



Matthew 5:1-16

The Secrets of a Spiritually Prosperous Life

What are the essentials of a growing mature intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ?

Christ is the author of God's kind of life in the believer. It is the *normal* Christian life.

Vance Havner once said, "We are so subnormal that if we came up to normal, the world would think we were abnormal." And so it does.

In order to have God's kind of life we must become acutely aware of our spiritual need.

THERE MUST BE AN AWARENESS OF OUR SPIRITUAL NEED.

Has the Holy Spirit made me aware of my spiritual poverty?

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:30). Jesus used a powerful word for "poverty" meaning such a person would literally starve to death if he doesn't get immediate sustenance. The person described is an absolute pauper; he is the lowest kind of beggar. His life depends upon his begging for every piece of food.

Of course, Jesus wasn't speaking of physical needs, but spiritual poverty. We can't even become Christians without a sense of our spiritual poverty. Every individual must come to a deep consciousness of his sinfulness and a realization that without Christ he is lost and does not know the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Therefore, we must each one turn from our sins and unbelief and ask Jesus Christ to be our Savior. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13).

This is how our new life in Christ begins, but it does not end there. It is only the beginning. Jesus came to give us more than an insurance policy. He came to give us abundant life which is the kind of life God has.

Are you thirsty?

Moreover, this principle of realizing our spiritual poverty is not only true of the person who has never become a Christian, but it is also true of believers. We

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person who has never become a Christian, but it is also true of believers. We grow spiritually as we become aware of our personal needs and turn them over to the Christ. John 7:37 refers to Jesus in the Temple on the last day of the great feast of the Tabernacles. On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39).

Psalm 63:1-2, vividly reminds us of this truth.

Oh God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly;
My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You,
In a dry and weary land where there is no water.
Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.

Do you have this spiritual hunger to be more like Jesus Christ? Do you thirst for a more intimate fellowship with Christ? Hungering and thirsting leads us to true happiness.

THERE MUST BE AGONY OF THE SOUL BECAUSE OF THE AWARENESS OF OUR NEED.

Have you mourned over your spiritual poverty?

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted (Matthew 5:4). Jesus used a strong word meaning to mourn as if one is mourning for the dead. The conviction of spiritual need becomes so powerful in the soul that the individual mourns over his condition. It is to feel the pain, sting, and hurt of the realization that I am not as good as I thought I was. There is a sense of spiritual poverty and the agony of it.

Have you died to self-interest, selfishness and arrogant pride? Dying to self is a painful process. But death to self is the way to the fullness of life in Christ.

There is no other way but the way of the cross. Have I grieved and mourned over my spiritual condition? Do I see myself as a dead man? Do I mourn spiritually over my spiritual need as one who mourns over the death of a loved one? Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24). Previously Paul had stated, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (2:20).

Not only must we become aware of our spiritual need, and grieve over it, we must abandon ourselves to Jesus Christ. There is awareness of our need, agony over it and abandonment to Christ as our only hope.

THERE MUST BE ABANDONMENT TO THE SAVIOR.

Has the Holy Spirit brought you to the place where you are sick of self? Our narcissistic filled society puts the

Has the Holy Spirit brought you to the place where you are sick of self? Our narcissistic filled society puts the emphasis on I, me and mine. We must come to the end of our selfishness. Our fleshy, sinful nature wants to worship self rather than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul in Romans 6:13 says, “do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ”

One of the verses I first memorized after I committed my life to Christ was Romans 12:1-2. Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. ”

Such a spiritual transformation comes through an intense hunger and thirst for God. Do I hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness? Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). It is to have such an intense hunger and thirst that you want the whole thing. You want the last bit of bread and the last drop of water because you are so thirsty. Do you want the righteousness of God in like manner?

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Do Christ and His righteousness have the highest priority in my life? Do I want at all personal costs to be in a right relationship with God?”

There must be a wholehearted unreserved abandonment to Jesus Christ. Am I willing to get serious with God and the Christian life? The normal Christian life is one in which the Holy Spirit is appropriated by faith to reveal Christ at work in us.

What is the spiritual need the Holy Spirit keeps pointing to in my life? Am I willing to agonize and grieve over the awareness of that need? Have I abandoned myself to Jesus Christ as the only hope for spiritual vitality? Am I willing to appropriate the presence of the Holy Spirit moment by moment?

THERE MUST BE THE APPROPRIATION BY FAITH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is not legalism.

Our fellowship with the Spirit of God is by faith, and not by works. This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (Galatians 3:2) One of the great lessons we learn in Paul’s letter to the church at Galatia is that the Spirit does not respond to methods, programs and man’s gimmicks. He is a person and He must be treated as a person.

It is a daily blessing.

It is not a “second blessing” type of experience. It is a daily blessing. It is our response to the Holy Spirit creating in our lives a hunger for Christ to be preeminent. Has the Holy Spirit revealed Christ in you? Has He revealed Christ deep in your inner soul?

The apostle Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus that God “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

glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Then at that point Paul just breaks out with a great doxology. Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:16-21).

Paul couldn't find words fast enough to communicate what was flashing through his mind. Literally, "But to Him who is able above all things to do exceedingly above . . . God's blessings exceed some number or measure, over and above, more than necessary. It is intensified by adding a preposition *ek*, adding the idea of exhaustlessness, and *hyper*, above. His grace goes beyond all things, superabundantly, and over and above. Marvelous is God's provision. And just to think, these promises are good forever. This grace will never come to an end.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be severely tested. He was tempted to use the power of the Spirit to change stones into bread to satisfy His real hunger. Why did Jesus refuse to do so? He knew that the power that filled Him was power to do the Father's will, not His own will. The presence of the Holy Spirit equipped Him to triumphantly complete the mission His Father had given Him to do, even if that involved hunger, pain and suffering. He had nothing to prove and nothing to lose.

