

Thirsty #2: Empowered

Objectives: We want to learn and reflect on how great our need is for the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we can be ready to begin walking in reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

Launch

There are many physical laws that continually impact the world everyday. An example is gravity. It is why skateboarding can be painful, why faces start to sag, and why airlines stay in business.

There are also moral laws, and just like their physical counterparts, they are binding on all of us everyday. Some examples are...

- Do Not Lie
- Do Not Lust
- Do Not Hate
- Do Not Gossip
- Do Not Worry
- Do Not Covet
- Love the Lord Your God with All Your Heart, Soul, and Mind

- How do moral laws impact your everyday life?

Explore

Read Romans 7:7-25

- What are your observations?
- What does Paul mean in verse 15?
- In speaking of the Old Testament commandments, Paul seems to indicate that they actually increased the desire to sin. How have you experienced this effect with laws and rules?
- What, then, does God point out by giving us the commandments (the law)? (That we would know we are sinners in need of a savior.)

Though the Spirit indwells us the moment we trust Christ, most believers live out their Christian life under their own strength and self-effort. That's not the Christian life. Not even close.

- What happens, for example, when I say, "Whatever you do, do not look at the ..."? (Bring in a weird object for the example. You could have them close their eyes, then place it somewhere that most would have to look over to see what it is. Then tell them that when they open their eyes to not look at that direction to see what it is. Tell them not to look at it for the rest of the study.)
- Does this make you want to look? How does it feel that you are told you can't?

Moral laws make us aware of our sin problem, but they are powerless to fix it and powerless to transform us. They are like an x-ray machine alerting us to our moral problem, not a doctor able to fix it. The only way to overcome the law of sin is by a new principle: the law of the Spirit.

Read Romans 7:24-8:18

- What are your observations?
- What is condemnation? Why are we free from it? (Judgment, death, separation from God. Christ has set us free.)
- How should freedom from condemnation impact us?
- In this passage we find living by the law (or by flesh) and living by the Spirit contrasted. List out the different contrasts. (It may be good to keep a list for the next question. Most are found in v2,6,7,13,15)
- When looking at these contrasts, how would you define what it means to live by the Spirit? (Ex. The Spirit lovingly gives us life and sets us free to submit to God and set our minds on the Holy Spirit.)

As referenced in Romans 8:18, we won't have a sin nature in heaven. Currently, however, we are indwelt by both the Spirit and our sinful nature, and therein lays our struggle.

- What might be some of God’s purposes in allowing this struggle and not removing our sin nature here and now? (Continually reminding us for a need of a savior. Seeking God more to refine us. To help us long for heaven.)

Apply

When referring to our sin nature, Paul often uses the word “flesh”—a great word that connotes our deeply engrained habits of sin. (Some Bible translations leave the word “flesh,” but others replace it with “sin nature” for clarity.) Our flesh is strongest in those areas where we cultivated its influence and gave ourselves over to its indulgence.

- In what areas of your life is your flesh (sin nature) more evident?

While the Scriptures elsewhere answer, “How are we to live by the Spirit?” they do not do so here. What is highlighted is the reality of both indwelling influences and the choice we have to live according to one or the other.

It is important to learn how to live by the Spirit, but for tonight our focus is to reflect on how great our need is for the Holy Spirit in our lives.

- How are you currently attempting to choose the law of the Spirit over the law of the flesh?
- How can relying on your own self-effort lead to struggling in your sin nature?

God often allows us to struggle in our self-effort because we need to come to the end of ourselves before we are ready to begin walking in reliance upon his Spirit. Walking in the Spirit and being filled and empowered is a lifestyle, and learning how to walk is a lifelong process. For now, we just want to take the first step to which Romans 8 calls us, and that is to decide to walk in step with God’s Spirit. There are three important questions you need to ask yourself, which in fact comprise this decision:

1. *Are you willing to surrender control of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ?*
 2. *Are you willing to confess sin and turn from it as God reveals it to you?*
 3. *Do you sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit?*
- Can you say yes to these questions? Why or why not? Is there one question that might be holding you back? (It’s important to not just ask this question intellectually, but on a heart level as well.)
 - How will saying yes to these questions help satisfy your thirst the way God intended?

For the rest of this series we will look at ‘How are we to live by the Spirit’, but our first step is to decide if we want to walk in step with God or not. Let’s take some time to pray for each other tonight and continue to do so over this week.

1. Pray that we will be able to say yes, that we can grow in their trust and understanding of God. Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal the sin in our hearts that we may be holding on to, that we may surrender control and entrust the Holy Spirit.
2. Pray that, when we do say yes to these questions, God will lead, direct, and empower our lives through his indwelling Spirit. Ask God to show us, step by step, what it means to walk in the power of the Spirit.