

LESSON 4

CONTINUING THE CHRIST-DIRECTED LIFE

To be empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit is a continuous, daily experience, not a haphazard and occasional adventure. The believer must be filled by the Spirit daily if he is to live a victorious life. The sinful self must be put to death daily and Christ must be invited to control one's life completely. Paul described his own experience as dying daily (1 Cor. 15:31). He stated that to be dead to sin makes it possible for one to live with Christ (Rom. 6:8f.). Unless a person dies daily to his selfish desires, sin rules in his body and there is no room for the control of Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:11ff.). Sin cannot dominate one's life if Christ is in control. Christ cannot control when self returns to the throne and a person follows his own desires. To live a victorious life over sin, a person must yield himself continually to the control of the indwelling Christ.

Walking in the Spirit

Romans 8:1-17

The meaning of walking in the Spirit

Paul uses the word "walking" to emphasize the constant, daily relationship with Jesus Christ. He speaks of the believer being "in Christ Jesus" (v. 1). To be in Christ Jesus is to walk or to live constantly under the control of the Spirit (vv. 1, 4, 5). Paul points out that one who is carnal is controlled by carnal desires (v. 6) and the mind of that person is opposed to God and refuses to submit to God's will (v. 7). The carnal man cannot please God.

The spiritual person is indwelt by the Spirit of God. In verses 9 and 10, Paul equates the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the indwelling Christ. If Christ dwells within, the body (lower or fleshly nature, the old personality dominated by sin) is dead (mortified because of sin, cf. v. 13). Paul uses various descriptions in referring to the old sinful self in control of one's life:

The old man or self and the body of sin (Rom. 6:6)

Sin as a person who makes slaves out of men (Rom. 6:6, 12, 14)

The weakness of the flesh (Rom. 6:19)

Paul conceived of the ruling power of sin in almost personal terms. Sin came into the world (Rom. 5:12), and it reigns there (Rom. 6:14); men serve it (Rom. 6:6), and they are its slaves (6:17-20). Man cannot free himself from the enslaving power of sin. As a personified principle, sin dwells in man and rules him. It operates through man's body, the organ of his activity. Paul describes man's body as the body of sin (Rom. 6:6). The body or whole personality of man controlled by sin is spoken of as a lowly body in contrast to the glorious heavenly body (Phil. 3:21).

Paul uses the term "flesh" to describe man's body as a willing instrument of sin. The flesh is sometimes equated with the body. On other occasions, it describes the external or outward expression of life which operates through the physical body but is not to be equated with the physical body. The fleshly nature of man is that part of man which makes him subject to sin. Sin as a personal power operates through the flesh to control the total personality and life of man. The flesh is the self or the ego which causes life to centre in its own selfish interests without regard for others. One cannot live the life of love (sacrificial self-giving for the benefit of others) and the life of the flesh (self-seeking);

Who described his experience of putting sinful self to death as "dying daily"? _____

(Paul)

The constant, daily relationship with Jesus is referred to by Paul as _____

(walking in the Spirit)

Using your Bible, write three expressions Paul used to describe man's sinful nature.

1. Romans 6:6 _____

2. Romans 6:12, 14 _____

3. Romans 6:19 _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Paul believed sin was a power which r_____, e_____, and c_____.

(reigns, enslaves, controls)

Which word does Paul use to describe man's body as a willing instrument of sin? _____

(flesh)

therefore, one cannot live according to God's will if the flesh or self dominates. God's will or commandment is to love one another.

Because of man's fallen nature (his inclination to sin), he cannot force his fleshly nature or ego to live according to the will of God. Man does not have the power within his own personality to overcome the desires of the flesh or the self. He discovers he can never keep his resolutions to improve his life. His fleshly desires are stronger than his noble desires. Since he does not have the strength to direct his earthly life in obedience to the commandment of love, he cannot please God in the flesh (v. 8).

The only hope for man to please God is to be controlled by the Spirit of God who dwells in him (v. 9). The resurrected Christ takes up abode in the heart of the believer to guide his life in the will of God. Christ can control only to the degree that the will of man permits Him to control. When the indwelling Christ through the person of the Holy Spirit controls man's life, he lives the life of Christ, that is, a life submitted to the will of God. While on earth, Christ's life was characterized by service to others and a willingness to give His life in love for others. A believer pleases God when Christ controls his life.

