

GROWING MOVEMENTS SERIES



A devotional on living a

SPIRIT-FILLED life.



THIRSTY

14 self-study devotions

Thirsty

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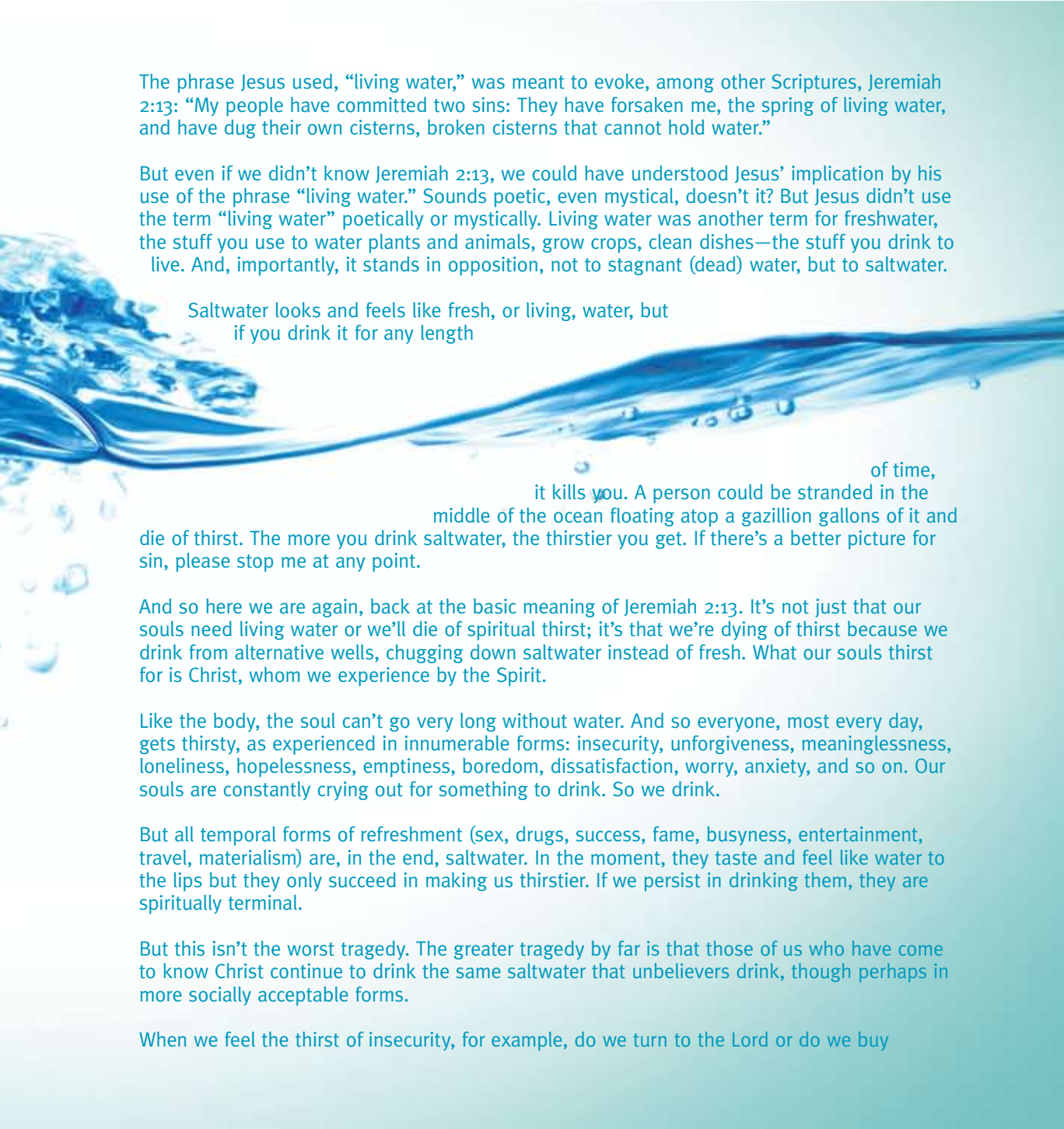
A high-speed photograph of a blue water splash. The water is captured in mid-air, creating a series of overlapping, curved layers that flow from the left towards the right. Numerous small, clear bubbles are suspended within the water, adding texture and movement to the scene. The background is a clean, bright white, which makes the vibrant blue of the water stand out prominently.

THIRSTY?



Introduction.

Have you ever felt that this can't be all there is—that somehow there must be something deeper, something more to the Christian life? Something you don't need to act out but a palpable source of energy and life flowing from the heart? Not behavior modification by your own effort and discipline but life transformation through God's power? Jesus clearly taught that there was when he said, "if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John goes on to tell us, "By this he meant the Spirit" (John 7:37-39). According to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is the source of that "something more," the source of what's missing.



The phrase Jesus used, “living water,” was meant to evoke, among other Scriptures, Jeremiah 2:13: “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

But even if we didn’t know Jeremiah 2:13, we could have understood Jesus’ implication by his use of the phrase “living water.” Sounds poetic, even mystical, doesn’t it? But Jesus didn’t use the term “living water” poetically or mystically. Living water was another term for freshwater, the stuff you use to water plants and animals, grow crops, clean dishes—the stuff you drink to live. And, importantly, it stands in opposition, not to stagnant (dead) water, but to saltwater.

Saltwater looks and feels like fresh, or living, water, but
if you drink it for any length

of time,
it kills you. A person could be stranded in the
middle of the ocean floating atop a gazillion gallons of it and
die of thirst. The more you drink saltwater, the thirstier you get. If there’s a better picture for
sin, please stop me at any point.

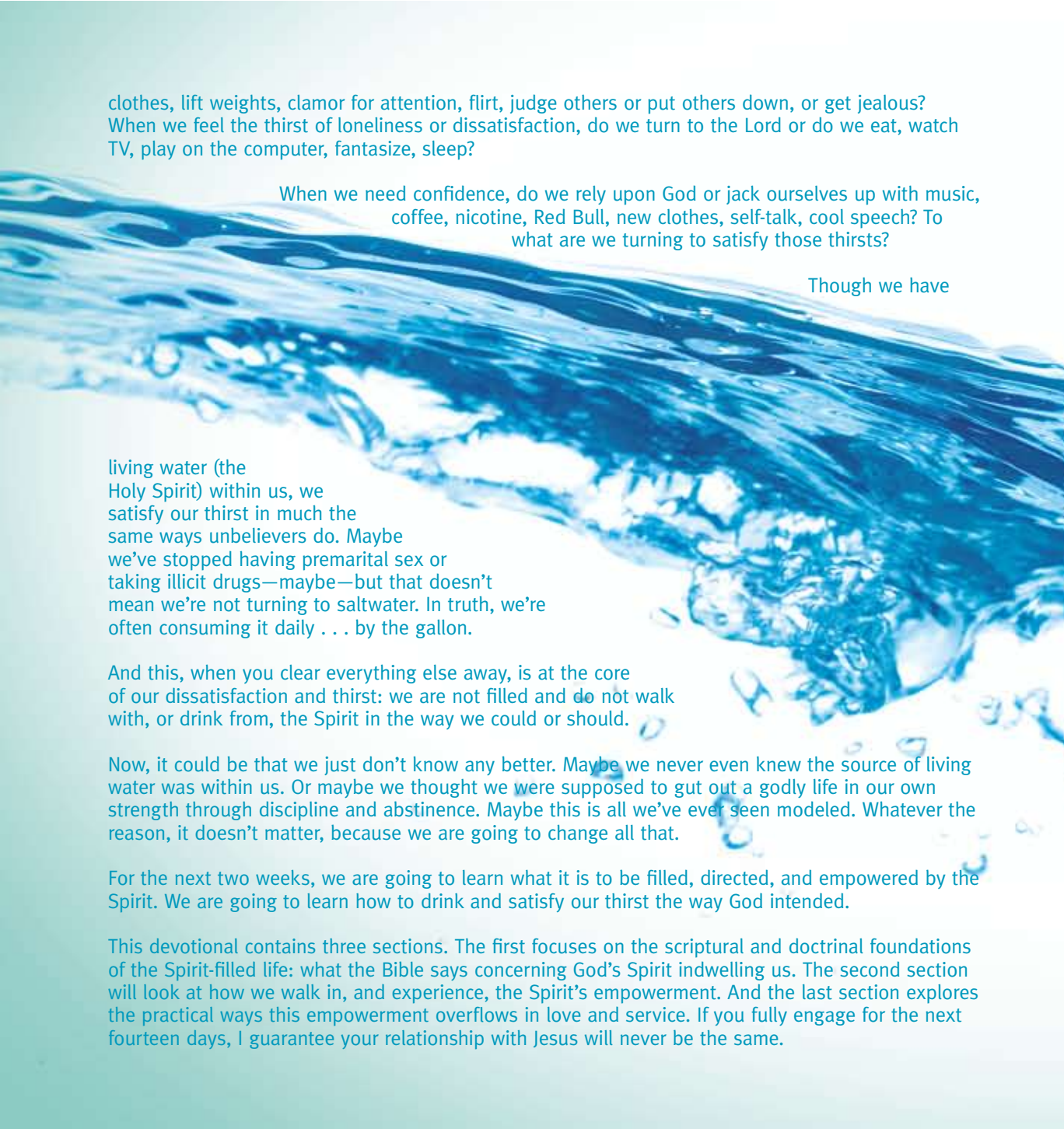
And so here we are again, back at the basic meaning of Jeremiah 2:13. It’s not just that our souls need living water or we’ll die of spiritual thirst; it’s that we’re dying of thirst because we drink from alternative wells, chugging down saltwater instead of fresh. What our souls thirst for is Christ, whom we experience by the Spirit.

Like the body, the soul can’t go very long without water. And so everyone, most every day, gets thirsty, as experienced in innumerable forms: insecurity, unforgiveness, meaninglessness, loneliness, hopelessness, emptiness, boredom, dissatisfaction, worry, anxiety, and so on. Our souls are constantly crying out for something to drink. So we drink.

But all temporal forms of refreshment (sex, drugs, success, fame, busyness, entertainment, travel, materialism) are, in the end, saltwater. In the moment, they taste and feel like water to the lips but they only succeed in making us thirstier. If we persist in drinking them, they are spiritually terminal.

But this isn’t the worst tragedy. The greater tragedy by far is that those of us who have come to know Christ continue to drink the same saltwater that unbelievers drink, though perhaps in more socially acceptable forms.

When we feel the thirst of insecurity, for example, do we turn to the Lord or do we buy



clothes, lift weights, clamor for attention, flirt, judge others or put others down, or get jealous? When we feel the thirst of loneliness or dissatisfaction, do we turn to the Lord or do we eat, watch TV, play on the computer, fantasize, sleep?

When we need confidence, do we rely upon God or jack ourselves up with music, coffee, nicotine, Red Bull, new clothes, self-talk, cool speech? To what are we turning to satisfy those thirsts?

Though we have

living water (the Holy Spirit) within us, we satisfy our thirst in much the same ways unbelievers do. Maybe we've stopped having premarital sex or taking illicit drugs—maybe—but that doesn't mean we're not turning to saltwater. In truth, we're often consuming it daily . . . by the gallon.

And this, when you clear everything else away, is at the core of our dissatisfaction and thirst: we are not filled and do not walk with, or drink from, the Spirit in the way we could or should.

Now, it could be that we just don't know any better. Maybe we never even knew the source of living water was within us. Or maybe we thought we were supposed to gut out a godly life in our own strength through discipline and abstinence. Maybe this is all we've ever seen modeled. Whatever the reason, it doesn't matter, because we are going to change all that.

For the next two weeks, we are going to learn what it is to be filled, directed, and empowered by the Spirit. We are going to learn how to drink and satisfy our thirst the way God intended.

This devotional contains three sections. The first focuses on the scriptural and doctrinal foundations of the Spirit-filled life: what the Bible says concerning God's Spirit indwelling us. The second section will look at how we walk in, and experience, the Spirit's empowerment. And the last section explores the practical ways this empowerment overflows in love and service. If you fully engage for the next fourteen days, I guarantee your relationship with Jesus will never be the same.