Simon the magician in Acts 8:9-23 was a crude dude who wanted lights, camera, and action. Now he would have done just the opposite of Christ. He would have been prime time news tonight.

By simple faith we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit equips us to fulfill God's eternal purpose in our lives. In that equipping process He conforms us to the image and likeness of Christ so that we can be His messengers to a lost and dying world.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). This gentleness of which Jesus speaks is strength. It is the strength of a wild stallion under perfect control of its bridle. It is the absence of pride. It is power under control. Such a person is a God-controlled man. He is under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit-controlled life is a complete breach with the old ways of life dominated by our sinful nature. It demands faith and commitment to Christ. It is a call to continual reliance on the Holy Spirit for daily living. On the negative side, the crucifixion of the flesh is not something any one of us can do by ourselves. We need help. The Helper comes along our side to give us His strength.

The exchanged life is a life of faith.

Just as we were saved by faith in Christ, we also live the Christian life by faith in Him. It is by simple faith that we live from day to day the kind of life that pleases Him.

The apostle Paul in Romans 8:13 said, "If you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Paul is reminding us that this is a continual reliance on the person of the Holy Spirit who dwells within our bodies because we are now His temples. Moreover in Galatians 5:16-25 Paul tells us that we are to "walk in the Spirit" (v. 16). If we are to continually walk in the Spirit we must be "led by the Spirit" because He does the leading (v. 18). He leads and we walk with Him hand in hand. That is what it means to "live in the Spirit" (v. 25). Therefore, He is in control of our lives. That is what it means to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). When someone is

control of our lives. That is what it means to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). When someone is filled with wine he is under the influence, or control of the alcohol content. When we are filled with the Spirit we are under His *control*. It is a daily, moment-by-moment, relationship with Him. When He is in control we experience Spirit controlled worship (vv. 19-21), Spirit controlled home life (vv. 5:22-6:9) and Spirit controlled warfare and witnessing (vv. 10-20). It is a walk of faith.

I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). The one who justifies us by faith also sanctifies us. He gives us His strength, joy, love, steadfastness, and self-control. As we give Him our weakness, He gives us His strength. We hand over our guilt and He gives us His forgiveness. He sustains us with His peace as we hand over our stress, anxiety and inner struggles. We hand Him our faithlessness and He gives us faith. He gives us His power in place of our weakness.

"And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:16, NET). How do we live in His abundance? I will live in them and will walk among them. "

Following this appropriation by faith of the Holy Spirit there is a moment-by-moment abiding by faith in Christ.

THERE MUST BE AN ABIDING BY FAITH IN THE SAVIOR.

This is a mutual abiding.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).

Lord Jesus, will I see You today? Remind me of Your steadfast presence. Apart from Me you can do nothing. That is the hardest lesson for most Christians to learn. And there is no other way to live the Christian life.

Abiding is obedience to His will.

The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (1 John 3:24). If I love Him I will have no problem with my attitude toward keeping His commandments. It is a matter of the heart. Jesus said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). When the heart is right we abide in Him and we sense His presence.

Abiding is not striving or struggling.

Remain in Me and I in you, said Jesus. This is a living relationship. It is not striving or struggling. It is resting in the Him. It is a matter of surrender. It is making ourselves available to Him so that He can live His life in and through us. This is a life of obedience responding to His love.

Hudson Taylor says it best: "When my agony of soul was at its height a sentence in a letter was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus as I had never known it before . . . But how do you get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One. As I read I saw it all! If we believe *not*, He abideth faithful. I looked to Jesus and saw and when I saw, oh, how the joy flowed!) that He had said, *I will never leave you.* "Ah, *there is rest!* I

and when I saw, oh, how the joy flowed!) that He had said, *"I will never leave you. "Ah, there is rest! I thought. I'll strive in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me — never to leave me, never to fail me? And, He never will!"*

Let's fix our eyes on Jesus.

The Amplified Bible on Hebrews 12:1-3 reads as follows:

Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance — unnecessary weight — and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher, [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. [Ps. 110:1]. Just think on Him Who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility against Himself — reckon up and consider it all in comparison with your trials — so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your minds.

THE EXCHANGED LIFE IS A LIFE OF ABUNDANCE.

How quick we are to try to put the cart before the horse. You can't get happiness, joy, abundance without first receiving His righteousness. Happiness is a byproduct. Joy is the outcome of His life in us. Abundance in spiritual life is the result of Christ in us. It is not doing, it is receiving. J. B. Phillips paraphrased Philippians 4:13, *"I'm ready for anything through the strength of the One who lives within me. That is Christ in you, the hope of glory. I am sufficient because Christ lives in me."*

Jesus compared it to a river overflowing.

John 7:37-39, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. 'But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. '"*

It is full of abundance. John 10:10b, *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. The secret is that His sheep hear His voice and obey Him. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice (John 10:4). Am I sensitive to His voice? Is my ear quick to hear the sound of His presence? Who knows what He will say or where He will lead us if we only make ourselves available to Him."*

We become invincible.

Jesus described the change in our lives when we are allowing Him to exchange our inadequacy for His all sufficiency. He said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were*

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and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:9-12).

That is the only way we can ever be salt and light in a spiritually dark and corrupt world.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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Series: Our Vital Union with Christ & The Beatitudes

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