How to walk in the Spirit

When a person is born of the Spirit, the fleshly nature is not destroyed, but it is dethroned as the master of life. The indwelling Christ is invited to take control of the life. The indwelling Spirit directs the life of the believer through his own spiritual nature—his will, his emotions, and his rational nature. The fleshly nature or self is still present within man's life, and it attempts to regain control of life when man decides in favour of self. The principle or power of sin controls the life of man through his fleshly nature. Although man does not have the power to restrain the operation of sin through his fleshly nature, he does have the power and responsibility of deciding whether to direct his attention towards selfish desires or towards the will of God (v. 6). That decision determines whether his life is controlled by sin, which leads to death, or by the Spirit of God, which leads to life and peace. If he sets his mind on the interest of self, he cannot serve God because "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God" (v. 7, RSV). The decision to follow self makes it impossible for one to keep the law of God. The principle underlying the law of God is to give oneself to benefit others. The fleshly nature seeks to receive instead of to give.

Paul assures us that the fleshly nature or body, which cannot do right because it comes under the control of sin, shall not control the life if Christ indwells it (v. 10). Since Christ dwells within, He is present at all times to control the life of the person. The following steps should be followed daily in maintaining life under the control of the Spirit: (1) Recognize the fleshly nature and confess it and its deeds to God (v. 8). (2) Ask God by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the flesh—do not permit the flesh to control (v. 13). (3) Yield your personality—that is, every member or part of your body—to God as His slave or servant (Rom. 6:13, 16). (4) Ask God to fill you with His Spirit (to empower you and to control your life completely). (5) By faith based on His command and promises, thank God that He has filled you and that He is able to do that which you are unable to accomplish through your own strength.

The results of walking in the Spirit

1. Life is delivered from the realm of condemnation to the new life of glory with Christ (Rom. 8:1, 17).
2. The law of God is fulfilled (Rom. 8:4).

Underline which desires are naturally stronger -

man's noble desires

man's fleshly desires

(Underline *man's fleshly desires*)

Man can live according to the will of God only if he is controlled by God's _____

(Spirit)

Circle the correct word.

The fleshly nature is (destroyed, dethroned) when one is born of the Spirit.

(Circle *dethroned*)

Steps which a person should follow daily in order to live under the control of the Spirit are:

1. R _____
2. A _____
3. Y _____
4. A _____
5. T _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Some results of walking in the Spirit are:

(1) no _____, (2) conquering of _____ nature,

(3) _____ and _____, (4) _____ relationship with God as _____

(condemnation, fleshly, life, peace, intimate, Father)

3. The fleshly nature is conquered and the higher or spiritual nature of man lives in victory (Rom. 8:10).
4. The believer enjoys life and peace because of victory through the Spirit (Rom. 8:6).
5. The believer possesses the new, resurrected life of Christ (Rom. 8:11).
6. The Christian experiences a new and intimate relationship to God as his heavenly Father, and he has the privilege of calling God his heavenly Father (Rom. 8:14f.).

The Fruit of the Spirit

Life apart from Christ is enslaved by sin (John 8:34) and leads to defeat and death. Life in Christ is abundant (John 10:10). The life is abundant because Christ produces satisfying fruit through the life which He controls.

The extent of potential fruitfulness: John 14:12-17

Jesus gave to his disciples the incredible promise that whoever believes in Him shall do the works that He did. Every person who really knows Christ, His life and ministry, desires to be like Him. Only those who have been deceived by Satan have no interest in being like Christ and doing His work. Not only did Jesus promise that His disciples would do the works which He had done, but they would be enabled to do greater works than those which He performed on earth as a result of His ascent to the Father. The success of the disciple does not depend on his ability to accomplish great things for God. Jesus promised that the accomplishments would be by Him and in His name for the purpose of glorifying the Father and the Son. Whatever the disciple asks of the Father, the Father will do by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the disciple. The Father has sent the Spirit of truth to abide in the life and heart of the disciple.

