

FTBC

GROWTH TRACKS


*Dr Peter Ng*

Welcome to Growth Tracks which is FBC's program designed to set the disciple on the firm foundation spiritual maturity.


*In 2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV) Paul writes "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".*

The key to growth in our spiritual lives is encountering the glory of God through the person of His Son who is His perfect image. The more our hearts are filled with the knowledge of Him the more our characters are moulded, the more our hearts are filled with His love and more our lives will be directed towards the purpose for which we were created....to glorify Him. Each chapter is designed to provide a progressive track to show the face of Christ through selected but key passages in the Bible laying down the bed rock foundations of faith that will form the basis for a life -long learning and growing in to the likeness of Christ. Prayerfully follow these chapters and His Spirit will propel you into a trajectory of robust growth and spiritual transformation. Learn how to read the bible by tackling whole passages of Scripture rather than piece meal verses. See how principles from the passages will be translated to everyday life. For those disciples going into the Gamma program these presentations will help bridge the gap between the Alpha Beta programs and the more in- depth Gamma discipleship program.

For those who prefer to listen and see the contents of this book you can go to our website at [www.fbc.com .my](http://www.fbc.com.my) and each chapter will be presented in a series of slides at the resources section of our site under the title "Growth Tracks"



MODULE 11



**SPIRIT FILLED LIFE**

John 15

In this particular study, we will examine how the Holy Spirit works in the life of a Christian, transforming the Christian, so we will be looking at the spirit filled life.

### **How does the Holy Spirit work in the life of a disciple?**

The first thing that happens that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in becoming born again is that the Word of God is entering into our lives resulting in greater and greater portions of our lives coming under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit. We more readily respond to the Holy Spirit. Our yielding to the Holy Spirit's influence is not unlike responding to a friend who advises us and exerts greater and greater influence over how we think and act. When this happens, we are progressively transformed into the image of God, which means we show the change in godly character which is the fruit of spirit like love, joy and peace. In our behavior, we become more God like in ethical integrity and with goodness. When we receive guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are endowed with assurance and boldness, we have the gifts of the Spirit and the Spirit unites us to everyone else in the body of Christ. This is how the Holy Spirit works in the life of a disciple.

### **The vital question in our study today is how do I become filled with the Holy Spirit?**

First thing we find to know that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra. We are actually commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we become Christians, the Spirit needs to work in our lives, we need to allow Him to fill our lives and this is actually a commandment. Let's explore on how we do this.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is a process that carries on throughout life and it is a dual tract process, one which we can see on the outside of disciple's life and on the other one is what happens inside. On the inside of us in our spiritual life, the Spirit prompts us and gives us the power. Outwardly the Spirit's influence is seen in our attitude and decision making that leads to action. There is a parallel process of being filled with the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit fills us from the inside, we will see a change in our attitude and our decision making which translates to action as to how we live.

### **How do we become filled with the Holy Spirit?**

To answer this question Paul writes almost two identical letters; one to the Ephesians and one to the Colossians. When we put these two passages side by side, we get some understanding of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

*Ephesians 5:18-21 (ESV) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Parallel passage in Colossians

*Colossians 3:16 (ESV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God*

You can see there is a parallel here. Being filled with the spirit in the Book of Ephesians is the same as letting the

word of God dwell in you richly in the book of Colossians.

In the Book of Ephesians, Paul uses the imagery of wine drinking. He says, don't get drunk with wine for that is debauchery, instead be filled with the spirit. Getting drunk with wine, being controlled by wine, is analogous to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Hence just as we love to be so thrilled of the high and influence of alcohol in a similar way we should instead be filled or be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In the latter condition we become more aware of spiritual matters because you have been filled with the Spirit. The result of being filled with the Spirit is singing psalms, spiritual songs and being thankful

Now look at the parallel passage in Colossians encourages us to "let the Word dwell in us richly" The result of being filled with the spirit or letting God's word dwell richly in our lives are the same in both passages. In Ephesians it says

*Ephesians 5:19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always*

This happens when you are filled with the spirit. Colossians says

*Colossians 3:16 ...teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God*

Similar parallel passage with the same results but that occurs by allowing the word of God to saturate our lives. Hence what it means is that being filled with the Spirit is letting the Word of God saturate our lives, change our attitudes.

So let's summarize again.

Being filled with the spirit of God is the same thing as letting the word of God dwell richly in our lives. Letting the word of God control, saturate and guide us. Hence this is what the Holy Spirit filling is like. On the inside, He fills, influences our lives in a continuous recurrent process. On the outside, it is reading and trusting God's word. The more we read and trust God's word, the more we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Bible uses other ways of describing the same phenomenon. Here is Paul's letter to the Galatians 5:16-17

*Galatians 5:16-17 (ESV) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do*

Here there are only two ways to live. You live according to the desires of the Spirit or you live according to the desires of the flesh and there is no middle ground. So therefore, there is a decision that the disciples will have to make and the decision needs to walk by the Spirit, which means to live according to the desires of the spirit, which is God's desires for your life. It is a decision of how you live your life.

Another way of describing the filling of Holy Spirit is setting our minds. It is a mindset.

