

LESSON 3

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

A child of God does not have to live in spiritual poverty since he is the heir of the heavenly Father and a joint-heir with His Son Jesus Christ. The first step in coming into full possession of the abundant life in Christ is to recognize that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. He who has cleansed us has the power to keep us clean. The redemption Christ provided through His death is to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). The second step is to become aware of and to appropriate the spiritual power that is available. This power is essential for overcoming sin.

Most Christians do not understand their spiritual heritage. Christ abides within our hearts in the person of the Holy Spirit: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). The indwelling Spirit is the source of spiritual power, but is often ignored. What few Christians realize this power, since they do not ask for it in faith!

The average Christian does not realize the significance of the Spirit of God dwelling in him and does not take full advantage of the spiritual heritage which is his through Christ. He continues depending on his own resources despite his access to the power of God. In the weakness of the flesh, he is open to all manner of spiritual diseases. He could be living the victorious life through Christ who dwells within to give him power and guidance, but pride causes him to depend on his own strength and wisdom. The purpose of this lesson is to point out or affirm the heritage available to those who believe in Christ and to instruct each Christian how to benefit from the spiritual wealth of that heritage.

The Relation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

The Baptists, in recent years, have not given proper emphasis to the Holy Spirit because of the fear that they would be accused of "emotional excesses" which characterize many groups emphasizing the power and control of the Holy Spirit. An examination of the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit requires that greater honour be given to Him because of His relation to Christ and to the Christian.

The Holy Spirit is God's power and presence

He is the power of God in creation (Gen. 1:2ff.).—The Spirit of God moved upon the formless matter during the creation activity and brought order and life out of void and darkness.

He is the source of man's life.—In the creative activity, God breathed life into man to make him a living soul (Gen. 2:7). Man's spirit originated by His divine Spirit is the very life principle (cf. Ps. 104:29f.; Ezek. 37:14).

The Holy Spirit was instrumental in the incarnation (God's becoming man in Jesus).—Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit. The birth of the Son meant "God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

The indwelling Spirit of God is Christ dwelling within (Rom. 8:9-10).—He is spoken of as both Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ. The indwelling Spirit effects adoption as sons of God, enabling us to call God "our Father" (Rom. 8:14-15).

Christians can possess abundant life by first _____

_____ and then _____

(recognizing that Jesus' blood cleanses from all sin, appropriating the spiritual power through faith)

Many Christians do not experience abundant life because they continue to depend on their own _____

(resources)

The Holy Spirit is God's _____ and _____

(presence, power)

The indwelling Spirit is the Father and the Son present in the life of the Christian (John 14:15–20; 23).—Jesus taught his disciples that the Father would send the Spirit who would dwell within them to strengthen and guide them. His presence in the life of the believer would mean that the believer is in Christ, and Christ is in the believer (v. 20). Jesus stated that He and His Father would make their abode with the man who loves Christ and keeps His words (v. 23).

The Spirit qualifies man to speak God's message (Isa. 61:1f.).—Only after the Holy Spirit comes upon a man is he qualified to speak as God's prophet. The prophetic message is good news for the afflicted. (See also Ezek. 11:5; Neh. 9:30; and Joel 2:28–29.)

The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:13–14)

Jesus taught his disciples that “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; . . . He shall glorify me . . .” Jesus stated that only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit would the disciples be able to understand His teachings and the nature of deliverance He would provide through His death and resurrection. The work of the Holy Spirit makes real the redemptive work of Christ. After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples' understanding of the death and resurrection of Christ was revolutionized. They found new courage, power, and direction in life. What Christ had been saying to them became understandable.

In Judaism, the Temple was the “house of God.” It represented God's presence in the midst of His people. Under the New Covenant, the Father and the Son take up their abode in a new temple—the body of the believer. The members of our bodies become the instruments to carry out the will of the indwelling divine Presence. Christ speaks with our tongues, does good deeds with our hands, and guides our thinking to the extent that the believer has “the mind of Christ.”

