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LEADER'S GUIDE

LIFE THROUGH THE SPIRIT • HOLY SPIRIT



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WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

In this study, you will get to introduce people to the life changing power of the Holy Spirit. When we trust in Christ, we are immediately forgiven from the penalty of sin, and are given freedom from the power of sin. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to live righteous lives consistent with our faith in Christ. Your job is to help people understand that by yielding to the Spirit, they no longer need to be controlled by their sinful nature.

Your familiarity with the booklet, "Satisfied?" will be a tremendous aid as you lead this study.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this study to cru.comm@uscm.org.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

ROMANS 8:1-16

In the previous chapter, Paul was expressing frustration over his internal battle with sin. Despite his desire to do what was right, he found himself unable to live obediently. In chapter 8, he explains God's solution to this problem.

Jesus Has Fulfilled the Law for Us

Read vv. 1-4. The opening paragraph to chapter 8 is a declaration of the security that we have in Christ. This provides a great opportunity for you to review the gospel. Our righteousness is not based on what we do, or how closely we keep the law (God's commandments), but is based solely on the perfect life that Jesus lived. When God looks at us, He sees us as if we had lived the morally faultless life that Jesus did. He literally gives us credit for Jesus' righteousness, just as Jesus literally took the blame for all our sin. Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who have placed their faith in Christ.

What Paul calls the "law of sin and death" is the Ten Commandments and the rest of the law as revealed in the Old Testament. He doesn't use that description because there is anything wrong with the law, but because there is something wrong with us. The Law is the perfect representation of God's holy character. The problem is that we are hopelessly given to sin. The Law is like an x-ray machine. It shows us we have a terminal problem (sin), but was not designed to fix the problem—only diagnosis it. Our sin made us unable to obey the law and separated us from God. God solved our problem in two ways. First, by sending His Son to do what we never could. He perfectly obeyed the law in His life, and fully satisfied the wrath of God in His death. Second, He has given us His Spirit to enable us to live a life pleasing to God. It is to this second principle that Paul now turns.

You Now Have a New Power Source to Live Godly Lives

Read vv. 5-8. This paragraph is filled with contrasts. Paul is establishing two categories of people: those who live according to the sinful nature, and those who live according to the Spirit. Following the sinful nature only leads to death, while the Holy Spirit brings life and peace. His point is that, as Christians, we now have a new power source—the Holy Spirit—to enable us to live a godly life.

This Power Source is Within You—the Holy Spirit

Read vv. 9-11. Until now, Paul has been using declarative statements. In this paragraph, he exclusively uses conditional statements: "If anyone does not have

the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” *“If Christ is in you...your spirit is alive because of righteousness.”* He is speaking to those who claim to have faith in Christ, and observing the things that will necessarily be true *if* their faith is genuine. The central promise is that the Holy Spirit is given to all believers without exception. That means we all have, in the present moment, full access to all the power we need to live righteous lives; and, in a day to come, even our dead bodies will be made alive again.

You Must Choose to Rely on This Power Source

Read vv. 12-16. Thus far, in the first three paragraphs, Paul has made it clear that:

1. We are secure in Christ, and our righteousness comes entirely from Him.
2. There are two kinds of people in the world: those who live according to their sinful nature, and those who live according to the Holy Spirit.
3. If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit lives in you, to give you power.

It seems, then, that the righteous life that the Spirit produces ought to be automatic, and always present in believers. But based on the fourth paragraph, (and our experience), this isn't the case. Apparently, Christians can choose to live according to the sinful nature, despite the life giving presence of the Spirit. The results of this are devastating, so Paul warns against it here, and elsewhere. Life controlled by the sinful nature is deadly, and may even be evidence that a person doesn't genuinely believe in Christ. Look at 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3 to see an example of Paul addressing this category of people who he calls “carnal” or “worldly.” They are Christians who act like non-Christians! Paul consistently writes to address this as unacceptable, and to offer a solution.

How We Can Know We Are Empowered

God has given us His Spirit to free us from our bondage to our sinful nature. By yielding to Him, and allowing Him to live through us, we can experience all the blessings of obedience. God doesn't call us to produce more righteousness, but simply to yield to the Spirit and allow Him to produce righteousness in our lives. The Bible calls this being filled with the Spirit. The Spirit always indwells all Christians, but we are not always empowered or directed (filled). Just as wind fills the sail of a sailboat, thereby determining its speed and direction, so also the Spirit fills our yielded lives giving us power, and determining where we go. The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life, by which Christ lives His life in and through us, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is by faith that we experience the empowerment and directing of the Holy Spirit. Four conditions must be met in our lives:

1. We must genuinely **desire** to be filled (that is, directed and empowered) by the Spirit. In John 7:37-39, Jesus said, *“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”* By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.” We need to thirst for, or desire Him, in our lives.

2. We must **repent**—turn from known sin and confess it to God. He is the *Holy Spirit*. If we are to enjoy His power in our life, we must not be harboring sin. In 1 John 1:9, God promises, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* This enables us to experience His great power in our lives.

3. We must **yield**—surrendering control of our life to God. Romans 12:1 urges us, *“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.”* To enjoy more empowerment, we don't need more of the Holy Spirit; He needs more of us. The Spirit has full reign in our lives when we express with our hearts our desire to have Him control all areas of our life: our dating life, career, entertainment, etc.

WHAT IF THERE'S A PROBLEM?

There is an awful lot that a young (or old!) believer needs to know about the Holy Spirit. This study uses one very packed portion of Scripture to overview the basics of the Spirit-filled life. But even as full as this passage is, we had to turn to supplemental texts to explain how a believer can experience the power of the Spirit in their life.

This study is far from a complete treatment of this critical topic. The accompanying article by Dr. Bright, and the booklet, “Satisfied?” will be a great help to the people in your study. We encourage you to use these as aids and to distribute them to the group.

WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

Read the accompanying article and/or the booklet, "Have you made the wonderful discovery of the Spirit filled life?" As God leads you, meet the conditions, and by faith, appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit.

4. We must **believe** that God will be faithful to His word and lead, direct, and empower us. In 1 John 5:14-15, we are promised, *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him."* Since we know that it is His will that we be filled, we simply need to trust Him and experience this by faith.

As those conditions are met, you can pray in faith asking God to fill you with His Spirit as He commanded you to be. Thank Him that He will direct and empower your life as you continue to trust Him.

This study is accompanied by an article. Take the time to read it over before the study. Hand it out to the group at the end of the study and have them read it this week.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:9 "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit..."

WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

1. Discuss. Paul is describing the frustration of trying to follow God's commandments without the Spirit's power.
2. Jesus has paid the penalty for their sin and lived a perfect life on their behalf.
3. We would live "according to the Spirit."
4. He is God, the third person of the trinity who comes to live in us.
5. Life according to the Spirit.
6. Hostile to God; can't submit to God's law; cannot please God.
7. Discuss.
8. Having the Spirit living in you is conditional. Only those who believe in Jesus, can be indwelt by Him.
9. If you have received Christ, then you have the Holy Spirit.
10. It's possible not to do so. Some action or decision is required on the part of the believer.
11. The Holy Spirit does live in all believers, but He does not necessarily fill them at all times. Our sin and refusal to yield to Him, temporarily rob us of His power in our lives.
12. See "What Do I Need To Know." The passages teach that we need to desire to be filled, repent (or confess), and yield our lives to Him. The final verse reminds us of His promises which we must believe by faith.
13. Desire to be filled, repent of sin, and yield to Christ. (See final paragraphs of "What Do I Need To Know?")
14. Rely on Him—moment by moment—to live in and though us.