

Lesson for October 25, 2009

Review of Our Spiritual Assets

A Firm Foundation and Availability of Divine Power

A Firm Foundation (Edification Complex of the Soul)

The Christian Way of Life is a life of learning, believing and applying the Word of God to every circumstance in life. In order to properly execute the plan of God, the believer must learn to think divine viewpoint. Divine viewpoint is found only in the Bible, the source of absolute truth.

God has given all believers a command to grow spiritually and He never gives us a command without giving us the means necessary to obey it. God, therefore, has provided His written instruction book (the Bible) and the filling (control) of the Holy Spirit. Both are grace functions for every believer in this age, regardless of education or I.Q. Any believer with a positive attitude towards Bible doctrine can learn, believe and apply it.

At salvation all believers are placed into union with Jesus Christ and become complete in Him, positionally (our standing before God). (Colossians 2:10) However, experientially (our standing before men) we are not complete because we still have a sin nature. For this reason all believers are commanded to grow spiritually and to advance toward spiritual maturity. (Ephesians 4:14-15; II Peter 3:18) Spiritual maturity and a stabilized mind should be the goal of every person who has trusted Christ as Savior.

Spiritual maturity does not happen overnight. It takes a lifetime of persistent and consistent study to learn Bible doctrine. God's Word likens spiritual growth to building a house. Often expressed as edification, the concept in Greek is to build or to build up. For the Christian, this occurs in his soul as he exposes himself to accurate Bible teaching and applies the truth that he learns. As with any building, we must be careful to first "lay" the right foundation before we build on it. The Scripture is clear that the only foundation for the believer is Jesus Christ Himself. We know that the Word of God is the mind of Christ. Therefore, the foundation is the written Word (Christ is the living Word). The written Word of God is meant to be understood and utilized as a blueprint for the Christian Way of Life. God's Word is meant to be understood.

The Biblical Usage of “Edification”

The Greek word for “edification” is “oikodome” and literally means the act of building or erecting a structure. (Ephesians 4:11-29) Like any structure, our “building” in the soul must have a firm foundation and properly-constructed “floors”. Our foundation is Jesus Christ and the “floors” are categories of Bible doctrine. Once the foundation is in place, then the believer can begin to build upon it with full confidence that it will stand. The foundation is received at salvation, but the floors must be built over a period of time, as Bible doctrine is learned, believed and applied. (Ephesians 4:12,16,29; Colossians 2:7; I Timothy 1:4; James 1:4)

The basis for any system from God is always GRACE. The word grace itself makes it clear that God’s system for the spiritual building is void of any human merit, human works, human ability or human viewpoint thinking. The reason that God planned it this way is to eliminate human viewpoint thinking and human production as the means for building anything spiritual. Instead, He provided a non-meritorious system for both perception and execution of the Christian Way of Life: FAITH. We learn how to erect this building in our souls by faith and it takes faith to put into practice. This method is the only one that can bring honor and glory to God. (Hebrews 11:6)

Glorifying God on earth is one of the reasons we are here and is never accomplished by overt activity. *It is our spiritual lives that bring glory to God, not our Christian lives.* The difference is that our spiritual life is our relationship with God and our Christian life is our relationship with others. As we allow the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us, we reflect the glory of God to the world. The Bible declares that the believer is the light of the world. As light, we are to shine into dark places, which means we are to exhibit the character of Christ. (Matthew 5:14-16; Colossians 1:27, 3:16-17)

The Formation of the Spiritual Building

The spiritual building is built using the stored Bible doctrine in the soul. Consistent study and application over a period of time is the method for developing our complex. This building is literally Christ being formed in the soul of the believer. Positionally, Christ is “in” every believer, but He is not “formed” in every believer. Jesus Christ had this spiritual building formed in His soul. He had all the characteristics of spiritual maturity: 1) He was full of grace and truth 2) He had a relaxed mental attitude 3) He was free from mental attitude sins 4) He had capacity for love and 5) He had divine inner happiness. Christ erected the spiritual building in His soul as a demonstration to all believers that it is possible for us to do the same through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 4:19; John 1:14)

