



Stepping from Being Unable to Empowered Leader's Guide

Big Idea

The new believer needs to understand the filling of the Holy Spirit to understand and experience the Christian life.

It might be a good idea to begin by reviewing the main concepts from the first two studies. This week the focus is the filling of the Holy Spirit. In this Life Concept, the new believer will learn it's impossible to live the Christian life in one's own strength. But God wants to give believers the power to do so. To start out your time together, share your story.

Comparing Our Stories

Share a story about your struggle in a time or season of spiritual weakness, including the emotions you experienced (such as anger, depression or frustration). Share enough about the struggle so the new believer can begin to identify with what you experienced. You want your story to convey how impossible it is to live the Christian life in your own strength. Keep it brief, no more than two minutes. Allow the person an opportunity to respond to your story.

Considering Our Struggles

After discussing the first question in this section, read and discuss the "Think about it" notepad.

Today we want to explore a passage that will help us begin to understand the power and ability God has given us to live the Christian life. In fact, this idea is so important that next week's Life Concept will explore it even further.

Exploring the Solution

Together read the whole passage aloud.

Have the new believer circle the word Spirit each time it is used (nine instances). Explain that when a person reads the Bible, one of the clues to discovering what the author of a book meant to communicate is the "key words." In this passage, the key word is Spirit because it is repeated so often.

Who is the Spirit? The Spirit is the Spirit of God (2:11). He is often referred to as the Holy Spirit in the Bible. The Bible speaks of God manifesting himself in three distinct persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are already familiar with God, the heavenly Father who sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior and Lord. In the days ahead, we will learn more about the Spirit, who was given (by the Father and the Son) to be with us and enable us to live the Christian life.

The Spirit works in many ways in the believer's life. What is one of His purposes according to 2:12? The Spirit enables us to understand what God has freely given us. Look back at verses 9-



10. Do you have any idea of all that God has given you? It's exciting to learn about all He has given us.

1. What is the spiritual condition of the person in 2:14? This verse describes the man without the Spirit. Many translations use the term natural man. Write this term in the space below the question. This is simply an ordinary person who doesn't know Christ and, thus, has never been given the gift of the Spirit.

How much spiritual truth does this person comprehend? Why? None, because it is spiritually discerned or understood and only the Spirit gives that ability. This doesn't necessarily mean the person has no factual knowledge of spiritual truth. It means this person cannot truly understand and experience this truth.

2.. What is the spiritual condition of the person in verses 15-16? This person is called a spiritual man. Write this below the question. This is a man who has the Spirit of God and receives understanding from the Spirit.

How much spiritual truth is this person able to comprehend? Why? The passage says this person can discern all truth as a result of being given the mind of Christ. It doesn't mean such a person suddenly has complete knowledge of spiritual matters, but, through the Spirit, will grow in understanding over time.

3. What is the spiritual condition of the people in 3:1-3? They are called worldly, mere infants in Christ. Write this below the question.

How much spiritual truth are they able to comprehend? Why? Only a little. They're just like babies who can only drink milk. Can you imagine feeding baby a T- bone steak, baked potatoes, salad and pie? Sounds good to me, but a baby could never eat all this food. Notice these believers were spiritual infants, not because they were young, but because they were worldly. What does that mean? They should have matured, but because of their lifestyle, the Spirit was unable to work freely in their lives. They were living "like mere men." They never grew up spiritually.

How would you summarize what Paul is saying about the Spirit and our spiritual condition? Our ability to understand and experience the Christian life is a direct result of our experience of the Spirit in our lives.

Examining the Sketch

Walk your friend through the sketch to help in understanding these concepts.

The Issue: What is God's design for the Christian Life?

The line is a timeline. Let's say it represents your life. Above the line is spiritual life and below it is spiritual death.

A. The lower circle represents my life before I received Christ. What was my spiritual condition? What was true of my ability to understand the things of God? Why? Before I received Christ, I was a natural man, a man without the Spirit as it says in



1 Corinthians 2:14. At times, I may have been closer to God and at times I felt farther away, but I had never received Christ as my Savior so I was really spiritually dead. I was unable to understand the things of God because I still did not have the Spirit to enable me to do so.

B. When I received Christ and He entered my life, I became spiritually alive and was given the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). Read John 7:37-39. It is important to realize that resources needed to live the Christian life are not found in ourselves. Rather they are found in God's Spirit. Therefore, the Christian life is a lifestyle of dependence. In myself, I am weak. In Him I am strong. From there, my life could go in two possible directions.

C. God intends for me to continue growing in my relationship with Him, learning how to live the Christian life and relying on His Spirit to work within me to give me power and understanding. According to Galatians 5:22-23, what would be the result? Read Galatians 5:22-23. The Spirit will produce His fruit (love, joy, peace, etc.) in my life.

D. But there is another possibility. I could fail to grow in my Christian life and never learn how to experience the power God has given me by His Spirit. What would my life be like then? Though I had Christ in my life, I would be a mere infant, a worldly Christian. In some ways, my life wouldn't look much different than the lives of those who don't know Christ. After reading the summary, ask, "Does this make sense? Do you understand who the Spirit is and one way He helps us to live the Christian life?"

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Taking Steps

So, how do you help the new believer put this into practice? Discuss the following practical step that will help your friend experience the Spirit's work on a continual basis.

Read Ephesians 5:18. What are we commanded to avoid? Why? What are we commanded to do? We are commanded to not be drunk with wine. The term debauchery communicates a lifestyle indulging in excessive physical pleasures that are wrong, a waste and harmful to a person. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit means to let the Spirit of God direct and empower you. In contrast to alcohol in a drunken person, the Spirit becomes the primary influence in how you live. The result is the exact opposite of drunkenness. It is right (not wrong), worthwhile (not a waste) and helpful (not harmful).

Read the explanation of the Spirit's filling and ask the three questions (*DRY*).

If your friend answered positively to the three "DRY" questions, suggest praying together to allow the Spirit to fill your lives. In your prayer, express your need for the Spirit's work to live the Christian life, ask Him to direct and empower you, and thank Him that He will do so as you rely on Him in faith.

Next Concept

It's exciting to know God has given us His Spirit. But many believers are not prepared for the inner struggles they will experience as they seek to live the Christian life. Next time, we will explore more about how the Spirit's work is the key to overcoming those struggles.



Notes and Questions

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