

Satisfied?

A Prayer Experience of the Holy Spirit

LEADERS NOTE:

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is vital to the Christian experience. Yet among believers today, there exists considerable ignorance, confusion and neglect concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Sound teaching is foundational to addressing this need. But too often the teaching remains as merely intellectual property for the believer, with little effect on his experience. The work of the Holy Spirit is a reality to be experienced, not simply a truth to be understood.

Based on the *Satisfied?* booklet, this prayer experience provides a transferable approach to imparting key truths regarding the Holy Spirit that will enable the participant to:

- **Understand** the ministry of the Spirit more fully.
- **Experience** the ministry of the Spirit more deeply.
- **Communicate** the ministry of the Spirit more effectively.

This prayer experience is adaptable according to the needs of the audience and your leadership style. The time can also be expanded or condensed according to the setting. But to provide you a framework with which to begin, the suggested times below are for a 50 minute prayer experience.

May God give you and your group a rich time celebrating and experiencing the powerful presence of his Spirit!

Satisfied? A Prayer Experience of the Holy Spirit was developed by Keith Davy, Director of Research and Development, Campus Crusade for Christ.

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The Promise of Satisfaction

Suggested time: 8 minutes

Objective: To evaluate our current Christian experience.

1. Illustration: The Guide

[Share a personal experience with a guide. (A tour guide, fishing guide, outdoor guide, etc.)]

A guide can enable us to go where we wouldn't have gone on our own, to see things we wouldn't have seen and to experience things more fully than we could have alone.

Today, I will serve as your guide as we explore some of the most important truths for the Christian life. But we will not only explore, I want to help you experience these truths, by leading you into the very presence of God. I am going to lead you in a prayer experience focused on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

2. Begin by thinking back over the last 30 days.

What three words would you use to describe your Christian life during the past month? In quick, popcorn like fashion, what are some of the words you thought of?

Are you satisfied with your experience? Do you desire more? Satisfaction is an interesting question, because the answer generally reflects a spectrum of experience, rather than a simple yes or no. But you can be sure that almost everyone here, if honest with himself, isn't completely satisfied. All of us desire more in our relationship with God.

3. Prayer Response

Turn in your Bibles to John 7:37-39. Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." Sounds satisfying, doesn't it? But how do we experience that? John goes on to tell us, "By this he meant the Spirit". The Spirit is the source of the truly satisfying life, quenching our deepest thirsts and longings. It is the gift of the Spirit that we will be focusing on together.

In the next few moments of silent reflection, speak to God about your thirst, your desire to be satisfied by him and him alone. Be honest with him, even if it means admitting your lack of desire.

The Divine Gift

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Objective: To express gratefulness for the gift of the Spirit.

God has given us his Spirit so that we can experience intimacy with him and enjoy all he has for us.

1. Illustration: Gifts – especially wedding gifts.

Everyone likes gifts. We like to give gifts and we like to get gifts, especially unique and expensive gifts. At a wedding, couples receive hundreds of gifts (many of them are often the same thing, ready to be exchanged.) But none of these gifts are the most special or expensive. That gift is given during the ceremony. The most special and profound gift is when the bride gives herself to the man to be his wife, and when he gives himself to her. The greatest gift, isn't a thing, it is a person.

In like fashion, God has given us a gift, the most priceless gift, and it isn't a thing, it's a person. It is God himself, given to us in the person of his Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Turn to John 14:16,17. He has given his Spirit to be "with us forever" and to be "in us." He is given, not as a wedding gift, but as a birthday gift. The Spirit is given to each of us at the moment of our spiritual birth.

2. Prayer Response

The most appropriate response to a gift is to say thanks. Turn to 1 Corinthians 2:9-3:4.

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. (1 Corinthians 2:12)

Turn into your groups of two or three, and pray together, telling God thank you for the gift of his Spirit. Use short sentence prayers to thank God for many specific things that God has given us in Christ and that the Spirit has helped you understand and experience. Be specific.

"Thank you, Lord, for enabling me to know and experience your love. I know and understand your love only through your Spirit."

Or, "Thank you, Lord, that by your Spirit I have come to know your wisdom and knowledge. Your Spirit has enlightened my heart."

The Present Danger

Suggested time: 8 minutes

Objective: To confess our sins and experience God's forgiveness.

We cannot experience intimacy with God and enjoy all he has for us if we fail to depend on His Spirit.

