



## Daily Devotionals: Rhythms | May 15, 2022

### Spirit-Led Life

I sat directly across from her, a trusted mentor and godly guide. We conversed about my exhaustion. The pace never stopped, and I was being dragged around by it. There was a brief pause and she leaned in, asking, “Are you doing things in your own strength or the strength of the Spirit?”

I blurted out my answer, “Well, of course, the strength of the Spirit!”

She was quick to quip back, “Do you think you’d be so exhausted if that were the case? I don’t know that God called us to that level of fatigue.” In that moment, I realized I knew very little about what it really looked like to walk in step with the Spirit—to experience a truly Spirit-led life.

When I was young, I remember carefully placing my little feet on top of my dad’s shoes, grabbing his hands and moving around the room, dancing with him. My job was to hold onto his hands or wrap my arms around his waist, clinging to him. His job was to gracefully carry me across the floor. My steps matched his steps every time.

A Spirit-led life looks a lot like this picture. It requires us to keep in step with the Spirit. Our job is to find God, to wrap our arms around Him, clinging to Him, moving where He moves and staying where He stays. His job is to carry us gracefully across the dance floor.

A.W. Tozer says, “The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.” In other words, the Spirit-led life is not an optional way to live as a disciple of Jesus. It is a part of God’s design for His children that we would all live both IN and WITH the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Our prayer this week is that we will learn to lean in a little more to the Spirit leading our everyday ordinary lives for the glory of God.



## Scripture

### Romans 8:5-17

<sup>5</sup> Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> 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 because of his Spirit who lives in you. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.<sup>[1]</sup> And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

## Practice

A Spirit-led life contains many components, but this week we're going to focus on three aspects of living a Spirit-led life: noticing the movement of God, releasing control to Him, and submitting our will to His. We'll have the opportunity to practice growing each of these aspects. You can engage in all three of these practices or choose the one that stands out to you the most. These practices can all be repeated multiple times throughout the week.



## **Practice 1 – Noticing**

In order to move in step with the Spirit, we have to see where the Spirit is moving. The *Prayer of Examen* is a great review of the day that helps you to notice where God was present throughout your day. You can take time to do this for any period of time—in the evening for the day or at the end of the week for the whole week. Determine what timeframe you would like to look back on and follow the prompts for the Examen prayer below.

### **BE STILL:**

Get into a comfortable position and let yourself relax.

Quiet your mind... your body... your heart before God.

Slowing your breathing—inhale God’s love and presence, exhale stress and distractions.

Ask God what He wants to show you in these moments.

With His help, be attentive to how the Spirit is working.

Let yourself see your day as God sees it.

### **PRACTICE GRATITUDE:**

What are you grateful for?

Gratitude cultivates our hearts and minds to see God working.

It changes how we view the circumstances and people in our lives.

With God present, go back through your day.

For what are you grateful? Look for the small things, as well as the large.

As things come to mind, pause, and express your gratitude to God.



### **PRAY THROUGH YOUR DAY:**

Looking back through your day, what circumstance(s) brought about strong thoughts or emotions? View this circumstance with God.

Did it draw you closer to God? OR did it lead you away or feeling distant from God?

Did it help you grow in faith, hope, and love OR make you less faithful or hopeful, or less loving?

Did it make you feel more alive and whole OR cause you to be more self-centered and anxious?

Did it challenge you to life-giving growth OR lure you into doubt and confusion?

Where was God present to you throughout the day? How did He show His love to you?

Did you receive His love?

What obstacles to His presence and His love did you encounter?

### **REJOICE AND SEEK FORGIVENESS:**

Rejoice in the moments God brought you closer--the moments where His attentiveness was evident and you responded to His grace.

Confess the moments when you resisted God's presence and ask for His forgiveness.

Thank God for the gift of awareness.

Receive God's grace for the entire situation.

### **LOOK TO TOMORROW:**

Just as God was with you today, He is faithful and will be with you tomorrow.

Invite God to be part of it. Ask Him for a greater awareness of His presence.



As you think ahead to tomorrow, what do you need God's help with?

Is there a specific gift of grace you need?

Thank Him for His grace.

### **Practice 2 – Releasing Control**

Relinquishment means to release or let go. Living a Spirit-led life means just that: our life is LED BY THE SPIRIT and not our own will.

In the book titled *Prayer – Finding the Heart's True Home* by Richard Foster, he writes, "We begin to enter into a grace-filled releasing of our will and a flowing into the will of the Father. It

is the prayer of relinquishment that moves us from the struggling to the releasing...this prayer is a bona fide letting go, but it is a release with hope... God is not destroying the will but transforming it so that...we can freely will what God wills."

Oswald Chambers said, "No one is ever united with Jesus Christ until he is willing to relinquish not sin only, but his whole way of looking at things...."

Take some time for this practice to prayerfully list some things for which it is difficult for you to release control. Then pray slowly through this "Prayer of Relinquishment" from Richard Foster's book *Prayers of the Heart*:

#### **A Prayer of Relinquishment**

*Today, O Lord, I yield myself to you.  
May your will be my delight today.  
May your way have perfect sway in me.  
May your love be the pattern of my living.  
I surrender to you  
my hopes,  
my dreams,  
my ambitions.  
Do with them what you will, when you will, as you will.*



*I place into your loving care  
my family,  
my friends,  
my future.  
Care for them with a care that I can never give.  
I release into your hands*

*my need to control,  
my craving for status,  
my fear of obscurity.  
Eradicate the evil, purify the good, and establish your  
kingdom on earth.  
For Jesus' sake,  
Amen.*

### **Practice 3 – Submitting to God**

Much of a Spirit-led life is made up of small “yeses” to God throughout our everyday, ordinary life. A well-timed text of encouragement to a friend in need as the Spirit whispers, a surrendered yes to serve our spouse by taking out the trash when it’s not our turn, or a humble apology regardless of their request when we’ve wronged someone. These are all simple movements of YES toward a life in the Spirit.

Choose a day (or a morning, afternoon, or evening) where you will simply pay attention to God’s invitations. Slow down so you can hear what He might be inviting you to do. Take a breath and ask every once in a while, “Spirit, where would you lead me right now?” As you hear a subtle prompting, say yes to God. Even when it is uncomfortable. Remember, God will never ask you to do something that is contrary to His words in Scripture. The things He will ask you to say yes to will grow the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Take some time to notice at the end of the day (or morning, afternoon, or evening) what you discovered. Where was it easy to say yes? Where was it more difficult? Spend some time praying, asking God to help you submit to life in His Spirit more often.



### **Questions for Reflection:**

1. Which practice did you decide to do this week? What did you discover as you engaged in it?
2. Think of someone who you have observed leads a Spirit-led life. What do you notice about them? What would you want to emulate in their life? What do you think they have cultivated in their life to live this way? If you have time, call them or invite them to coffee to have a conversation about how they have learned to live by the Spirit.
3. What takeaways or invitations from God do you see from this week's practice? From the entire series? What is your next step from here? Take some time to pray through that with God.