



POWER PLAY

HOLY SPIRIT [HOW DO I LIVE DIFFERENTLY?]

THE HURDLE

I was so excited the day I asked Christ into my life, but now I'd say it's harder to live for God than I imagined. Sometimes my teammates have more influence on how I act than God does. I still find myself getting angry or worrying more about what others think than God. I read my Bible but I don't always do what it says.

My Christian friends remind me that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," but frankly, I don't always feel like it. I don't seem to feel the same passion for Jesus that they do and sometimes I wonder if I didn't get the whole package when I trusted Christ. Some people get emotional when they talk about the Holy Spirit, but that's not my personality. I want to learn but I just don't know how to put the pieces together.

In what ways can you relate?

Have you ever felt:

- Apathy about the things of God?
- Powerless to do the right thing?
- Confused about why many Christians live like non-Christians?
- Your 'lived' behavior doesn't match your verbal commitment?

It's been said that "The Christian life isn't difficult to live—it's impossible to live." What do you think about this statement?

“ _____
To deny we need and want power is to deny that we hope to be effective.

Liz Smith
Columnist

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I HEAR YA

The Bible is full of people who were trying to figure out how to live in the Spirit's power...

Paul speaking about himself: "I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate ... for the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish." (Romans 7:15-19 NASB)

Jesus speaking to Nicodemus: "...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3,5)

King David after sinning: "... do not take the Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:126)

Paul speaking to the believers in Corinth: "I had to talk as though you belonged to this world... for you are still controlled by your own sinful desires... You are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord." (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NLT)

LISTEN UP

Like an encouraging teammate or coach who helps us do more than we could on our own, the Holy Spirit enables us to live a life impossible to live on our own. The gospel according to John has much to say about the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was preparing His disciples to live and love in a totally different way, He knew they would need the person and power of the Spirit to do it.

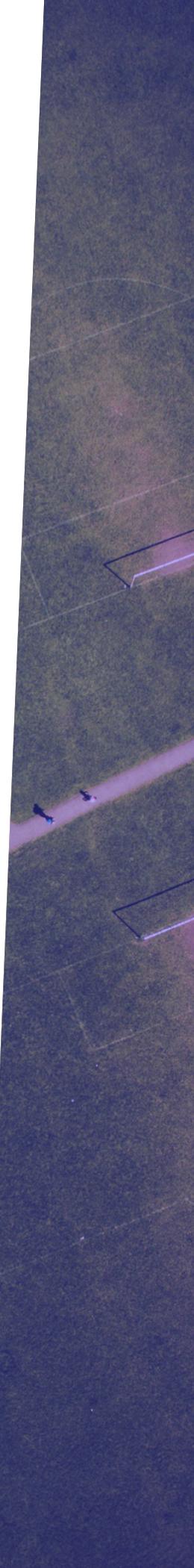
Read John 14:16,17, 26.

1. Identify the words and phrases that describe the role and relationship that the Holy Spirit would have in our lives.
2. In some Bibles, translators use the word comforter or advocate instead of helper. The word is taken from a Greek word meaning “to come alongside to give courage.” What does this say about God and His commitment to you?
3. List some characteristics of an influential teacher or coach in your life. Why would it be important to have a constant teacher and guide within you for your new life in Christ?
4. What aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work in your life are described here? We not only need guidance to the truth but also correction when we’re heading in the wrong direction. How might the Holy Spirit communicate these to you?
5. Romans 8:11 tell us that the Spirit lives in all true believers. If this is so, why do you think most believers don’t experience the life that God offers?

FOR THE RECORD

Christ forgave us, made us spiritually alive, and wants to empower our lives—but we still have the capacity to sin. We naturally want to do things our way, in our time, under our control, and for our gain. If we want to experience the Spirit’s power in our lives, we must willingly submit ourselves moment by moment to God, yielding ourselves to Him as a conscious

decision. When we ask the Spirit to control us, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead gives us new affections and strength to follow through on them. Jesus wants to live in the world through us, but we must purposely allow him constant access to our lives so He can!



