

LIVING AS CHILDREN OF GOD
STUDY THREE - THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GOD'S CHILDREN

A. Introduction – Lessons from Previous Weeks.

1. God has adopted us.
2. We should bear a family resemblance.
3. Our motivation for change is our adoption.
4. Our aim is God's character.
5. To change, we need to reflect deeply on truth about God and ourselves.

B. Life Story – Change in God's Children.

C. The Holy Spirit and Adoption.

⁶Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." *Galatians 4:6*

¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. *Romans 8.*

Lesson 1: The Holy Spirit _____

D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

1. What is the occasion for the verses below from the Gospel of John?
2. How does Jesus describe the Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit?

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." *John 14:15-18*

²⁵ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. *John 14:25-26*

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. *John 15:26-27*

“I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment...” *John 16:7-8*

“Behind every sin is a lie. The root of all our behavior and emotions is the heart – what it trusts and what it treasures. People are given over to sinful desires because ‘they exchanged the truth about God for a lie.’ (Romans 1)... Not many people think of themselves as someone who believes lies. But every time we don’t trust God’s word, we are believing something else, and that is always a lie.” Tim Chester, *You Can Change* page 73-74.

Lesson 2: The Holy Spirit

C. The Negative Side of Change – Mortification (Putting Sin to Death)

A1. “Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but

B1. it is not to the flesh, to live according to it, for

B2. if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but

A2. if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.” *Romans 8:12-13*

Note:

There is a contrast between A and B. The two **outside** clauses (A1/A2) go together, and the two **inside** clauses (B1/B2) go together.

A1 and A2 are about: _____.

B1 and B2 are about: _____.

These verses describe: actors; an obligation; opposing forces; a warning; a means; a promise.

Actor(s):

To whom are these verses directed? _____.

An Obligation:

Clause A1 says we have an obligation.

What is NOT the obligation? _____

What IS the obligation? _____

Opposing Forces:

The opposing forces are: _____

A Warning:

Clauses B1 and B2 together warn that to live according to the flesh has a result. What is it?

A Means:

What is the **means** of accomplishing the “obligation” of A1? (**How** is it accomplished?)

A Promise:

Clauses A1 and A2 together contain a promise. The promise is: _____

Questions:

1. What difference does it make that the “actor(s)” are _____?

a. If the actors are _____, what does “you will live mean?” what does “you will die” mean? _____

b. If the actors are _____, what does “you will live mean?” what does “you will die” mean? _____

2. There are several meanings in Scripture of “flesh,” in Greek “sarx.” The meaning of sarx below is: _____

²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body (sarx), but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church. *Ephesians 5:28-29*

“³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them,...
³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh (sarx) and bones, as you see I have.” *Luke 24: 37-39*

“¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh (sarx)¹; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.” *Galatians 5:13-15*

¹ The notes to Galatians 5:13 in the NIV says, “In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (sarx) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24; and in 6:8.”

¹⁹ The acts of the sinful nature (sarx) are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. *Galatians 5:17*

In Galatians, “sarx” means: _____.

Why is it important to understand the meaning of “sarx” here?

If “sarx” means “body,” what does Romans 8:12-13 direct us to do? _____.

If “sarx” means “sinful nature,” what do these verses direct us to do? _____.

Again, what are we aiming for in sanctification? _____.

Lesson 3: The Holy Spirit _____.

D. The Positive Side of Change - The Fruit of the Spirit.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” *Galatians 5:22*

Paul uses the “botanical” language of fruit. He tells us the growth of the fruit of the Spirit is:

1. _____.

Growth in the fruit is so gradual as to be imperceptible, but measurable.

2. _____.

If the Spirit is in you, you will change.

3. _____.

Growth in the Spirit is not shown in activity, but in character

4. _____.

Growth in the fruit shows itself in all aspects, not just those that fit our Myers-Briggs score.

Lesson 4: The Holy Spirit _____.

E. The Filling of the Spirit.

- A “Do not get drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery.
- B Instead be filled with the Spirit.
- C Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
- D Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,
- E always giving thanks to God the father for everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- F Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” *Ephesians 5:17-21*

Notice that Clause A and Clause B are contrasted (“Instead”). Two reasons:

1. A Contrast: _____
2. A Comparison: _____

In Greek, Clauses C, D, E and F is an unbroken series of participles (speaking, singing...) which are _____

Notice that C and F govern our _____

Notice that D and E govern our _____

In short, if we are filled under B, our relationships will be right.

The key is to “Be Filled!” Some of this draws on the Greek, but notice here:

1. The statement is in the _____. ‘Be filled’ is not a _____.
It is a _____!
2. The verb is in the _____. The command is for **all** Christians.
3. The verb is in _____: **be** filled. This is something that _____
4. The verb is in the _____ and _____. Contrast with the verb form used by Jesus in John 2:7, the wedding at Cana (“Fill the jars with water.”)

