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2540 N. Kansas Expressway
Springfield, MO 65803

Bible Institute of Missouri
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www.bibleinstituteofmissouri.com

Bible Institute of Missouri
2540A N. Kansas Expressway
Springfield, MO 65803

Phone: 417-865-4543
Fax: 417-865-4377
Web: www.bim-us.org

Director: Jerry Sullins
Faculty: Ray Sullins, Max Patterson, Chuck Northrop, Tim Kidwell, Brent Green

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BIM Informer
Bible Institute of Missouri Newsletter

BIM Contributors (2013)

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How Does the Holy Spirit Lead and Influence Christians?

Chuck Northrop

To the Christians at Rome, Paul wrote, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Thus, clearly Paul is affirming that Christians are led by the Holy Spirit. However, the question arises, "How does the Holy Spirit lead and influence Christians?" Does this mean the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, leads *directly* by visions or dreams, by revelation, or by influencing thought? Or does this mean the Holy Spirit leads us *indirectly* by the Word which He revealed to holy men of God? These are the only two possibilities. Either the Spirit leads directly or indirectly. If directly, then there is no need for the written revealed will of God, but if He leads indirectly through the Word of God, then there is no need for direct revelation since the Word of God claims to be all sufficient. To answer these questions, consider the context from which the statement is given.

In Romans 8:1 Paul declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." There are a great number of blessings for those who are "in Christ Jesus." In fact, they have "all spiritual blessings" (Ephesians 1:3). Therefore, there are no spiritual blessings found outside of Christ. Such spiritual blessings as redemption (Romans 3:24), forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7), reconciliation (Ephesians 2:13-16), salvation (2 Timothy 2:10), and in Romans 8 "no condemnation" (no spiritual sentence of death) are "in Christ." Because of so many rich blessings, those who are "in Christ" "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." To "walk after the Spirit" is the same as being "led by the Spirit," and these are the opposite of walking "after the flesh."

Question: How, then, do Christians walk after the Spirit? The answer is found in the verses following. Paul continues, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:2-3). There are three laws found in these verses. The first of these laws is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This law is the gospel, the truth, the New Testament, or the law of Christ. It begins with Matthew's account of the gospel and ends with the book of Revelation. The second law is "the law of sin and death." This law is the general principle that if you sin, you die (see also Romans 6:23 and Ezekiel 18:20). Finally, the third law (verse 3) is the Mosaic law. This is the law that was given to Moses on Mount Sinai and proclaimed to Israel while wandering in the wilderness. To answer the question, Christians walk after the Spirit by walking according to "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

Here is Paul's point: The Mosaic law was impotent in freeing man from "the law of sin and death," but "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" could (and for Christians did) free people from "the law of sin and death." Therefore, there is no sentence of death, "no condemnation," to those who are "in Christ Jesus."

Further in this context, Paul contrasts walking after the flesh with walking after the Spirit. To walk after the Spirit is to mind the things of the Spirit — spiritual living (verse 6). To walk after the flesh is to mind the things of the flesh or, in other words, to be carnally minded — carnal living, worldliness, sensual lifestyle (verse 6). (continued inside)

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2



(continued from front)

Notice in verse 7, Paul writes that “the carnal mind” “is not subject to the law of God.” Remember and keep in mind, the carnal mind is opposite of the spiritual mind. Since, the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, the spiritual mind is subject to the law of God, and, thus, to walk after the Spirit (that is, to be spiritually minded or to be led by the Spirit) is to be subject to the law of God. Verses 8-9 concern the person who refuses to follow the Spirit of God. In other words, he refuses to follow or subject himself to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Paul’s conclusion is found in verses 12-14. He writes, “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” To keep this in context, to live after the flesh is to die spiritually—“the law of sin and death.” However, to be led by the Spirit of God—“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”—is to be the sons of God and to live.

This conclusion also fits the general context of the book of Romans. Throughout this book, Paul develops his stated theme: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16-17). Notice the provisions the gospel provides. First, it is “the power of God unto salvation.” The gospel contains all the provisions needed to obtain salvation. No other provision is needed, including the Spirit working independently from the gospel. Second, the gospel reveals the righteousness of God. This is not speaking of God’s character of righteousness but of the gospel that reveals righteousness or justification through faith which is from God. Again, no other means is needed to understand the righteousness which God imputes upon the faithful servant of Christ. Finally in these key verses of Romans, Paul declares that from the gospel the righteousness which emanates from God is “revealed from faith to faith.” Literally this phrase can be translated “out of faith into faith.” From the system of faith (the word of God), Christians grow in faith (Romans 10:17). Paul develops this theme throughout the book of Romans. The gospel is all sufficient, and as such, there is no need for direct revelation.

This conclusion is further developed in the context of the New Testament. Peter declares the all sufficiency of the scriptures in 2 Peter 1:3. God has “given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” Nothing else is needed. When the “sword of the Spirit” is wielded, the Holy Spirit wields His mighty power by and through the word of God which He inspired (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 2:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Also consider the parallel verses of Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians

3:16. A casual comparison of these verses reveals that being “filled with the Spirit” is to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”

Finally, if the Holy Spirit leads us in our understanding of the Word, then there could be no misunderstanding because the Spirit makes no mistakes. Since there are misunderstandings among Christians, then we must conclude the Holy Spirit did not lead us in our understanding. Further, if the Holy Spirit leads us directly in our understanding of the Scriptures, then He keeps us and guards us from apostasy. In fact, since the Holy Spirit is perfect, it would be impossible for a Christian to fall away. However, the Bible teaches that Christians can and do fall away (Galatians 5:4; 6:1; Hebrews 6:4; Acts 8:13, 20). Therefore the conclusion is necessary—the Holy Spirit does not lead us directly.

