Central Truth

Every believer should earnestly desire and ardently pursue a life in step with the Spirit.

Lesson Outline

• Life in the Spirit Defined
• The Blessings and Benefits of Life in the Spirit
• Prerequisites to Life in the Spirit

Introduction

When we purchase something in the market, we want to receive the maximum return on our investment. That’s why we bargain for the lowest price possible! It is the same with God. He wants every person to receive the maximum return on his or her investment in life. This is one reason why Jesus came—to give us “life to the full” (John 10:10).

In this lesson we will learn more about the wonderful life that God offers to every believer, a life lived “in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25 NIV). In doing this, we will answer three important questions: (1) What is meant by the term “in the Spirit?” (2) What are the benefits and blessings of a life lived in the Spirit? (3) What must we do before we can live in the Spirit?

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT DEFINED

Sometimes we make statements such as this: “The pastor was really in the Spirit when he ministered today.” Or we may accuse, “He was not in the Spirit when he did that!” And yet, when while make such statements, there is a problem. Many of us do not clearly understand the true meaning of the biblical phrase “in the Spirit.”

The term, “in the Spirit” (or its companion term “by the Spirit”) is used at least 29 times in the New Testament where the word “Spirit” refers to the Spirit of God. Sometimes
when the Bible speaks of being in the Spirit, it simply means to be in a living relationship with Christ through the Spirit (Rom. 8:9; see also John 3:1-7; Rom. 2:29; Gal. 3:3; 1 John 3:24). In this sense all Christians are in the Spirit.

There is, however, a second meaning of the term. In this sense to be in the Spirit means to be under the influence, control, or guidance of the Holy Spirit. The phrase is used this way at least twenty times in the New Testament. This is the meaning that we will most often be using as we move through this study.

Thus, when we say that a person is in the Spirit, we could mean that he or she is under the influence or control of the Holy Spirit. For instance, Paul was once “compelled by the Spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 18:5). There are many other New Testament examples of people being influenced or controlled by the Spirit, for instance, Acts 20:22, 1 Corinthians 14:2, and Revelation 1:10, 4:1-2; 17:3; 21:10.

In other instances believers were in the Spirit and received guidance from Him. Jesus is the best example. Throughout His ministry He was guided by the Spirit. On one occasion, immediately after His baptism, Jesus was “filled with the Spirit” and then “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness (Luke 4:1).


THE BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS OF LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Great blessings come into the lives of Christians who enter into the Spirit-filled life. Blessings also come to the church as more and more Christians learn to walk and live their lives under the Spirit’s direction. Here are some benefits that come as a result of living one’s life in the Spirit:

1. Power to ________________ (Acts 1:8)
2. God’s abiding presence (John 14:16-18; 2 Cor. 13:14)
4. Overflowing joy (Rom. 14:17; 1Thess. 1:16; Acts 2:46)
6. A _______ of _____________ to others (John 7:37-38)
7. Power over temptation ((Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 5:16)
8. True worship (John 4:24; Luke 19:21; Rom. 8:15)
9. Spiritual ______________ (1 Cor. 12:7-10)
10. Spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22-23; John 15:4-5; cf. 14:17, 20)
11. Physical strength and ________________ (Rom. 8:11)
12. ______________ life strengthened (Luke 11:1-13; Rom. 8:26-28)
13. Spiritual man renewed (Eph. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:4; Jude 20-21 with Rom. 5:5).

**PREREQUISITES TO LIFE IN THE SPIRIT**

With so many attendant benefits accruing, how could anyone not want to live in step with the Holy Spirit? There are, however, certain things one must do in order to enter into the Spirit-filled life. Let’s look at five:

1. ______________ of the Spirit

Before one can enter into the Spirit-filled life he or she must first be born of the Spirit. Jesus said, “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:7). We are born again when we come to God, repent of our sins, and put our trust in Christ alone for salvation. As a result, we become new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). We are made alive to God and to the things of the Spirit of God (Rom. 6:11-13; John 3:3).

2. ______________ with the Spirit

In addition to being born of the Spirit, one must be filled with Spirit if he or she is going to live a life in step with the Spirit. With this powerful spiritual experience comes the power needed to be Christ’s witness (Acts 1:8). In addition to being initially baptized in the Holy Spirit, the believer who desires to live in step with the Spirit, must learn to stay full of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
3. _____________to the Spirit

A third prerequisite to a life in the Spirit is genuine openness to the things of the Spirit. The person who has a closed mind or critical spirit will never be able to live a life in step with the Spirit of God (Heb. 3:8; 4:7).

4. _____________and _____________after God

As we hunger and thirst after God, we open ourselves to the Spirit and to His working in our lives (Matt. 5:6). Just as thirst for water draws the deer to a river, thirst for God will draw us to Him (Ps. 42:1). As a result, our lives become streams of spiritual water flowing out to those around us (John 7:37-39).

5. Ardent _____________of the Spirit

Before the Day of Pentecost the disciples were “continually in the temple praising and blessing God” (Luke. 24:53). After the Day of Pentecost, “every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts” (Acts 2:46). They were ardently pursuing the things of the Spirit. It must be the same with us today. We who would live a life in step with the Spirit must ourselves ardently pursue the things of the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

In this lesson we have learned that it is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to live and walk in step with the Spirit of God. Such a life is filled with great joy and blessing.

Class Discussion

Discuss the following in class:

1. Discuss why many Christians fail to live in step with the Spirit of God.

2. Discuss several benefits that come to the church and into a Christian’s life from living in the Spirit.

3. How does one’s openness to the things of God influence his or her walk with the Spirit?