

Empowerment

Previously we learned about our new selves and how to experience God's love and forgiveness when we fall short of living a life that pleases our loving heavenly Father.

An amazing transformation has begun to take place since you received Christ as your Savior and Lord. You are beginning to live the Christian life, which isn't a standard of performance or code of ethics, but a vital personal relationship with a loving God.

“On the last day, the climax of the holidays, Jesus shouted to the crowds, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in Me.’ He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in Him.”
— John 7:37-39 (TLB)



Jesus describes the results of a growing relationship with Him as an abundant, overflowing life that comes from within. He explains that the source of this life is the Holy Spirit.

Just as our relationship with God depends totally on what God has done through Jesus Christ, so the power to live a dynamic Christian life also comes totally from God.

This computer has all the capacity to do what it was created to do — but it has no power of its own.



Similarly, because you are a new creation in Christ, you have all the capacity you need to live the Christian life; but you must continually draw from the proper source of power.



1

The Holy Spirit is the source of power to live the Christian life

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts 5:3-5.

Who did Peter believe the Holy Spirit to be?

Why did He come?

To live in you (Romans 8:9).

To show unbelievers their need for forgiveness (John 16:8).

To guide you into the truth (John 16:13).

To reveal Christ to you (John 16:14).



What does the Holy Spirit desire to produce in your life?

Read Romans 8:16.

What does the Holy Spirit tell our hearts about our relationship with God?

Read Galatians 5:22,23.

The degree to which these desirable qualities are manifested in your life depends on how much you trust the Lord with your life and on how long you have been trusting Him. If you are only beginning to understand the power of the Holy Spirit, don't be discouraged if you are not as fruitful as you would like to be.

“Take care to live in Me, and let Me live in you. For a branch can't produce fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from Me. Yes, I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him shall produce a large crop of fruit. For apart from Me you can't do a thing.”

— John 15:4,5 (TLB)

What does Jesus say we are to do in order to see this fruit produced in us? Why?

Read Acts 1:8.

What does the Holy Spirit desire to equip you to do?

Why do you think the Holy Spirit's power is needed to be His witness?

2

Many Christians are not experiencing the Holy Spirit's power

You became a Christian through the Holy Spirit's work (Ephesians 1:13). From that moment on, the Spirit has lived within you (Romans 8:11). As we have already seen, He provides the power to live the abundant Christian life.

A Christian who is living by the power of the Holy Spirit is said to be “filled with the Spirit” (see Ephesians 5:18). Although the Holy Spirit **lives within** all Christians, not all Christians are **filled with** (that is, directed and empowered by) the Holy Spirit. The Bible explains this situation by describing three kinds of people:

Natural (1 Corinthians 2:14)

These people have not trusted in Christ's death to pay for their sins and thus the Holy Spirit does not live in them.



Self-Directed

= Self is in control.
= Christ does not live in the unbeliever.
= Throne or control center of one's life.

Spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:15)

These people have trusted Christ as their Savior and are trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life — they are filled with the Spirit.



Christ-Directed

= Christ has been placed in control.
= Self is yielding to Christ's direction.

Fleshly (1 Corinthians 3:1,2)

These people have trusted Christ to pay for their sins but are trusting in their own efforts and resources to live the Christian life.



Self-Directed

= Self is in control.
= Christ lives in the believer but is not allowed to direct the believer's life.



KEY QUESTION

Which circle best represents your life?

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

3

You can be empowered by the Holy Spirit

The Spirit-empowered life is the Christ-directed life by which Christ lives His life in and through you. You can be filled with (directed and empowered by) the Holy Spirit only by faith, by trusting God to produce in you the fruitful life He promised.

You can be empowered by the Spirit if you:

Confess

Confess all known sin (Psalm 66:18).

Why do you think it is important to confess all known sin in order to be empowered by the Spirit?

Surrender

Surrender control of every area of your life to Christ (Romans 6:12,13).

What is an area of your life that would be difficult to surrender?

What has God done that shows He is worth entrusting our lives to Him?

When you are willing to confess your sins and surrender your life to Christ, you're ready for the next step.

Trust

Trust the Holy Spirit to fill you in response to God's command and promise.

1. God has **commanded** you to be filled with His Spirit.

“Don't drink too much wine, for many evils lie along that path; be filled instead with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by Him.” — Ephesians 5:18 (TLB)

2. God has **promised** to answer your requests which are in accord with His will.

“And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”
— 1 John 5:14,15 (NASB)

You can be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone. This prayer is a good way to express that faith:

“Dear Lord, I know that I've been directing my own life, and I've sinned against You. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for forgiving my sins through Your death on the cross. I now invite You to take Your place on the throne of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised that You would do if I asked in faith. As an expression of my faith, I now thank You for empowering my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit.”

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

**KEY QUESTION**

What do you think would happen if you prayed this prayer right now?

If this is the desire of your heart, you can pray this prayer right now and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

4

You can be continually empowered by the Holy Spirit

This week, if you find you have retaken control of your life through sin — any definite act of disobedience — simply “breathe spiritually” (exhale the impure and inhale the pure).

Remember the three elements of confession:

EXHALE
Confess your sin
(1 John 1:9)

1. **Agree** with God that you have sinned.
2. **Thank** God that He has already forgiven you.
3. **Turn away** from sin and trust God to change your wrong attitudes and actions (repentance).

INHALE
Claim by faith
the direction and
empowerment
of the Spirit in
your life
(Ephesians 5:18)

1. **Surrender** control of your life to Christ.
2. **Trust** that He now directs and empowers you.

This simple exercise of exhaling and inhaling will enable you to continue to experience Christ’s loving direction and empowerment of your life throughout the day.

To help you grow, continue to spend 15 minutes each day alone with the Lord in Bible reading and prayer. Here are some suggestions:

Read Ephesians 5:18-21 and Colossians 3:12-17.

Compare what these two passages say about the Spirit-filled life.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21.

This is Paul’s prayer for people in that day and for us. From where does this power come? What can this power accomplish in your life?

Read Mark 4:35-41.

This is the account of Jesus and the disciples in the storm. Why were the disciples afraid? What did they doubt about Jesus?



Summary

The Spirit-directed life is a practical experience. As you trust Him, God’s Spirit will produce the character of Christ within you and empower you to be His witness.



You can only trust someone as much as you know him. Next time we’ll discover that God has a plan for you to get to know Christ better so you can grow in your Christian life.