SECTION ONE:

Indwelt by the Spirit

PERSON

PRESENT

SECURE

EMPOWERED

SECTION TWO:

Influence of the Spirit

WALKING

RELIANCE

LED

ATMOSPHERE

AWAKE

NAKED

SECTION THREE:

Overflow of the Spirit

POWER TO WITNESS

POWER FOR HOLINESS

POWER TO SERVE

FATHER, SON, & HOLY SPIRIT

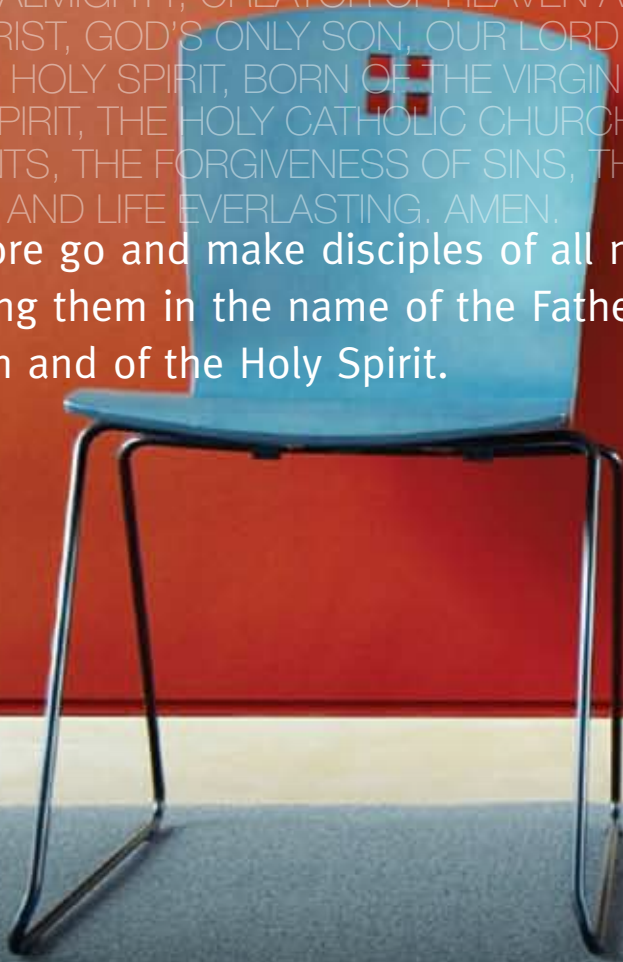
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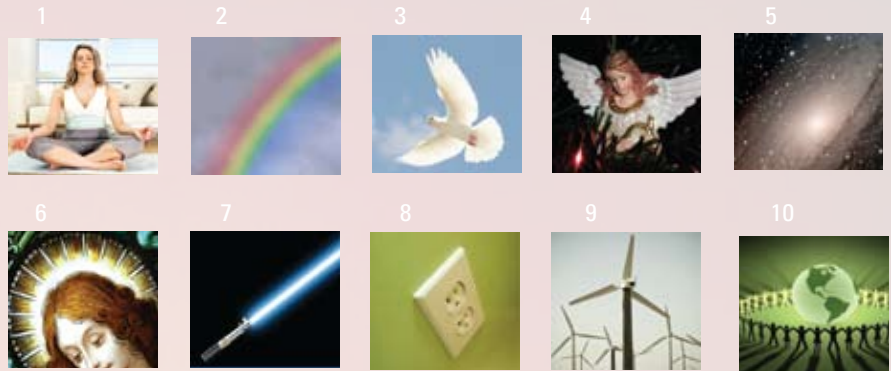
PERSON

I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY. I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

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.

MATTHEW 28:19





Which image do you think best represents people's general understanding of the Holy Spirit?

In your mind, which images do a lousy job of representing the Holy Spirit's identity? Why?

Which image best represents the Holy Spirit to you? Why that image?

If you had to come up with your own image, what would it be? What do you envision when you think about the Holy Spirit?

What are some of the conceptual distortions about the Holy Spirit pictured in some of the images above?

Why is image 3 so often used when depicting the Holy Spirit?

Introducing the Holy Spirit.

Read John 16:5-15. In this discourse Jesus gives a formal introduction to the third person of the Trinity. Write what you learn from the passage about the Holy Spirit and why he was sent.

The person of the Spirit.

Personhood is not a matter of having feet or eyebrows but rather of having attributes of being such as intellect, agency (the ability to act), will, emotion, and identity. Below are some of the major biblical passages that affirm the unique personhood of the Spirit. Look up each and record what aspect of personhood is described.

Acts 5:3

Romans 15:30

1 Corinthians 2:10; 12:11

Ephesians 4:30

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

While the identity of the Holy Spirit is not fully revealed until the New Testament, most scholars see inferences about him in Old Testament passages such as Genesis 1:26-27. What Holy Spirit inferences do you see in these opening verses of Scripture?

GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, IN OUR LIKENESS, AND LET THEM RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND THE BIRDS OF THE AIR, OVER THE LIVESTOCK, OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND OVER ALL THE CREATURES THAT MOVE ALONG THE GROUND." SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. GENESIS 1:26-27

Is there something to be learned about the nature of God in the nature and creation of man?

Why do you think that God did not fully disclose his triune nature (Trinity) until the coming of Jesus?

The Trinity.

How would you clarify the Trinity to someone who thinks you believe in three gods?

While the term "Trinity" is never used in Scripture, the personhood and deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are clearly taught. If we were to summarize the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity, it would be as follows: God is three distinct persons; each person is fully God; there is one God.

The greatest minds of the last two thousand years have generally conceded that while we can state these three truths with clarity, like the mathematical concept of a fourth spatial dimension or the mystery of human consciousness, the Trinity is beyond our human capacity to perceive or envision.





Flatland. *In 1884, Edwin Abbot wrote “Flatland,” an imaginative story of life in a two-dimensional world. The protagonist is A. Square, and as the name suggests, he’s simply a flat shape—lines on a page. The story illuminates the difficulty of picturing 3-D life for a two-dimensional being. A. Square, for example, can only experience a sphere as a flat circle, for in Flatland the concept of depth is unfathomable. Flatland is still used in math today as a helpful analogy to explain the difficulty of envisioning a fourth spatial dimension.*

Incomprehensible as it may be, there has been no shortage of illustrations offered over the years that attempt to explain the Trinity. To a degree, they are all helpful. But, to a degree, they are all deficient. Below are some of the better known of the illustrations. Look at each, and if you can, write down what it tries to communicate and where the analogy fails.

Water illustrates the Trinity in that it can manifest itself in three forms: liquid, vapor, and ice.

An egg illustrates the Trinity in that it is made up of three constituent parts: shell, egg white, and yolk.

Sex illustrates the Trinity because, in the consummation of marriage, two people, to the extent possible, become one.

A plant illustrates the Trinity, with the Father as the root, the Son as the shoot that breaks forth into the world, and the Spirit as that which spreads beauty and fragrance.

A person illustrates the Trinity in the union and interdependence of intellect, emotion, and will.



As these illustrations are not all equal in their descriptive insight, which do you find most helpful?

The Trinity is one of many mysteries surrounding God that can freeze the brain when pondered too long. What other mysteries about God do you wrestle with?

How all three persons comprise one God may not be as clear as we’d like. What is clear is that the doctrine of the Trinity is true and that each member of the Trinity plays a distinct role in our salvation, for we “have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood” (1 Peter 1:2). It is also clear that the mission and ministry of the Spirit are to bring glory to the Son. The Spirit labors in us to focus our mind, affections, worship, and service toward “our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

What I know now.

Since we’ve touched on some abstract ideas, try to process the content through answering these two questions:

How I viewed the Holy Spirit in the past:

How I view him now:



I AM WHO I AM ADONAI JEHOVA ROPHE GOD ALMIGHTY FATHER LORD ELOHIM EL SHADDAI ELYON YESHUA FIRST AND LAST ALPHA AND OMEGA LIVING GOD EL ROI HOLY ONE GREAT SHEPHERD LORD OF HOSTS GOD MOST HIGH EVERLASTING GOD KURIOS WORD MAKER GOD ONLY WISE REDEEMER ADONAI AVINU CREATOR HOLY GLORY ETERNAL IMMANUEL

PRESENT

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

EPHESIANS 2:22

OKAY, SO YOU ENTER A ROOM AND THERE YOU FIND THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE: TWO POWERFUL POLITICAL FIGURES (BARACK OBAMA AND MAYBE HILLARY CLINTON), A COUPLE OF SPORTS ICONS (LIKE TOM BRADY AND TIGER WOODS), YOUR TWO FAVORITE MUSICIANS (LET'S SAY DAVE MATTHEWS AND BEYONCE), AND TWO ACTORS WHO DEFINE BEAUTY (SUCH AS BRAD PITT AND ANGELINA JOLIE). THAT'S THE SCENARIO. NOW . . .

Whose presence would you find most intimidating?

How would you feel in his or her presence? Why?

Which inspires a greater sense of awe in you: being in the presence of beauty, power, genius, or talent? Why?

Now imagine what it would be like to stand in the presence of God. Write down the first five words that come to your mind ("Terrifying"? "Blinding"?).

Were your initial thoughts physical (the appearance), emotional (exciting, terrifying), or spiritual (unworthy, guilty)? Why, do you think?

How do these thoughts or feelings differ from those that come from being in the presence of celebrities?

Old Testament encounters.

Look up the following verses and make notes of three things: What does God communicate about himself? What does he use to communicate it? What emotions might be evoked by that particular demonstration of his character?

The Israelites' experience: Exodus 19:9-20

Moses' experience: Exodus 33:14—34:8

Elijah's experience: 1 Kings 19:9-13

The story of God's presence and the temple.

From the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, God's presence had dwelled with them in a unique way. A portable tent, or tabernacle, was erected for God's residence among them. And yet it wasn't until some 450 years after their Red Sea crossing that King David's son Solomon built a permanent structure in Jerusalem, a temple, to be the earthly focal point of God's dwelling among his people. Upon the completion of the temple, there was an inauguration ceremony that concluded with Solomon praying as follows:



NOW ARISE, O LORD GOD, AND COME TO YOUR RESTING PLACE, YOU AND THE ARK OF YOUR MIGHT. MAY YOUR PRIESTS, O LORD GOD, BE CLOTHED WITH SALVATION, MAY YOUR SAINTS REJOICE IN YOUR GOODNESS. O LORD GOD, DO NOT REJECT YOUR ANOINTED ONE. REMEMBER THE GREAT LOVE PROMISED TO DAVID YOUR SERVANT.

WHEN SOLOMON FINISHED HIS PRAYER, FIRE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND CONSUMED THE BURNT OFFERING AND THE SACRIFICES, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TEMPLE.

THE PRIESTS COULD NOT ENTER THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD BECAUSE THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED IT. WHEN ALL THE ISRAELITES SAW THE FIRE COMING DOWN AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD ABOVE THE TEMPLE, THEY KNELT ON THE PAVEMENT WITH THEIR FACES TO THE GROUND, AND THEY WORSHIPED AND GAVE THANKS TO THE LORD, SAYING, "HE IS GOOD; HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER." 2 CHRONICLES 6:41—7:3

All in all, a pretty wild demonstration of God's power as his presence filled the temple. And, by the way, this was a one-time performance. While God's presence continued to dwell in the temple throughout Israel's history, it was only at the inauguration (the grand opening so-to-speak) that we witness such a dramatic scene—God visibly demonstrating that his presence now dwelled in the temple among his people. Another event wouldn't occur like this until after Jesus had been raised. And it's that event that we want to look at next.

The new temple. Read Acts 2.

Pentecost was a Jewish harvest festival celebrating the firstfruits of the coming harvest. How does this backdrop aid our understanding of the event?

Why do you think God chose speaking in different languages as a sign of his presence among the church?

What other tangible results or outworkings of the Spirit's presence do you see in this chapter?

How were the disciples different as a result of the Spirit's presence?

In light of the fear and awe associated with God's presence throughout Israel's history, how do you think the disciples felt when they realized that **they** were the new temple? (Excited? Paranoid?)

According to God's Word, the moment you trusted Christ, the Holy Spirit was given to you and indwells you. You are now God's temple. "You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13).

Like the filling of the Jerusalem temple, the Pentecost event in Acts 2 was a unique display of God's empowering presence. Typically, our experience of God's indwelling lacks this supernatural commotion. Rather, this is something we are to take by faith in what Scripture has promised, and what it's promised is that God lives in you and will never leave.



As best you can remember, when did you place your faith in Christ? What were the circumstances surrounding your decision?

As you let your mind mull over this fact—that through the Holy Spirit, God actually indwells you—what are some of the immediate implications that come to mind?

Tracing the word “filled” in a single chapter of Acts sheds light on the way in which we feel and experience the Spirit's presence:

Saul, who was also called Paul, FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT . . .

When the Jews saw the crowds, THEY WERE FILLED WITH JEALOUSY. . . .

The disciples WERE FILLED WITH JOY AND WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. ACT 13:9, 45, 52, EMPHASIS ADDED


How is being filled with the Spirit similar to be filled with joy or jealousy? How is it different?

Why do you think God makes his influence and presence so subtle in our lives, working in concert with our own thoughts and emotions rather than overriding them?

How have you experienced or felt the Spirit's presence or influence in your life since becoming a Christian?

What variables might affect how much you feel or experience the Spirit's influence? Put another way, are there things you can do to increase or decrease the Spirit's influence upon your thoughts and actions?

As the Lord indwells you, your life is now his home. What about your life right now do you think Jesus would want to change to make his new temple more of a “holy dwelling”?



