

In This World (pt.1)

How Can I Be Spiritual in this World?

(Gal.5:22-25)

Introduction: We don't have to look far to see we are living in a troubled time and world. The things people want most shouldn't surprise us in a world full of trouble. But isn't it amazing the very things people (all people) admire the most, God desires to give us first. The Bible tells us these things are the very characteristics of a "Spiritual (or Spirit-filled) Christian." So, if these are the same things you want out of life in a troubled world, the answer seems to be – we must become "Spiritual" or Spirit-filled. The question becomes, "*How can I be spiritual In This World?*"

I. The way has been provided:

1. **The efforts** – (v.16) it is significant that Paul distinguishes between "works of the flesh" and "fruit of the Spirit."
 - a. *Works of the flesh* – are those things which are produced through human effort and energy.
 - b. *Fruit of the spirit* – this is only that which grows from a branch that abides in the true vine (Jn.15:5)
American theologian Dr. C.I. Scofield said – "...this fruit is foreign to the soil of the human heart."
 - c. *The false teaching in Galatia* -
 1. *A group of Judaizers* – These Judaizers were teaching new Christians that even though they were saved by Christ, they were bound to the law.
 - a. Paul shows us to operate through the law, one must depend upon his own resources which activates the flesh. *However, Paul argues...*
 - b. The person who seeks to be relate to God through faith turns to the spirit – it is the spirit in him that produces love which in turn spills over into every attitude and action which is right and good.
 2. *We cannot do what God can and will do for us and in us by His Spirit, through our own efforts. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt 26:41b)*
2. **The evidence** – (*Jesus came to give us abundant life. (Jn.10:10)*) But most people don't really believe that, so they live below it.
 - a. *Modern day Judaizers* – like to put the fear of losing our salvation in us if you don't live by the law.
 - b. *They were teaching – Salvation comes by faith, but it must be kept by works of the flesh – (Being Spiritual by self-effort... which is false teaching.)*
 - c. *But Paul teaches us the call to Christ is a call to freedom* – it is an invitation to live by faith and become the new person we can become in Christ.
 - d. *The law* – never produces the character of Christ in us, it simply points to God's character which is holy. So, *the Law* – is still good because it points out what is wrong. Our challenge as Christians is not to keep up with the law, but to stay sensitive & responsive to the Spirit of God. (v.16-18)
 - e. *The spirit* – will then produce His fruit in us, which is in direct contrast to the products of our self-efforts and sinful nature. (vv. 22-25)

It is only the Holy Spirit in us, and our dependance upon Him, that gives us the ability to be spiritual in this world. However, there is a role for us to play...

II. The will must be present: The truths Paul is expressing here are available to every believer, but only the one who is willing to say with Paul – (*Gal 2:20*) *will truly know and enjoy it... We must understand being spiritual in this world...*

1. **It is the believer's decision** – (*Rom 6:13,14a*)
 - a. Presenting ourselves to God is a personal choice of our will, (the way has been provided) Before sin can have power over a believer it must first pass through the will.
 - b. Christ has removed our bars and set us free from the dominance of sin over our reactions & responses. *But we must be willing to by faith embrace that freedom...*
2. **It is the believer's direction** - (*Phil 2:12-13*)
 - a. The believer has a personal responsibility to pursue obedience. (putting feet to your faith)
 - b. *Paul writes (Rom 6:19) The believer has the ability to set their course...*
3. **It is the believer's discipline** (*1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Cor 7:1*)
4. **It is the believer's devotion** – (*Gal 6:7-9*) *Being a committed believer is not the same thing as staying a committed believer. We are not to be devoted for the short hall, but for a lifetime!*
5. **It is the believer's dedication** - (*Eph 4:1*) *Paul reminds us here: one's calling, and conduct should be in balance. "The calling" refers not only to believers' salvation (cf. Rom 1:5-6; 1 Cor 1:9) but also to their union in one body.*
6. **It is to be the believer's description** – (*Col.3:1-17; Heb 12:1*) *When our will is present, our lives are hidden with God in Christ, because He is the way. (This is the way to be spiritual in this world). The reality is...*

III. The work is a process:

- A. **Relying completely upon the Holy Spirit** - allows Him to be unleashed to transform us from within. Note – in Paul's description of the spiritual fruit there are no specific acts or behaviors at all. That is because...
God views being spiritual very different from how we do: We look externally – At best, what we do is only a reflection of what we are! God effects our spirituality from within – the only way righteousness in us can be produced.
- B. **The relationship a Christian has with God** as His children means that we share His heritage. *If (sense) we are the children of God –*
 1. The life we live is able to be sensitive & responsive to the spirit within us – so that then (and only then), we can conduct ourselves spiritually!
 2. It is important to point out these are not personality traits but Christ-like qualities already at work in us! (*Gal. 5:22-23; Rom 5:5; 1 Jn 1:4; Jn 14:27; 2 Pet 3:9; Col 3:12; II Th 1:1; 1 Thes 5:24; Rev 2:10; 1 Cor 9:27*)