

The No. 1 Thing Christians Are Missing Today

There are so many believers who aim at great things, yet they find themselves settling for the lowest common denominator. They remain contented in a life of compromise when they could be experiencing the power of God. They stay in the shallow end of the Christian life when they could cross oceans. They live on spiritual junk food instead of the royal banquets.

Does this sound like you? If so, there is hope. Every believer *can* live the abundant life Christ promised (see John 10:10). We simply need to yield to the work of God's Spirit in our lives.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, the apostle Paul declares, "Brothers, I could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to worldly, even as to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with solid food. For to this day you were not able to endure it. Nor are you able now, for you are still worldly. Since there is envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not worldly and behaving as mere men?"

Here, Paul was saying to the believers in Corinth, "I long to speak to you on a deep spiritual level, but you are still acting like babies! You aren't even living by the power of the Holy Spirit."

I grieve at how true this is of so many of us today.

How often do we attempt to live the Christian life without God's help? How often do we read the Bible without going to the Author directly? How often do pastors and church leaders go rogue in their biblical interpretation because, long ago, they grieved or quenched the Holy Spirit?

In 1 Corinthians 2:12, Paul says, "Now we have received not

the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God." We have the Spirit of God Himself living within us—the same Spirit "who raised Jesus from the dead" (Rom. 8:11). We need to live like the world no longer.

The challenge is this: When we become born again, our sinful nature does not just disappear. The Greek word Paul uses for "the flesh" is *sarx*, and it refers to the old nature before Christ came into our lives. *Sarx* is the natural mind before Christ transformed our minds. *Sarx* is that sinful nature that dominated us before Christ came in. *Sarx* is like an automatic gate that opens up the moment the devil and the world push the button. If you're not living in and through the power of the Holy Spirit, it's because you have allowed your flesh to open the door, permitting the world and the devil to enter.

The Lord has given us the three musketeers to defeat the world, the flesh and the devil: (1) a renewed nature, (2) His Word and (3) His Holy Spirit. Through them, we may live victoriously, above the enemies who are trying to get us down.

So, what's the key to living the Christian life? It's simple. The moment-by-moment prayer of every Christian should be, "Holy Spirit, take over. I give You control." Fill your mind with God's Word and surrender daily to His work in your life—for He is a gentleman, and He will not take control unless you allow Him to.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the one who opened our blind eyes to the truth. He is the one who helps us grow in the knowledge of God. He is the midwife who delivered you when you were born again. He is our tutor, teacher and instructor—and He is eager to give you discernment, wisdom, understanding, power and favor with God and man. He should be your best friend—for you cannot live the Christian life without Him!

No one, when they are born again, immediately becomes a

spiritual giant. We grow into that greatness by submitting day by day to the Holy Spirit of God. We are filled day by day by that same Holy Spirit—that wind of God that can pull our sails when we ask Him to—as we live under the authority of His book.

Ask yourself these questions:

–Have I grown in my faith?

–Have I grown to trust God more deeply?

–Have I grown in the Word of God over the past year?

If the answer is no, it's OK. You can start right now by allowing these words to be your moment-by-moment petition to God: "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Have Your way in my life today." {eoa}

Michael Youssef is the founder and president of Leading The Way with Dr. Michael Youssef, a worldwide ministry that leads the way for people living in spiritual darkness to discover the light of Christ through the creative use of media and on-the-ground ministry teams (). His weekly television programs and daily radio programs are broadcast in 26 languages and seen worldwide, reaching audiences across six continents.

Dr. Youssef was born in Egypt, but in 1984, he fulfilled a childhood dream of becoming an American citizen. He is the founding and senior pastor of Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, Georgia. He holds numerous degrees, including a Ph.D. in social anthropology from Emory University. He has written more than 40 books, including such popular titles as *The Hidden Enemy* and *Life-Changing Prayers*. His latest book, *Saving Christianity?*, is available from booksellers everywhere. He and his wife have four grown children and 10 grandchildren.