He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 CORINTHIANS 1:21,22

SECURE

WE HAVE FORGIVENESS OF SIN
WE HAVE BEEN MADE HOLY
WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE
WE HAVE REDEMPTION
YOU ARE HOLY AND CHOSEN
YOU ARE BLESSED
YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD
YOU ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD
YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD
YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED BY GRACE
YOU HAVE BEEN RECONCILED
YOU HAVE FULLNESS IN CHRIST
YOU HAVE BEEN SET FREE



Having believed, you were marked in him with
a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. EPHESIANS 1:13

King of Aboh.

Marty Johnson knew he was the product of two young college students who had a brief affair. Neither parent was prepared to deal with raising a child, so Johnson was given up for adoption and grew up in Minnesota. Years later, as an adult, he started digging through past records and got in contact with his birth-mother. Then a letter arrived one day that said, "Welcome to the Ogike dynasty! You come from a noble and prestigious family." The letter went on to explain that Johnson was the next in line to inherit the position of village chief from his biological father, John Ogike, the current chief of Aboh village in Nigeria. (ABC NEWS)

Letter to the Ephesians.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14. Write down all those things that you have inherited in Christ. Wherever it says "us" or "we," change it to "I" or "me."

We've all experienced spiritual worries (*Can I lose my salvation? What if I fall away from God? Am I the Antichrist?*). Write down those things that have caused you some anxiety or insecurity in your relationship with Christ.

Which of the truths in Ephesians 1 provides you the most comfort or security?

Yo.

Dalton Conley is a sociologist at New York University. He and his wife, Natalie Jeremijenko, have two children. They recently sought permission with the city of New York to change their four-year-old son's name to Yo Xing Heyno Augustus Eisner Alexander Weiser Knuckles Jeremijenko-Conley. At home, the boy is known as Yo. CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Write out a new name for yourself, perhaps an even longer name than Yo's, that encapsulates what is true of you in Christ. (Think of names like Saved, Loved, or Redeemed, as opposed to Eisner, Weiser, or Knuckles.)

Downpayment.

Ephesians 1:1-14 demonstrates the distinct roles the persons of the Trinity play in your salvation. Describe their differing roles:

Father

Son

Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:14 states that the Holy Spirit is a "deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession." An insanely powerful passage, if you reflect on the keywords. So let's reflect on the keywords. Try to define what each word means on your own—or look it up. Just pondering a dictionary definition can open up new windows of meaning from the passage.

Deposit

Guarantee

Inheritance

Redemption

Possession

Which do you find most meaningful? How are any of these truths currently changing how you think, believe, act?

Why do you think God wants us to know that we can never lose our relationship with him? Why isn't he concerned that this will give us the freedom to sin more?

Sealed.

In Ephesians 1:13, Paul writes, "Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit." The word 'sealed' has a range of meanings. All of the following images are sealed in some way:



With these in mind, write out all of the implications of what it means to be sealed by the Holy Spirit?

Adoption.

The apostle John describes our conversion with an analogy from human birth: **“TO ALL WHO RECEIVED HIM, TO THOSE WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME, HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD—CHILDREN BORN NOT OF NATURAL DESCENT, NOR OF HUMAN DECISION OR A HUSBAND’S WILL, BUT BORN OF GOD.”** JOHN 1:12-13

As our spiritual birth was outside the realm of “human decision,” what does this mean to your security as a child of God? It might be helpful to reflect upon this: no matter what you do, relationally and genetically you can never cease to be your parent’s child. Your parentage is what it is, and by virtue of your birth, it’s irreversible.

Ephesians 1:4-5 tells us that “in love he predestined us to be adopted.” While you may never have signed papers from some heavenly adoption agency, you have, in fact, been adopted into God’s family—and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is assurance and confirmation of this. Not to be cute, but in order to forge it into our hearts, finish filling out the particulars of this affirmation of your adoption.

STATE OF _____ Term, _____

COUNTY OF _____

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

Irrespective of birth parents and personal history this certifies that on the _____ Day, in the month of _____, in the year, _____, that _____, (original name) confirmed his or her status as an adopted child. A permanent member of the family, which can neither be undone by the child or by any authority, and is binding, irreversible, and indissoluble. All rights, status and privileges of the adopted family are hereby and permanently transferred to _____ (original name)

P. A. Shelton
Clerk.



EMPOWER

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to
debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. PSALMS 138

And I will put my Spirit in you and move
you to follow my decrees and be careful
to keep my laws. EZEKIEL 36:27

The tyranny of $F=ma$.

$F=ma$ is why skateboarding is painful, why faces (and other things) sag, and why airlines stay in business. It's the equation that describes the law of gravity. There are also moral laws, and just like their physical counterparts, they are binding on all of us. Which of the following moral laws do you find most difficult to keep?

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.

If you could be exempt from any one of these moral laws, which would you choose?

Do you think people who have never read the Bible know these moral laws exist? (Look at Romans 1.)

A plane flies due to the ingenious shape of its wings. Higher air pressure under the wing actually lifts the plane and cancels out the law of gravity. This principle is famously known as Bernoulli's principle. In an interesting parallel, Romans 7 and 8 describe the inescapable gravity of the law of sin, which is binding on all of us—all of us, that is, except those living by the law of the Spirit. The law of the Spirit is able to cancel out sin's gravity.

The Law of Gravity.

Read Romans 7:7-25

What does Paul mean when he says, **"I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT I DO. FOR WHAT I WANT TO DO I DO NOT DO, BUT WHAT I HATE I DO"** ROMANS 7:15

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, was the point of God giving us the commandments (the law)?



In what ways have you experienced, or are you experiencing, this “law of sin” in your life?

Power outage.

When a hurricane hit South Florida, Norena’s home was one of many severely damaged. The elderly woman received an insurance settlement for repairs. However the contractor took her money and skipped town leaving an unfinished home with no electricity. Norena has been living without power ever since.

The astounding part of this story is that the hurricane was Hurricane Andrew. Norena has been living in the dark since 1992: no heat, no air conditioning, not one hot shower. Without money to finish the repairs, Norena just got by with a small lamp and a single burner. Acting on a tip, the mayor of Miami-Dade got involved. It only took a few hours of work by an electrical contractor to return power to the house. “It’s hard to describe having [the electricity] . . . to switch on,” she said. “It’s overwhelming.”³

The principle of flight.

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. To use the airplane metaphor, our best efforts cannot prevail against the gravity of sin and our sinful nature. In fact, the harder we try, the stronger the pull of gravity. What happens, for example, when I say, “Whatever you do, do not look at the paper airplane”? It made you want to look more, didn’t it? Moral laws make us aware of our sin problem, but they are powerless to fix it, powerless to transform us. They are 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.

“THROUGH CHRIST JESUS THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE SET ME FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.” ROMANS 8:2

Roman law.

Carefully read Romans 7:24—8:18. What is condemnation? Why are we free from it?

What difference does this make, or should this make, to us?

In this passage we find living by the law and living by the Spirit contrasted. Write out those contrasts.

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 lies our struggle. In what area of your life are you most experiencing this struggle?

What might be some of God’s purposes in allowing this struggle and not removing our sin nature here and now?



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 ways or areas of your life did you do this? Where is your flesh strongest?

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. In the devotions that follow we’ll look closely at how to live by the Spirit. But before we do, it’s important to reflect on this question: how are you currently attempting to “put to death the misdeeds of the body” (Romans 8:13) and grow in holiness? Describe:

How, as they say, is that working out for you?

Write a note to God, giving voice to any questions or frustrations you’ve had in your struggle with sin:

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 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:

Are you willing to surrender control of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Are you willing to confess sin and turn from it as God reveals it to you?

Do you sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit?

If you can say yes to these questions, then you can pray right now. Ask God—from this point forward—to lead, direct, and empower your life through his indwelling Spirit. Also ask him to show you, step by step, what it means to walk in the power of the Spirit.

Dear Father . . .

If “asking” was the first step of walking in the Spirit, then the second step is to trust and believe. By faith, trust God to lead and empower you as you seek daily to walk in step with him.

So, how do we daily walk in step with the Spirit? Let’s press on to section two . . .

REVIEW

If you're a practical or relational or creative person, which I guess is most of us, then the first section will not have been as stimulating as the sections to follow. But these are the foundational truths on which the practical and experiential aspects of walking in the Spirit are grounded, and it's therefore essential for us to ground ourselves in them. Allowing the images to jog your memory, write down the things you remember from this section and the things you don't want to forget.





INTRODUCTION TO SECTION TWO

INFLUENCE

Walking in step with God's Spirit is really a partnership or marriage (depending upon your preference of metaphor). We don't run off on our own and go perform for God or discipline ourselves to greater degrees of holiness. Nor, for that matter, do we sit passively by waiting for God to blink us into holy creatures. Though we often err in either of these directions, spiritual growth is a partnership. Author John Ortberg describes our cooperation and partnership with God's Spirit in this way:

*Spiritual transformation is a long-term endeavor. It involves both God and us. I liken it to crossing an ocean. Some people try, day after day, to be good, to become spiritually mature. That's like taking a rowboat across the ocean; it's exhausting and usually unsuccessful. Others have given up trying and throw themselves entirely upon "relying on God's grace." They're like drifters on a raft; they do nothing but hang on and hope God gets them there. Neither trying nor drifting are effective in bringing about spiritual transformation. A better image is the sailboat, which if it moves at all it's a gift of the wind. We can't control the wind, but a good sailor discerns where the wind is blowing and adjusts the sails accordingly. Working with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus likened to the wind in John 3, means we have a part in discerning the winds, in knowing the direction we need to go, and in training our sails to catch the breezes that God provides..That's true transformation.*⁴

Taking possession of the land.

This idea of partnership is helpfully demonstrated in Israel's relationship with God in the Old Testament era. According to Genesis, God gave the Promised Land to Israel, but upon arrival, Israel found people still living there. As it turns out, they had to partner with God to take possession of each and every acre of land. God did not do it for them, and they did not do it for themselves. As they were obedient, walked by faith, and depended upon God, they were led in victory, city by city, town by town. Our spiritual growth is precisely like that: as we walk in step with God's Spirit, he leads us on to greater holiness, battle by battle, sin by sin, taking greater and greater control of our lives.

Maximum influence.

Perhaps the best New Testament description of this partnership is found in Paul's letter to the Philippians:

CONTINUE TO WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU TO WILL AND TO ACT ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PURPOSE.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12, 13

God's part is to *work in* us "to will and to act according to his good purpose." Our part is to *work out* what God is working in us to do. By "work out," it means we must participate in the process through—among other things—faith, reliance, and obedience.

The Holy Spirit indwells you and he will lead, direct, and empower you. That's what Philippians 2 says: he will influence your thoughts, actions, motivations, and emotions, but you must play a role. Whether the Spirit's influence in your life is like a dripping faucet or a racing river depends upon your participation in the process. What follows is how we participate and partner with God to experience the maximum influence of the Spirit in our life.

THE FOUNDATION OF

SPIRIT & WORD

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD. EPHESIANS 6:17

DO NOT GET DRUNK ON WINE, WHICH LEADS TO DEBAUCHERY. INSTEAD, BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER WITH PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS. SING AND MAKE MUSIC IN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD, ALWAYS GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER FOR EVERYTHING, IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. EPHESIANS 5:18-20

LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, SINCE AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY YOU WERE CALLED TO PEACE. AND BE THANKFUL. LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY AS YOU TEACH AND ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER WITH ALL WISDOM, AND AS YOU SING PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS WITH GRATITUDE IN YOUR HEARTS TO GOD. COLOSSIANS 3:15-16

We find in Ephesians and Colossians parallel passages, each describing the Spirit-filled life; parallel that is except that one emphasizes the Spirit and the other God's Word. Did you catch that?

How is God's Word connected to his Spirit?

How is God's Spirit connected to his Word?

What might be the danger of focusing and following God's Spirit apart from his Word?

How does God's Spirit use the Word to bring about life-change in us?

The Spirit enables and empowers us to believe and trust the Word. How have you experienced this?

Why do you think this connection is foundational to our study on the Spirit-Filled life?

God's holy inspired Word has several characteristics that guarantee powerful results. First, it is infused with the power of the Holy Spirit. It has been said that a Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person who isn't. That is because God's Word is energetic and active, speaking to today's world and our own personal needs and circumstances.

Second, God's word is truth. It awakens our conscience. With the power to reach into the private corners of our hearts, the Word bares our motives and secret feelings and reveals our hidden longings.

Third, God's Word discerns our true character. It exposes the weakness in our attitudes and conduct, enabling us to correct ourselves by the power of His Holy Spirit. BILL BRIGHT

Now, with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, let's look at "walking in the Spirit."

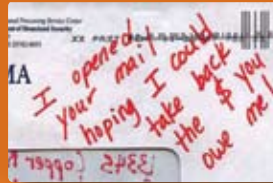
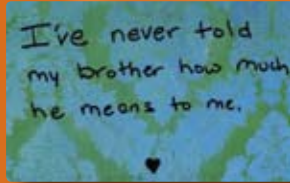
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EFTRIGHTLEFTTRIGHTLEFTTR
IGHTLEFTTRIGHTLEFTTRIGHT
LEFTTRIGHTLEFTTRIGHTLIGH

WALKING

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep
in step with the Spirit. GALATIANS 5:25

Can't seem to get clean.