The Meaning of Being Filled with the Spirit

Related concepts

Several related expressions referring to the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of the believer are understood in various ways by different interpreters. The most common of these phrases are—

1. baptism with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13);
2. the promise of the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39; John 14:16, 26; 15:26);
3. born of the Spirit (John 3:5; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:23);
4. the gift of the Spirit (Luke 11:13; John 4:10; Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Heb. 6:4);
5. filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52. Also Acts 1:5, 8; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 8:17; 11:15; Matt. 10:20; Mark 16:17; 1 Cor. 12:10f.; 14:21);
6. the coming of the Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1–4; John 14:17f.);
7. anointing with the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13);
8. sealed by the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13).

Baptism with the Spirit.—John the Baptist preached repentance and baptized those who repented in preparation for the establishment of God's Kingdom. Ezekiel 36:24–27 may have provided the background for his work. Ezekiel proclaimed that God would manifest Himself to the nations where the Israelites were scattered and would bring His people to their own land again. He would cleanse them from their filthiness by sprinkling them with clean water (v. 25). He would give them a new heart

John 16:14 states that Jesus said of the Holy Spirit,
“He shall _____ me.”

(Compare your answer with John 16:14.)

Which Old Testament prophet may have provided background for John the Baptist's work?

(Ezekiel)

Read Ezekiel 36:25–26.

Jehovah said He would cleanse His people by sprinkling them with clean _____

He also said He would give them a new _____

and a new _____

(water, heart, spirit)

and put a new spirit in them: "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (v. 27, NASB). John baptized to symbolize the cleansing of the people in preparation for their restoration as the people of God. The One who would come after him would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matt. 3:11). Apparently baptism with the Holy Spirit was the divine act by which God's chosen were made the new citizens of His Kingdom. Baptism with the Holy Spirit means for one's life to be immersed in the Spirit. Such an experience means that one lives under the control of and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle John instructed Nicodemus that unless he was born of water and the Spirit he could not enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). Born of water has reference to baptism which symbolizes cleansing from sin when one repents. Righteousness comes through the atoning death of Christ rather than through the keeping of the ceremonial law. The Pharisee Nicodemus thought that man could accomplish his own righteousness through the law. Born of the Spirit refers to the renewing of the heart by the Spirit's entering into it and abiding therein. Paul encountered at Ephesus some disciples who had been baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit. Paul explained that John baptized with the baptism of repentance; that is, he prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah by calling on them to repent and to symbolize their cleansing by baptism (Acts 19:4). Paul baptized the disciples in the name of the Lord Jesus, laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:5f.). Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit was the means by which the Kingdom is being established.

Paul stated that by one Spirit all are baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek (1 Cor. 12:13). Most Jews believed that the Kingdom belonged to the descendants of Abraham. Paul taught that both Jews and Gentiles became part of God's Kingdom through the baptism of the Spirit. This experience is equivalent to conversion and the new birth.

The promise of the Spirit.—Apparently the promise of the Father has reference to the putting of God's Spirit within His people (Ezek. 36:27) and the pouring out of His Spirit upon all mankind (Joel 2:28f.). Since Ezekiel connected the giving of the Spirit with the separation of God's people from the nations, the putting of God's Spirit within His people signified the establishment of His Kingdom. Jesus stated that one must be born of the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5).

Jesus instructed His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). The disciples were told that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from then. This baptism promised by the Father took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 33). The experience is referred to also as the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). These Scriptures show that baptism with the Spirit, the promise of the Spirit, and being born of the Spirit refer to the establishment of God's Kingdom.

The filling with the Spirit.—When the baptism with the Holy Spirit came about on the Day of Pentecost, it was referred to also as being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). Although baptism appears to have reference to the initial experience, the fact that it is described as being filled with the Holy Spirit suggests that the two phrases are not exclusive but overlapping in meaning. Apparently being filled is a repeated experience while baptism is the initial filling or birth of the Holy Spirit (See Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 13:9, 52, etc.).

