

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

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If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

As we develop as Christians, we must master the principles of the Kingdom of God that will move us into the abundant life. In this world, we must strive to bring our flesh under the control of the Spirit.

The most difficult aspect of the life we are called to live is that of crucifying the flesh. We have become so accustomed to walking in the flesh that we pull ourselves away from the principles that the Lord has for us in every area of our lives. I am happy that God cares so much for me that He has a plan for my development and success. One of my favorite Scriptures is found in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 29 and verse 11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

I trust that the Lord will reveal to all of you His heart towards us as you read this article. I know these words will both comfort and bless you in your spirit as we explore your life in the Spirit. Now, let's begin!

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God (1 Cor. 2:9-12 KJV).

This tremendous passage of Scripture tells us some interesting things that we must know. There are things that the Lord has prepared for us that are so far beyond our comprehension that we need the Holy Spirit to reveal them to us. The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God and brings us into the knowledge of the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit helps us negotiate the Kingdom and put those things we learn into practice. I am convinced that there is a world of excitement awaiting us as we move into the deep things of the Lord. Our relationship with God will bring us into the exciting world of a Spirit driven life. What do we mean by Spirit driven? This is a life that contains the impartation of the Holy Spirit and the peace of God. Paul tells us that

all things will work together for good to those that love the Lord. I believe that is a word to bring us peace in our spirit. If we believe that all things will work together for our good, we can trust God for all things.

Paul goes on to say that no human can explain the things of God in a way that makes sense all of the time. No human can fully comprehend the things of God; we struggle with this reality. We have seen that man has always wanted to be his own god. Man has always wanted to be in control of everything that comes his way. Yet, we that are believers know that God is in control. I remember as a child I really did not like being told it was time to go to bed. I would always fight against the parental instructions to be in the bed by a certain time. I was convinced I knew what was best for me. So, on one school night, I was allowed to stay up as long as I wanted. I remember feeling a bit smug, and thinking, "I'll show them." Well, you guessed it. When it was time for school I was made to get out of bed my regular time and boy was I sleepy. Needless to say, I did not resist parental instructions again.

Well, life in the spirit is along the same lines. We think we know what is best and yet, in reality only God KNOWS everything. That is a comforting thought, and we can rest in the knowledge that God is in control.

NO CONDEMNATION

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

We are free from guilt and shame now that we are in the body of Christ. The knowledge of our new freedom is a true blessing as we are no longer in the grip of satanic despair. One of the things our adversary likes to do is accuse us regarding our past lifestyle. He does this so that we will feel like we are no good. He likes to keep our past sins in front of us, and he delights in seeing us stumble over previous failures. However, the Word of the Lord is very clear: *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us* (Psalms 103:12). Praise God, our sins are removed far from us and we are walking in the liberty of the love of God. Take a deep breath and relax; your past is not going to dictate your future any longer. We are free from sin. The Lord now lives inside of us and we enjoy fellowship with Him. Think about this, the Lord lives inside of you and He delights in bringing you into the fullness of His kingdom.

While we are learning to live in the Spirit, we must remember that the Lord has given us His holy Word so that we will know what He requires of us in our everyday life. The Apostle Peter tells us that we must remove the hindrances from our life as we grow up in our salvation.

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good (1 Peter 2:1-3 NIV).

I am convinced that this new life in the Spirit is one that you will not regret as you walk with the Lord daily.

BEING FILLED

Being filled with the Spirit is the crowning glory of the new life in Christ. To some believers, being filled with the Holy Spirit means the ability to speak in tongues. While I do believe in and practice praying in tongues, I do not believe that it is a sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit. There are just too many instances of satanic demonstrations concerning tongues for me to be convinced that speaking in tongues is a sign of the Spirit indwelling. Many believers use tongues as proof of being filled with the Spirit. I am afraid the Bible just does not give credibility to this doctrine. I am convinced that we must be filled with the Spirit and I am in agreement with the Apostle Paul when he states that the "Fruit of the Spirit is ... LOVE." I have seen many tongue speaking believers who were very mean and their deportment not inline with the teachings of our Lord as it pertains to love. I guess this is where many of my "Pentecostal" friends will get offended. I do not mean to offend, yet we have held onto improper doctrines for so long that we have come to believe many things that just are not supported by the Word of God.

You may be asking the following question. "Okay Pastor Lambert, if you have taken the emphasis off of tongues, then how do I know I am filled with the Spirit?" Well, I am glad you asked, and I will give you something to consider.

In the Book of Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18, the Apostle Paul teaches us that we should be filled with the Spirit: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein excess; but be filled with the Spirit".

I believe that this is a command that each believer must obey – "BE FILLED" with the Spirit. I am sure that as we are filled with the Spirit, we find the peace of God and the joy of the Lord.

