

What We Overhear about How to Live the Christian Life

There is little doubt that being a Christian requires some specific disciplines on our part, and that's what this chapter is all about. It contains some of the directives of Jesus that we are expected to follow. Any true Christian reading the Scriptures will overhear these directives and immediately begin to apply them to his or her heart.

Join a Support Group

We Leak

The story is told of an old guy in the backwoods of Kentucky who could be counted on to show up at revival meetings whenever an evangelist came to town. At the end of each service when the invitation was given, he would come down the aisle, get down on his knees, raise his arms to heaven and cry out, "Fill me, Jesus! Fill me! Fill me, Jesus!" Then, within a matter of a week or two, he would slip back into his old ways of living. But when the next round of revival meetings was held, he would once again go to the meetings, walk down the aisle, and pray the same prayer over and over.

One time, he was down on his knees yelling to the ceiling, "Fill me! Fill me, Jesus! Fill me, fill me! Fill me, Jesus!" when suddenly from the back of the church some lady yelled, "Don't do it, Lord! He leaks!"

Of course, the truth is that we all leak. Being filled spiritually is not a once-and-for-all thing. Our spiritual energies dissipate, and we

must find ways to be regularly refilled by the Spirit and reenergized by God.

Filling Up

One of the primary means to experience regular renewal is by being a part of a small group. There are those who call them "support groups." Others call them "accountability groups." But I believe that everyone should belong to a group with two or three other people who meet regularly. I, myself, have such a group that meets for prayer and fun on Tuesday mornings. We meet at Joe's, an old-fashioned breakfast place that's close to where we live. When we get together, we talk about what's going on in our lives and listen to one another's troubles. In the context of intimacy, there is something of God's Spirit that flows between us and energizes each of us.

The New Testament gives evidence that Jesus had such a support group. You can name His partners. They were Peter, James, and John.

Church historians tell us that John Wesley had such a group at Oxford University. He and his friends met so methodically that the other students at Oxford ridiculed them and called them "The Methodists." That's where the name of that denomination came from. Testimonies about spiritual renewal are countless, but among those who have "made it" as Christians, most consider the dynamism of the Spirit experienced in small-group encounters to be a primary instrument for the maintenance of their faith.

Whatever spirituality we have eventually leaks out of us, but God wants to pour in His Spirit faster than it can ebb away.

The Whole Armor

It is through small groups that Christians take on the whole armor of God as described in Ephesians 6. Through such accountability groups we are encouraged to: