

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

Can human nature be changed? Is it possible to make a sour person sweet, a proud person humble or a selfish person unselfish? The Bible declares emphatically that these miracles can take place. It is part of the glory of the gospel. Jesus Christ offers to change not only our standing before God but our nature. He promised in Ezekiel 36 that He would put a new spirit within us. John the Baptist proclaimed that the Messiah would baptize us with the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of the indispensable necessity of a new birth, and His words are still applicable to us: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born anew" - John 3:3-7

Paul's statement is in some ways even more dramatic, "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation." - 2 Corinthians 5:17. Here then is the possibility of which the New Testament speaks - a new heart, a new nature, a new birth, a new creation.

This tremendous inward change is the work of the Holy Spirit.

OPEN

How would you like to be different?

- I'd like to change my attitude about life
- Less apprehensive about the future
- more courageous
- more loving toward people
- more sincere
- I like myself the way I am.

What do you think keeps you from making those changes?

What are some of the changes you believe the Holy Spirit has already made in your life?

READ AND STUDY JOHN 16:5-16

1) How did Jesus comfort His disciples in their alarm that He was leaving them?

2) What words indicate that the Counselor, or Spirit, is not a feeling or impersonal force but a Person?

3) Jesus tells His disciples that this Counselor, the Spirit of Truth, would do particular things for the "world" (unbelievers). What were those things?

4) How would the Holy Spirit help those who believe in Jesus?

5) What aspect of the Spirit's work gives Him the name "Spirit of Truth"?

6) Earlier in John 14:17, Jesus said, " He (the Holy Spirit) lives with you and will be in you." How does this promise make a new heart, a new nature, a new birth, a new creation possible in our everyday lives?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

How will you respond to Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit to teach, guide and empower you in your Christian life?

What changes do you think the Holy Spirit would like to make in you - with your cooperation?

Obey the prompting of the Spirit of Christ today. Give Christ permission to teach you and change you from the inside out, not only today but everyday. As you sense a prompting test it with five CS- Is it Commanded in Scripture? Are you Compelled by the Spirit to love? Does it follow Common Sense? Is it Confirmed by Servants of God (authorities in your life)? Is there a pattern in Circumstantial Signs?

Paul tells us in Galatians 2:20 that "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me...". To see Christ live in us we are to be crucified with Christ. How is this done on a daily or moment by moment basis?