Researchers at the University of Toronto published experiment results suggesting that people experience a powerful urge to wash themselves when suffering from a guilty conscience. Researchers asked a portion of the volunteers to think about immoral acts they had committed, then all of the volunteers were offered an opportunity to clean their hands. Results showed that those mulling over their sins were twice as likely to jump at the offer to clean their hands.



Postsecrets.

Each year, thousands find solace in mailing their deepest secrets to [Postsecret.com](https://www.postsecret.com), and in so doing, confess their deepest secrets and most shameful sins. If you could write a postcard to God and confess the thing or things that cause you the most guilt and remorse, what would you write? Here, have a postcard . . .

From:

POST CARD



To:



In 1951 the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ was launched on the campus of UCLA. Today it is a missionary enterprise reaching into 190 countries with 27,000 full-time staff.

The late founder, Dr. Bill Bright, grounded the ministry on a handful of basic biblical concepts. Their simplicity makes them timeless. Here is one of Dr. Bright's simple Transferable Concepts, and it's what you need to know about confession:

Spiritual Breathing by Bill Bright.

For the nonbeliever, sin stands as barrier to a relationship with God; for the Christian, it stands as a barrier to fellowship and to the unimpeded influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

To receive God's forgiveness, simply confess your sin and accept his forgiveness by faith. We call this process "spiritual breathing." Just as you exhale and inhale physically, so you must also breathe spiritually. You exhale spiritually when you confess your sins. The Bible promises that if you confess your sins to him, God is faithful and just to forgive you and to purify you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). To confess your sins means to agree with God about your sins. Your agreement is threefold:

First, you agree that your sins are wrong and grieve God. Second, you agree that God has already forgiven your sins through Christ's death and the shedding of his blood on the cross. Third, you repent. You change your attitude, which results in a change of action. Through confessing your sins, you begin the process of "spiritual breathing":

Exhale: Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it. Agree with God concerning it and thank him for his forgiveness.

Inhale: Surrender back control of your life to Christ and—by faith—rely upon his Holy Spirit to lead and empower you with his presence.

Confession, then, is an expression of faith, which results in our experiencing what God has already done for us through the death of his Son. Christ died for each and every one of your sins; confession is the vehicle through which you experience the cleansing, mercy and forgiveness of that sacrifice.

Walking in the light.

In 1 John 1:7-9, the apostle states:

IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS, HIS SON, PURIFIES US FROM ALL SIN. IF WE CLAIM TO BE WITHOUT SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST AND WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND PURIFY US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

Why does John use light as a metaphor? What does light do, and (biblically) what does it represent?

What does it mean to walk in darkness? What does it mean to walk in light?

John states that when we “walk in the light we have fellowship with one another.” How does unconfessed sin affect our fellowship with other Christians?

In addressing confession, the passage underscores that God is “faithful and just.” Why emphasize this?

John does not comment on the frequency of confession, though immediacy seems implied. Just thinking back to the last couple of days, how many times do you remember confessing your sin to God?

Does your answer suggest a sensitivity to sin, an insensitivity, or something in between? What would you say if “something in between” wasn’t an option?

What role does faith play in confession? That is, what are the things you must choose to believe about God, about your sin, about his Word, and about your relationship with him?

Feeling forgiven.

Our relationship with God is not affected by sin. By virtue of our new birth, we will forever be his children and he will always be our Father. But as with any relationship, sin does hinder fellowship. If you’ve confessed your sin, then your guilt has been forgiven and your fellowship with God has been completely restored. Yet for some sins—those ground-in, tough-to-get-out stains—you may find that feelings of guilt linger. To help in *feeling* forgiven, try the following two exercises:

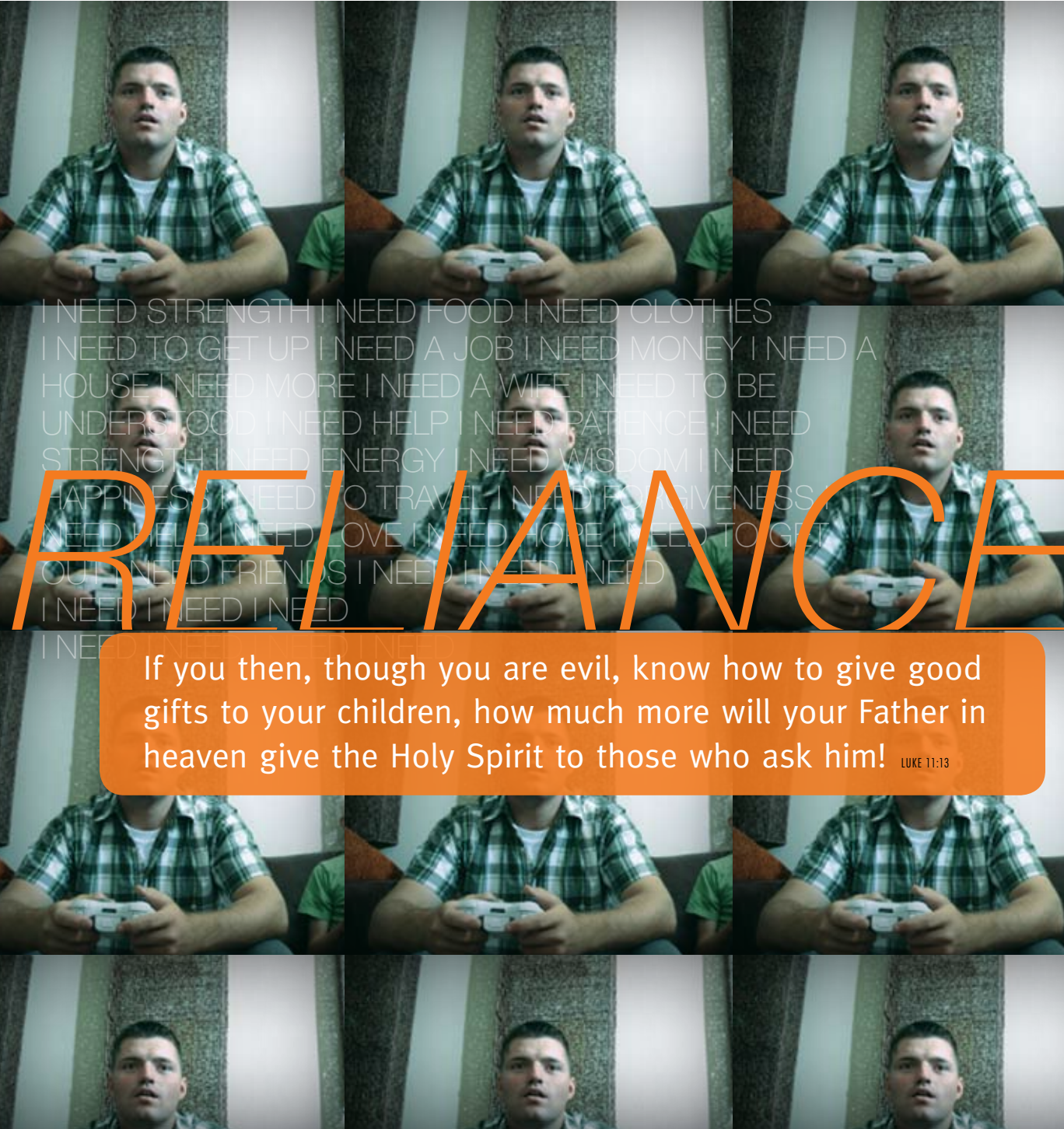
1. Write out on a piece of paper every sin you’ve committed that comes to mind. Next, write out across the list the words of 1 John 1:9. Then thank God, rip up the list, and throw it away—preferably where it cannot be found and posted on the Internet.

2. Although we can’t see God, sometimes others can model his forgiveness to us. This is why Scripture tells us, “Confess your sins to each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16). Who could you connect with on a weekly basis to share your struggles, prayer requests, and sin?



Just do it: What will you do this week to establish this believer-to-believer accountability?


The critical things to remember about confession are: You should confess sin throughout the day as soon as God makes you aware of it. Confession restores *fellowship*, not your *relationship* (that never changes). The three components of confession are *agreeing* with God that you sinned (don’t justify it), *agreeing* that Christ’s death paid for that sin, and *agreeing* to turn away from that sin and ask God to empower you to do so.



I NEED STRENGTH I NEED FOOD I NEED CLOTHES
I NEED TO GET UP I NEED A JOB I NEED MONEY I NEED A
HOUSE I NEED MORE I NEED A WIFE I NEED TO BE
UNDERSTOOD I NEED HELP I NEED PATIENCE I NEED
STRENGTH I NEED ENERGY I NEED WISDOM I NEED
HAPPINESS I NEED TO TRAVEL I NEED FORGIVENESS
I NEED HELP I NEED LOVE I NEED MORE I NEED TO GET
OUT I NEED FRIENDS I NEED I NEED I NEED
I NEED I NEED I NEED

REPENTANCE

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! LUKE 11:13

A man in a green and white plaid shirt is sitting on a couch, holding a white video game controller. He is looking intently at the screen. The background consists of vertical wooden slats.

The 30-year-old man fainted at a cybercafe in the city of Guangzhou after he had been playing games online for three days, the Beijing News reported. Paramedics tried to revive him but failed and he was declared dead. ASSOCIATED PRESS

Potato chips, cheese curls, and candy may be some of your favorite things to eat, but for a few mule deer in Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park, these foods proved to be deadly. Park rangers had to kill over two dozen mule deer because they became hooked on junk food left by visitors. ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT GAZETTE

Signs of addiction.

How do you know if you may be addicted to something?

Do you need increasing amounts to get the same effects?

Do you feel any type of emotional or physical withdrawal when going without?

Do you ever take more than you had intended?

Do you feel a need for it in order to do certain activities?

Do you have a preoccupation with it?

Are you willing to spend a significant amount of money to have it?

If you were to apply these addiction questions to things like coffee, texting, boyfriends, music, media, food, smoking, and exercise, what do you tend to rely on to help you get through the day?

What do you think are some of the unmet needs (loneliness, boredom, worry, insecurity, and so on) that draw you into such reliance?

Under the influence.

DO NOT GET DRUNK ON WINE. . . . INSTEAD, BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. EPHESIANS 5:18

WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST CAME, THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE. . . . ALL OF THEM WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. . . . AMAZED AND PERPLEXED, THEY ASKED ONE ANOTHER, "WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?" SOME, HOWEVER, MADE FUN OF THEM AND SAID, "THEY HAVE HAD TOO MUCH WINE." ACTS 2:1, 4, 12-13

Taste test: In both of these passages, being filled with the Spirit is compared and contrasted with drinking alcohol. From the passages and your own experience (I won't ask) or observation, what are the similarities? What are the differences?

People can turn to alcohol to help them cope with hardship, express affection, relieve worry, boost confidence, and facilitate self-reflection. Alcohol offers a counterfeit empowerment, which is the main reason it's so addictive. In what ways have you witnessed this?



Spirit vs. spirits.

Read all of Acts 2.

How do you see the Spirit's influence and empowerment manifested in and through the disciples in Acts 2?

If you think about alcohol or coffee or tobacco or music, how would you describe what it means to be "under the influence" of something? How does such a situation affect your personality? Your willpower? Your thoughts?

Again, how is the influence of the Holy Spirit similar and how is it different from being "under the influence" of a substance or experience?

In Ephesians 5:18, the apostle Paul instructs us not to be influenced by wine, because it will eclipse the influence of the Spirit. Passions such as rage, greed, lust, and envy can also exert a controlling influence over our hearts and minds. What would you say are the negative controlling influences in your life?

How do you know when the influence of even good things—sports, music, food, and so forth—have begun to drown out the Spirit's influence over your thoughts and emotions?

Reliance.

All of us have emotional, mental, and physical needs that arise each day and for which we feel the need to rely on something. A cigarette smoker, for example, will light up when he feels bored, anxious, distracted, unmotivated, lonely, insecure, impatient, frustrated, tired, depressed, or stressed or has the desire to be creative or sociable. Which of these needs do you most experience and identify with?

What do you turn to and rely on daily to meet these needs?

How do you think your life might be different if, whenever you experienced these needs, you turned to God and asked the Holy Spirit for enablement, grace, and empowerment? What if the Holy Spirit were your coffee, your cigarettes, your iPod (metaphorically speaking)? What would your day look like?



Living out the Psalms.

If there was one word that could summarize the Psalms—and perhaps the life of David (who authored many of them)—it would be reliance. David reflexively and incessantly called out to God for strength and empowerment.

ARISE, O LORD! DELIVER ME, O MY GOD! PSALM 3:7

GIVE EAR TO MY WORDS, O LORD, CONSIDER MY SIGHING. PSALM 5:1

O LORD, BE NOT FAR OFF; O MY STRENGTH, COME QUICKLY TO HELP ME. PSALM 22:19

VINDICATE ME, O LORD. PSALM 26:1

As you go throughout the day relying upon the Lord, what might be some of your “O Lord” kinds of requests? (For example, “O Lord, give me wisdom in this conversation.”)

