

Thirsty #6: Partnership

Objectives: To learn that the Word of God partners with the Holy Spirit to do great works and that devoting ourselves to learning and living out God's word is vital for learning how to walk in step with the Holy Spirit.

Launch

What are your favorite things about working in a group on a project? What are your least favorites?

What are the benefits of working in a group? Why can it be difficult to work in a group?

You probably have had some experiences where group work was more a problem than help, but suppose you group members were all devoted and excited about the work. How would this change the group dynamic? Would you like the idea of working in the group than?

Walking in step with God's Spirit is really a partnership or marriage (depending upon your preference of metaphor). We don't run off on our own and go perform for God or discipline ourselves to greater degrees of holiness. Nor, for that matter, do we sit passively by waiting for God to blink us into holy creatures. Though we often err in either of these directions, spiritual growth is a partnership.

Partnership

Read Philippians 2:12-18 (It will be good to give some context that Paul is the speaker.)

- What are your observations?
- What's is the work that God is doing in verses 12 and 13? (works in us according to his purpose)
- What is our part? How are we to accomplish this? (work out what God is working in us to do)
- What does 'work out' mean? (we must participate in the process through—among other things— faith, reliance, and obedience.)
- Why should this process take place with in 'fear and trembling'?

- In verse 16 Paul tells us to 'hold fast to the word of life'. What is the 'word of life' and why is it such an important part of Paul's commandment?

While God is working in us for his good pleasure, we should also be partnering with him in this work. As we have been studying, one step in this partnership is obeying God's Spirit, but the other step is obeying God's Word. The Spirit and the Word are vital and inseparable as they both partner in helping us walk with God and grow in our faith.

We find in Ephesians and Colossians parallel passages, each describing the Spirit-filled life.

Read Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:15-16

- How do these passages differ? Where does their influence come from? (Eph. is the Spirit and Col. is God's word)
- How is God's Word connected to his Spirit?
- What is the danger of focusing and following God's Spirit apart from his Word? (You will tend towards only following your emotions and feelings rather than truth)
- How does God's Spirit use the Word to bring about life-change in us?
- The Spirit enables and empowers us to believe and trust the Word. How have you experienced this? (Another way to ask this, 'as you've grown in your faith how has the your experience reading God's Word changed?')

There are many verses showing the similarity in the work of the Holy Spirit and God's Word. Looking up these groupings of scripture and list out the similar functions of the two.

Look up these passage and share how the Holy Spirit and God's Word partners together. (Have everyone split into groups and then give a couple sets of scripture to each group. A suggestion, write the sets of verses out on a 3x5 card for each group ahead of time instead of reading them aloud to each group. It also may be good to point out the functions that we've studied earlier to help them recall topics we've been looking at.)

- John 3:5-7 and 1 Peter 1:22-25 (giving birth)
- Titus 3:5-6 and Ephesians 5:25-26 (washing)
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 and Colossians 3:16 (indwelling)
- Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 1:9-12 (filling – with power, knowledge)
- 1 Peter 1:2 and John 17:17 (sanctifying)
- Romans 8:2 and John 8:31 (setting free)
- 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Making us competent, adequate)
- Philippians 2:12-13 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (working within)
- 1 John 4:2-4 and 1 John 2:14 (Giving victory over Satan)
- Romans 15:13 and Romans 15:4 (providing hope and comfort)
- Galatians 5:16 and 2 Peter 1:4 (giving victory over the desire of the flesh)
- Romans 8:27 and Hebrews 4:12 (searching the heart)

Apply

The 'Spirit-Filled Life' should also always be the 'Word-Filled Life'. They do not operate separately; rather they work in tandem. God's Spirit uses God's Word to speak to us—teaching us and leading us to Jesus. That process renews our mind and transforms our life (both our attitudes and actions) from the inside out.

- Does how you value God's Word in your life match up with how active and influential the Word should be in the your life? Why or Why Not?
- How will obeying and dwelling in God's Word help satisfy your thirst the way God intended?

- What is one step you can take to make God's Word a more important part of your life?

Let's help encourage each other to get in to the Bible everyday over Christmas break. Cru is going to be doing a daily devotional together to encourage us all to stay focused on God over the break. (Intro the devotional. It will be on the web next to this study. It may be good to walk through some basic tips on quiet times and reading the Bible on your own. -- This is also a good time to share your heart about how important getting into God's Word is. It is safe to say that many in your small group do not read the Bible on a regular basis, if at all. It may be a step of faith for them to believe that it is worth the time. This is a great moment to challenge them in a step of faith. Preach it!)

- Let's pray together that we continue to grow in dwelling in and obeying God's word, starting this Christmas break and lasting a lifetime.