

# Living in the Spirit

## *Faithfulness*

©2016 Mark Beard

**Text: Galatians 5:22-23**, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

### **Introduction**

Living in the Spirit is made possible by the “fruit of the Spirit” or by the result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the Greek, the term “fruit of the Spirit could also be translated the “harvest of the Spirit.” ***It is an expression of what is produced by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as we allow Him to work and produce spiritual growth within us. This is truly “living in the Spirit.”***

Today, we look at another aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit—Faithfulness. Faithfulness takes many shapes and forms and is lived out every day through countless acts of devotion. From the soldier sacrificing all for his fellow soldiers, to the husband or wife who turns away inappropriate flirtations out of love for their spouse, to the friend who stands by someone in need until the need is met.

Examples of faithfulness are seen even in the creatures God has created. Call it instinct. Call it devotion. Either way, there are stories that make one stop and think, such as the one I read and want to share with you.

Several years ago, when a railway train was approaching the city of Montreal, the engineer saw a large dog on the track, barking furiously. The whistle was blown, but still the dog stayed on the track. Just as the engine came upon him, he crouched down and extended himself across the track, where he was struck by the locomotive and killed. The engineer, looking toward the front of his engine, saw a piece of white cloth fluttering in the wind. He discovered that it was part of a child's dress. After backing the train he found not only the mangled body of the dog, but also the body of a little child. The child had evidently wandered along the track and had fallen asleep there, while her faithful companion, seeing the train approaching, had done his best to save her. Failing, he had covered her with his own body and died with her. He had been "faithful unto death."—*The King's Business*.

*Just a thought: Imagine how we could shake the work for Christ if everyone who named the name of Christ simply had the faithfulness of a dog.*

As we look back at our text today, consider the ***implications*** of faithfulness in the context of living in the Spirit.

## **I. For those Living in the Spirit, Faithfulness a Natural Outcome of Faith.**

### **A. It is natural for people to be motivated by selfish desire.**

Paul makes it clear in Galatians 5:20 what the selfish desires of human beings will produce when he names, "...idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions..." (NIV)

**B. It is spiritual to be motivated to model faithfulness.**

Faith and commitment cannot be separated in the service of Christ. We cannot say we have faith, yet not have commitment. Neither can we say we are truly committed without faith.

**II. For those Living in the Spirit, The Holy Spirit Makes it Natural to be Faithful.**

**A. The Holy Spirit is able to transform our nature.**

Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:24-25, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (NIV)

*The Holy Spirit transforms us, but it is our responsibility to stay in step with Him.*

**B. The Holy Spirit strengthens our resolve to be faithful.**

The Holy Spirit inspires true faith and true faith produces true faithfulness.

**Conclusion**

The **implications** of faithfulness for those who want to live in the Spirit require we redefine our standards of what is important. In our society many see "success" as the ultimate goal and ultimate measure of achievement and often of one's worth. But this is not the measure of achievement in the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God faithfulness is the ultimate test of achievement in life and eternity.

Senator Mark Hatfield tells of touring Calcutta with Mother Teresa and visiting the so-called "House of Dying," where sick children are cared for in their last days, and the dispensary, where the poor line up by the hundreds to receive medical attention. Watching Mother Teresa minister to these people, feeding and nursing those left by others to die, Hatfield was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the suffering she and her co-workers face daily. "How can you bear the load without being crushed by it?" he asked. Mother Teresa replied, "My dear Senator, I am not called to be successful, I am called to be faithful." -- Beyond Hunger, Beals