

Together Notes: living the Christian life

In order to live the Christian life and experience God's intimate presence we need to learn to walk in step - that is live moment by moment - with His Holy Spirit ¹.

The struggle

For a person who is a follower of Christ - a Christian - the penalty for sin is paid in full. But the effect of sin continues throughout our lives.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (*1John 1:8*)

For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do.- this I keep on doing. (*Romans 7:19*)

The effects of sin carry over into our marriages as well. Many Christians can find themselves struggling to maintain solid, God-honouring marriages. They can feel frustrated, discouraged and unfulfilled. Life is a duty. Many Christians would like to experience life as dynamic and joyful. Most realise that they can't do it on their own. But with God's help, they can succeed.

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. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (*John 7:37-39*)

Jesus promised that God's Holy Spirit would satisfy our thirst, or our deepest longings.

The divine gift

God has given us His Spirit so we can experience intimacy with Him and enjoy all He has for us. The Holy Spirit is God's intimate presence with us. Jesus said, 'And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.' (*John 14:16-17*)

The Holy Spirit enables us to understand and experience all God has given us. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. (*1 Corinthians 2:12*)

The present danger

We cannot experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us if we do not depend on His Spirit. People who trust in their own efforts and strength to live the Christian life experience failure and frustration, as will those who live to please themselves rather than God.

Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (*Galatians 3:3*)

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want? (*Galatians 5:17*)

The Bible describes two types of Christians: **worldly** and **spiritual**.

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? *(1Corinthians 3:1-3)*

Many of us who are Christians are not satisfied with our lives because we are not experiencing intimacy with God and all He has for us. We are worldly. **To experience intimacy with God means living in step with the Holy Spirit - learning to trust and depend on Him.**

His empowering presence

We are filled with the Spirit by faith.

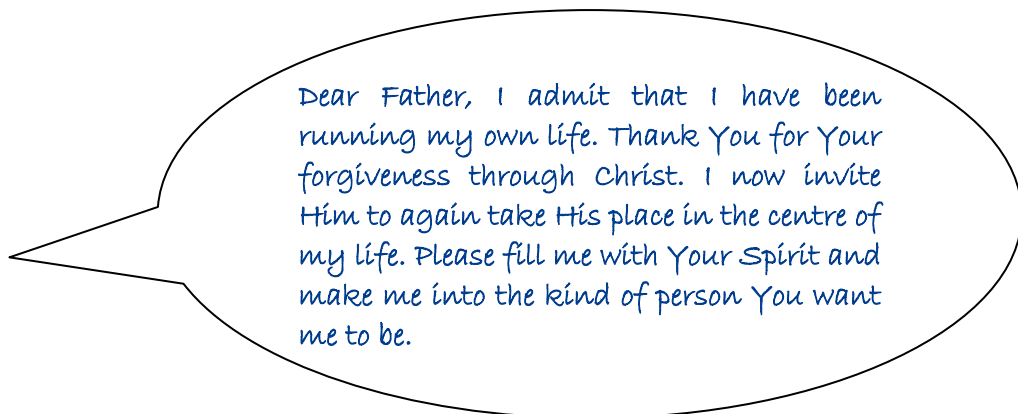
I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
(Ephesians 3:16-17)

To be filled by the Spirit is to be directed and empowered by God - in a loving relationship where He fills and guides every area of our lives. The essence of the Christian life is what God does in and through us, not what we do for God.

To experience the empowering presence of the Spirit we need to ask ourselves three important questions:

- **Am I ready to wholeheartedly give myself to God?** ²
- **Am I ready to confess my sin and experience God's forgiveness?** ³
- **Do I really want to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit?** ⁴

If we are able to say 'yes' to all three questions we can talk to God in prayer and ask Him to fill us with His Spirit. Here is a suggested prayer...



As we continue to depend on God's Spirit moment by moment, as a way of life, we will experience intimacy with God. It's important to remember not to depend on feelings (if unsure see 'How can we be really sure all this has happened?' in 'Knowing God' page 156 of the workbook).

Now that you are filled with the Holy Spirit ...

Thank God for answering your prayer and enabling you to live a life that seeks to please God.

Whilst we need to invite Jesus to come into our lives once, we will need to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us many times, as we become aware that we have taken over control of our life.

The filling of the Spirit will enrich your marriage as He transforms and empowers you to live God's way.

¹ Adapted from: 'Satisfied' copyright 2001 Campus Crusade for Christ.

² Romans 12:1-2

³ 1 John 1:9

⁴ John 7:37-39