

# Cooperating with the Holy Spirit (5)

## Introduction

- A. God's gracious provision, in the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit, is directly related to the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit has come to make us more and more like the Savior.
- B. Many believers are thwarted and disappointed in their daily life, even though they know what it means to be filled with the Spirit, and have use of His gifts.
- C. Such believers continually grieve the Holy Spirit, suffer the loss of fellowship, power, freedom, joy, the fruit of the Spirit, and particularly self-control, because they have not submitted to the Holy Spirit's ministry regarding their fleshly, sinful nature.

## I. Background

- A. In that all of the power of redemption has not been applied to us as yet (glorification), all believers possess what the Bible calls "flesh," or "sinful nature." See Romans 7 and 8.
- B. Our "sinful nature" is an inner vulnerability and desire to live a self-centered life, that is characterized by a sensual, proud, self-protective, self-promoting, indulgent, worldly manner of life. Such believers may be highly religious in regard to external activity, and may be able to be quite successful in Christian service.

## II. The Believer's Vulnerability

- A. Our sinful nature weakens and enslaves us. Romans 7:15,19,23

*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing... But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.*

- B. Our sinful nature defiles us and is a source of evil thoughts. Mark 7:21-23

*For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"*

## III. The Believer's Provision.

- A. In His Crucifixion the Lord Jesus dealt with our sinful nature. Romans 6:6

*For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin (sinful patterns of action) might be done away with (paralyzed), that we should no longer be slaves to sin--*

B. In His Resurrection the Lord Jesus provided a life of freedom from sin. Romans 6:4

*We were therefore buried with him through baptism (the new birth) into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

C. In Pentecost the Lord Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to apply His work to us. Galatians 5:16,17

*Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*

#### **IV. The Believer's Responsibility.**

A. The warning. Romans 8:12,13

*Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,*

B. The exhortation. Ephesians 4:22-24

*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

C. The procedure. Romans 6:11-13

*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

#### **Conclusion**

A. We must face up to our sinfulness: hidden idolatry, sinful fantasy, anger, pride, malicious manipulation, grudges, jealousy, envy, sensuality, unforgiveness and spiritual passivity.

B. Consider the devastating effects of our sinfulness: it is a transgression of God's person and will, it grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit, it deprives us of fellowship with God, it marks our character, it opens the door to Satan, it affects others adversely, it makes us a poor testimony, it stunts our spiritual growth, it has mental, physical, emotional, volitional, and social implications, and it forces God to discipline us. It isn't worth it!

C. **The real issue is that God made us for Himself—to find meaning and fulfillment in fellowship with Him and doing His will—and what are we doing? – we are seeking substitutes for God: idols of money, control, power, sex, and personal satisfaction!!**