

The Holy Spirit

by Bob Bruton

To live the Spirit-filled life, one must be wholeheartedly yielded to the Holy Spirit's direction, provide Him with the Word of God, and stop sinning.

Duration: 20:42

Scripture: Psalm 119:9, Psalm 119:11, Acts 11:24, 2 Timothy 2:20-21, Hebrews 12:11, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by inviting God into every area of their life and asking for cleansing from sin. They emphasize the importance of studying the Bible and relying on the Holy Spirit for strength. The speaker mentions the concept of being a clean vessel that God can use for His work, using the example of Barnabas in the Bible. They also discuss the process of acknowledging, asking for forgiveness, accepting God's forgiveness, and acting upon it when we sin. The sermon concludes with the idea that if we continue to sin despite studying the Bible and inviting the Holy Spirit, God may discipline us until we stop our wrongdoing.

Transcript

When we speak of the Spirit-filled life, we must be very careful that we accurately define according to the Scriptures exactly what we mean. Now, the reason I say this is because there have probably been more misunderstandings on this one particular subject than any other subject in the Bible, and before we consider the biblical key to being filled with the Spirit, we should consider the person and work of the Holy Spirit in general. So, with your permission, let us consider some of these facts at this time.

The Godhead subsists of three persons-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Just a small amount of Bible study will reveal the fact that the Holy Spirit is just as much God as is God the Father and God the Son. The fifth chapter of Acts, verses three and four, make this very clear.

In these verses, we find that the Holy Spirit is called God. We find also in Genesis, chapter 1, in verse 2, Job, chapter 26, in verse 13, 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, verses 9 through 11, and Hebrews, chapter 9, in verse 14, that the Holy Spirit also has the attributes of God. And time and time again throughout the entire Bible, we find the Holy Spirit performing the works of God.

The Holy Spirit is called God. He has the attributes of God and performs the works of God. Now, for some references to substantiate this last fact, we might turn you to Job, chapter 33, in verse 4, Psalms 104,

verse 30, Luke 12, verses 11 and 12, 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, in verse 11, 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 8 through 11, and 2 Peter, chapter 1, in verse 21.

But let's go on. As far as the Holy Spirit's relationship to each and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is concerned, the Word of God reveals the following facts. Number 1, He dwells within the being of each and every believer.

We find this to be true when we read 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, in verse 19, and compare it with Romans, chapter 8, in verse 9. Number 2, this dwelling begins the moment one receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, according to Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 13 and 14. Regarding this point, we might again refer you to Romans, chapter 8, in verse 9, where we conclude all believers must have the Spirit, or simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ would not be sufficient to make one a child of God. But, according to Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, we are saved by faith and faith alone.

Number 3, in as much as the Holy Spirit is a person, you either have all of Him dwelling within you, or none at all. To have only half a person is to have none, but we do not have to lean upon reason. This is made clear in John, chapter 3, in verse 34, where the Word says, God giveth not the Spirit by measure.

The last two words in that verse, unto Him, are not in the original. The thought is that every single Christian has an equal measure of the Holy Spirit. One has said that we may have all of the Spirit, but the Spirit may not have all of us, and this brings us directly to the theme of our conversation at this time.

For, you see, the biblical key to being filled with the Spirit, if it could all be summed up in one sentence, is simply this. To be filled with the Spirit is to be wholeheartedly yielded to His direction in every single area of your life. But, at this point, I'm almost certain I can hear some small voice saying, How do you yield? And, believe me, this is really the heart of the whole matter, learning how to yield to the Holy Spirit, and this is precisely what we want to think about for the next 20 minutes or so.

In the third chapter of 2 Corinthians, verses 15 through 18, we read this, quote, But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now, the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit. The thing that we wish to point out at this time is this. If the Christian studies the Word of God and beholds the Lord Jesus Christ in its sacred pages, the Holy Spirit, which has given him liberty to see Christ in the first place, also gradually transforms the believer to become more and more like the Christ that he sees.

You'll notice that three things are necessary, however. First, the Word of God, secondly, the Holy Spirit, and thirdly, the Christian's correct attitude, which in this case is the search for Christ in the Scriptures. Now, it may be helpful to us if we'd elaborate on these three facts a bit more, so with your permission, let us present a little illustration.

When the kitchen sink gets dirty, the housekeeper sends us to the supermarket to secure some all-purpose cleanser so it can be applied to the dirty area to make it clean. Now, the spiritual application to this is this. When we develop a sinful area in our life, the Holy Spirit shall direct us to the Bible, which gives us the needed verses.

Now, before we go further, let's restate this application once more. When we develop a sinful area in our life, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within each and every believer, shall direct us to the Word of God, which in turn shall produce the needed verses of Scripture that can be used by the Holy Spirit to cleanse the sin out of our life. Now, in 1 John, chapter 1, in verse 9, we have this same principle summed up in one verse.

It says there, these words, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Notice, first, that we must acknowledge that we have sinned. Second, we ask forgiveness.

