

Godly Men Lean On the Holy Spirit

When Bill was in his 20s, he asked Jesus Christ to forgive his sins and give him the gift of eternal life. During the last 15 years he has had a few spiritual “moments,” but mostly Bill has struggled against his lusts, his anger, his pride, his selfishness, and his worldly ambition. He stumbles when he tries to balance his priorities and usually ends up scheduling his family right out of his life.

Bill likes church, but the messages on Sunday just don’t seem to do very much for him. All in all, he feels pretty lukewarm. He’s not cold toward God, but neither is he passionate about his relationship with the Lord.

Like millions of other Christian men, Bill lives a defeated Christian life because he does not understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit. As a result his experience is like that of the man Paul describes in Rom. 7:15-23:

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do... I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it ... For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Why Do We Need the Holy Spirit?

Why is it so troubling to us when we aren't walking with God? Exactly because we know we can have a deeper relationship with Him by walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Here are four reasons why we need the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit quenches our soul's thirst for a deeper relationship with God. Jesus 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.' By this he meant the Spirit" (John 7:37-39).

2. There is an ongoing battle that can only be won by the Spirit. All men struggle with temptation and sin. The flesh and the Spirit want different results. "For the sinful nature (flesh) desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature (flesh). They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Gal. 5:17). A man said he felt like two dogs were fighting inside him. "Which one is winning?" asked a friend. "The one I feed the most," he answered.

3. The Holy Spirit shows us God's truth and points us to Christ. Jesus said that the Spirit would come and "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness" and "lead (the disciples) into all truth" (John 16: 8,13). Today, only the power of the Holy Spirit can change our deceitful hearts and allow us to know God. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by pointing our hearts towards Him; without the Spirit we would still walk in the darkness of unbelief.

4. Learning to walk in the Spirit is the turning point from cultural Christianity to Biblical Christianity. Yet, according to Campus Crusade for Christ surveys, 95 percent of Christians do not understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Still, God desires for us to walk in dependence on the Holy Spirit every moment of our lives. At its core, the normal Christian life is the life of the Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God. He is co-eternal and of the same substance as God the Father and Jesus Christ. What would be left without the Spirit? "If God were to withdraw His Spirit, all life would disappear and mankind would turn again to dust" (Job 34:14, TLB).

Some of His roles include converter (Titus 3:5, John 3:3-6), comforter and counselor (John 14:16), teacher (John 14:26), witness to Christ (John 15:26), intercessor (Rom. 8:26-27), empowerer (Acts 1:8), and seal until redemption (Eph. 1:13). He is the giver of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7,11).

If you need comfort, counsel, conviction, assurance, someone to intercede with God the Father on your behalf, power to witness, strength to overcome temptation, or forgiveness of sins—the Holy Spirit will meet your need.

When we talk about "walking in the Spirit", we do not mean that there are two "levels" of Christianity. Either you are a Christian or you are not. If you are a Christian, the Bible teaches that, over time, you will be transformed by the Holy Spirit. Still, while the Holy Spirit indwells every true Christian, not all Christians live in daily dependence on the Holy Spirit to the same degree. Every Christian can grow in his understanding of what it means to walk in the Spirit.

One Baptism, Many Fillings

The Bible reveals two basic experiences with the Holy Spirit. First, the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" means that we are washed clean of our sins and are renewed in our inner man. All Christians receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion (Eph. 1:13-14). In fact, we cannot become a Christian without the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-6). Did you know that our bodies are actually the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16)?

Second, the "filling of the Holy Spirit" is our daily

dependence on the Holy Spirit and commitment to God's word. You can be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in His strength and power. In fact, it is God's will for you to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 puts it this way: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be "under the influence" and living in the light of God's word. The allusion is to deep drinking, but always under control.

How Can We Be Filled?

We can be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith when we prayerfully depend on Him and follow God's word. You can be filled right now by asking Him to fill and empower you.

Pray This Prayer

Lord Jesus, I need You. I have succumbed to my sinful nature (the flesh) and I have sinned. I have not been living by the Spirit and the teachings of Your word. I desire to be reconciled with You and to again experience Your love and forgiveness. I confess my sins to You and ask You to forgive me (Note: confess specific sins to Him). Thank You for forgiving all of my sins. Holy Spirit, I want to live in dependence on You and allow You to continue changing me. Help me live in moment-by-moment fellowship with You. Empower me to be a Biblical Christian. Amen.

Be Filled Continuously

Being filled must be maintained. It is not an automatic, once-for-all thing. We have one baptism, but many fillings.

When God shows you that you have sinned, acknowledge and confess that sin. Thank Jesus that He has forgiven all your sins. Then ask the Holy Spirit to again empower you to obey God's word. The key is to keep "short accounts" with God and maintain your commitment to His word – don't let unconfessed

sins take root in your life. Examine yourself at least daily. You will get better by practice and increasing spiritual maturity.

A Continuous Prayer

Lord Jesus, I confess (name the specific sin). I thank You that You died for this and all my sins. Please forgive me, and take control of my life. Holy Spirit, by depending on You, I commit to walk in Your power. Amen.

For the original article, please visit .