Man learns from experience that he is limited in accomplishing anything significant. He will be sceptical of the promises of John 14:12f., as long as he depends on himself. When he becomes aware of the spiritual presence of the Father and the Son, he is able to accomplish "greater works than these . . . that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

The source of fruitfulness: John 15:1-17

The true vine and the branches illustrate again that the source of man's fruitfulness is the indwelling Christ and not human ability. The branch which bears the fruit must draw its nutrition from the vine which brings the nutrients from the soil. Without the vine, the branch can do nothing. The Christian can no more produce fruit apart from Christ than the branch can produce fruit apart from the vine. Jesus stated that He is the vine who gives the power to those who abide in Him to produce much fruit (v. 5). Apart from Him, however, man can do nothing. Unfortunately, most Christians continue to depend on their own abilities and efforts for fruitfulness.

The weakness of Christians today can be attributed to the manner in which they dedicate themselves to serve Christ. A Christian may bring all of his abilities, talents, and possessions to the service of the Lord, but he may see little results because his resources are not equivalent to spiritual power. Man's abilities and possessions cannot buy nor substitute for spiritual power. On the other hand, the person who commits his life to Christ and makes himself available for the power of Christ to work through him will see spiritual fruit. God's power is unlimited; therefore, much fruit can be produced by God through the cleansed and Spirit-filled life (v. 5).

Jesus warned that those who do not abide in Him and bear fruit will be destroyed (v. 6). Whoever abides in Him makes his

Romans 8:6 states, "the mind of the flesh is _____; but the mind of the Spirit is _____ and _____."

(death, life, peace)

In accord with John 14:12, great things for God are accomplished by His disciples by the power of the _____ working through the disciples.

(Holy Spirit)

Which parable recorded by John illustrated again that the source of man's fruitfulness is the indwelling Christ? _____

(the true vine and the branches)

request of the Father and it is done for him to the glory of the Father (vv. 7f.).

One of the most difficult requirements of the Christian is to love his brother when disagreement arises. He constantly offends others and is forced into the slough of despondency because he does not find within himself the ability to love his enemies nor to do good to them who hate him (cf. Matt. 5:44). The keeping of Jesus' command to love Him and one another is the testing ground for sincere Christians. He promised that whoever keeps His commandments will abide in His love (v. 10). It should be remembered that one can do nothing apart from Christ (v. 4). Since the Father is love and Christ is love, the love of one's brother is possible by asking the indwelling Christ to love through us. Christ promised that our joy would be full as a result of abiding in the love of the Father (vv. 10f).

God is spirit; God is love. The Spirit of God dwelling in us is nothing less than Divine love itself which has come down to dwell in us. The Spirit of love within becomes the fountain from which the stream of love flows to others. Without the Spirit of love abiding within, man cannot love his enemies. His ability to love is a result of prayer and faith. He must recognize that his own sinful nature inhibits his obedience to love. He asks God to love through him, and by faith he depends on the indwelling Spirit to enable him to love.

The variety of fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23

The one who walks in the Spirit will no longer be dominated by his weaknesses, but his life will experience the fruit of the Spirit. If he permits self to regain the throne or control his life, he can expect the reassertion of the weaknesses of his flesh and the accompanying defeat. As long as the Spirit is in control, the Christian can expect the fruit which means victory.

Love.—Jesus commanded us to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves. An understanding of the nature of love reveals that the ability to keep the first and second commandments is superhuman. Man by nature is a greedy creature, and the commandment to love his fellow-man is contrary to his nature. Even if he is able to achieve some humanitarian tendencies towards his fellow-man, no man is able to love his enemies, especially those who spitefully use him. Actually, the absence of love within a church fellowship is one of its greatest hindrances.

Love is possible, but not humanly possible. Love becomes a reality as the fruit of the indwelling Spirit.

Joy.—Pessimism and despair are crippling attitudes. An enduring joy from within based on the faithfulness and grace of God is a cardinal Christian virtue. Paul and Barnabas were able to express their joy and victory in Christ at midnight in the midst of the discomfort of prison chains and bonds. External circumstances did not rob them of the joy of life. If a person depends upon the circumstances of life for joy and happiness, much of his life will be lived in despair. The Christian who lives in the fullness of the Spirit experiences inward joy as an enduring fruit of the Spirit.

Peace.—The natural man living with the emotions of hatred, jealousy, wrath, division, and envy lives in turmoil and knows no peace. The fruit of the Spirit is peace—from God and peace with God. Paul described the person who has been justified by faith as having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). The justified person does not live exiled from God nor does he exist with the fear of death.

Christians can fulfill the commandment to love others because God is _____ and His Spirit dwells in Christians.

