

“*You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant...*”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

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Walking in the Spirit in Business

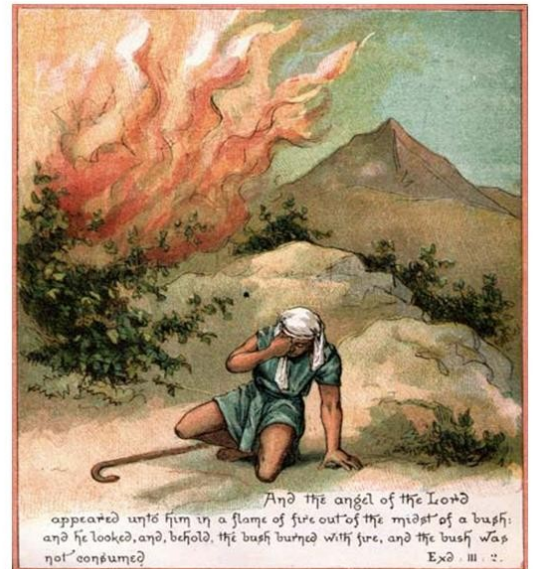
“Any Ole Bush Would Do”

By Robert C. Benson, President

“Without the Spirit of God we can do nothing. We are ships without wind...Like branches without sap, we are withered. Like coals without fire-we are useless.” Charles H. Spurgeon

A. Situational Analysis

Bert Harned M.D. explains how any Christian, with no seminary training, can walk in the Spirit in his book *Any Ole Bush, Christ Living in Us*, “One day, Moses was walking through the hot sand on the back side of the desert (Exodus 3). God spoke to him out of a burning bush-not *the* bush, not just a bush...any ole bush would do. There was nothing special or magical or super-natural about the bush. **What made it special was that God was in it,** (paraphrasing Major W. Ian Thomas). That is a picture of every believer. There is nothing special about believers, we look like all the other bushes (believers) but there is an enormous difference between what any ole bush can do, as compared with any ole bush that contains God. It’s not the bush, but what the bush contains.”



“*And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you,*” (Romans 8:11).

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOU IS GOD’S GUARANTEE OF HIS PROMISES.

When one becomes a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ the Bible says that God “*anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come,*” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). As Christians in the marketplace the Bible then instructs us to stop living according to the old nature (sinful nature) and that “*those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*” In addition, the Lord Jesus Christ expects us to “*make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded them to do.*” Incredibly, the Apostle Peter instructs that “*you must be holy in everything you do, just as God — who chose you to be his children — is holy,*” (1 Peter 1:15-16 NLT). And even more humbling the Apostle John says that “*Whoever claims to live in him [Christ] must walk as Jesus did,*” (1 John 2:6). **But how can we, as ordinary marketplace people, do such things?**

2. THE POINT IS – CHRISTIANS ARE ANYTHING BUT ORDINARY.

That’s the whole predicament with God’s children. Most of them believe they are just like everyone else on earth, except that Christianity is our religion and others have their religion – or none at all. Further, we see our lives in the following manner “my father is _____, my mother is _____, I grew up in _____, I have _____ brothers or sisters, I work at _____, my job is _____, I am single or married, etc. You get the point; our identity is tied to our life on this earth.

The fact is those who **believe** in Christ **and receive** Him into their life **become** children of God and members of His Kingdom – forever! The children of God have two families and two heritages (earthly and spiritual), “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy,*” (1 Peter 2:9-10). So the point of Scripture is that your real family as a Christian is the family of God, with all of the position, rights, privileges and resources of His children!

Therefore, Any Ole Bush can “just do it” right where you are. You don’t have to go to seminary or work for a Christian non-profit organization, although God may call some to do so. You can and are instructed to be filled with the Spirit and be a disciple of Christ right where you are – at work, at home, socially, etc.

The purpose of this article is to help you understand how to “walk in the Spirit” so you become a mature Christian, receive the blessings God has promised you, overcome the enemy (Satan) and become effective at helping in the building of Christ’s Church (Matthew 28:16-20). If you are interested in reading more articles providing real-world insights and advice on your daily spiritual life, you can find them at www.ABAdvisors.com, at the eNewsletter link.

B. Walking in the Spirit A Simple Explanation

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” Galatians 5:25

There is no separation between the secular and spiritual for those who are members of the Kingdom of God on earth, “*a holy nation.*” We live one life. God, family, work, social and personal are all part of one life to be lived in the Kingdom of God as His child and ambassador while functioning in this world.

All of God’s promises in Scripture are tied to obedience and the Bible says that obedience can only be attained by choosing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, nothing in your life as a Christian is more important than what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit and how to walk under his influence and power. The Holy Spirit is every Christian’s personal counselor, “*All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you,*” (John 14:25-26).

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (the old nature). For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law (the Jewish law). But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit,” (Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25 NKJV).

1. GOD NEVER ASKS YOU (OR COMMANDS YOU) TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE. Even seeming impossible instructions such as “*Be holy just as God is holy,*” “*Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did*” (1 John 2:6) and “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:19-20a) are possible for any of God’s children to attain. People who say such things are impossible “*do not know the scriptures or the power of God.*” (Matthew 22:29). God simply does not ask or command you to do things that are impossible! Of course, you are not going to do it perfectly – that is, sinless (read the book of 1 John to obtain a better understanding of balance in this area of spiritual growth). It is the enemy (Satan) who wants Christians to believe such things are impossible, because if all of God’s children understood and believed they could “*walk as Jesus did,*” the Great Commission will be fulfilled and Satan will be finished!

How is this possible we can “walk as Jesus did?” Because Christ, through the Holy Spirit, lives in you! *“Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’”* (Matthew 28:18&20b). And, because **all** who have been born into God’s family *“have an anointing from the Holy One”* and therefore John says *“I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him”* (1 John 2:20, 26 and 27).

