

SPIRITUAL BREATHING

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WHAT IS A TRANSFERABLE CONCEPT?

When our Lord commanded the 11 men who were His closest followers to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, He told them to teach these new disciples all that He had taught them (Matthew 28:18-20).

Later the apostle Paul gave the same instructions to Timothy: "...and the things which you have heard from me...these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (I Timothy 2:2).

In the process of counselling and interacting with tens of thousands of students, laymen and pastors year after year for over 35 years, our staff have discovered that many church members, including people from churches which honor our Lord and faithfully teach His Word, are not sure of their salvation, that the average Christian is living a defeated and frustrated life and does not know how to share his faith effectively with others.

In our endeavor to help meet these three basic needs and to build Christian disciples in obedience to the Lord's command, Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc. has developed a series of "how to's"--or "transferable concepts"--in which we discuss many of the basic truths that Jesus and His disciples taught.

A "transferable concept" may be defined as an idea or a truth which can be transferred or communicated from one person to another and then to another, spiritual generation after generation, without distorting or diluting its original meaning.

As these basic truths of the Christian life are made available through the printed word, films, tapes and cassettes in every major language of the world, they could well be used of God to help transform the lives of tens of millions all over the world.

We encourage you to master each of these concepts until you are personally prepared to communicate them to others "who will be able to teach others also." In so doing, many millions of men and women can be reached and disciplined for Christ. They can then make a significant contribution toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our generation.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

"My life will never be the same after tonight," commented the senior pastor of one of America's leading churches after he heard the message on "Spiritual Breathing." "I have been a pastor for more than 20 years," he said, "but have never understood how to be empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit as a way of life until now. I can hardly wait to share this with my church members."

A retired businessman and his wife who had come to Arrowhead Springs from halfway across the continent said, "Our lives were changed when we learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of your ministry. Now we are sharing Christ with others wherever we go. We have come to ask you to share on television how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Your simple approach reached us, and we want to help you reach multitudes of others."

Thousands of similar stories could be told of students, pastors and laymen who have made the exciting biblical discovery of how to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit by faith.

ADVENTURE AND CHALLENGE

Jesus meant for the Christian life to be an exciting, abundant adventure. He said, "I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). When we walk in the fullness and the control of God's Holy Spirit, every day can be filled with wonder, meaning, purpose and fruitfulness.

A rich and satisfying life is the heritage of every Christian, "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Love	Christ centered
Joy	Empowered by Holy Spirit
Peace	Introduces others to Christ
Patience	Effective prayer life
Goodness	Understands God's Word
Kindness	Trusts God
Faithfulness	Obeys God
Gentleness	Loves God
Self-control	Loves other people

But most Christians do not know anything about this kind of life -- a life of victory, joy and abundant fruitfulness for our Savior. On the contrary, to many people the Christian life is a burden, a chore, a terrible cross to bear. This is not the way the Lord intended.

Jesus had more to say about peace, love, joy and victory in the last few hours of His life on earth than about suffering. The apostle Paul, who endured all kinds of suffering, beatings, and imprisonments and finally martyrdom for our Lord, said, "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems" (Rom. 5:3), "Rejoice always" (I Thess. 5:16), "In everything give thanks" (I Thess. 5:18). Whatever our circumstances -- in joy or in sorrow, in abundance or in need, in health or in sickness, in freedom or in persecution -- we are promised by our Lord, "Peace I leave with you" (John 14:27), "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5), "Ask me anything in My name and I will do it" (John 14:14).

It is here that we discern a vast difference between the church of the New Testament and the church of today. The book of the Acts of the Apostles tells the thrilling story of what God did through those first-generation Christians as they went door to door sharing their faith and constrained by the love of Christ, often in the face of death and martyrdom, went everywhere telling everyone about Christ. This is seldom the experience of twentieth-century Christians.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY

Why was that first-century church able to make an impact for God upon a wicked Roman Empire? Why is the church today so ineffective in changing the world?

The early church was composed largely of spiritual Christians, men and women filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit. They knew that, before they could experience fellowship with God and be used to help fulfill His purposes in the world, they needed to be cleansed of their sins and filled with His Holy Spirit. Only in this way could they walk in Jesus' presence and in His power.

