

# Instinctive Christianity

Part One: How did Jesus walk in the Spirit?

By Bill Rose

When we become a Christian, we inherit a supernatural life with a new creation to fit it into. Paul mentions that *old things have passed away and all things have become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17). Since that is the case, we are immediately *living in the Spirit and directed to walk in it*. (Galatians 5:25) Further, we are told to *walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*. (Galatians 5:16) With this, we can see the believer has been given two things. We have a new creation with awareness of walking in the power of the Spirit. This article is written to discuss what it means to walk in the Spirit so that our new creation flourishes in our daily walk with the Lord.

If I were start by asking 100 Christians what it means to walk in the Spirit, do you think I would get the same answer from any of them? Have you resolved in your mind what it means to do this or have we, like most folks, kicked this question down the road as a mere Christian cliché? It's a big thought because it identifies everything we do after we become "born again" people. It is one of the most important questions to pursue and yet it seems its assumed that we will all figure it out in time.

That was my situation for most of my Christian life until just recently. I assumed it was a combination of spiritual activity like studying the Bible, praying, ministry to others, trying to do the Lord's will, well-- you can see religious expectations can go on forever. Nothing wrong with any of these things in and of themselves, but they do not get us to addressing the point of walking in the Spirit. Instead, they are meant to be fruitful activity coming from living in the Spirit. Allow me some time to pass along some ideas that opened the door to understanding this reality. It has become more than head knowledge; it comes with some practical experience as I looked into how Jesus walked in the Spirit and became aware of the same quality of life living within me.

## How did Jesus live?

Notice I didn't ask the worn-out question, "What would Jesus do?" We miss the answer to our question if we focus on the life of Christ and primarily look at His activity of healing, teaching disciples and crowds, praying,

feeding the hungry, challenging the religious leaders of the day and finally remaining perfectly obedient within His humanity. It is easy to get caught up in looking at the activities of Jesus and attempt to follow in His footsteps of religious work. As I mentioned earlier, activity doesn't lead us into walking in the Spirit, just as it didn't with Jesus. As both God and man He was, and is today, our proto-type and perfect model for how to live. Yet we must remember, He set aside His deity and lived obediently from His humanity. In those days He was privileged to be the only man with the understanding and experience of the New Covenant life because He came on our behalf to model and introduce it to others. He had the Spirit permanently living within Him giving everyone a glimpse of things to come after He departed (John 16:7).

There is a better question to ask concerning the issue of walking in the Spirit. Should we review the Gospels and ask ourselves how Jesus lived when He came and dwelt amongst people some 21 centuries ago? When we explore that as the heart of the issue we focus on the nature and relationship that He had with the Father and not just the activities of His life.

Christ's energized work came from a source other than Himself. Nothing about them were created by Him instead He says they came from the Father. But how was that accomplished and with such magnitude?

### **All things came from the Father**

The mystery of trying to discover how Jesus succeeded in accomplishing everything is reduced to just one point; **He lived knowing the Father and He were one, and as a result the Father was going to direct Him in all things.** This is how Jesus walked in the Spirit. He didn't live His life on a moment-by-moment basis trying to open Himself up for the Father to work within Him. Instead, it was a matter of awareness of His permanent union with the Father. *You, Father, are in Me, and I in You;* (John 17:21) The key for walking in the Spirit wasn't necessarily doing things for God, but seeing and experiencing His oneness with God. The confidence for doing the will of the Father came from the Doer of spiritual activity being united within Him. Thus, Jesus could say, *my food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.* (John 4:34) His humanity was lived from a dependent lifestyle and that is why He could point others to live it as well. (John 17:23) I would like to share some of those examples that are recorded in the Book of John.

- Jesus lived the spiritual life from the Father: *For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have **life in Himself**.* (John 5:26) The empowerment to accomplish all things came from the reality of living in, from and through the Father's life.
- Jesus submitted His will to the Father: *For I have come down from heaven, **not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*** (John 6:38) Jesus understood eternal activity was introduced and achieved by living from the will of the Father.
- Jesus did what He saw the Father doing: *Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, **the Son does in like manner.*** (John 5:19) There was a way or a procedure for how things were done. Jesus confidently reflected the Father's works from His own life.
- Jesus spoke the words of the Father: *Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? **The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the work.*** (John 14:10) Jesus understood the reality of living in the Father and therefore trusted the words He spoke to others came from Him as well.
- Jesus heard all things from the Father. *I can of Myself do nothing, **As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*** (John 5:30) Fulfilling the God's will came from the Son's desire to hear the Father's voice. The ability to judge or to direct His life from one thing to another came from hearing that voice.

When we separate the activities and inspect the root or source of Christ's life we begin to see how He accomplished His work. Note the following:

- He could nothing from Himself.
- He understood He lived in oneness with the Father, which was the substance of His life.
- He always knew He was imitating the Father.
- He set aside His own objectives and submitted His will to the Father.
- He knew He spoke, heard, saw and did all things in concert with the Father's will.

## **Instinctive Christian Living**

Jesus did not choose to live this way because He had to or was commanded to do it. He chose to live this way because it was the only way to live and ultimately glorify the Father. Instead of getting mired in the mud of legalism, proper and improper behavior and trying to determine the will of God, Jesus demonstrated for us instinctive spiritual living. He didn't walk through His day working on trying to *see, hear, speak* and *do* what the Father wanted. All of these things were fruits of a life devoted to believing the Father was going to live through Him at all times because they were intimately united as One.

