



filling the sail

by Vic Black, National Prayer Director

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but ever be filled and stimulated with the [Holy] Spirit. —Eph 5:18 (AMP)

If we binge drink, we end up drunk, heavily under the influence of alcohol. By comparison, perhaps we can binge or overindulge ourselves with the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the verb, “ever be filled” (here in the Amplified, simply translated in most other versions as “be filled”) is the present continuous tense, indicating “keep on being filled.” Most drunkards don’t casually get drunk. They don’t accidentally overdrink. They drink, and drink, and drink, with the intention of getting drunk, losing themselves in strong drink! What if we did the same thing with the Holy Spirit? But how do you drink, and drink, and drink of the Holy Spirit?

The best picture I’ve found that captures this truth is a sailboat (not original with me). The sail must continuously be being filled with wind. Yes, I said, “be being filled.” The sail can only “be” a sail. That is its function and identity. But the sail is designed and intended to receive a force exerted upon it. The sail is to “be filled” with wind. All the sailor can do is position the sail to catch the wind. But this is not a one-time effort. The sail must constantly be repositioned to catch the wind, causing the boat to fulfill its intended design and purpose of sailing.

Translate this to us, the believer. We are to continuously “be being filled” with the Spirit. We are a receiver, affected and directed by the force of the wind of the Holy Spirit. (Fascinating that the Holy Spirit is referred to as wind...).

Could we binge on the Holy Spirit? Could we indulge and overindulge on the Holy Spirit? Could we drink, and drink, and drink of the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Could we position our lives in such a way as to continuously catch the wind and influence of the Holy Spirit?

I’ve often reflected on the truth, “You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you.” I’m compelled to ask a humorous, yet deeply theological question: “What’s He doing in there?” After you’re finished chuckling, please consider the implication. The Spirit of God dwells, lives, abides, resides, takes up residence in me. He moved into the neighborhood, and I am the neighborhood! The interesting thing is, He moved in, but I get to stay!

Consider these suggested steps to better engage with the reality of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and the charge to keep on being filled with Him:

1. Sign over the deed of your dwelling to the Holy Spirit. (Remember, you were bought with a price, but you get to stay in the dwelling. Only the ownership has changed.)
2. Apologize to the Holy Spirit for largely ignoring Him up till now.
3. Study the Holy Spirit. Who is He? What is He doing? What is His unique role within the Trinity? How do I interface with Him?
4. Ask the Holy Spirit for help in adjusting your life to His presence and influence. (Consider this: a relationship is going on here, and the person at the other end of this relationship is God! You’re not expected to do this alone.)
5. Talk to the Holy Spirit about how you might binge, overindulge, drink deeply and passionately of Him.
6. Consider how you might position and reposition yourself to the wind of the Spirit throughout your day.
7. Keep a list of reasonable forays you could make in exploring this fascinating indwelling, anointing, filling, and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit of the living God.

The sail must constantly be repositioned to catch the wind, causing the boat to fulfill its intended design and purpose of sailing.

“I don’t understand where my spiritual vitality went,” Andy told me. “I feel like I have no spiritual life left.”

real change

by Brad Hillman
People Resources Team Director

Change. It brings up more questions in me than answers. Do I have examples of others changing? Have I changed? What needs to change? What do I mean by change? Does change come only from God? What about Muslims and Hindus and atheists that lose weight, stop smoking, manage their anger, or develop better communication skills? Did those changes come from God? Are there changes that only God can do?



Brad Hillman

Who do you want to be?

Once upon a time, *three Navigators were in a meeting. Without warning, another Navigator insulted and disrespected all three of them in the same way at the same moment!

The first Navigator felt he had been maliciously hurt. He was upset and offended, but he managed to not say anything in return. (James 1:19)

The second Navigator was also hurt and upset, but he immediately focused his thoughts on the future heavenly reward where there would be no hurts and offenses. He chose to endure this suffering for the sake of the Gospel. (II Timothy 2:10; Revelation 21:4)

The third Navigator was likewise hurt and offended. His mind, however, went toward a deep concern for his brother’s actions, a “sanctified” curiosity about why a fellow image bearer would act in this way. Along with this came a willingness to be used by God to “be good” or “bring good” to the offender or others in the meeting. (Philippians 2:6-7; Mark 10:45)

The first person didn’t express his anger, but this silence was motivated by a fear of losing others’ approval. The second, also choosing not to share “unwholesome words,” focused on the future heavenly reward. Now, that is a worthwhile thought, but not if combined with denial and inaction in the present. The third was moved by other-centered compassion and love...the way I believe God would respond.

All three were “biblical” in their response, but I’d suggest only one was “godly”... godly in the sense of how God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit might likewise respond.

I want to experience the kind of change in my life that would make me more like Navigator #3.

What kind of change?

As we reflect on the idea of change in this issue of *Upfront*, I want to be upfront about what I see as the goal. It’s important to begin with the end in mind.

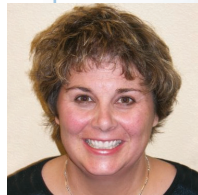
For the Christ follower...for the one who is yielded to Him as Savior and Lord, *change is a movement from the human nature to the divine nature.* Agnostics, Muslims, Hindus, or even Texans may experience a transformation or change in habits, ideas or beliefs, but we’re considering a deeper, more fundamental shift. The

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God's transforming power

by Cynthia Hagen, People Resources Team



Our Father is all about bringing growth. As good stewards, we in The Navigators need to understand how change happens. As we cultivate the soil of our own hearts, God's word can bear fruit in our lives, allowing us to effectively come alongside others and help them change as well. This issue of *UpFront* covers some of the elements involved in transformation, how God does this, and how we can position our hearts to experience it.

