

Summary

- a) This session is the tenth of ten sessions that looks at a vital principle that fosters Spirit-led living.
- b) The tenth principle that we will examine is this: Christ dwelling in your heart is of utmost importance, for whoever dwells in your heart—whether self or Christ—will be the life source from which you live.

Introduction

- a) Ephesians 3:16-17 states, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”
- b) Your spirit is like a reservoir containing Christ’s indestructible life and everything you need for godliness.
- c) Your soul is like a dam determining the measure of Christ’s life that is released from your spirit.
- d) Your heart is like the river on the other side of the dam receiving the release of Christ’s indwelling life from your spirit. Then, like an aqueduct, your heart distributes Christ’s life to your mind, will, emotions, and body.
- e) And finally, like a hydroelectric powerplant, when Christ’s life is released from your spirit, it generates God’s inward power for ability—His grace—enabling you to live by Christ’s life and produce Christlike fruit.

Your Spirit Is Like a Reservoir

- a) Peter said, “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).
- b) Notice he wrote *has granted*, in the past tense, meaning you already have everything you need for life and godliness in your spirit.
- c) Because of the indwelling Spirit, you already have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control inside of you (see Gal. 5:22-23).
 - This means you already have all the love you will ever need to love God and love others.
 - You already have unspeakable joy inside of you, shattering the yoke of gloom and depression.
 - You already have peace—the very Prince of Peace Himself—residing inside of you, silencing the voice of anxiety and worry trying to rise up in your soul.
 - You already have all the patience you need to deal with difficult children, relatives, and coworkers, enabling you to remain composed when others express their quirks, faults, shortcomings, and sins.
 - You already have all the kindness you need to give a gentle answer which turns away wrath.
 - You also have all the meekness you need to fully obey the Lord, silencing the inner lawyer who wants to argue your selfish cause with persuasive, self-justifying excuses.
 - You already have all the meekness you need to submit to God’s will, ways, Word, and voice without resistance, defiance, internal disputes, arguments, strife, or contention.
 - You have all the self-control you need to live a disciplined, focused, and holy life, empowering you to overcome the external cravings of the flesh and the internal desires of the soul. You already have the inner restraint in your spirit to resist ungodly impulses, thoughts, emotions, and desires.

Your Soul Is Like a Dam

- a) Paul said, “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him” (1 Cor. 2:14).
- b) Like the natural man’s thinking blocks the things of the Spirit of God, your soul is like a dam, determining the measure of Christ’s indwelling life that is released from your spirit.
- c) Even though you have everything you need for life and godliness in your spirit, your thinking, choices, and feelings determine the measure of life and godliness released from your spirit into your heart and then outward to your soul and body.
- d) As stated in the last session, your will determines whether you are spiritual or carnal.
- e) The soul, especially the will, is truly the gatekeeper and steward responsible for the life source from which you live.
- f) Your will shoulders a weighty responsibility, choosing each day whether you live by the body, the soul, or the spirit.
- g) Not only does your will choose whether or not you live by Christ’s indwelling life, but your will also decides the measure of Christ’s life that fills your heart and permeates your soul.

Your Heart Is Like a Receiving River

- a) Speaking to born-again believers, who had the indwelling Spirit in their spirits, Paul said, “So that Christ *may* dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:17, emphasis mine).
- b) When your mind is renewed and your will crucified, Christ’s indwelling life is released from your spirit into your heart. This means your heart is like the river on the other side of the dam, receiving the release of the Spirit from your spirit.
- c) Notice the word *may* in this verse. Christ dwelling in the heart is not automatic. Reading Ephesians 3:14-17 carefully, Christ dwelling in the heart depends upon whether or not your spirit has been strengthened by the indwelling Spirit with power for ability.
- d) If your spirit is strengthened as the uncontested leader, then Christ, who dwells in your spirit, will overflow into your heart, fill your heart, dwell in your heart, and live His life in you and through you.
- e) But if your soul or body is the strongest part of you, then the opposite will happen. Like a closed dam, your soul will keep Christ’s indwelling life restrained within you, self will remain enthroned in your heart, and you will live for yourself, using the mind, will, emotions, and five senses to get what you want.
- f) God’s great goal is to conquer your heart and dwell there continually. The Lord aims to make your heart His permanent habitation. This was Paul’s burden for the Ephesians in his great prayer in Ephesians 3:14-17. Paul wanted the life of Christ in their spirits to have a permanent dwelling place in their hearts.
- g) The word for *dwell* in Ephesians 3:17 means “to settle down in a dwelling, to dwell fixedly in a place.”¹ The noun form of this word means a “habitation.”² In fact, according to *Strong’s*, this word means “to house permanently.”³
- h) The ramifications of this are astounding! Paul’s prayer is nothing less than the Spirit of Christ making a permanent home in your heart, dwelling in fullness. This is far more than an occasional visitation. Christ wants to make your heart His permanent habitation.
- i) Remember my definition of the heart:

