

This is a continuation of a series I started back in 2003. There are basic doctrines that believers need to understand in order to advance spiritually. Let's consider this a review and perhaps we can use the material in this and other lessons in this series to help disciple new believers.

Review. We have covered the miracle of the new birth – how that upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior we do not merely gain access to heaven but that something wonderful happens in the here and now:

¹⁷Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Cor 5, KJV.

The original literally has the believer becoming a new *species*. The believer is simply different than he was before Christ. Old things – the condition of the believer as per Ephesians 2:1-3 are “passed away” (*gk = historical aorist of pararechomai*). The LXX used this word to translate the event that the Israelites had passed over the Red Sea (Josh 4:23). The New Testament, however, has a different flavor on this word. Jesus' word shall not *pass away* (Matt. 24:35). In contrast the heavens shall pass away (Matt. 5:18) with a roar (2 Peter 3:10).¹ Let me illustrate: when a man becomes married his bachelorhood is passed away – he can no longer behave as an unmarried man. When a sinner comes to Christ he is no longer under the same “old things” i.e. he is no longer expected to behave and he did while under the control of his sin nature and under the dictates of Satan.

This newness includes new life – he is alive spiritually:

³Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom 6:3, 4, KJV.

This is not turning over a new leaf or some sort of epiphany where someone's life is forever changed and he starts in a new direction. No. The believer literally becomes alive spiritually. MacArthur makes a helpful comment on the word "newness" in our passage: "Newness translated *kairos*, which refers to newness of quality and character, not *neos*, which refers merely to newness in point of time."² Precisely the point – we do not merely have a life-changing experience – rather we are forever changed in the sense of our basic nature – we become spiritually alive children of God.

We have previously covered the believer having a Regenerate mind – that is, a mind that has been changed. We have the same mind that Jesus Christ has ([1 Cor 2:16](#)). That means that we can think the way He thinks – an entirely different condition from the sinful mind ([Isaiah 55:6 - 9](#)). This allows us to understand spiritual matters and to behave as children of God. If I may illustrate this way: as much as I love my pet and want to care for him he will never enter into the same relationship with me as my children can. My cat simply cannot think as I do. However, my children are a different matter – they have the capacity to think as I do. Whether they actually do is their

¹ See *The Complete Biblical Library, GREEK - ENGLISH DICTIONARY, Pi - Rho*, page 89.

² *THE MACARTHUR NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY ROMANS 1 – 8*, page 322.

option. The same applies to our new relationship with God. We have the capacity to think as He does – whether or not we do is our decision – the basic “equipment” is there because we have a regenerate mind.

The Believer Is Indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The problem with the sinful mind goes beyond the lack of capacity to think like the Lord. There is the problem of the carnal mind:

⁵For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. ⁸So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Rom 8, KJV.

The carnal mind “mind” the things of the flesh (*gk = active - a linear constant ongoing condition of phroneō meaning to think something through and decide*) it has to do the one’s mindset or frame of mind. It hints at one’s viewpoint. Simply, the sinner thinks like a sinner. And this mind-set is a condition of spiritual death (read vs 6a). However, the believer thinks differently. Look at verse 6b. To be spiritually “minded” *is* (a condition of reality) life and peace. This is a new, in quality, way of thinking and there is a reason why:

⁹But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Rom 8, KJV.

This is the direct fulfillment of Jesus Christ’s promise of the Comforter ([John 14:16, 17](#)). If you read the context of John 14 you will note that there is great emphasis of the communion between the Godhead and the believer.

The Indwelling of the Spirit Results in Spiritual Thinking and Spiritual Behavior.

I’d like to turn to another passage of Paul. It might not be obvious what the connection is with our present topic but I will try to get us there:

¹Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ²And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. Eph 5, KJV.

It’s all about *who and what* we are – children of God. It is not a matter of a changed lifestyle although God’s children do lead a changed life. It’s not the acceptance of a world-view although believers certainly do have a different mind-set. No. It’s *who* we are – beloved children of God. Notice that our new quality results in a new walk. Yes. Just as I expect my children to behave a certain way – to have a certain view-point, so God expects us to act as He does. The result of this quality is that we please Him. Let’s move on.

⁸For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: ⁹(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) ¹⁰Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Eph 5, KJV.

Here's our responsibility with an important note: God would never place a responsibility on us *without the ability to fulfil it*. Please note that there is a result of this walk – all goodness and righteousness and truth. Verse 10 has an interesting point: we have to prove what is pleasing to the Lord. To prove means to examine, to test, to assay a thing as to it's quality and characteristics. Some believers have it the wrong way – they have an agenda and so to make it have more weight they say that the Lord told them it was His will. That is entirely the wrong meaning. The believer does not decide what is pleasing to the Lord – he diligently investigates to find the will of God.

So far we have looked at our new quality – we are the children of God – and our behavior – we are to act as children of God. Let's look at the means by which we are empowered to do these things: we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Eph 5, KJV.

Notice that the emphasis is our thinking (and previously our behavior). Verse 18 has had some controversy in the church. Some have it as a second condition of grace where one believer (who has been filled with the Holy Spirit and another has not) has had an "experience" that another believer needs to seek because he has not. I disagree with this hypothesis. It's not about some sort of second act of grace but that of utilizing what the believer *already has* – the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Indwelling and Infilling should carry no distinction. When the Glory of God filled the temple of Solomon ([2 Chron 5:14](#)) it was said that God "...The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness." 2 Chron 6:1.

To be filled with the Spirit is to come completely under the influence of the Holy Spirit. That's no problem – the problem come when believer places special non-biblical requirements of *evidence* of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Paul teaches that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit – Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would come into the believer and become a Comforter – advocate – instructor. We all as believers have this asset, if I can put it that way or, as Paul puts it, we are none of His – that is we have no relationship with Him ([Rom 8:9](#)). This is an important concept for us to grasp. A believer becomes ineffective not because he has not successfully achieved some sort of additional state of grace – rather a believe may become ineffective spiritually because of his own choice:

²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ³According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1, KJV.

There is nothing more to seek – we are to be diligent in our relationship with Him and we will have the power to live the Spirit-filled life.