

More...Where our hunger meets His Promises

Ephesians 5:18 NLT

*“Filling our buckets with the Person of the Holy Spirit
and why we need to study and learn more about Him...”*

As new believers, we ask the question, *“Where do I start?”* We might own a massive family Bible or one that was given to us, probably a King James version written in Elizabethan english, which to most of us, is complicated and confusing - and we struggle trying to read it. In addition, we’re trying to grow and to stay away from the things that want to pull us back into the world. But God hears our cries and prayers to grow, and as we connect with other disciples who support and encourage us, we also discover new resources - different Bible translations we actually understand, so we can begin to study, memorize, and apply scriptures in our lives.

We learn to value group Bible study, and to develop and cultivate our own spiritual discipline in plotting the way forward. As we begin to have a plan and acquire tools, we can literally explode in our growth in Christ, and then become even *more* hungry for the Word of God - the Bible. We begin to fill our buckets with the Person of the Holy Spirit, and also to study and learn *“more...”* about Him.

We fill our buckets - we go out and make beautiful messes everywhere we go. We’re just messy - we spill out - we slosh out Jesus, the very Presence and Heart of God, and the person of the Holy Spirit. We slosh him out all over the place. So, why do we need to fill our buckets? Why do we need to study and learn more about him at all? Why does it matter to have the Holy Spirit?

We’ve got the Father. We’ve got the Son. Why do we even need the Holy Spirit? Here’s why - because Jesus said, *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”* (John 16:7 NKJV) Jesus was the Son of Man while he was on earth, and could only be in one location. He had flesh and blood like you and me - we can’t be in two places at once and Jesus couldn’t either.

So we see in Acts chapters two, ten, and twelve how the Holy Spirit came, and that he’s omni-present - he can be *everywhere* at one time, so we get the value of the Presence of Christ living with us - all of us - *wherever* we are.

Another reason we need the Holy Spirit is because he is the *Paraklétos* - the *Helper* - he is *our* Helper. Max Lucato's new book is titled Help is Here, not, "*Help is coming someday if you hold your tongue just right and you don't cuss - then maybe help will show up*" - or "*No help is here*". But, for us right here, right now - today - this moment, we can *know* and be confident that the Helper *is with us*

Other words translated from *Paraklétos* are: *Counselor, Comforter, Friend, Advocate, Intercessor* - all based from the same word - and that is why we need him - because *we need help*. Some of us *need* counseling, need a Comforter, a Friend, Someone called alongside - *that* is the Person of the Holy Spirit.

A recent poll showed that fifty-nine percent of people in America believe the Holy Spirit is not a Person, but a force. This is not *Star Wars* - this is the Kingdom of God - and the Holy Spirit is the very Presence and the very Power of God released *into* us to live *with* us. He puts himself *in* us. He lives his life *through* us, and he puts himself *upon* us, to *empower* us, so we can do exactly what we're called to do and fulfill the destiny in our lives.

Also, the Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to live Life out of the overflow of his Person, Presence, and Power. How many of us would like help? We need all the help we can get! People are strangely drawn to those whose buckets are filled to the brim and running over. Everywhere you go, you're making these beautiful messes, and people are strangely drawn and attracted to that - the fact that Jesus Christ in the Person of the Holy Spirit lives within you - and woos people towards you, so that you can share the Life and the Hope that you have in Christ - *that's* why.

We pray, "*Father - Abba - I want everything you have for me, nothing more, and nothing less. In Jesus' name. Amen.*"

So, how do we fill our buckets? These are all practical tools for us as children trying to learn - trying to grow - trying to gain a foothold in this thing. What does this mean? - and do we *want* to grow up? - or, do we want to remain spiritual babies? Paul said, "You're *immature*, and I want you to be mature - and get to where you can handle eating "*meat*", rather than like a baby, always having the *milk* of the Word.

That predicates *us growing up*, and as we grow up, something happens. We begin to grow *out* - the buckets are getting full - and *more full* - and it becomes normative for us to walk around with full buckets out in the world, making these beautiful messes - and as we grow up, we grow out, and the whole process of all that. We begin to grow *deeper* in that inner Life - that deeper Life of our walk with Jesus.

God is calling us to *intimacy* with him - and we need to shake whatever presuppositions we have about that not being for men as though it's a feminine word only. Men need to be intimate with the Father God. We often struggle with that depending on the model father we had in our own lives. Not all of us had great models. We sometimes overlay a template of what our *heavenly* Father looks like from our own experience, and it causes us to not feel safe with God - but they are *not* one and the same, and we need to move into this deeper place.

How do we do that?

[1] We must spend time in God's Word - there is *no other way*. There is no such thing as "microwave" Christianity - or guilt by association. If we hang out with someone who reads the Bible all the time - maybe we'll get the Cliff notes from them - get the *run-off*. *No* - that isn't the way it happens! *You* have to feed yourself. We can't get full watching somebody else eat. We need the Word of God as much as we need oxygen or water or food and nourishment. If not, then our spirit will begin to look like we're decaying and wasting away.