Do you desire this degree of connectedness with God in and through your day? Really?

An experiment: Try going through today replacing your favorite crutch (texting, music, or whatever) with reliant conversation with God.

While we can express reliance upon God conversationally throughout the day, we can also express it in our prayer times. Read Psalms 2, 3, and 4 and then compose your own psalm of reliance to God.

A Psalm of reliance.

Because those who are led by the Spirit of God
are sons of God. ROMANS 8:14

LED

START OUT GOING SOUTH ON
INTERSTATE CROSS OVER TOLL
ROAD TURN LEFT TOWARD OWEN
ROAD 0.1 MILES TURN LEFT ONTO
RT. 78 UNDER BYPASS UNTIL AVE
STREET TURN LEFT ONTO MAR
HILL DRIVE GO 7.6 MILES THEN
ONTO DUMAR TO 3RD AVENUE
COMES TO STOP GO 4.3 MILES ON
HARRISON PARKWAY TO 280 EAST
STROUDSVILLE TURN LEFT ONTO
COSHEN AVENUE 2.1 MILES
RAMP ONTO PARKDALE TURNPIKE
CROSS OVER TOLL ROAD FOLLOW
US 31 INTERSECTION OF CHADS
FORD AND MUNDTH STRAIGHT FOR
4.5 MILES EXIT 27 TOWARD EASTON
LEFT ON CONNOLLY ROAD .06 MILES
THEN COME TO A STOP

COUNCIL: "A flood. This has been the hottest, driest summer on record, and you say we're going to have a flood. When might we expect this?"

EVAN: "September 22nd at midday. That's what I was told."

COUNCIL: "Might I ask who told you?"

EVAN: "God."

COUNCIL: "God? You talk to God?"

EVAN: "Yes."

COUNCIL: "And God is talking back?"

EVAN: "Yeah. We've hung out a little."

Evan Almighty, UNIVERSAL PICTURES 2007

Do you think you would do whatever God asked, no matter what it was? How do you know?

If you could know the future, would you really want to know it? Even if it was extremely bleak?

If you could clearly know God's will for your life in any one area, what would it be?"

Do you see God's will for your future as a set plan (like a blueprint) or as something more flexible (like a map with alternate routes and destinations)?

What causes you the most anxiety about the future? Where do you struggle to believe that God's plans for you are good?

God leads.

At the end of Acts 1, as the disciples seek a twelfth disciple to replace Judas, we read, "Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles" (v. 26). Though casting lots was a common way of determining God's will in Old Testament days, it's hard to imagine the disciples of Jesus looking for God's leading by rolling a pair of rocks (lots). But there's a message implicit in this story's placement, for recorded in Acts 2 (right after this story) is the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the church, from which time onward following God's will and leading would never be the same.

After the story of the Spirit descending upon the church in Acts 2, there is a distinct change in the narrative of Acts as we witness firsthand God's Spirit leading and directing his people. Consider these examples:

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SUDDENLY TOOK PHILIP AWAY" 8:39. "THE SPIRIT SAID TO HIM, 'SIMON, THREE MEN ARE LOOKING FOR YOU' " 10:19. "THE TWO OF THEM, SENT ON THEIR WAY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WENT DOWN TO SELEUCIA" ACTS 13:4.

In what ways have you been experiencing God's leading in your life?

How have you experienced God's leading today? How do you know?

God doesn't always give immediate or initially clear answers concerning the future. Why do you think he doesn't?

The rather dramatic leading of the Spirit in the book of Acts is all in the context of ministry. Do you think being engaged in ministry and in serving others affords us a greater opportunity to see the Spirit leading?

Recognizing God's leading.

In Scripture we observe a variety of ways through which God leads us in determining his will: through wisdom, through reasoning, through the counsel of other believers, through his Word, through circumstances, in dreams and impressions, as well as through emotions and desires. These are our spiritual senses, and God uses the discovery or discerning process to draw us closer to himself. Through which of your spiritual senses have you typically experienced God's leading?

What are some of the potential dangers in relying too much on emotions, circumstances, or impressions? How have you seen or experienced this?

As a critical and cautionary step, it's important to utilize as many of our spiritual senses as possible and to look for each to confirm the other. How are you most prone to be hasty, premature, or imbalanced in your following of God's leading?

What is Scripture's role in the process of discerning God's will?

Gathering clues.

Think of a major issue in which you are trying to detect God's leading. Write down the clues you've uncovered so far through circumstances, Scripture, godly counsel, feelings, impressions, desires, and reasoning.

Wisdom is our acquired knowledge and experience of walking with God. When you think of how God has led you and worked in your life in the past, what insight does this provide as to how he may be leading you now?

Finding the key.

In discovering God's will, there is one principle that's more important than any other, being foundational to all the others. It's found here in Romans 12:1-2.

I URGE YOU, BROTHERS, IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY, TO OFFER YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES, HOLY AND PLEASING TO GOD—THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL ACT OF WORSHIP. DO NOT CONFORM ANY LONGER TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST AND APPROVE WHAT GOD'S WILL IS—HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND PERFECT WILL. ROMANS 12:1-2

What are the prerequisites in the passage to knowing God's "good, pleasing and perfect will"?



Why is it important to recognize and believe God's will is "good, pleasing and perfect"? Do you? Why might you doubt it?

What does living your life completely yielded, like a sacrifice, have to do with experiencing God's leading?

This passage cuts to the heart of discovering God's will. There's an awful lot of data to process when discerning God's will, and it's easy to twist the facts if you don't desire his will above all things, including above your own things. In fact, you will twist the facts. Only a heart totally yielded to God, willing to do whatever he asks, desiring his will more than one's own, can process the clues with honesty and objectivity.

In what areas are you, or would you, be most prone to manipulating the facts in order to make them conform to your will?

The decision to yield every aspect of one's life to the Lord is sometimes referred to as a "lordship decision." What do you think would be entailed in such a decision or commitment?

Is there any area of your life—future, dating, career, or something else—where you are not completely open to God's alternative leading? Are you completely willing to be led by God, sitting in the passenger seat and allowing him to drive?

If this is your desire, express to God your willingness to yield your entire life to his will. It may be most meaningful to affirm each specific area: "Lord, I give to you my career (my dating and so on)."

Lord, I give you . . .



ATMOSPHERE

MY HEART CHRIST'S HOME MY HEART CHRIST'S HOME MY HEART CHRIST'S HOME MY HEART CHRIST'S HOME

Be filled with the Spirit . . . Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:18-20

Dining in the dark.

Imagine, that you cannot see for an hour or two, that you are abandoning vision in exchange for a new dining experience. Opaque is enhancing our senses of taste, smell, touch, and hearing by abandoning one that we often take for granted—this is “Dining in the Dark.”

Brought to you by Opaque, the dining in the dark experience allows you to willingly plunge into a world of sensitivity you have never experienced before.

Opaque—Dining in the Dark—will seat you in a literally pitch-black dining room where you will be guided and served by blind or visually impaired individuals that have been specially trained to serve meals in the dark, casually and comfortably offering guidance and reassurance.⁸

DINING IN THE DARK, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA

Atmosphere.

What is your favorite place to think? Hang out? Eat?

What is it about the atmosphere there that relaxes and energizes you?

What, or where, is an atmosphere that tends to have a negative effect on you?

How is your home (where you grew up) as a spiritual environment?

If you've ever been to a college party or bar, then you've experienced the influence of atmosphere. The room is dark, the music is pulsing, clothes and conversation are sexually suggestive, and alcohol sands down inhibitions. From a spiritual perspective, an atmosphere has been created that's conducive to sin. No one forces you to drink, lust, or gossip; they don't have to. Just bask in the music and the glow of the lava lamp long enough, and you want to. That is the power of atmosphere.



Our heart, like any other living space, has an atmosphere. In the passage below, the apostle Paul describes the Spirit-filled life, but he is doing more than just listing spiritual activities. Rather, he is describing the state or atmosphere of the heart that allows the Spirit to freely influence us and maximally affect our thoughts, actions, and emotions. The passage draws our attention to giving praise and thanksgiving as our role in creating a conducive atmosphere in our heart for the Spirit to dwell within us.

DO NOT GET DRUNK ON WINE, WHICH LEADS TO DEBAUCHERY. INSTEAD, BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER WITH PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS. SING AND MAKE MUSIC IN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD, ALWAYS GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER FOR EVERYTHING, IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. EPHESIANS 5:18-20

The music of praise.

Praise is extolling what you love and admire about an individual. According to Ephesians 5:18-20, the Spirit does not conduct our worship to himself but toward Christ. Why is that important to remember?

Why do you think music plays such a significant role in establishing an atmosphere of praise?



We all have a mental iPod. What bands and song lyrics have been playing in your head and heart these last few weeks? Have they brought you closer to or further from the Lord?

Are there specific songs that, for whatever the reason, create a negative atmosphere in your heart (one of lust, bad memories, pride, or whatever)?

Since Ephesians 5 specifically mentions it, what role does spiritual or Christian music play in your devotional life? In what ways might you take steps to incorporate praise, hymns, psalms, or other spiritual music into your daily walk with Christ?

As praise can be spoken as well as sung, reading the Psalms can be a helpful way to express your praise to God. Certain psalms, in fact, were written for precisely this purpose. These include Psalms 145—150, which all begin with a call to "Praise the Lord." Take time to read through a few of these psalms and use them as a springboard for praising God.

The fountain of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving flows in a cycle. It may drip out slow and forced for a while. “Thanks, God, for flowers . . . mammals . . . hair gel.” But as your mind and heart engage, thanksgiving begins to flow.

This cyclical motion is the dynamic of worship. As you pour your heart out to God in gratitude, he pours back into you, which is why the more you give thanks, the more you want to.

As you look around you right now, begin to start the thanksgiving cycle. What do you see? What do you feel? What can you thank God for? Just start listing things until you run out of room.

The nature of the thanksgiving cycle is such that after listing all those things, instead of being thanked-out, you’re actually more thankful. So throw a few more things down before we move on.

Continuous praise and thanksgiving.

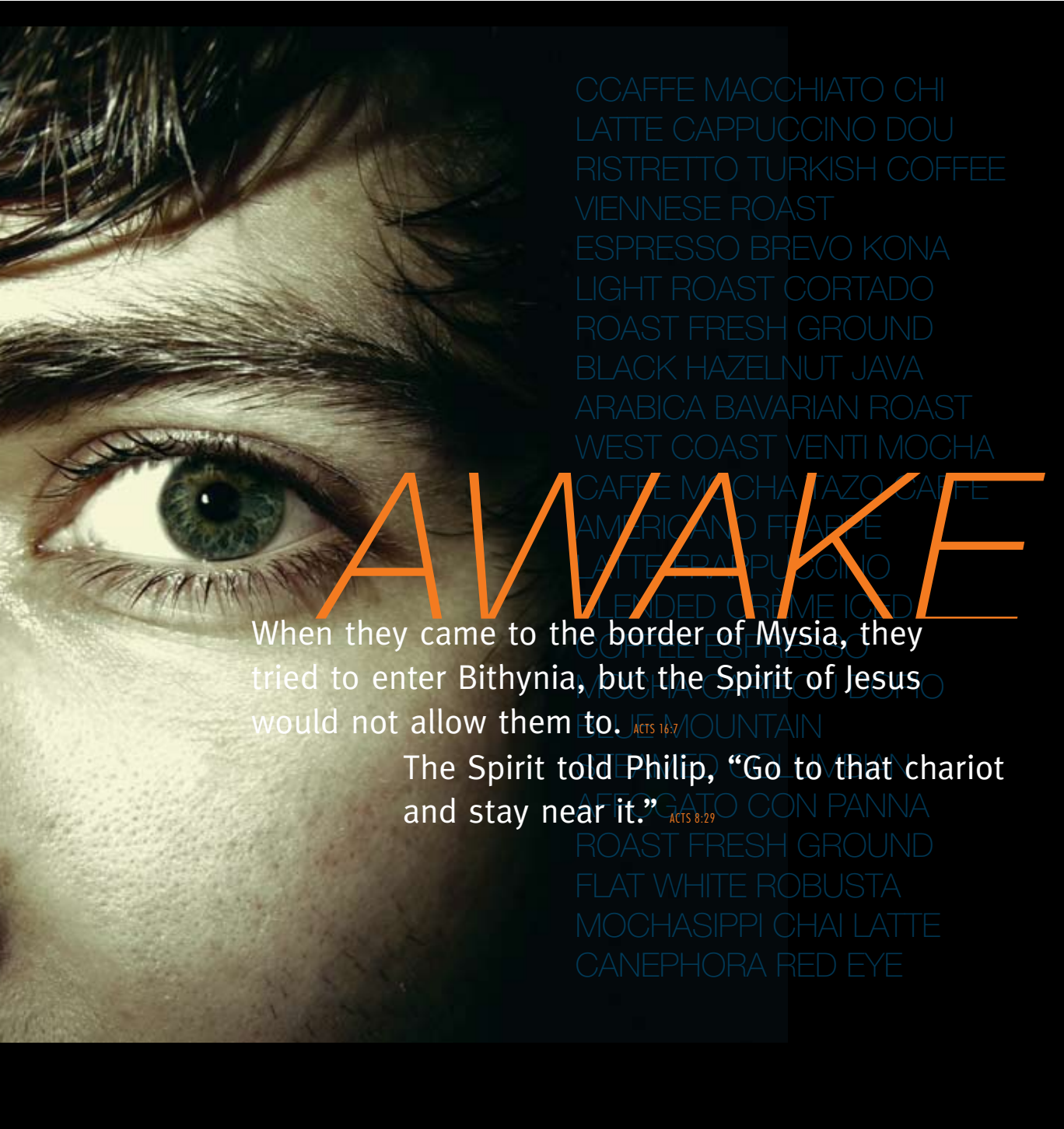
Apollo 11 landed on the surface of the moon on Sunday, July 20, 1969. Most of us are familiar with astronaut Neil Armstrong’s historic statement as he stepped onto the moon’s surface: “That’s one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.” But few know about the first meal eaten there.

