



WOW: Word Of the Week

Zephyr

January 22, 2025

Welcome to another WOW. I am committed to beginning the New Year with words that can make a difference for you in 2025. Akrasia—lack of decisive power; eunoia—good thinking. Today a more familiar word, a word you have heard, a word you may know. Zephyr.

I have begun the New Year overwhelmed with reading plans and commitments. *Dwelling in the Word* has a reading for each weekday; plus I am teaching the *Knowing Jesus* series--a 10-week reading plan to read all four Gospels; plus 1 Peter-2 Peter-Jude for a Bible class I teach at church. The primary project: I am working diligently on my new book, *A Year in the Psalms*. A secondary project: after completing the *Knowing Jesus* series, it seems natural to write something about the Holy Spirit before the end of 2025. And always, an annual trip through the entire Bible!

Zephyr. The Greek word is not in the Bible. The background in Greek mythology is interesting. Zephyrus was the Greek god of the west wind and the messenger of spring, one of the four Anemoi, wind gods (anemos is the Greek word for wind). In general, each god represented a cardinal direction (NSEW) and a season.

Jump with me—and I will make the connection soon. In Galatians 5, Paul contrasts spirit vs. flesh, spirit vs. law or legalism. Not difficult to understand. But, how do we do this? How does this work? Faith expressing itself through love, surrender, turning lives and wills over to God? How do we produce the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5?

Fruit, Greek karpos. The origin of this word is also found in Greek mythology. Karpos was a youth renowned for his beauty. He was the offspring of Zephyrus and his wife Chloris the goddess of flowers (Flora in Roman mythology). Fruit, Karpos, the Greek god of fruit. The word karpos means fruit in Greek. This background intrigues me in the study of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Springtime, gentle breezes, hearts that are open, fertile, available. I do not know how much Paul knew of Greek mythology and the origin of the Greek word he used, karpos. Beautiful image and connections.

Zephyr, gentle west wind of springtime. Holy Spirit. Over a dozen years ago (2010), Gerald Harris wrote a book about the Holy Spirit in which he contrasted a gentle zephyr and a mighty wind. His title suggests a point I am studying and want to explore further.

Too often, contemporary studies of the Holy Spirit depend on the mighty wind, Pentecost, fiery evidence, power unleashed, overwhelming. But you and I live our lives each day, and we wonder how and where we are supposed to experience this mighty overwhelming wind. Where is the Holy Spirit? Zephyr gives me fresh understandings of Holy Spirit presence—gentle, constant influence, comfortable, relaxing, refreshing. Holy Spirit—as much zephyr as mighty wind.

I do not have to overwhelm, be spectacular, grab attention. The Holy Spirit provides life resources, almost as it were “behind the scenes.” Live by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit, lifestyle, appetites, desires, fruit, attitudes. The fruit will seem automatic. (Related WOW words – wind, autopilot.)