

Living a Spirit-Empowered Life

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Day One

We are examining the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and we'll look at how the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin. Hopefully, that didn't just make you want to tune out.

Being convicted of sin doesn't necessarily sound like something to get excited about, but when God sheds light on your sin the purpose is for you to live in greater harmony with him. As we surrender our lives to God and walk in obedience (another word that can make us cringe), the Holy Spirit begins to renew and rewire our minds and realign our affections, and that's a good thing.

Bible teacher Priscilla Shirer says this, "After salvation, because of the Holy Spirit, certain kinds of activities, thoughts, or attitudes don't feel comfortable to you anymore, even if they did before. Something you may have once done without concern now feels wrong and problematic—increasingly so over time. Participating in certain behaviors, entertaining certain habits, and engaging in certain relationships may become awkward and difficult with little apparent reason. Other than this: God's Spirit is infiltrating your soul—influencing you, molding you. Your conscience is being conformed into the image of Christ."

When you become a follower of Jesus and order your life after him, your tastebuds change. Things that once were appealing lose their luster when we chase after Christ. As you continue to align your life with Jesus, you will become less and less captivated by your flesh and more conformed to Christ where truth is found. The Holy Spirit's conviction is for your sanctification; to get your attention so that you, as 1 Peter 1:14-16 says,

Do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:14-16).

When the Holy Spirit exposes your sin, don't fight against his conviction. If you ignore and override his voice, over time you will become desensitized to him. The Holy Spirit never points things to be punitive. Remember he loves you and wants you to free you from sin, so you live life to the fullest in him.

Day Two

We are exploring the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

God speaks to us. We can hear his voice when we properly position ourselves before him. Not walking in obedience will hinder our ability to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. But the more we walk in holiness and earnestly seek him, the more we grow in our ability to hear him.

This is realized when we regularly meditate on God's Word, spend time in worship and prayer, and intentionally create space in our day to quiet ourselves in his presence. The reality is the Holy Spirit is always guiding you.

In John 16:13-14, Jesus says,

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you (John 16:13-14).

When it comes to hearing the Holy Spirit, heed Jesus's words when he says, "He will glorify me." The Holy Spirit will never speak anything contrary to the Word of God and the teachings of Jesus. That is why it is so vital you study the Bible and continue to learn to discern God's character. Years ago, I met with a young woman who was dating a married man at work. When I confronted her, she said she prayed about it and was convinced God told her the man was the one she was supposed to marry. How greatly deceived she was. The Holy Spirit will not go against scripture. Sometimes we want something so badly we try to convince ourselves God approves when he doesn't. Don't be duped. He will never lead you down paths of unrighteousness.

James 1:5 teaches us,

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you (James 1:5).

When you attune yourself to the Holy Spirit you will experience gentle nudges or impressions that direct you to do something, and help you make discerning decisions, always in alignment with the Bible. There have been times when I have asked God for wisdom and he will highlight a song, a sermon, or something somebody says. Often the Holy Spirit will prompt me to send a text of encouragement to a friend. I can't tell you the number of times someone responded grateful and astounded because the timing of my text was perfectly aligned with what they needed to hear at that moment. I love how the Holy Spirit works, don't you?

Let's make it a habit to seek the Holy Spirit and ask him to guide us in wise living. Because the truth is, he loves to lead you.

Day Three

Is your life a testimony to the power of God at work in you? How do you know if your life is aligned with God's Spirit? By asking this simple question: Is your life bearing fruit?

In his discourse about living life in the Spirit, Paul speaks these words in Galatians 5:16-17a, 19-25,

... walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.... The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17a, 19-25).

If our lives are marked by selfish ambition, impatience, unforgiveness, arrogance at work, or infighting with fellow followers of Jesus, we aren't producing the fruit we are called to cultivate. We need to resist being overpowered by our fleshly actions and resolve to live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Not too long ago I felt very wounded by a friend. I could sense the bitterness welling up in my heart as I rehearsed the hurt I felt. But I was determined not to let ill feelings put me in bondage. Romans 8:26 says, *the Spirit helps us in our weakness.*

I prayed fervently and daily and asked the Holy Spirit to help my mind and heart. And you know what, he did. The Holy Spirit helped me to release the offense. The word help in Greek means to “take hold with another.” In the weakness of your flesh, when you ask him, the Holy Spirit helps you by taking hold of you and intervening, changing your heart, and impacting your actions. I’m so grateful, aren’t you?

The next time you find yourself tempted to lash out, be impatient, hold a grudge, or react with indifference, resentment, or rage, ask the Holy Spirit for help. Pray that he will take over and that the fruit of his Spirit will be evident in your life. As your life bears fruit, you become a strong witness to the power of the Gospel, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Day Four

We have been exploring the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and we’ll wrap up with a reminder about his presence in your life.

King David wrote Psalm 139 as a prayer and praise to God, acknowledging the Holy Spirit’s personal presence in his life.

*Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast (Psalm 139 7-10).*

God was with David in his lowest moments and most magnificent victories. The same is true for you. No matter what, God is always with you, my friend. In your greatest joys and in your seasons of sorrow, disappointment, fear, or despair. In your highest of highs and your darkest moments, the Holy Spirit embraces you, surrounds you on all sides, and covers you. Even in the seasons of waiting where you sense his silence and wonder if he hears you, he does. Don’t let your feelings fool you. God is always near to you. Let that sink in.

If you are in a season of feeling God is silent, don’t fear this time. There have been several times in my life where I have felt like God was silent, times when I desperately wanted an answer or direction. What I needed to be reminded of is that even though God seems silent, he is still present. In those seasons of silence, we need to ask ourselves, “Will I keep pressing on and pursuing Christ and Christ-likeness when life appears stagnant? When I don’t feel like I am progressing in my career, my vocation, in life?”

In those times when we have a hard time sensing his presence perhaps, we are progressing in what is most important, trusting God and becoming more like him, as we wait for the timing of his response to our deepest inquiries and longing for direction.

I’m not sure what circumstances you currently find yourself in, but I pray you not only remember the Holy Spirit is present, but you experience the nearness and companionship of God’s Spirit. Take time right now to acknowledge him and thank him for his closeness, that in this moment he is grasping your hand with kindness, love, and tenderness.

Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are always with us and guiding us. Help us to experience more of you.

Day Five

Does your prayer life feel weak? We have been exploring the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and today we'll wrap up by looking to God's Word to power up our prayer life.

I don't know about you but sometimes my prayer life can be really puny. There are times I just go about my day and forget to pray for God's supernatural wisdom and power. Other times I feel like my prayers are a broken record, and I simply don't know what to say. Have you ever felt that way?

There is good news! When you are at a loss for words, this is what Romans 8:26b-28 says,

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:26b-28).

When you do not know exactly how you should pray, or can barely squeak out a prayer, God himself (through the Holy Spirit) helps you and prays on your behalf. And he prays for you in a way that guarantees all things will work together for your good.

There is no other God like our God! Whatever you are facing, ask the Holy Spirit to intercede on your behalf; his prayer for you will make a way through.

As we end our time, I want to pray Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 over you. If you can, and feel comfortable, open your hands, palms up in a position of receiving this blessing from the Lord.

For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen (Ephesians 3:14-21).