Read Matthew 3:11.

John's baptism with water symbolized the _____ of the people.

Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit would make the people new _____ of God's Kingdom.

(cleansing, citizens)

Circle the correct words.

Paul taught that (only Jews, some Gentiles, both Jews and Gentiles) could become part of God's Kingdom through the baptism of the Spirit.

(Circle both Jews and Gentiles)

The promise of the Father to which Peter referred is based on writings of the Old Testament prophets

_____ and _____.

(Ezekiel, Joel)

Baptism with the Holy Spirit seems to refer to the _____ experience.

Being filled with the Spirit appears to be a _____ experience.

(initial, repeated)

Born of the Spirit.—Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). Perhaps this statement recorded by John is parallel to the synoptic account of John's baptizing with water in preparation for the coming Kingdom and announcing the coming of the Messiah who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Baptism with the Holy Spirit and being born of the Spirit refer to the same experience. Both refer to man's conversion which is the deliverance from the domain of darkness and the transference into the Kingdom of God's Son (Col. 1:13).

The Holy Spirit who came upon the disciples at Pentecost is the Spirit who effects the new birth. The Spirit is the presence of God in His Kingdom on earth. A person is not part of the Kingdom unless the Spirit abides within his life to control and empower him for the new life of a kingdom citizen.

Nicodemus was puzzled how one could be born again when he was old. Jesus replied that he could not understand the mystery but he could experience it by faith—believing that the Kingdom was present in Jesus as King and submitting to Him. The temptation for the Israelites was to deny that Jesus was God's anointed King (Christ or Messiah) because of His apparent defeat through His death on the cross. But just as God gave life to those in the wilderness who looked to the uplifted serpent in faith, so would God give new life to those who believed or trusted in Jesus who would be lifted up on the cross. The crucified-resurrected-glorified Christ would abide within and rule over the lives of those who believed in Him, the subjects of His Kingdom. Eternal life, a new quality of life, would result from the power of the indwelling Christ, not from the subject finding within himself the ability to overcome sin.

Many Christians recognize the necessity of the new birth because of the statement in John 3, but most do not understand its meaning and purpose. The average Christian reverts to a dependence on his own resources to conquer sin when he should be living by faith in the power of the indwelling Christ, who is able to deliver him and to give him victory. The carnal nature (or self) struggles constantly to regain the control of one's life by replacing the control of the indwelling Christ. By faith one is born of the Spirit (comes under the control of the indwelling Christ), and by faith one lives the new life of victory as a kingdom citizen (walks in newness of life in union with the resurrected Christ, see Rom. 6:4).

The coming of the Spirit.—This is not distinctly different from the previous expressions. Acts 1:4–8 speaks of the descent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as the promise of the Father, being baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the coming upon the disciples of the Spirit. The rabbis taught that the Spirit of prophecy had departed from the world when the Law of Moses became established as the Word of God. They believed that the Spirit who revealed God's Word to the prophets was no longer needed nor active. Pentecost was the coming or return of the Spirit to qualify God's prophets (servants of the Kingdom) to proclaim His Word—the gospel of the Kingdom concerning Jesus Christ. Peter explained to the crowds at Pentecost that the disciples' speaking in various tongues the unbelievable message concerning "the wonderful works of God" was not the result of drunkenness but an evidence of the pouring out of God's Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:11, 17). There is no indication that the promise that God "will pour out of my Spirit" is different from the coming of the Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

The anointing and sealing with the Spirit.—When David was anointed as king of Israel, the Spirit came upon him to qualify

A believer's receiving God's presence to abide in his life to control and empower him is described as being

_____ of the _____

(born, Spirit)

Read Acts 1:4–8. List three phrases which refer to the descent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to qualify God's servants to _____

(proclaim His Word)

him for the responsibilities given to him by God. Paul spoke of an anointing and sealing with the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21f.). The sealing of the Spirit has reference to a guarantee that those who have believed and received the Spirit have the assurance that they will inherit the full blessings of the Kingdom. The writer of Hebrews spoke of tasting the heavenly gift and being made partakers of the Holy Spirit (6:4).

