

Inspirational Nuggets

(Archived posts from www.discipleshipcenter.org)

HOLINESS / LIFE IN THE SPIRIT:

When was the last time you had an "Oops! There's something wrong here!" moment? My mother-in-law, Louise, recalls a time when she and her husband, Maynard, were leaving their house to go for a ride. Just before they left, Louise put some dirty clothes in the washer and started a load of laundry. Upon returning home after a while, Maynard and Louise noticed that there was water all over the floor surrounding their washing machine. They had an "Oops! There's something wrong here!" moment, for sure. Upon investigating the situation, I seem to recall that Maynard found a defective water hose that had been connecting their water supply with the washing machine. But the hose had become broken while they were away, and allowed water to get all over the floor. An "Oops! There's something wrong here!" moment . . . and how frustrating those can be! Repair was needed to fix the problem!

Sometime after the day you asked Christ into your heart, to become your Savior, you probably started having some spiritual "Oops! There's something wrong here!" moments. C.S. Lewis explains that, as he came to his evening prayers, and reckoned with the day's activities, what bothered him most were those times when he "sulked or snapped or sneered or stubbed or stormed." Dealing with those "Oops!" moments may require Christian growth and maturity, but they may also be the result of self-centeredness in the heart of the Christian. In the case of self-centeredness, the only solution is a heart cleansed from all sin by the work of the Holy Spirit. God wants to fill your heart with the Holy Spirit (that's called being "Spirit-filled") and dispose of all self-centeredness. **Will you let Him do it?**

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through . . . The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it." -- I Thessalonians 5:23-24.

HOLINESS and LIFE IN THE SPIRIT:

Evangelist and seminary professor Charles Shaver used to talk of the human heart as being like a living room in a house. That room might have many objects in it - a chair, a couch, a TV, books, DVDs etc. If someone were to turn the light on in that room, it would be the nature of light to want to flood every corner, every part of that room. But the light cannot do so because there are objects in the way. If, however, that room were cleared of all objects, the light could (and would) fill up the entire room.

Think of the human heart as being like a living room. The Holy Spirit would be like the light we spoke of earlier. If the Holy Spirit were to enter the human heart (and He does when Jesus becomes one's personal Savior), it would be His nature to want to flood every part of your heart. After all, being "filled with the Spirit" is the desirable goal for every Christian, and it is what God wants to see take place in each of us (Ephesians 5:18b).

But wait - there are objects in the way! A bit of unforgiveness here, an unyielded will in an area there; more evidences of self-centeredness scattered about; refusals to bear with and love people; ways of our world, that are not pleasing to God, embraced all things that prevent the Holy Spirit from filling your heart with Himself. All things that keep us from experiencing a life of power, victory, and love - not to mention the best possible relationship with God.

What things are keeping the Spirit from filling my heart completely?

HOLINESS and LIFE IN THE SPIRIT:

The last nugget talked about the fact that the Holy Spirit wants to flood your heart with His presence, and yet there may be things in your heart that keep Him from doing so. What can you do if you find things present in your heart that prevent you from being Spirit-filled? Here are a few things to consider:

1. We have **promises from God**, in the Bible, that give us hope for overcoming sinful ways (II Peter 1:3-4).
2. God has put **His power** to work in our lives, so that we need no longer be in slavery to sin (Romans 6:6-7).
3. We must recall that the sins we hang on to **displease the Lord** (Ephesians 5:8-10), and can cause pain to others around us (lack of forgiveness, choosing not to be patient, etc.).
4. We have **direct orders from the Bible** to put to death whatever belongs to the sinful nature (Colossians 3:5-6).
5. We must **consider the cost** of holding on to things that keep us from being Spirit-filled. Those things prevent us from receiving the best possible relationship with God, power for Christian service, and the full display of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in our lives. Is it really worth it?
6. We can call on **the prayers of others** to help us die out to, and overcome, those things that keep us from being Spirit-filled (James 5:16 can refer to spiritual healing, too).
7. We have **the example of other Christians** throughout history who have been set free from self-centeredness and have moved on to the Spirit-filled life (Acts 2).

Are you following the Holy Spirit's lead toward a Spirit-filled life?

HOLINESS / LIFE IN THE SPIRIT:

One of the greatest helps for understanding what the holy life/Spirit-filled life looks like is to see it demonstrated in the lives of other Christians. Some well-known Christians such as Oswald Chambers, Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, and J. Hudson Taylor all had their struggles with trying to live a holy life. Eventually, though, God worked in each of their lives in such a way that *He enabled them* to live that holy, Spirit-filled life. Seeing how He worked in the lives of those men can encourage us. "If God helped them, He could probably help me, too."