As a believer-priest, we have the opportunity to build a spiritual building in *our* soul. With Christ as our example, we simply follow His pattern. Christ built this building under the filling of the Holy Spirit as He learned and applied the Word of God. As we abide in Him (fellowship with God) and His word abides in us (Bible doctrine) we are allowing God the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ in our lives. (John 15:10) The Bible uses a number of terms to refer to this building process. For example, walking in the light (I John 2:3-11), walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-23), imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1), Christ at home in your hearts (Ephesians 3:17), and Christ formed in you. (Galatians 4:19)

Availability of Divine Power

The Christian Way of Life can be lived only by a power greater than ourselves. We need God's supernatural power in order to be effective in the execution of His plan, purpose and will. This power has been given to each of us in the person of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus prophesied the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, He said He would send the Comforter. The word in Greek for Comforter is "parakletos" which means "someone called to the aid of another", particularly in the legal process. The "parakletos" would have therefore been an advisor, intercessor, mediator or advocate in a courtroom setting. In English we would use the word "lawyer."

We can see from the etymology of the word that "comforter" is a poor translation of "parakletos." The word more correctly connotes ability, aid, and assistance, rather than comfort from pain or distress. God the Holy Spirit was not sent to "pat us on the head" and tell us that all will be okay. The Holy Spirit was given to us to empower us, to guide us and to teach us. (John 14:26, 15:26) Jesus said, "You shall receive power ("dunamis" in Greek) after the Holy Spirit is come upon you...." (Acts 1:8)

After salvation the Holy Spirit provides the spiritual I.Q. for learning and applying Bible doctrine. (I Corinthians 2:9-14) The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for the unbeliever, and God's Word (Bible doctrine) is powerful in the life of the believer when he is learning and applying it. (Romans 1:16; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12) John 4:24, tells us to worship God in Spirit (the filling of the Holy Spirit) and in truth (Bible doctrine). *Without the power of the Holy Spirit the believer has no spiritual life.*

The utilization of the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is a matter of personal volition. The believer must choose to allow the Holy Spirit to "fill" him. "*Be filled with the Holy Spirit*" is one of the first positive commands after salvation. The Greek word for "filling" is "pleroo" and has four meanings, all of which apply to the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The second positive command after salvation is to “*walk by means of the Holy Spirit*”, which means the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives. By relying on the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us we are depending on His power to control our lives. The control of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is limited only by the amount of Bible doctrine resident in his soul *and* his personal volition. It is Bible doctrine resident in your soul that the Holy Spirit uses to guide you. The Holy Spirit does not whisper in your ear and your conscience is not the same as the Holy Spirit. However, your conscience can be influenced by God’s Word and by the Holy Spirit. In the Church Age in which we live, God speaks to us only through His Word.

“*Stop grieving the Holy Spirit of God*” is the first negative command after salvation. Grieving means to bring sorrow, which is against the will of God, takes us out of fellowship with God and we lose the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:30) The second negative command after salvation is “*do not quench the Spirit.*” Quenching means to suppress or say “no” to the Holy Spirit, which is also against the will of God and causes us to lose the filling of the Holy Spirit and our fellowship with God. (I Thessalonians 5:19)

When the believer chooses to sin, he cuts off the divine power source: God the Holy Spirit. Since God’s power system and Satan’s cosmic system are mutually exclusive, the believer is either in one or the other. If you are not residing in God’s system, you are residing in Satan’s. By residing in Satan’s system, the Holy Spirit is either grieved and/or quenched and He is no longer able to function in the life of the believer. Returning to God’s power system is a matter of acknowledging known sins directly to God. As a result, fellowship with God and the filling of the Holy Spirit are restored, and the believer is able once again to “walk by means of the Spirit.”
(I John 1:5-10)