

DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON NINE: IDENTIFYING MYSELF WITH CHRIST – MY GUIDE, THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION: Every successful organization has a director or leader. Without one, there would be confusion and the lack of focused leadership would prevent anything from getting done. There would be many members who had the ability to direct the affairs of the organization, but everyone thinks differently. If everyone tried to lead, then everyone would be going in a different direction. There would always be the need for one leader so that the organization could function properly.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not leave His army without leadership. When you received Christ as your Savior, The holy Spirit of God entered your human spirit and took up permanent residence. He did this because He has the responsibility of leading you on your journey while you are here on earth. If you are obedient to the Holy Spirit, disagreements or confrontations with other brothers and sister in Christ will not be a problem, because he will direct us where we are supposed to go, and teach us what to do. It is only when you go against His leadership that you will have problems.

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before He returned to heaven, Jesus told us about the Holy Spirit's ministry. In JOHN 16:7-15, He taught us that the Holy Spirit has two important jobs: (1) To convince non-believers that they are sinners, that by themselves they cannot reach the state of perfection required to enter heaven, and that they therefore need a Savior, and (2) to guide God's children so that they can accomplish the purpose for which they were created.

It is because God saved you that you seek to be a disciple. Therefore, we want to study the second phase of the Spirit's ministry. It concerns the leadership you need in order to grow spiritually. 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 teaches that when you are being obedient to the Spirit, He will reveal our Lord's truths to you in such a manner that your day to day growth will transform you into His image. Little by little you will see yourself change - like looking into a mirror and seeing Jesus in you more each day. This way, when your lost friends see you, they will see Jesus in you, and the Holy Spirit can work through you and can complete the first phase of His ministry, which is to convince non-believers of their need for a Savior. Because you are living in obedience to the Spirit, the world will compare itself to you, and will feel ashamed, recognize it's sins and want to repent, ask forgiveness, and accept the only One who can save.

The Holy Spirit uses at least three methods to bring about this transformation in you. According to ROMANS 5:3-5, one of those methods involves bringing problems into your life. If you went through life with no problems or obstacles, you would come to depend on yourself and would find little reason to depend on God. When you encounter problems, and then learn to have faith in God and to depend on Him, the opportunity is created for Him to reveal His willingness and ability to provide for you and to help you through life's problems, as well as His will for your life.

This is the method the Spirit uses to "transform" us into the image of Christ. Jesus always sought to do the Father's will. So, you too must learn to do the same. However, if you are constantly depending on you own ability and are feeling self sufficient, you will find yourself doing only what you want, and would forget about the purpose of your existence, which is to bring honor and glory to God. Sometimes when you reach this point in your life, the Holy Spirit will send problems your way which will cause you to seek God's will and help, which in turn will cause you to become like Jesus and be "transformed into His image."

The second method the Spirit uses is the giving of "blessings." As you learn from your problems and make whatever adjustments to your life are necessary, you will receive blessings from God. They will come as rewards for your obedience and will help you to realize that God your Father is pleased when you are obedient. As you receive blessings from Him, you are going to want to serve Him more. This is another way the Spirit helps you to transform to the image of our Lord, who "for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning it's shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). As you receive blessings from the Father, you will be able to continue in what God wants you to do, suffer whatever difficulty needs to be endured, and determine to complete your mission no matter the price, knowing that at the end of your battle lies the *ultimate blessing*.

The third method the Spirit uses involves the Word of God. This is the most effective method because the Word of God is *POWERFUL*. HEBREWS 4:12 teaches us that the Bible cuts deeper than any two-edged sword. In other words, its words can penetrate all the way to the soul and spirit of man, and discern or read thoughts and intentions. *What POWER*. EPHESIANS 6:17 says that the Bible is the "sword of the Spirit". God will take His sword and, as a surgeon uses a scalpel to operate, will cut away anything that is hindering your spiritual health.

II. THE OBSTACLE TO THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY

The major obstacle to the process of transforming you to the image of Christ, is not Satan, or his demons, sin or the world. It is you yourself. When you are disobedient to the Spirit's leadership and doing those things that your flesh naturally wants us

to do, then you become an obstacle, slowing down the transformation process. When you get to the point where you will not let the process continue, you become useless to the purpose of God. Sometimes God removes those who refuse to follow His will. Such a situation occurred in 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1?, where one of the brethren at the church in Corinth was committing adultery with his father's wife. Apparently, that brother refused to change his behavior, so the apostle Paul "turned the brother over to Satan so that his sinful nature would be destroyed (his flesh desires), and his spirit saved unto the day of the Lord." In other words, because the brother was not going to let the transformation process continue, the Apostle asked that he be removed so as not to be an obstacle to others.

It is important that you need to understand that the Spirit is not a "thing" or an "it", but a person. He has feelings and can be offended. The Spirit is offended when you do not follow His leadership and turn away from God. This is the opposite of what a child of God should do. It is obeying the desires of the flesh. Why does the Spirit become offended when we disobey Him? Because He loves us. He knows what is best for us and wants to guide us in that direction. The world wants to destroy us. Why should He not get offended when we choose to follow the world?

CONCLUSION: Remember that you are composed of three parts: Body, soul, and spirit. When you received Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit of Christ entered into your human spirit and took up permanent residence there. He wants to have fellowship with you. He is that very special person living with you who is there to teach you, guide you, protect you, and help you transform to the image of our Lord. If you are going to be a true disciple of Christ, it is necessary to be obedient to the Holy Spirit.



SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

BIBLE STUDY:

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19...According to verses 16-18, what should we be continually doing? Are these three things evident in your life? What changes need to be made?

2. Galatians 5:22-23...What things should you be able to detect in the life of a disciple who is being obedient to the Spirit? In which of these things are you resisting? What can you work on to help speed up the transformation process?

3. John 16:13...According to this verse, what will the Spirit guide us to? What do you think "all truth" means? Can you name some truths that the Holy Spirit has guided you to?

4. 1 Corinthians 2:14...Why are people who have not received Christ as Savior unable to understand things about God? At one time you thought God's things were foolish. Now you do not. Why?

5. REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week. writing down what you learned from them.

PRAYER: Write down the person or things for which you prayed for today.

FELLOWSHIP: Write down the name of the believer you had fellowship with and what you did.

WITNESSING: Write down the name of the non-believer you witnessed to and how you did it.