

THE INDWELLING AND RENEWAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

One of the great lessons we must learn as believers in Christ is that it is impossible to live the Christian life in one's own strength. The Christian life is a supernatural life and demands supernatural enablement. God has not left us without this supernatural enablement, for He has given every Christian the Holy Spirit to help us live the Christian life.

The New Testament teaches every Christian is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. At the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer.

The act of the indwelling Spirit is not experienced, but the effects or results of the indwelling are experienced. We must not depend on our feelings but believe God's Word. The Bible says if we have trusted Christ, we have the Spirit. The experience will come after we believe God's Word.

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Predicted by Christ *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."* (John 14:16-17).

Indwelling is a Gift *"Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."* (2 Cor. 5:5). This gift came at the moment of salvation.

Not Lost Because of Sin *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."* (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Sinning and immature Christians, as seen in the Christians at Corinth, still retain the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. With all their faults, failures, sins and vices, Paul could still say that the Holy Spirit indwelt them.

There are no conditions to receive the Holy Spirit. It is a gift from God. While submission/yielding remains the condition for the filling of the Spirit, the indwelling is unconditional for true believers in Christ. As wayward Christians, we may grieve the Spirit, quench Him, refuse His guidance, reject His wisdom, but the Holy Spirit will never leave us. Once we are saved and He comes into our lives, He abides forever.

Proof of Salvation *"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."* (Rom. 8:9). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is proof of salvation. Without evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in a person, there is reason to believe the new birth has not taken place. The proof of the indwelling Spirit is the fruit of the life. To have the Holy Spirit indwell us is to have God indwell us. The Spirit never lies dormant in the Christian, for even the rebellious Christian experiences the convicting work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is either sanctifying us and making us more Christ-like or He is convicting us of our sin to break down our rebellion.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INDWELLING

Primary Purpose. The primary purpose for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is that the Christian might glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). God's glory cannot be contained and must be manifested. All of God's program in the physical creation and the spiritual creation was originally planned as a self-revelation and self-manifestation of God.

Where God Manifested His Glory

1. Original Creation. God made the world to glorify Himself (Psa. 19:1). God also made man to glorify Himself (Gen. 1:26-27). Creation and man were to be recipients and channels of God's glory. When man fell in Eden, he was plunged into sin and not a capable vessel to manifest the glory of God. Because of man's sin in the Fall, the physical creation was also cursed. Neither physical creation nor natural man could now be fit channels to display God's glory.
2. Tabernacle. The tabernacle was another place where God revealed Himself to men. The whole Jewish ritual system was designed to reveal God to Israel. The tabernacle was but an empty tent until God filled it with His glory (Ex. 40:34-35). Israel was to reflect the glory of God among the nation of Israel and the world, but failed to do so because of sin.
3. Temple. The tabernacle was a tent designed for the needs of a nomadic people on their way to the Promised Land. When they were securely in the land, God instructed them to build a magnificent temple (1 Chron. 22:5). Again the temple was empty until God filled it with His glory (1 Kings 8:10-11). Israel was to reflect the glory of God who indwelt the temple. However, Israel apostatized and failed to respond to God's revelation and reflect His glory. Israel was no longer a fit channel to glorify God, so God removed the glory from them.
4. Jesus Christ. With Israel in apostasy, there was a period of about six hundred years in which God's glory was dimly manifested to the world through a small remnant. Then Jesus Christ, the Son of God, appeared on the scene of history. Christ became the next vehicle for God's glorification because God indwelt Christ. *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14). The eternal Son of God became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us. God dwelt specifically in Christ while He was on earth. Christ was resurrected from the dead and ascended to the Father; therefore, God's dwelling in Christ and His reflection for glory in Christ were removed from this earth. Where then is God dwelling today?
5. Christians. With the ascension of Christ, God planned that Christians should be those who reflect His glory to the world. Today Christians are the spiritual temple of God. This temple was not made with skins and tapestries as was the tabernacle, nor was it erected out of stones and overlaid with gold as was the temple, but the Church has become the indwelling place of God's Shekinah glory. All believers in the universal church of Jesus Christ, as a group, are corporately indwelt by the Spirit.

