

Gospel Identity: Missionaries

SECTION 8: NOTES



notes

Alive by the Spirit

Discuss: What is the Holy Spirit's role in salvation?

John 3.5-8:

1 Thess. 1.4-7:

Titus 3.3-8:

John Piper: Human nature, with which all of us are born, will not enter into the kingdom of God unless it is changed. This change is called being born again. And what this means is that the Spirit of God creates something new; he takes out of us the heart of stone that rebels against God, and he puts into us a new heart which trusts God and follows his ways. Or to put it another way, the Holy Spirit establishes himself as the new ruling principle of our life. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

The Spirit-Led Life

John 14.15-17: How do we see the Holy Spirit in Jesus' ministry? What was his relationship to the Spirit?

Acts 1.8: How do we see the Spirit at work in the church? What is the church's relationship to the Spirit? (p.70-71)

Richard Lovelace: The failure to recognize the Holy Spirit as personally present in our lives is widespread in churches today. Sometimes the lack of recognition is intentional and theologically motivated... More often it is simply ignorance. Even where Christians know about the Holy Spirit doctrinally, they have not necessarily made a deliberate point of getting to know him personally. They may have occasional experiences of his reality on a hit-and-run basis, but the fact that the pronoun "it" is so frequently used to refer to him is not accidental. It reflects the fact that he is perceived impersonally as an expression of God's power and not experienced continually as a personal Guide and Counselor.

Discuss: What is your experience of the Holy Spirit, both in the past and in the day to day now?

Richard Lovelace: What should be done to reverse this situation? We should make a deliberate effort at the outset of every day to recognize the person of the Holy Spirit, to move into the light concerning his presence in our consciousness and... share all our thoughts and plans as we gaze by faith into the face of God. We should continue to walk throughout the day in a relationship of communication and communion with the Spirit mediated through our knowledge of the Word, relying upon every office of the Holy Spirit's role as counselor mentioned in Scripture. We should acknowledge him as the illuminator of truth and of the glory of Christ. We should look to him as teacher, guide, sanctifier, giver of assurance concerning our sonship and standing before God, helper in prayer, and as one who directs and empowers our witness.

Ephesians 1.13-14 AND 5.18: Being filled with the Spirit is both a one-time event and an ongoing experience
Acknowledge your need: Apart from me you can do nothing (John 15)!
Ask to be filled, led, empowered: Ask for all Jesus promised the Spirit would do (John 14-16)!
Trust him to do it: The Spirit is supplied and works among us by faith, not works (Galatians 3.1-6)!
Act in accordance: Focus on the objective gospel resources and live in accordance (Ephesians 5.1-2)!

Sent by the Spirit

Rolland Allen: The rapid and wide expansion of the Church in the early centuries was due in the first place mainly to the spontaneous activity of individuals. A natural instinct to share with others a new-found joy, strengthened and enlightened by the Divine Grace of Christ, the Savior, inevitably tends to impel men to propagate the Gospel. The early Church recognized this natural instinct and this divine Grace, and gave free scope to it. Very many of the Christians in those local Churches had no doubt become Christians, led by the spontaneous zeal of some one who was a Christian before them. The names of a few great Apostles were known to the whole Church; but the first teachers of the majority of the Christians were probably unknown to any but those whom they had quietly influenced. Thus as men moved about there were constantly springing up new groups of Christians in different places. [This zeal] remains so essentially the natural action of that joy, and that gift of the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit which desires and strives after the salvation of men, that... it constantly breaks out afresh.

Discuss: In your life, to what degree is sharing the gospel a “natural instinct” of gospel joy and Spirit power?

ABCs of Mission: Who are you sent to? How can you bless them this week?

A Family of Missionaries

Leslie Newbigin: It is surely a fact of inexhaustible significance that what our Lord left behind Him was not a book, nor a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life, but a visible community. He committed the entire work of salvation to that community. It was not that a community gathered around an idea, so that the idea was primary and the community secondary. It was that a community called together by the deliberate choice of the Lord Himself, and re-created in Him, gradually sought – and is seeking – to make explicit who He is and what He has done. The actual community is primary; the understanding of what it is comes second.

Discuss: The church of God does not have a mission in the world. The God of mission has a Church in the world.

Spurgeon: Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.

Acts 2.42-47: Jesus established a witnessing *community*, not individual evangelists. Why?