

LIFE CONCEPTS



STEPPING
FROM
BEING

UNABLE
TO
EMPOWERED

LEADER'S GUIDE



BIG IDEA

The new believer needs to understand the filling of the Holy Spirit to understand and experience the Christian life.

It might be a good idea to begin by reviewing the main concepts from the first two studies. This week the focus is the filling of the Holy Spirit. In this Life Concept, the new believer will learn it's impossible to live the Christian life in one's own strength. But God wants to give believers the power to do so. To start out your time together, share your story.



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THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF THE TEMPLATE

The goal of your interaction is to effectively and relationally communicate key biblical concepts, and so each interaction contains the following elements: Comparing Our Stories; Considering Our Struggles; Exploring the Solution; Examining the Sketch; and Taking Steps.

COMPARING OUR STORIES

Share a story about your struggle in a time or season of spiritual weakness, including the emotions you experienced (such as anger, depression or frustration). Share enough about the struggle so the new believer can begin to identify with what you experienced. You want your story to convey how impossible it is to live the Christian life in your own strength. Keep it brief, no more than two minutes. Allow the person an opportunity to respond to your story.

CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

After discussing the first question in this section, read and discuss the "Think about it" notepad. Today we want to explore a passage that will help us begin to understand the power and ability God has given us to live the Christian life. In fact, this idea is so important that next week's Life Concept will explore it even further.

EXPLORING THE SOLUTION

Together read the whole passage aloud.

Have the new believer circle the word Spirit each time it is used (nine instances). Explain that when a person reads the Bible, one of the clues to discovering what the author of a book meant to communicate is the “key words.” In this passage, the key word is Spirit because it is repeated so often.

WHO IS THE SPIRIT? The Spirit is the Spirit of God (2:11). He is often referred to as the Holy Spirit in the Bible. The Bible speaks of God manifesting himself in three distinct persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are already familiar with God, the heavenly Father who sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior and Lord. In the days ahead, we will learn more about the Spirit, who was given (by the Father and the Son) to be with us and enable us to live the Christian life.

THE SPIRIT WORKS IN MANY WAYS IN THE BELIEVER’S LIFE. WHAT IS ONE OF HIS PURPOSES ACCORDING TO 2:12? The Spirit enables us to understand what God has freely given us. Look back at verses 9-10. Do you have any idea of all that God has given you? It’s exciting to learn about all He has given us.

1. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN 2:14? This verse describes the man without the Spirit. Many translations use the term natural man. Write this term in the space below the question. This is simply an ordinary person who doesn’t know Christ and, thus, has never been given the gift of the Spirit.

HOW MUCH SPIRITUAL TRUTH DOES THIS PERSON COMPREHEND? WHY? None, because it is spiritually discerned or understood and only the Spirit gives that ability. This doesn’t necessarily mean the person has no factual knowledge of spiritual truth. It means this person cannot truly understand and experience this truth.

2. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN VERSES 15-16? This person is called a spiritual man. Write this below the question. This is a man who has the Spirit of God and receives understanding from the Spirit.

HOW MUCH SPIRITUAL TRUTH IS THIS PERSON ABLE TO COMPREHEND? WHY? The passage says this person can discern all truth as a result of being given the mind of Christ. It doesn’t mean such a person suddenly has complete knowledge of spiritual matters, but, through the Spirit, will grow in understanding over time.

3. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE IN 3:1-3? They are called worldly, mere infants in Christ. Write this below the question.

HOW MUCH SPIRITUAL TRUTH ARE THEY ABLE TO COMPREHEND? WHY? Only a little. They’re just like babies who can only drink milk. Can you imagine feeding baby a T- bone steak, baked potatoes, salad and pie? Sounds good to me, but a baby could never eat all this food. Notice these believers were spiritual infants, not because they were young, but because they were worldly. What does that mean? They should have matured, but because of their lifestyle, the Spirit was unable to work freely in their lives. They were living “like mere men.” They never grew up spiritually.

HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARIZE WHAT PAUL IS SAYING ABOUT THE SPIRIT AND OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION?

Our ability to understand and experience the Christian life is a direct result of our experience of the Spirit in our lives.

EXAMINING THE SKETCH

Walk your friend through the sketch to help in understanding these concepts.

THE ISSUE: WHAT IS GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

The line is a timeline. Let's say it represents your life. Above the line is spiritual life and below it is spiritual death.

A. THE LOWER CIRCLE REPRESENTS MY LIFE BEFORE I RECEIVED CHRIST. WHAT WAS MY SPIRITUAL CONDITION? WHAT WAS TRUE OF MY ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE THINGS OF GOD? WHY? Before I received Christ, I was a natural man, a man without the Spirit as it says in had never received Christ as my Savior so I was really spiritually dead. I was unable to understand the things of God because I still did not have the Spirit to enable me to do so.

B. WHEN I RECEIVED CHRIST AND HE ENTERED MY LIFE, I BECAME SPIRITUALLY ALIVE AND WAS GIVEN THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (JOHN 7:37-39). Read John 7:37-39. It is important to realize that resources needed to live the Christian life are not found in ourselves. Rather they are found in God's Spirit. Therefore, the Christian life is a lifestyle of dependence. In myself, I am weak. In Him I am strong. From there, my life could go in two possible directions.

C. GOD INTENDS FOR ME TO CONTINUE GROWING IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, LEARNING HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND RELYING ON HIS SPIRIT TO WORK WITHIN ME TO GIVE ME POWER AND UNDERSTANDING. According to Galatians 5:22-23, what would be the result? Read Galatians 5:22-23. The Spirit will produce His fruit (love, joy, peace, etc.) in my life.

D. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. I COULD FAIL TO GROW IN MY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND NEVER LEARN HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER GOD HAS GIVEN ME BY HIS SPIRIT. WHAT WOULD MY LIFE BE LIKE THEN? Though I had Christ in my life, I would be a mere infant, a worldly Christian. In some ways, my life wouldn't look much different than the lives of those who don't know Christ. After reading the summary, ask, "Does this make sense? Do you understand who the Spirit is and one way He helps us to live the Christian life?"

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TAKING STEPS

So, how do you help the new believer put this into practice? Discuss the following practical step that will help your friend experience the Spirit's work on a continual basis.

READ EPHESIANS 5:18. WHAT ARE WE COMMANDED TO AVOID? WHY? What are we commanded to do? We are commanded to not be drunk with wine. The term debauchery communicates a lifestyle indulging in excessive physical pleasures that are wrong, a waste and harmful to a person. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit means to let the Spirit of God direct and empower you. In contrast to alcohol in a drunken person, the Spirit becomes the primary influence in how you live. The result is the exact opposite of drunkenness. It is right (not wrong), worthwhile (not a waste) and helpful (not harmful).

Read the explanation of the Spirit's filling and ask the three questions (DRY).

If your friend answered positively to the three "DRY" questions, suggest praying together to allow the Spirit to fill your lives. In your prayer, express your need for the Spirit's work to live the Christian life, ask Him to direct and empower you, and thank Him that He will do so as you rely on Him in faith.

NEXT CONCEPT

It's exciting to know God has given us His Spirit. But many believers are not prepared for the inner struggles they will experience as they seek to live the Christian life. Next time, we will explore more about how the Spirit's work is the key to overcoming those struggles.

Suppose you did everything you could to imitate a world-class musician, a professional athlete, or another famous person. The level of frustration you would experience would be in direct proportion to the difference in ability between you and your hero. Jesus Christ is the only one who ever perfectly lived the Christian life. We are to imitate Him (Ephesians 5:1-2). How much difference is there between His ability to live the Christian life and yours?



LIFE CONCEPTS

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

Because of our relationship with Christ, we have a genuine desire to live the Christian life. Yet we often find ourselves failing to do so. In fact, the Christian life often seems impossible to live.

MY EXPERIENCE ...

YOUR EXPERIENCE ...

Since receiving Christ, to what degree have you experienced frustration in your Christian life?

STEPPING FROM BEING UNABLE TO EMPOWERED

2. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

WHAT thoughts and emotions occur when you are unable to do something you want to do? Why?

WHEN we are frustrated with our inability to live the Christian life, we should consider four possible reasons:

- We lack the necessary power or ability to live the Christian life.
- We have the power and ability, but we don't know that we have it.
- We know we have the power and ability, but we don't know how to use it.
- We know how to use the power and ability, but we choose not to use it.

In what follows, we will discover the first reason isn't a possibility for a true believer, and we will begin to learn about the power we have been given and how we are to use it.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-3:3

9However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" - 10but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 16"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 3Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. 2I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Circle the word *Spirit* each time the word is used.

STEPPING FROM

BEING UNABLE TO

EMPOWERED

3. EXPLORING THE SOLUTION

Paul is writing to a group of believers struggling to live consistent Christian lives. They have become divisive and even formed cliques, claiming to follow different leaders. In this section, Paul is discussing the power or ability needed to understand God's truth.

WHO IS THE SPIRIT?

The Spirit works in many ways in the believer's life. What is one of His purposes according to 2:12?

Three spiritual conditions are described in this passage. Note how each spiritual condition influences the Spirit's ability to fulfill this purpose.

1. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN 2:14?

How much spiritual truth does this person comprehend? Why?

2. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PERSON IN 2:15-16?

How much spiritual truth is this person able to comprehend? Why?

3. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE IN 3:1-3?

How much spiritual truth are they able to comprehend? Why?

How would you summarize what Paul is saying about the Spirit and our spiritual condition?