The heart is the deepest part of the soul. It is central to who you are and all you do and contains your deepest emotions, desires, beliefs, intentions, motives, thoughts, hopes, attitudes, convictions, affections, devotions, dispositions, and character. Most importantly, the heart determines your hunger, thirst, and desire for God.

- j) God is a heart God. He doesn't look at outward appearances but at the heart (see 1 Sam. 16:7). The Spirit yearns to make your heart His home. He wants to be King in your heart. He desires to establish His kingdom in your heart. He wants to dwell in your heart fully and live His life from there.

Your Heart Is Like an Aqueduct

- a) Solomon said, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov. 4:23).
- b) The NKJV translates the last phrase as "for out of it spring the issues of life." The NIV translates it like this: "Everything you do flows from it." The NLT puts it this way: "For it determines the course of your life."
- c) Not only is your heart like a receiving river, but your heart is also like an aqueduct. When your heart is filled with Christ, His life is distributed from your heart to your mind, will, emotions, and body, organically producing Christlike fruit in abundance.
- d) The issues of life spring forth from the heart. That means everything you do flows from the heart, and therefore, the heart determines the course of your life.
- e) Just as the physical heart pumps blood to the arteries and veins in the circulatory system, your immaterial heart pumps your deepest thoughts, desires, emotions, and beliefs to your soul for processing and execution.
- f) Jesus confirmed this, stating, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders" (Matt. 15:19).
- g) All the issues of life, whether righteous or unrighteous, flow out of the heart to the rest of your being.
- h) As the heart is, so are you. You can't fake the condition of your heart. You can't hide the condition of your heart. Who you are in your heart is who you are. And who you are in your heart eventually comes out, one way or another, whether through your thoughts, words, or actions.
- i) Your heart is like an aqueduct, receiving the release of the Spirit and channeling Christ's life to your soul and body. Therefore, Christ dwelling in your heart is of utmost importance, for whoever dwells in your heart—whether self or Christ—will be the life source from which you live. This is the tenth law of the Spirit-led life and will be our focus in this session.

The Old Self and New Self

- a) To unpack this tenth law of the Spirit-led life, I want to answer this question: How do you get Christ's life in your spirit released into your heart and distributed to your soul and body?
- b) To answer this question, let's look at Paul's teaching about taking off the old self and putting on the new self in Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-14.
- c) In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul said, "In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."
- d) Notice the old self is in a state of decay and corruption, as the lusts of deceit rot your old Adamic nature.

- e) What, exactly, is the old self? It's everything you were in Adam minus your new righteous spirit and new heart. More specifically, your old self is your flesh, your unrenewed soul coupled together with your unredeemed body. Paul exhorted us to take off this old self and put on the new self.
- f) As you have seen, your new self is your new spirit—regenerated, resurrected, recreated in righteousness and holiness, refashioned into a state of Christlikeness, complete, one with the indwelling Spirit, and a partaker of the divine nature. The old you must be taken off, and the new you must be put on.
- g) In his letter to the Colossians, Paul offered additional insight into taking off the old self and putting on the new self. He said,

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. . . . Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. (Col. 3:9-14)

- h) Here's the main take away. Putting on the new self is synonymous with putting on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love. So it sinks in deeper, here's an abbreviated version of this passage: "Put on the new self. . . . Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. . . . Put on love."
- i) When you put on the new self—your new spirit—the place you put it on is your heart. This is the same idea of Christ dwelling in your heart from the overflow of a strong spirit. And it's the same idea of your heart being like the river behind the dam, which receives the overflow of Christ's indwelling life, and then like an aqueduct, channels it out to your soul and body.
- j) All this can be summarized by Paul's commandment to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14).
- k) Putting on Christ, therefore, is clothing your heart with your new spirit. It's having your spirit strengthened with the indwelling Spirit's power, which then releases Christ from your spirit into your heart, so He dwells in your heart and lives His life in you and through you.
- l) So, how do you practically take off the old self and put on the new self? I have discovered at least eight ways:
 - 1. Crucifying the soul, especially the will.
 - 2. Renewing the mind.
 - 3. Praying for a strong spirit.
 - 4. Removing hinderances in the heart.
 - 5. Sanctifying Christ as Lord in your heart.
 - 6. Releasing the life and godliness in you.
 - 7. Developing a daily routine of putting on Christ.
 - 8. Abiding in Christ from the heart.
- m) Since we already looked at the first three in earlier sessions, we will only look at the remaining five in this session.