The psalmist King David understood the need for cleansing from sin. Listen to his heartfelt prayer, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me... Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee" (Psalm 51:2,3,10,12,13). Cleansing from our sins is a prerequisite for the abundant and fruitful life to which Christ has called us.

Then as cleansed people we can appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit by faith and enter the life of power and victory which is the privilege of each Christian. The most powerful message we can give to Christians all over the world is the wonderful news of the Spirit-filled life.

If you are not already experiencing the abundant life which Jesus promised and which is your heritage as a Christian, if you are not already introducing others to Christ as a way of life, but you desire to do these things, we have good news for you!

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SECTION 1

1. What does John 10:10 mean:
to you personally? _____

to your daily walk? _____

2. In what ways are you now fruitful for Christ? _____

In what other ways could you become fruitful for Christ? _____

3. What do each of the following verses tell you about God's view of sin?

Ephesians 2:1-3 _____

Psalm 107:17 _____

Isaiah 59:2 _____

Romans 3:23 _____

Psalm 86:5 _____

Acts 26:18 _____

I John 1:9 _____

SECTION 2

THE GREAT PROBLEM

More than half of our nation's population of more than 220 million people profess to be Christians. Yet our attitudes and actions show that our nation has become a materialistic people, morally and spiritually decadent. Many Christians have become more a part of the problem than a part of the solution. Non-Christians see little or no difference between their quality of life and that of the average Christian.

Yet the average materialistic Christian is defeated, frustrated, fruitless and is not happy with his spiritual condition. He would like to change but he does not know what to do. This person does not need to be rebuked or criticized and condemned. He needs to be loved and helped.

Some time ago when I was driving in a strange city in Mexico, I made a wrong turn. I found myself driving against traffic on a one-way street. The people along the sidewalk began to tell me that I was going in the wrong direction. But I had already realized this in the split second after I turned. My problem was not to determine whether or not I was going in the wrong direction; it was how to get turned around! I soon succeeded in changing my direction through the help of a friendly policeman and went on my way rejoicing, driving with the traffic.

So it is in the Christian life. One does not need to be told that he is a hypocrite or that his life is not honoring to our Lord. He needs to be shown how to get turned around. He needs to understand the nature of his problem and how to find a solution to it. This is exactly what God's Word does for us.

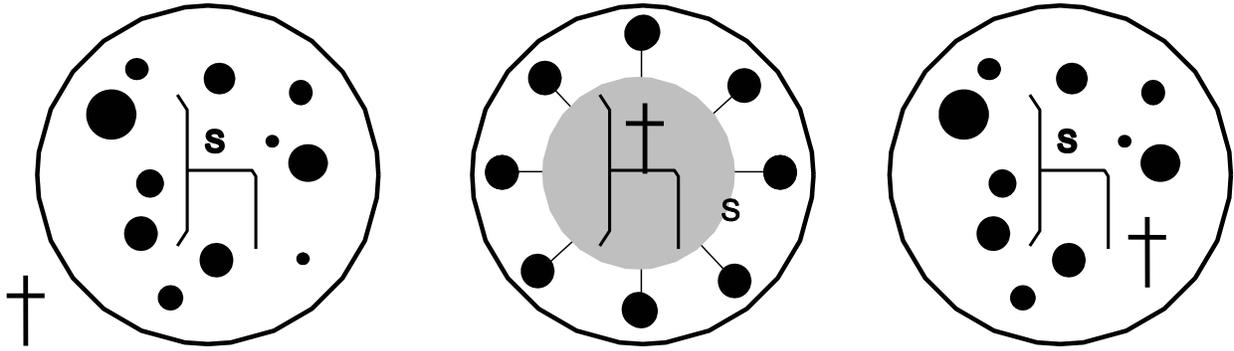
THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE

In I Corinthians 2 and 3, the apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, diagnoses the problem when he tells us there are three kinds of people in the world -- the natural man, the spiritual man and the carnal (fleshly) man.

Natural Man

The natural man is not a Christian. He depends upon his own resources and lives in his own strength. Spiritually he is dead to God because of his sin (rejection of God). He cannot understand or accept the truths of God's Word.

