

**NORMAL? Finding Spiritual Equilibrium in a**

NCAC Sunday School Class Summer 2021

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**Overall Class Objective:** To gain biblical perspective on maintaining spiritual health in a context of prolonged, disorienting circumstances.

**Class Overview**

1. Discuss the general effects of Covid in our culture.
2. Identify some aspects of Covid's emotional/psychological impact.
3. Explore the spiritual consequences of the pandemic among believers.
4. Examine how we get off balance spiritually.
5. Delineate the nature of the Christian life.
6. Consider what constitutes spiritual health.
7. Determine what we can do to renew our spiritual wellness.

**Notes****How should we understand the essential nature of the Christian life?**

Union with Christ (see previous notes)

Union with the Holy Spirit

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:11

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 1 Corinthians 2:12

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 2 Corinthians 5:5

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being. . . . Ephesians 3:15-17

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20, 21

## How do we go about reinvigorating our spiritual equilibrium?

We return to foundational Gospel truths properly ordered.

Union with Christ results in our justification (being declared righteous by God).

Union with the Holy Spirit empowers us to pursue sanctification (living a life of holiness).

Sanctification is grounded in justification. Because we are liberated from the bondage of sin by the sacrifice of Christ, we are free to pursue righteousness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, these two inseparable truths must not be confused!

If we believe sanctification equals justification, it results in legalism (salvation by works). I am made acceptable to God through my spiritual achievements. (i.e. I am justified by my sanctification.)

If we believe justification is the same as sanctification, it results in license (believing we have holiness without obedience). Since I have been made fully acceptable to God by the righteousness of Jesus, I cannot make myself any more acceptable to God, therefore my obedience is unnecessary. (i.e. I am sanctified by my justification.)

We tell ourselves the truth about our justification.

“. . . [that] only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives remains a perpetual concern for Christian communities. . . . We [the church] must first make real to them the grace of God in accepting them daily, not because of their spirituality or their achievements in Christian service, but because God has accounted to them the perfect righteousness of Christ.”

Richard Lovelace, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Life*



We live daily, consciously seeking the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to follow Christ, overcome sin and serve the cause of the Gospel.

“Even where Christians know about the Holy Spirit doctrinally, they have not necessarily made a deliberate point of getting to know him personally. They may have occasional experiences of his reality on a hit-and-run basis, but the fact that the pronoun “it” is so frequently used to refer to him is not accidental. It reflects the fact that he is perceived impersonally as an expression of God’s power and not experienced continually as a personal Guide and Counselor.

A Normal relationship with the Holy Spirit should at least approximate the Old Testament experience described in Psalm 139: a profound awareness that we are always face to face with God; that as we move through life, the presence of his Spirit is the most real and powerful factor in our daily environment; that underneath the momentary static of events, conflicts, problems and even excursions into sin, he is always there. . . .

What should be done to reverse this situation? We should make a deliberate effort at the outset of every day to recognize the person of the Holy Spirit, to move into the light concerning his presence in our consciousness and to open up our minds and to share all our thoughts and plans as we gaze by faith into the face of God. We should continue to walk throughout the day in a relationship of communication and communion with the Spirit mediated through knowledge of the Word, relying upon every office of the Holy Spirit’s role as counselor mentioned in Scripture. We should acknowledge him as the illuminator of truth and of the glory of Christ. We should look to him as teacher, guide, sanctifier, giver of assurance concerning our sonship and standing before God, helper in prayer, and as the one who directs and empowers witness.

We should particularly recognize that growth in holiness is not simply a matter of the lonely individual making claims of faith on the basis of Romans 6:1-14. It involves moving about in all the areas of our life in dependent fellowship with a person: “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16 NASB). When this practice of the presence of God is maintained over a period of time, our experience of the Holy Spirit becomes less subjective and more clearly identifiable, as gradually we learn to distinguish the strivings of the Spirit from the motions of our flesh.”

Richard Lovelace, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Life*

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16