1. Illustration: The two ditches.

There are ditches on both sides of the road. It is hard to get anywhere in a ditch. The Christian life is like a road and we can slip into the ditch on either side. In the one ditch, we begin to trust our own efforts and strength to live the Christian life. This is of course a source of great frustration.

Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (Galatians 3:3)

When we discover the futility of that, we can cross over to the other ditch. We may give up and succumb to our own selfish desires, seeking to please ourselves rather than God.

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. (Galatians 5:17)

Then, like the Corinthians, our lives can begin to manifest symptoms of the flesh and worldliness.

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

2. Prayer Response

Spend the next few minutes in silent confession. Examine your life for symptoms of self-dependence or self-centered living. Confess them to God and claim his forgiveness according to 1 John 1:9.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

The Intimate Journey

Suggested time: 9 minutes

Objective: To express dependence on the Spirit's leading in our life.

As we learn to walk in the Spirit, we increasingly experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.

1. Illustration – Dance

Walking in the Spirit is a moment-by-moment lifestyle, learning to depend upon the Holy Spirit for his abundant resources as a way of life.

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16, 25)

What does keeping in step with the Spirit look like? Its like a dance, where there is a leading partner and a responding partner. Each step the leading partner takes, the responding partner follows. The Spirit is the leading partner. We are responding. Where he steps, we follow.

Where does he lead us? The fruit of the Spirit is one description of what we experience through the Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22,23)

2. Prayer Response

Think about the challenges you are currently facing. What do you need to experience most at this time? Remember, it is the role of the Spirit to produce that fruit in your life.

Pray in your groups of 2 or 3, claiming the fruit you seek (such as, love for specific relationships, joy for specific trials, etc.) As you become aware of more areas where your attitudes or responses have fallen short and been displeasing to God, breathe spiritually: Exhale by confessing your sins, thanking God for his forgiveness. Inhale by expressing your dependence upon the Spirit.

The Empowering Presence

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Objective: To seek the power of the Spirit in our own lives.

We are filled with the Spirit by faith, enabling us to experience intimacy with God and enjoy all he has for us. Paul prayed that his beloved Ephesian believers would experience these realities.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Ephesians 3:16,17)

1. Illustration: The two-sides of a coin.

The Christian life is like the two sides of a coin. On one side is the Spirit strengthening us with power. The other side is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Christ's life is reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit. By faith, we experience God's power through the Spirit.

2. Prayer Response

It is our desire that all of us would know with confidence that we are experiencing the fullness of the Spirit today and throughout the days ahead. As we conclude this segment of prayer, examine your hearts one more time. Ask yourself these three questions:

- Am I genuinely surrendering control of my life to the Lord Jesus Christ? (Romans 12:1,2)
- Have I confessed my sins, according to 1 John 1:9, and genuinely turned from them and back to God?
- Am I sincerely desiring to be filled, that is directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (John 7:37-39)

If you confidently answer yes to each question, silently reaffirm your faith in the Spirit's filling in your life according to his COMMAND to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and his PROMISE that he will answer when we pray according to his will (1 John 5:14,15). Ask God to fill you with his Spirit, enabling you to understand and experience in greater ways your intimacy with him and your enjoyment of all he has for you.

Take a few moments to silently pray Ephesians 3:16,17 for yourself. Pray that you would fully experience the Spirit's strengthening with power in your inner being, so that Christ would be living his life in and through you.

Sharing the Satisfied? with Others

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Objective: To prepare to communicate the message to others.

There are many individuals who have come to know Christ as their Savior but who have become stuck in their spiritual life. They may be struggling with either self-effort or self-centeredness, as we considered earlier in *The Present Danger*. They need to experience the very truths we have been exploring this morning.

1. Prayer Response

Think of a few individuals you know who need to experience the leading and filling of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Turn to your groups of 2 or 3 and pray Ephesians 3:16,17 for them, asking God to strengthen them with power through his Spirit.

2. Communicating the Message

How will these believers experience the Spirit's work? God may desire to use you to communicate these truths to them. How? You can communicate it clearly and effectively by using the *Satisfied?* booklet. It has been designed to communicate these same truths in a conversational manner. It is simple to use. Just read through it together, discussing the concepts as you go.

3. *Satisfied?* Booklets

[Hand out copies of the *Satisfied?* booklet. Conclude by sharing the story of a someone whose life changed through understanding and experiencing the filling of the Spirit.]