

BIBLICAL EXERCISES FOR SPIRITUAL HEALTH & FITNESS IN 2014 SERIES

**Truth-3: Spirit-Filled
Simeon Illustrates the Spirit-Filled Life,
the Spirit-Illumined Life & the Spirit-Led Life God Offers
Luke 2:25-35**

We are looking one-by-one at the Spiritual Living Lessons that new believers need to have personally taught to them by older believers.

Saved: We have seen salvation as portrayed across the pages of Acts by those early Apostles & disciples.

Scripture-Fed: Then we examined the Scriptures and the link between salvation through the Word and spiritual nurture by daily feeding upon the Word.

Spirit-Filled: This is the whole realm of understanding all that God has given us through Christ that only comes to us by walking in step with the Holy Spirit. We have examined the Scriptural terms: Spirit-filled, Spirit-Led, grieving & quenching, and even seen the immensity of the Spirit's work as portrayed in Romans.

The Holy Spirit is revealed in many ways in God's Word: perhaps eighty times in the Old Testament, at least fifty times in the Gospels, nearly sixty times in Acts, and more than one hundred times in the rest of the New Testament. But today we need to see how:

LUKE EMPHASIZES THE AMAZING HOLY SPIRIT @ WORK

It was the Holy Spirit that Gabriel announced would fill John the Baptist as he prepared the way for Christ's coming (Luke 1:15).

It was the Holy Spirit who caused Christ's conception in Mary (Luke 1:35);

It was the Holy Spirit who prompted Elisabeth to announce Christ's presence within Mary (Luke 1:41);

It was the Holy Spirit who spoke through Zechariah announcing that his son was Christ's herald named John the Baptist (Luke 1:67);

It was the Holy Spirit who led Simeon to find Jesus carried by Joseph & Mary in the Temple area (Luke 2:25-27).

It was the Holy Spirit who baptizes believers into Christ's church (Luke 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13);

It was the Holy Spirit who led Christ out into His desert temptation (Luke 3:22; 4:1; Mark 1:12).

It was the Holy Spirit who empowered Christ to preach the Gospel (Luke 4:14, 18).

It was the Holy Spirit who indwells us the moment we are saved by Christ (Luke 10:20; Romans 8:9); and becomes the engagement ring or down payment of our eternal redemption (Ephesians 1:13).

It was the Holy Spirit who empowered Christ to minister with joy (Luke 10:21).

It was the Holy Spirit who was given as a gift to those who ask for Him from God the father (Luke 11:13; John 7:37-39).

It was only by the Holy Spirit that Christ casts out evil spirits (Luke 11:20; Matthew 12:28).

It was the Holy Spirit who empowered the disciples to preach the Gospel with boldness (Luke 12:10, 12).

It was the Holy Spirit that was called the Promise of My Father by Christ that ended the disciples with power (Luke 24:49).

SEEING THE SPIRIT AT WORK IN NORMAL PEOPLE

Today as we head towards Christmas, we begin a more personal look at the Spirit. Instead of seeing just the didactic, doctrinal writings of the Epistles, we are going to spend these weeks using the characters of Christmas as illustrations.

In the Gospels we see the Holy Spirit greatly at work in both Christ's life and those around Him. We can actually see how the Spirit can operate when we see what He does in those who surrender, yield, and seek to stay in step with Him.

Simeon is introduced to us by God in Luke 2:22-35, and if it wasn't for that introduction, he would be like untold billions of others throughout human history that were only known by those closest to them during their lives; and who died without leaving a trace.

Even if God hadn't added him to the Biblical record, and even if we had never read about Simeon, what he was will last forever.

Simeon was an Old Testament saint, who lived in hope waiting for the coming Christ by faith; and died in faith, ready to go whenever God's time came.

Ready to go, what a way we all should live.

MEET SIMEON A SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVER

Simeon sends a message from his life that extends far from the Christmas scenes, reaching all the way to the very end of each of our lives. Simeon was a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led servant; and his life is a model for each of us.

In our text a nearly six-week-old Jesus was on His way in the arms of His parents to be dedicated in Jerusalem's Temple. Joseph and Mary would undoubtedly have been walking up the entrance called the Southern Steps. I love to teach this passage standing in the midst of a group of Holy Land pilgrims with Bibles opened. It is one of those moments when you can feel the very place the event happened in God's Word!

Around Christ's parents would have been the tens of thousands of pilgrims who each day streamed in and out of that astounding structure. The Temple Mount was a 40-acre platform that could easily contain a quarter-of-a-million people standing on feast days. Herod enlarged the platform Solomon had built and surrounded it with one of the greatest colonnades of the ancient world. Among this forest of gleaming white 60' carved limestone pillars, moved the rivers of worshippers who filled the Temple each day in Jerusalem.

