

DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS

"Fruit of the Spirit"

9/9/12

Verses from New Living Translation unless noted.

This morning I want to do some review, answering questions about the Holy Spirit – who, whys, what and how. Johnny covered these more thoroughly two weeks ago, but just in case you weren't here, let's make sure we got this. It's too important not to.

1st WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is God. He's the third person of the Trinity and he is fully God, just like God the Father and God the Son.

God the Son visited our planet for 33 years and then returned to heaven. He told his disciples, when I go I will send my Spirit to live in you and he will be with you always.

Someone observed that the OT is primarily the time of God the Father, the Gospels at the time of God the Son, and the time from Pentecost till Christ's return is the time of God, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus once said, "I and the Father are one." He could have also said "I and the Holy Spirit are one," because that's true as well.

2ND WHAT IS HIS ROLE AND PURPOSE?

~ To enable us to know Christ (John 3:1-8) The Holy Spirit draws us to Christ.

~ To glorify Christ (John 16:14) Girl to Nelson Price, "I got the Holy Spirit. Do you have the Holy Spirit? I've got the Holy Spirit?"

After careful thought, "No, I don't have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has me, and when he gets a hold of you, come tell me about it."

He wasn't trying to be insensitive or glib, but rather, to make an important point. The Holy Spirit is not like a new computer – we get excited about what we can do with all that power. It's about what the Holy Spirit will do in us when we surrender to Him.

Beware of any movement, person or church that glorifies the Holy Spirit. John 16:14 says that the Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ. He didn't come to glorify himself. When we're filled with the Holy Spirit, we glorify Christ. He came to edify, not to entertain.

~ To lead us into all truth (John 16:13) S.O.A.P.

~ To empower our witness (Acts 1:8) He draws people. Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, often called the father of the atomic bomb, after the first successful test detonation July 16, 1945 he was reportedly asked for his response. He commented, "It's hard to believe that all that power has been there all along and we just never knew it."

~ To enable us to defeat sin (1 John 4:4) He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world. Satan is like a roaring lion prowling about seeking those he can destroy. Our only hope of defeating him is with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16 "So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves."

Dwight L. Moody, the Billy Graham of a former generation once demonstrated the principle like this: "Tell me," he said to his audience, "how can I get the air out of the jar I have in my hand?"

One man said, "*Suck it out with a pump.*" But the evangelist replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter it." Finally after many suggestions, Moody picked up a pitcher and quietly filled the jar with water. "*There,*" he said, "*all the air is now removed.*"

He then explained that victory for the child of God does not come by working hard to eliminate sinful habits, but rather by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill our lives completely.

3RD WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE FILLED?

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? It means that more and more as we grow to maturity, the fruit of the Spirit will be visible and apparent in our lives.

Here's another metaphor Christ uses.

~ We will experience the overflowing life

John 7:37-39 "On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.' (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

A glass of water, though indwelt it is not necessarily overflowing. From the moment of spiritual birth every believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

A prayer handed down to us from the Great Welsh Revival went this way:

"Fill me, Holy Spirit, fill me, more than fullness would I know; I am smallest of thy vessels, yet, I much can overflow."

A person is never too small to overflow.

4TH – WHY ARE MOST CHRISTIANS NOT FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Billy Graham once estimated that 95% of Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

~ Lack of knowledge.

In Texas there is a famous oil field known as the Yates Pool. During the Depression of the 1930's, this field was a sheep ranch owned by a man named Yates.

Mr. Yates was not able to make enough money to pay the principal and interest on the mortgage on his property, so he was in danger of losing his ranch. With little money for clothes or food, his family, like many others, had to live on government subsidy.

Day after day, as he grazed his sheep on the rolling west Texas hills, he was no doubt greatly troubled about how he would pay his bills. Then one day a seismographic crew from an oil company came into the area and told Mr. Yates that there might be oil on his land. They asked permission to drill a wildcat well, so he signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet they struck a huge oil reserve. The first well came in at 80,000 barrels a day. Many subsequent wells were more than twice as large. In fact, 30 years after the discovery, a government test on one of the wells showed that it still had a potential flow of 125,000 barrels of oil a day. That's one well, over \$12 m/day.

