

Created After the Image of God

Lesson 14 – The Strength, Comfort, and Peace of the Holy Spirit

December 15, 2019

“... and to put on the new self, **created to be like God** in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24)

“... and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge **in the image of its Creator**” (Colossians 3:10)

1. Ultimately it doesn't matter that we say we know Him, but that He says He knows us!
 - a. “Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you.** Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:23)
 - b. “My sheep listen to my voice; **I know them,** and they follow me.” (John 10:27)
 - c. “But now that you know God—or rather **are known by God**” (Galatians 4:9)
 - d. “**‘The Lord knows those who are his,’** and, ‘Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.’” (2 Timothy 2:19)
2. Not all who call themselves “Christian” truly are—Christians have the Holy Spirit in their hearts
 - a. “And if anyone **does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.**” (Romans 8:9)
 - b. “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of **the Holy Spirit, who is in you,** whom you have received from God? You are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19)
 - c. “Because you are his sons, **God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,** the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Galatians 4:6)
 - d. “**Those who belong to Christ Jesus** have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:24)
 - e. “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of **the Holy Spirit who lives in us.**” (2 Timothy 1:14)
3. God gives us supernatural strength that we can't just “work up” or produce on our own
 - a. “So do not fear, for **I am with you;** do not be dismayed, for **I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;** I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)
 - b. “They will say of me, **‘In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.’**” (Isaiah 45:24)
 - c. “I pray that out of his glorious riches **he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit** in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16)
 - d. “Finally, **be strong in the Lord** and in his mighty power.” (Ephesians 6:10)
 - e. “**Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might** so that you may have great endurance and patience” (Colossians 1:11)
4. I heard Bill Kennedy say many times, “It's not just hard to live the Christian life—it's impossible!”
 - a. In our own human strength and ability, it's impossible to live the way Christ commanded
 - b. God gives us the strength by the Holy Spirit in our hearts to be able to live pleasing to Him
 - c. God never commands us to do anything that we're unable to do because He will give us the strength, ability, resources, and means to be able to do it
 - i. For example: since He commands us to honor our father and mother, though we might have to make major sacrifices to fulfill this, God will provide and make the way
 - ii. Since He enables us to do what He commands, we have no excuses for disobedience
5. The Holy Spirit enables us to do what the rest of the world can't do—sincerely love our enemies
 - a. “A new command I give you: **Love one another. As I have loved you,** so you must love one another.” (John 13:34)
 - i. Christ's example is that He loved all 12 disciples including His enemy Judas Iscariot
 - ii. “But I tell you, **love your enemies** and **pray for those** who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44)
 - iii. “**Father, forgive them,** for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

- iv. It's not natural or humanly possible to have consistent and sincere love for our enemies
- v. Genuine love for our enemies is strong assurance that we truly are one of God's children
- b. "Love your neighbor as yourself ... So I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**" (Galatians 5:14, 16)
 - i. The solution for the lusts of the flesh is not willpower, it's walking by the Spirit
 - ii. The lusts of the flesh subside when we strive to obey Christ's commandment of love
 - iii. I've learned that the more I focus on loving others, the less problems I have with my flesh
- 6. "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, **I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.**" (2 Corinthians 12:7)
 - a. This "thorn" in Paul's flesh was likely a person, a false teacher undermining his work
 - i. "But if you do not drive out **the inhabitants of the land**, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and **thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble** in the land where you will live." (Numbers 33:55)
 - ii. In Scripture, thorns in the flesh were ungodly people causing trouble for God's people
 - b. "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me." (2Co 12:8)
 - i. Even the apostle Paul didn't always get his prayers answered or know what to pray for
 - ii. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. **For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought**, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26)
 - c. "**My grace is sufficient for you**, for my power is made perfect **in weakness.**" (2Co 12:9)
 - i. Grace means favor—God was favoring Paul, He was on Paul's side and that's all he needed
 - ii. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)
 - iii. "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; **he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.** But when you are tempted, **he will also provide a way out** so that you can endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - iv. The solution isn't always for the problems to go away but for us to trust God through them
 - d. "That is why, **for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses**, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**" (2Co 12:10)
 - i. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **Rejoice and be glad**, because great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:11-12)
 - ii. "**Consider it pure joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2)
 - iii. "**In all this you greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials." (1 Peter 1:6)
- 7. The Holy Spirit gives us the desire and will to obey—it's actually a joy to serve and obey Him
 - a. Christians have a hunger to do His will similar to a hunger for food
 - i. "I have not departed from the commands of his lips; **I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.**" (Job 23:12)
 - ii. "Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6)
 - iii. "**'My food,'** said Jesus, **'is to do the will of him who sent me** and to finish his work.'" (John 4:34)
 - b. My wife and I both experienced changed hearts toward our dads after becoming Christians
- 8. The Holy Spirit confirms our conscience when we do right and when we repent
 - a. "I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, **my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit**" (Romans 9:1)
 - b. The clear conscience we feel after repenting is one of the greatest assurances of salvation