GOD'S RECORD OF AN AMAZING MOMENT

Luke captures the moment when just a hand full of these thousands of worshippers met in a Divine appointment. The transcript of their meeting has been preserved through the inspiration of God, and comes to us as part of God's record of Christ's birth. Please stand, as we witness again this event in Luke 2:22-35.

Luke 2:22-35 (NKJV) Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and **the Holy Spirit was upon him**. ²⁶ And it had been **revealed to him by the Holy Spirit** that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ So **he came by the Spirit** into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he **took Him up in his arms and blessed God** and said:

²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting **Your servant depart in peace**,
According to Your word;

³⁰ For **my eyes have seen Your salvation**

³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

³² A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel."

³³ And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. ³⁴ Then **Simeon blessed them**, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

PRAY

Think for a moment what we have here. These fourteen verses are a biographical snapshot that God wrote down for us using Luke as His human agent. So, each detail we read was chosen by God to frame our understanding of what God saw in Simeon's life.

So what do these 14 verses teach us?

THE SPIRIT'S FULLNESS IS EMPHASIZED IN SIMEON'S LIFE

Simeon's life, chronicled ONLY here in all of God's Word, models what it means to **make choices to walk in the power of God's Spirit**. Note the concentration of terms familiar to us, on this side of the Cross in the age of Christ's Church, but very uncommon in these end of

the Old Testament times Simeon lived in. Three clear statements of the Spirit of God's work in his life:

v. 25b ***the Holy Spirit was upon him.***

v. 26 *And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*

v. 27 *So he came by the Spirit*

Walking in the Spirit insured for Simeon—a life that mattered, a life that counted, and that pleased Jesus.

Walking in the Spirit gives us a life that pleases God, and a life that is “on duty” as God's servant, at any moment.

But God does not force Himself upon us.

The words most associated with the Holy Spirit's filling of our lives are all choices. Think of those words used for the life of the Spirit:

abide, walk, wait, seek first, present yourself, clothe yourself, yield yourself, surrender, consecrate, follow, Spirit-led, and be filled with the Spirit.

Those are words of choices made, and of a conscious pathway of choosing to open one's life to God's rule.

Life as God intended it to be, for every believer, is pictured by this simple, humble, and obscure saint. As we study these truths, ask yourself, “Am I offering myself to the Lord, to live this kind of life He wants me to live, as a gift to Christ this Christmas?”

FIRST, LIKE SIMEON SEEK THE **SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE** GOD OFFERS:

Luke 2:25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and **the Holy Spirit was upon him.**

How does anyone get God to enter their life? God said long before Simeon's day in Jeremiah 29:13, which was written six hundred years before Christ's birth:

Jeremiah 29:13 (NKJV) And you will seek Me and find Me, **when you search for Me with all your heart.**

Simeon sought God.

Simeon opened his life to God, and surrendered to His control.

Simeon wanted God's way, and God controls surrendered people by filling them with His Spirit.

Simeon was living the Spirit-filled life that God offers.

Application: Pause and ask yourself:

How long has it been since I asked God to take over my plans?

How long since you parked the car of your life, turned off the ignition, pulled the keys out and surrendered both the keys, the steering wheel, and the driver's seat to God?

How long has it been since you were personally aware of His Presence in your heart and life each day?

How long has it been since you cried out and told the Lord that you wanted to rely upon Him to lead and guide you?

NEXT, LIKE SIMEON SEEK THE **SPIRIT-ILLUMINED LIFE** GOD OFFERS:

Luke 2:26 And it had been **revealed to him by the Holy Spirit** that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Simeon learned what God wanted him to do in life.

He was confident that the Lord had a plan and he rested by faith in God will for his life.

Simeon sought to follow God's plan. He said not my way but yours.

Simeon found the Spirit-illumined life God offers.

Do you have that calm assurance that you are following the plan of God? Remember what Simeon had grown up hearing? As a faithful Jew he would have often heard the Psalms and one of the most well know Psalms was David's 16th Psalm that is a promise from God to "show us the path of life". Look there with me and underline these words in your soul:

Psalm 16:11 (NKJV) You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;

At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

God wants to illumine, guide, and direct His path for us, all we have to do is want to listen to His voice.

Application: Have you ever invited the Spirit of God to illumine your mind by bowing and asking Him to "open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things" in Your Word (Ps. 119:18)? That is what the Spirit-illumined life is all about. Asking God to open His Word, which is His Will, which is His plan for our lives. That is the work of the Spirit God offers to each of us.