The meaning of Pentecost

The phenomenon at Pentecost included a unique element which has not been repeated in the life of the Church. The Holy Spirit who had been promised (Acts 1:4) but would not be given until Jesus was glorified (John 7:39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8) was given to the Church (cf. Acts 2:2-4, 16-21). Jesus told His disciples that it was to their benefit for Him to go away: "Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate . . .) will not come to you. . . . But if I go away, I will send Him to you—to be in close fellowship with you" (John 16:7, Ampl. NT). The Comforter or Holy Spirit was sent on the Day of Pentecost into the world and to the Church.

Peter interpreted the sending of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy concerning "the last days." Peter implied that the New Age (the last days) had arrived, a time when men could be saved by calling on the name of the Lord: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). The salvation included receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; John's being "born of the Spirit," 3:5). The filling of the Spirit was repeated (Acts 4:8, 31, etc.), but the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church needed to occur only once (Acts 2:33). The Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:17).

It appears that those whom Paul met at Ephesus had not experienced salvation because they had not received nor heard of the Holy Spirit. Repentance, symbolized by John's baptism as preparation for the coming of God's Anointed, was insufficient. Jesus as Lord in the person of the Holy Spirit must be enthroned in the lives of repentant believers (cf. Act. 19:1-5). Jesus is not only the Saviour who cleanses from sin through the shedding of His blood on the cross, but He is also the resurrected Lord who must rule the life of the believer. His complete control is synonymous with being filled with the Spirit.

The indwelling of the Spirit

The Spirit controls the believer.—Jesus told his disciples that it was expedient that He depart in order that He could send to them the Comforter or Holy Spirit (John 16:7). This Comforter (Paraclete) is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father and testifies of Jesus (John 14:16f.; 15:26). The Spirit of truth will abide with the disciples and within them (John 14:17). His coming will mean that Jesus and His Father have come to the disciple to make their abode with him (John 14:26). The indwelling Spirit controls the disciple's life and makes his service effective by—

1. guiding him in understanding Jesus' teachings concerning His death and resurrection (John 14:26);
2. qualifying him to bear witness (John 15:27);
3. convicting the hearts of those who hear the gospel (John 16:7-13);
4. guiding the disciple in righteous living (Rom. 8:1-17ff.).

After confessing that his own fleshly nature was weak and unable to do the things which please God, Paul victoriously stated that there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). The self-controlled life results in sin, but the Christ-controlled life

Read the Scripture passages listed below to find four ways the indwelling Spirit controls the life of a believer and makes his service effective.

1. John 14:26 _____
2. John 15:27 _____
3. John 16:7-13 _____
4. Romans 8:1-17 _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

results in righteousness. A kingdom servant who is guilty of unforgiven sin is ineffective and powerless.

The Spirit empowers the believer.—A Christian whose life is controlled by the Spirit has the unlimited power of God operating in his life to bring about God's Kingdom on earth. Paul testified that the success of his own Christian service came through his crucifying of self with Christ and permitting Christ to live through him (Gal. 2:20). He declared that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him (Phil. 4:13), and he reminded the Ephesians of the mighty power of God which works through His servants (1:19). Without an awareness of God's power, the Christian lacks confidence that he can successfully witness in obedience to the command of Christ.

Peter's lack of understanding led to discouragement, fear, and the denial of his Lord. After he had been filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, he boldly proclaimed the gospel that Jesus who had been put to death had been raised from death by the power of the Father. Threats against his life by the Sanhedrin did not deter his public proclamation that Jesus Christ, whom the Jews shamefully crucified, was the Prince of life whom God had raised from the dead (Acts 3:15). Peter, who had been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, was filled on subsequent occasions when he needed boldness and power to proclaim effectively the gospel (see Acts 4:8, 31). Stephen is described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5). Regarding his ministry, the author stated: "And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8, RSV).

