

## WEEK 9: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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#### Big Picture

*This is where we're going... the big ideas you want people to understand more deeply during this session.*




- Spiritual Disciplines (Walking in the Spirit, Prayer, Word, Giving)
- Personal Transformation (Fruit of the Spirit)
- Gospel in rhythms of life (Spirit in Life)
- Community Life & Service

#### Set the Training Tone

*You will not need to repeat this list every week, but be aware of these and reestablish the right tone as necessary.*

- We are here to learn and change (not just a social time, but we also desire to grow closer and build community)
- Have fun, keep things moving and participatory.
- Welcome a challenge from me or others in the group (let's give each other permission to challenge us—probe, ask questions etc.).
- Strive to be honest and vulnerable and we should honor that by keeping what is shared in confidence.
- We are going to try and answer questions as much as possible from within the Story found in the Bible. Everything we need to learn about God and humans can be found right here in his Story!

#### Review Last Week's Story

-  **Last Week...** We looked at Jesus' command to his followers to be and make disciples: people that believe in Jesus and are continually learning how to walk in his ways. We learned that this command is for all ages—all people who follow Jesus. This command is for us! We are to be actively making disciples. And we are all called to be baptized as a public display and confession of our faith in Christ.
-  **Last Week...** We also talked about the idea that all of this is the work of God. He precedes us and makes us able to believe in Jesus. He then sends us out, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to live the life of a disciple and then also to make disciples. It is ALL God's work!
-  **Last Week...** What really stuck with you from our last time together?

## THE STORY & DIALOGUE

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### Scene 1 ~ The Early Church Part 1

*Story from... Acts 2 and 4; Acts 9:31; 1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 8*

The Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit filled all the disciples, marked the beginning of the new covenant people, known as the Church. Every member of the Church was empowered by the Spirit to speak about God in ways people from other cultures could understand. Thousands came to believe all that Jesus had done for them.

These new disciples of Jesus spent time together in prayer and were united in heart and mind so they shared everything they had. Selling their possessions and goods, they felt that what they owned was not their own. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to anyone in need. They celebrated communion in their homes and ate together all with great joy, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. They testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. And the Lord added to their number daily people who were being saved.

The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. Everyone was filled with awe and all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade where they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching of the Word.

Guided by the Spirit, the church grew in Jerusalem and then spread throughout the region as the disciples gave their lives fully to the work of the gospel. They continued to preach about Jesus' death and resurrection and new life for all who would believe. They lived generous lives, sacrificing for those who were in need. All of this displayed God's great generosity toward mankind in real, tangible ways.

The believers were encouraged in a letter by one of the apostles, named Paul, *"I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity."*

*I can tell you that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in this gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do."*

Another time Paul taught the believers, *"You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once."* In this way the church continued to grow and be a blessing to each other as they supported the continued spread of the gospel.

These were times of great growth and blessing for the Church as they were guided and strengthened by the indwelling Holy Spirit who led them in all the ways of truth and life.

## **Scene 1 Dialogue ~ The Early Church Part 1**

Remember **this is a dialog, not a quiz**. The “answers” below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.

**1. What are the disciples up to in this new life? What types of things are they doing?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward:*

- *Prayer, sharing their things, selling things to fund the mission, eating together, preaching, giving to the work, sacrificing, learning from the Apostles, studying the Word, celebrating communion, living a life of service...*

**2. Where did you see them living out these Rhythms:**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward:*

- *Listen(ing), Eat(ing), Celebrate(ing), Bless(ing), Storyformed... were they reCreating?*

***And it says they were filled with abundant joy...!***

**3. What parts of this story are true in your life today?**

**4. Which parts of the story do you wish were true in your life?**

**5. What do you think is keeping these things from being true?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward:*

- *Not trusting in and being led by the Spirit!*

## Scene 1 ~ The Early Church Part 2

*Story from... 1 Corinthians*

**Let me tell you another story about the Church**—several years went by and problems began to arise among some of the believers. They were no longer living under the power of the Spirit, but instead were becoming just like the rest of their culture...

Corinth was a port city, and along with great economic gain and philosophical understanding came questionable moral behavior. The problems of the city began to affect the Corinthian church. Quarreling and divisiveness had sprung up among the believers and some leaders started to claim spiritual superiority over one another. Some of the believers even began to sue one another in public courts.

