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Spiritual Breathing

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Spiritual Breathing

Experience God's transformation is through "Spiritual Breathing".

"Exhale"—by confession—sin

"Inhale"—by faith—the Holy Spirit's control

Being controlled by the Holy Spirit is a moment-by-moment decision. There are going to be times when you are totally Spirit-controlled and then there will also be times when you are self-controlled. Every believer sins and breaks fellowship with the Holy Spirit at times. Broken fellowship does not mean your sins aren't forgiven. Jesus paid for all your sins on the cross, once and for all—past, present, and future. Broken fellowship means that you are not abiding in Christ, and therefore are not experiencing God's supernatural power for a life of purpose and joy. When we are in step with the Holy Spirit, our life results in purpose, power, peace, and hope. These are times when we are walking in the Spirit.

Q. When are you most often in step with the Holy Spirit?

Being controlled by the Holy Spirit is a moment-by-moment decision. Unfortunately, the sinful part of you will always want your own way ... the self-controlled way. A self-controlled life usually achieves short-term pleasures, but more often than not the end result is quite often fear, emptiness, loneliness, and eventually despair.

Q. When are the times in your life when you are most often self-controlled rather than Spirit-controlled?

Romans 12:2 encourages us with these words: "Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect."

Walking in step with the Spirit results in purpose, power, peace, and hope.

One of the ways you can experience God's transformation is through a spiritual discipline called "Spiritual Breathing." A spiritual discipline is a habit or regular pattern in your life that brings you back to God and opens you up to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you.

Years ago, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, Bill Bright, compared walking in the Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis to breathing. When you breathe, you exhale impurities, and inhale pure air and oxygen. In “spiritual breathing,” you “exhale”—by confession—sin, and “inhale”—by faith—the Holy Spirit’s control.

Exhale: confess your sin—agree with God concerning your sin and thank Him for His forgiveness of it. Confession involves repentance—a change in attitude and behavior.

Inhale: by faith, surrender the control of your life to the Holy Spirit. Trust that He now directs and empowers you.

Jennifer’s Story

It was Labor Day 1972. I had had it! This time I left Jeff for good. I was miserable and in tears as I drove down Roscoe Boulevard on a sunny day in southern California. I needed to talk with someone—anyone who would understand and give me sympathy. Jeff just didn’t understand me. He was oblivious to my needs. So many times I had tried to communicate with him—but he was too busy watching football, or thinking about his career, or just spending time with other people, especially his family.

The tears were streaming down my face as I pulled into the parking lot at Grace Community Church. We had been attending this church for over a year, and had heard the Bible taught by John MacArthur. I had accepted Christ years earlier and had even been door-to-door witnessing—but the reality of Christ in my life was missing. Jeff had actually prayed with me, and talked about Christian things, but I didn’t understand them, nor could I understand him. If Christ was real in his life, why didn’t he pay more attention to my needs and show more love to me?

The fall leaves were blowing around as I pulled my green Volkswagen into a parking space. The church was large and always had a lot of people and staff around. But on that day, as I looked around for someone, I saw no one; not a car, not a person. It was Labor Day and everyone had taken the day off. My tears flowed openly now. Who was I going to get help from? I thought about leaving—and reached for my keys. But then I decided to read a little booklet someone had given me that was sitting on the floor of my car! This little booklet, entitled *How to be Filled by the Holy Spirit* by Bill Bright, explained how Christ gives us a new nature which is like Him, loving, humble, non-judgmental, patient, and kind. I read the verse that said, “The Lord will fight your battles.” I had always fought my own battles, and I had

been battling Jeff. In the midst of my tears, I cried out to God to forgive me for my sins and fill me with his Holy Spirit. In the middle of that prayer an amazing peace overcame me. My tears of sadness and self-pity were replaced with tears of joy and gratitude.

It was in that parking lot on a hot sunny day in southern California that I met my Savior and Lord. I then read in that little pamphlet how I could not just be controlled by the Holy Spirit, but that I could stay controlled on a moment-by-moment basis. The little section in the booklet called “Spiritual Breathing” taught me to “exhale” (or confess) any known sin in my life when I became aware of it, and “inhale” (renew the Spirit’s control) in my life simply by asking. I was a new person! I no longer looked to Jeff as my source of strength and contentment. In fact, he became incidental to my own walk and wonderful new relationship with Christ. Nearly 29 years later, our marriage has blossomed. Jeff saw the change in me and God dealt with him about his need to surrender his life to Christ and yield his life to the Holy Spirit. Now we are actively teaching others how Christ can give them victory in their lives and marriages. Confession involves repentance—a change in attitude and behavior. By faith, surrender the control of your life to the Holy Spirit.

Another Story ... from Matt

Although I was a worship leader in my church, I led a double life. I became addicted to pornography at eleven years of age. As my addiction grew, my cravings became more vile and ugly. Soon I was having all-night pornography sessions on the Internet, and even fantasizing about rape. I was out of control. When a godly man told me about the Holy Spirit’s power to break my addiction, I began looking into God’s Word and memorizing its promises. I discovered God’s awesome power to overcome my addiction. My breakthrough came when I began believing and claiming God’s promises.

Now, whenever I am tempted, I think about a promise in God’s Word that applies to that particular temptation. I then simply focus on His Word, and pray for the Holy Spirit to give me strength to overcome. There are really four keys to my victory over the bondage of sin. First, I needed to take the time to memorize and meditate on God’s promises. Second, I confess my sins whenever my thoughts are wrong which is the “Exhale” part of Spiritual Breathing. Third, I surrender my thoughts and actions to the Holy Spirit by telling Him I want to please Him which is the “Inhale” of Spiritual Breathing. Finally, I spend time with my mentor and other Christians who hold me accountable and encourage me in my walk with Christ.

As I've applied God's Word to all areas of my life, I have been free from bondage to sin and addiction. God has blessed me with a wonderful Christian wife and family. My wife and I are now teaching others how memorizing God's promises can help overcome sin and addiction. I feel so free and joyful now that I have turned my life completely over to the Holy Spirit's control.

First John 1:9 says, "But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness."

Take some time to watch the four-part video series, "[Walk in the Spirit](#)" and read "[How to Walk in the Spirit](#)" both available on this App.

Application

Q. How can you begin to practice the spiritual discipline of Spiritual Breathing?