

Valley Bible Church Growth Studies

Spiritual Growth and Christian Character

Lesson 5 – Power Through the Holy Spirit

Introduction

Concerning our walk with God, the Scriptures exhort us to: abide (John 8:31; 15:1-10; 1 John 2:28); persevere (Rom 2:7); endure (Heb 12:1); press on (Phil 3:14); excel still more (Phil 1:9; 1 Thess 4:1, 10); buffet the body (1 Cor 9:27); run to win (1 Cor 9:24); exercise self-control (1 Cor 9:25); and keep the course to not suffer shipwreck in regards to the faith (1 Tim 1:19)

But where do we get the power *to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects* (Col 1:10)? The Holy Spirit.

Jesus said⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸" You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are **clothed with power** from on high." Luke 24:46-49 (NASB)

⁶So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;⁸ but you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Acts 1:6-8 (NASB)

Power translates DUNAMIS, from which the English word "dynamite" derives

Thayer Definition: 1) strength power, ability

The Christian's Struggle

The devil – Satan is a created being and therefore does not possess any of God's incommunicable attributes (omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.). Satan is a murderer, a liar, the father of lies (John 8:44), and tempter of believers (Matt 4:1-11; Acts 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5). Satan uses the world system to propagate his lies and to entice people to sin.

The world (1 John 2:15-17) – Satan's (John 12:31; 16:11) worldwide system of deception and wickedness that leaves God out and is opposed to Him. The wisdom of this world is demonic (James 3:15). Satan's aim is to make the values of this godless system seem attractive and thus to satisfy people's fleshly desires.

The flesh -- The sinful nature, inherited from Adam, that results in the complete corruption and depravity of our will, conscience, and intellect. At salvation we are born again (John 3:3-8), the power of the sinful nature over us is broken (Rom 6:15-23), and a new nature is imparted (2 Peter 1:4). The sinful nature is not eradicated at salvation. The flesh and the new nature are now opposed to one another and are at war.

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We battle the flesh so that we are not carried away and enticed by our own lust (James 1:14) as we are bombarded with and tempted by the lies of Satan that he presents in his world system.

Paul's experience – If we have been a Christian for any length of time we can relate to Paul and his struggle with the flesh in Romans 7: For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom 7:22-23)

The Means to Overcome

The indwelling Holy Spirit – Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (Rom 8:9; 1 John 2:20, 27).

The filling of the Holy Spirit

The Passage: And do not get drunk with wine, for this is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, (Eph 5:18)

The Contrast: Getting drunk with wine. When people get drunk, we say that they are under the influence of that substance. In other words the substance is controlling them. As believers we should not allow anything to control us except for the Holy Spirit.

The Meaning

The statement is a passive, present tense imperative (something that we are commanded to let happen to us on a continuous basis). It is literally *let yourselves be kept being filled with the Spirit*.

PLEROU

Used of the wind filling a sail and thereby carrying the ship along. To be filled with the Spirit is to be moved along in our Christian life by God Himself... MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...carries the idea of permeation, and was used of salt's permeating meat in order to flavor and preserve it. God wants His Holy Spirit to so permeate the lives of His children that everything they think, say, and do will reflect His divine presence. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...the connotation of total control... To be filled in this sense is to be totally dominated and controlled, and it is the most important sense for believers. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

The Implication – The usual, expected position of the believer is to be filled with the Spirit. The believer in a right relationship with God will be filled with the Spirit.

How to be Spirit Filled

Recognize and repent of sin.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God... (Eph 4:30)

An attitude of the heart that is willing to always come under the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin and genuinely repent.

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Yield to God in every area of life.

Do not quench the Spirit. (1 Thess 5:19)

An attitude of the heart that yields to God's Word.

Immersion in the Word: Comparing Eph 5:18-21 and Col 3:16-4:1

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce the will of God in a believer's life.

The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will. The two (being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word dwell richly in us) are the same spiritual reality viewed from two different sides. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by His Word. To have the Word dwelling richly is to be controlled by the Spirit. The MacArthur NT Commentary - Colossians and Philemon

	Ephesians 5:18-21	Colossians 3:16-4:1
Command	And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you
Words	speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs	with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms <i>and</i> hymns <i>and</i> spiritual songs
Worship	singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord	singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God
Reactions	always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father	Whatever you do in word or deed, <i>do</i> all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
Relationships	and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... (Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...)	Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...

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The results of being filled:

Edifying words (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)

Pure worship (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)

Godly reactions (Eph 5:20; Col 3:17)

Righteous relationships (Eph 5:21; Col 3:18-4:1)

Christ-like character (Gal 5:22-23)

Abundant fruitfulness (John 15:1-5)

Illumination and teaching (John 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:9-13; 1 John 2:27)

Prayer (Rom 8:26-27) and answered prayer (John 15:7)

Assurance of salvation (Rom 8:16)

Effective witness (Acts 2)

Lessons

Just as we are unable in our own strength to save ourselves from sin, we are unable in our own strength to walk in manner that glorifies God. Only as we are filled with the Spirit are we able to obey consistently.

A walk in the Spirit is a moment by moment decision to recognize and repent of our sin; to yield our will to God's will; and to allow the Word to richly dwell in us.

Homework

Read Matthew 21-28

Commit yourself this week to allow yourself to be kept being controlled by the Holy Spirit.