And Mr. Yates owned it all! The day he purchased the land he received the oil and mineral rights, yet he was living on relief. A multi-billionaire living in poverty! The problem? He didn't know the oil was there. He owned it, but he didn't possess it.

Like Mr. Yates before the oil was discovered most Christians live in ignorance of their vast riches.

~ Lack of trust.

Many people are afraid that if they fully surrender their lives to God he will do something terrible to them. He'll send them to Africa as a missionary or make them sell their golf clubs or put them in a closet and feed them spinach the rest of their lives.

They're afraid God is going to take all the fun out of life. They don't trust him. Are you like that? Do you think God is just a big bully and if you let him he'll make your life miserable?

God loves you. That's what Jesus was here to tell us. And, if we'll let him, he'll show us how to get the most out of life. God is a loving Father and nothing thrills him more than showing his love to his kids.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." You can't even begin to imagine all the good things God has in store for you.

5TH - HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT BEING FILLED?

~ You must desire to be filled.

Matthew 5:6 (NIV) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

When I was traveling internationally I learned that in many restaurants the waiter will not fill your cup with coffee unless you turn it over. He doesn't ask you, he simply make his way around the table filling those cups that are turned upright.

Often someone would get perturbed because he would skip them. When they complained he would point out that their cup was upside down. In many restaurants that was the indication that you didn't want it filled.

Spiritually, God will not fill us with his Spirit unless we desire to be filled. Do you want the Holy Spirit to fill your life? Then make your life available to him.

Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of His Spirit. Today, we no longer have to wait to be filled. In fact, the Holy Spirit is waiting for us. He wants to fill your life this morning.

I'm aware that there are some Christians don't want to be filled. They're not thirsty. They are too full of the stagnant water of this world. For them their greatest need is to recognize their greatest need.

~ Be sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life.

Psalm 66:18 (NKJV) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear."

You can't expect the Lord to fill our cup if it is already filled with dirt. It must first be cleansed. Many Christians lead lives filled with the stagnant water of the world and then wonder why they are not experiencing more of God's fullness.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."

~ You must be continually filled.

It's not a one time thing. It's not like being born again. We are born only once into the family of God. But we must be filled continually like the sail of a boat.

Ephesians 5:18 "Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit."

How does a person get drunk? By drinking. How does a person stay drunk? He must keep drinking. How can you cause a glass to overflow? You keep filling it.

"be filled" literally translated reads "be being filled".

Man in a church service praying out loud, "Lord fill me, fill me, please fill me." A woman behind him prayed, "Don't bother, Lord. He leaks."

We all leak, and need continual filling.

~ We are filled by faith

Galatians 3:11 "The righteous man shall live by faith." Hebrews 11:6(NIV) "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Faith is trusting God to do what he says he will do. Will the Lord fill you if you ask him to??

In Eph. 5:18 he commands us to be filled.

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 us--whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."

Prayer for filling: *"Dear Father, I need You. I acknowledge that I have been directing my own life and that, as a result, I have sinned against You. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I now thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit."*

~ We must put on the character of Christ

In December 1973 *Time* magazine called streaking "a growing Los Angeles-area fad." A year later Ray Stevens wrote and made popular as novelty song called "*The Streak*". (song)
Streaking – running around with no clothes on. As silly as that seems a lot of people who call themselves Christians are doing something just as silly and inappropriate.

Believe it or not there is a dress code for Christ followers; there is appropriate attire. The Apostle Paul said in **Galatians 3:27** "All

who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.”

The ultimate fruit of a disciples’ life is more disciples; more people who are growing into the image of Christ. In John 15 Jesus said if we abide in him, remain grounded rooted in him, then we would bear much fruit.



We are rooted in the soil of God and his Word which causes us to grow into the likeness of Christ. Then our lives produce fruit, and the ultimate fruit of our lives is more disciples being conformed to the image of Christ.

