

Living By The Holy Spirit—Part Two, Cont...

The Path of the Cross

This week I want to continue with the methods God uses on the path of the cross, that journey into full life in the Holy Spirit. Remember that to be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be under His influence, His control: to live and act and do as He wills. Remember also that living by the Spirit is so foreign to our experience that habits of self-reliance are nearly impossible to break. So only with our invitation and God's power can we be transformed into Spirit filled people.

There are three overlapping areas that God will address in our lives in order to bring us to full dependency upon Him, and His plan is tailor made for each individual depending on their needs and strongholds:

The area of full surrender to God in every area of our life
The area of death to the self-life on the journey to the cross
The area of freedom from law-keeping

I. God Will Test Our Surrender, Either Before or After Our Commitment

- A. Abraham & Isaac on the altar of sacrifice
- B. Jacob at Peniel wrestling with God at the Brook Jabok
- C. Peter at the seashore after the resurrection
- D. Paul on the road to Damascus
- E. There must be no question remaining that we have surrendered completely to God every aspect of our being: our cherished possessions, our hopes, our dreams, our goals. Anything less than full surrender will leave us standing at the threshold of the Spirit-filled life without crossing over.

II. God Will Lead Us Down A Path Designed To Destroy All Self-confidence

- A. Moses in Egypt and 40 years later at the burning bush
- B. Jeremiah wants to quit (Jer. 20:7-9); see also Jer. 17:5-8
- C. Peter boasts of his devotion, but is broken in denial at the trial (Matt. 26:31-35; 69-75)
- D. Paul battles with coveting and envy (Rom. 7)

III. God Will Prove That We Have Died To Law-keeping And Lead Us To Freedom

The test of surrender brings us to a crisis of faith. The path of the cross leads us on a journey that is initially filled with despair. But the deliverance from law-keeping makes us feel initially insecure and afraid, fearful that we are doing something terribly wrong or that we will do something catastrophic.

- A. Peter and the sheet of unclean foods, preparing him to visit Cornelius' home and his backsliding at Antioch
- B. David eating the shewbread in the Tabernacle when he was in need of food (Matt. 12:1-6)
- C. We desire rules because they makes us feel secure and give us a metric for measuring our progress—against our past and compared to one another. They also avoid a dependent relationship upon and with the Holy Spirit for our daily life.

Paul had the clearest understanding of this principle after His conversion. He teaches clearly that we are free from law in all realms, that we might be led by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:25)