

DISCIPLESHIP PRINCIPLE #3

Luke 4 / John 4:23-24 / 1 Cor. 2:12-15 / John 14:26

PROPER ADJUSTMENT TO THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT

We live in two realms simultaneously, the seen and the unseen, the physical and the spiritual. There is a great war being fought between God and Satan in these comingled realms regarding who shall rule them as Lord and King. Both seek the worship of the eternal creatures of these realms, angels and men. This is why Jesus declared,

*"An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father **in spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. **God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**"*
— John 4:23-24

Two major changes have been done for a true disciple of Christ at the time of his salvation. First, his or her **personal spiritual capacity**, which was lost for humans at the fall, has been restored.

*"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But **he who is spiritual** appraises all things."*
— 1 Cor. 2:12-15

Second, the **Holy Spirit Himself** has been sent to be with a believer to teach, lead, and empower him according to the will of God.

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things**, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."*
— John 14:26

*"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."*
— John 16:13

A proper, ongoing adjustment to the leading, teaching, helping, and controlling presence of the Holy Spirit, by the word of God, for the glory of Christ, is **the divine ideal** and the primary issue of our maturity and usefulness. Given the supernatural requirements of living the Christian life, being filled with the Holy Spirit **must** be our spiritual condition if

we are to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, please God in all respects, and bear fruit in those good works that God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Col. 1:9-11) To be properly adjusted to the Holy Spirit is what being filled with the Spirit means. So...

What Does It Mean To Be Filled With The Spirit?

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. Christ was full of the Spirit and every believer is to be also.

*“And Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit.”* — Luke 4:1-2

*“Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, ... but **be filled with the Spirit**.”* — Eph. 5:15-18

The Christian life is not hard. It is impossible in our own knowledge and strength. Without being filled with the Spirit many believers do not go far along the path to maturity because they are never properly adjusted in their new relationship with the Holy Spirit. Our ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit as we live for Christ, is distinct from the Spirit’s work in us at the time of our salvation. After our salvation, the Spirit’s work in the life of a believer is transformative and continuous. God is transforming us into the image of His Son and this work is continuous and progressive throughout our life. Our usefulness and fruitfulness for the kingdom depends upon our responses to God’s command to “**be keeping yourself filled with the Spirit**” — Eph. 5:18.

To be completely “filled up” with the Spirit is to be totally controlled by Him. Three times in Scripture this filling of the Spirit is contrasted with being drunk with alcohol and totally under the control of it. That is the meaning of being filled in its biblical usage.

When totally controlled by the Holy Spirit, He works both in us and through us. **In us**, controlling our mind, our will, and our emotions, to transform, lead, and empower us. **Through us**, to fulfill God’s plans (Eph. 2:10, John 15:16) and produce spiritual fruit in others to God’s glory (John 15:4-5, 2 Pet. 1:5-8). The following summary addresses the biblical teaching regarding the nature, conditions, and results of the filling of the Spirit in the life of a believer.

1. The **NATURE** of the Spirit’s filling.

The Christian life is a relationship. It is a relationship that requires our proper adjustment to the authority, methods, and enablement of the Holy Spirit if it is to be all that it can be. We are not robots but beings with the ability to say yes or no in the relationship. The divine ideal is for a born again child of God to be always yielded, obedient, and empowered to do all that God wills, as taught, led, and empowered by

the Holy Spirit. That never happens 100% of the time because our old nature will not be completely eradicated until our earthly days are finished and we see our Lord face to face. But now, we can and do grieve the Holy Spirit by sinning (Eph. 4:30) and we can even quench Him by saying no to His clear will (1 Thess. 5:19).

These are the primary issues in the relationship. The Holy Spirit has been sent to teach us the Word of God (John 14:26), lead us in God's will (John 16:13), and empower us to do all that God asks of us. But, He is not a dictator. He is our Helper, Comforter, and Guide. He loves us, forgives us, and will never leave us or forsake us.

When we are controlled by the Spirit, He leads us by the Word of God to fulfill God's will and plans for our lives. This is an **objective** rather than a **subjective** leading. He also empowers us to do all that God asks of us. Jesus is our example.

We are far from being able to completely comprehend the operations of the grace and power of the Spirit Who dwells within us, for we are both completely dependent upon Him and yet required to fully cooperate with and submit to Him.

2. The **CONDITIONS** of the Spirit's ongoing filling.

Either from immaturity, a time of weakness, or from a false profession, many who profess faith in Christ do not live a Spirit filled life. There are three conditions that determine the extent of the Spirit's filling (control and influence) in our heart, resulting in our maturity, usefulness, and fruitfulness. (2 Pet. 1:5-9) To excel for Christ we must continually adjust ourselves to them. They are:

1. To **walk by means of the Spirit**, which is to learn the Word of God and impose it upon my soul and circumstances by the enabling power abundantly supplied through the Holy Spirit.

*“(Christ) condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, **who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit**. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”*
— Rom 8:3-5

2. To **not grieve the Spirit** by unconfessed and undealt with sin.

*“And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*
— Eph 4:30

3. To **not quench the Spirit** which happens when we say “no” to Him.

“Do not quench the Spirit”
— 1 Thess. 5:19

*“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For **let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**”*

— James 1:5-8

3. The **RESULTS** of the Spirit’s filling.

The varying maturities of Christians can be traced to the degree to which they are filled with the Spirit. The following results are a function of this proper and ongoing adjustment to the Holy Spirit. This adjustment to the Spirit is not a question of us getting more of the Spirit. It is a question of Him getting more of us!