Buzz Aldrin had brought aboard the spacecraft a tiny Communion kit provided by his church. Aldrin sent a radio broadcast to Earth asking listeners to contemplate the events of that day and give thanks. Then, in radio blackout for privacy ... [Aldrin] read, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit.”

We tend to think of thanksgiving, praise, and worship as being confined to our devotional time, but that doesn’t seem to be what the apostle Paul had in mind in Ephesians 5: “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, . . . always giving thanks to God the Father for everything.” He was definitely talking about doing this as we go about our day. As an exercise today (and a practice that will hopefully endure beyond today), see if you can’t give thanks as well as sing praises in your heart in the following situations:

1. In the shower
2. Walking on campus
3. Sitting in a class
4. On the computer
5. In a public restroom
6. Every time someone texts you
7. Exercising
8. In the midst of a conversation
9. While eating and not just before
10. Every time you see a Pepsi or Coke can.





CAFFÈ MACCHIATO CHI
LATTE CAPPUCCINO DOU
RISTRETTO TURKISH COFFEE
VIENNESE ROAST
ESPRESSO BREVO KONA
LIGHT ROAST CORTADO
ROAST FRESH GROUND
BLACK HAZELNUT JAVA
ARABICA BAVARIAN ROAST
WEST COAST VENTI MOCHA
CAFFÈ MACCHA TAZO CAFFÈ
AMERICANO FRAPPE
LATTE CAPPUCCINO
BLENDED CRÈME ICED
COFFEE ESPRESSO
MOCHA GARDOLINO
BLUE MOUNTAIN
STEPPED COLUMBIAN
AFFOGATO CON PANNA
ROAST FRESH GROUND
FLAT WHITE ROBUSTA
MOCHASIPPI CHAI LATTE
CANEPHORA RED EYE

AWAKE

When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ACTS 16:7

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” ACTS 8:29

Perception and awareness.

In 1998, Daniel Simons conducted a visual memory experiment in which the experimenter approached participants on a university campus asking them for directions to a nearby building. While conversing, two assistants carrying a wooden door would step between the participant and the experimenter, momentarily obscuring the participants' view. During the interruption, one of the assistants carrying the door stayed behind to continue the conversation while the original experimenter grabbed the door and walked away behind it. A shocking 50% of participants failed to detect the switch and continued with the conversation as if nothing had happened—talking to an entirely different person.

Let's do our own experiment on awareness and perception. Which of the following was the visual in a previous devotion?



Or how about this? Close your eyes and see how many details you can remember of a friend's room or a favorite restaurant. Or try picturing what a friend was wearing yesterday or what you wore yesterday. For the memory challenged, how about what you have on now; do you remember what you're wearing?

Spiritually awake.

Many factors determine whether you notice something, but at the top of the list is whether you're paying attention or, better yet, looking for something specific. Odds are you'll find someone wearing a red jacket if you're looking for someone wearing a red jacket.

But let's shift our thinking from visual perception to spiritual perception—our awareness of the spiritual world. Any activity can be done being spiritually aware (awake) or asleep: by asleep, meaning that you do the activity cognizant only of the physical world: where you need to go next, what you need to do, what a person's wearing, etc. Being spiritually awake means attending to those same things while also being aware of the spiritual dimension: having one eye on the situation and one eye on God. This is sometimes called living with "expectancy," because you are expecting God to show up to lead and direct and are trusting that he's going to use you.

Wakie, wakie.

[ISRAEL SPEAKING] **AWAKE, AWAKE! CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH STRENGTH, O ARM OF THE LORD.** ISAIAH 51:9

[GOD SPEAKING] **AWAKE, AWAKE, O ZION, CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH STRENGTH.** ISAIAH 52:1

In the book of Isaiah there is an interesting exchange between the prophet and God. Isaiah, speaking for Israel, tells the Lord to wake up and come to help them. God, in return, basically says, "You wake up! You are the ones who are spiritually asleep."

This scripture is actually the Old Testament background to Mark 4:36-41:

LEAVING THE CROWD BEHIND, THEY TOOK HIM [JESUS] ALONG, JUST AS HE WAS, IN THE BOAT. THERE WERE ALSO OTHER BOATS WITH HIM. A FURIOUS SQUALL CAME UP, AND THE WAVES BROKE OVER THE BOAT, SO THAT IT WAS NEARLY SWAMPED. JESUS WAS IN THE STERN, SLEEPING ON A CUSHION. THE DISCIPLES WOKE HIM AND SAID TO HIM, "TEACHER, DON'T YOU CARE IF WE DROWN?" HE GOT UP, REBUKED THE WIND AND SAID TO THE WAVES, "QUIET! BE STILL!" THEN THE WIND DIED DOWN AND IT WAS COMPLETELY CALM.

HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID? DO YOU STILL HAVE NO FAITH?" THEY WERE TERRIFIED AND ASKED EACH OTHER, "WHO IS THIS? EVEN THE WIND AND THE WAVES OBEY HIM!"

While a storm threatens to sink the disciples' boat, Jesus remains asleep. The disciples tell him to awake. But as in the exchange in Isaiah, it turns out that they are the ones who are "asleep"—they are too spiritually groggy to recognize who Jesus is. The story in Mark 4 is not about Jesus waking up but about his disciples waking up.

What caused the alarm clock to go off for the disciples?

In a state of spiritual alertness, what do the disciples see that they haven't seen before?

Why do you think they had been asleep to the reality of Jesus' identity?



In what ways do you live unaware of Jesus—unaware of his power, unaware of his mercy, unaware of his presence?

For the disciples, it was a threatening storm. What trials has God used in your life to rouse you to awake and turn to him?

Alert, open, expectant.

Faith and spiritual alertness are connected. What are we trusting God to do when we go about our day spiritually alert and expectant?

If you were spiritually awake throughout the day, what sorts of things might God show you or lead you to do?

When you've been spiritually aware in your conversations, what kinds of things has God brought to your mind?

What activities are you most prone to attend to in a state of spiritual slumber, oblivious to spiritual reality?

"If you went through today prayerfully and spiritually alert, it is almost guaranteed that the God of the universe would in some way communicate with you." What are your reactions to that thought? Agree or disagree?

It's doubtful that anyone spends the entire day wide awake to God and the spiritual world. But a goal of each day is to pursue spending as much time in a state of alertness and expectancy as possible. If you had to assign a number to it, what percentage of the day would you say you spend spiritually awake?

God's using us is contingent upon our availability and preparedness. Obviously, there would be little point in God bringing someone across your path who needs to hear the gospel if you were unwilling or unable to share it with that person. Using the scale below, how would you rate your openness to break from your own schedule and agenda to serve and minister to others?

1. Closed 2. Usually Busy 3. Depends 4. Willing 5. Open 6. Available

What, if anything, will you be doing differently?

TRY THIS: As you go through the day, seek to be as open and connected to God as you can. Ask often, "Lord, what do you want me to see here? Do here? Say here? Learn here? Who do you want me to pray for? Encourage? Forgive? Share with?"



JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME.
JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME.

NAKED

I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. ISAIAH 57:15

MERCY.

Martin Luther, the German leader of the Reformation, was asked when exactly he came to faith. His response was “in cloaca,” which sounds rather spiritual until you translate it from Latin—it means, sitting ‘on the toilet.’ Now, Luther was a man with ‘issues’, crudeness among them, but many scholars believe that he was using a metaphor for humbling oneself, one popular in the Middle Ages: “sitting on the toilet.” And if you think about it, it’s a darn good metaphor for humility: there is no pretense, no facade, no pride, no image management—you are what you are, totally naked before God. The toilet is ground zero for humanity.

JESUS WITHOUT RELIGION, IVP (2007)

Humiliation and humility.

Try answering the following questions from the now-defunct reality show The Moment of Truth. As you answer them, imagine that you are in front of your friends, family, and twenty million viewers and that a lie detector will let everyone know if you’re lying.

Would you be upset if your younger sibling got married before you?

Do you think that you are smarter than your parents?

Have you ever spied on a neighbor?

Do you have fantasies you’d never admit to anyone?

Do you look at pornography online?

Have you ever made fun of your friends behind their backs?

Do you really care about starving children in Africa?

Humility is nothing more—nor less—than embracing the truth about ourselves. And as believers, we habitually drift away from that truth in one of two directions: toward *Performance* or *Pride*.

Under performance.

IF ANYONE ELSE THINKS HE HAS REASONS TO PUT CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH, I HAVE MORE: CIRCUMCISED ON THE EIGHTH DAY, OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN, A HEBREW OF HEBREWS; IN REGARD TO THE LAW, A PHARISEE; AS FOR ZEAL, PERSECUTING THE CHURCH; AS FOR LEGALISTIC RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAULTLESS.

BUT WHATEVER WAS TO MY PROFIT I NOW CONSIDER LOSS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST. WHAT IS MORE, [I CONTINUE] TO CONSIDER EVERYTHING A LOSS COMPARED TO THE SURPASSING GREATNESS OF KNOWING CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOSE SAKE I HAVE LOST ALL THINGS. I CONSIDER THEM RUBBISH, THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS 3:4-8

For those impressed by religious performance, the apostle Paul provides his spiritual résumé (vv. 4-6). However, in coming to Christ, Paul regards such achievements as worthless (v. 7) because favor with God cannot be earned it is a gift of grace. But notice, he also says that he continues to consider them worthless (v. 8). Humbling himself was an ongoing practice in Paul's life, something he did quite regularly to keep from falling back under performance.



Write out the unspoken résumé that you carry around with you. (While you'd never say it, what are the things that you feel score points for you with God and other Christians?)

How do you find yourself falling back into performing for God (that is, thinking, *If I do this, God will like me more*)?

When you have sinful thoughts and motivations, do you simply push them away and try to do better, or do you confess them and turn to God for grace and forgiveness?

In what ways do you try to keep up appearances or spend energy on image management?

When you feel you are not measuring up to the standards of the Christian life, do you . . .

1. Put on the appearance that you are?
2. Feel jealous of those who appear to be?
3. Criticize those who appear to be?
4. Try harder?
5. Humbly confess and cry out to God.

Over-inflated.

If *performance* moves us away from truth by trying to be seen as better than we are, *pride* detours us from truth in actually believing we are better than we are. In what ways do you see pride at work in your life?



Blowfish. *As a defense mechanism, blowfish have the ability to inflate rapidly, filling their elastic stomachs with water or air. Thus a hungry predator may suddenly find itself facing a seemingly much larger fish. There is a risk when puffers inflate with air, since it may result in problems deflating again afterward.*

Vain imaginings.

In what ways do you fantasize about people seeing you as better than you really are?

In discussions, do you feel that your ideas and thoughts are better than others? Y/N

Is it hard for you to hear about an area where you are failing? Y/N

Is it impossible for you to live with people misunderstanding or wrongly judging you? Y/N

Why do you think you would respond yes to any of these? What's going on here?

"The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Performance and pride both lead us away from the Spirit and away from freedom. How have you experienced this?

Humbling ourselves.

So, how do we make our way back to the truth, back into God's presence and under the Spirit's influence? We humble ourselves.

To humble oneself is to get completely naked before God. Not just confessing a sin, but getting to the root of the sin (the sin beneath the sin), putting aside our facades, our attempts to justify, and our instincts to perform and embracing the full truth about who and what we are before God. "Oh, Lord, I am such a liar. I stretch the truth to protect myself. I exaggerate so people will think more highly of me. I generate excuses for my failures. I act as if I'm doing fine when I'm not. . . ."

Brute, blunt honesty about who we are: while this is the essence of humbling ourselves, it's actually a two-step process. First we *wallow* in the honest truth about ourselves, but then we must *wallow* in God's grace—this too is the truth about us. "Thank you, God. Thank you that I can never earn your favor but you have given it to me freely in Christ. Thank you that you cannot love me any more nor any less. Thank you that I'm a liar saved by your kindness and mercy. . . ."



