

3. God's Power

Introduction

How would you complete the following statement? The most essential ingredient to living the Christian Life is to...

- fill your heart and mind with Scripture.*
- pray as much as you are able.*
- attend Christian meetings for inspiration.*
- get involved in ministry.*
- choose to do what is right and Godly.*
- none of the above.*

Each of the above choices are important to living the Christian life, but none of them qualifies as the "most essential" because they all fail to adequately deal with the primary obstacle Christians must overcome. This obstacle not only makes the Christian Life difficult to live, but impossible to live! In this lesson, we will learn about God's provision to overcome this problem!

Why We Can't Live the Christian Life

The primary obstacle that hinders Christians is the **Sin Nature**. Contrary to the belief that we are all *born innocent*, Scripture teaches that *we do not become sinners*, but that *we are already born sinners*. Consider the following written by King David, whom God described as a "man after My own heart".

*"Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me."
Psalm 51:5*

From the moment we were conceived, we were already damaged with *a fatal flaw ... an inherited condition* which *makes sinning part of our very Nature!*


❖ **Read** how the following Scriptures describe this problem.

*"There is no one righteous, not even one;
there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.
All have turned away, they have together become worthless;
There is no one who does good, not even one."
Romans 3:10--12*

*"(Jesus said) 'For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts,
sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness,
envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and
make a man 'unclean'."
Mark 7:21-23*

*"the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor
can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."
Romans 8:7-8*

► *If we are sinful at birth, where do you think Sin comes from?*

 Psalm 58:3
Job 15:14
Romans 5:12

► *If no one seeks God, how do we eventually find Him?*

 John 6:65
Matthew 11:27
Matthew 16:17

Because of our Sinful Nature, no matter *how many Scriptures we know*, no matter *how often we pray*, no matter *how many inspirational meetings we attend*, no matter *how involved we are in ministry*, or no matter *how strong our will to do right*, **our best efforts will fail** because they do not deal with the **main problem!** When done in our own strength, these activities simply produce Spiritual Pride! But God has provided a **solution** for us!

God's Solution

God's Solution to our Sin Nature is to give us a New Nature! He did this by putting His *Holy Spirit* in us at the moment we received *Jesus Christ!*

❖ **Read** the following Scriptures that describe this miracle.

"Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"
John 3:5-7

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"
2 Corinthians 5:17

"to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."
Ephesians 4:23-24

❖ **Circle** the words in the above passages that **refer** to our *New Nature*. *God's Spirit* imparts *God's Nature* and *Power* in us!

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."
Ezekiel 36:26-27

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8

- ❖ **Circle** *three things* God gives to us in *Ezekiel 36:26-27*.
- ❖ **Underline** *two things* which result when God puts His Spirit in us.
- ❖ **Circle** what we *receive* when the Holy Spirit comes on us in *Acts 1:8*.
(The word "*power*" here means "*the ability to carry out a task.*")
God's Spirit gives us the *Desire (Ezekiel 36:26-27)* and the *Power (Acts 1:8)* to do *His will!*
- ❖ **Read** *Philippians 2:13* below from *The Living Bible*.

"For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants."
Philippians 2:13 (TLB)

Religion vs Christianity

Many **Religions** teach that we must **conform** ourselves to a standard of spiritual principles or laws in order to reach perfection. **Christianity** teaches that Man is incapable of transforming himself. What is needed is a **totally new life!**

► **Which words** in each of the Bible passages to the left express this idea?

 Colossians 3:10

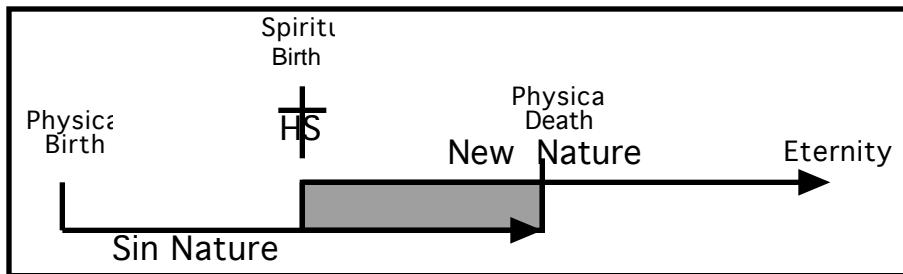
► **What is significant** about the phrases "heart of stone" and "heart of flesh"?