Self directed life
 Self is on the throne -S
 Interests are directed by self
 often resulting in discord and
 frustration.



Spiritual Man

The spiritual man is a Christian who is controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit and walks in close fellowship with God. He draws upon the resources of God's love and power and lives in the strength of the living Christ. He is rejoicing in the Lord and bearing fruit for Jesus Christ.

Christ-directed life

- S - self is yielded to Christ
- Christ is guiding the life
- interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan.

The Carnal Man

The carnal man is one who has trusted Christ to be his savior, but is living a defeated life. He is living in the energy of the flesh instead of drawing upon the resources of the Holy Spirit. He desires and sometimes attempts to set his affection on the things of God, but still holds on to the things of the world. He may honestly try to live up to man-made standards, only to fail over and over again.

Self-directed Christian

- S - self is in charge
- Christ is not allowed to direct the life
- interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

I DO WHAT I HATE

Paul tells us more about the carnal Christian when he writes, "The law is good, then, and the trouble is not there but with me, because I am sold into slavery with sin as my owner. I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't" (Romans 7:14-16). Does this passage of Scripture describe your present walk?

A gifted young educator with his doctorate, a successful career and an even brighter future came for counsel. "I became a Christian years ago when I was a young boy," he said, "But through the years I gradually took back the control of my life. I was still active in the church, yet, I am ashamed to say that I have been more interested in promoting my own business and social position than I have been in serving the Lord and getting to know Him better. I have compromised my business and professional standards, and have not always been honest and ethical in my dealings with others."

"God has shown me that I am a carnal Christian and has reminded me of the many years I have wasted living selfishly for my own interests. I have come to confess my sins to God," he said, "and to surrender my life completely and irrevocably to Christ. Now I want to help evangelize the world for Christ."

Many Christians find that Romans 7 fairly well characterizes their life. They want to serve God but repeatedly lose the struggle to be faithful to the Lord and consistent in their walk with Him. They are not experiencing the victory over sin nor are they living fulfilling lives. They, and perhaps you, need to know how to walk by faith in the power of the Spirit.

In the next two sections we will look at what the Bible says about how to live the life of power and fruitfulness.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SECTION 2

1. Describe what your life would be like as a natural man. What would be the nature of your relationships at home and at work?

2. Describe your life in the same relationships if you walk in the fullness and control of the Holy Spirit. _____

3. What would you like to see changed in your life? _____

4. Christ offers true freedom. From the following verses explain the freedom Christ gives.

Romans 8:21 _____

Galatians 5:1,13,14 _____

I Corinthians 8:6, 9-13 _____

SECTION 3

THE GREAT SOLUTION

Every Christian struggles with carnality until he makes the discovery that Paul made -- that Jesus Christ sets us free: "So there is now no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit - and this power is mine through Christ Jesus - has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death" (Romans 8:1).

For many Christians it is a great relief to discover that they were never intended to live the Christian life in their own power, they were never intended to do so! We trust Christ to live His life in and through us. It is faith, not effort, that pleases Him (I Peter 1:7; Hebrews 11:6).

THE OBJECT OF FAITH

What is faith? Faith is another word for trust. It is an active response each person can choose to make-to believe God, to trust Him to do exactly what He said He would. But we do not have faith in faith! Faith must have an object.

The object of faith for the Christian is God and His Word, made known through Jesus Christ. The object of our faith has both the power and the willingness to deliver us from carnality. We can be fruitful witnesses for Christ, just as He called us to do (John 15:16). The Lord Jesus gave the incredible but reliable promise that if we believe on Him we will be able to do greater works than He did (John 14:12). He assured us that whatever we ask in His name, He will do for us (John 14:14).

We place our faith, even a faith that may be very weak, in a trustworthy God and His Word, in this way His power and love is brought to bear on circumstances in our lives. The better we know God, the more we can trust Him, the more we trust Him, the more we experience the reality of His love and grace and power.

How can the carnal Christian get off and stay off this roller coaster-type of existence and overcome his inconsistent way of life?