Removing Hinderances from the Heart

- a) In my journey of learning how to live by Christ's indwelling life, I have discovered times when the release of the Spirit from my spirit into my heart seems to be hindered. Something—more accurately, someone, namely self—is blocking Christ from dwelling in my heart unhindered.
- b) When I experience this blockage, I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what is lodged in my heart, whether pride, jealousy, lust, judgment, fear, doubt, or unbelief. I ask Him to highlight the areas where I need to confess my sins and repent or renew my mind to the truth.
- c) Remember, the heart is the spring from which all the issues of life flow.
 - This means your heart will either be the source of human depravity or Christlikeness.
 - Your heart will either be filled with self or Christ.
- d) Whoever occupies the throne of your heart will be the life source from which you live—whether self-life in the soul or Christ's life in your spirit.
- e) Though Christ dwells in your spirit, He will only dwell in your heart if He is welcomed, invited, and embraced. He will only dwell in your heart if you surrender to Him.

The Heart-Mind Connection

- a) I can't afford having any hinderances blocking Christ from dwelling fully in my heart. That's why, if my mind is bombarded with thoughts of pride, doubt, anxiety, coveting, lust, bitterness, guilt, shame, or condemnation, I try to remember that evil thoughts spring forth from the heart.
- b) Like my car's check engine light, a flood of thoughts in a specific area usually indicates something needs to be fixed in the engine of my heart.
- c) Though renewing the mind is essential, I have also learned the importance of the heart-mind connection. If I can't stop thinking about something, it usually means a belief has been forged in my heart and the fruit of this belief is an onslaught of thoughts in my mind.
- d) Upon further examination, I realize my heart is believing a lie that must be confronted and expelled by the truth of God's Word.
- e) This means watching over your heart diligently is essential if you want Christ to dwell there. Without this circumspect posture, it's likely pride, lust, doubt, unbelief, greed, jealousy, envy, judgment, or criticism will subtly creep in and defile your heart.
- f) No matter how much the Lord loves you, Christ will not compete with your other lovers, gods, and idols, including the idol of self. The Holy Spirit jealously yearns to cleanse your heart from all defilement of the flesh and replace it with the fullness of Christ's uncreated life.
- g) Don't allow anything of the fallen nature to fill your heart, keeping Christ's life in your spirit suppressed and imprisoned. Let the Spirit dig deep into your heart and make it the permanent dwelling place of Christ in fullness.

Sanctifying Christ as Lord in Your Heart

- a) Peter exhorted us to "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1 Pet. 3:15). The Greek word for sanctify is *hagiazō* and has three distinct but related meanings.

Make Christ Lord

- a) First, *hagiazō* means “to render or acknowledge, to be venerable or hallow.”⁴
- b) To sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart, therefore, requires you to acknowledge daily that Christ in you is the supreme Lord of your life. He is the King of your heart.
- c) Everything you are, including all of your hopes, dreams, and plans, must be surrendered to Him. This includes relinquishing your prized possessions, money, house, family, country, ministry, and career.
- d) In addition, acknowledging Christ as Lord in your heart means committing yourself to wholehearted obedience, determining to rely entirely on the Spirit’s enabling grace to fully obey Jesus’ commandments.
- e) When you fully surrender your heart to Jesus daily—burning every bridge to the self-life—then obedience to His commandments becomes the natural outcome. And it’s the fruit of obedience that reveals whether the surrender of your heart is real and not just an empty prayer.

Consecration

- a) Second, *hagiazō* also means “to separate from profane things and dedicate to God.”⁵
- b) Profane things can be sinful things, such as looking at pornography, an adulterous relationship, holding onto bitterness, or coveting some treasure or toy.
- c) But good things can also keep you from living from your spirit and fulfilling the will of God, such as an over-demanding job, a friendship, a business partnership, a life consumed with your children’s sporting events, an obsession with golf, or a drive to move up the corporate ladder. The list of possibilities is endless.
- d) True surrender of the heart involves separating from whatever hinders you from living from your spirit and following Jesus wherever He goes. As you separate from profane and even good things and dedicate yourself wholly to God, Jesus will possess your heart.

