

Discipleship Lesson-5: Meet the Spirit of God Who Empowers & Transforms My Life

Galatians 5:19-26

Today, each of us believers gathered here, represent what God began at Pentecost. We are the local, visible gathering of the Church that Christ Jesus is building.

Following Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension the most amazing event of all of human history began at Pentecost.

The Church was born in Acts 2, as the Holy Spirit began to apply the sacrifice of Christ Jesus to doomed earthlings, making them sons and daughters of God.

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH AT PENTECOST

Across the sin darkened canvas of the 1st Century world a new day dawned. Starting about 30 AD a world that sat in darkness began to see the light.

What a transformation!

In just one generation,

People crippled by racial enmities,

People ripped apart by ethnic strife,

People marred by cruel inhumanity,

People drowning in sexual perversion,

People plunging headlong into self indulgence,

People chained to idolatrous false worship: were gloriously changed.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

In one generation, spanning the lifetimes of Christ's 12 apostles, the entire world was touched. The light of the gospel dawned upon countless hearts.

There was no empire untouched. From China to Africa, from Britain to India, across the trade routes to the furthest outpost like a forest fire marching across a sin parched woods, the dry and barren lives of the world flamed to supernatural life.

The fire of Pentecost burned into the lives of the world of that day the image and life and sacrifice of Jesus.

And that fire has never stopped. This week the Fire of Pentecost has ignited the souls of even more formerly dry, lifeless and doomed sinners unto everlasting life.

What am I describing? The birth and growth of the church: the supernaturally regenerated body of Jesus on earth. And who is accomplishing this incredible event? The Spirit of God, the Fire of Pentecost, and today:

God's Spirit is still washing clean sin stained hearts,

God's Spirit is still breathing life into sin-darkened souls,

God's Spirit is still filling empty hopeless lives.

God's Spirit is still transforming barren lives into spiritual gardens.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

We need to understand this incredible Third Person of God. We need to look at His work as a part of the Triune God we worship and adore. To start look with me at Genesis 1:

The Spirit of God is the Agent of Creation. Genesis 1:2

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

The Spirit of God is the Agent of Conviction. Genesis 6:3

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

The Spirit of God is the Author of the Scriptures. II Samuel 23:2

"The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.

The Spirit of God is the one who reveals Jesus. John 16:13

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.)

The Spirit of God is the one who secures saints for heaven. 2 Corinthians 1:22

who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

The Spirit of God is the one who makes us brand new. Titus 3:5

not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God is the one who cleanses our minds. Hebrews 9:14

how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?).

The Spirit of God is the one who calls us homeward. Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit is revealed in many ways. Mentioned perhaps eighty times in the Old Testament, at least fifty times in the gospels, nearly sixty in Acts, and more than one hundred times in the rest of the New Testament.

The Holy Spirit attends the birth of Jesus, causing His very conception in Mary (Matthew 1:18, 20), and empowers John the Baptist from childhood (Luke 1:15).

He leads Jesus into His desert sojourn (Mark 1:12).

He is the agent by whom Jesus baptizes believers into His church (Matthew 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13) and by whom He casts out evil spirits (Matthew 12:28).

God's Spirit is the possession of all who are in Christ (Romans 8:9), the down payment of our ultimate redemption (Ephesians 1:13).

Scripture also reveals that the Spirit can be lied to and tested (Acts 5:3, 9), resisted (Acts 7:51), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

THE LIFE-ALTERING, PERSONALITY CHANGING SPIRIT OF GOD

But more than anything else, the Spirit of God can totally alter the way you live. God's Spirit can change us into brand new people!

To see how God wants to change each of us, would you open to Galatians 5 and stand with me as we read v. 19-26.

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

There are 17 manifestations of the flesh in verses 19-21.

Of these 8 are dealing with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas. Or, to say I sinned and go on.

The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in visible ways, in each of these areas that are described in v. 22-26.

FIRST, WE WILL SEE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

LOVE is the absence of selfishness. It is the product of the Holy Spirit present in our lives Rom. 5:5 says. And it even "flowers in the presence of the unlovely and hostile" (J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship* p. 118.).