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (Eph. 2:19-22).

Also each individual in the universal Church of Jesus Christ is personally indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Believers in Christ are brought together into a temple to fulfill the same purposes as the temple and tabernacle in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament—to manifest God's glory. The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian and every Christian is a receiver of God's glory in Christ and a reflector of God's glory to the world.

THE RENEWING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

God is changing every true Christian and making that person more like Christ. The highest motivation for living a Christian life is the promise that God is at work in the Christian and will be at work in him as long as he lives (Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13).

Sin is a reality in the life of every true Christian and it must be defeated if the Christian is to experience any progressive victory in his life. Christianity is a supernatural way of life and God has provided supernatural enablement to live it. God has given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to every true child of God, and the Holy Spirit is at work in every Christian to break the power of sin. The Bible calls this process renewal. The Holy Spirit is renewing the believer on the inside and is stripping away at his sin in order to conform him more and more to Christ, enabling him to progressively defeat sin in his life.

The Original Creation of God [See CHART #1]

When God created Adam and Eve, He created their personalities to glorify God. He gave them will, intellect and emotion. An intellect (mind) to know God; an emotion to love God, and a will to obey God. Man was created to be filled and possessed by God.

Our first parents had real freedom for they were unrestricted by sin or by their surroundings. They had a perfect nature and a perfect environment. Adam and Eve had no sin nature and no sinful external forces keeping them from glorifying God. They were free to worship the One true God.

The Fallen Creation

Genesis 3 tells us that Adam and Eve sinned against God and they became sinners. Their whole nature and personality became sinful. They now had sin natures with a sinful environment. Their total personality was corrupted by sin, and natural man lost all that he had in original creation.

The Bible says Adam's sin was passed on to every member of the human race. Each person born into this world is a sinner by birth and by choice. All men have a sin nature that affects their total personality. Their intellects cannot know God because they are corrupted by sin. Their emotions cannot love God because they are corrupted by sin. Their wills cannot obey God because they too are corrupted by sin. Natural man cannot fellowship with God because of sin which permeates his whole being.

In his natural state, the Bible declares that man is dead spiritually. *“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins”* (Eph. 2:1), has no capacity for God, *“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor. 2:14), is blinded to the truth of the gospel, *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake”* (2 Cor. 4:4-5), and is not seeking God, *“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.’”* (Rom. 3:10-11).

The New Creation

Natural man is in a hopeless and helpless spiritual condition unless God intervenes to bring him alive spiritually. God does intervene with the miracle of the new birth and the new birth is the possession of all who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Because of the new birth, the Christian becomes a new spiritual creation in Christ. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone,*

the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17). *“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* Eph. 2:10). The believer has a new position before God. He is a new creation in Christ, but he is not yet perfect, for he still has the problem of sin in his life.

The Christian, as a new creation, still has a sin nature or indwelling sin, but he now has the indwelling Holy Spirit whom God sent to him. The child of God also has a new nature in him because of the new birth. The new nature gives the unsaved man a desire or propensity to do God's will, but it does not give him the power to accomplish God's will. After we become Christians, we get new desires for God but the power to live the Christian life is found in the Holy Spirit.

The believer is a new creation, but is not yet perfect, nor will he ever be perfect in this life. However the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in the true Christian and He has begun the work of renewal, whereby the power of sin in the Christian's life is being broken and he is being progressively conformed to Jesus Christ.

The New Creation under Renewal

The Biblical Teaching on Renewal. The Bible is very explicit about the renewal process which God the Holy Spirit is carrying out in the Christian. *“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator”* (Col. 3:9-10).

