

Spc137 – Growing in The Holy Spirit – Part 2 Romans 8:5-6
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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Growing in The Holy Spirit – Part 2.” We are going to Romans Chapter 8.

If you are saved today, there is nothing the enemy can do about that. He has lost you to the kingdom of God and he can't get you back.

However, if that same enemy (who has lost you to God's kingdom) can manage to keep you from growing in the supernatural life and power of the Holy Spirit then he can keep you separated from the true power of God. And if he can keep you separated from the true power of God, then he knows you won't be able to do any real good for the kingdom of God. And there is also a good chance that he can get you to *help him* by doing damage to God's people and God's kingdom.

Can you hear me please when I tell you that us growing in our ability to be *both* influenced by and empowered by the Holy Spirit is a vitally important part of our Christian life?

Let's pray. *Heavenly Father, please show us that our life with you, our life in the kingdom is not just a ticket punch to heaven, it's not just getting our sins forgiven and our eternal life restored to us with you. But Lord, we are called to become witnesses. We are called to become conduits. We are called to join you in what you're doing, to draw others into the kingdom, not to offend and repel and prevent. Lord, we're called to come alongside you under the influence of your Holy Spirit, under the guiding of your Holy Spirit and imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit to join you in what you are accomplishing. Show us how to do that today. We've come back to this subject specifically for a practical answer to the "how" question. Please, Lord, at least begin that thought in us. Open the door to that today we pray, in Jesus' name, amen.*

This is a two part message. Last message in “Part One” I said that I was going to title this message “Practical Steps To Being Filled With The Holy Spirit.” But, that was way too long. So I just titled it the same as last message, “Growing in The Holy Spirit – Part Two.”

But the goal today is the same. We want to look at the practical steps to being filled with the Holy Spirit. If it really is spiritually life and death important that we grow in the Holy Spirit then we've got to know *how* we can do that!

How do we grow in the Holy Spirit's overall influence in our lives? Let's start with the goal.

When it comes to "Growing in the Holy Spirit" the goal is in Galatians 5:16-17.

Galatians 5:16–17 (NLT)

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives (that's the GOAL, right there). Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

17 The sinful nature wants to do evil . . . And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other . . .

This is "The Battle of Spirit Versus Flesh." If you will search in our Galatians series online at wordbymail.org, you'll find a two part message with that title.

Every Christian is in a battle between the spirit and the flesh. And if we ever want to begin winning that battle, we've got to begin *growing in the spirit* and *dying to the flesh*.

The goal is simple.

Grow in the Holy Spirit so the Holy Spirit will guide your life and die to the flesh so the flesh will not guide your life.

So, I'm going to give you – right now – the foundational "*how*" for growing in the Spirit. It's not the entire answer, but it's the launch-pad, it's the starting point. I'm about to give you the doorway that will absolutely set the direction of *your life*.

Romans 8:5–6 (ESV)

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit
(there's the HOW, the Launch Pad).

6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Four times in two verses we read the direction setting words "*set your mind.*"

Set your mind on the flesh and you will live according to the flesh – leading to death.
Set your mind on the Spirit and you will live according to the Spirit – leading to life and peace.

That is the foundation for the answer to the "*how*" question.

How do I grow in the life and the power of the Holy Spirit? You start by setting your mind on the things of the Spirit, until you begin living according to the Spirit.

Set your mind on the Spirit and you will begin to live *according* to the Spirit which will lead to life and peace.

Romans 12:2 tells us,

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind . .

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Our transformation comes from God *renewing our mind* and that renewing of our mind comes from *what we set our mind on*.

Romans 8:6 makes it perfectly clear:

The mind SET ON the flesh – is DEATH

The mind SET ON the Spirit – is LIFE and PEACE

And so growing in the Holy Spirit COMES from you

Setting your mind – *more and more* on the Spirit and

Setting your mind – *less and less* on the flesh.

And as you do that the Holy Spirit will supernaturally renew your mind and that supernatural renewing of your mind will transform your life. (That's what Romans 12:2 says.)

However...

Please remember all of your growth in the Lord is *relational* – not mechanical. That is why “setting your mind on the Spirit” is the launch pad – it's the starting point to the true growth and transformation that comes through your *relationship* with the Lord.