As the Christian serves his Lord, the indwelling Spirit empowers his life sufficiently to qualify him for each task God wills for him to do. To be filled with the Holy Spirit means that the power of God operates effectively through the life of the Christian servant. This filling gives boldness to the servant and victory to his work. The Christian servant lives by faith in which he expects God to accomplish by His power what He commands and leads His servant to undertake.

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit when He faced the wilderness temptations (Luke 4:1ff.). Reference has already been made to the filling of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost and the effectiveness of their witnessing to the assembled pilgrims from various countries. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit when he withstood Elymas the magician and pronounced a curse of blindness upon him for a season (Acts 13:9ff.). The disciples were filled when they were opposed by the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:52). Their experience was accompanied with joy.

The Holy Spirit abides in the heart of each believer to guide his life and to equip him for every responsibility which God places upon him. When God assigns a responsibility to a person, He makes the necessary power available to accomplish that task. Man must appropriate the available power by faith. Man's sinful nature causes him to want to receive the glory; therefore, he often attempts to accomplish God's work through dependence on his own abilities. When self takes control, the results of one's service are greatly limited.

The Spirit qualifies the believer with gifts.—The fullness of the Spirit has often been confused with spiritual gifts. Some Pentecostal groups believe that a person is not Spirit-filled unless he demonstrates the particular spiritual gift of speaking in tongues.

Spiritual gifts—different gifts of grace bestowed by the same Spirit on members of the Church—should be distinguished from the Spirit as God's gift to the believer. God the Father gives the same Spirit to each believer (1 Cor. 12:13). The indwelling Spirit

Write in the columns several words which characterized Peter before and after his filling with the Spirit at Pentecost:

Before

After

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Before—fear, discouragement, denial; After—boldness, power)

Three persons besides Jesus who were described as being filled with the Holy Spirit were _____, _____, and _____.

(Stephen, Peter, Paul)

Is there a difference between the gift of the Spirit and spiritual gifts?

(Yes)

bestows different spiritual gifts (“extraordinary powers distinguishing certain Christians, due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit”—1 Cor. 12:4, Ampl. NT). Some Christians are endowed with the special ability of wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8); others with the abilities of faith, of prophecy, the working of miracles, or one or more of the other gifts (1 Cor. 12:8–10). The special ability of speaking in tongues is only one of a number of special gifts, and it is not bestowed upon all (cf. 1 Cor. 12:30¹). Speaking in tongues, if in church services, should be interpreted in order that the gift might benefit all (1 Cor. 14:5); otherwise, “let him keep silence in the church” (1 Cor. 14:28).

Paul states that unknown tongues are a sign, not for those who believe, but for those who believe not (1 Cor. 14:22). According to Acts (the author was Paul’s companion, Luke), speaking in tongues by Cornelius and his family was a sign to the Christian Jews “who believed not” that Gentiles could be saved and become part of the church (cf. Acts 10:44–11:8). Peter was called into question by the Jerusalem church for associating with Gentiles (Acts 11:2). After relating his vision at Joppa and his experience in Caesarea, Peter convinced the church that if God gave the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles (Acts 11:17), they should be recognized as saved brothers in Christ (Acts 11:18), and thus be baptized as part of the church (Acts 10:47). The gift (ability) of speaking in tongues should not be denied, but it should be recognized as a gift bestowed only for special occasions. It is not the norm for all Christians, but the gift of the Spirit to each believer and the fullness of the Spirit are normal for the Christian life. Notice that the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:16), the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:17), and salvation (Acts 11:14 and 18—“repentance of life”) refer to the same experience.