Jeremiah 15:16 NLT

"When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God of Heaven's Armies."

Jeremiah found the Word of God and *devoured* it - he *ate* it! - and it gave him nourishment and brought a joy in life to him - *even* in the midst of complaining to God about his assignment.

Colossians 3:16 NASB

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Hebrews 4:12 NRSV

"Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Matthew 4:3-4 ESV

“And the tempter came [after Jesus had fasted for forty days] and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’

The Word of God is our *sustenance*. We will not live a victorious Christian life - an overcoming life - if we are not “*Worded-up*” - if we’re not in God’s Word - *eating* God’s Word - being nourished by it - letting it become the joy and the Life of our heart - where it literally *becomes* Life for us. You’ve *got* to have God’s Word or you will not make it. You can’t live vicariously through someone else - you have to get it for yourself - just like food - you have to eat for yourself.

Tools for studying the Bible - a great starting place:

YouVersion Bible App - look up a Bible verse and then read it in different translations. It will speak to you, and also bring out different nuances of the scripture so as to understand it better, and begin to enjoy reading the Bible instead of having to labor in it. Let these feed and fuel you.

English Standard Version (ESV) Study Bible - another great Bible translation which includes a commentary that is short and to the point - very practical and not too academic - provides helpful insight into the scriptures you’re reading, especially troublesome passages - available in digital or printed versions

DailyVerses.net - you can search all the scriptures in the Bible by just typing in the topic you want to get a comprehensive list

BibleHub.com - tells the meaning of Greek words - type in a word or verse - takes you deeper into a particular scripture

[2] We must spend time in Worship. The basis of worship is understanding his worth-iness. We acknowledge who he is - we hold him high. *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.”* (Isaiah 6:1 NKJV). We recognize his majesty. He is our Father, but he is also the *King - God Most High*. In worship, we are acknowledging that - and as we do, he is drawn - attracted to our worship - he inhabits the praises of his people - he shows up - and he’s here habitating with us.

John 4:23-24 ESV

“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Revelation 4:8-11 ESV

“And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.’

Worship is going on twenty-four-seven in the heavenlies - never ceasing - perpetually. The word *worship* means *to bend low*.

Simple tools for worship: Spotify, Amazon Music, Apple Music, YouTube, Alexa - find the music you like and begin to inform your own worship life.

[3] We must spend time in Prayer

Ephesians 6:18 NIV

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Matthew 6:5-13 NASB

“And when you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they will be seen by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But as for you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. And when you are praying, do not use thoughtless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father, who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’”

Remove the word “just” from your prayers in attempting to convey humility before God. Scripture invites us to “*come boldly to the throne of Grace*” (Hebrews 4:16).

Philippians 4:6 NKJV

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...”

Jesus talked about the persistent widow who kept coming to the godless judge until she got what she wanted. (Luke 18:2-8)

That wasn't sweet or gentle, or what we would call humble. Step up in confidence before God, because we know him and trust him, and we know that he loves us - and when you know you're loved, you don't have to “*just*” anything - you go.

Tools for Prayer:

Prayers That Avail Much - book by Germaine Copeland - also online at Prayers.org - scriptures put in prayer form - search by topic

The Power of Praying (series) - books by Stormie Omartian - scriptures in prayer form

Practicing His Presence - book by Brother Lawrence and Frank Laubach. Brother Lawrence, a 17th century French monk, worked in the monastery kitchen until he was too lame - but his walk with God and his intimacy with the Father was world-renown. He was sought out by kings, nobles, and bishops who all sought spiritual guidance from him. Included is another book by Frank Laubach who talks about “a game with minutes” - to think about God all day long.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 NASB

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit, do not utterly reject prophecies, but examine everything; hold firmly to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil.”

Instead of formal prayers, have an ongoing conversation with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords - bring him into everything. Turn your inner monologue into a *dialogue* - and begin to “*practice His Presence*”.

Enjoying the Presence of God - book by Jan Johnson

General Tools:

One Minute Pause - App by John Eldridge, of Wild at Heart

Lectio 365 - App - daily devotional - 24-7 prayer

Soultime Christian Meditation - App - daily meditations by Naomi Trenier

Another Opportunity:

Bridge Church has a track to help all of us together to “*grow up - grow out - and grow deeper.*” Bill Loveless and Tommy Hays have classes Sunday mornings and also weeknights - more opportunities to grow.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, what do You want us to take away from here today? What do You want for us?

Lord Jesus, show each one of us what we need in terms of what's been said here. Show us

how we can activate what You have given us. We listen for You and we want to step out

and operate as You lead us. Let us go away with not only tools and information, but also

with Your Presence, so that our buckets will overflow and make beautiful messes everywhere

we go. We honor You and love You. In Jesus' name. Amen