Take it all off. Okay time for you to get naked. I won't look. Remember, wallow and wallow.

Whenever you feel the encroachment of performance, pride, failure, or judgmentalism—whenever you feel the ensnarement of sin—humble yourself. And do so on a regular basis. Just like the apostle Paul, return to the Lord again and again with that same brokenness and poverty you did when you came to know Christ.

REVIEW

Section one.

The Spirit of the living God lives in you. Be in awe. Be very in awe. The Holy Spirit is a person, not an “it,” and we worship one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s presence within us seals and secures our salvation, guaranteeing our eternal life. And the Spirit enables and empowers us to love and live for Christ; it is the Spirit that makes Christ beautiful to our hearts and minds.

Section two.

What we described in section two is the ‘abiding life.’ We could summarize this section with a single verse:

I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. IF A MAN REMAINS IN ME AND I IN HIM, HE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT; APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING. JOHN 15:5

So why ramble on for twenty pages if it could all be said in a single verse? Because abiding contains all of the different nuances we looked at and it’s important to understand the unique role of each. To many people, abiding may simply mean having a daily quiet time or praying throughout the day. And it does mean this—but it means much more than this. If, for example, you were praying throughout the day but were not available to be used by God, you’d be abiding but not to the degree that you could.

In keeping with Jesus’ metaphor of branches, you’ll note that a branch—or a tree for that matter—is not a pole but a network of passageways through which life flows. Our abiding life branches out in the ways we’ve just looked at, each contributing to the vitality of the branch, all flowing from Christ but channeled through these different pathways.

And so you’re bored in some classroom, but why be bored when you can be giving thanks or praising God in your mind?

Or you’re sitting down to eat and it’s a routine you’ve done a million times—but it’s different when you’re open to being used by God to encourage or share Christ with the person or people next to you. A mundane activity no longer mundane when you are spiritually awake.

Each day requires its resources: time, energy, food, and so on. It’s the same spiritually. As often as you drink water, coffee, or soda, as often as you snack and eat, you could be calling out to the Lord in reliance: “Oh, Lord, I need wisdom”; “I need patience”; “Jesus, show me how to love this person”; “Keep me from temptation”; and on and on. Like a chain smoker, we should reflexively turn to God in reliance moment by moment, all day long.

And then you’re finished with work or classes and your mind scouts ahead to plan out the rest of your day from available options. But in abiding, you bring God into the planning and check his agenda, not just your own. “Lord, what would be best for me to do this evening?”

The resurrected Christ is in you through the Spirit; is there really an evening when Jesus is just looking to kill time? He is always looking to lead and direct us if we are available . . . listening . . . expectant.

As we live out our day, our minds track in all kinds of mud through sinful thoughts and attitudes. Why ignore it and press on or tell ourselves to stop and do better? Why not bring Christ into it, confess our sin, and experience his forgiveness?

And when we find ourselves ensnared in performance, trying to achieve in order to get God to love us or trying to make others think more highly of us, we need to humble ourselves before God and get at the sin beneath the sin. When we find ourselves thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought, we need to do the same: we need to get completely naked before God and come back to the truth of who and what we are.

This is the Spirit-filled life. This is the Christian life. It is abiding with Christ through his Spirit. All we've done in this section is break down "abiding" and view its constituent parts. A life so open and so connected to God is always new, always alive, never routine. It is Christ living out his resurrected life in and through us.

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION THREE

OVERFLOW

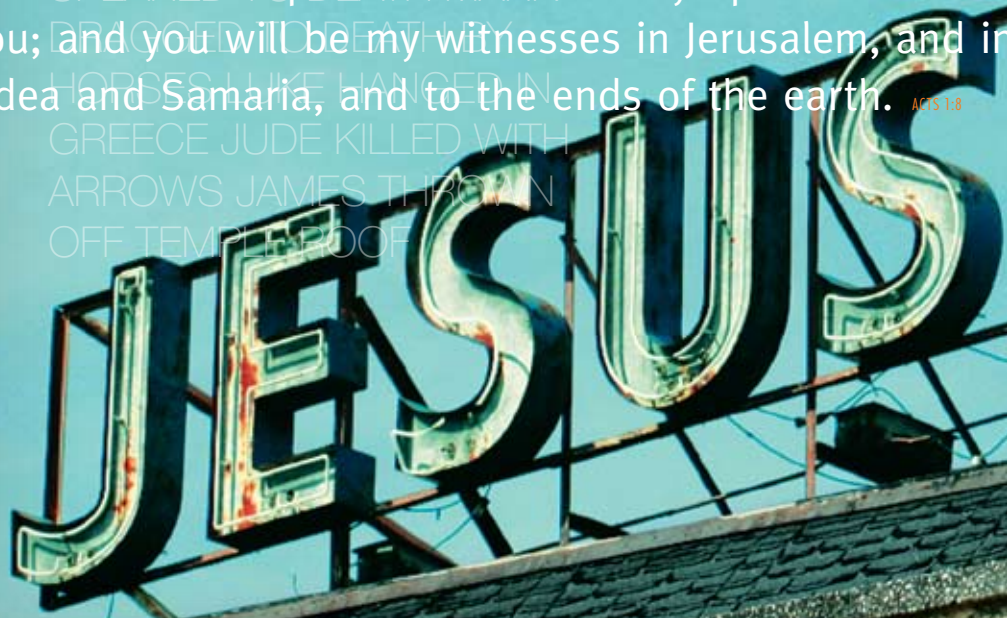
This brings us to the last section, where we'll look at some of the fruit of the Spirit. To influence is to produce an effect, and there are many tangible effects that result from the Spirit's work in our life. As Jesus stated, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit" (John 15:16).

In one sense, God's Spirit is tied to everything that spiritually grows from your life. But as you read through the New Testament you'll notice an emphasis and repetition of concepts most strongly tied to the work of the Spirit. And so, however else the Spirit may be at work in your life, he is most assuredly motivating and empowering you to be holy, to witness, to serve others, and to glorify Christ.

MATTHEW SPEARED TO
DEATH ANDREW CRUCIFIED
PETER CRUCIFIED UPSIDE
DOWN JAMES BEHEADED
BARTHOLOMEW FLAYED
TO DEATH JOHN BOILED
IN OIL ANDREW WHIPPED
AND CRUCIFIED IN GREECE
MATTHIAS STONED AND
BEHEADED THOMAS

POWER TO WITNESS

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. ACTS 1:8



Witness ['wɪtnɪs] noun

1. a person who sees an event take place.
The police are appealing for witnesses to the accident.
- a person giving sworn testimony to a court of law.
2. evidence; proof
The memorial service was witness to the wide circle of his interest.
- evidence given by signature, oath, actions or otherwise.

The power of a witness.

In Iran, Mehdi Dibaj, an Assemblies of God minister, spent nearly 10 years in prison for his faith. A convert from Islam in 1955, Dibaj was given every opportunity by the authorities to regain his freedom. First, he was asked to sign a paper admitting he was wrong and that he wanted to return to Islam. When this failed, he was beaten, tortured, and put through mock executions. His wife succumbed to the pressure, converted to Islam, and married another man, though Dibaj's children refused to renounce their faith.

It was only after fellow pastor Haik Hovsepian-Mehr, courageously sent out an open letter to western media publicizing Dibaj's plight that he was finally freed. However, pastor Mehr, shortly after sending the open letter, disappeared—his murdered body found days later. Still, Dibaj refused to flee and continued his pastoral ministry and eventually met the same fate as his fellow pastor. And all for what?

*In 1977 there were only 2,700 evangelicals in Iran out of a population of 45 million. Of these only 300 were former Muslims. Today, there are close to 55 thousand believers, of whom 27 thousand are from Muslim backgrounds.*¹¹ MICHAEL G. MAUDLIN

The responsibility of a witness.

Jesus makes the priority and purpose for sending the Holy Spirit abundantly clear in his final message to his disciples before ascending into heaven: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (ACTS 1:8).

What does it mean to be a witness of Jesus Christ?

Do you need to know how to do evangelism in order to be a witness?

Jesus states in John 16:14 that the Holy Spirit “will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” How might you expect the Holy Spirit to empower and motivate you to witness for Christ?

Have you felt a desire or responsibility to tell others about your faith, about Jesus, about what he’s done in your life?

The testimony of a witness.

Read John 4. Write down some observations about how Jesus initiates this spiritual conversation.

The woman was an accomplished sinner, not an evangelist, but she was able to share what she had experienced in meeting Jesus. Try to imagine the words she might have used to share with her friends and family

An affidavit is the prepared written statement of a witness. Let’s write a brief one. What would be your testimony to those who know you? How have you experienced Jesus? What have you seen him do in your life? Try writing it out in this sequence:

1. What your life was like before you met Christ:

2. How you came to know Christ:

3. What you’ve experienced since coming to know Christ:



What opportunities or circumstances in your life right now might provide an open door for you to share your story?

The prayers of a witness.

The woman in John 4 returned to tell those close to her—friends, family, neighbors—about Jesus because she wanted them to experience what she had experienced. Write down those people who you really want to know Jesus as you do:

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Write out a prayer to the Lord expressing your passion to see them come to know Christ. (Try to incorporate praying for these individuals regularly in your daily devotional time.)

The availability of a witness.

*Let's pretend that you are someone who might be willing, in theory, at some point, possibly, to consider maybe doing something that, while not "evangelism-type" evangelism, still could be in some way construed as a sort of sharing of hope.. Kind of.*¹² STEVEN C. BONSEY, "A SHY PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE PRACTICE OF EVANGELISM"

IN YOUR HEARTS SET APART CHRIST AS LORD. ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU TO GIVE THE REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE. 1 PETER 3:15

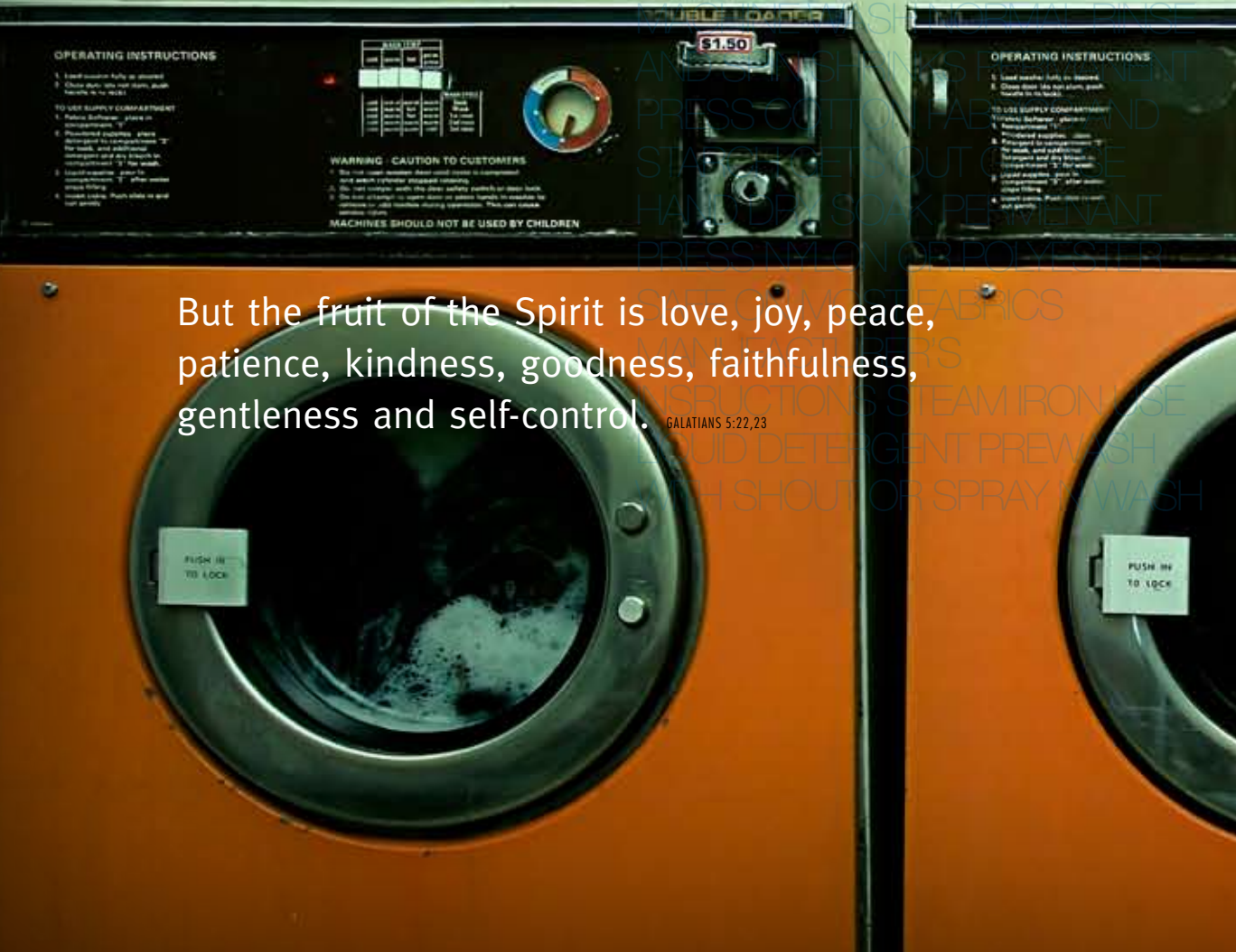
The encouragement of 1 Peter is that we would choose to "fear" the Lord rather than others. Is this a choice to not fear or to not let fear keep us from testifying? What are your greatest fears about witnessing?

