

BUILDING MOVEMENTS: BUILD THE HOLY SPIRIT

TEACHING LESSON: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

This is a teaching lesson, the teachers notes are in black.

"The Christian life is so simple, even a child can live it."

"The Christian life is so difficult that no one can live it."

[Have the class vote on whether they agree or disagree with each statement. Then ask them "How can both be right?" Proceed with the notes to shed some light on this question.]

A. Everyone can experience a full, abundant, purposeful, and meaningful life (John 14:12-14).

B. The Christian life is not complex or difficult, but it is a paradox.

1. It is so simple that we stumble over its simplicity.
2. It is so difficult because it is a supernatural life only Christ can live.

C. The secret of the Christian life is to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and thus allow the Lord Jesus to live His abundant life in and through us in all of His resurrection power (Acts 4:13).

If I try to live the Christian life in my own fleshly effort, it does become complex, difficult and even impossible to live. But if I invite the Lord Jesus to direct my life; if I know the reality of having been crucified with Christ and raised with him by faith; if I walk in the light as God is in the light through the enabling of the Holy Spirit--then the Lord Jesus simply lives his abundant life within me and through me in all of his resurrection power.

FILLED BY FAITH

The very act of looking for an emotional experience is a denial of the concept of faith, and 'whatever is not of faith is sin.' We can know right now that we are filled with the Holy Spirit by trusting in God's holy word, his command and promise, and we can go through life with that assurance. In order to walk in the Spirit we must first be sure that we are filled and then we must continue to breathe spiritually.



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This was at the heart of the Apostle Paul's moment-by-moment experience, 'I have been crucified with Christ; and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me' (Galatians 2:20)."

D. The teachings of our Lord are simple and understandable.

"Even new Christians can understand how to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit."

"Walking in the Spirit through the practice of spiritual breathing is a simple concept which we discussed in our last two messages. However, there are four important factors which will contribute greatly to an understanding of this great adventure and ensure a successful walk in the Spirit. First, be sure that you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Second, be prepared for spiritual conflict. Third, know your resources as a child of God. And, fourth, live by faith. Let us look more closely at each of these factors."

I. BE SURE YOU ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

[The material in this section is a review of the message "How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit." How thoroughly you cover this content will depend on how well your class understands the concept and/or how long it has been since they heard the message, "How to Be Filled." Use your discretion.]

A. Being filled with the Spirit means to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

"It is such a simple truth; and yet, in its essence, that is what the Christian life is all about—keeping Christ on the throne. We do this when we understand how to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came for the specific purpose of glorifying Christ by enabling believers to live holy lives and be productive witnesses for our Savior."

B. Spiritual breathing is the key to appropriating God's spiritual provision for us moment-by-moment.

1. "When we receive Christ as our personal Savior, we experience a spiritual birth, we become children of God, our sins are forgiven and we are filled with the Spirit."

2. "Average Christians are not drawing on their resources in Christ, but are living an up-and-down spiritual life. They go from one emotional experience to the next in control of their own lives, frustrated and defeated."



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C. Practicing “spiritual breathing” enables us to stop this up-and-down emotional experience and to enjoy the abundant Christian life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

1. Exhale by confessing our sins--agreeing with God concerning them (1 John 1:9).

a. Call it sin. Acknowledge (agree with God) that our disobedience is sin.

b. Call it forgiven. Acknowledge (agree with God) that Christ has already forgiven us because of His death on the cross and the shedding of His blood for our sin.

c. Repent (change our attitude toward the sin) and experience a change in conduct through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Inhale by appropriating the fullness of God’s Spirit by faith.

a. His command, and thus His will, is we be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

b. His promise is that He always grants our requests when we pray according to His will (1 John 5:14,15).

D. Expect the Holy Spirit to fill and empower you.

We are filled with the Holy Spirit as an act of faith, not by asking to be filled--in the same way we became Christians by faith (Ephesians 2:8,9) and not because we asked Christ to come into our lives.

E. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16).

“We can then say to Him, ‘I surrender my life to you and by faith appropriate your fullness.’”