SPIRITUAL BREATHING

Spiritual breathing is a principle which enables the believer to live a consistent Christian life, obeying Christ and finding His victory in each of our lives. Just as we exhale and inhale physically, so we can also exhale and inhale spiritually. We exhale when we confess our sins and thus open a channel for God's blessing to flow in our lives. We inhale when we appropriate the fulness of the Holy Spirit by faith and thus energize God's power in our lives.

Exhale

The Bible promises, according to I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession (*homologeō* in the Greek) suggests agreement with God concerning our sins. Such agreement involves at least three considerations.

First, I acknowledge that my sin or sins (which should be named specifically), are wrong and are grievous to God. Second, I acknowledge that God has already forgiven my sins - past, present and future - because of Christ's death on the cross. It is essential to realize that there is nothing I can do that will add anything to what He has already done for me. Third, I repent, which means that I change my attitude toward my sin - I will seek not to do it again.

God loves us unconditionally with His inexhaustible love. He loves us not "when" we are good enough, or "if" we will obey Him, but even when we are disobedient, because of His great love. One of the great discoveries of Bible study is the Lord's statement in His prayer to God the Father: "So that the world will know You love them as much as You love Me (John 17:23). Think on this, feel it in your heart. God loves you and me just as much as He loves His own Son Jesus. Just as a human father, but with much greater accuracy, God hates our sin and will discipline us when we need it, but He never ceases to love us.

This also relates to the third element - repentance. We determine to do what God wants us to do and to do it in His way. We thus turn our backs on doing things, living life, in our own power and by our own plan. We seek to follow Him.

The Basis of Our Forgiveness

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament make clear the basis of the Christian's forgiveness. "Every priest (in the Old Testament order) stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God...For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified...Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:12,14,18). If you are a Christian, one set apart or sanctified in Christ, then your sins are forgiven. You will never stand before God to answer for your sins. Jesus has done that for you.

Why then do we need to confess? If Christ has paid the penalty for our sin and if we are objectively (before God) already forgiven, if our standing with God is thus firm, what further need is there for confession? It should be understood that confession does not result in another forgiveness. Confession is necessary as an act of faith and obedience to claim God's promise in our personal experience.

Confession of sin makes real in your experience what God has done for you through the

death of His Son. The benefits are not simply psychological but are real, based on the testimony of the Word of God. If you refuse to be honest with God in confessing your sins you continue to be carnal, walking in the shadows instead of walking in God's light.

The Bible says, "But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ does, then we have wonderful fellowship and joy with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from every sin" (I John 1:7).

Perhaps you have committed sins, and have not experienced God's forgiveness. You may feel some resentments toward friends or members of your family. You may have lost the joy of your relationship with Christ. You pray, but there is no response. You read the Bible, but get little joy or help from it. You witness for Christ, but no one responds.

Sin short-circuits the power of God in your life. Because of conscious, willful acts of disobedience, God's power cannot flow through us. We know that the penalty for this is paid for based on Romans 8:1-3. We know, based on Colossians and Hebrews, that Christ has already dwelt with the sin. But we, who walk in fellowship with God, break that fellowship when we consciously disobey the Word of God and the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

But God loves us even though we may have unconfessed sin in our lives. All that we need to do to experience afresh the wonder of His love and the joy of His promises is to confess our sins - exhale spiritually - and enter the reality of His cleansing power.

The Bible uses the Greek word cathara for 'cleansing'. This indicates that God removes the guilt of the sin and anything which would stand between Him and us. Now we can once again experience the joy of our salvation. We can be assured that He hears and will answer our prayers, that all our hope is in Him, and that He will lead us and empower us for witness for Christ.

List Your Sins

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you every sin in your life which stands between you and fellowship with God. As He does this, write them down on a sheet of paper. Your list may include jealousy, pride, selfishness, lust, indifference to the things of God, unbelief, lukewarmness, loss of love for God, and many other items. I suggest you take a pencil and paper and do this right now.

After you have completed your list, write out this wonderful promise in I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Realize that this list is just between you and God, so be completely honest. Tell God everything that is wrong. When you have completed your time of prayer, write across the face of the list the word "forgiven." On the authority of the Word of God, if you have

honestly confessed your sins, they are forgiven. Express your gratitude to the Lord that He has forgiven you, based on the work of Christ on the cross 2000 years ago.

