

The Lifestyle of the Spirit-filled Believer

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All of us are born with sinful natures. However, when we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, we become new creations because we are born again. The Word of God testifies to this in II Cor 5:17 which says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old one has gone, the new has come!" The Spirit of God dwells within us after we have confessed and believe that. Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord. Therefore, we need to let the Holy Spirit dwell in us and rule over our sinful nature.

There are only two kinds of lifestyles—a lifestyle that gratifies the sinful nature and a lifestyle that is led by the Holy Spirit of God. Those who believe and put their trust in Jesus is assured of guidance from Him to lead a Spirit-filled lifestyle. In John 16:13-14, Jesus Himself tells us about the work of the Holy-Spirit: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak of his own, he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by asking from what is mine and making it known to you."

If we want to lead successful and victorious Christian lives, we need to be led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only abides in us but also teaches us and reveals the Father's plans to us.

What is the Spirit-led life?

The apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:1-2 describes to us what a spirit-led life is like: "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing one another in love."

Paul describes himself as "a prisoner for the Lord" because his experience for the Lord's love and grace has been so rich and so full that he willingly surrendered his whole life to Him. Likewise, we as believers should surrender our lives and come under the Lordship of Jesus. When we do so, our lives become His agenda. He will give us His strength, His power and His wisdom to accomplish all that He wants us to do. We will be led by His Spirit.

Paul urges us who are putting our faith in the Lord Jesus to live that are worthy of the calling we have received from God. He urges us to:

Be Completely Humble

If we want to know what it means to be completely humble, we need to look at the example set by Jesus Himself. In Philippians 2:5-8, we are urged to put on the same attitude as that Christ Jesus who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, being completely humble means that there is absolutely no rights in ourselves when it comes to what God wants to do in our lives. We have become totally and absolutely His. God is the Lord and Master of our lives.

In 1 Peter 5:5, 6 we are exhorted to humble ourselves: "All of you, clothe yourself with humility towards one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." There is no lack of grace for those who humble themselves. God Himself draws near to those who are humble.

Be Gentle

To be gentle is not being weak. To be gentle is to know that we have the strength and ability and being able to put them under control. To be strong and yet able to hold and discipline ourselves. To have the power to perform and yet able to withhold it. That, is the exercise of gentleness. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" Matthew 5:5.

Be Patient

Patience is longsuffering. The ability to stay under pressure and being there yet keeping the testimony. That is the meaning of being patient. Paul in Romans 12:12 encourages us to: "Be joyful in hope, patient and affliction, faithful in prayer."

We cannot be completely humble, humble and patient on our own. They are the outcomes of a life that is led by a totally yielded to the Spirit of God. The Spirit-led life needs to be developed in us. The natural man cannot understand it, produce it, or tolerate it. They are fruit of the Spirit produced in lives that are yielding to the working of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" Galatians 5:22-23.

The Holy Spirit dwells within us and when we allow Him to work in us, He will give us grace and strength to be humble, patient, gentle and loving. That is the way we should live our spirit-led life. But, why do we need to live Spirit-led lives?

Why Do We Need to Live Spirit-led Lives?

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" Ephesians 4:3

Unity cannot be created by us. Where the Spirit of God is, there is unity. Paul told the Ephesians to "make every effort to keep the unity." This means with God there is unity. Our part is to keep the unity. It is not easy to keep and maintain unity. Our character traits sometimes hinder us from doing it. Circumstances sometimes bring disaster. However, we who live by the Spirit are led by

the Spirit and are led by the Spirit are able to do so. Paul talks about it in Romans 8:6, “The mind of a sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” Unity is produced when we live and walk in the Spirit and that means obeying the Lord. God comes first, others second and ourself last. God’s Spirit will enable and empower us when we put in effort to maintain unity. “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” Phil 4:13. Why do we need to keep this unity?

The Bases for the Spirit-led Life

“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and in all” Eph 4:4-6.

These are the seven bases for us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit – one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. We can only live one life-one that glorifies, honours and gives pleasure to God.

In the book of Judges chapter 13 to 16, we are told the story of Samson, one of the judges raised up by God to lead His people. When the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, he would rise up with tremendous power and perform miraculous feats (Judges 14:6, 19; 15: 14, 15). Samson was called and anointed by the Lord but later on in life he played with fire. He lived an immoral life (Judges 16:1). We cannot live dual lives. We cannot read our Bibles and pray and then turn around and pursue after our carnal desires. Samson deceived himself by living such a manner. In Judges 16:20 we are told that “he did not know the Lord had departed from him.” He was then defeated by his enemies and had his eyes gouged out. Samson’s power and success lie in him walking and living according to God’s ways. He was set apart for God’s service (Judges 13:2-5) but when he broke the vow, he fell.

Therefore, seek and strive to live a Spirit-led life.

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