Third, believing that God does forgive us, we accept this fact as true. And then, fourth, we act upon our acceptance by faith, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we turn from this particular sin. Later, if we sin again, we repeat the process of acknowledging, asking, accepting, and acting.

But between times, we must be securing more and more of the cleansing agent, which, remember, is the precious Word of God. It is only as we consume the Word that He can cleanse us in a practical way. Judicially, we are cleansed the moment we confess the sin.

Let me say at this point that this is the principle of cleansing the Christian from sin in his life, not the plan of salvation to save those who are lost. If, dear friend, you have never been born again, the plan of salvation is to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, not confessing your sins to God, even though when you're accepting Christ as your Savior, you are, in effect, acknowledging that you are a sinner needing to be saved. Now, if this process is allowed to go on continually, we shall have the gradual fulfillment of 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18 in our lives, which is, of course, becoming more and more like Christ day by day.

It seems to me now that we can hear someone else saying, well, if it's so simple, why is it that so many of us fail to live the Spirit-filled life? Where do we fall short? What are our faults? So, at this time, let us consider some of the areas where we may be falling short. The first mistake that many of us make is this. We may have plenty of the Word of God on hand, but we've not given the Holy Spirit liberty to apply what we've learned to our lives.

In other words, we could have a garage full of cases filled with all-purpose cleanser, but if we have locked the housekeeper in the bedroom closet, he cannot apply the cleanser to the needy areas. Have you ever noticed over there in Matthew chapter 27 and verse 48 where the soldiers took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave it to the Lord to drink? Well, that little word filled carries an interesting thought. In order to fill a sponge with vinegar, you must place the sponge below the surface level and let the vinegar seep gradually into the sponge until it has reached every single area of the sponge.

So, when the sponge is filled, there is not so much as one speck of dry area left in it. Interestingly enough, this is the same thought behind the word filled in Ephesians 5:18 where it says, be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. In other words, God wants us to let the Holy Spirit come into every area of our lives so there is not so much as one speck that is not reached by his presence and power and influence.

Now, let's get back to our question. Could it be that even though we often spend hours studying the Word of God, we sometimes fail to invite the Holy Spirit to come into every single area of our lives and apply what we've learned? For instance, how is our thought life? How is our eating habits? What about the

clothes we wear and the impression we seek to make before others? Does the Holy Spirit have his way in these matters? We may often know right from wrong, but perhaps we have not let the Holy Spirit direct us away from the wrong, and we simply can't do it in our own strength. Let me make one more point concerning the filling of the Holy Spirit.

When God saved you, he received the Holy Spirit in his entirety. No one Christian has more of the Spirit than any other Christian. He is a person, and dwells as a person within you.

Remember now, the thing that we're talking about is not how much of the Spirit we may have, but how much of us does he have? Does he have free course in our lives? O child of God, let us not make the mistake of being mere intellectual Bible students. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 1, knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up. This word love here is spiritual love, the love that only God can give through his Holy Spirit.

Let us always approach the Word of God with a mind yielded to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, otherwise we become like frozen Bible concordances. We may see the surface meaning of the verses we've studied, but we're far from seeing the deeper meaning, which is really what God wants us to see. Another error that many of us often make in our lives is that we may be yielded to the Holy Spirit somewhat, but we have not equipped him to do his work in our lives.

It's like having a full-time housekeeper, but nothing with which he can clean the place up. If we want the Holy Spirit to produce Christ in our lives, we must supply him with plenty of the Word of God. The first fault that we mentioned was that we may have the cleanser, but not given freedom to the housekeeper.

This fault is the reverse. We may give freedom to the housekeeper, but not supplied him with the cleanser. Have you ever noticed that whenever you have those times of real genuine revival within your own personal life, that the first thing you want to do is read the Word of God? The reason is because the housekeeper is, in effect, sending you to the supermarket to get enough all-purpose cleanser to clean up the whole house.

In connection with this thought, we should remember Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 17, where the Word is called the sword of the Spirit. If we take the Word away, the Holy Spirit cannot lead us to victory over the world of flesh and the devil. For, you see, the Word of God is the battle weapon of the Holy Spirit.

Usually, when you meet someone with this problem, you'll find them saying something like this, oh it's not a matter of what you believe, just live in the presence of the Lord and everything shall be okay. But the fact of the matter is, however, that number one, everything isn't okay, and number two, they're not really living in the presence of the Lord. For to obey is better than sacrifice, we learn in 1 Samuel chapter 15 and verse 22.

Disobedient or unscriptural service is then, in the next verse, classified as witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry. Now, this is a very unpopular subject to many, but it's still true nevertheless. No service at all is more pleasing to the Lord than service that is known to be contrary to the Word of God.

O child of God, let us not make the sad mistake of neglecting the Word of God. Well, so far we have found two faults that we often make that causes us to miss living the Spirit-filled life. Could there be others? Well, I don't know about you, but as I look back over my past life, I see another mistake that I personally have often made, and I'm going to share it with you.