Remember that faith - not tears, pleading or any other self-imposed spiritual discipline - lays hold of God's promise. This is not a new or second salvation. You are simply bringing into your experience the once-and-for-all forgiveness which we read about in the tenth chapter of Hebrews.

Restitution May Be Necessary

For some, confession will also involve restitution - returning something that you have stolen, or asking another to forgive you for a wrong you committed against him. This is vitally important because you cannot maintain a clear conscience before God if you still have a guilty conscience before your fellow-man.

At the conclusion of a Christian medical meeting at Arrowhead Springs, a doctor accepted the challenge to go alone and make his list. He was very excited when he came to see me early the next morning. "Last night about midnight a doctor friend of mine came to my room," he said, "and told me that he had hated me for years, while pretending to be my friend. As he was making his list, God told him that he should come and tell me, and ask me to forgive him!"

"We had a wonderful time of prayer, and God met us in a special way. I wanted to tell you this in order to encourage you to keep telling Christians to confess their sins to God and, if necessary, to ask forgiveness of those whom they have wronged, as the Holy Spirit leads them."

Guilt is Gone

If you have confessed all known sins, any guilt remaining will be from Satan or from false (unbiblical) notions of sin, not from God. God has forgiven all your sins on the basis of Christ's death on the cross for you (Hebrews 10:1-17). Now, thank God that your sins have been removed from you and that you are clean before God.

Inhale

The other side of the process of spiritual breathing is inhaling - obtaining the power of the Holy Spirit of God for every aspect of our daily life. This is living life in the fulness of Christ. The Bible uses different words to describe the dynamics of this exciting relationship. The central terminology is "being filled with the Spirit." In fact, Ephesians 5:18 commands each Christian to "be filled with the Spirit." When this happens I am controlled by Christ, because the word "filling" means to be controlled - not as a robot but as one who is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring glory to Christ.

This amazing fact - that Christ lives in us and expresses His love through us - is one of the most important truths in the Bible. If we are willing to have Christ live His

resurrection life in and through us, we will bear spiritual fruit -which includes both the transforming of our own character and many people being won to Him.

The Life of Power

Jesus said in Mark 1:17, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." It is our responsibility to follow Christ - to abide in Him - and His responsibility to lead us to be fishers of men.

In John 15:8, He said, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." One can be a great preacher, a Christian scholar, a deacon or elder, attend church meetings daily, live a clean, moral life, or teach Sunday School; but if he is not bearing fruit - if he is not introducing people to Christ - he shows that he is not filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

While it is very good to live a good life, this is not enough by itself. Many non-Christians live good, moral lives. According to the Lord Jesus, the way that we demonstrate that we are truly following Him is by producing fruit, the result of spiritual life and concerns. The only way we can produce spiritual fruit is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some time ago I asked a leading theologian and dean of the faculty for a renowned theological seminary if he felt that one could be a Spirit-filled Christian without sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with other people. His answer was an emphatic, "No!"

Not only do we receive power for witnessing when we are filled with the Spirit, but our personalities also begin to change. As we continue to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit, the inner fruit of the Spirit becomes evident in us as well. The apostle Paul explains, "When the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

The Christian's relationship with Christ is both critical and progressive. Critical in that one learns that the Christian life is a life of faith rather than a life of works and that it not based on our emotions ("the just shall live by faith" Romans 1:17). It is progressive in that as one walks consistently in the power of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit (both inner and outer) will be produced in his life.

The Process of Filling

Christian are not filled with the Spirit for one of two reasons, in many cases. Either they fear God and cannot step out in faith to trust Him, or they lack the knowledge of how to be filled. A Christian who simply rejects the filling of the Spirit, who rejects the leadership of Christ in his life, is a carnal Christian.

Suppose my two sons were to greet me with these words: "Dad, we love you and we have decided that we will do anything you want us to do from now on, because we trust

you." What do you think would be my attitude?

If I were to respond to their expression of trust in me as many believe God will respond when they surrender their lives to Him, I would take my sons by the shoulder, shake them, glare at them sternly and say, "I have been waiting for this. I am going to make you regret this decision as long as you live. I am going to take all the fun out of your lives and make you do all of the things you are afraid of."