With this hope in mind, let me recommend a book to you entitled *They Found the Secret*. It is available at www.christianbook.com (under \$10). (Your local Christian book store could probably help you acquire this book, too). Each chapter is no more than 12 pages long, and contains an inspiring story of God's divine work in the life of a notable Christian. You'll be glad you read it!

Holiness is possible in my life because of God's ability to make it happen. (II Peter 1:3-4) *He has done it for others, and He can do it in me!*

HOLINESS:

Here are a couple brief thoughts from author and former Nazarene General Superintendent Dr. William Greathouse:

At the deepest, holiness is not a matter of holy habit patterns; these are simply a cut-flower arrangement if we do not sustain an intimate relationship with Christ. But if we abide in (live in continuous relationship with) Him, His life becomes our life, His love our love, and His joy our joy. The secret of holy living is to permit Christ to live His life of holy love in us!

-- taken from "Love Made Perfect: Foundations For the Holy Life."

How is your relationship with Christ today?

HOLINESS:

Fasten your seat belt as we hear some thought-provoking, and hopefully heart-stirring, words about HOLINESS:

Francis Frangipane is a pastor, author, and founder of River of Life Ministries in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 1985, he wrote a book entitled *Holiness, Truth and the Presence of God*. This book is a must-read for anyone who is serious about holiness (which should be every Christian, according to I Peter 1:15-16!). Test drive a few of Pastor Francis' thoughts about holiness . . .

While the word "holiness" means "to be set apart; separate," a possible interpretation of the Hebrew root word for "holiness" is, "to be bright; clean, new or fresh; untarnished." Holiness produces separation from sin, but mere separation from sin cannot produce holiness. It is not the absence of sin that produces our sanctification; holiness comes from the Presence of God. You may avoid "touching what is unclean," but if you are not united through love to the Fatherhood of God, you will never know true holiness; all you will have is religion. Christ in us is our holiness, for as close as our relationship is with Him, to that degree we reflect His holiness.

So, could holiness in us be thought of in terms of "farther from sin; Father within"?

HOLINESS / LIFE IN THE SPIRIT (What kind of car do you drive?):

When was the last time you heard the term "entire sanctification"? In the world of Wesleyan theology, it can describe an experience with God in which a Christian is fully devoted to God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and cleansed from self-centeredness/selfishness.

What is the difference between a Christian life that has experienced "entire sanctification," and a Christian life that has not? Evangelist and author Stephen Manley, in his book entitled *Journey Into Wholeness*, gives this intriguing illustration:

The difference between the sanctified life and the self-centered life is almost unthinkable. My life was like an old, junk Ford. The windshield was cracked, the tires bald, the fenders rusted, the springs flat, and the upholstery torn. The engine ran on only four cylinders, while blue exhaust smoke spewed from the tailpipe. About all I could get from my self-centered life was about 15 miles an hour.

When the Holy Spirit came in entire sanctification, I was given a brand new Cadillac! The upholstery was luxurious; the fenders were solid; the car ran on eight cylinders. To my amazement, all I had to do is get in, buckle the seat belt, and hang on. God not only gave me the car - He took over the driving!

Are you going to chug along at 15 miles an hour, disgruntled and cantankerous, hoping you'll make it? Or are you willing to switch cars and accept all the resources of God?

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

How much do you know about the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

One of the hallmarks of strong discipleship in our lives is the consistent presence and active work of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul lists nine evidences of the Spirit's work in us, known as the "Fruit of the Spirit." Let's focus on the first fruit listed, which has a definite impact on all other fruit - and that is Love. Here are a few things to think about regarding love:

Love cures people - both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it. -- Karl Menninger

Love is the key. Joy is love singing. Peace is love resting. Long-suffering is love enduring. Kindness is love's touch. Goodness is love's character. Faithfulness is love's habit. Gentleness is love's self-forgetfulness. Self-control is love holding the reins. -- Donald Grey Barnhouse

Some children were asked, "What is love?" One little girl answered, "Love is when your mommy reads you a bedtime story. True love is when she doesn't skip any pages."

God loved us, not because we were lovable, but because He is love. -- C.S. Lewis

*It's not how much you do, but how much love you put into what you do that counts. --
Mother Theresa*

Lord, increase our love for You, and our love for others as well.