*“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.**”*

— John 15:4-5

There are five primary results that come to us as we allow the Spirit to fulfill in us and through us all that God intended when He came to indwell us at our salvation.

1. **Our Progressive Sanctification**

*“Applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**”*

— 2 Pet. 1:5-8

As this passage reveals, this transformation of our soul involves a number of heart and conduct changes. Chief among them are the attitudes and actions of selfless love of God and others. (Phil. 2:3-11). This ongoing transformation of our soul and life is only possible when we are properly adjusted to the Holy Spirit.

2. **A Growing Assurance Of The Truth**

*“**The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.**”*

— Rom 8:16-17 (See also Eph. 3:16-19, Gal. 4:6, 1 John 3:24, 4:13)

3. **Our Growth In The Knowledge Of God’s Word and Will**

“He (Epaphras) also informed us of your love in the Spirit. For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that

you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might.”
— Col. 1:8-11

*“But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ...**For to us God revealed them through the Spirit;** for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, **that we might know the things freely given to us by God,...** those taught by the Spirit.”*
— 1 Cor. 2:7-13

4. Sincere Worship, Praise, And Thanksgiving

*“**Be filled with the Spirit,** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”*
— Eph. 5:18-20

5. Fruitful Participation In God’s Work To Build His Church

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
— 1 Cor. 12:4,7

*“**As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another,** as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified.”*
— 1 Pet. 4:10-11

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works,** which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*
— Eph 2:10

UNIT STUDY SESSION #1

In preparation for the group study of this principle of living for Christ, read and study the above scriptures and summary of our proper adjustment to the indwelling Holy Spirit and then complete the following self evaluation.

How Does Your Approach To Life Compare With These Commands?

1. Do you **grieve** the indwelling Holy Spirit by unconfessed sin and no repentance?
No ___ Yes ___ Often? _____
2. Have you ever **quenched** the Holy Spirit by saying no? _____?
Does this still stand? _____
Do you have “lines” that are as far as you will go in serving Christ? _____
3. If we define **pride** as “reserving the right to make final decisions for myself”, are you a proud or a humble disciple of Christ? _____
4. Overall, what is your assessment of how you are doing? How would you grade yourself?
___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ F ___
5. What does the study of this area tell you, as a disciple of Christ, that you need to be doing to please your Lord and be growing in usefulness to Him in the work of the age? _____

6. What needs to change in your life for you to be mature in this area and be able to be an example to others? _____

7. What commitments are you willing to make at this time to do what God is asking you to do in this area of living for Him? _____

Discussion Questions For Session #1

- How important is it for a believer to understand the following five truths in applying and living by this principle of life? – and why?
 1. The truth about our existence in Adam. (Rom. 5:18)
 2. The truth of our crucifixion in Christ. Rom. 6:6,7,11)
 3. The truth of our resurrection in Christ. (Rom. 6:4-5)
 4. The truth of our present position in Christ. (Eph. 1:18-20, 2:6)
 5. The truth of the Holy Spirit living in us. (Rom. 8:9-16)
- Why does the Lord allow us to get into situations, as we serve Him, that are not good, and that we have no ability in ourselves to change or improve? (See, for example Judges 6:11-24, 2 Cor. 12:7-10, Luke 4)
- “Sometimes to learn that God is all we need, He leads us to places where He is all we’ve got.” How much truth is in this statement? Can you give an example from your own life?
- If I have grieved the Holy Spirit, what do I do to correct this? How do you do it?
- If I am living the Christian life in my own strength, what will happen?

UNIT STUDY SESSION #2:

Preparation For Session #2: Personal Application Project

In preparation for the second study session please consider doing the following:

Set aside a day of prayer and fasting to be with the Lord and seek His fellowship and leading in your life. If you have never done this, the following scriptures will give an overview. (Mt. 6:17-18, Isa. 58:6-12, Acts 13:2, 14:3, Dan. 9:3, Neh. 1:4, Luke 4)

The idea is to set yourself completely aside by stopping your normal activities and spending the time with the Lord seeking His fellowship, opinions, and will for your life. Be sure to drink water if you decide to fast, particularly if you fast for more than one day. Leave your phone, and try to find a time and place where you have no immediate responsibilities and will not be distracted. Just you and the Lord for as long a time as you can. Come prepared to share.

If this coming week does not allow an entire day, set aside a few hours if you can. The Psalms are a good place to start. Ps. 32:8, Ps. 37:1-11 will get you started.

Discussion Questions

1. If you were able to set aside a time to be with the Lord, can you tell us how it went?
2. If you have been able to spend extended times in the past with the Lord, can you tell us how these have gone?
3. What is your daily/weekly/yearly routine to be with the Lord? What would you recommend?

Recommended Resources For Further Study On The Holy Spirit

He That Is Spiritual by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The Person And Work Of The Holy Spirit by René Pache

The Holy Spirit by John F. Walvoord

The Other Comforter by Theodore H. Epp

The Wonderful Spirit Filled Life by Charles Stanley