As we read the rest of this great chapter, we find that Paul teaches that the result of being filled with the Spirit is clearly demonstrated by changes in our lifestyle.

SPEAK, GIVE, SUBMIT

Let us look at the verses that give us a clear understanding of being filled with the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of each of us, there will be a real change in our character and in our actions.

Ephesians 5:19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

When we are filled with the Spirit, we will exhibit a joyful heart. We will have the joy of the Lord in our spirit, and we will sing songs to the Lord. Joy is a primary characteristic of the Holy Spirit's filling.

Ephesians 5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

We will develop a thankful heart. This is a very important attribute to have as a Christian. I believe that we have lost the attitude of giving God thanks. We have become ungrateful, complaining more than we give thanks. If you are living in the realm of the Spirit then complaining will be replaced with thankfulness.

Ephesians 5:21 *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

In order for us to truly enjoy life in the Spirit, we must learn to be submissive one to another. In the Kingdom of God there is no hierarchy; we all take the attitude of a servant. Those who are truly filled with the Spirit know how to submit to one another. To submit simply means to yield and to not be as competitive as you were in the world. Remember, "Blessed are the meek."

Ephes. 5:22 , 25 *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

When you are Spirit filled, your relationship with those in your home will change. Wives will be submissive to their husbands and husbands will love their wives as the Lord does His church. I feel that the home suffers due to the absence of Spirit filled lifestyles. Can you imagine what type of homes we would have if these two principles alone were mastered? Wives and husbands living as unto the Lord in humility and submission would result in churches that would be truly filled with the Spirit. There would echo throughout the congregation the sound of being filled with the Spirit - the sound of love, peace, joy, and submission.

PEACE OF GOD

Philippians 4:7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

As we walk and live in the Spirit, we are given a new peace to enjoy. I believe that we need to walk in peace while enjoying the things of God. There is just too much anxiety in our world and we must seek to replace that anxiety with the peace of God. When you walk in the Spirit, you will find that there is a level of rest that you will receive as a child of God that can only come from the Father. We live in a pressure and stress filled world. We must learn to employ the steps necessary to rise above the stress and pressure of the world and focus on the grace given to us by our Father. Our enemy delights when we have our faith pushed aside by stress and pressure.

Our greatest challenge is replacing stress and pressure with faith and rest. Remember the story about Jesus sleeping on the boat while the disciples were struggling with the storm? Jesus stands up and commands, "...Peace, be still". I believe He is speaking those words today. When you are struggling with anxiety, Jesus commands PEACE! Speak to your stressful situation and speak boldly: PEACE, BE STILL!

My friend, I can feel the power of God being released right now into your situation. Go on, speak it. PEACE to every storm that comes your way. PEACE to every sick condition in your life. Praise God. You shall have what you say. Go on command it... PEACE!!!

Hallelujah, it is done!

MOVING TOWARD THE SPIRIT LIFE

Jesus wants us to live in the Spirit and to not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Our flesh loves attention and it is extremely spoiled. When the flesh does not get what it wants, it will pout. When the flesh does not have its way, it will cry out for attention. It asks for food when the body is not hungry; it wants pleasure even if the action does not glorify the Lord. Yet, I am sure that we can live above the flesh.

1 John 3:9 (NIV) *No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.*

The word seed comes from the root word *sperma* (*sper'-mah*) which is defined as something sown such as a seed; by implication it means offspring or a remnant. It is where we get the word *sperm* from. We can conclude that 1 John 3:9 is telling us that we

are literally the offspring of God. Since we are the children of God and we have His seed in us, we are to live as God does.

Now I know that many of you are asking what you can do to live above the flesh. You may say, "Pastor Lambert I just cannot get the victory over the flesh, and I feel so unworthy to serve the Lord in Spirit and in truth."

Well, I have some good news for you. God has given us His holy Word and when we read that Word, we gain victory over the flesh.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee (Psalm 19:11).

As you hide the word in your heart, it will replace the desire to sin. Praise the Lord! There is victory in the Word of God, and it is available to you. I cannot overstate the need to stay in the Word of God, my friends.

When I was a young Christian, I was disciplined in the Word of God. Oh, times were so different. We just loved to hear the Word of God. There weren't so many fleshly demonstrations presenting themselves before us. We would come to church to hear the Word. It was a glorious time. Now, we have replaced the Word with people and their wisdom. Today, we hear man's opinion instead of the Word of God. I fear that unless we break the cycle of dependency on man, we will not return to the freshness of the Spirit of God. I want a real revival of God's Spirit and I will accept nothing less!

Well, there you have it. Life in the Spirit is a life of joy, contentment and peace. I trust that you will experience the fullness of God as you live life in the Spirit. May the Lord bless you richly as you go beyond your borders into the Lord's realm of reality. †