

LESSON 3

BEGINNING YOUR NEW LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

For three years the disciples had walked, worked and talked with Jesus. They knew Him, trusted Him and loved Him. On one particular night, however, Jesus told His disciples some very upsetting news: He would soon die.

Put yourself in the disciples' place. How would you feel? Confused? Frightened? Helpless? They probably did, too.

But then imagine hearing Jesus tell you that, as a result of His going to be with God the Father, another friend would come – one who would be with you; one who would be in you.

The friend who was to come is the Holy Spirit. The amazing thing that Jesus told His followers was that the Holy Spirit would reside in them. Even better, He would be with them forever. Imagine the encouragement this offered these individuals. God would make His home within the lives of those people who would love and receive Him.

In this way, the disciples would not be left with the impossible tasks of trying to imitate the character of Christ and attempting to continue His mission. Instead, through the Holy Spirit, the very life of Christ with all His character, authority and strength could be lived through their individual lives and personalities.

Twenty centuries later, Christ's promise still remains true. He offers hope to those who are trying to live as He lived. Anyone who has sincerely attempted to reach that goal knows that, worthy as it is, it is a hopeless ideal. Only Jesus Christ can act like Jesus Christ.

And that of course, is the uniqueness of Christianity. Instead of frustrating us with the inevitable failure of attempting to live up to impossibly high ethical, moral and spiritual standards, the only Person who ever perfectly fulfilled all those standards offers to do it again – through each one of us. Once Jesus has entered into a life, that person has the potential to let Him live out His life in and through him. This is available to anyone!

It sounds good, doesn't it? The obvious question is, how can I experience the resurrected Christ living His life through me? The following pages will help to explain.

Do you know how to be FILLED with the HOLY SPIRIT?

Every Day Can Be a Day of Victory for a Christian Through the Power of the Holy Spirit.

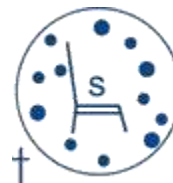
Before you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you were in control of your own life. But when you received Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit came to live within you (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit makes it possible for every Christian to live a victorious life. (2 Corinthians 3:18), for the Holy Spirit of God is more powerful than any other Spirit. (1 John 4:1-4).

However, in 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3, the Bible tells us about three kinds of people.

1. The Unspiritual or Natural Man

“The unspiritual or natural man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them for they are spiritually discerned.” **(1 Corinthians 2:14).**

This diagram shows that self (**S**) is in control of his own life and Christ (+) is outside his life.



The interests (●) of his life are under his control.

This person needs to receive Jesus Christ into his life as his Saviour.

2. The Spiritual or Spirit-controlled Christian

“The Spiritual man judges all things but is himself judged of no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” **(1 Corinthians 2:15).**



This diagram shows that this person (**S**) has received Jesus Christ into his life and he allows Christ (+) to control all the interests (●) of his life.

The Spiritual man allows Christ to control his life moment by moment and he therefore grows steadily toward Christian maturity, demonstrating more and more of the fruit of the Spirit.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is not law” **(Galatians 5:22,23)**.

As he allows Christ to control his life, he will want to please God. He will have a desire to read the Bible and pray. He will have a desire to tell others about Christ and be with other Christians.

However, when a Christian is not Spirit-controlled, he becomes...

3. A Self-Controlled or a Carnal Christian

“But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men but as babes in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving like ordinary men?” **(1 Corinthians 3:1-3)**

This diagram shows that although this person has received Christ as Saviour, Self (**S**) is still on the throne. He does not allow Christ (**+**) to control his life. The different interests of his life (**●**) are now under his control.



The Spirit Controlled Christian will become a self-controlled Christian, if he:

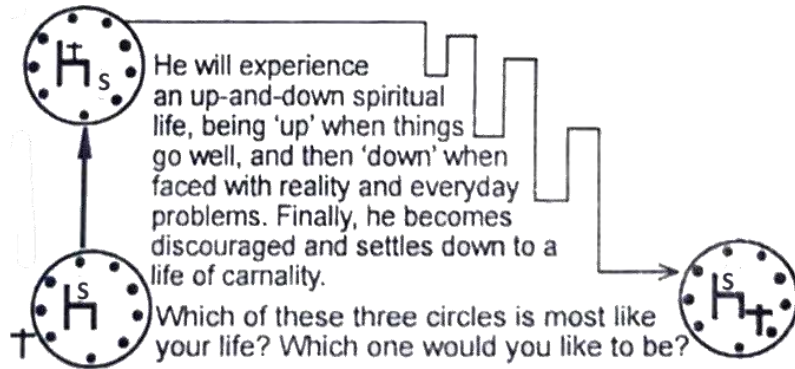
1. Cares more about pleasing himself than pleasing God (1 John 2:15-16); or
2. Tries to live the Christian life in his own strength. He tries but does not trust, then he wonders why he fails.