It's not a separate relationship with the Holy Spirit and with Jesus. You don't have three relationships with God. Three distinct persons with three unique roles – ONE GOD. One God in three Persons.

When I say a relationship, it's not separate from your relationship with Christ; it is *IN* your relationship with Christ.

Write down John 7:37. Jesus says,

John 7:37-38 (NLT)

37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!

38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’”

And then in John 7:39 the Apostle John makes a comment.

John 7:39 (a)

39 (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. ...)

And so Jesus says “Come to me and you’ll receive this power of the Holy Spirit.” Not separate. Same. One relationship.

And more specifically as it relates to growing in the Holy Spirit your growth occurs as you learn to *surrender to* – as you learn to *yield to* – the leading of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Growing in the Holy Spirit is about learning to *respond* (that’s the keyword.) It’s about learning to respond to the “leading of the Lord” (which is one of the Holy Spirit’s roles in your life.)

Jesus said in John 16:13-14,

John 16:13-14 (NLT)

13 [The Holy Spirit] will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard . . .

14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. The Holy Spirit is the “leading” in the phrase “the Leading of the Lord.” It is the Holy Spirit’s role to “be” that leading and growing in the Holy Spirit is learning to *respond* to his leading.

So, let’s look at three ways we can begin to grow in the Holy Spirit by learning to *respond to his leading*. All three of these “growth steps” are based on you *setting your mind* on the things of the Spirit (as we’ve just said.)

First, we must learn to respond to the Holy Spirit’s leading – *IN GOD’S WORD*.

1) RESPOND to God’s Word

We've got to learn to respond to God in his Word. It absolutely *must* start there. Because if it *doesn't* start there then your "responding" to the Holy Spirit can lead you – all kinds of ways – into all kinds of craziness.

Some of you have seen or heard of someone doing something crazy in the name of "responding" to the Holy Spirit. So, how do you know if a certain "response" to the Holy Spirit is legitimate or crazy?

By finding the answer to one simple question: Where is that in God's Word?

If it's there – great

If it's *not* there – not great.

God will never act contrary to his Word and God will never lead you to act contrary to his Word. And so the first place we must grow in *responding* to the Holy Spirit is in God's Word.

The problem is we often don't know even where to turn or where to start. And so, the critical component that you need in your growth plan is a *good discipler*. NOT someone who will give you their opinion. But someone who will direct you in God's Word to address your question or situation.

We've got to first learn to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit – *according to God's Word*.

Because 2 Timothy 3:16 says,

2 Timothy 3:16 says (NLT)

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

Look closely at that verse because that is *also* the Holy Spirit's role to teach us what is true and convict us of what is wrong in our lives and *if* we will learn to respond to the Holy Spirit, that is exactly what he will do for us. And he will do that through God's Word.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

But... does it really? Do we allow God's Word to do that?

Do we interact with God's Word or do we read it more like a newspaper? Do we desire the living and powerful Word of God to really deal this personally with us? And if we desire it, how do we do that?

How do we go from "*I don't understand what I'm reading*" to "*I hear you loud and clear Lord*"?

That is such a critical question that eight years ago we created a guide to help you learn to do this. It's called **The Daily Devotion Journal**. If you go to www.calvarynuevo.org and click the resources tab, you will find a link for the **Daily Devotion Journal** and the **Instructions**.

The journal guides you through: *praying* first, then *meditating* on the scripture, *applying* the scripture to your life, *responding* to God in action and *praying* again in response to what you've just meditated on.

We've got to learn to *interact* with God and *respond* to God in his Word. For more teaching on responding to God's Word, search for our message titles "***Meditating On God's Word***" in the **Fundamentals** series.

2) RESPOND in prayer and worship

To me – prayer and worship are synonymous – they are ONE.

And so, the first question we have to ask is *do we have some?* Do we have ANY meaningful prayer and worship time – in our lives. We must *make* this time. We must *create* this time. Because this is our relational interaction with God. This is where we *talk to the Lord* and this is where we *listen to the Lord*.

So, first of all, we've got to have some. *Then* we have to ask ourselves how are we doing *talking* versus how we are doing *listening*.

We might be really good at talking to the Lord telling him what we want. But how are we doing on the *listening* part?