Personal checkup question: *Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love? Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month, or last year?*

JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances; because love and self-centeredness cannot co-exist. However, the Apostle Paul said that he was II Cor. 6:10 - sorrowful yet always full of joy.

Personal checkup question: *Do those that know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person?*

PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. “Peace is love in repose, with no borrowing of tomorrow’s troubles today.” Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present! “When the Holy Spirit is not grieved the dove of peace is able to alight on the heart.”

Personal checkup question: *Has peace become more and more a way of life for you this year?*

SECONDLY, WE WILL SEE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR PUBLIC WALK WITH OTHERS.

LONGSUFFERING/PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. It is that bearing long with people that Paul spoke of in I Corinthians. Patience is also one of the Supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. See Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; II Peter 3:9.

Personal checkup question: *ask yourself, am I more patient than I was three months ago? Or less? If we are not increasing in patience it is only because we are not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit.*

KINDNESS is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. It is a chosen reflection of Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32 in my life. “Kindness is seen as that sensitivity toward others that issues into deeds of self sacrifice and love even toward the unlovely and undeserving ones. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another.

Personal checkup question: *Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others?*

GOODNESS is being Godlike! It is the opposite of fallen humanity. Today to call someone good is an insult. If you really want to demean someone, call them a “goodie, goodie”. But, look at Jesus in Acts 10:38. When the Holy Spirit anointed His life, what came out? As one author wrote -- “Ecstatic utterances? Spectacular Miracles? Flamboyant Sermons? No! He simply went about doing good. ”

Personal checkup question: *Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do people see me doing good to all those around me?*

FINALLY, WE WILL SEE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR PRIVATE LIFE WITH OUR SELF.

FAITHFULNESS is a trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Like Psalm 15 speaks of, they make and keep their word.

Personal checkup question: *Am I making strides in reliability and dependability?*

GENTLENESS is the opposite of asserting ourselves. The Lord said that the Meek were the ultimate winners. [Matthew 5:5] Those who are Servants of the Lord must not strive II Timothy 2:24. They resist selfish ambition [James 3:16] because it is a reflection of Satan not God. Remember Jesus described Himself as 'Meek and Lowly' [Mt 11:29].

Personal checkup question: *What shape is my personal agenda in? Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or is it in hopeless shape, crucified with Christ and fading?*

SELF-CONTROL is a mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones. The only force that can control or flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to Him we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him no longer to self. Self cannot control self. Flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us.

Personal checkup question: *Do others see me as graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline? Are you beating under and giving knockout blows to your flesh? Paul was in I Cor. 9:27. Can we do any less?*

Well, are they present? Are they growing? The proof is in how we are with our relationships

WE NEED THE SPIRIT'S POWER TO FOLLOW GOD

Let me show you something neat in Galatians 5, another great text on the Holy Spirit.

We are to actively follow the Lord—inviting the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives by reading the Word, praying, and obeying His will.

Galatians 5:16, 25 I say then: **Walk...**

(present active imperative—keep constantly walking)

We are to walk **(present active imperative)** in the Spirit. And if we do that, look what verse 16 says

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Now look at verse 25—

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

So our body is His abiding place, we are to walk in Him.

WE NEED THE SPIRIT'S POWER OR WE GRIEVE GOD

Now keep going to Ephesians 4:30 with that in mind.

Because He owns us and lives in us, because He commands us to walk in Him, if we give in to sin (like the lying, bitterness, and course talking) by disobeying God, we are *grieving the Spirit* (Eph. 4:30)

Ephesians 4:30 And **do not grieve** (another **present active imperative**) the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

It is my duty to say no to any thing that will shut off the valve of the Holy Spirit's working in my life. It's my job to make sure that nothing constricts Him, nothing stops the flow of the Spirit in my life.

Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but **be filled** (**present passive imperative**) with the Spirit,

This is a continuous experience, like drinking water from a fresh stream (John 7:37–39).

John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and **drink** (**present active imperative**). He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

That’s a command; and if we disobey, we are grieving God!