PROBLEM: How can we be _____ to do something which is _____?
How does our work relate to the work of the Holy Spirit?
What is our work? _____
What is the Holy Spirit’s work? _____

Lesson 5: We have a relationship of _____ with the Holy Spirit:

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.

The Struggle with the Sinful Nature.

According to Paul (and John Owens), we live in the midst of a battle, a struggle with sin with a life-and-death outcome. John Owen says, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” Do I really believe this? _____.

Have I developed daily spiritual disciplines that reflect a seriousness of purpose to kill sin?
_____.

When I pray, what part of my prayer life is dedicated to my *circumstances*? _____.
“ ”, what part of my prayer life is dedicated to *killing sin*? _____.

Are there areas of my life where change seems impossible? _____.
If so, where? _____.
What do I usually do in such circumstances? _____.
What can I do to seek change? _____.

Developing Fruit

Is the Holy Spirit a real presence in my life? _____.
Have I seen growth in the fruit of the Holy Spirit over time? _____.
If so, in what setting? _____.
Do I see growth which is “symmetrical” across the board? _____.

Being Filled

Am I surrendered to the work of the Spirit? _____.
Where do I tend to compartmentalize God to exclude the Spirit from changing me? _____.

The term “dependent responsibility” was used in class to describe my relationship with the Spirit. Is this useful? _____.

Does it describe my relationship with the Spirit? _____.

SECTION HEADINGS IN JOHN OWENS
THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN IN BELIEVERS

A. The Necessity of Mortification

1. The Foundation of Mortification – Romans 8:13.
2. Believers Ought to Make the Mortification of Indwelling Sin their Daily Work.
Indwelling Sin Always Abides, Therefore it must Always be Mortified.
Indwelling Sin Not Only Abides, But is Still Acting.
Indwelling Sin will Produce Soul-Destroying Sins if not Mortified.
It is our Duty to Perfect Holiness and Grow in Grace Every Day.
3. The Holy Spirit is the Great Sovereign Cause of the Mortification of Indwelling Sin.
4. The Life, Vigor and Comfort of Our Spiritual Life Depends on Mortification of Sin.
*Sin Weakens the Soul; Sin Untunes the Heart; Sin Fills the Thoughts with Contrivances;
Sin Hinders Duty.*

B. The Nature of Mortification

5. What Mortification is NOT.
6. What Mortification IS.
*Mortification Consists in a Habitual Weakening of Sin; It Consists in Constant Fighting and
Contending Against Sin; It Consists in Frequent Success.*
7. General Directions for Mortification.
8. There will be No Mortification of Sin Without Sincerity and Diligence of Obedience.
9. Particular Directions for Obedience.
Consider Whether Your Lust Has These Dangerous Symptoms -
10. Get a Clear and Abiding Sense upon your Mind and Conscience of the Guilt, Danger
and Evil of Your Sin.
*Consider the Dangers of Being Hardened by Deceitfulness; Of Loss of Peace; Of Loss of Strength
all a Man's Days; Of Eternal Destruction;*
11. Load Your Conscience with the Guilt of Sin.
12. Use and Exercise Yourself to Such Meditations as May Serve to Fill You at All Times
with Self-Abasement and Thoughts of Your Own Vileness.
13. Do Not Speak Peace to Yourself before God Speaks it, but Hearken to what God
Says to Your Soul.

C. The Means of Mortification

14. Directions for the Work Itself.

Teacher Notes:

Transformative Learning

What the Best College Teachers Do provides us with a cautionary tale about learning (page 22). Two physicists at Arizona State University wanted to know whether a typical introductory physics course, with its emphasis on Newton's laws of motion changed the way students thought about motion. Students of four different and well-regarded physics teachers were given a test at the beginning of the semester. The students entered the class with an elementary intuitive approach to motion, described as "a cross between Aristotelian and 14th century impetus ideas." They did not think about motion the way Isaac Newton did, much less like 20th Century physicists. But that was before the students took introductory physics. Did the course change student thinking? Not really. After the course, the two physicists gave the examination once more, and found that the course had made relatively little change in the way students thought. Even many "A" students continued to think more like Aristotle than like Newton. They memorized the formulas and put the right numbers into equations, but they did not change their basic conceptions. After the second examination, the two physicists met with students to discuss the rejection of Newton's principles. During the interviews, they asked students questions about some motion problems and asked the students to predict the outcomes. The students made their projections and then the researchers performed the experiment in front of the students. At that point the physicists were astonished to hear the students "held firm to mistaken beliefs even when confronted with phenomena that contradicted those beliefs...they tended to argue that the observed instance was governed by some other law or principle and the principle they were using applied to a slightly different case." Some of these students had received high grades in the class. The question raised is whether students learn as much as we have traditionally thought they did.