Have you allowed the Lord to illumine His Word and open your eyes to see what He has planned for your life? The greatest joy in life comes from knowing and doing God's will for your life.

THIRDLY, LIKE SIMEON SEEK THE **SPIRIT-LED LIFE** GOD OFFERS:

Luke 2:27 So **he came by the Spirit** into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,

Simeon knew that God wanted to show him the path, so he just set out to follow the Lord day-by-day.

Jesus said that the essence of being His disciple was to "follow" Him. He also said that His sheep hear His voice, and follow Him. The Spirit led life is a life of hearing and following God through His Word, by the Holy Spirit's power.

Application: Do you walk through life being consciously led by the Spirit? Being led by the Spirit is one of the evidences of salvation (Rom. 8:14), and we should be very conscious of His guiding work in our lives.

What pathway are you choosing to live? Simeon had made a choice to follow the Spirit's leading.

Now we get to the heart of Simeon's spiritual walk. Simeon is an advertisement to. Listen what walking in the Spirit can do, it made Simeon full of joy, peace, and hope:

FOURTH, LIKE SIMEON SPIRIT-FILLED LIVING MAKES US READY TO GO

Luke 2:28-29 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now **You are letting Your servant depart in peace**, According to Your word"; NKJV

Simeon was ready to die at any moment v. 29: The word "*depart*" in the Greek has several meanings, and each of them tells us something about the death of a Christian.

Each of these pictures gives us a beautiful and comforting hope.

Death is only the **start** of the greatest journey of our lives and involves **leaving behind** our slavery to sin, **taking down** our tent of our temporary earthly dwelling, and **setting sail** for our home beyond the stars.

Depart can mean 'to release a prisoner' which speaks of our redemption from the slave market of sin. This aspect of salvation is the most frequent theme of the saints ("the redeemed") in Heaven. We like Simeon should celebrate that Christ's death has made us long to leave behind our slavery to sin.

John 8:32, 36 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 36
Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Depart can also mean 'to untie a ship and set sail', and this is the picture Paul gives when he told Timothy "I am now ready to depart". We like Simeon should celebrate that Christ's death has made us long **to take down** our tent of our temporary earthly dwelling.

II Timothy 4:6-7 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. NKJV

Depart finally speaks of 'taking down a tent' and this is the metaphor of Paul in II Corinthians 5:1-8 as he talks of his and our death being the laying aside of our tents. We like Simeon should celebrate that Christ's death has made us long to **setting sail** for our home beyond the stars.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, **we have** a building from God, a house not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens**. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be **clothed with our habitation which is from heaven**, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, **that mortality may be swallowed up by life**. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent

from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. NKJV

Each of these pictures gives us a beautiful and comforting hope. Death is only the **start** of the greatest journey of our lives and involves **leaving behind** our slavery to sin, **taking down** our tent of our temporary earthly dwelling, and **setting sail** for our home beyond the stars.

FIFTH, LIKE SIMEON SPIRIT-FILLED LIVING MAKES JESUS OUR LIGHT

Luke 2:30-33 For **my eyes have seen Your salvation** 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 **A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles**, And the glory of Your people Israel.” 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. NKJV

Simeon saw Jesus as the Light for his life v. 32: “Simeon referred to Jesus as “a light for revelation.”

Few metaphors capture Jesus’ mission as well. Light makes the stillness come alive; light settles fear; light reveals mystery; light enables relationships. Jesus is God in the flesh, eternal light breaking into a spiritually dark world.

Jesus is your light. He is not a distant sun, remote and driven by physics’ laws. Jesus is the light of your life—your courage, your enabler.

Start each day by turning on the light—a moment of meditation on God’s Word, a prayer of dedication to live for God all day”.¹

SIXTH, LIKE SIMEON SPIRIT-FILLED LIVING MAKES US PRAISE GOD

Luke 2:34-35 **Then Simeon blessed them**, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35 “(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” NKJV

How did Simeon praise God? Notice how he “blesses” those around him. He is not trapped by his situation (weak, and elderly as he may have been), rather he is choosing to praise God.

Praise is a choice, and in Simeon’s life it had to start by a conscious decision to push aside all of his problems and complaints in order to see and then celebrate God’s generosity. In those days just getting daily necessities took much more work than we are used to. So as he made it through each day, Simeon learned to thank God for his “daily bread” as Jesus would call it. But the clearest choice this passage reveals is that Simeon had chosen to reorient his heart around God’s message in His Word and the priorities that the Bible taught him.

Simeon chose to live in hope. He walked in step with the Spirit of God, and his life was an offering us praise. That is the beautiful portrait that God’s Word gives us of this man we only see here in the entire Bible. I hope he will become an example and inspiration for many of us to also live in hope, energized by God to live this life of praise.