Now before you can make disciples, you have to be discipled yourself. You need to get a good healthy start on the process before you can turn and help others.

Many of you are in a discipleship triad or quad and you’ve begun that intentional growth process. But, many of you are not yet in a discipleship group. That doesn’t mean you’re not a disciple and that doesn’t mean you’re not growing.

But, I believe the best way to grow is the way Jesus demonstrated when he was on earth. One of the first things he did was to gather a group of men around himself, and he began to disciple them.

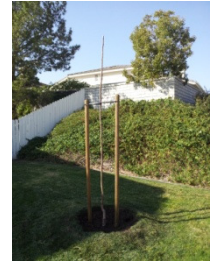
If you are not in a group but you want to be in one, we’d like to help you find one. Pastor Jim Moyer back at the discipleship desk is there after service to do just that. Stop by and see him.

Now I want to talk about what a Christian looks like who is truly starting to grow spiritually. When you decide to become a follower of Jesus Christ, God plants the seed of his Holy Spirit in your life.

That’s what makes you a child of God—you now have his life in you. And it’s right that we can expect you to begin to act and look

like Jesus. John 6:40 says, "The student who is fully trained will become like the teacher."

Some of you have asked about my walnut tree. Some weeks ago I told you the story of my walnut tree. When I planted it nine months ago it looked like an 8' javelin; not a branch or a leaf on it.



It remained that way for four months. I started thinking it was dead. Then one day to my great delight, I went out and saw tiny buds coming out of the trunk. I went out every day to observe the growth.



Today it has multiple branches and leaves. Some have asked if it has any walnuts on it. No, it doesn't. Not yet. It's only been in the ground nine months. But, it is right to expect that it will produce walnuts. If it is truly a walnut tree, it should produce walnuts.



If you and I are true followers of Jesus, it's right to expect to see fruit from your life. When you decide to become a follower of Jesus, when you respond to his invitation of forgiveness and invite him into your life, you will begin to act and look like Jesus.

Two weeks ago Johnny Laubacher talked to us about the Holy Spirit. When Jesus left earth and returned to his Father in heaven, he promised his Holy Spirit to come and live within us. He said

John 14:16-17 "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."

The fruit of the Spirit, the result of the Holy Spirit living in you is our primary focus today; the description of people who act and look like Jesus.

You can find this description in Galatians 5:22-23 that says, "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"

Look at those verses carefully. Is there anything listed there that you wouldn't want in your life? Can you imagine anyone who wouldn't want those characteristics describing them?

Time magazine ranked John Stott among the 100 most influential people in the world. Stott was a renowned Christian leader who died last year, but he said, "The mere recital of these Christian graces should be enough to make the mouth water and the heart beat faster. For this is a portrait of Jesus Christ."

This is what the perfect human being looks like. And, this is what Jesus wants you to become.

For the past two years at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Bar-B-Q the staff has given out Gold Coin awards to celebrate outstanding volunteerism. This is one of those coins. Every coin has two sides, right?



If you describe the Gospel as a coin given to us by our Heavenly Father, one side would be the work of the Son for us; the other side would be the work of the Spirit in us.

TWO-SIDED COIN

Work of the Son for us – salvation from the penalty of sin
Work of the Spirit in us – salvation from the power of sin

The Holy Spirit is the one who enables us to put on the new clothes; those virtues that characterize Jesus Christ; that make us look like Jesus. Here's secret – you don't become Christ-like by trying really really hard. You become Christ-like by allowing the Holy Spirit to do his work in your heart.

I remember a college student just after he became a Christian saying, "This is really great. I so glad I decided to become a follower of Christ." A few weeks passed and his attitude changed. He said, "This living like Jesus did, this is really hard. I'm trying but it's hard." After a couple of months he was saying, "This is impossible. I can't do this! I can't live this way!"

That's the point. In our own strength this Christian life is not hard; it's impossible. We can't do it. There's only one person who has a that was Jesus.

Jesus said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you..." Without this miraculous Holy Spirit power you haven't got a chance of living this kind of life.

