

### 3 - Strength to Live for Jesus Christ

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After a person responds to God through faith in Jesus Christ, the immediate challenge is living an obedient, victorious Christian life. The ability to live such a life does not come from our efforts, our abilities, or our determination, even though they may play a part.

The immediate question which arises is: If I can't live an obedient life in my own strength, is it even possible? **The answer is YES!**

God, in His goodness, has provided a way to live a life pleasing to Him and satisfying to us. The answer is to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, which we shall explore by answering the following 3 questions:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What is our relationship with the Holy Spirit?
3. What role does the Holy Spirit play?

#### 1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is not some vague influence, or an inane force without intelligence. **HE IS A PERSON.** This means He is knowable; He can communicate, and He can make Himself real to us. As such, He has all the characteristics of personhood. We cannot necessarily see Him, but He is real and has great impact upon our lives.

**The Holy Spirit is God.** 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, *now the Lord is the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is the third equal member of the threefold Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

Like God the Father and God the Son, the Holy Spirit is:

ETERNAL:	With no beginning and no end	(Hebrews 9:14)
OMNIPRESENT:	Present everywhere	(Psalm 139:7-8)
OMNISCIENT:	All knowing	(1 Corinthians 2:10)
OMNIPOTENT:	All powerful	(Job 33:4; Luke 1:35)

#### 2. What is our relationship with the Holy Spirit?

##### ✓ He spiritually renews us

Titus 3:5 *He [God] saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

At the time of salvation, it was the Holy Spirit who performed the invisible operations of spiritual rebirth, that is, the spiritual washing of our sin and inner renewal. This is what Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John 3:1-8. The unseen working of the Holy Spirit is impossible to predict or dictate. He, being God, works in agreement with God the Father and Son to make a believing sinner a new person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

When we confess our state of sin before God, believing that Jesus took our judgment in our place on the cross, and we confess Jesus to be Lord (Romans 10:10), the Holy Spirit renewed.

##### ✓ He lives in the body of every believer

1 Corinthians 6:19 *...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.*

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Again, it was an invisible action that took place, and we most likely had no physical realisation of the Holy Spirit entering us. From that point onwards, the Spirit of God carries out His service from within. Where we go, He goes. What we do, He does with us. From within, He knows us intimately and feels all that we feel. Therefore, the sole ownership of our body has been relinquished, as we have been purchased by God with Christ's death. The Holy Spirit is our personal, resident, heavenly owner.

### ✓ He is the seal (security) of the believer

Ephesians 1:13

*You also were included in God when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*

Paul tells the Ephesian Christians that at the moment in which they believed in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit not only entered them but sealed them. Meaning, believers are safe and secure in an unbreakable relationship with the Lord. Jesus explaining to His disciples about those who believe in His said, *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.* <sup>29</sup> *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand* (John 10:28-29).

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit who actualizes the working of God the Father and Jesus Christ within every believer. There is no falling out of Christ, no deconversion, and no undoing all that God has accomplished in salvation. The Holy Spirit is the constant guarantee of God's fulfilled purpose in us.

### 3. What role does the Holy Spirit play?

- ✓ God the Holy Spirit has many critical functions within the believer's life. He patiently leads and matures us in Christlike development. Therefore, He is best experienced as we are filled (Controlled) by Him.

Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, instead be filled with the Spirit.* (Debauchery is excessive or riotous living)

In the original Greek language of the New Testament, the word "filled" means, "being kept filled." That tells us it's a moment-by-moment state of mind and will, each day. It's our new attitude as a Christian, to be daily filled/controlled by the Lord who is the Spirit within us. Therefore, to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to live in willing surrender to His control of our lives. This means our thinking, speech, and actions, will be in alignment with the Bible, which the Holy Spirit wrote (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Below are a few ways in which the Bible guides us concerning our living. If we follow these guidelines, we will in effect, be living a Holy Spirit filled life.

- ~ Keep a clean record with God of your sins. Turn your back on recurring sins that hold you back in your Christian life (2 Timothy 2:21; 1 Peter 1:9).
- ~ Daily surrender your body and mind to God's transformation (Romans 12:1-2).
- ~ Hunger after a life of righteousness (Matthew 5:6).
- ~ Bathe yourself in the Word of God (Colossians 3:16).

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- ~ Consciously live daily for the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). Regardless of life's circumstances or events, live in each moment knowing that the Spirit of God is within you, participating in that moment.

