

Holy Spirit More

Session Six: Yielding - Open for more?

Welcome, opening prayer and worship

(5–15 minutes)

Introduction

(5 minutes)

Bible study

(15 minutes)

Read Ephesians 5:8-20

1. Read vs. 18. In what way is being filled with the Spirit an alternative for getting drunk on wine? What need are we trying to fulfil?
2. This passage is titled "Instructions for Christian Living". How does the Spirit help us to live 'in the light'? (hint in vs. 10 and 17).

Discussion time and video

(40 minutes)

There's nothing wrong with pursuing what God would have you do with your life, but sometimes we get so scared about missing our calling for the future that we become paralysed in the present. God does have a plan for each of our lives, but He has never promised to reveal that plan to us in advance.

1. The video poses an important question: If you were absolutely, 100 percent submitted to the will of God at this moment, what do you think He might ask you to do?

The moment you heard that question, maybe you knew exactly what God would want you to do. He's been calling you to it for a long time, but you've been writing it off as anything but the voice of God. Or it may be a tough question for you to answer. You may have no idea what God "might" call you to. But that's not really the point. Generally speaking, the answer is not as important as the question. Daily considering and pursuing the Spirit's leading in our lives is crucial.

Read Romans 8:1-13. In Romans 7, Paul discusses the impossibility of obedience in the flesh: "I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out" (v. 18). This is a hopeless situation. But what is impossible in Romans 7 is made possible in Romans 8. What makes the difference? The Holy Spirit. "The Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (8:2). According to Romans 8, the difference between trying and failing, and truly obeying God has everything to do with following the Spirit's leading.

2. In verses 5-8, Paul talks about the difference between the mind set on the flesh and the mind set on the Spirit. Think about this difference. Give an example of what each type of person looks like.
3. Look at verses 9-13. What things does Paul mention that set the Spirit-filled person apart?
4. What do you think it means to "by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body" (v. 13)?

Paul refers to this process of following the Spirit's leading as walking "according to the Spirit" in Romans 8:4 and walking "by the Spirit" in Galatians 5:16 and 25. The concept of walking is so basic that perhaps you've never considered what walking entails. Think about how simple it is: You don't have to know exactly where you're going; it doesn't require any planning; all you have to do is put one foot in front of the other. Really, the only way to walk is one step at a time.

We can get so caught up in the big picture that we lose sight of the fact that God is simply calling us to walk. It won't necessarily be easy, but we can always put one foot in front of the other.

5. Think about the analogy of walking. Practically, what would it mean for you to walk by the Spirit in your daily life?

There is a real difference between adding the Spirit to your life and actually following Him minute by minute. If you add the Spirit to your life, you're not open to change; you just want to enhance what you're already doing. This is not what the Spirit came to do. On the other hand, if you begin following the Spirit's leading in your life, you will find yourself changing. The Spirit may prompt you to let go of things that were once important to you. He may even call you to give up some good things in your life, at least for a time, in order to accomplish His purposes in and through you.

6. The thought of being called to give things up may be scary, but honestly answer this question: Which is more frightening to you, giving up everything you own, or going through life on your own without the Holy Spirit? Why do you say that?

Walking by the Spirit comes down to daily dependence on God. Sometimes the struggle with sin seems hopeless, but remember that if you are actively walking in the Spirit, you won't sin (Gal. 5:16). This doesn't necessarily mean that your struggle with sin will get easier, but it does provide hope. You may find a particular sin difficult to resist, but as you become more sensitive to the Spirit's leading, you will begin doing the things that He leads you to do.

We all know people who are daily walking by the Spirit. These people are actively maintaining their relationship with God and constantly opening themselves to follow the Spirit's leading, whatever that may mean. The most difficult part is the daily maintenance. Most of us are excited about submitting to the Spirit in an abstract sense. We enjoy the thought of being filled with the Spirit. But how often do you consider the way the Spirit might be leading as you spend time with your family? What might the Spirit want you to say to the people you work with? Have you thought about how the Spirit might want you to shape your budget? These are all practical areas that we rarely consider submitting to the Spirit.

7. Think about some of these mundane daily activities. In which of these are you prone to do your own thing without considering how the Spirit might lead you?
8. How can you turn these activities into opportunities to follow the Spirit's leading?

Prayer ministry and closing prayer

(15 minutes)