*Romans 8:5-11 (ESV) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is*

*life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

Notice the phrase that is being repeated here, it is 'setting your mind'. Hence filling of Spirit can also be rephrased as setting our minds with the issue of decision that we make up our minds, to purpose according to that to which we want to live. We can see in this passage, there are two kinds of purposes we can set our minds to. We can set our minds to please our human desires in defiance to our natural obligations to God, which means the mind of the flesh and the result of that is death. We can also set our minds on to living according to God's way, image and word that will result in eternal life and peace.

So we are set with a choice. It is an attitude, it is a decision in our minds, it is a mindset. The filling of the Spirit is setting a mindset. We can set our minds to live, to please ourselves with the things of the flesh, but that will result in spiritual death. Or we can set our minds to the things of the Spirit and that will bring us eternal life and peace. The filling of the spirit is a mindset.

The second thing that we can see in this passage that setting your mind is actually a function of whether we are actually children of God, whether we actually have the spirit of God inside us.

*7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.  
9 ...Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

Therefore, if we have a mindset that is only set on fulfilling the desires of our flesh, living for ourselves rather to God, that kind of mind is kind of hostile to God. It cannot submit to God's law. In fact, it will not, and it is a function of whether we have the spirit of God or not. If we don't have the spirit of God inside us, it is not possible to set our minds on the Spirit. The default mode would be setting our minds on the flesh which is living a life independent of God.

*10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

This means if you are a Christian and even though one day you will physically die because of sin but the Spirit gives us eternal life because of His righteousness and we will begin to set our minds on the Spirit, on the things of the Spirit.

There is another passage in Colossians and here we are to actively seek fixated on.

*Colossians 3:1-17 (ESV) If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

Paul is trying to tell us where we are. It is our position in Christ and when Christ is seated at the right hand of God, so therefore our mindset should be on things of Christ in heaven, not on things that are on earth.

In conclusion this is a dual parallel process. The Holy Spirit's filling and power for us is on the inside. On the

outside is our attitude and decision making process which depends on us actively considering that we are dead to sin, actively seeking the things of heaven, setting our minds on the things of God rather than things of the world. That's what happens to us on the outside. The result of doing that is that the Spirit will inwardly enable us to live godly lives.

There is an old saying that goes, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. We want to be filled with the Holy Spirit I think, but maybe we are not capable? . We know that being filled with the Holy Spirit is a command, but do we obey it out of compulsion? Is that how the Holy Spirit work? Let's examine it by looking at the next verse

*Ephesians 3:14-19 (ESV) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Now let's breakdown this verse into parts that will be understandable. First of all, this verse represents Paul's solution to being filled by the Holy Spirit. How are we are going to be filled by the Holy Spirit, how are lives are going to be transformed? It starts off,

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,

This mean it starts with prayer. If we are to filled with the Holy Spirit or increasingly more influenced by Him, we need to ask for it. God does not force Himself on us.

*15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

So we need strength, we need power, ability, resolve and that comes through God giving us power and we get this power through His Spirit in us. That means He will inspire us .We don't try with our own effort; He inspires us through his Holy Spirit in our inner most being. When he does this through prayer, two things happen. There are two results of the Spirit's working in us. Verse 17 is the first result.

*17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*

This means we will receive the faith that will enable our hearts to become more surrendered to Christ control. We will be so convinced of the need for Christ in our lives that we will surrender more and more to his control and this is done voluntarily.

The second result of the Holy Spirit working in our lives is that,

*you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,*

The second part of the Spirit working is that so that we would understand and experience more and more of the riches, the depth of Christ love. That's important because that's the part that will move us, that's the part that will

enthrall us, that is the part that will inspire us, so that we would want to follow Christ. As a result of these two things, you can see the last part of the verse. This needs to happen in the context of the wider body of Christ because Paul's says we need to comprehend with all the saints. Only with the wider body of Christ, fellow believers can we experience more and more of Christ's love. We need the church to grow.

*that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

The end result will be we become more God like, we will move towards the image of God, the reason and the purpose for which we are created and all of this is done with the Holy Spirit's power and the power of prayer.

Jesus teaching his disciples just before he goes to the cross. This setting is the upper room, is few hours before he goes to the cross.

*John 16:13-14 (ESV) When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

There are two things that are quite important in this passage. He will guide you in all the truth. The Holy Spirit tells us the truth about who God is and what spiritual reality is. He will glorify me, now that's an essential function of the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit is not unlike the flood lights on a building. You don't really see the flood lights where they are but what the lights do is that they extenuate the beautiful architecture of this building. What you see is actually the building, all the way to the top, you don't actually see the flood lights. So that is what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit draws attention to Jesus, accentuates His beauty and magnificence so that it enralls, it captivates and inspires our hearts.

Hence, when the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, it makes the love of God so real that it overwhelms all rejection, poverty, difficulty in life because his love becomes more important than all those things. The Holy Spirit so glorifies the power of Jesus that it will overwhelm our fear, anxiety, weakness or struggle.

The Holy Spirit also glorifies Jesus by highlighting His grace, as grace is so wonderful that it overwhelms our feelings of condemnation, low self-esteem or feeling useless.

