

Three Important Exhortations

by Zac Poonen

To live the Christian life as God wants us to, we must be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, know God intimately, and be a cheerful giver.

Scripture: Daniel 11:32, Matthew 4:4, John 7:37-39, John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 8:11

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Generosity", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes three crucial exhortations for Christians: the necessity of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit to effectively live and serve as Jesus did, the importance of knowing God intimately for spiritual strength, and the call to be cheerful givers in all aspects of life. He explains that without the Holy Spirit, believers cannot fulfill their God-given ministries, and that true knowledge of God leads to overcoming life's challenges. Poonen also highlights that giving should come from a place of joy and freedom, as God values cheerful acts over those done under compulsion.

Transcript

1. Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18- Literal).

It is impossible to live the Christian life, as God wants us to, if we are not continually filled with the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to serve God as we should without being anointed with the Spirit and receiving His supernatural gifts. Jesus Himself needed to be anointed. The Holy Spirit has come to make us like Jesus in our personal lives as well as in our ministry (See 2 Cor.3:18). God fills us with the Spirit in order to conform us to the likeness of Christ in our character, and to equip us to serve as Jesus served. We do not have the same ministry that Jesus had, and so we won't be able to do what Jesus did in His ministry. But we can be as fully equipped to serve God as Jesus Himself was - to fulfil OUR OWN ministry. All that is required is an adequate thirst and faith, on our part, for rivers of living water to flow out through us (Jn.7:37-39). We must earnestly long for the gifts of the Spirit if we are to have them(1 Cor.14:1). Otherwise we will never have them. A church without the gifts of the Holy Spirit is like a man who may be living but who is deaf, blind, mute and lame - and therefore useless.

2. Know God intimately

Knowing God intimately is the secret of being strong "The people who know their God will be strong" (Dan.11:32) Today, God does not want us to know Him second-hand through others. He invites even the

youngest believer to know Him personally (Heb.8:11). Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God and Jesus Christ personally (John 17:3). This was the greatest passion of Paul's life and must be our greatest passion too (Phil.3:10). One who desires to know God intimately, will have to listen to Him always. Jesus said that the only way man could keep himself spiritually alive was by listening to EVERY word that proceeded from God's mouth (Matt.4:4). He also said that to sit at His feet and listen to Him was the most important thing in the Christian life (Lk.10:42). We must develop the habit that Jesus had of listening to the Father from early morning every day (Isa.50:4), right through the day; and then to be in a listening attitude in the hours of night when we are asleep too - so that if we ever wake up from our sleep at night, we can say, "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening" (1 Sam.3:10). Knowing God will make us overcomers in all situations - because God has a solution for every problem that we face - and if we listen to Him, He will tell us what that solution is.

3. Be a cheerful giver

"God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor.9:7). This is why God gives man total freedom - both before and after conversion, and after being filled with the Spirit. If we are like God, we also will not seek to control others or pressurise them. We will give them freedom to be different from us, to have different views from ours and to grow spiritually at their own pace. All compulsion of any sort is from the devil. The Holy Spirit fills people, whereas demons possess people. The difference is this: When the Holy Spirit fills anyone, He still gives that person freedom to do whatever he wants. But when demons possess people they rob them of their freedom and control them. The fruit of being filled with the Spirit is self-control (Gal.5:22,23). Demon-possession however, results in the loss of self-control. We must remember that any work that we do for God that is NOT done cheerfully, joyfully, freely and voluntarily is a dead work. Any work done for God for a reward or for a salary is also a dead work. Any money given to God under pressure from others has no value at all, as far as God is concerned!! God values a little done cheerfully for Him far more than a great deal done under compulsion, or done merely to ease one's conscience.

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