

How to Live a Spirit-Empowered Life

Message 1 of 7 in the series: "If I Could Tell You Just One Thing"

A. The Christian life is not hard to live...it is impossible! The Spirit alone gives life...human effort accomplishes nothing!

"The Spirit alone gives eternal life. **Human effort accomplishes nothing...**" John 6:63a (NLT)

"...I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me **you can do nothing.**" John 15:5 (NLT)

Good news! Jesus wants us to experience the fullness of His life. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10b (NIV)

B. Stop depending upon our flesh and human effort and start relying on God's Spirit for life and fruit.

"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

Question: *Why am I continuing to struggle if I have new desires and God's power?* "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. **These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.** But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses." Galatians 5:17-18 (NLT)

Question: *How do we live in God's power?*

1. We must surrender control of our life from our flesh to His Spirit.

Note: Surrender is a matter of control. Who is in control- Spirit or flesh? This is always a question of who before what.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

"So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves."

Galatians 5:16 (NLT)

"So Jesus explained, 'I tell you the truth, **the Son can do nothing by himself.** He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.'" John 5:19 (NLT)

2. We must listen to what God is saying/revealing to us.

Note: Listening is being attentive to God, His Will, and His Word. You can't follow if you can't hear what God is saying or see what God is doing (or where He is going).

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches..."

Revelation 2:7a, 11a, 17a, & 29; 3:6, 13, & 22 (NLT)

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 (NLT)

"I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won't. For I say only **what I have heard** from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful.... **Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God.** But you don't listen because you don't belong to God."

John 8:26 & 47 (NLT)

3. We must pray and align our will with God's will.

Note: Prayer is more than talking to God or bringing our requests to God. Prayer changes us by bringing us into alignment with God's will. It is re-surrender.

"**Pray in the Spirit** at all times and on every occasion..." Ephesians 6:18a (NLT)

"And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for **anything that pleases him.** And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for."

1 John 5:14-15 (NLT)

"May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10 (NLT)

“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet **I want your will to be done, not mine.**” Luke 22:42 (NLT)

4. We must obey by putting our faith into action.

Note: Obedience is more than compliance to a set of rules. It is faith in action. It is an overflow, the fruit of trust.

“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.” James 1:22 (NLT)

“So Jesus explained, ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does...I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because **I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.**’” John 5:19 & 30 (NLT)

“And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For **I always do what pleases him.**”
John 8:29 (NLT)

C. Jesus wants all His children to be filled with His Spirit, and He wants us to help each other live Spirit-empowered lives.

“Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, **be filled with the Holy Spirit...**”
Ephesians 5:18 (NLT)

“These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They **follow their natural instincts** because they do not have God’s Spirit in them. But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, **pray in the power of the Holy Spirit**, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love.” Jude 1:19-21 (NLT)

Life Application: Develop the habit of asking yourself and each other two questions:

1. What is God saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?

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Connect Group Questions:

1. How would you describe the difference between eternal life and abundant life?
2. Why do you think Jesus tells us that human effort accomplishes nothing? (John 6:63, John 15:5)
3. Read Galatians 5:17-18. How does this verse prove that our struggle with sin will not go away (or become less) the longer we are a Christian?
4. Discuss the following steps about living a Spirit-empowered life:
 - Surrender- What do you know about God’s will, character, and promises that helps you give control of your life to Him? Why are we afraid to give Him control at times?
 - Listen- What are some ways that you can hear God’s voice? What gives you confidence that it is truly God speaking to you?
 - Pray- Why does true prayer always change us? How can viewing prayer as alignment with God’s will remedy some of our frustrations with unanswered prayer?
 - Obey- What does it mean for obedience to be an overflow, the fruit of trust? Why is it easy to fall into the trap of turning our relationship with Jesus into compliance to a list of rules?
5. Read Ephesians 5:18. Why is Paul comparing/contrasting being drunk with being filled with the Holy Spirit? How does being drunk ruin your life? How would be filled with the Spirit improve your life?
6. How do the two questions (“What is God saying to you?” and “What are you going to do about it?”) encourage us to live Spirit-empowered lives?