“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” **(Romans 7:15, 18, 24)**.

The self-controlled Christian does not enjoy a victorious Christian life. He begins to lose his love for God and others. He loses his desire for prayer and Bible study. He feels insecure, guilty and worried.

The following diagram shows the process by which a Spirit-controlled Christian becomes self-controlled.

The moment the natural man asks and trusts Christ to come into his life, he becomes Spirit-controlled. All may go well for a time until he meets problems. If he then begins to try and live the Christian life in his own efforts, instead of trusting Christ to live His life through him, he will go from one defeat to another as he struggles to succeed.



The Following Explains How You Can Become Spirit-Controlled

1. Recognize that you are living a carnal life.
2. Desire to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (**John 7:37-39; Matthew 5:6**).
3. Confess all known sins in your life (**1 John 1:9**).
4. Present every area of your life to God for Him to control again. (**Romans 12:1-2**).
5. By faith, claim the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Just as we become Christians by placing our faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour, we also become filled with the Holy Spirit by faith (**Col. 2:6**).

In **Ephesians 5:18**, God commands us to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In **1 John 5:14,15**, God promises to hear and answer us when we pray according to His will.

We can demonstrate our faith through prayer.

But First...

Do you recognize that you have been controlling your own life? Do you desire to be filled with Holy Spirit? If so, pause now to confess all known sins which the Holy Spirit brings to your mind...

Now pray in faith for God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. The following is a suggested prayer:

“Dear Holy Spirit, I need You. I have sinned because I have been controlling some areas of my life. Thank you for the forgiveness we have in Jesus. I want you to control my whole life again. Fill me dear Holy Spirit as the Bible commands. I surrender totally You. Thank you for taking control of my whole life. Amen.”

If this is the kind of prayer you would like to pray, then pray right now and have the Holy Spirit fill and control you.

How to Know That You Are Filled With (Controlled by) the Holy Spirit.

Do you know that you are now filled with the Holy Spirit? How do you know? God promises to hear and answer us when we pray according His will (**1 John 5:14,15**). So, you can know that you are filled with the Holy Spirit on the basis of God’s promises.

Do Not Depend Upon Feelings

Some days you will feel spiritual and some days you may not. No matter how you feel, thank God that He still continues to fill and control you as you trust Him. ***Then you will learn...***

How to Walk in the Spirit.

A Christian can only live the Spirit-filled life by faith. Keep trusting God to live His life through you moment by moment. However, if you do retake control of your life through sin, then “breathe spiritually.”

Spiritual Breathing

Breathing involves breathing out the impure air and breathing in the pure air. Spiritual breathing involves:

- 1. Breathing out:** Confessing, agreeing with God about our sin and turning from it.
- 2. Breathing In:** Surrendering the control of our life to Christ and receiving the filling of the Holy Spirit again by faith.

Breathe spiritually whenever you become aware of sin in your life. As you continue to do this, you will experience a consistent, victorious Christian life, day by day.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Under whose control is the carnal Christian?

2. On whose strength is the Spirit-controlled Christian relying?

3. What are the two aspects of spiritual breathing?

4. What three things are involved in breathing out (exhaling)?

5. What does breathing in (inhaling) mean?

6. We can know that we are filled with Holy Spirit by faith based on His

SUGGESTED READING

1. The Gospel of John

ANSWERS

1. The carnal Christian relies on himself to live the Christian life.

2. The Spirit-controlled Christian relies on the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life.
3. The two aspects of spiritual breathing are exhaling (breathing out) and inhaling (breathing in).
4. Exhaling (breathing out) involves:
 - Agreeing with God concerning the sin.*
 - Thanking Him for His forgiveness.*
 - Repenting – a change in attitude and action.*
5. Inhaling means surrendering the control of our lives to Christ and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith based on His command and promise.
6. We can know that we are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith based on His command and promise.