(love)

Read Galatians 5:22-23. Write at least five fruits of the Spirit.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

One fruit of the Spirit is peace _____ God and peace _____ God.

This kind of peace alleviates the fear of _____

(from, with, death)

Long-suffering.—This word describes the person of patience and endurance. The Spirit gives a person the ability to bear injuries or to suffer affliction without seeking revenge. To do the menial and forgotten tasks of life without complaining requires the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

Gentleness.—Recent translations often substitute the words “kindness” or “goodness” for gentleness. Gentleness is an act of polite and considerate kindness from a heart which is aware of the feelings of others. It is very sensitive to the feelings and needs of others.

Goodness.—This quality originates in an unselfish heart that is more interested in giving than receiving. It includes a zeal for truth which rebukes, corrects, and chastises as Christ did when he purged the Temple. It is maintained only through the power of the Spirit.

Faith.—This fruit involves complete surrender to God and complete dependence upon Him. It expresses a conviction in God’s ability and power to bring about His will and purpose in one’s life.

Meekness.—The natural man is proud, haughty, arrogant, egotistical, and self-centred, but the spiritual man is humble and submissive. He is not a weak person, pushed to and fro by the tides of life, but he is a Spirit-controlled person whose life is regulated by the power of God.

Self-control.—This word does not mean to direct one’s own life, but it means to control the emotional outbursts of anger, fear, jealousy, and hatred.

Obstacles to a Spirit-filled Life

Gaining victory over the world by the power of the Holy Spirit does not mean that one’s life will be free from struggle and battle. Jesus warned his disciples that they would be hated of the world just as He had been rejected and hated (John 15:18ff.). Paul warned that the Christian would be in conflict with superhuman powers (Eph. 6:12). The most deadly enemy is within.

Temptations from within

Although the carnal nature of man was discussed in detail in a previous lesson, the subject needs further elaboration. Fallen man has an inclination to sin which is so strong that it is inevitable that every person will sin. He becomes responsible for his moral decisions when he knows the right but chooses the wrong. Unfortunately, man’s sinful nature is not eliminated when he is converted; but it is placed under a new controlling power as a result of the birth of the Spirit. With the old desires of the flesh still present, sin continues to have a base of operation within one’s life.

James states that “every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desires (lusts, passions)” (1:14, Ampl. NT). Again James says, “Ye lust (desire and covet what others have), and have not: . . . yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (4:2f.). Yielding to lusts does not bring the permanent gratification one seeks; his lusts increase. Prayer is frustrated by the tension between one’s desires, based on wrong purposes and selfish motives, and asking in faith—submission to God’s will (cf. 4:7).

James tells his readers that the Spirit which God has placed within them yearns over them with a jealous love (4:5). Through the indwelling Spirit, God gives grace (power to meet this evil tendency) to the humble-minded, but He resists the proud and haughty (4:6).

Underline the correct words.

The most deadly enemy of the Christian is (man’s own sinful nature, the temptations of the world).

(Underline *man’s own sinful nature.*)

The man who thinks he can stand in his own strength will fall victim to his own lusts and give Satan an opening for ruling his life (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12). The man who recognizes his lustful nature and submits even the control of his desires to God will receive grace for victory over the temptations from within: "Ye have not because ye ask not. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:2b, 10).

Temptations from without

Adversaries are not to be taken lightly. Jesus warned His disciples that they would have tribulation, trials, distress, and frustration in the world (John 16:33). The world (the domain of the devil) hated the works of Jesus and shows like contempt for His followers (cf. John 13:2; 17:14f.). Since Jesus was persecuted because of that for which He stood, the followers of Jesus who keep His Word will be persecuted (John 15:20).

Much of man's energy is consumed with efforts to be accepted rather than rejected by society. His nature is to conform in dress, thinking, and actions to the accepted styles and patterns of his day. He might react in protest or rebellion to gain attention if he feels neglected or unnoticed in the multitudes. In either case of total conformity or rebellion, man cannot tolerate rejection. The fact that Jesus rejected the superficial religious practices of the Jewish leaders was a primary cause of their counteraction in condemning Him to death. Man's pride opposes rejection and supports the temptation to compromise with the crowd to insure acceptance.