To demonstrate particular spiritual gifts is not a condition of salvation. To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit or to be born from above is the condition of salvation and of entrance into the Kingdom. Paul urged every Christian to pray for spiritual gifts that he might more effectively serve Christ. He especially urged Christians to desire the gift of prophecy, which is interpreting the divine will and purpose through inspired preaching (1 Cor. 14:1). He instructed the Corinthians who were zealous for spiritual gifts to concentrate on those which would build up the church. It is interesting to note that a church with many members boasting of manifestations of the Spirit was rebuked for being spiritually immature—spiritual infants (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1–5).

Spiritual gifts are not equivalent to the “fruit of the Spirit” (love, joy, peace, etc.) which is produced in the lives of those who walk in the fullness of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16, 22). The life which is controlled by the Holy Spirit is characterized by love (1 Cor. 13) instead of envy, strife, and division (1 Cor. 13:1–5).

How to be Filled with the Spirit

Introduction

Andrew Murray stated that the greatest need of the Church is for every member to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. “Christianity is nothing except as it is a ministration of the Spirit. Preaching is nothing, except as it is a demonstration of the Spirit.

¹ The form of the question in Greek indicates the answer “No” is expected.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4 and 13.

God the Father gives the same Spirit to each

The indwelling Spirit bestows different _____

(believer, spiritual gifts)

Underline the correct word or words.

Paul stated that speaking in tongues is a sign for those who (believe, do not believe).

(Underline *do not believe*)

Paul’s advice to the Corinthians was to concentrate on the spiritual gifts which would build up the

(church)

Circle the correct word or words.

Spiritual gifts (are, are not) the same as the “fruit of the Spirit.”

(Circle *are not*)

Holiness is nothing except as it is the fruit of the Spirit.”²

Not everyone is in agreement concerning how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Some emphasize the truth that the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church and that He, a fountain of living water, dwells in every believer. Murray remarked that as fountains are often clogged by stones and earth and only need to be cleared and opened up, so we have only to remove the hindrances, to yield ourselves in perfect surrender to the Spirit in us, and the filling will come. “We must not ask God for more of the Spirit. God asks for more of us that the Spirit may have us wholly.”³

Just as a person is born of the Spirit through faith, he must live by faith day by day. The Spirit has control of his life when he yields to the Spirit’s control. Faith often has to exist without any conscious experience. By faith the soul which is fully surrendered to God claims the promise of God and works in the full assurance that the Spirit is in him and will do His complete work through him.

Wrong motives must be avoided

In seeking the filling of the Holy Spirit, wrong motives must be avoided (cf. John 15:8; 14:13f.). If self is at the root of our motives, the Holy Spirit cannot fully possess our lives. If the underlying motive is to gain pre-eminence in the eyes of others (to use the power of the Spirit to gain personal success), the fullness of the Spirit cannot be experienced.

Philip, a deacon, had been leading a revival in Samaria. Peter and John were sent to investigate the report that the Kingdom of God included believing Samaritans. Simon, who used magical art to impress the people with his greatness, became covetous of the power of the Holy Spirit in order to perform miracles. He offered money to John and Peter to lay their hands on him so that he might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The selfish motive of his heart was revealed to Peter who pronounced God’s judgement upon him. God’s gift is not available for selfish purposes. Peter admonished Simon to repent of the evil intention of his heart for it had brought him into “the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:23). Apparently Peter had described to him the punishment which comes from God upon the covetous and deceitful, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1ff.).

Christ must be given complete control

If being filled with the Spirit means to invite Christ to take control of our lives, to walk in our bodies, to think with our minds, and to love with our hearts, what is required to make this relationship a reality?

The filling of the Spirit does not depend on our accomplishments. Many Christians have desired to be filled with the Spirit in order that they might experience greater joy and the power of God in their lives. Some pray earnestly for days, others fast and afflict their bodies, while others spend long hours in faithful service. The filling of the Spirit does not come as a reward for man’s sacrifices or accomplishments. It is by faith—laying claim to God’s promises.

