

Spirituality & Carnality

I. Introduction & Definition

- A. Spirituality is a sphere in which the believer functions under the controlling influence (guidance, teaching, and power) of God the Holy Spirit.
- B. Carnality is a sphere in which the believer volitionally functions under the controlling influence (guidance, teaching, and power) of the Old Sin Nature.
- C. These spheres are absolute, and mutually exclusive. Every believer is either spiritual or carnal at any given moment in time.

II. Second Introduction: The Walk

- A. Spirituality and carnality are both “walks” that must be volitionally chosen by every believer every moment of every day.

- 1. περιπατέω ^{#4043}: *to walk. fig. to conduct oneself or behave in a particular manner; to live.*

Physically, walking is one of the best forms of exercise, it works more muscles than any other activity, it develops circulation, improves breathing, supports regular elimination of waste, strengthens the heart. Thus, spiritual walking works all the spiritual skills, the “muscles” of the spiritual life, increases circulation of doctrine in the soul, improves the application of Bible doctrine, eliminates the waste of Human Viewpoint (HVP) in the soul as it is replaced by Divine Viewpoint (DVP) in the soul, and edifies or “strengthens” the soul through the construction of the soul-fortress which protects and defends the soul from the outside pressure of adversity and prosperity.¹

- 2. στοιχέω ^{#4748}: *to walk in a straight line, march in step.*

- 3. ὀρθοποδέω ^{#3716}: *walk straight, upright.*

- 4. πορεύομαι ^{#4198}: *to walk, go about one’s daily activities, to live.*

- B. The Dative of Sphere: Walking in the day (Rom. 13:13), or walking in light (1st Jn. 1:7) is the antithesis of walking in darkness (1st Jn. 1:6).

- 1. Walking properly in the day is the believer’s volitional act of “putting on” the Lord Jesus Christ. By so doing, a believer preempts the flesh before any lustful temptation can come (Rom. 13:13,14).
- 2. The believer can volitionally walk in either light or darkness, but it is the walk in light that imitates Christ (1st Jn. 1:6,7).

- C. The Dative of Means: Walking by faith (2nd Cor. 5:7), by means of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16,25).

- D. The Accusative: The Walk according to spirit (and not flesh) (Rom. 8:4), according to love (Rom. 14:15), and not according to the course of this world (Eph. 2:2), like mere men (1st Cor. 3:3).

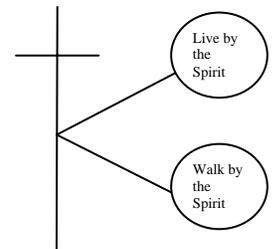
III. Development & Application

- A. The believer who walks in carnality is no more capable of learning the Word of God, and growing in grace and knowledge than the unbeliever (1st Cor. 3:1-4).

- 1. Paul was unable to speak to the Corinthians *as spiritual men* (ὡς πνευματικοῖς), but was obliged to address them *as carnal men* (ὡς σαρκίνοις).
- 2. The progression from milk to solid food (1st Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-14) requires the believer to remain in fellowship for the purpose of learning the Word of God.

- B. Within every believer are two competing desires, in opposition to one another (Gal. 5:16-26).

- 1. Every believer who volitionally chooses to conduct their lives under the controlling influence (guidance, teaching, & power) of God the Holy Spirit will not submit to the controlling influence (guidance, teaching, & power) of the Old Sin Nature (Gal. 5:16).
- 2. These two competing operating systems are mutually exclusive (Gal. 5:17).
- 3. The two competing operating systems have contrasting manifestations or fruit.
 - a. The expressions of the Old Sin Nature (Gal. 5:19-21).
 - b. The fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23).
- 4. Living by the Spirit is our positional sanctification (top circle), walking by the Spirit is our experiential sanctification (bottom circle) (Gal. 5:25).



¹ “The Doctrine of Walking.” Pastor Robby Dean, Preston City Bible Church, Preston, CT.
<http://www.prestoncitybible.org>

- C. Paul wrote of that inner battle and described his own struggles (Rom. 7:1-25; 8:1-8).
1. The believer in Christ walks in the newness of life—free from sin, and free from Law, which could only condemn us in our sin (Rom. 7:1-13).
 2. Mosaic Law was a spiritual (πνευματικός #4152) standard that the human spirit could recognize, but not live up to perfectly because of the sin dwelling within (ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία).
 3. This passage does not describe the unbeliever who is born under bondage to sin, but a believer who is sold (πικρῶσκει #4097) into bondage to sin.
 - a. The believer has a spirit that is willing, but also a Sin Nature (flesh) that is weak (Matt. 26:41).
 - b. Having volitionally submitted his will to the Old Sin Nature, the believer finds himself doing that which his spirit knows to be wrong (Rom. 7:19).
 - c. The battlefield of the soul is where each believer must volitionally submit his will to the Holy Spirit, or else he will be taken captive by the Old Sin Nature and plunged into the walk of darkness (Rom. 7:23).
 - d. This war will continue to be waged until we are removed from our physical bodies (Rom. 7:24).
 - e. Believers have the privilege and blessing to walk according to the Holy Spirit, and walk in the light for the pleasure of God the Father (Rom. 8:1-8).
 - f. Believers are either operationally alive or dead, depending on which power system we volitionally choose to operate under (Rom. 8:12-17).
- D. Sin entangles the believer, and hinders them from running their race (Heb. 12:1,2).
1. Believers must lay aside every encumbrance. These circumstances and details of life are not necessarily sinful in themselves, but they do distract us from our race.
 2. Believers must lay aside sin. Failure to do so will result in the easy entanglement.
- E. The carnal mind can delude the believer into a legalistic system of works which has no value against carnal activity (Col. 2:18-23).
1. Functioning in carnality results in forfeiture of eternal reward (Col. 2:18).
 2. The legalist loses sight of Christ as he misplaces the priority upon non-issues (Col. 2:19-21).
 3. Such “religion” is man-made and worthless (Col. 2:22,23).
 4. Rather than being an escape from carnality, it becomes a trap into more carnality (2nd Pet. 2:18).
- F. Every believer should endeavor to be “under the influence” at all times (Eph. 5:18).
- Note: this means we are to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit’s guidance, teaching, & empowerment.
1. This is how we walk the “walk of wisdom” (Eph. 5:15).
 2. This is how we redeem the time (Eph. 5:16).
 3. This is how we understand the will of the Lord (Eph. 5:17).
 4. This empowers us to edify others, give thanks to God, and be subject to one another (Eph. 5:19-21).
- G. The filling of the Holy Spirit is what empowers believers to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and through that fellowship, to have fellowship with one another (1st Jn. 1:1-10).
1. All κοινωνία #2842 fellowship is grounded in the κοινωνία of the Father and the Son (1st Jn. 1:3).
 2. Fellowship = walking in the light, practicing the Truth (1st Jn. 1:6,7).
 3. Denial of the Old Sin Nature is self-deception and destructive to the believer’s faith (1st Jn. 1:8).
 4. Since all our sins have been eternally forgiven when God established our relationship (Col. 1:14), every confession of personal sin produces temporal forgiveness when God restores our fellowship (1st Jn. 1:9).