9. God comforts our hearts by the Holy Spirit when we're suffering out of obedience to Him
 - a. "And walking in the fear of the Lord and in **the comfort of the Holy Spirit**, they were multiplied." (Acts 9:31 NKJV)
 - b. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and **the God of all comfort**, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with **the comfort we ourselves receive from God**." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
 - c. "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, **comfort your hearts** and establish you in every good word and work." (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NKJV)
10. God's peace in our hearts comes by prayer and by thinking right about other people
 - a. "**Do not be anxious about anything**, but in every situation, **by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding**, will guard your **hearts and your minds** in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - i. We're not to be anxious about anything but to turn everything over to God in prayer
 - ii. It won't make sense how we can have such peace in the midst of our problems
 - b. "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is **true**, whatever is **noble**, whatever is **right**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **admirable**—if anything is **excellent** or **praiseworthy**—**think [logizomai] about such things**. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. **And the God of peace will be with you**." (Philippians 4:8-9)
 - i. There's a saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover" but we all tend to do this with people—we jump to conclusions about them and treat them accordingly
 - ii. The Greek *logizomai* means "to reckon" or "to take into account," we are to reckon what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy about other people
 - iii. If we don't know something is true about someone, we shouldn't reckon it to be true
 - iv. We're to treat others right, not just in what we say and do, but every thought about them
 - v. "And the God of peace will be with you," He is on the side of those striving for peace
 - vi. When we're doing our part to be at peace with others, God is with us and is on our side
11. "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation**, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **I can do all this through him who gives me strength**." (Philippians 4:12-13)
 - a. God knows our hearts therefore He knows if we're sincerely content in our situation or not
 - b. When He sees we're striving to be content, He will give us the strength to truly be content
 - c. God can easily change our situation, so when He doesn't, we should conclude that it's His will
 - d. When we're discontent with our circumstances, we're not submitting to God
 - e. Rather than being content with our problems, we get sidetracked trying to solve them all
 - i. We get too focused on ourselves that we don't obey God and sacrifice to serve others
 - ii. We say to ourselves, "Once I get these problems solved then I'll start serving others"
12. When we're walking with God, we experience God working in our lives every day
 - a. Christianity is not a set of rules, it's experiencing and living in a real relationship with God
 - b. If you're not yet a Christian, you haven't experienced God showing Himself real in your life
 - c. Your first experience will be the burden of your sins gone by the Holy Spirit in your heart
13. If you're not yet in a relationship with God then you need to seek Him and find Him
 - a. Christ has been away for 2,000 years, "It is like a man going on a journey" (Mark 13:34 NET)
 - b. There's a saying, "When the cat's away, the mice will play!" How do we act while He's gone?
 - c. God can hide so incredibly well that you'll be convinced He doesn't exist
 - d. He doesn't need to be found by anyone, He doesn't need anything—we need Him!
 - e. "Come near to God and he will come near to you." (James 4:8)