When we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit so impresses us that the wisdom of God is so great that it captivates our hearts, from a concept it becomes a reality that we actually believe. It conveys a sense of reality and resonance in our hearts when our minds grasps the Word. It begins to make sense, it changes our view of the world and life and makes all other worldly values that use to hold sway over us diminish.

The Holy Spirit so fills us with the joy of the Lord that comes with being filled with the Spirit and worship in church becomes so attractive that we rather be intoxicated with that than with wine.

When Jesus says the Spirit glorifies him, it means it takes concepts like the love of God, grace of God, the wisdom of God and the power of God and it converts those concepts to heartfelt realities that we really feel these things in our heart.



Ezekiel is an Old Testament prophet that prophesize about coming of the Holy Spirit.

*Ezekiel 36:26-27 (ESV) And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

So therefore, what he is telling Israel, a prophecy which was fulfilled when Jesus came and sent Holy Spirit, is that the Spirit will move the rebellious, insensitive hearts and they will have a soft heart, a heart which is pliable under the control and moving under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He puts the Holy Spirit within us and causes us to walk in his statutes and his law. Being careful to obey my rules which means godly living, living according to the image of God. That happens naturally and within our own hearts. It is not by force or compulsion that He makes Jesus so wonderful, His rules and wisdom so great that they become heartfelt realities that we willingly submit to.

When it comes to the things of God, what we are usually confronted with is the painful choice of being obedient and living the kind of life that reflects the image of God or reject this and decide to go it alone under our own wisdom and power. If we decide on the former, we could either do it under the Old Covenant which is through human efforts to obey the Law motivated by the fear God or our desire for reward. This way is the way of human pride in our attempts to be religious or we could do it by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.

Living under the influence of the Spirit is life under the New Covenant. The filling of Holy Spirit in our lives we motivates us to do the things of God, not because we have or we expect reward or we are fearful of God but that we do it because we are convinced of its value. The Holy Spirit comes in our lives and moves our hearts.

Jesus describes this in Matthew 13:45-46, when it says

*Matthew 13:45-46 (ESV) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

The kingdom of God is like someone who searches for values and he finds a pearl of great value, so much so that he is willing to sell everything else in order to buy it, because he is convinced of its value.

This is how the Spirit glorifies Jesus, like that merchant we are so convinced of His value that we will sell everything else, we will sacrifice everything else in order to walk in a manner that glorifies him. That's the filling of the Holy Spirit.

So let's summarize what the filling of the Holy Spirit is

The Holy Spirit is an aid to us, very much like those new fangled mechanical exoskeletons. The Exoskeleton is something that we strap on to our limbs to give us extra power. With this device you can lift heavy weights and run twice as fast as you ever could under your own power. It gives you that ability, but you have got to make your own decisions. The device kinks in to power your legs when your legs actually move and starts to run to augment it. It doesn't do anything if you don't do anything. So when the Holy Spirit comes in, it comes in with the Word and you are motivated read the Word and when you read the word, the Holy Spirit uses that Word and it glorifies Jesus and makes Jesus look great because it puts the flood lights on Jesus. It inspires us, allows the Word to change our values, our attitude and love towards Jesus, so that glorifying Jesus becomes the most important thing in our hearts. The

Spirit changes our attitudes causing us to decide to set our minds to the things of God rather than things of the world. When that has happened, we then live out according to God's word and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out these decisions. That's what it means by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

There are certainly many wrong concepts on how we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There are those who believe that if certain pastors lay their hands on you then suddenly the Spirit fills you up with power, much like your hand-phone is being charged up and you will feel great, so in love and close to God, you can speak in tongues perform miracles and live a victorious Christian life. But this effect is often short lived and the person gets depressed again and has to come back again a week later having been depleted of the Spirit like our hand phones and we need to be recharged

This kind of understanding of the filling of the Spirit is not biblical and it totally ignores the agency of the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God together, in a gradual lifelong process of where we step out in faith in response to the word of God and prayer in our lives. There is no quick fix solution, our struggle with sin is a lifelong journey and the Spirit is there to fill us and transform us when we regularly encounter the word and pray and set our minds to allowing the spirit to transform us.

### **REVISION:**

1. We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. The combination of prayer and reading of the Word and obedience to the word is how we are to be filled or controlled by the Spirit.
3. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus and so moves us to experience the reality of his love in our lives and this inspires us to decide and set our minds in living obedient holy lives.
4. The Spirit empowers us to live holy lives that please Him.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. How do we seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
2. Why should we be filled with the Holy Spirit why can't we live our normal lives like before we became Christians.
3. What if you read the Word of God and still feel nothing in your life is there something wrong?
4. If I am filled with the Spirit shouldn't I be able to speak in tongues?
5. What if I continue to live a sinful life because I still enjoy my old life of lust and greed because I just cannot feel that living a godly life is an attractive option for me. I love my sin too much?
6. How do I know if I am filled with the Holy Spirit?
7. Is the presence of power or miraculous spiritual gifts any indication that I am living a Spirit filled life? Matt 7:22