Of course, I would never respond in that manner. If my sons came to me with such a greeting, I would put my arms around them and say, "I love you too, and I deeply appreciate this expression of your love for me. Your trust is the greatest gift you could give me."

God loves you far more than you realize. He is worthy of your trust. Jesus assures us, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him" (Matthew 7:11).

Just as we received Christ by faith, trusting Him to come into our lives and save us, so we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. We trust Him to take control of our lives and begin to live the resurrection life of Jesus Christ in us. You don't have to beg or barter or fast to be filled with the Spirit. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit right now by faith.

We have looked at several factors which contribute to preparing your heart for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Let's review them right now.

First, you must desire to live a life that is pleasing to God.

Second, you must be willing to surrender your life to Christ, in accordance with the command of God in Romans 12:1-2 "I beg you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies to God as a living and holy sacrifice, which is your spiritual service of worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds."

Third, you must confess any known sin which the Holy Spirit brings to your mind so that you can be cleansed.

Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

God commanded us to be filled with the Spirit, as we saw in Ephesians 5:18. I John promises, "This is the confidence which we have before Him that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (I John 5:14-15). Is it God's will that you be filled with the Holy Spirit? Of course it is, He commands it! Right now, **by faith**, you can ask God to fill you with the Spirit. Claim the promise of

I John 5:14-15. We are filled with the Spirit by faith, trusting Him to come into us and empower us for a life of faithful service.

You do not have to pray to ask the Holy Spirit to come and fill you, just have faith that He will do so because you desire it and it is within His expressed will. However, the means to **express** your faith is to talk to God about it, to pray. I suggest that you stop right now and talk to God. Ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit and to begin to make you fruitful for Jesus Christ.

The Word and The Spirit

It is very important that we recognize the importance of the balance between the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The Word of God is closed to our understanding and has little meaning to us apart from the illumination given by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is hindered in speaking life-changing truth apart from the Word of God.

When there is balance between the Word and the Spirit in the believer's life, the result is a life of power and fruitfulness along with great joy, as the Savior promised.

Conclusion

Spiritual breathing, exhaling our sin through confession and inhaling the power of the Spirit through faith, is the process by which we re-establish our walk with God. It is absolutely necessary to a fruitful and glorious Christian life. May this be the source of a significant change in your life, beginning today!

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SECTION THREE

1. What does the great promise of Romans 8:1 mean to you?

2. How does Hebrews 11:1 describe faith? _____

3. According to I John 1:9 what is the Christian to do about his sin?

4. According to that same verse, what does God say He will do if we confess our sins?

5. If a person has confessed all known sin in his life and has made restitution as God leads, but still has guilt feelings what should he do?

6. What does God's command in Ephesians 5:18 mean to you?

7. According to I John 5:14-15 and Ephesians 5:18, can you say for sure that God wants you to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

8. How can you be filled with the Holy Spirit? _____

SECTION FOUR

WALKING IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In order to walk in the Spirit, the means to growth and success in the Christian life, you must first be filled with the Spirit. From this point the Christian life is simple - keep following Jesus Christ through the leading of the Holy Spirit and the Bible.

If you keep walking with Jesus by faith, the Holy Spirit will lead you to truth and to victory. Life will be a constant source of growth and fruitfulness. You will learn more of Jesus Christ and of life walking with Him every day. You will spend time reading and studying the Bible and will find it fascinating. You will be glad for times of prayer, for then you will talk with the Father and Jesus. It will be natural to witness to others for you will want to share the love of God for them. Your own life will be changed to become increasingly like Christ. You will face spiritual battles (from the world, the flesh, and the devil) and will overcome them.

Could anything break this pattern of victorious living? Yes, sadly, we know that something can - sin. If you retake control of your life through sin, a conscious act of disobedience, then you will need to breathe spiritually again. Some Christians breathe spiritually more often than others.

Exhale (confess) only when the Holy Spirit reveals something that needs to be confessed. For some this may be several times a day for a while, for others it may be only a few times a year. Then immediately inhale by turning back to trust God by faith.

As you grow in your knowledge of the Word, and as you learn how to maintain your walk of faith and obedience, the times of deliberate sin will diminish and your walk with Christ will be more consistent and more fruitful.