Are we applying James 1:19 to our prayer and worship time with God?

James 1:19 (NLT)

19 . . . You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak . . .

Shouldn't this apply to our relationship with the Lord as much as it does to our other relationships? Do you enter this incredible and awesome time in the presence of God more committed to *responding*?

The **Daily Devotion Journal** that we just reviewed will help you in this area as well. It's the same principles as responding to God's Word: HEARING – APPLYING – RESPONDING

The Lord wants to speak to you in prayer and worship and he does so through the Holy Spirit. But we have to grow in our ability to listen and respond.

How do we do that?

The first step is we must develop a sincere, persistent desire to *hear* from God and *respond* to God in our prayer and worship. This is not a casual thing. This is an intense desire to live in response to the Holy Spirit's leading in our prayer time.

I really want to give you specifics on how to hear from and respond to the Holy Spirit in prayer and worship but I find it a little hard to put into words because there is no "certain way" that we hear from and respond to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit *impresses the truth on us* in different ways. But I guarantee you the best way to learn – to hear from and respond to the Holy Spirit in prayer and worship – is to direct our prayer and worship by God's Word.

The Psalms were written as the prayer and worship manual for Israel and we can learn to use them just as Israel did to guide and focus our own prayer and worship time.

And as we learn to use God's Word to guide and focus our prayer and worship time, I promise you the Holy Spirit will "*impress*" God's truths upon you, God's truths that he wants to specifically apply to your life. That is his job – to lead us into all truth.

Again, using the **Daily Devotion Journal** will help you in this area. And so to learn more about it search for two messages on www.wordbymail.com called:

"Praying in God's Word"

"Worshipping in God's Word"

Both of these messages are in the "Fundamentals" series.

1) RESPOND in the Word

2) RESPOND in prayer and worship

3) RESPOND in obedience

We can't ask God to give us the power to respond then never take a step toward responding. If you're asking to grow in the power of the Holy Spirit you have to start to live like it. You have to begin to respond in obedience.

Ask God to give you the power to take that step, then... *take the step*.

God did not part the Red Sea until Israel had marched right up to it and Moses had placed his staff into the water. The Jordan River did not part until the feet of the priests were actually *in* the water.

The miracle of growing in the Holy Spirit is that he is there. He is living in you ready to give you all the power you need, but the trigger, I promise you, is obedience. The very moment you obey him, he gives you the power to obey him. The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit is triggered by your obedience in faith.

In the end, growing in the Holy Spirit is about learning more and more to respond to the "*leading of the Lord*" – in OBEDIENCE.

We've got to grow in our ability to hear from God and respond to his Word.

We've got to grow in our ability to hear from God and respond in prayer and worship.

But it all falls short of true life transformation if we fail to respond in *obedience*.

Know what God is calling you to do, then... *do it*, and God will transform your life.

Let's pray. *Oh Lord, we want to be those Christians. We want to desire your power so bad. We want to experience the supernatural life while we are on this natural earth. We want heaven to crash into our lives, Lord. We want to know that we have a real relationship with you, where your Word is living and powerful and it does pierce us. And it does reveal to us all that we are. And we want to know that we have a communing interaction with you in prayer and worship, according to your Word. And we want to know, Lord, that if we'll put our feet in the water of the problem that you will part the Jordan. We want to know, Lord, that if we'll take a step in obedience that you will meet us there and you will supply the power as we make the choice.*

But Lord, to do that we need something beyond our own understanding. We need something more than knowledge. We need something more than just acquiescence, just acknowledging that you are God and that you exist. We need your life in us. And we know, Jesus, you promise that is the person of the Holy Spirit. And so we pray – Holy Spirit, come. Fill this place. Fill our hearts. Rain down on our lives. Draw us out of the

natural into the supernatural, Lord. Give us eyes to see what can't be seen in the natural. Lead and guide and influence and empower us, Lord. Let your power rain down on us.

I just want to give you a chance to pray right now, right where you're at. But I want each person to pray, no matter where you're at with God. Call out to him. You know in your own heart what you need from God and he wants to rain down that power on you. But you have to ask for it. Would you ask for it now? Would you ask for it right now? Cry out to God, *Lord, let it rain. Let it rain. For your glory and in your name, amen.*