² Introduction to *The Spirit-filled Life* by John MacNeil (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1896), p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Filling of the Holy Spirit is often hindered by

(sin)

One wrong motive in seeking filling of the Spirit is glorification of _____

(self)

Some have the mistaken attitude that the filling of the Spirit is a reward for man’s _____

(accomplishments)

Christ invites all those to come unto Him whose souls are hungry, disquieted, and discontented. It is the Christian's birthright to be filled with the Spirit, as Peter and Stephen were filled, and as the 120 men and women in the upper room were filled. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is the gift to those who repent of their sins and are cleansed (Acts 2:38f.).

The Christian is filled with the Spirit at the time he is born from above and receives the gift of the Spirit, but the filling is not a once-for-all experience. Peter was filled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), but he experienced a new filling on subsequent occasions (Acts 4:8, 31, etc.). The subsequent filling of the Holy Spirit is by faith just as is the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian must be cleansed of sin before he can be filled with the Holy Spirit. The life of the Christian cannot be controlled by both the Holy Spirit and self. The carnal man lives a self-directed life. The spiritual man lives a Christ-directed life in which self is denied control. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

The filling of the Spirit is a response to God's command, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). God does not command the impossible of His children. He has already provided for that which He commands. In addition to the command, there is the promise of Christ, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13f.). Jesus made this promise in connexion with the sending of the Comforter or the Spirit of truth. Jesus also stated, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23b). On another occasion Jesus told his disciples that whatsoever they asked in prayer, believing, they would receive (Matt. 21:22). To ask in Jesus' name implies asking according to His will. The Apostle John assures us that "if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us We know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14f.).

God desires His children to be filled with the Spirit. Jesus used a parable to assure His disciples that the heavenly Father desires good gifts for his children (Luke 11:1-13). Some Christians do not ask God to control completely their lives because they are fearful of what God will require of them. Jesus assured His disciples that the heavenly Father would not cause harm to befall them, as He desired the very best for them in life. The best gift God can bestow upon His children is the Holy Spirit who is given to them that ask Him (Luke 11:13). Jesus taught His disciples that they did not have to beg God in repetitious prayer for Him to bestow upon them His best gift. They were simply to ask and they would receive (v. 10).

The Christian must confess his sins daily, receive cleansing by the blood of Christ, and appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit. Paul instructs us to be prepared at all times to serve God. Some opportunities for witnessing arise unexpectedly, and the Christian should be spiritually prepared; that is, he should be equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit as he shares his faith with the lost. Life takes on a new effectiveness when it is constantly available to God for His service.

Salvation is experienced by a definite act of faith in which the repentant sinner trusts God to cleanse him and save him. The Christian life continues to be a life of faith. The Christian must trust God's Spirit to control him and empower him day by day, recognizing that becoming qualified to serve God is not by his own accomplishments, just as salvation is beyond man's accomplishment.

Write a verse which teaches that daily self-denial is necessary for a Spirit-filled life.

(See Luke 9:23.)

The assurance that God will fill a Christian with His Spirit is God's promise to answer one's petition in accord with His _____.

(will)

Circle the correct word.

In order to serve Christ effectively, a follower should confess his sins, receive cleansing by Jesus' blood, and appropriate the filling of the Spirit (every Sunday, once a month, daily).

(Circle *daily*.)

Feelings do not bring about the filling with the Holy Spirit, but they may or may not result from the experience. The fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, and peace. The fruit involves feelings. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of the control and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual.

Summary

The New Testament teaches that every person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit when he believes. The Holy Spirit is the indwelling Christ who guides and empowers the Christian in living a joyful, fruitful, and victorious life in Christ. The indwelling Spirit qualifies the Christian for spiritual service. Spiritual service cannot be accomplished in the strength of the flesh.

