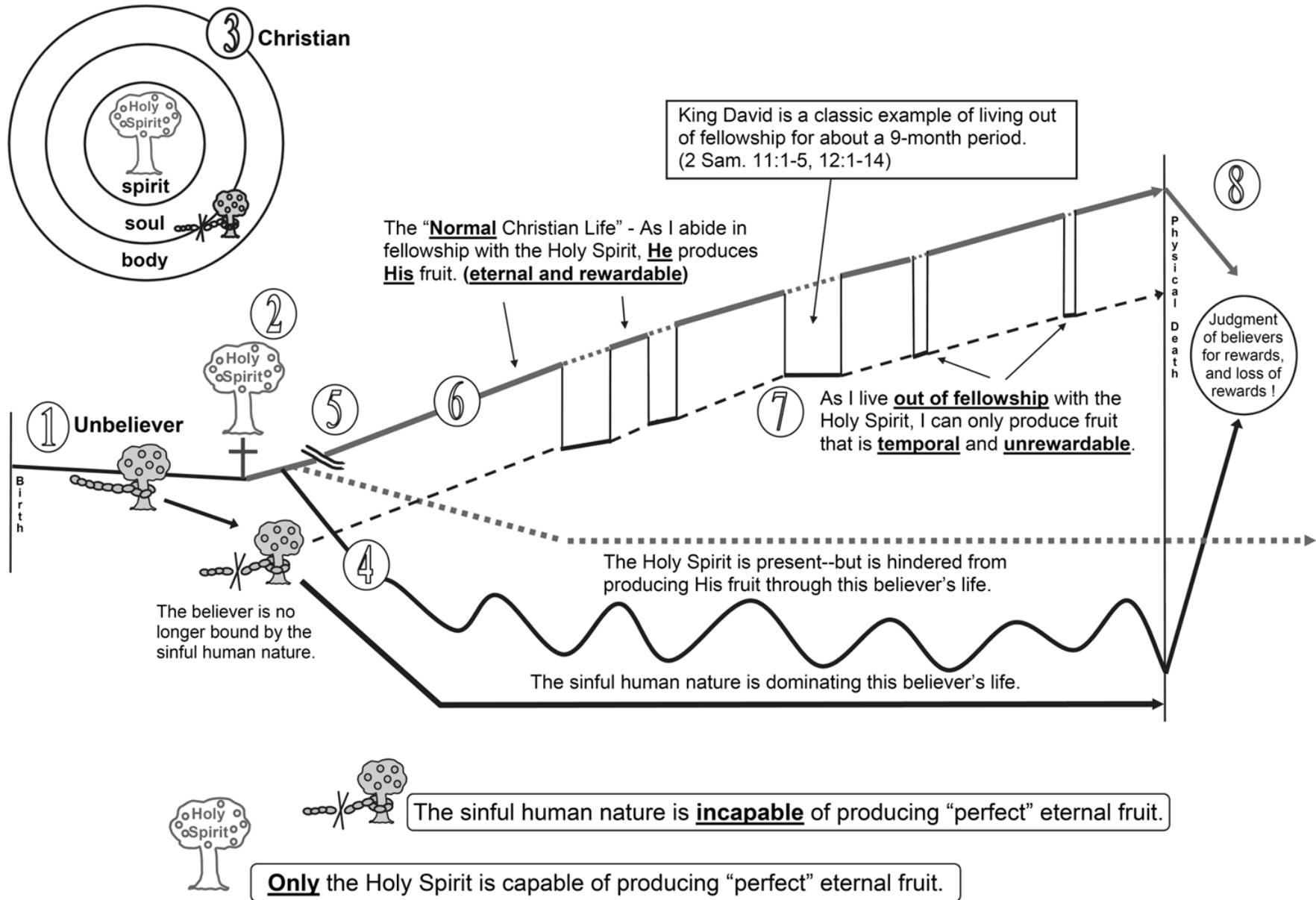
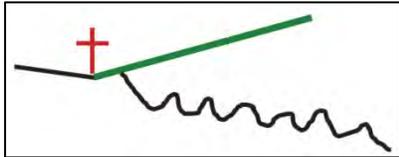


Living Daily In (or out of) Fellowship with The Lord



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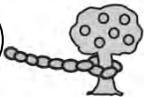
This lesson is an overview of concepts previously covered. This lesson should help me understand my continual interaction with my two competing natures, and how that impacts my daily abiding relationship with the Lord.



After Salvation there are two paths for the new believer. Note that both of these paths represent believers.

1. One line gradually goes upward and into the "spiritual Promised Land." This upper path represents a believer who sees the Lord as his **Master**, that is, the One who oversees and manages his life.
2. The lower path leads into a "spiritual desert." This lower path represents the believer who, either out of ignorance or choice, **has not acknowledged** the Lordship of Christ over his life.

①



Before salvation, I was an unbeliever, bound to the sinful human nature (represented by the chain around the darkened tree).