F. Spiritual Christians become worldly (carnal) when they develop an attitude of unbelief (Romans 14:23b).

“Paul says in Romans 14:23, ‘Whatever is not of faith is sin.’ When we cease to practice spiritual breathing, we become worldly (carnal). We do not become worldly (carnal) simply by committing one or more sins, provided we sincerely continue to breathe spiritually. We become worldly (carnal) when we develop an attitude of unbelief and refuse to breathe spiritually.”

G. Do not allow sins to accumulate (1 John 2:1,2).

“If we exhale and inhale the moment we know that we have sinned, we will not allow sins



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to accumulate and as a result become worldly (carnal).”

H. Claim Christ’s love and forgiveness, and continue to have fellowship with Him when you become aware of an area of your life that is displeasing to Him.

I. Do not depend upon feelings.

“The very act of looking for an emotional experience is a denial of the concept of faith, and `whatever is not of faith is sin.’ We can know right now that we are filled with the Holy Spirit by trusting in God’s holy word, his command and promise, and we can go through life with that assurance. In order to walk in the Spirit we must first be sure that we are filled and then we must continue to breathe spiritually.”

II. BE PREPARED FOR SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

[Have the class divide into groups of 4-6 and ask the question, “Why is the Christian life sometimes so difficult and challenging to live?” Have each group come up with as many answers as they can. Have each group share their responses as time allows.]

Why is the Christian life sometimes so difficult and challenging to live?

A. Our battle is the Lord’s.

Though we must be prepared for spiritual conflict, we must also remember that our battle is the Lord’s (2 Chronicles 20:15).

He said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.’” 2 Chronicles 20:15

B. Three forces wage war against the believer:

1. The world (1 John 2:15-17).

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2:15-17

a. “The Bible warns us not to love the world.”



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b. “No one who is in love with the world can be used by God.”

c. “Jesus has overcome the world.”

“I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

2. The flesh (Galatians 5:17).

[Ask someone to read Galatians 5:17.]

“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.” Galatians 5:17

“The flesh--our old sin nature--is at war with the Spirit.”

“This conflict will continue as long as we live.”

a. Temptation (the initial impression to do something contrary to God’s will) is not itself sin.

[Ask the class as a whole “When does temptation become sin?”]

“It becomes sin as we continue to meditate on it and develop a desire which becomes lust, which is often followed by an actual sin of disobedience.”

[Ask the class as a whole “So how would you describe the difference between temptation and sin?”]

“There is a difference between temptation and sin. The impressions to do something contrary to God’s will come to everyone, even as they did to our Lord, and are not sin in themselves. They become sin if we yield to the temptation.”

b. The conflict is resolved as we surrender continually to the control of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

“Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.’ For practical daily living we simply recognize our weakness whenever we are tempted and ask the Lord to take care of the problem for us.”



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3. The devil (1 Peter 5:8).

[Ask someone to read 1 Peter 5:8.]

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8

“Satan is a real foe seeking to destroy us. We have the assurance that ‘greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.’” (1 John 4:4b)

[Use this illustration, or one similar, to express the concept.]

“In zoos, lions are kept in cages. In the same way Satan is in a cage. Visit the cage in the zoo and watch a lion pacing impatiently back and forth. He cannot hurt you. Even if you go up close to the cage, he still cannot hurt you, if you are careful. But stay out of the cage, or you will be in danger. Get in the cage and the lion will tear you apart. But you have nothing to fear if you stay out of the cage.”

“We have nothing to fear from Satan if we depend upon Christ and not on our own strength. Remember, Satan has no power except that which God in his wisdom allows him to have. Satan was defeated 2,000 years ago at the cross and God’s power is sovereign over him.”

“God’s spiritual armor provides our safety against Satan.” (Ephesians 6:11,12)

III. KNOW YOUR RESOURCES AS A CHILD OF GOD

[Have the class as a whole consider the question, “What does Jesus want you to experience in your Christian life?” Record the class answers on an overhead.]

What does Jesus want you to experience in your Christian life?

A. Christ is the source of our strength (Ephesians 1:3). It is impossible to know and experience our resources in Christ without spending time with the Lord.

“It is impossible to walk victoriously in the Spirit without spending unhurried time in fellowship with the Lord. Time in His word, in prayer and in listening to Him for directions for our daily activities and witness is of utmost importance. We need to be able not only to experience this great adventure with Christ for ourselves, but to present it to others. Witnessing is critical to experiencing a balanced spiritual life.”