Christians do not experience at all times the full control and power of the Holy Spirit because of their carnal natures. When the carnal nature regains control, the Christian experiences spiritual defeat. Regardless of how hard he tries, he cannot set his own life in order and conquer the old sinful self. If he depends on himself to live the Christian life, he is left hopeless and desperate.

John assures us that it is not necessary for us to live the defeated life in sin, without joy of fellowship with the Father and His Son, because Christ has already provided for a lifetime of cleansing from sin through His shed blood. The defeated Christian needs to confess his sins and nature to sin and to claim by faith what God has already provided for him in Christ—a cleansed life. The cleansed life is receptive to the Holy Spirit who will empower and control that life.

God's Word commands us to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18b). God always makes possible what He requires of man. Since He commands man to be Spirit-filled, He makes the experience possible through faith. Without depending on feelings, by faith we must ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit, and by faith we expect Him to fill us, because God promises to give whatever we ask, in faith, according to His will. We receive the filling of the Spirit by faith without depending on any conscious experience, and we work in the full assurance that the Spirit has filled us because of God's promises.

A Christian experiences defeat when the _____ nature gains control. (carnal)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide content, answer the following questions.

1. What two steps must be taken to come into full possession of the abundant life in Christ? _____

2. What prevents a person from experiencing fully the abundant life? _____

3. What is the relation of the Holy Spirit to God and to the work of Christ? _____

4. What two things did Ezekiel predict God would do for His people? _____

5. How did John's baptism differ from baptism with the Holy Spirit? _____

6. What two Old Testament Scriptures did Peter seem to have in mind when referring to the promises of the Father? _____

7. How does baptism with the Spirit differ from being filled with the Spirit? _____

8. What does it mean to be born of the Spirit? _____

9. What phrases are used to refer to the Spirit in connexion with Pentecost? _____

10. Why was it necessary for the Spirit to return at Pentecost? _____

11. List four ways the indwelling Spirit makes a disciple's service effective. _____

12. How did the filling of the Spirit affect Peter's service? _____

13. Name three persons described in Scripture as being filled by the Spirit. _____

14. Distinguish between spiritual gifts and the gift of the Spirit. _____

15. Explain Paul's statement that speaking in unknown tongues is a sign for those who do not believe. _____

16. What spiritual gifts did Paul urge the Corinthians to desire? _____

17. Why do persons who have been born of the Spirit need subsequent fillings? _____

18. Name one wrong motive and one wrong attitude which hinder the filling of the Spirit. _____

19. What must one do to be filled with the Spirit? _____

20. What assurance does the Christian have that God will fill him if he asks for that experience? _____

21. How often does the Christian need to confess his sins, receive cleansing by the blood of Christ, and appropriate the filling of the Spirit? _____

22. If a Christian is filled with the Spirit when he is born again, why does he need subsequent fillings? _____

Suggested supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). Do one of the following reading assignments, make a summary or brief outline of what you read, and be prepared to share the significant points with the seminar.

Bright, *Revolution Now*, pp. 78-82

Taylor, *The Key to Triumphant Living*, pp. 37-49, 74-83, 145-155

Huegel, *Forever Triumphant*, pp. 43-63

Culpepper, *The Shantung Revival*, pp. 28-53

Paxson, *Life on the Highest Plane*, vol. 3, pp. 30-86

Seminar Discussion

1. Does the Church need another Pentecost?
2. Were the disciples “born of the Spirit” before Pentecost?
3. From Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians, evaluate the misunderstanding of the work and the perversion of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Corinth.
4. What are “unknown tongues” and should the Church expect and exercise this gift today?
5. What importance should Baptist churches place today on being filled with the Spirit?
6. What is the relation of baptism with the Spirit, born of the Spirit, filled by the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit?
7. Distinguish between gifts of the Spirit and the gift of the Spirit.
8. What is the relation of the Holy Spirit’s work to the Son and to God the Father?
9. What should Christians do daily to be filled with the Spirit?