

## Living a Spirit Filled Life

Through Jesus, the old covenant was fulfilled and the new covenant of grace began and Christ now mediates on our behalf. Although the temple was completely destroyed in A.D. 70 by Roman soldiers who occupied Jerusalem, God's Spirit departed the sanctuary nearly 40 years earlier during Christ's crucifixion. Matthew records this extraordinary event in his rendering of the gospel of Christ:

*And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split. (Matthew 27:50, 51)*

The curtain that separated the inner sanctuary from the rest of the temple was torn in half at the moment Christ died. At this point in time, the Spirit of God left the inner sanctuary of the temple and He never returned. So where did the Spirit of God go after departing the temple? Paul answers this question in his first epistle to Corinth:

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20)*

The Spirit departed the temple in Jerusalem and now makes His home in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus Christ. This is what is known as the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit" and signifies our adoption into God's family:

*We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. (1 John 4:13)*

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit began on the Day of Pentecost, as foretold by the prophet Joel, and continues to this very day. When a person accepts Christ into his or her heart, a new creation begins. God's people once worshiped in a temple made by human hands, but now worship directly through communion with the Holy Spirit:

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (John 4:23)*

The Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our adoption into God's family (Romans 8:15) and a seal of our salvation:

*And 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)*

Living a holy life that both personally satisfying and holy may seem like an impossible task for us to fulfill. Indeed, if we attempted to do so by our own strength we would undoubtedly fail. God does not expect us to do it by our own power and might. The reason He sent His Spirit into our hearts is so we could live the life He desires for us to live. We need the Spirit's help so we can overcome the weaknesses born of the flesh:

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. (Romans 8:26, 27)*

What a great comfort this is for those who struggle with addiction. It is not a battle the Christian faces alone. God has given us the power through the Holy Spirit to overcome this foe. The Spirit searches our hearts and intercedes before the Father on our behalf. Do not underestimate this gift you have been given. The Holy Spirit is a mighty weapon that you can rely upon in overcoming great adversity. He is working in and through you to achieve sanctification:

*All good things are found in the divine Comforter. Matchless consolation, infallible instruction, immortal quickening, spiritual energy, and divine sanctification all lie compounded with other Excellencies in that sacred eye-slave, the heavenly anointing oil of the Holy Spirit. It imparts a delightful fragrance to the character and person of the man upon whom it is poured. Nothing like it can be found in all the treasuries of the rich, or the secrets of the wise. It is not to be imitated. It comes alone from God, and it is freely given, through Jesus Christ, to every waiting soul. Let us seek it, for we may have it, may have it this very evening. O Lord, anoint Thy servants.<sup>1</sup>*

Seek the manifestation of God's Spirit which is a treasure beyond anything this world can possibly offer and is a source of great power and strength. If you are in the midst of this battle, you may feel like giving up because you think this enemy is too great to overcome. Given the nature of addiction, this sentiment is easy to understand, but it is simply untrue. You can overcome addiction through God's power if you have faith. Understand and recognize that it is when you are at your weakest point that God is strong. His power is made perfect in your weakness:

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<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, C.H. 1952. *Spices for Anointing Oil – Exodus 35:8*. This Evening's Meditation, November 29, 1952.

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

It is hard to imagine that we can boast about our weaknesses, but Paul had a different perspective, as the above Scripture reveals, than many of us have today. He discovered that God's power was greater than the many struggles he personally encountered. For Paul, he understood that God's grace was sufficient in every situation and he experienced great joy; even in times of relentless struggle. And you can experience the same happiness in your life as you lean on God in your time of need.

In order to do so, you will have to live "by the Spirit" of God rather than seeking to satisfy earthly passions and desires. This is not always easy since our sin nature desires what is contrary to God's moral law. Fortunately, we have been crucified with Christ and can now walk in righteousness:

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 5:24, 25 NIV)*

How do we "keep in step" with the Spirit? We must offer our bodies as living sacrifices holy and blameless.

*Therefore, 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. (Rom 12:1 NIV)*

This undoubtedly requires tremendous effort and patience. It does not come naturally which is why Paul has to tell us to do it! However, as we renew our minds with God's truth and reject the many lies, such as the "disease" myth of addiction, then we will inevitably become transformed. We renew our minds through God's revealed truth in scripture. God's holy word works in unison with His Spirit to sanctify our lives. By submitting to both, we will live a Spirit filled life!