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“Remember that we become spiritual, experience power from God and become fruitful in our witness as a result of faith and obedience. The Bible clearly teaches that the ‘just shall live by faith.’ Works are the result of faith.”

B. We are able to live the Christian life only through the enabling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:5).

“Paul says, ‘I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord’s mighty power within you’ (Ephesians 6:10). Jesus Christ, in all of His mighty, resurrection power, lives in all of us who have become children of God through faith in Christ. I do not have strength in myself.”

C. The Holy Spirit enables us to be fruitful witnesses for Christ. (John 15:8); as we understand and draw upon our resources in Christ.

[Add a personal example of a recent fruitful witnessing experience when you drew upon your resources in Christ.]

“Leading people to Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we cannot boast over much fruit or be discouraged over little fruit. The responsibility for bearing fruit belongs to the Holy Spirit, who works in and through us producing fruit and changing lives as we exalt Jesus Christ.”

D. Christ’s power is available to help carry out the Great Commission. (Ephesians 1:19-23; Matthew 28:18-20)

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” Ephesians 1:19-23

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20

E. Yielding to Christ does not make us puppets. God does not force us to obey Him.

The more we understand our resources in Christ, the more we will desire to do His will.



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“A student asked, ‘If I give my life to Christ, do I become a puppet?’ No. We never become puppets. We have the right to make choices; we are free moral agents. God guides and encourages us, but we must act. He does not force us. But the more we understand the love of God, the faithfulness of God and the wisdom and power of God, the more we will want to trust Him with every detail of our lives. The secret of the successful Christian life is to keep Christ on the throne of our lives and live in the power and control of the Holy Spirit. Failure in our Christian lives will occur only if we deliberately choose to be disobedient.”

IV. LIVE BY FAITH

[Have the class divide into groups of 4-6 and consider the question, “What will typify the person who understands how to walk by faith?” Have each group list as many as they can. Have each group share their answers as time allows.]

What will typify the person who understands how to walk by faith?

A. We do not live by emotional experiences; we live by faith (Galatians 3:11).

1. Feelings are a by-product of faith (John 14:21).
2. Seeking emotional experiences denies God’s command to live by faith.

B. The object of our faith is God and His Word (Romans 8:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

1. “We can trust the great promise of God’s Word that all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28). Do you believe this? Then the reasonableness of God’s command in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 logically follows: ‘In everything give thanks for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.’”

“Have you learned to say, ‘Thank you, Lord,’ when your heart is broken because of the death of a loved one? Do you thank God when your body is in pain? When you receive a letter terminating a love relationship? When you have financial problems? When you fail an exam? When you are persecuted for your faith?”

2. “We may say that only a fool would give thanks to God under such circumstances. But, if God commands us to give thanks, then there is good reason for it. This is one of the most exciting lessons we can learn, to say, ‘Thank you’ when things go wrong.”

C. Cast all of our cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7).



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Christians have problems, but they are commanded to freely cast all of them on the Lord.

“I do not wish to suggest that Christians who walk in the fullness of the Spirit will have no problems. Problems of poor health, death, financial needs and other such experiences are common to everyone.”

“However, most of our problems are self-imposed because of our own worldly (carnal), selfish actions. Spiritual people are spared from most of these problems. But when the problems do come, they can be faced with a calm and confident attitude because of God’s divine resources which are available to deal with such problems.”

[It is important to use a personal illustration for this point.]

D. Giving thanks demonstrates faith (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

[It is important to use a personal illustration for this point.]

1. “Faith pleases God.”

2. “Unbelief displeases God.”

E. From the time we awaken in the morning until we go to bed at night we should walk with God, trusting and thanking Him for every circumstance of our lives.

V. APPLICATION

A. Be sure that you are filled with the Spirit by faith. This is based on God’s command to be filled and by claiming His promise that, if we ask according to His will, He will hear and answer.

B. Be prepared for spiritual conflict. The enemy is real. The world, the flesh and the devil will assail.

C. Know your resources as a child of God. Our strength must come from the Lord. We must abide in Him.

D. Live by faith, draw daily upon His strength, wisdom, power, and love, giving thanks in all things.

[Close in prayer.]