

BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT: EXHALE

INTRODUCTION

Today we continue our Holy Spirit journey. Last week we saw that the Holy Spirit has come to help us stop sinning and enable us to live pleasing lives to God. Today, we will consider how that happens. Let's start by praying that God will help us be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

SPIRITUAL BREATHING

We've seen from last week a two fold working of the Spirit in us. Firstly, to put to death our sinful actions and desires. Secondly, to produce righteous fruit in our lives that please God. The bible refers to this work in our lives as the filling of the Holy Spirit. In Student Life, we think of this through a word metaphor- Spiritual Breathing. Breathing out is dealing with our sin through confession and repentance. Breathing in is our prayer of dependence and trust in God to fill us with his Spirit and produce righteous fruit in our lives. Today, we will be thinking about the first part of that: **Exhaling**.

LEADER'S NOTES:

Remember to book or think of the space you will meet. Notify students in your AG of the time and place. Pause, take a moment right now to pray for your group - commit it to God!

SUMMARY

Today we will begin talking about being filled with the Spirit. To do this we will use the metaphor of Spiritual Breathing. Today's conversation will only go halfway with that and talk about exhaling (dealing with our sin). We'll leave the second half, inhaling, till next week. We will spend the first part of today thinking about what it means to confess our sin and be transparent. Your own transparency with your sin as a leader will be important to model it to others. Then in the second part, we will think about repentance, considering what it means to die to ourselves and choose to put Jesus first in our lives. Success will look like the people in our group pondering these things for themselves, understanding that for these things to be true in us, we need the help of the Holy Spirit.

AT THE START

- Remember to welcome any new people.
- Remember the Action Step from last week? We were going to ask for the Holy Spirit's help with our sinful tendencies. How did it go praying for God to help us with those this week?

EXHALING

CONFESSION

Read **1 John 1:5-10**

- *In this passage, John parallels walking in light with confessing our sin. The implications are clear- we must be honest and open about our sin. Why do you think that's so important to God?*
- *Vs 7&9 both mention the promise of God to cleanse us from our sin. But what does it say that cleansing is dependent upon us doing?*
- *Vs 7 says if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another. In other words, when we let people see our sin, we get to know each other better. How do you feel about being vulnerable with your sin to others in our Action Group?*

From these scriptures, we learn an important truth. To receive cleansing from God, we must be honest and transparent about our sin. This is what the bible means by confession. It says when we do this, we have fellowship with each other. So this confession involves an acknowledgement of our sin not just before God, but also with others. This is a challenge for most of us. Our sinful nature fights hard to keep us from being open and transparent about our sin. People find it hard to allow others to see their flaws. But if we want to be filled with the Spirit, this is the first thing required of us. Remember though that we are all in this together. Not one of us is without sin! God is also making it clear that we do not need to fear revealing our sins to God - he knows them already. He will not push us away, no matter what we've done. Instead he will draw us to himself. So He will help us journey together as we help one another deal with our sin.

DISCUSS

Talk with the person next to you:

- *Where am I at with being transparent about my sin with God and others?"*

1 John 1:5-10

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

HELPFUL ANSWERS

- If we don't own up to the problem, how can the problem be fixed? God wants us to acknowledge the sin in our lives. It's a very humble thing to do to acknowledge our sin, and God esteems the humble. To hide it though is to act in pride and shame, which God opposes. If we keep hiding our sin, nothing gets dealt with.
- We must come into the light, or rather confess our sin. Being humble and acknowledging our sin is what cleansing depends upon.

Mark 8:34-38

34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

REPENTANCE

But to be aware and transparent about our sin is not the whole of dealing with it. Paul taught us last week we must put it to death, or crucify it. That's straight from the teaching of Jesus which we'll read now. We must couple confession with a genuine desire for change, and a willingness for the Holy Spirit to bring God's will into our lives at the expense of our own. This is what the bible means by repentance.

Read **Mark 8:34-38**

- What is involved in denying ourselves?
- What is at stake here for us?
- What is the heart attitude Jesus demands here in the lives of his disciples?
- Are we willing to die to ourselves and follow Jesus?

REMEMBER

Let the conversation flow. The answers are here for you if you need them. But if the right things are coming out naturally through the discussion, you don't need to point them out yourself.

HELPFUL ANSWERS

- It involves saying no to the things we might want in our lives that do not line up with the things God would want in our lives.
- If we take this seriously, our very souls are at stake.
- A willingness to serve Jesus rather than serving ourselves. It's his will in our lives that should be done and not our own will.

SUMMARY

We are finishing today's Action Group right in the middle of the Spiritual Breathing metaphor. This gives us all a chance to consider our lives carefully. Next week, we will finish it off by considering what it means to 'breathe in' spiritually.

ACTION STEPS: PRAY FOR THE HELPER TO HELP

Let's take this week to ask the Holy Spirit to help us have a heart that's willing to confess our sin and repent of it. Whether it be relying upon our daily phone reminders, or through other times of prayer, let's ask God to grant us a genuine desire for his will to be done in our lives rather than our own.

PRAYER

At this point, it's important to appreciate that we will struggle with this. We've already learned that left to ourselves, it is impossible for us to please God. So we need the Holy Spirit's help to both Confess our sin and Repent of it. Take some time now as a group to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us with both of these things.

Campus Notices

Share any campus notices people will need to know about.