God's Spirit in Us

The *desire* in you to please God is the **work of the Holy Spirit** in your heart. It is evidence of the **New Nature** you inherited when you were **born again** by God's Spirit.

 **MEMORIZE!**

Applying God's Solution



The above diagram illustrates our situation as Christians. We are born into this world with a Sin Nature. But the moment we trust Jesus Christ for forgiveness, we are “born again” with a New Nature, which is not only the *New Me*, but the *Real Me!* The Sin Nature, or *Old Me*, can *never* please God and does not even want to, but our New Nature not only *desires* to please God, but is *able to* by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

 Romans 7:22
Philippians 2:13

Notice that the Christian's Sin Nature will *cease* at the moment death, while our New Nature will continue for *eternity!* The **challenge** we face in this life is the *battle* between these two Natures to rule in our *minds*, our *hearts* and our *bodies*. **They are at war within us!** The *good news* is that this struggle is *temporary* (shaded area)! Once we are free of the Sin Nature, our New Nature will be *unhindered to do all that God desires!*

 Galatians 5:16-17

It is important to understand that the key to victory is God's Spirit within us. **Only by allowing His Spirit to live through us will we experience God's Will and Power in us!** (see Philippians 2:13 on page 12 again!)

► **Can you recall** incidents in your life when your New Nature and Sin Nature battled within you?

❖ Study *Ephesians 5:18* below.

Be Filled with the Spirit

*“Do not get drunk on wine,
which leads to debauchery.
Instead be filled with the Spirit.”*

Ephesians 5:18

 **MEMORIZE!**

Ephesians 5:18 teaches us how to **apply** God's provision to overcome *Sin*.

❖ **Circle** what we are *to do* with *the Spirit*.

The word “filled” means *to be filled to the full!* A person “filled with the Spirit” leaves no room for the *Sin Nature* to control his life! The following *properties* of the verb “filled” help us to *understand* and *apply* it.

► **How** does *being drunk* relate to *being filled* with the Spirit?

Command: This verb teaches that we are “*filled with the Spirit*” by an act of our will! God is not *asking* us to be filled with his Spirit *if we feel like it*. God is *commanding* us to be filled. No matter how we feel ... no matter what our circumstances, we can choose to be filled and allow God to rule in our lives!

God’s Work: This verb also indicates that it is *God* who fills us. *We simply make ourselves available to Him!* As we *yield our lives to God, His Spirit empowers us with His Desire and Ability!*

Present Tense: *Finally*, this verb commands us to *continually allow God’s Holy Spirit to fill us* ~ *moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day*. No breaks and no allowance for the *Sin Nature* to reign!

How can we be sure God will fill us with His Holy Spirit? Because *He said He would*, and God *does not lie!*

❖ Read His promise in *1 John 5:14-15*.

*“This is the confidence we have in approaching God:
that if we ask anything according to His will,
He hears us.
And if we know that he hears ~ whatever we ask ~
we know that we have what we asked of Him.”
1 John 5:14-15*

❖ Circle the *attitude* we should have when we approach God.

❖ Underline what *kind* of request God hears.

❖ Underline the *result* when God hears our Prayer.

1. *Is it God’s will for us to be filled with His Spirit?* yes no
2. *If we ask God to fill us with His Spirit, will He hear us?* yes no
3. *If we know God will hear us, can we be sure we are filled?* yes no

Application

The following steps can help us experience God’s Power continually:

1. **Confess** ~ Not being filled to the full with God’s Spirit is **sin**. Confess this to God and claim His forgiveness (*1 John 1:9*).
2. **Be Filled with the Holy Spirit** ~ Ask God to fill you with His Spirit! Allow Him to **Reign** in your *Mind*, your *Heart* and your *Body*!

Pray

*“Dear God, Forgive me for allowing Sin to rule in my life. I now yield my heart, my mind and my body to You, and ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I want YOU to reign in my life! Thank You, LORD, for hearing and answering my prayer!
In Jesus’ Name. Amen”*

 Titus 1:2

 MEMORIZE!

Praying According to God’s Will

1 John 5:14-15 can be applied whenever we pray for anything in God’s Will. We can be confident God will answer that prayer because He promised He would!