

One Thing You Absolutely Cannot Do Without the Holy Spirit

“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy” (Eph. 4:21-24, NLT).

You need more power than just willpower in your life. You need God’s power.

The “fruit of the Spirit” are the qualities that God puts in your life when the Holy Spirit lives through you: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

How does God produce that fruit in your life? Not by your willpower. You don’t go out and say, “I’m going to be a more patient person!” That doesn’t work.

You try to say, “I’m going to be more patient. I’m going to be more loving.” It’s like tying some oranges on a eucalyptus tree and calling it an orange tree. It doesn’t work that way. Fruit can only come from the inside—the Holy Spirit living through you.

How does the Holy Spirit work in your life? The answer is gradually: “And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us *more and more* like him as we are changed into his glorious image” (2 Cor. 3:18, NLT, emphasis added).

When God wants to make a mushroom, he takes six hours. When God wants to make an oak tree, he takes 60 years. The question

is: Do you want your life to be a mushroom or an oak tree?

You didn't collect your hurts, habits and hang-ups overnight. It took you a long time to get as messed up as you are! Someone approached me once and said, "Pastor Rick, I need you to solve my marriage problem."

I said, "How long have you been married?"

"Fifteen years.

"How long have you had this problem?"

"Ten years."

And you want a five-second answer? It isn't going to happen! You've got to peel that onion one layer at a time.

The Holy Spirit works within us to make us gradually more and more like him. Your character is the sum total of your habits. Your responsibility is to develop new habits that help you to change.

Talk About It

- What new fruit—representing recent spiritual growth—are you seeing in your life?
- What new habits do you want to develop so that the Holy Spirit can continually work in your life to make you more like Christ?
- Ask your small group or accountability partner to pray for you as the Holy Spirit develops these new habits in your life. {eo}

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of *LifeWay*, a global internet community for pastors.

This article originally appeared at [www.rickwarren.com](#).