The Holy Spirit is pleading with you to be led by Him! No, He is not leading nor influencing you in a direct or miraculous way. He is pleading with you by or through the Spirit inspired word. Listen to the Spirit’s pleading. It is not a voice in your mind or a vision in a dream. It is the word of God—the word given to us through holy men of God by the Holy Spirit.



Chuck Northrop began working as an instructor for the [Bible Institute of Missouri](#) in 2006. He is a graduate of the Preston Road School of Preaching in Dallas, TX under the direction of Eldred Stevens and holds both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in Bible from the [International College of The Bible](#). He has labored in local work in Texas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. He has preached in over twenty states and in six foreign nations — Latvia, Ukraine, Taiwan, Mexico, Zambia, and Costa Rica. He has served as an instructor of the Midwest School of Biblical Studies in Independence, MO; the Kiev School of Preaching in Kiev, Ukraine; and the Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies in Chandler, OK. He has also taught in the [Zambia School of Biblical Studies](#) in Livingstone, Zambia. He also presently serves as an instructor for the [Online Academy of Biblical Studies](#). Besides numerous articles, he has written three books: *We Can Rest Assured*, *Biblically Speaking about the Church*, and *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses*.

From the Field

Chris Gardner was raised in the church and was baptized into Christ in 2001. He is married to his wife Melissa, and they have four children. After graduating from the [Bible Institute of Missouri](#) in 2010, he served as the preacher for the church of Christ in White Hall, AR. Starting in January 2012, he started working with the Ligonier church of Christ located in Ligonier, PA.



“The world we live in can be a very dark place filled with pitfalls and tribulation and can seem overwhelming at times even for those who are part of the body of Christ. For those who have not yet heard, believed, and obeyed the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, the world can seem nearly impossible to overcome. In an ever darkening world, what the

world needs as much now as it ever has is trained, educated men who are willing to stand up against the evil schemes of the devil, rebuke his lies and educate the public about the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Being a graduate of the [Bible Institute of Missouri](#), I personally know that is exactly what the school and faculty there will do. The men there are dedicated to meet students at their education level and build them up to become the best preachers that they can be. I know without their training, love, and patience, I would not be the preacher I am today or the man, husband, father, and brother that I have grown into as well.” —Chris Gardner

How Do We Know That the Old Law Was Taken Completely out of the Way at the Death of Jesus?

Chris Gardner

There are some today in the religious world that use the Old Law (or fractions of it) as an example of authority to why they have carried over certain aspects of the Old Law in their worship today, despite the fact that the New Testament is silent on these aspects. Some of the confusion may be a misunderstanding of what the Old Law was. Some people make the claim that the Old Law only refers to the Ten Commandments and/or the Torah, but that is not accurate.

The Old Law and its entirety are found scattered throughout the entire Old Testament. We see that in the New Testament with passages that deal with the Old Law. When the term Old Law is used it is referring to the *entire* Old Law and not just parts or fractions. An example of this is found in the New Testament in John 10:34. Jesus was here talking to the Jews who had picked up stones in order to stone Him because He had declared to them that He was the Son of God. He said, “Is it not written *in your law*, ‘I said, “You are gods”?’” This passage is a quote from Psalm 82:6. Jesus taught there that even Scripture from the book of Psalms was to be considered part of the Old Law. Another example of how the Old Law is found throughout the Old Testament is in John 12:34: “The people answered Him [Jesus], ‘We have heard from *the law* that the Christ remains forever.’” This reference is a quote taken from Micah 4:7. The people in Jesus’ day knew and understood that the Old Law included the writings of not just Moses but also the Psalms and the prophets. This leads us to logically conclude that all (not just a fraction) of the Old Testament is considered by God to be the Old Law.

Today in the Christian era, thanks to Christ, we are no longer under its authority. Christ set us free from the Old Law with His death upon the cross. The Old Law was “taken out of the way” by Jesus being “nailed to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). The Old Law could not offer salvation due to the fact that in order to be saved by it a person had to keep the entire law perfectly. Since we know that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), no one was able to keep the Old Law perfectly except Jesus. The purpose of the Old Law was to prepare people for the fulfillment of the promise (which God had made to Abraham) in Christ the promised Seed (Galatians 3:19). The Old Law condemned. Since it could not save, Paul even said in Colossians 2:14 that it was “contrary to us.”

The entire Old Law (and not just certain aspects or fractions) ended at the death of Christ, which was the completion or fulfillment of it. Jesus’ death likewise put to death the Old Law and its system of worship, ushering in a new system—the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). There are several things from the Old Law that were re-enacted in the New Testament, not because they were in the Old Law but because God declared them. These are found in the New Testament, giving us authorization to do them in the Christian era. All other Old Testament acts not found in the Law of Christ are not authorized. Thomas Campbell once expressed that Christians ought to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. If God wanted us to do things as done under the Old Law, He would have stated such in the New Testament. When we find silence in the New Testament on Old Law practices, we can know that due to the silence we have no right to do them. To do so would be in violation of God’s will.

As Christians we have been commanded by Scripture that “whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Colossians 3:17). This means our acts of worship and how we approach God must be done in accordance with God’s will and by the authority of Christ since we are living under the Law of Christ. In the book of Acts, Peter and the other apostles were asked by whose power and authority they were performing miracles, specifically like healing the lame man (Acts 4:7). Peter declared, “Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *by Him* this man stands here before you whole” (Acts 4:10).

So how do we know that the Old Law was completely taken out of the way? We know because Jesus fulfilled the Old Law at the cross, ushering in a new system. Let us then live and be free of the confinements of the Old Law and do as Paul said: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1). “For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain” (Galatians 2:21).