On New Year's Day years ago, during the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, the parade came to an abrupt halt. One of the floats had run out of gas. The amusing part was - it was Standard Oil float.

Standard Oil founded by American industrialist John D. Rockefeller, the first American billionaire. His company was the largest oil refiner in the world but his float ran out of gas.

We Christians can get all fired up, but we will eventually run out of gas if they don't understand where the power comes from.

As we begin let me point out the triple triplets. There nine characteristics are often divided into three groups.

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

The first three have one syllable. The second three have two syllables and the third set have three syllables. Ever notice that?

“Love, joy, peace” = single syllables. “Patience, kindness, goodness” = double syllables; and “faithfulness, gentleness & self-control” = triple syllables.

The first three are gifts from Jesus for us: love, joy, peace. John 15:9 “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me.” John 15:11 “I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy.” John 14:7 “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart.”

The second three emphasize the way he wants us to treat people – patience, kindness, goodness. The final set are character qualities that Christ develops in us – faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Learning how to allow the Holy Spirit to grow these qualities in your life may be the second most important discovery of your life; the first being discovering Christ; the second being discovering the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul’s metaphor of putting off the works of the old sin nature and putting on the works of our new spiritual nature are like changing clothes. We are to put off and put on.

Paul describes the works of the sin nature in Galatians 5:19-21. “When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these.”

Then the next two verses: “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

When you hear a list of qualities like these being read, however, do you sometimes - like me - feel a sense of frustration? Does hearing this list of superlative qualities remind you of what's lacking in your life?

Does an absence of love in your heart toward certain people bother you? Are you at times overwhelmed with an inner lack of joy or peace?

Does your own personal resource of patience, kindness and goodness fall short of the demands of particular circumstances? Are you sorrowful over your own lack of faithfulness and trustworthiness in certain duties?

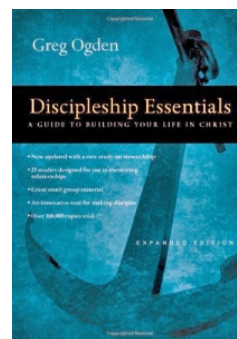
Do you hate the arrogant pride that occasionally shows itself in your heart? Do you mourn over your own lack of self-control in certain areas?

Truly, only Jesus could be said to have possessed these qualities in perfection. But as we look at them - and if we're truly children of God by faith - we can't help but wish that His perfections could also be found in us more often than they are.

By our own efforts, these things could never be produced in us as they were found in Jesus. But the wonderful promise of this passage is that, through the ministry of His own Holy Spirit dwelling in us, Jesus' own perfect character - as defined by these qualities - can be exhibited in us!

Just imagine - the perfections of Jesus in us!!

Greg Ogden is the author of Discipleship Essentials, the study curriculum that all 250+ of us in triads and quads are using. It's a life-changing study of the primary teachings of the NT. We're all learning so much.



Greg has another book titled Essential Commandments. It focuses on the two commandments Jesus responded with when asked by a Jewish leader, which of all the hundreds of commands given in the OT are most important.

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself."

Greg, in the introduction to this book suddenly realized something quite embarrassing to himself; something that seems so obvious but he had never realized before. Here he is with advanced theological degrees and the author of numerous Christian books, a pastor for many years and yet he had failed to see this.

The truth that suddenly dawned on him was: Jesus actually believes that it is possible for frail and deeply flawed human beings to become like Him.

He confessed that he had unconsciously given up on that possibility. He had never consciously said it or even thought it – Jesus, I think you're an idealistic dreamer.

But, in his attempt to be authentic and not to deceive himself about this capacity for sin, he had really given up on the possibility that the character of Jesus could actually take over his life.

What I am here to tell you this morning is that Jesus is sincere when he says that these characteristics listed in Galatians 5:22-23 can actually be authentically reflected in your life. And, he expects it because he has sent his Spirit to live within us to make it happen.

Conclusion: Worse than wearing no clothes at all are Christians still running around in the sinful rags of this wicked world.