Others were coming to their communal meals and overeating and drinking to the point where some were drunk and some went away hungry. Sexual immorality in the church became a problem too. One man was even reported to be having an affair with his own stepmother and no one was doing anything about it! On top of all of that, the church was starting to divide itself into factions based on who's preaching they liked the best.

The Apostle Paul wrote them a letter stating, *"each of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ.'" But Paul told them, "all things are yours . . . you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. The place of the preachers is not to establish themselves as leaders among men; instead, people should think of us all as servants of Christ."*

There were also fights about which spiritual gifts were the "best" and they began to argue about whether Jesus was really raised from the dead or not. **(Pause for a moment...)**

The good news for this story is that the church in Corinth was teachable and ultimately repented.

## Scene 2 Dialogue ~ The Early Church Part 2


Remember **this is a dialog, not a quiz**. The "answers" below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.


- 6. But what was going on here? What had happened? Why such a difference between this church and the way things were in the beginning...?**

**The Apostle Paul wrote to another church in the region, warning them how to avoid all of this...**

### **Gal. 5:16**

*So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your flesh desires. The flesh desires to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the flesh desires. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*

 *When you follow the desires of your flesh, 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. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

 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!

**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their flesh to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.**

**7. What are your thoughts about this in light of the two stories we heard about the church?**

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**8. What do you notice about the differences between these two lists?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward:*

- *The desires of the flesh produce feelings and actions that lead to relational strife.*
- *The fruits of the Spirit are both the internal and the external at the same time...*
- *We love because God is love... We are patient because God is patient....*

**Desires of the flesh**

Sexual immorality,  
Impurity  
Lustful pleasures  
Idolatry  
Sorcery  
Hostility & quarreling  
Jealousy  
Outbursts of anger  
Selfish ambition  
Dissension, division  
Envy  
Drunkenness & wild parties

**Fruit of the Spirit**

Love  
Joy  
Peace  
Patience  
Kindness  
Goodness  
Faithfulness  
Gentleness  
Self-control

**9. How do we work out the implications of this?**


**10. How do you get in this Spirit-led mode? How do you stay in it?**

**11. What does it look like to NOT live by the Spirit and try to please God in the flesh?**

**12. What is our only hope of not ending up like the Corinthian church...or being completely like the flesh-led world?**

- *Life led by the Spirit!*

 **[Resting Slide]**

 **Romans 1: 1-2 (The Message)**

*With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved....*

*A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death.*

## EXTENDING THE DIALOGUE

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### Using Media

Use of songs or artwork for further discussion...

#### **"OTHERS MAY... YOU CANNOT"** *(edited version)*

by G. D. Watson (1845-1924)

If God has called you to really be like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put upon you such demands of obedience, that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians, and in many ways, He will seem to let other people do things which He will not let you do.

Others may boast of themselves, or their work, or their successes, or their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing, and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep humiliation, that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, or may have a legacy left to them, but it is likely God will keep you poor, because He wants you to have something far better than gold, namely, a helpless dependence upon Him, that He may have the privilege of supplying your needs day by day out of an "unseen treasury."

He may let others be great, but keep you small. He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it, but He will make you work and toil on without knowing how much you are doing: and then to make your work all the more precious, He may let others get credit for the work which you have done, and thus make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes!

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you, with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for little words and feelings, or for wasting your time, which other Christians never feel distressed over. So, make up your mind, that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has the right to do as He pleases with His own. He may not explain to you a thousand things which puzzle your reason in His dealing with you, but if you absolutely sell yourself to be His love slave, He will wrap you up in a jealous love, and bestow upon you many blessings which come only to those who are in the inner circle.

### Further Application

13.  **If what we discussed today is true, how does/should it affect your life?**

14.  **How would it affect us as a community?**

15.  **How would it affect others... our neighborhood, our city?**

#### **WALKING IT OUT**

The Walking It Out handout is a tool to help us engage the Story individually and with others during the week. This session alone is not nearly enough for someone to be saturated in the Story and begin living out the implications of the Story in everyday life with a community.

As you distribute them...

**point out a few key things from the handouts you as a leader have already found meaningful.**