

Study Series: Absolute Surrender

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 Lesson Title: “ ‘Having Begun in the Spirit’ ” (pp. 156-168)

Session 13

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The main point of this lesson is: Absolute surrender means living a Spirit-empowered life.

Focus on this goal:To help adults live every day under the power of the Holy Spirit

Key Bible Passage:Galatians 3:2-3

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask: What’s the longest you’ve ever gone without electrical power? What was most frustrating or difficult for you about not having power? What was the reason for that lack of power? What steps, if any, did you take to try to minimize the possibility of living without power again?

Read the main point of this lesson statement (p. 167). State that in this session we will see some reasons Christians lack that power and explore how we can live every day under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Step 2. Feeble Christianity

Ask: What is frustrating and difficult about the church not having power? Read the Day One paragraph (pp. 156-157) beginning with, “Then comes the great question: . . . .” Invite responses to Day One, activity 1 (p. 157).

Explain the author said Galatians 3:2-3 is the solemn answer to his questions. Invite a volunteer to read those verses. Discuss Day One, activity 2 (p. 158). Explain Paul broke with the ancient custom of opening a letter with words of thanksgiving and commendation for the recipients. Instead, he went straight to his frustrations with the Galatians (Gal. 1:1-6) because they were turning from a gospel begun and sustained by God’s grace and His Spirit’s power to a false gospel of works done in their own power.

Ask: Do you think Paul’s opening words to the twenty-first century church would be similar or different? Why?

Request a volunteer read the pull quote in Day One (p. 158).

Step 3. Receiving the Holy Spirit

Note: Vessels don’t just appear; every vessel has a beginning.Read the pull quote in Day Two (p. 159).

Discuss Day Two, activity 1 (p. 159). Explain Paul may have been writing to the churches he and Barnabas planted after the church at Antioch sent them off (Session 9, pp. 109-119, examined Acts 13–14).

Invite a volunteer to read Acts 13:42-52. Guide the group to describe the beginning of these believers’ Christian lives. (They began in the Spirit and stood firm in the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ.) Read the last paragraph of Day Two (p. 159).

Step 4. Neglecting the Holy Spirit

Explain the Galatians tried to perfect what was begun by the Spirit by following false teachers who taught that being saved by grace through faith in Christ was not enough, and believers had to add to that by following Jewish laws regarding diet, festivals, and circumcision.

Discuss Day Three, activity 1 (pp. 160-161). Say: These good things are dangerous because they divert us onto the wrong track while we think we’re headed the right direction.

Relate the author’s train illustration (p. 160) and equate that to blindly following GPS instructions being totally unaware we’re way off track.

Discuss Day Three, activity 2 (p. 161). Invite a volunteer to read the first pull quote in Day Three (p. 161).

Request participants listen for indications believers are living in the power of the flesh as you read Galatians 1:10; 2:11-14; 6:12-13. Call for responses (people-pleasing, hypocrisy, boasting in self rather than God).

Invite a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4. Determine additional indications that “flesh and human energy have taken the place the Holy Ghost ought to have” (p. 162).

Step 5. Lacking the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Declare another indication that Galatians 3:3 is true of a believer is the lack of the fruit of the Spirit. Recall from Session 8 (pp. 96-108) that absolute surrender means the Spirit overflows love from us.

Review from Galatians 5:19-21 evidences of not being Spirit-filled. Evaluate what those evidences look like in our homes and churches. Declare: These are the results of religious self-effort and living without the Spirit’s power.

Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 163). Explain in this context “fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4) refers to setting aside the grace God showed in Christ (2:21) and saying it’s not enough. It’s the “Jesus + my own religious effort” mentality of the Judaizers.

Discuss Day Four, activity 2 (pp. 163-164). Ask: What does faith working through love look like in our homes and churches? State: This is what it looks like when power is restored. So that leads to our final question—How can power be restored?

Step 6. Yielding to the Holy Spirit

Invite a volunteer to read the first paragraph of Day Five (p. 164). Explain another word for return is repent. Determine what believers may need to repent of in regard to our relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Determine truths believers need to once more, or for the first time, believe about the Holy Spirit.

Discuss Day Five, activity 1 (p. 165).

Ask if participants can identify with the question the author said he had been asked often (p. 165, last paragraph). Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 166).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Ask: What steps can we take to minimize the possibility of living without the Spirit’s power anymore? Read the final paragraph of Day Five (p. 166).

Close in prayer, asking God to help each adult with absolute surrender.

