

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-24 The Spirit Will Help Us Become Like Jesus

One day, Jesus was walking through His hometown of Nazareth. He passed a man named Matthew sitting at his booth collecting taxes. Jesus looked at Matthew and said to him, “Follow me.” At that, Matthew got up, left his business, and followed Jesus. (Matt 9:9). This is but one of 20 times in the four gospels that Jesus issued the command to “Follow me.”

Christianity is more than a decision to receive Jesus as Savior. It involves leaving all to follow Him. We are to go after Him with all our hearts, patterning our lives on His beautiful life. Our life’s ambition must be to become more like Him in every way. In this lesson, we will investigate how the Holy Spirit helps us in this noble venture.

John wrote, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1John 2:6). Peter reminds us that Christ has left us an example, and we should “follow in his steps” (1Peter 2:21). Paul told the Philippian believers, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). These Apostles are telling us that, as Christians, our chief purpose in life is to become like Christ. This then raises the question, “If we are called to live like Jesus, exactly what kind of life did He live?”

Jesus lived a life of *purity*. Peter, who walked with Jesus for three years, wrote, “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1Peter 2:22). John, who also walked closely with Jesus, testified, “In him is no sin” (1John 3:5). Jesus also lived a life of *selflessness*. He spent His life caring for others. Paul said that, for our sakes, Jesus “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant” (Phil 2:7). Christ now commands us, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34). Our Lord went even further, saying, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:43-45). Further, Jesus lived a life of *commitment* to His Father’s will. “My food,” He testified, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). This commitment ultimately took Him to the cross.

The Bible thus call us to imitate Christ in His purity, His selflessness, and His commitment to His Father’s mission. Peter wrote, “Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do” (1Peter 1:15-16).

When we hear this, we are tempted to wring our hands in despair. How can we, as mere humans, ever live like Jesus? It is a seemingly impossible assignment. The apostle Paul must have had similar feelings when he wrote, “I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Rom 7:18). To live like Jesus was a task beyond his ability—and ours. How then can we ever hope to live such admirable lives? How can we ever hope to master our inclination to sin and self-centeredness? Can we ever find the moral and spiritual strength we need to commit our lives fully to God and His mission? Yes, we can! We can do it the same way Jesus did it—in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says that, when Jesus was baptized, “the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove” (Luke 3:22). Soon afterward, the Spirit led Him into the Judean wilderness where, through the Spirit’s power, He overcame the devil’s temptations. Jesus then revealed the source of His strength by announcing, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me...” (Luke 4:18). Peter added, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and...he went around doing good” (Acts 10:38). The Holy Spirit thus empowered Jesus to do His Father’s will and fulfill His God-given mission.

Paul also described how the Spirit helped him. When faced with his own inability to live a holy life, the apostle cried out in despair, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” He then answered His own question: “Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom 7:24-25). Paul went on to explain that one could have power over sin by living “according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:5).

This insight presents us with another important question, “How does the Holy Spirit help us to live as Christ lived?” The Spirit helps us in at least two ways:

First, when we receive Jesus as our Savior, the Spirit comes, regenerates us, and *makes us into new creations in Christ*. Paul wrote that before we were saved, our lives were “controlled by the sinful nature” (Rom 7:5). Because of this, our hearts were naturally drawn toward sinful deeds and thoughts. However, when we were born again, the Spirit of Christ entered our beings and began to produce in us the character of Jesus. We now want to live pure, selfless, and committed lives. This life is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul called these character traits the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22).

A second way the Holy Spirit enables us to live like Jesus is by *giving us the power we need to live for Him*. Paul told the Corinthian believers that they were to live “in purity...in the Holy Spirit... and in the power of God” (2Cor 6:6). When we are saved, the Spirit comes and indwells us. Then, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, He comes to empower us as Christ’s witnesses. That witness includes both our words and our deeds. Now, if we will submit ourselves to the Spirit, He will enable us to speak and live in such a way that people “may see [our] good deeds and praise [our] Father in heaven” (Matt 5:16). Paul reminded the Roman Christians, “You...are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit” (Rom. 8:9). In another place, he exhorted believers, “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Gal 5:16). To live by the Spirit, we must be born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, and live daily under His power and guidance.

This lesson is **important** because in it we have learned how the Holy Spirit helps us live Christ-like lives.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that, if we are going live like Jesus, we must be filled with the Spirit and daily submit ourselves to the Spirit’s control, just as He did.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson:

1. According to this lesson, how has every Christian been called to live his or her life?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that we have been called to live like Jesus, you are right.

2. What kind of life did Jesus live while here on earth?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Jesus lived a life of purity, selflessness, and commitment to His Father’s will,” you answered correctly.

3. How can we possibly have the moral and spiritual power to live like Jesus?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that we can do this only in the power of the Holy Spirit, you are right.

4. Name two important ways the Holy Spirit enables us to live like Jesus.
 - A. [PAUSE] If you said that the Holy Spirit enables us to live like Jesus by making us new creations in Christ and by giving us the power we need to live like Him, you have answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to re-listen to it until you thoroughly understand the concepts it teaches. Please memorize the following, “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Galatians 5:16). Then, begin to allow the Holy Spirit to work in your heart, molding you into the image of Christ.