Purify

- a) Third, *hagiazō* also means “to purify.”⁶
- b) As you acknowledge Jesus as Lord, venerate Him as King, separate from the worthless, the profane, and even the good, and dedicate yourself to the lordship of Christ, then Jesus will possess and purify your heart.
- c) When you relinquish everything in your heart to Jesus and ask Him to come and dwell fully in your heart by His Spirit, then the Holy Spirit will purify your heart and fill your heart with His indwelling life.
- d) Noel Mann, a minister from Australia who was like a spiritual father to me, put it this way: “What we give, He takes. What He takes, He cleans. What He cleans, He fills. What He fills, He controls.”
- e) Let me say this again a bit differently. Whatever Jesus possesses, He purifies. Whatever Jesus purifies, He fills. And whatever Jesus fills, He directs toward His perfect plan, purpose, and will.
- f) As you make Jesus the supreme Lord of your heart, He takes possession of your heart, purifies your heart, fills your heart, and then lives His life from your heart, affecting everything in your life.
- g) Like Paul said, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). The Christian life is not about you trying to live like Christ, struggling to obey Him and overcome sin. It is Christ dwelling in your heart and living His life through you.
- h) To make Galatians 2:20 a reality in your life, you need Christ to possess your heart wholly, purify your heart completely, fill your heart fully, and reign in your heart as King unconditionally.

Releasing the Life and Godliness in You

- a) Picture for a moment Hoover Dam in Nevada, one of the largest dams in the United States. Behind the dam is a massive reservoir known as Lake Mead. During times of excess water flow, the dam stores water in the reservoir. But when the water flow is low, the dam releases water from the reservoir to meet the community's demand for water.
- b) Now imagine the water supply in the community is low, but the reservoir is full. All that needs to happen is for the dam to release more water from the abundant supply in the reservoir. Instead, a group of intercessors goes to Hoover Dam and prays for God to send more rain to the area. More rain is certainly not a bad thing, but in this situation, it is not necessary. All the water the city needs is presently contained in the reservoir.
- c) Like the intercessors asking the Lord to send rain, many sincere believers are asking the Lord for more love, joy, peace, or patience. There is certainly nothing wrong with this type of prayer. I still pray this way at times.
- d) But the problem is we typically look up to heaven for God to pour out His love, peace, joy, and humility upon us rather than looking to our spirits, where Christ dwells, for an inward release of His life into our hearts. What's really needed is opening the dam of your soul and releasing the water in the reservoir of your spirit.
- e) After I realized my spirit was like a reservoir and my soul was like a dam, I changed the way I pray. Now, instead of looking upward for an outpouring of the Spirit's life upon me, I look inward, to where Christ dwells in my spirit. I then ask for the Father to strengthen my spirit with power, so Christ would fill my heart and release His life from my heart into my soul and body.
- f) I pray for Christ and all that He is to dwell in my heart unhindered and to permeate my thinking, feelings, and choices with Christ's divine nature. I also rely on the Spirit to apply the cross to my soul, especially to my will, so nothing of self would block the release of the Spirit into my heart.
- g) Remember what Paul told the Colossians when he said, "Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. . . . Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" (Col. 3:12, 14)? You can only put on what you already have.
 - You can't put on clothes that are not in your closet.
 - You can't put on shoes that you haven't already purchased.
 - You can only put on what already belongs to you.
- h) Basically, Paul was saying compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love already reside in your spirit. However, don't let these attributes of Christ become suppressed and dormant. Go into the closet of your spirit, so to speak, take out these attributes of Christ, and clothe your heart in them.
- i) So rather than asking the Lord for more love, peace, joy, or patience, ask instead for the indwelling Spirit to fully possess and fill your heart with Himself. Then, step out of the way and allow Him to live His life in you and through you.
- j) When you do this, the Spirit will flow from your spirit outward to your heart, soul, and body, organically producing His fruit in you and through you.

Putting On Christ Daily

- a) Most of us wake up wearing PJs. If it's cold, I wake up with long pajama bottoms and a long-sleeve t-shirt. On occasion, I might take the trash to the street in my PJs, but I would never go to the store, work,

or see my friends dressed like this. I don't leave the house until I've had breakfast, taken a shower, brushed my teeth, put on deodorant, and gotten dressed. I have a daily routine for getting ready for the day.