The Christian has put off the old man or “self” and has put on the new man (“self”). This is a fact and it already has happened for every true Christian. The old man is not our sin nature but is all that we were in Adam as an unsaved person. The new man is not our new nature but all that we are in Christ. The new birth caused the Christian to end his history in Adam and begin a new life in Christ. The new man, who is a spiritual creation in Christ, still has indwelling sin but is undergoing renewal. This verse says that *“we are being renewed in knowledge”* (present tense). Renewal is happening now! [See CHART #2]

The same thought is given in Ephesians 4:22-24: *“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 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.”* In the Greek, these are not commands but statements of fact: *“you have put off the old self* (old man)” and *“you have to put on the new self* (new man).” As a new man in Christ, the Christian is being constantly renewed in the spirit of the mind. [See CHART #3]

The Christian is told in Romans 12:2 to renew his own mind. The reason a Christian can renew his mind is because he knows God is carrying on a work of renewal in him. The Christian is certain of victory because of God's work. We would never push on in our Christian lives unless we knew God was at work in us and was for us.

The Meaning of Renewal. The English dictionary defines renewal as “to renew, make over, or repair.” The Biblical definition means “to renovate by inward transformation.” The total personality of the new man in Christ, which is basically sinful, is being renovated or transformed by renewal. There is a tremendous change going on inside of every Christian.

The Beginning of Renewal. The renewal of a Christian began at the moment of salvation. *“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”* (Tit. 3:5). God changed a person's position at salvation, and began at that moment to change a person's disposition.

The Process of Renewal. The Bible says the Christian is being renewed. Renewal is a process and it is progressive. There is no end to the renewal process as long as a Christian is in his sinful body. Renewal is basically inward; that is, it is going on inside of a person. *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day”* (2 Cor. 4:16). Because of inward renewal, the Christian is able to respond more and more to God. There is obviously degrees of renewal, for some Christians are more Christ-like than others.

The Subject of Renewal. The subject of renewal is the Christian. The whole immaterial part of the Christian man is being renewed. The Christian's total personality is being transformed through renewal. The Holy Spirit is at work in the Christian's mind so he can know God. The Holy Spirit is moving upon the Christian's emotions so he can love God. And the Holy Spirit is changing the believer's will so he can obey God. The Holy Spirit is progressively setting free the Christian's whole personality so that he might have deeper fellowship with God.

The renewal process explains why the Christian often finds himself in conflict. The Holy Spirit is slowly changing the various areas of sin in the Christian's life and he does not like it, for there is still that part of the saved man which loves sin and self.

Purpose of Renewal. God has definite ends or goals in the renewal process for the Christian. These goals are threefold.

1. To restore the image marred in Adam (Col. 3:10). All men have had the image of God in them marred by sin as the result of the Fall. But God's new spiritual creation in Christ is having God's image restored to him by renewal of the Spirit. Therefore, the Christian is being brought back to that likeness which God gave to man in the original creation. What Adam lost in the Fall, God is progressively restoring to those in Christ who are being renovated by the Holy Spirit.
2. To produce holiness and righteousness (Eph. 4:24). The Christian is God's spiritual creation, created for righteousness and true holiness. The true believer, because of progressive renewal, can now do righteous and holy acts. As an unsaved man, a person could do nothing to please God because he was a servant of sin, but the Christian who is a new creation in Christ can do, but does not always do, righteous acts to please God. Practical righteousness and holiness are not nice but necessary for Christian living, for these things are proof of the renewal process going on inside of every true believer.
3. To conform the Christian to Christ *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified”* (Rom. 8:28-30). In the eternal plan of God, the exalted goal for the elect is total conformity to the image of Christ. Christians are *“to be conformed to the likeness of his Son”* (Rom. 8:29). Every Christian is guaranteed absolute conformity to Christ in eternity.

Conformity to Christ is not just something the Christian hopes for as the elect of God, but it will become, in degree, a reality to the Christian in his daily life. The Christian in this present life is being changed from glory to glory through the power of the Spirit. *“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit”* (2 Cor. 3:18). The renewal process causes us to get a glimpse of the God who saved us, and then causes us to face up honestly to our own sinfulness. This in turn forces us to go to Jesus Christ for deliverance from the power of sin.

Result of Renewal. Since the purpose of renewal is to make us Christ-like, then the result of renewal is to make us face up to our sinfulness as believers. Renewal allows us to see our own inadequacy to live the Christian life in our own strength and causes us to cling to the Lord Jesus Christ for victory over sin. As the Christian grows more like Christ in holiness of life, the more sensitive he becomes to sin and the conflict with sin becomes more intense.