Transformative Learning II

Patricia Cranton is an educator who studies adult education, and particularly adult education that transforms. In *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning* she says that there are three levels of knowledge.

- *Technical Knowledge* is that which allows us to manipulate and control the environment, predict observable and social events and take appropriate actions. Technical knowledge is the type necessary for production.
- *Practical Knowledge* is based on our need to understand each other through language. It is social and communicative.
- *Emancipatory Knowledge* is knowledge which enables people to grow and develop as individuals. It is dependent on being aware and critical of ourselves and our social and cultural context.

Cranton says there is such a thing as “transformative learning,” a kind of learning that deals with emancipatory knowledge. Transformative learning takes place when a person sees his place in the cosmos differently. She says transformative learning is “a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives become more open, permeable and better validated.” (page 2) Transformative learning requires that the learner review “habits of mind” which are “the broad predispositions that we use to interpret experience.” (page 22) “Learning occurs when an individual encounters an alternative perspective and prior habits of mind are called into question.” (page 23)

How do you think about your place in the cosmos? Do you see yourself as God sees you? Does your standing before God change the way you view yourself, your family, your place in the community or the larger world? Or do you see yourself pretty much through the eyes that most others do?

I would like to challenge you to see yourself as radically different because of your relationship to Christ, as a person who:

- Is forgiven and cleansed before God
- Who is set aside for holy living
- Is called to live life in full enjoyment of the creation
- Has access to resources to change your life
- Is called to a secure and glorious future.

This is what Paul means when he says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2

Galatians 5:22 - The Fruit of the Spirit

These are habits of mind, of lifestyle and of conduct which find their source in God. The word “fruit” is singular - the believer should exhibit all of these characteristics as a unity. This fruit is not produced by a believer, but by the Holy Spirit working within a person in union with Christ (John 15:1-8). A yielded believer should begin to show these qualities as the Spirit works.

Ephesians 5:17-21 –The Filling of the Spirit

In Ephesians 5:17-21, all is connected. In the Greek there are two verbs in the imperative (“Do not get drunk with wine...instead be filled with the Spirit”), on which depend four verbs which are present participles (“speaking,” “singing and making music,” “giving thanks” and “submitting”). That is, the single command to be filled with the Spirit is followed by four descriptive consequences of the Holy Spirit’s fullness.

The first and fourth consequences of this command to be filled are that we are in right relationship with each other, because our speech is right and we submit to one another. The second and third consequences are that we are in right relationship to God because we are worshipful and thankful.

We can make four points about the statement that we are to be filled.

1. The statement is in the **imperative mood**. ‘Be filled’ is not a tentative suggestion, a mild recommendation, a polite piece of advice. It is a command.
2. The verb is in the **plural form**. Being filled is not optional. It is a command for all Christians.
3. The verb is in **passive voice**: be filled. That is, “let the Holy Spirit fill you.” We must to yield to the Spirit without reserve. But we are not purely passive in receiving the Spirit’s fullness, any more than we are passive in getting drunk. A man gets drunk by drinking; we become filled with the Spirit by drinking too, as Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” (John 7:37). We must come to be filled.
4. The verb is in the **present tense**. In the Greek language, the verb form can show that the action is either a single action or that the action is continuous. Thus when at the wedding in Cana Jesus said, “fill the jars with water.” (John 2:7), the verb form shows that he meant to do it only once. The present imperative, “be filled with the Holy Spirit,” on the other hand, indicates that this filling is to be continuous. This is not a dramatic or decisive experience which will settle the issue for good, but a continuous appropriation.

In summary, God intends us to be filled with the Holy Spirit as part of the normal Christian life. The filling puts us in right relationship with each other and God. All Christians are exhorted and commanded to be filled by the Holy Spirit by being yielded to him on an ongoing basis.

F. Conclusion to Lesson Three: Dealing with Sin.

Teacher Notes: *In Respectable Sins, Jerry Bridges says we live in a position of dependent responsibility (page 41). He says we are responsible before God to obey His word, to put to death the sin in our lives, to grow the fruit of the Spirit. At the same time, we do not have the ability within ourselves to carry out this responsibility. We are in fact totally dependent upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. In this sense we are both responsible and dependent.*

He says (page 47-51) we can deal with a pattern of sin in this way:

- *Apply the gospel – remind myself of who I am in Christ; review the gospel regularly. Representative Scripture references are Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 4:7-8; Romans 8:1; Psalm 130:3-4; Isaiah 1:18; Micah 7:19; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13-14; and Hebrews 8:12 (pages 37-38).*
- *Depend on the Holy Spirit.*
- *Recognize my responsibility.*
- *Identify specific sins.*
- *Memorize and apply appropriate Scriptures.*
- *Cultivate the practice of prayer.*
- *Involve one or a few believers with you.*