Though it's doubtful a throng of people will stop to ask you, "Why do you have hope?" or "Dude, why so hopeful?" in what way could you prepare yourself, or become better prepared, to "give a reason for the hope that you have"?

With whom will you be prepared to look, pray, and expect God to open a door to share Christ?

Go to Cojourners.org for one of the most helpful guides to authentic, effective witness. Download the overview and read through it.

POWER FOR HOLINESS



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

GALATIANS 5:22,23



Picture of holiness.

Holiness is a concept having many facets. What are some of those facets that come to your mind as you look at these images?

Which of these aspects best represents holiness to you? Why?

When you think of God's holiness, not our own, what image comes to your mind?

Conduct of the kingdom.

Even if you've never traveled to another country, at some point you've had to cross into another culture, such as that of a different ethnic group, age group, or economic group. What makes a culture a culture? How does one adapt to any new culture?

Colossians 1:13 says that we have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light. Like any culture, the kingdom of God has its own language, conduct, and worldview, all of which manifest what it means live a holy life. *Read carefully Ephesians 4:17--5:7.*



New language.

List the different “languages” of the world or flesh (lying, vulgarity, and so on) that Paul describes.

Of these “languages,” which were you most “fluent” in when you were not walking with God?

In what ways have you seen God changing your speech? In what ways do you still carry an “accent”? (If you're having a really horrendous day, what language would we hear?)

Paul also describes some of the “dialects” spoken in the kingdom of light (speaking the truth, building up others). In what area of speech do you see God's Spirit moving you toward greater holiness?

What's God's role in changing your speech? What role do you play? How should you bring God into the process?

New worldview.

*Directors of the Japanese Mental Health Institute blamed the infiltration of Western values for rising levels of depression among workers and the country's suicide rate, which remained the highest among rich nations. The male suicide rate alone had doubled since 1976.*¹³

“WESTERN VALUES ‘ARE CAUSING MENTAL ILLNESS,’” TIMESONLINE.CO.UK

Different cultures have different values, different philosophies, different worldviews. How have you seen your values and perspective change since becoming a Christian?

Paul describes the secular worldview as futile and pointless. How have you encountered the futility of worldly thinking?

What are some TV shows or movies you've seen that express a futile worldview?

Paul says that we are to be made new in the attitudes of our mind. How does this happen?

How does the Spirit renew our thinking and perspective?

New conduct.

When we are filled with the Spirit, saturated in God, thanking, relying, and continuously praying, then life change happens in a natural and healthy way. Our obedience overflows and is not forced. What happens when we try to change habits apart from this Spirit-filled environment? How have you experienced this?

The verses stretching from 4:25 to 5:3 tell us of habits that don't fit into the new kingdom. Where do you see yourself—your issues—in this list?

God does not grow us overnight, nor can we just grow ourselves. It is a process and a partnership, and typically God addresses one issue at a time in our lives. In what area are you currently feeling the Spirit's conviction?

Certain habits of sin are deeply engrained and it can be a prolonged process to see growth. Ultimate victory may never fully be realized. What is critical is that we never give up fighting on these fronts. In what area are you most weary and most tired of the struggle? Are you living in grace and experiencing God's forgiveness when you fail?

When you become aware of a specific issue of sin, do you think, *I have to change this*, do you think *I need to begin to talk to God about this*, or do you think *I need to draw closer to the Lord*?

In 2006, a Russian man named Vladimir Villisov specially designed his own coffin to accommodate his vast collection of pornography. "The girls in those magazines have been my companions for years," said Villisov, 66, "and I want them to accompany me to the next life."¹⁴ "ONLY IN AMERICA"

Sexual sin and temptation are typically the greatest challenge to our personal holiness and to the Spirit's control of our life. How have you seen God at work in this area?

As a result of God's work in your life, what would you hope to be true of you in this area that is not true now?

Who in your life can come alongside you, praying for you, providing accountability, and helping you to pursue sexual purity?

*Resources: Campus Crusade's *Flesh* (for men) and *Fantasy* (for women) are helpful spiritual resources in the struggle against lust and are available at Crupress.com.*



OSTIVES PROPHECIES WISDOM MIRACLES ADMINISTRATION
LPS EVANGELISM TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT LEADERSHIP
SDOM TONGUES DISCERNMENT FAITH KNOWLEDGE PASTOR
ADING GIVING MERCY PROPHECY KNOWLEDGE

POWER TO SERVE

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4, 7



By popular poll, here are the super powers that adults would most like to possess:

To read minds: 28%

To fly: 15%

To be invisible: 11%

To possess super strength: 9%

To walk through walls: 1%

If you could have any of these special abilities, which would you choose? Why?

What would you do with it? What does your choice of super power say about you?

When you think of who God has made you to be, what would you say is your greatest strength (power)?

The Holy Spirit brings glory to Christ by empowering us to witness for him, by moving us to greater degrees of holiness in our thoughts, speech, and actions, and by equipping us to love and serve others. We'll look here at the Spirit's ministry in our lives that empowers us to love and serve.

Empowered to serve.

TO EACH ONE OF US GRACE HAS BEEN GIVEN AS CHRIST APPORTIONED IT. IT WAS HE WHO GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME TO BE PROPHETS, SOME TO BE EVANGELISTS, AND SOME TO BE PASTORS AND TEACHERS, TO PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR WORKS OF SERVICE. EPHESIANS 4:7, 11-12

When this passage mentions "works of service" what kinds of things might it be referring to?

Building the body.

*In a “60 Minutes” interview with Ed Bradley, Denzel Washington spoke of a pivotal moment in his life. Washington was in college at the time and was dealing with questions about his future. As he sat in a chair in his mother’s beauty salon, he saw an elderly lady in the mirror. She stared at Denzel and suddenly spoke to his mother, saying, “Give me a piece of paper; I have a word for [Denzel].” On the paper she wrote, “You will speak to millions.” When Denzel asked his mother who the woman was, she said, “She’s one of the oldest women at Mt. Vernon [Denzel’s church], and she has the gift of prophecy.” Washington pointed to that day as a defining moment in his life.*¹⁵ 60 MINUTES WITH ED BRADLEY

Spiritual gifts in the New Testament.

The following is a list of the gifts of the Spirit that are specifically mentioned in the New Testament. If you could choose your spiritual gift, which would you choose? Which gift (or gifts) do you think the Spirit has given you to serve Christ with?

Helps/mercy: An energy for serving and a sensitivity to those hurting

Administration: The spiritual gift of leadership

Giving: An empowerment to give liberally to God and his people

Healing: To be used by God to bring mental or physical healing to others

Pastor: A energy and desire to shepherd, serve, protect, and lead God’s people

Miracles: An ability and desire to trust God for mighty works of his Spirit

Teaching: A thirst to study and explain God’s Word and to see others learn it

Encouragement: A desire to strengthen, support, and encourage God’s people

Prophecy: An inclination to correct and challenge sin and hypocrisy in the church

Evangelism: A passion to help lost people come into the kingdom

Tongues: To speak in an unlearned language for prayer and encouragement

Faith: An ability to trust God in unusually difficult and trying circumstances

Discernment: The gift of wisdom and spiritual perception

Apostleship: The gifting and desire for planting new ministries

Knowledge: Direct, God-given insight

Some suggest that the spiritual gift lists found in Scripture are not exhaustive and that there are other spiritual gifts. Do you agree? Is there anything you think is missing from the list above?

Read 1 Corinthians 12. This is the user’s guide to spiritual gifts. What are some of the purposes for which the Spirit has given us these gifts? What are the cautions and instructions?

We are most empowered and directed by the Spirit when we are engaged in serving others. How are you currently ministering to others? How could you be more involved? How has your involvement shed light on your areas of gifting?

LOOK IT UP: If you Google “Spiritual Gifts Test,” you’ll find questionnaires online that may be helpful in determining your spiritual gifts.



Empowered to love.

IF I SPEAK IN THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM ONLY A RESOUNDING GONG OR A CLANGING CYMBAL. IF I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY AND CAN FATHOM ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE, AND IF I HAVE A FAITH THAT CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-2

Of all virtues, love is preeminent in Scripture. Why do you think that is?

In our culture, “love” can be a euphemism for a relationship, sex, infatuation, or a strong preference toward something (“I’d love a Whopper right now”). What would you say is a biblical definition of love?

In emphasizing love alongside the gifts of the Spirit, there is obviously a concern that spiritual gifts might be used selfishly or pridefully or that certain gifts might be emphasized too much. How have you seen this?

A lot of disturbing attitudes and issues emerge when we attempt to serve without love as our motivation. Such as?

Loving by faith.

Everything about the Christian life is based on faith. You love by faith just as you received Christ by faith, just as you are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. . . . If you have difficulty in loving others, remember that Jesus has commanded, “Love each other as much as I love you.” It is God’s will for you to love. He would not command you to do something that He will not enable you to do. Relating this promise to God’s command, you can claim by faith the privilege of loving with His love.

In order to experience and share this love, you must claim it by faith; that is, trust His promise that He will give you all that you need to do His will on the basis of His command and promise. And then take the first step; start loving by faith. BILL BRIGHT, “HOW TO LOVE BY FAITH”

Who do you find it most difficult to love? What makes loving him or her so difficult?

Practically speaking, what would it look like for you to move toward that person in love, trusting God to empower you?

LOVE BY FAITH. On the basis of God’s command to love, pray right now that God will empower you to love this person as you move toward him or her in faith. Confess any known sin (such as bitterness or anger) you’ve harbored toward them that may stand as a hindrance to the Spirit’s influence.



FATHER SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. JOHN 15: 26

From the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

Theologically speaking, there are times when it's important to be focused—as we have been here—on a specific issue or doctrine. The downside is that, by its very nature, such a focus can cause imbalance. In our case, that could lead us to overemphasize the Spirit at the expense of the Father and Son. So we need to conclude with some balancing perspective.

AS SOON AS JESUS WAS BAPTIZED, HE WENT UP OUT OF THE WATER. AT THAT MOMENT HEAVEN WAS OPENED, AND HE SAW THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDING LIKE A DOVE AND LIGHTING ON HIM. AND A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAID, "THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE; WITH HIM I AM WELL PLEASED." MATTHEW 3:16-17

This passage quite clearly—and quite intentionally—reveals God in his triune nature. Also significant is what this scene communicates about the Holy Spirit: the predominant role of the Spirit is to glorify Christ, to point to him, to testify to him (John 15:26), to be Jesus' presence in us (John 14:18). The implications of this are important.

Where the Spirit is powerfully at work, it will be the Lord Jesus who is lifted up, not the Spirit. The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-centered, Christ-directed life. By contrast with this study, we are rather to search the pages of Scripture to find Jesus, for the Spirit-inspired Scriptures are completely and utterly about him. "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). It is through Jesus that we are united to the Father, and the Spirit is the vessel through which we are united in, to, and with Christ.

All of which is to say that our study of the Spirit is to enrich our pursuit, intimacy, and love of Jesus, not detract from it.

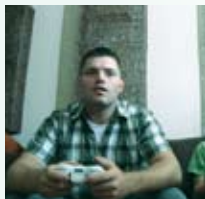
STEPS

Moses had been in the presence of the Lord. And then, Exodus 34:30 tells us, “When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant.”

By this point, having finished two weeks of Spirit-filled devotions, you are no doubt glowing. Those around you are barely able to stand the glare. But Exodus tells us that it didn't take long for Moses' glory to fade once he left the presence of the Lord—and that fading is what we want to avoid. We want to retain as much as we can and make walking in step with the Spirit a fixed, unchanging part of our life, however long our life may be.

Journal next to, over, or around each image. Write what you remember from that devotional, what you want to remember from that devotional, and what you never want to forget.





Go and do likewise.

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 AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE VERY END OF THE AGE." MATTHEW 28:18-20

These principles of the Spirit-filled life are meant to be passed on. Everybody wants more, everybody is thirsty. Sharing the ministry of the Holy Spirit with believers—seeing them come alive in their faith—can be as revolutionary and as life altering as sharing the gospel with an unbeliever. These principles stay fresh in our life as long as we continue to pass them on. You might say that a part of the Spirit-filled life is sharing the Spirit-filled life. (In any case, I just said it.) A great way to introduce others to the ministry of the Spirit is through sharing the "Satisfied?" booklet or passing on this devotional. Sharing the ministry of the Spirit is at the heart of personal discipleship.

Additional resources.

To order Satisfied? booklets, this devotional, or other discipleship material go to:

Crupress.com or call **1.800.827.2788**

Notes.

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