The disciples of Jesus will often find themselves at odds with the world. Their convictions will require that they denounce the actions and attitudes of their own culture, but to do so brings social exclusion and rejection. Much of the modern persecution comes in the form of rejection of those who stand for principles different from the customs of society. A constant temptation is to compromise convictions to avoid tension with the world. If the disciple does not compromise, he will experience persecution as did his Lord; however, the persecution may not be physical (see John 15:20).

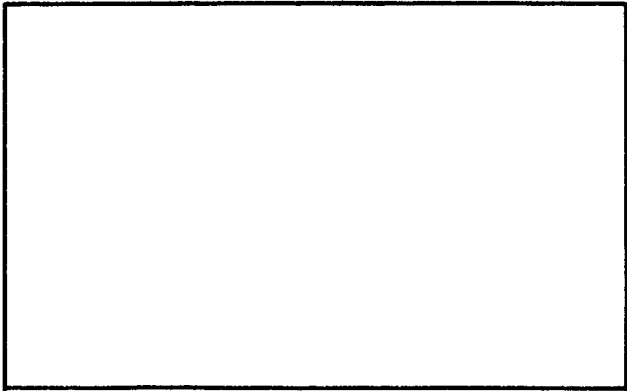
Paul warned that we battle not with flesh and blood (physical opponents) but with the evil spiritual rulers of this present world of darkness (Eph. 6:12). Satan, the supernatural spiritual leader, heads up the opposition to man's spiritual growth and victory. He seeks to control the life of man just as the Spirit of God does. In comparing the Christian to a soldier, Paul exhorts him to stand his ground firmly. He recognizes that the Christian must be equipped with the proper armour if he is to win the battle.

Withstanding temptations

Paul suggested that the Christian's strength is not in himself but in the Lord: "Be empowered through your union with Him; draw your strength from Him" (Eph. 6:10, Ampl. NT). He stated that the Christian needs the armour of truth girded about him tightly; his life needs to be shielded by integrity and upright living; his feet need to be secured by the peace and assurance only God can give; his mind needs confidence of salvation through faith in Christ; and his courage needs to be bolstered by his superior offensive weapon, the Word (cf. Eph. 6:13-17). Victory is assured only when the Christian stands in God's power and not in his own strength.

<p>The temptation to compromise to insure acceptance by society is caused by man's _____.</p> <p>(pride)</p>
<p>After reading Ephesians 6:13-17 and the interpretation of it in the text, describe briefly the armour which a Christian needs to withstand the power of Satan.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

The self-confident person will experience defeat (1 Cor. 10:12). On the other hand, the person who recognizes his weakness and depends on the strength of God will prevail. God will protect him from trials which are beyond the normal human experiences. God will always provide a way out when man faces temptation. God's Word does not promise that temptations will cease when one becomes a Christian, but it does promise that God will not leave the Christian to his own strength to withstand those temptations which he faces (1 Cor. 10:13).



Home Study Exercise

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

1. What did Paul mean by "I die daily"? _____

2. What is meant by "walking in the Spirit"? _____

3. List three expressions Paul used to describe man's sinful nature. _____

4. What was Paul's concept of sin? _____

5. How is the "flesh" related to sin? _____

6. Why cannot man through his own efforts please God? _____

7. List the steps which must be followed daily in order to walk in the Spirit. _____

8. List four results of walking in the Spirit _____

9. Explain how Jesus' statement in John 14:12 is possible. _____

10. What does the parable of the true vine and the branches illustrate? _____

11. Explain how a Christian can fulfil the difficult command to love. _____

12. What kind of peace is the fruit of the Spirit? _____

13. What is the inner source of man's temptations? _____

14. How does Satan use man's social nature to tempt him? _____

15. Since our struggle is against spiritual powers, what did Paul suggest to be the Christian's armour? _____

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. 83-97
 Taylor, *The Key to Triumphant Living*, pp. 49-64
 Huegel, *Forever Triumphant*, pp. 64-74
 Culpepper, *The Shantung Revival*, pp. 54-79
 Paxson, *Life on the Highest Plane*, vol. 3, pp. 112-151

Seminar Discussion

1. How free is man to direct his own life? Consider Paul's view of sin and flesh or self.
2. Compare and contrast the views of Paul and John concerning victorious living.
3. Is man or Satan responsible for temptation and sin?
4. What is the meaning of walking in the Spirit and how does one accomplish it?
5. Why are most Christians unfruitful?
6. What is the relation of man's body to sin?
7. Permit students to share important concepts from their supplementary reading.