



## Walking With the Spirit

As we close out what we know as [chapter 4](#) in the epistle to the Christians in Ephesus, we find ourselves really in the middle of Paul's essay on how true believers act and behave. As we've seen, much of this chapter has been devoted to instructions on how we must [walk the walk](#) we talk, and even [talk the talk](#) we talk. And when we move into [chapter 5](#), we'll see Paul has much more to say to the church on this very important topic.

***Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. [Eph 4:31-32](#) NASB***

Last week we saw how living in sin can grieve the living Holy Spirit of God Who is literally joined and married to a true Christian's soul ([Eph 4:30](#), [1 Cor 6:17](#)). And this week we see Paul point out several more sins that believers must be on guard against.

***Bitterness... wrath... anger... clamor... slander... and malice.*** It's plain these things are not fruits of the Holy Spirit nor the outward works and evidence of a Christian who is united in and walking closely with the Spirit of Christ. Yet, if we are truly honest with ourselves, it is easy to see how we can allow such sins to creep in without much notice. Something as simple as a bad day can lead to the repeated commission of such sins. We may flippantly write it off as just "waking up on the wrong side of the bed" or "my boss is being mean today" or "my kids are driving me crazy," but Scripture gives no valid excuses for such behavior.

The conviction which tugs at our heart when we do such things is a blessing. Yes, a blessing! The Holy Spirit working within our heart convicts us of our sins and teaches us new ways to approach old situations ([John 14:26](#), [Rom 8:26](#)). The wise and humble believer is the one who submits to this conviction, repents, and seeks forgiveness ([1 John 1:9](#), [Heb 10:26](#)).

None of us are perfect, of course, and thankfully God does not expect perfection. His Son's perfect sacrifice on the cross, in the grave, and in ascension to heaven covers all such sins past, present, and future ([Psalm 103:12](#), [Rom 5:8](#)). Praise God for His wonderful gift and plan of salvation to absolve us of such a vast list of capital crimes!



After this instruction, Paul then goes into an exhortation to believers of what we should be like when guided by the Holy Spirit: *kind... tender-hearted... forgiving*. Paul could have left it here, but I love how he reminds us that we should be this way because “**God in Christ also has forgiven you.**” Many of us need to often be told such things to keep us encouraged and focused on what really matters, especially since our sin-nature is still a very powerful force in our lives even after we are saved.

As we close, let’s turn to another of Paul’s epistles. Near the end of his rather scathing letter to the Galatians, he wrote this beautiful passage, which is well worth writing on the tablets of our hearts and minds as a moment-by-moment reminder of what our lives can look like when we live in full submission to the Spirit’s will and calling:

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*** [Galatians 5:22-25](#) NASB

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece