

## Life with the Spirit

### I Introduction:

- A Our Father has called us out of the far country to be children who reflect his compassion, kindness, patience and grace.
  - a This is our purpose as his children: to learn love in the image of his love.
  - b We are his “handiwork” (Ephesians 2:8), the products of his grace, born again to be new creations, given the free will necessary to choose to love as he has loved us.
- B He sent Jesus as the perfect reflection of who he is so that we would know his love in terms we could understand and practice.
  - a The purpose of the Father’s love that we have come to personally know in Christ is not just to make us feel loved but, instead, to empower us love as he loves. When we love others as he has loved us, his love is “perfected” in us, accomplishing its purpose. (1 John 4:16-18)
  - b During our talks together, we will be discussing in depth how to make transformation in his image our purpose and pursuit as individuals and as the body of Christ.
  - c We may have a good understanding of how the Father and the Son have worked to accomplish our transformation in the image of the Father. But the role of the Father’s Spirit may be a little vague among believers in general.
  - d The theme passage for our studies this year refers to transformation as the work of the Spirit. This presentation will suggest a beginning for understanding the Spirit’s role.

### II Thoughts on the meaning of 2 Corinthians 3:18.

- A To paraphrase: With uncovered faces, we behold/reflect the Lord’s glory as in a mirror as we are being transformed in his image, step by step, glory to glory, from the Lord, the Spirit.
- B In the context of this passage, Paul refers to the experience of Moses when he ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the second set of stone tablets containing the commands of God, after Moses had broken the first set.
- C When he descended from the mountain, his face radiated light from the glory of God who is light, a sign that he had been in the presence of God. (Exodus 34:29-35)
- D The light that radiated from Moses’ face made the Israelites afraid, so he covered his face with a veil until the light eventually diminished and vanished with time.
- E Paul compares/contrasts Moses’ experience with our experience of living in the presence of the Father.

- a We behold the Lord's glory in the person of Jesus and then reflect his glory with unveiled faces.
- b We do not cover our faces but, instead, we live to shine with the glorify of the Father through his image in us, without fear or shame.
- c We, unlike Moses, are transformed into the image of the Father.
- d Our transformation is evidence that we are living in the Father's presence. (1 John 4:16)
- e Our transformation happens with ever-increasing glory, step by step—it is a process.
- f This transformation is the role of the Spirit—"as from the Lord, the Spirit."

F What is the specific work of the Spirit in our transformation?

### III The role of the Spirit in our transformation.

- A We might have been afraid to teach very much about the role of the Spirit because of the fear of initiating a pentecostal, charismatic spirit in the church. Such a division did happen back in the seventies; but it may have happened in part because not enough study and discussion took place about the Spirit's role in our transformation. Since there was a vacuum of understanding, the charismatic movement took advantage of this vacuum and of the desire of believers for a closer relationship to God and filled the vacuum with a false understanding.
- B We know from the immaturity of the Corinthian congregation that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit such as prophecy and speaking in languages did not produce a congregation of believers who lived in the image of the Father. They were carnally minded, with proud and envious hearts. The purpose of those gifts was not to produce transformation but to confirm the truth of the revelation of Jesus (Mark 16:20).
- C The role of the Spirit begins with the new birth—birth of the water and the Spirit (John 3:1-8)
  - a Nicodemus would have understood that the water in the new birth referred to baptism because, being a Pharisee from Jerusalem, he would have been acquainted with the baptism of John the Baptist.
  - b What would have been new to him was being born of the Spirit.
    - i In John's gospel, "Spirit" contextually refers to the Holy Spirit.
    - ii We are born of the Spirit because the Spirit gives life to our spirits. (Romans 8:2).
    - iii We were dead spiritually having been separated from the presence of the Father because of sin.
    - iv The Spirit makes our spirit "alive" by bringing God's presence to us to live in us.