I have found that sometimes I go around messing up just as fast as the Holy Spirit cleans up. Now, let me illustrate. From time to time, my wife gives me the privilege of babysitting for her while she goes shopping, or visiting, or maybe just out of the house for the day.

Now, I have learned the hard way that if you want to clean up a house, you must do two things. Number one, you must stop the source of dirt, and number two, you must clean up the existing mess. For instance, one rainy day, I cleaned up the kitchen while the children played in the living room.

Then, I sent them into the kitchen to play while I cleaned up the mess in the living room, and when I finished, I found that the kitchen was worse than when I had begun. Why? Because the source of dirt had not been stopped. Have you ever heard a mother exclaim that she never seems to get through around the house? Well, the problem may be that she needs to get the play clothes on the children and get them out of the house.

Then, when she cleans up her room, it stays clean. Interestingly enough, Hebrews chapter 12, verses 7 through 11, seem to touch this very subject. It says, if you endure spankings, which is the up-to-date translation of the word chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom the father spanketh not? Now, verses 9 and 10 tells us that if our fathers, after the flesh, spank us, we obey them, and then we're exhorted to obey our heavenly father. Verse 11 tells us that no one likes to be spanked, but nevertheless, when we've learned our lesson and see the real benefit behind our spanking, we appreciate it. Well, how can we apply all of this to our lives and to ourselves? The thought is this, if we have faithfully studied the word of God, and have truthfully invited the Holy Spirit to reign supreme in every area of our total being, and then continue to mess up just as fast as he cleans up, then God undoubtedly shall have to give us a little spanking, and he shall spank, and spank, and spank, and spank, until we decide that we'd better stop the wrong that we're doing.

Now, this is the message, I believe, of Hebrew chapter 12, in verse 11. It says, Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Now, did you get those last six words? Unto them which are exercised thereby. Some of us, it seems, are more hard-headed than others, and so we hang on to our little pet sins longer. Consequently, we receive more spankings from God, and they last longer.

As a matter of fact, the spanking continue and become more and more severe until we yield that sin up to Christ and forsake it. And then God says, Enough, and the spanking stops. Later in life, we find that whatever we were exercised to give up was for our good, even though we didn't realize it at the time.

Before going any further, let us summarize our frequent mistakes at this point. Number one, often we study the Bible like mad, but refuse to let the Holy Spirit apply these words to dirty, sinful areas of our lives. Number two, other times we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit completely, but we neglect to provide Him with His battle weapon, which is the Word of God.

Number three, we often study the Word of God and simultaneously yield ourselves unreservedly to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, but we then turn right around and mess up again. But, eventually, if we continue in the Word and yield it to the Holy Spirit, God shall, through a series of corrective measures if necessary, cause us to refrain from continuing in a particular sin or a particular group of related sins. With

your permission, let me add one more point to our illustration.

Have you ever had the experience of wanting to help the housekeeper clean up? Sometimes, I've actually began wanting to help my wife clean up the old homestead just because her enthusiasm was catching. And, you know, the Bible says in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 16, walk into spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The next time you find yourself yielding to some particular sin, why don't you do this? Number one, yield yourself immediately and unreservedly to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Number two, pick up the Bible and begin reading and studying like mad. Number three, determine by the strength of the Holy Spirit to help Him clean up. If you follow this simple three-point thought truthfully, I think you'll find that you won't have time to devote yourself to that particular sin that was before you earlier.

Psalms 119, verses 9 and 11 says, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Now, dear Christian friend, if you will decide right now that you're going, by the help of God, to live the Spirit-filled life, and that you're going to do it God's way, which is found in the Word of God, I think you'll discover there will be no time at all before you'll begin to see the fruit of the Spirit blossom out in your life.

You may find this fruit described in Galatians chapter 5, verses 22 and 23. Here's some more good news for you. You don't have to wait until you get to some church building and go down to the altar and pray through until it hits you.

You can start right now wherever you are in whatever the circumstances may be. For you see, God is far more anxious for us to yield to Him than we are to do so. So, all that is necessary is that you simply let your heart utter this prayer in truth.

O God, at this moment I now take the lock off the door that may be holding you out of any area of my life. I at this moment willfully invite you to come into every single area of my life and cleanse out any and all sin. I now take up the Word of God, the Bible, and shall begin digesting it in greater proportions than ever before, and I am looking to you and you alone to give me the needed spiritual strength to carry on.

Dear friend, the responsibilities are now in God's hands, and He will follow through. Before our little conversation comes to a close, let us conclude by pointing out that according to 2 Timothy chapter 2, in verses 20 and 21, God uses clean vessels in His work, and in Acts chapter 11, verse 24, we could find an example of a clean vessel being used. It says there that Barnabas was a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith, and consequently much people was added unto the Lord.

And dear friend, when you yield to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, God will use you in His great work.

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