4. EXAMINING THE SKETCH

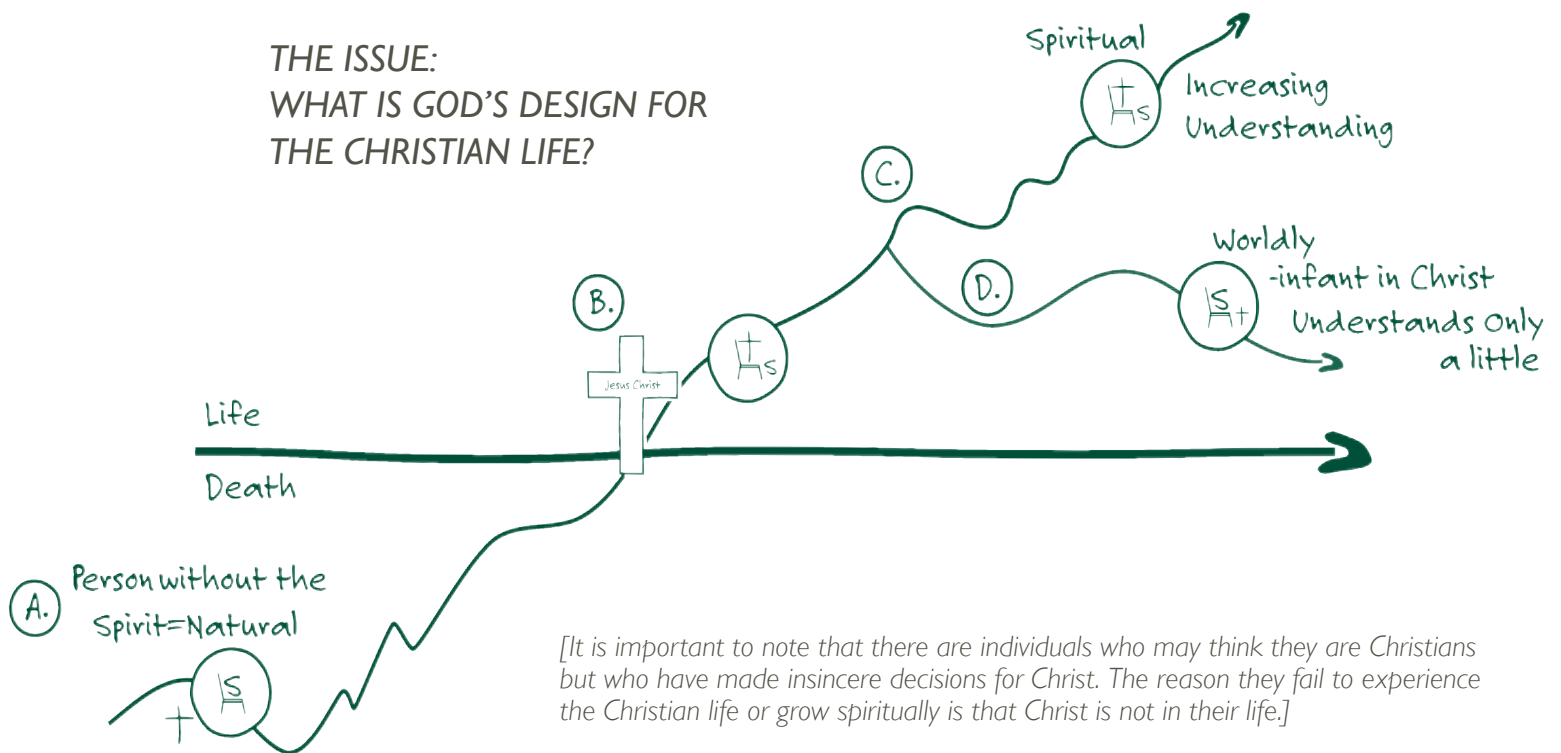
A. The lower circle represents my life before I received Christ. What was my spiritual condition? What was true of my ability to understand the things of God? Why?

B. When I received Christ and He entered my life, I became spiritually alive and was given the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to every true believer. (John 7:37-39)

C. God intends for me to continue growing in my relationship with Him, learning how to live the Christian life and relying on His Spirit to work within me to give me power and understanding. According to Galatians 5:22-23, what would be the result?

D. But there is another possibility. I could fail to grow in my Christian life and never learn how to experience the power God has given me by His Spirit. What would my life be like then?

THE ISSUE:
WHAT IS GOD'S DESIGN FOR
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?



SUMMARY

When a person begins a relationship with Christ, it's important to grow in the experience of the Spirit in order to understand spiritual truth and have the power to live the Christian life. God's design is for us to be filled (that is, directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit as an ongoing experience.

5. TAKING STEPS

Read Ephesians 5:18. What are we commanded to avoid? Why?

What are we commanded to do?

The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life by which Christ lives

His life in and through us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

WE ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT BY FAITH.

Jesus pictured believers as coming to Him to drink from the living water, which is His Spirit (John 7:37-39). Are you thirsty?

D - DESIRE Do you desire to be filled (that is, directed and empowered) with the Spirit?

R - REPENT Are you turning from known sin and confessing it to God?

Y - YIELD Are you surrendering control of your life to Christ?

If so, pray in faith asking God to fill you with His Spirit as He commanded you to be. Thank Him that He will direct and empower your life as you continue to trust Him.

NEXT CONCEPT

FROM UNCERTAINTY TO CONFIDENCE

FROM FEELINGS OF UNWORTHINESS TO FORGIVENESS

FROM BEING UNABLE TO EMPOWERED

FROM BEING UNPREPARED TO EQUIPPED

FROM BEING UNDEVELOPED TO MATURITY