#### Evidence of a Spirit filled life

- **We will show the Fruit of the Spirit**

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

A Spirit filled Christian is often easy to pick in a crowd. Their life will be characterised by the qualities listed above. These are the observable expressions of the Holy Spirit's activity in a believers' life. They are unmistakable because they are so different to the norms of this world.

Sometimes, with the busyness of life, plus the difficulties and distractions of life, it can be easy to think independently God. Over time, as we walk with the Lord and develop Christian disciplines, those moments become less frequent. It is the Holy Spirit who progressively enables those disciplines to grow us towards maturity in Christ. So, as time goes by, our relationship with the Holy Spirit strengthens as we spend time in God's Word and walk in obedience.

- **We will be worshipful**

Ephesians 5:19-20 *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord God.*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of God dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

When a believer has God's Word richly (abundantly) indwelling them, they will be controlled by God's Spirit. God's Word dwells richly when we regularly read and study the Bible with an intentional attitude of surrendered listening. The primary goal of Bible reading is to explore and discover God more! It's really about our attitude as we read God's Word. While there will be times when we quickly read through a passage, there should also be regular times when we read slowly and thoughtfully, pausing to pray as we read. Other times it's beneficial to listen to others read, or even listen to an audio Bible.

The Holy Spirit can then produce His fruit in our life that flows out of the influence of His written Word. When we observe this happening, our response will be thankfulness and praise to our heavenly Father for all of life. Sadly, the reverse is true also. If we are not residing in God's Word, we will fail to express the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we won't be marked by thankfulness.

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✓ **The Holy Spirit intercedes with the Father on believer's behalf**

Romans 8:26 *...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

There are often times in our Christian walk, when words fail us in our prayers. We may be grieved and can't find the words to express our pain. Maybe we are so excited about something that our words are jumbled. Or maybe we simply can't find the right words to explain to God what we are feeling in our hearts. Whatever the case, God the Holy Spirit, who lives within us and knows our hearts perfectly, takes our case to our heavenly Father. There in the throne room of God Almighty, the Holy Spirit accurately and intimately presents our inner most thoughts and feelings to the Father with a divine language that we can only recognise as groaning.

This intimate service that the Holy Spirit offers on our behalf picks up where our words fail. There are no human words or vocal sounds that can compare to this loving communication between Spirit and Father in our place.

✓ **The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to believers**

1 Corinthians 12:4, 11 *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit ...All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

At the time of salvation, the Holy Spirit placed within each believer a gift, which is a blending of spiritual abilities uniquely designed for each believer. While your gift may include some of your natural abilities and talents, your gift will be used by God for the blessing of others.

Over time you will recognise acts of service that you want to do and which you enjoy doing. Added to that will be the people you serve will comment on how blessed they are by your service. This can be a good indication of your spiritual gift.

The New Testament lists a few such gifts as a guide. Our gift is not intended to be ignored or left dormant. Rather, the Holy Spirit has graciously provided our gift to be used for the betterment of others, never for self-gratification.

Romans 12:6-8 *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

✓ **The Holy Spirit teaches and reminds believers of Jesus' words**

John 14:26 *But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name [Jesus'] will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

The Holy Spirit always seeks to bring the words, the example, and the teachings of Jesus into believer's lives. The Holy Spirit does this **primarily** through the written Word of God. This is why personal Bible reading and study is so important. **Second**, the Holy Spirit uses gifted Bible teachers to accomplish this in your local church (Ephesians 4:11-14). **Third**, the Holy Spirit

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achieves this through faithful believers who actively make disciples of others (Matthew 28:19-20). **Fourth**, the Holy Spirit achieves this through faithful Christian parents who teach God's Word to their children (Deuteronomy 11:19).

✓ **The Holy Spirit strengthens believers**

Ephesians 3:16 *according to the riches of his glory he [God] may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.*

This ministry of the Holy Spirit generally operates through the believer's motives and desires, causing determined faithfulness and courage in their service for God. However, at times, as required, the Holy Spirit will dramatically elevate a believer's strength to meet the needs of extraordinary circumstances. Again, Holy Spirit strength is internally integrated in such a way that much of the time Christians simply think their strength was what they felt like doing.

**Memorise:**

**Romans 12:1-2** *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. <sup>(2)</sup> Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

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