- 2. CHRIST WAS OUR EXAMPLE OF HOW TO DO IT.** Jesus showed us *“the way”* while living on earth because, while here, He functioned through the power of God the Father living in Him, not through His own power as the Son of God, *“who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”* (Philippians 2:6-7 RSV). What did Jesus empty himself of? No one knows for sure. But it is clear from His teachings such as John 14:10, ***“it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work”*** and others, that he emptied Himself of His God powers while on earth so that he could be like us, showing us how to walk in the power of God, through the Holy Spirit, living in us on earth.

Another reason he emptied himself of His God powers while on earth was to earn the right to represent us at the right hand of God the Father. *“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. **Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect,** so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation (atonement) for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted,”* (Hebrews 2:14-18 RSV).

- 3. WHO ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM?** The Bible says that those who believe in Jesus Christ are the descendants of Abraham! *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise,**”* (Galatians 3:26-29).

What is the promise to Abraham? *“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you,”* (Genesis 12:2). *“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God. Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come,”* (Genesis 17:7-10). *“And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me,”* (Genesis 22:18).

Man’s requirements under the old covenant with Abraham were replaced by Christ’s coming to earth. He fulfilled the requirements of man under the old covenant and established a new covenant and requirements to fulfill God’s covenant promise to bless Abraham’s descendants.

4. **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE NEW COVENANT IS SIMPLE, BUT CHALLENGING.** The new covenant is simple, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son,”* (John 3:16-18).

Christian Apologetics Lee Strobel provides a simple formula of “Believe + Receive = Become.” Believe in Jesus Christ and Receive Him into your life as Lord and Savior, and you Become a child of God – and an heir of God, according to the promise. Of course, your intentions must be sincere.

How do you know your faith is in Christ? *“Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.* (John 14:23-24).

What is His teaching? *“If you love me, you will obey what I command,”* (John 14:15). What did He command? *“This is my command. Love each other,”* (John 15:17).

C. Walking in the Spirit

“Christ in You, the Hope of Glory”

“I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20 NLT

The Apostle Peter teaches us that “***His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires,***” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

Further, the Apostle Paul teaches us to accomplish this by daily dependence on the power of Christ living in us, “*I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. **To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,***” (Colossians 1:25-27).

As Major W. Ian Thomas says in his book on The Mystery of Godliness, “you cannot make yourself godly...godliness is a work of God.”

1. THE KEY TO WALKING IN THE SPIRIT IS YOUR DAILY MINDSET. To walk “in the Spirit,” you must have your “*minds set on what the Spirit desires,*” (Romans 8:5). This includes allowing yourself to be controlled by the Holy Spirit instead of by the “*sinful nature*” (or “*old nature*”) and to be obedient to Christ’s teaching. “*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want,*” (Galatians 5:13-17).

“**The sense of this verse probably is, ‘We who are Christians profess to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit.** His influences and agency is our spiritual life. We profess not to be under the dominion of the flesh; not to be controlled by its appetites and desires. Let us then act in this manner, and as if we believed this. Let us yield ourselves to his influences, and show that we are controlled by that Spirit.” It is an earnest exhortation to Christians to yield wholly to the agency of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, and to submit to his guidance,” (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc.).

2. GOD’S ESTABLISHES A DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE. When Christ leaves planet earth He makes a promise to all believers, “*These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I*

have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid,” (John 14:25-27). As promised and reported in the book of Acts, He sends the Holy Spirit to earth to indwell believers and provide the knowledge and power to “*walk as Jesus walked.*”

Before He left earth Jesus commissions all believers to build His Church and obey Him, “*Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,’*” (Matthew 28: 17-20).

Put these together and you have a Strategic Partnership between God and His children on earth. God needs us to get the job done, there is no plan B! We need him indwelling us and teaching us, EVERY DAY, in order to grow, obey him and get the job done! God has declared His dependence on us in the verse above and our dependence on Him in John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

D. WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Any Ole Bush Can Do It

“Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, ‘Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, ‘Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?’ No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.” Deuteronomy

The Bible connects the dots between the blessings and curses for obedience and disobedience under the old covenant and new covenant in Deuteronomy 30 above and Romans 10, “*Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: ‘The man who does these things will live by them.’ But the righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down) or “Who will descend into the deep?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,”*” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: *That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you*

confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.' For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,'" (Romans 10:5-13).

1. GOD'S CALL TO ACTION. *"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; **then you will live and increase**, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.*

*But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you **will certainly be destroyed**. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.*

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," (Deuteronomy 30:11-20).

2. THE REWARD AND CONSEQUENCES. God provides us with the rewards and consequences of obedience and disobedience in black and white in Deuteronomy 28-30. I highly recommend you read them. Here is a summary from Chapter 8, *"Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land — a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. (The "good land" is the Kingdom of God and if you have put your faith in Christ and become a child of God, you have entered into this "good land").*

*When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. **You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.'** But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 8:6-14,17-20).

- 3. A DAILY PRAYER OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD.** Every day since about 1995 in my prayer time I have used the Apostle Paul’s declaration of dependence to remind myself of the reality of my daily dependence on Christ to render my “sinful nature” powerless, *“The life I live in the body (of sin), I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,”* (Galatians 2:20).

I highly recommend including this in your daily prayers. Why? Paul explains, *“Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort,* (Galatians 3:3-4)? Christ explains, *“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,* (Matthew 6:28 NKJV).

In the next issue of *The Spirit Led Business™*, we begin a series of articles on Secrets of the Kingdom Culture.

If you don’t have a Bible, you can go online to www.netbible.org. And if you want someone to talk to about the things in this letter, call us at ABA!

Note: All Bible verses are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

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