Fact, Faith, Feelings

Do not depend upon feelings. The promise of God's Word, not our feelings, is our authority. The Christian is to live by faith, trusting in God and His Word.

This can be illustrated by a train. Let us call the engine **fact** - the fact of God's promises found in His Word. The coal car we will call **faith** - our trust in God and His Word. The caboose we will call **feelings** - the resulting feelings in us from walking with God.

When you put coal in an engine the train runs and the caboose follows naturally. Obviously it would be futile to attempt to pull the train by putting coal in the caboose. It would not go anywhere! In the same way, we as Christians do not depend upon feelings or emotions in order to live the Spirit-filled life. We place our faith in the promises of God's Word. The act of seeking an emotional experience would be a denial of faith.

Be Prepared for Spiritual Conflict

The Christian life is a supernatural life, and the only one who can live it successfully is Jesus Christ. The battle is His. It becomes ours as we walk by faith with Him. But we are never to fight it in our own strength.

The Christian is to fight against the world and its system of evil thoughts and deeds (1 John 2:15-17). He is to face the external and internal forces of the flesh (the old sin nature - Romans 7 and Ephesians 4). He will even be called upon to battle the devil (Ephesians 6:12).

You have nothing to fear from these enemies so long as you depend upon Christ and not your own strength. Remember Satan has no power except that which God has allowed him to have. Paul details the "armor" we can use in spiritual battle in Ephesians 5:13-18. Study this passage and note that the first three pieces of armor are given in past tense. This is what we already have in Christ, but we often need to remind ourselves when the battle is fierce. The remaining pieces are in the present tense, we are to take them up in the middle of the conflict. But the essence of victory will still be the walk of faith, trusting Jesus to protect us and to bring us victory.

Know Your Rights as a Child of God

We need to know our spiritual heritage. We need to know the Bible in depth so that we can live according to it. To do this you will need to learn to study the Bible and to properly meditate on its teachings. We need to know how to draw upon the inexhaustible resources of God's love, power, forgiveness and grace.

One of the most important things that we can do to learn who God is and who we are and about our position as His children is to spend time, even at a sacrifice of other needs and demands on our schedules, in reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on the Bible. Then pray it all back to God, asking Him to use it to change your life. Then, be ready! For He will surely use you to bring other people into a similar walk with Him.

Bible study, prayer and sharing your faith--these become regular parts of your daily walk. These are the steps to victory.

The Great Commandment

Mark 12:28 to 34 records an incident where one of the scribes came to Jesus and ask Him what was the greatest commandment. Jesus answered, "The foremost one is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord'; And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." If we are to love God with our heart (the center of our values and affections), soul and mind (the will, emotions and intellect), and strength (all the inner power of our spirit), then our entire being will be focused on loving God.

Jesus went on to say to the scribe, "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Love for God and a life lived in His power will surely result in a love for other people.

The Great Commission

Our love for others is also given a specific direction by Jesus. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus says, "All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe what so ever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always." This tells us that we have each been called to lead other people to trust in Jesus to save them and to teach them to join us in being disciples.

Jesus Himself came to "seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10) and He has called us to follow Him: "As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

We are to live holy lives and tell other about Christ at every opportunity--but their response is dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Success in witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.

CONCLUSION

The secret of the successful Christian life is to keep Christ in control of our lives. This personal intimate walk with Christ, our Savior and our Friend, is Christianity. The Christian life is wonderful. It is exciting! It is filled with adventure for those who let God control their lives--who walk with Him day by day, moment by moment.

As you walk in the Spirit and faithfully apply the concept of spiritual breathing, you can become one of the great army of effective Christian disciples which God is raising up around the world to work, to plan, to pray, to witness for Christ - to help fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord in this generation.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SECTION FOUR

1. Please define the two aspects of spiritual breathing:

Exhaling _____

Inhaling _____

2. Why are Bible study, prayer and witnessing keys to our daily walk with Christ?

3. Is the authority in your life your own feelings or is it the Word of God? Which should it be?

4. Study Romans 5:1-11 (as a sample of a passage which lists some of the truths of your position in Christ, see also Ephesians 1:3-14 for another). List as many truths as you can find in these verses which are about you as a Christian.