②

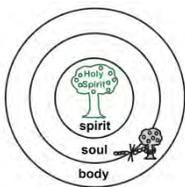


At the cross I was delivered from the "**penalty**" of sin (represented by the "broken chain" around the darkened tree). During this life, from the cross until death, I am being delivered from the "**power**" of sin. And at physical death I will be delivered from the "**presence**" of sin.

At the moment of salvation, I was freed from the mastery of the sinful human nature, and received the Holy Spirit, Who indwells the believer from that time forward. I started the Christian life abiding in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and choose to take one of two paths: (#4 or #5/6)

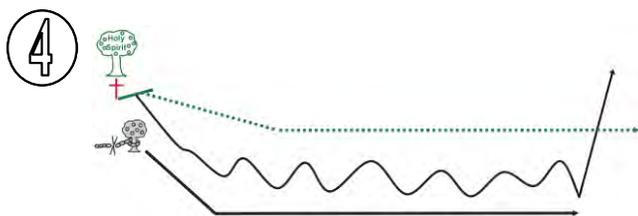
It is important to note that while **the believer has been set free from bondage to the sinful human nature, the sinful nature does not cease to exist and will continue in me until physical death occurs**, at which time I will be freed from the presence of the sinful nature.

③



Upon believing, I was born into the spiritual race, and received God's divine nature in the Person of the Holy Spirit. I am **no longer bound** to the sinful nature, although it is still present. Paul wrote: *For we know that **our old self was crucified with Him**,... so that we may **no longer be enslaved to sin**, since a person who has died is **freed from sin's claims**.* (Romans 6:6-7)

The unbeliever has no option but to be mastered or dominated by the sinful nature, producing **only flawed** fruit. However, the believer is only dominated by the sinful nature **by choice**.



The lower wandering line represents the "abnormal" Christian life. If not spiritually mentored and instructed on **how to follow the Holy Spirit**, many believers find themselves modeling their behavior after other believers, rather than following the leading of the Holy Spirit. The typical result is that

the believer will at some specific time ignore or discount the leading of the Holy Spirit, choosing rather to follow the example of peers.

As a result of spiritual ignorance, or by willful disobedience, if I am unwilling to allow the Holy Spirit to manage my life, I will find myself in a "desert" experience – never quite being able to gain victory over the pull of the sinful nature.

These believers typically see God as their "**Junior Partner,**" rather than their Master. They conclude that "He is always there when they can't cope and **they determine** He is needed to deliver them out of circumstances." They typically consider their own goals and aspirations to be of greater importance than those of God. They desire for God to fit into **their** plans, rather than fitting into **His** plan. Their lives are characterized by a "**disposition of self-dependence.**" (As illustrated by King Saul – see Lesson 3-3)

Note that the Holy Spirit (His presence is represented by the dotted line just above the wavy line) is constantly wooing the believer to yield to Christ as Lord and Master of his life. The Holy Spirit is not the dominant force in this believer's life. As a consequence He doesn't have the freedom to produce His fruit through the believer, who is **forfeiting God's intended fruitful Christian life.**

The solid line at the bottom represents the dominance of the sinful human nature. This believer typically relies on his own understanding to make decisions. By not allowing the Lord to rule in his life, the human nature is allowed to rule. Submission to the human nature will cause problems for the believer, and hopefully he will become so dissatisfied and frustrated (usually through a crisis) that he will finally make a decision to acknowledge Christ's Lordship over his life.

These believers are described in the parable of *The Sower* (Matthew 13 & Luke 8) as being **distracted, not maturing**, resulting in **not bearing eternal rewardable fruit**, until they choose to acknowledge His authority over their life, and begin to "abide." Although saved, they can potentially lose all rewards. *If anyone's work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.* (1 Cor. 3:15)

To believers that have habitually lived in a desert experience, often for years, the thought of consistently abiding in fellowship with the Lord seems unrealistic and "super spiritual." Such a biblical relationship with the Lord is often perceived as idealistic and beyond the attainment of the average believer. The simple truth is that it is not a matter of attaining to, but rather by faith taking advantage of what God has already made provision for.

If a believer simply understands the need to let the Lord manage his life (Lordship) and learns how to consistently abide in harmony, he will experience God's designed normal Christian life. It's not something you "attain to," it is yours through spiritual birth. **Every Christian has a right to live in the spiritual Promised Land. For many believers this desert experience could have been avoided, or significantly shortened, had they been personally mentored ("spiritually parented," "personally disciplined") when they first believed in Christ.**

5



The short parallel lines, located at the fork in the believer's life, represent the "spiritual Jordan river" and the believer's choice to acknowledge His Lordship and enter the "spiritual Promised Land." This indicates the "**event**" in the believer's life to "**choose**" to let the Lord control and manage his life.

