

## From Self to Spirit—A Life Transformed

Before a person comes to know God, life is mostly lived for self. The desires of the flesh, the pursuit of status, security, and personal goals dominate the heart. Even acts of kindness may stem from a desire to feel good or be seen, rather than to honor God. As Scripture says, “All of us also formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest” (Ephesians 2:3, LSB). In this state, man walks in darkness, unaware of his need for spiritual rebirth.

But when a person encounters the truth of God through Jesus Christ, a new desire is born within—to be changed, to live not for self but for Him who died and rose again. This is the turning point where the heart cries out: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10, LSB). They earnestly seek the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, not for power over others, but for power over the old self.

This longing echoes the words of John the Baptist: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30, LSB). The believer begins to walk a new path of surrender, daily putting to death the deeds of the flesh and inviting the Holy Spirit to guide, convict, and sanctify. As Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23, LSB).

In this walk, the self becomes less influential, and the Spirit becomes the leading voice. Paul writes, “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20, LSB). When a person truly yields, they become a vessel—no longer driven by personal ambition but compelled by love for God and others. The Holy Spirit becomes the dominant influence, bearing fruit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23, LSB).

This is the Spirit-filled life: a life no longer self-centered but Christ-centered, where the believer humbly walks not in their own strength, but in the power and presence of the living God.