¹Barton, Bruce B. ; Veerman, David ; Taylor, Linda Chaffee ; Osborne, Grant R.: *Luke*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 1997 (Life Application Bible Commentary), S. 51

As you hold God's Word in your hands, let this truth overflow into your mind, your heart, and your life—nothing is as bleak as the life of an unbeliever. They must live only for today because they have no firm hope in God's promises of a glorious tomorrow.

With the promises of God to cling to, every day has hope and good cheer. As believers we know the truth of the Scriptures that nothing can separate us from God's love—neither old age, nor grim circumstances. Remember today that nothing but your own wrong choices can keep you from God's comfort.

He is sufficient for our needs today and forever. Allow God's Spirit to use Simeon's example to energize you to look ahead to God's great plan for each day. Choose to live in hope one day at a time like Simeon.

But the greatest message from this whole passage is that we like Simeon can have a:

SIMEON PORTRAYS THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

Look back at Luke 2:25

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, **and the Holy Spirit was upon him.**

If we are truly saved, we have the Spirit. He lives within, we are His temple.

Simeon chose to live energized by God's Spirit of hope.

He walked in step with the Spirit of God, and his life was an offering us praise.

That is the beautiful portrait that God's Word gives us of this man we only see here in the entire Bible.

I hope Simeon will become an example and inspiration for many of us to also live in hope, energized by God to live this life of praise.

APPENDIX:

Simeon's words declare—

“how completely a believer can be delivered from the fear of death. **“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace”** (verse 29). Simeon speaks like a person for whom the grave has lost its terrors and the world its charms. He speaks as one who knows where he is going when he departs this life and cares not how soon he goes. What delivers us from that fear of death which enslaves so many people? There is only one answer to this question. Nothing except strong faith can do it. Faith laying firm hold on an unseen Savior—faith resting on the promises of an unseen God. Faith, and faith only, can enable a man to look death in the face and say, “I depart in peace.”²

Simeon was Spirit Sealed: Luke 2:30-32 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

When we were saved the Holy Spirit enters our lives and transforms us. Note the practical applications of this truth to our lives that God's Word has given us.

The Holy Spirit Authenticates and certifies that we belong to God. Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, (KJV)

The Holy Spirit Secures us. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. NKJV

These verses say that the Holy Spirit has signed, sealed and delivered us for God. The Holy Spirit also given to us as a pledge. God delivered us our engagement ring. This is the security of divine protection. We are delivered God's engagement ring. It is a pledge that there is even more to come.

The Holy Spirit makes us to be Epistles of Christ. Look at 2 Corinthians 3:3 clearly [you are] an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, [that is,] of the heart. (NKJV)

Do you see the plan? We are the love letters of God. Written in our lives, signed and sealed by the Spirit, delivered as a down payment to empower us to go out and be read by the world! So testifying of Christ is not an option. It is the very reason for which we have been made. Each of us have become His book, written by Christ, published or circulated by the Holy Spirit into the world, taking God's love to sinful mankind. We are bound not in full grain leather, but in a human life. Are you carrying the priceless message of Christ into the world? Does your lifestyle advertise your true contents? Does your dress, deportment, modesty, conduct and language support your message or confuse it? Is the Holy Spirit writing on your life fresh messages from His Word? Is the Eternal truth coming through? How sacred is our calling.

²Ryle, J. C., *Luke: The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1997.

The Holy Spirit supplies us to be Snapshots Of Christ! 2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (NJKV)

The Holy Spirit wants the image of Jesus to be a full color photo in our lives. We are not just His epistles, or letters. We are full color, living Photos. We are movies, videos of Jesus. They want proof that He is real and alive? He lives within my heart! Unveiled like the camera lens to get a clear exposure. Let's lay aside the world, our flesh, our bad habits, our wrong desires, our mixed up priorities, our personal grievances, our petty strife, our bitterness. All must be rid of to be a clear photograph. Signed, Sealed and Delivered Epistles. Illustrating Christ to a dark and hopeless World. That is what the Holy Spirit wants to do with you. Are you willing?

So Simeon departs from the pages of God's Word -- **Finishing Life Fruitfully for Jesus.**

Other Simeon Messages:

131215AM Giving To God Like Simeon: A Life of Walking In The Spirit Luke 2:22-35

071216AM GCM-40 Simeon: Living a Life of Hope Luke 2:22-35

051218AM GCM-28 Seeing Christ This Christmas Being Good And Faithful Servants Like Simeon & Anna Luke 2.22-38

031228AM GCM-5 Finishing Fruitfully Waiting: Simeon & Anna Luke 2.22-38