This is not a decision to "try my best," or to "behave better in my own strength," but rather a decision to **surrender my "will," accept His yoke, and allow Him to live His life through me.**

(Jesus said) "*Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, **take up My yoke** and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" (Mat. 11:28-30)

(Paul wrote) ... and **I no longer live**, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

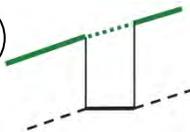
6



Once the believer makes the Lordship decision, then the normal Christian life is one of consistently "abiding in fellowship (harmony)" with the Lord.

The solid line at the top represents the time in which the believer is in fellowship with the Holy Spirit ("walking in the Spirit"). The presence of the sinful nature in the spiritual believer is represented by a dashed line.

7



Notice that there are breaks in the line, which represent periods of time during which the believer is out of fellowship (not abiding) with the Holy Spirit.

The third dip depicts the example of King David. When King David climbed up to the roof of his house he may or may not have been in fellowship with the Lord.

When he chose to commit adultery and murder, he was clearly out of fellowship. He remained out of fellowship with the Lord for approximately a nine-month period. Fellowship was not restored until just before the baby was born, when David was confronted by the prophet Nathan. As soon as David confessed his sin to the Lord he was immediately restored, even for murder and adultery. Yes, he suffered consequences through the rest of his life, but as far as God's forgiveness was concerned, he was **immediately** forgiven and restored into fellowship. Being restored into fellowship does not mean that there are no consequences, but it does mean that there is **complete** forgiveness.

As shown above, the acceptance of Christ's Lordship over one's life is no guarantee of continual unbroken spiritual fellowship. Abiding fellowship is **conditional**. At any time the believer may allow his fellowship with the Holy Spirit to be disrupted, and find himself "walking in the flesh" (submitted to the sinful nature). At any given moment we are either submitted to the Holy Spirit or we are submitted to the sinful nature. We are either "walking in the Spirit" or "walking in the flesh."

God has made provision for every believer to consistently "walk in the Spirit" (the "normal" Christian life). A believer may excuse sin using the pretext of "that's just the way I am," or cite verses from Romans 7, where Paul describes his struggle with the sinful nature. It should be noted however that Paul's spiritual life was better characterized by Romans 8. Certainly every believer will be out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit at times, but such periods should be the exception, not the rule. And those times of being out of fellowship (walking in the flesh, dominated by the sinful nature) should diminish in both frequency and duration as the believer matures.

The Holy Spirit **will** produce His fruit as we abide in Christ. Our part is **not to strive** to produce fruit. Or worry about it. Our part is to **abide in fellowship** with Him, and the fruit will come **naturally**. The Holy Spirit will only produce **good** fruit. I should not assume that everything I do while I am abiding is pleasing to God. He will only hold me accountable according to my maturity level, just as loving parents train their children. *For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but He does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness.* (Heb. 12:10)

During periods when we are out of fellowship (when we're not abiding) the Holy Spirit is not free to produce His fruit through our lives. *The Spirit is the One who gives life. **The flesh doesn't help at all.** The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.* (John 6:63)

⑧ God wants to reward every believer. He is preparing eternal rewards that cannot be compared with the things of this world. Jesus commanded us to lay up treasure for ourselves in heaven, not here on earth. The treasures in heaven are so wonderful, they will make everything in this world that we're familiar with pale in comparison. Each believer has to decide if he wants to lay up **eternal** treasures in heaven or **temporary** treasures here on earth. Jesus said: *But **collect for yourselves treasures in heaven**, ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Matt. 6:20-21)

1 Cor. 3:10-15 speaks of potential "loss" at the Rewards Ceremony for believers. It is important to distinguish between "loss" and "punishment." **Loss is not punishment.** Consider a graduation ceremony as an example. You may go to a graduation where you receive a diploma. Others may receive accolades and awards in addition to their diploma. Because you only received a diploma it would not be correct to view yourself as being "punished." Those who have received special awards were honored because of their priority decisions. You could also have received special awards had you not chosen to forfeit them in favor of other priorities that you considered to be more important.

The believer who is walking in the flesh can do "good" things (from the human perspective), just as an unbeliever can. Anything, however small, that is motivated by the Holy Spirit is **eternal** and **rewardable**. Anything, regardless of outward appearance, that is not motivated by the Holy Spirit is **flawed**, less than perfect, and of **no** eternal or rewardable value.

Paul warns us: *If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am **nothing**. And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, **I gain nothing.*** (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

Only that which is produced by the Holy Spirit is perfect and can enter into eternity. Only the Holy Spirit can produce perfect fruit. It is not what I do "for" God that is important, but rather what I allow the Holy Spirit to produce through me. (see Eccl. 3:14)

The issue is not one of fruit or no fruit that we have to be concerned about. What we need to be concerned about is **where does the fruit originate**. As we abide in harmony with the Holy Spirit, He **will** bear **His** fruit through our life. It's as simple as that!

(Jesus said) *"I am the vine; you are the branches. **The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.**"* (John 15:5)