- v The promise of living water is the promise of the Spirit living in us, filling our spiritual emptiness, quenching our spiritual thirst with the presence of the Father through his Spirit. (John 7:37-39)

D The Spirit living in us gives life to our mortal bodies (Romans 8:10-13).

- a In Paul's description of his life before being born again, he explained that his spirit delighted in God's law (Romans 7:17-24). But his spirit, separated from the life of the Father, did not have the power to overcome the force of sin living in his body.
- b The desires and habits of selfishness "live" or exist in our bodies as physical, neural networks that form memories about how to think and behave. In this way sin "lives" in us.
- c Even after we are born again spiritually and our spirits become alive with the presence of God, our bodies are still wired for sin. We have experienced leaving the waters of baptism, only to continue to battle with our old way of thinking.
- d Paul describes this condition (Romans 8:10) as our spirit being alive while our body is dead because of sin. The body (the brain) wired to sin by our previous experiences is prone to react in selfish ways as before.
- e The Father created our brains with the ability to stop and think about our thinking and change what we are thinking. This process is the work of our spirits controlling the thoughts of our brains. Our bodies are the instruments of life for our spirits. Our brains can form new memory pathways as we choose, with our spirits alive through God's Spirit in us, to practice new thoughts and behaviors in the image of the Father.
- f But to live a new life, our spirits need the necessary strength to control the pathways of memory in our brains and form new thinking patterns.
- g The Spirit gives life to our spirits to control and change what we think, giving life to our mortal bodies, making them instruments of righteousness. The Spirit empowers our spirits, but our spirits must make the decisions that lead to behaviors and memories of those behaviors that form new memory networks in our brains.
- h Now, with the Spirit living in us, we are no longer obligated to do what our bodies were programmed to do. (Romans 8:12-13). We are "putting to death" the misdeeds of the body.

E The Father's Spirit strengthens our spirits. (Ephesians 3:14-18)

- a Our problem in living a transformed life is consistency in practice from day to day.
- b We can pray that the Father's Spirit living in us will give power to our spirits.
- c This power given to our spirits enables us to be consistent, rooted and grounded in our practice of the love of Christ.

F The Spirit intercedes in our prayers. (Romans 8:26-27)

- a The Spirit living in us knows our specific weaknesses and communicates our needs directly to the Father in words only the Spirit can express.
- b We may pray, asking the Father to “help us be more patience.” But this is such a general request. What is it, specifically, that we need to understand or practice in order to learn to become more patient? The Spirit knows our hearts better than we do and knows the answer to this question and can ask the Father to supply what we need.

#### G Keeping in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25)

- a How do we make the presence of the Spirit real to us and not just a lofty idea?
- b The Spirit is our companion in our Christian walk. We keep in step, living in harmony from moment to moment, with the Spirit.
- c Keep always in mind that you are walking in life with the Spirit living in you. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. For this reason we do not want to do anything that would offend the Spirit and cause us to be out of step with the Spirit.
- d Paul had also written in Romans 8:5-6 that we must keep in mind the desires of the Spirit; his desire is for us to live transformed lives in the image of the Father (2 Corinthians 3:18)

#### H We share in the emotions of the Spirit.

- a When we achieve this harmony with the desires of the Spirit, we can feel the joy, peace, and sense of fullness from the presence of the Father. This joy is the joy of the Spirit that no one and no circumstances can rob us of. Allow yourself to feel this joy and express it. (Romans 14:17)
- b When harmony is broken by practicing selfishness, the Spirit grieves. (Ephesians 4:29-32) We can feel this disconnect in our emotions.

#### I As the result of these forms of help and strength, we produce that transforming fruit of the Spirit in the image of the Father.

- a Galatians 5:22-24.
- b These fruits show that we are conquering the desires and passions that had ruled our bodies (flesh) in the past.

#### IV Conclusion:

- A We have risen from the dead to walk in new life. Our fellowship with the Spirit moves us to be fully dedicated to this journey.
- B The power from God's Spirit to strengthen our spirits is indispensable on the journey.