The story of the Vine and the Branches (John 15:1-9) was taught from the awareness and the experience Christ was having with the Father. This was not theoretical pie-in-the-sky spiritual living. That is why He could teach it with such authority and reliability. He knew a person could live the same way He lived, in instinctive harmony with God without working at it. The organic life of a branch in association with the vine is a vivid picture of natural life. *I am the vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing* (John 15:5). Abiding is "taking up residence" in Christ and remembering the impact of that decision; Perfect union with God! This is a conversion verse not a day-to-day manufactured standard that one must live up to or they get snipped from the vine. When we interpret it as a "born again" conversion passage this is the only way everything within its context makes sense.

If one takes up residence in Christ he is guaranteed to live fruitfully. The promise is: *You will bear **much fruit***. If another person chooses to not abide (take up residence) in Christ he will never bear (spiritual) fruit and therefore will be cut out of the way so that more abundant fruitful activity is allowed to exist around others. If this were a "daily walk" passage of scripture or a Devotional Thought for the Day we would be constantly living in moment-by-moment introspection instead of a lifestyle of freedom to walk instinctively in the Spirit. We would be weighted down with the impossible task of trying to determine if we were abiding or not. And ultimately, if we concluded we were not regularly abiding, we might believe to be permanently cut off and placed in the position of losing our salvation. There are too many passages that settle the score on eternal security. One within immediate reach is located in this same Gospel in John 18:9. Jesus said, "*Of those whom You gave Me **I have lost none***."

## **Victoriously living in oneness with Christ**

I remember having a conversation with a man about instinctively living in Christ instead of trying to live the Christian life from principles, performance and purposes. He listened patiently to what I had to say about another way of thinking, believing and living and discarded it by saying he was going to live the purpose driven life to the best of his ability. He couldn't rest in the awareness that God was going to live in him, through him and for him and therein would be the victorious life. He couldn't wait to get back out on the street and start hustling to run the race so that God would see him as a "faithful servant." I saw I was in his way and decided to keep moving so that he wouldn't need to hurdle over me to get out the door of the restaurant.

Everything we do in our natural setting here on earth is based on principles, performance and purposes. Success is based on how well we discipline our lives around those internal motivations. Therefore, when we come to living the Christian life, we can easily take it upon ourselves as just one more objective to accomplish. What sometimes comes across is this Gospel is not for the faint-hearted, but for the truly dedicated people who want to please God. If we reduce the Christian message to religious over tones then what we are doing is competing with all the other world religions. Our message then becomes, "Our rules are better than yours and our godly principles have high standards because they come from Jesus."

## **The life of a Honeybee**

You've heard it said many times, "If it's too good to be true then it probably isn't." That's what we think of the "good news" of the Gospel, it's too good to be true so therefore it isn't! The answer just can't be as simple as the Christian life (walking in the Spirit) is instinctively responding and reacting to the indwelling life of God. As I've shared, Jesus lived this way and He knew of no other way to experience the life of God. He knew He abided in the life of the Father, which also allowed Him to abide in His love so that He could confidently live out all commandments in an instinctive way (John 14:10).

I've been asked to explain this instinctive behavior in a way that makes sense so that it is understandable and explainable. I struggled with trying to find an example of this way of living until it came to me recently while I was working on my property.

I was standing next to a bright red Crepe Myrtle tree leaning on my shovel in the late hot summer afternoon. One-hundred-degree temperatures give us the motivation to pause and find some shade and to think. I took the time to admire the red blooms and wished I had more trees like this scattered around the property. As I focused on the blooms, the buzz of dancing honeybees was scattered everywhere on the tree. I watched in fascination recalling that out of all the insects that pollinate flowers, the hardest worker is the bee.

The honeybee doesn't view their lives as working but taking nurture. They go about their day taking in sustenance from nectar and pollen. As they move around the flower, their feet slip into grooves, which are filled with sacs of pollen. The pollen has come from the male part of the plant called the anther. When the bee's feet come in contact with these grooves, the pollen sacs stick to the bee's legs and feet. When the bee flies off to another location the pollen from the anther travels with it to its new destination. When the bee arrives at another flower, and while the honeybee is foraging around for more nurturing nectar, the pollen either slips off or is rubbed from the bee's leg onto the stigma (female part) of the flower. The pollination of that flower is accomplished naturally with future seeds to follow.

This illustration explains how Jesus lived His life and how we are to view our working from the Father's life. If we see ourselves constantly indwelt in Christ's life, dependent upon Him and drawing our sustenance from Him, we will naturally go about life spiritually pollinating (working) as we go from place to place and from one activity to another. Jesus is the *nectar* and the pollination is the *good works* accomplished naturally from abiding in Him who is our sustenance. (John 4:34)

At the end of His life, when He knew the cross was near and that He would be leaving to be with the Father, He prayed for all believers to experience the quality of instinctive living He shared with the Father. *I do not pray for those alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all **may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in you;** that they also **may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that you sent Me. And the glory, which You gave Me I have given them, that they **may be one just as We are one;** I in them, and You in Me; that they **may perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me John 17:20-23).*

It would take a lifetime attempting to identify and explain all that was meant by that prayer. Suffice it to say, Jesus existed in the unity of life in the Father that was so intimate nothing blocked or restricted the sustenance empowering Him to walk in the Spirit. It was a matter of believing God set it up this way and then it became a natural outcome of knowing good works would follow.

Most Christians struggle with this because it is not instinctive natural behavior. I propose it is *Instinctive Christian* behavior and there cannot be another way to walk in the Spirit and find confidence in doing the will of God.

The simplicity of the Gospel is what we thirst for and so it shall be  
for those in Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:3)

Instinctive Christianity Book Chapters  
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