- b) Tragically, many born-again believers, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, spend less than five minutes a day, if that, dressing themselves spiritually. They might wake up, say a quick prayer, read one or two verses in the Bible, perhaps read a short devotional, frantically get ready, and then bolt out the door spiritually naked, clothed in the PJs of their old self.
- c) When Paul exhorted us to take off the old self and put on the new self, this was not a one-time act. It is a daily routine—just like getting ready for the day.
- d) Just as getting ready physically takes times, clothing your heart with Christ, the new self, and Christ's virtues also requires time. You simply can't clothe yourself appropriately if you rush it.
- e) If you don't have a daily routine to properly clothe yourself with Christ before starting the day, by default, you will be clothed in the old self. You will go to work, run errands, and see friends wearing your PJs rather than the appropriate clothes.
- f) If you don't have a daily routine—a set schedule where you spend time waiting on the Lord, taking off the old self, and putting "on the Lord Jesus Christ"—you will likely live from your self-life, resulting in a soul-led or body-led life rather than a spirit-led life. This means you will be carnal rather than spiritual.
- g) If you don't give yourself enough time every day to clothe your heart with the fruits of the Spirit by renewing your mind, waiting on the Lord to strengthen your spirit, and surrendering your heart to the lordship of Christ, then you will live spiritually naked, dressed in the clothing of the old self rather than the new self.
- h) It's impossible to live by Christ's indwelling life apart from a daily routine, where you actively lay your self-life on the altar, receive a fresh inward strengthening of the Spirit's power for ability, confront fleshly thinking patterns with the truth, invite Christ to dwell unhindered in your heart, and then yield to His life as it pumps outward from your heart to your soul and body.

Abiding In Christ from the Heart

- a) There's a vital connection between Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-17 with Jesus' teaching about the abiding life in John 15:1-11.
- b) As previously stated, whoever occupies your heart will be the life source from which you live. This means the abiding life hinges upon whether or not the Spirit of Christ makes His home in your heart.
- c) Therefore, the abiding life begins when living for yourself ends.
- d) Since the word *abide* is not frequently used in our culture, let me take a second to define it. According to *Strong's*, abide means "to stay" and refers to staying "in a given place, state, relation or expectancy."⁷ When referring to a place, this word can mean "to stay at home."⁸ Thus, *abide* has a similar meaning as *dwell*. In fact, the KJV translates this word as *dwell* fifteen times.
- e) Paul used the word *dwell* in Ephesians 3:17 to describe Christ dwelling in the heart—the end result of your spirit strengthened by the Spirit's inward power. This underscores the connection between Ephesians 3:17 and John 15:1-11.
- f) Simply put, the key to the abiding life is allowing Christ to first make His home in your heart. When your heart becomes Christ's perpetual dwelling place through a cleansed heart and a strong spirit, the abiding life becomes possible.

- g) As you lean into your union with the Holy Spirit and draw from His life, then Christ will make His home in your heart and live His life through you. Like a branch drawing sap from the vine to produce fruit, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in you in ever-increasing measure, yielding a harvest of Christlike fruit that remains.
- h) This means, as Christ makes His home in your heart without rival, the faith of Christ, the mind of Christ, the nature of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, and the power of Christ will be pumped from your heart outward to your soul and body, transforming your thoughts, choices, emotions, and actions into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.
- i) As the indwelling Spirit cleanses, purifies, and circumcises your heart from pride, lust, jealousy, envy, criticism, judgment, doubt, unbelief, cold love, bitterness, unforgiveness, and selfishness, Christ will dwell unhindered in your heart.
- j) When you resolve to clothe yourself with Christ daily, His nature will fill your heart and you will notice a very real difference in how you think, feel, and make decisions. Things that used to easily bother you will no longer affect you, for Christ is now living rather than you.

¹ "G2730 - katoikeō - Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (nasb95)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 27 Jun, 2022. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2730/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

² Ibid.

³ "G2730 - katoikeō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (nasb95)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 27 Jun, 2022. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2730/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

⁴ "G37 - hagiazō - Outline of Biblical Usage (nasb95)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 27 Jun, 2022. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g37/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "G3306 - menō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (nasb95)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 27 Jun, 2022. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3306/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

⁸ *Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon* (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, 2014), s.v. "meno," referenced from OneTouch OB-2 (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, 2016).