UPCOMING PRT EVENTS

Listening and Inner Healing Prayer Seminar

May 20-21, 2013

Relational Healing Seminar

July 11-12, 2013

Becoming One Retreat

July 26-28, 2013

Sabbatical Orientation Workshop

July 29-Aug. 1, 2013

Personal Contribution Assessment

July 15-17, 2013

October 7-9, 2013

For more information call
(719) 594-2555.

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my road to freedom

by Patricee Johnson, Military Ministry

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:32).

Hearing these words as a teenager led me to surrender my life to Christ as Lord. Brought up in a broken home where I'd learned to stuff and hide the pain from physical and sexual abuse, I was broken and ready to be set free. This was the most liberating and frightening day of my life.

What I didn't understand was that embracing this Christ-given freedom and truth would be a lifelong journey—not a one-time event.

I was eighteen when I met The Navigators. By then, I'd become an expert at hiding, pretending, and performing, a masquerade that led only to pride and depression. My heart longed for something more. As The Navigators clearly taught and modeled for me the life that has an eternal and generational impact for God's Kingdom, I wanted that more than anything. I jumped in with both feet. As I committed myself to the Great Commission, little did I know that the Lord had a plan to complete the work He'd started in me.

He wanted to heal my heart. But instead of living out of that place of brokenness where my heart was exposed to Him, I retreated into hiding. It was what I'd been taught growing up. But the Lord didn't let me stay there. He used His people, my pain, and His promises.

As a young believer, I thought other Christians wouldn't accept me if they knew the truth. When godly women invited me to share my struggles and issues, I would be very vague. Not until I realized these women had my best interests at heart, and that my pride was blocking them and hurting me, did I finally share more honestly. My vulnerability opened the doors of my heart to hear the Lord's Truth through His servants. Then I could see myself and my sins for what they really were, and begin to address many of my issues at the root (Psalm 32:3-5).

Like hiding symptoms from the doctor and hoping to get well anyway, closing ourselves to the godly people in our lives slows and hinders God's work in us. Today I'm committed to having soul watchers, people who are intentional about asking me the hard questions and speaking into my life. My part is to take initiative in sharing my heart with them.

The Lord also helped me see how embracing my pain and suffering was key in my transformation. I just wanted to forget the many painful experiences in my life. Memories of suffering, whether from my own poor choices or the sins of others, made me feel weak. In my mission to disciple women, appearing weak was the last thing I wanted.

When I first started discipling women, I had my own plans and strategies to measure their growth and my influence. I began treating people like projects, putting faith in my own understanding rather than God and His unfailing promises (Numbers 23:19).

But as I met with women one-on-one, I saw their hurt and brokenness. They wanted someone who could relate and understand, someone real and broken before the Lord. I'd believed my ministry skills alone qualified me to disciple women, but it was my broken and contrite spirit that had led me along this road of freedom. The Lord uses my pain and suffering not only for my maturity, but for ministry. Today I understand that He is glorified in my weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As I reflect on my road to freedom in Christ, it hasn't been easy. But through His faithful people, embracing my pain, and clinging to His promises, I am convinced that by the grace of God I can lead others to freedom, one life at a time.

real change

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transformation in our souls, from the human to the divine. Oh, it will never be complete in this life, but beginning at II Corinthians 5:17, I believe it can happen.

What is the source for change?

Paul further describes this kind of change in II Corinthians 3:16: *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."* (ESV—also check out *The Message*, verses 16-18, for Eugene Peterson's rich paraphrase.)

We are changed from one degree of glory to another. Humanness decreases and godliness increases. And what is the source for change?

Paul, in this verse as well as II Corinthians 3:6 and 3:17, makes it clear that the Holy Spirit, imparted by Jesus into the hearts of believers, is the irreducible minimum, the only source for transformation. Indeed, *"without me, you can do nothing."* (John 15:5)

The Holy Spirit is the absolute essential for transformation from human to divine. To the degree that we believe this and are yielded to him:

1. We will know that knowledge or insight is not the agent of change.
2. We will know that willpower/human effort is not the agent of change.
3. We will know that accountability partners are not the agent of change.
4. We will know that decisiveness, determination, or the latest "self-help" book is not the agent of change.

The Holy Spirit of God alone is what changes our fundamental nature.

What's my role in change?

As we discuss change...the kind of change our souls long for...I wonder just what I can offer or contribute to the process. While my earlier words and verses push back on the "try harder," "man can do anything he sets his mind to," "change is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration" type of thinking, it does seem to me we can play a part in the process. We can offer our presence and our repentance. Our yieldedness.

In our spiritual disciplines, do we just go through the motions? Or do we vulnerably present ourselves to God?

One of the most difficult practices I've tried was to think about/experience God for twenty minutes without allowing my mind to wander. The goal was to quietly sit, lie down, or kneel in the presence of God without asking for anything, without giving Him mental or verbal praise. Just being present, seeking his presence by giving him mine.

It is a presence that says, "I'm all yours." As much as I am able, without obsessing about my "being able," I present myself to the Trinity with no demands. Yes, I'm available to listen if he wants to "speak" to me—there is a yieldedness or repentance that must mirror my presence—but I'm not there to receive. Only to be present.

This can be in a specific time like what I just described, or a heart attitude of presence and yieldedness, but I think it's an important part of change.

I can confidently describe how to change brakes on a '57 Chevy or how to ice skate backwards, but my confidence recedes like my hairline when it comes to detailing how our human nature can be changed to the divine nature.

I don't get it all and I have many questions, but I hold on to a deep belief that the only change that really matters comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is my only hope of being authentically Navigator #3.

What are your thoughts?

*It has been molded and modified, but the thought for this illustration originated from John Climacus' *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* quoted in *Conversations*, Spring/Summer 2010, pg. 72



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