YOUR MOVE

The word filled in the Bible means controlled and empowered: filled with fear, filled with rage, filled with joy. Being filled describes what takes control or dominates your life. Ephesians 5:17,18 talks about not being drunk with wine, but instead being filled with the Spirit. The writer is not using this occasion to speak against drunkenness; he is using drunkenness as an illustration to help us understand the influence of the Holy Spirit.

1. How do you describe a person under the influence of alcohol? How might being under the influence of the Spirit be similar? Different?
2. You can know the Holy Spirit is in control of your life when you meet 3 conditions:

a. **Yield to God.** Relinquish control of your life—step back and allow the Holy Spirit to run the show! *Are there any areas of your life you are unwilling to yield to God? What? Why?*

b. **Confess Sin He Reveals.** Confess means to agree with the Holy Spirit that the sin He shows us is wrong (1 John 1:9). When we ignore sin brought to our mind, we short-circuit His power and grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). *Are there sins He is bringing to your attention that you are trying to hide?*

c. **Depend on God.** Galatians 5:16 encourages us to walk by the Spirit, turning our attention to Him with moment by moment trust. *What are you afraid God will do if you surrender these areas to him?*

3. Memorize 1 John. 1:9. Allow the truth of His grace to wash you of guilt and discouragement, and ask Him to give you courage and strength to live in the freedom His Spirit promises.

4. *Spiritual breathing* is an exercise you can do every moment the Spirit prompts you.

Exhale the impurities (sin) that poison you and others through confession. Identify the specific attitude or action that is impure, destructive, or selfish and agree with God that it's wrong.

Inhale the fresh air of His forgiveness by depending on the Word and Spirit of God to give you truth and power to live as He intends.

“ I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God’s law the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of (them), there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled. ”

D. L. Moodyz
Evangelist

For additional work on your own, visit **The Training Room** on the next page for extra exercises on living in the Spirit’s power.

AS YOU ENTER

“YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU AND YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES.” (ACTS 1:8)

Compare the different aspects the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

Aspect of Work	Primary Passages	Purpose	Explanation
Filling of the Spirit	Ephesians 5:18	Empowerment to live for Christ	We are filled when we meet His conditions; a repeated experience.
Baptism of the Spirit	1 Corinthians 12:13	Identifies us with the Body of Christ	True of all believers; a one-time event at salvation; a non-experiential truth; greatly misused term today.
Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:22-23 John 15	Makes us more Christ-like	Character building; the production of godly qualities into our everyday life; grows over time and dependence.
Gifts of the Spirit	1 Corinthians 12-14 Ephesians 4:7-16	Equips us for ministry	Every believer is given one or more (never all) spiritual gifts to serve. None are more spiritual than others.
Ministries of the Spirit	John 16:7-15 Romans 8:14-16, 26-27	Convict, lead, teach, assure, pray for us	Everyday involvement in our lives to help us know and follow Christ.

Abiding in Christ Produces Fruit

Read John 15:1-11 and answer the following questions:

1. What is necessary in order for the branch to bear fruit?
2. Look up the word “abide” or “remain”. How is this related to your spiritual life?
3. What happens to the branches that are not connected to the vine?
4. Ways to stay connected to the vine: Study God’s Word, Pray, and Fellowship with other Christians. Which ones do you need to spend more time doing?

FYI about “Being Filled with the Spirit”

- Though all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, not all Christians are filled with the Spirit.
- This is a command, meaning we have to act on it. God put the Holy Spirit in us, but we have to allow Him to work.
- The Holy Spirit came in once to stay. Being filled is a repeated action. When we take charge of our lives and walk under our own power, we are not filled with the Spirit.
- Filled does not mean we get more of the Spirit, it means He gets more of us.

AS YOU LEAVE

- » TELL GOD EACH MORNING THAT YOU WANT TO LIVE FOR HIM.
- » PRACTICE YOUR SPIRITUAL BREATHING EXERCISES EVERY DAY.
- » BE THANKFUL FOR THE FRUIT HE IS PRODUCING IN YOUR LIFE.