Life in the Spirit Seminar
SEMINAR 6
Growth

GOAL

To help them to make a commitment to take the steps they need to take to ensure that they will grow in the life of the Spirit.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (Jn. 15:5)

The sixth week is a week for solid growth. The people in the seminar have begun something new. Now they must be taught practical ways to make what they have begun is something solid, something that will last. Like the fourth week, the sixth week is practical and instructional, teaching people how to take definite steps.

The Sixth Seminar

A. The Talk

1. In order to grow in the life of the Spirit, we have to make use of the basic means to growth, especially personal prayer and being part of a community.

2. We should spend time with the Lord in prayer every day.

3. We should be part of a Christian community/prayer group.

4. We should peacefully share what we have found with others.

SEMINAR 6
Expanded Outline of the Presentation

I. In order to grow in the life of the Spirit, we have to make use of the basic means of growth

A. Being baptized in the Spirit is only a beginning; now we need to grow in the life of the Spirit.

B. In order to grow, each of us needs certain practices in our lives prayer, study, service, and community.
   — explain the wheel diagram.
   1. The power that comes from the Holy Spirit makes us grow.
2. But we need to keep in contact with Christ in order for the Holy Spirit to keep strengthening us.  
3. Prayer, study, service and community are means to growth, ways of staying in contact with Christ.

II. We should spend time with the Lord in prayer every day

A. Personal relationships (friendships) don’t grow without two people spending time together, so we have to spend time with the Lord to grow in our relationship with him.

B. We can expect the Lord to speak to us and reveal himself to us if we give him a chance.

C. Set aside time every day for prayer and scripture reading.  
   — decide on a particular time  
   — find a place  
   Include personal testimony to the value of a daily period for prayer. Mention study briefly.

III. We should be part of a Christian community/prayer group

A. We have to get together regularly with a group Christians with whom we can grow in what we’ve found.

B. Community is not an optional extra, it is essential to the life of the Spirit.  
   1. God’s plan is for us to come to him with others, in a body.  
   2. The Holy Spirit works through others to build us up — this is what spiritual gifts are.  
   3. The result of Pentecost was to create a community of Christians (Acts 2:41-47).

C. Church life as it exists in most parishes or congregations is not enough. To grow in the life of Spirit we need to get together with Christ who have experienced the same thing we have.  
   — The Lord does not want us to leave the Church but to become more active, better members of it.

D. Explain how to make contact with the community or prayer group (briefly here).  
   Include personal testimony to the value of community.

IV. We should share with others what we have found.

A. One main form of service is to share with others what we have found ourselves.

B. With our friends and family we should begin showing them the kind of love that they experience as love, by showing them the fruits of our changed lives.

C. We should then share with them about the Lord as they seem open, not being too pushy frightening them unnecessarily but not being unwilling to talk with them about the Lord.
COMMENTS ON THE PRESENTATION

(I) The wheel diagram: The Christian life can be as a wheel. The rim of the wheel represents the Christian’s daily life. The hub of a wheel is the source of and direction for the whole wheel. It holds the wheel together. The hub of the Christian life is Christ himself (on throne, the center). In order to transmit the power and direction from the hub to the rim, spokes are needed. Some spokes in the Christian life are prayer, study, service and community. These are means to put our whole life in with Christ, so that he can transform it with his and directions.

The purpose of the wheel diagram is to put into people’s lives practices by which they can grow as Christians. It does not seek to explain the mediation of Christ’s presence to individuals. Therefore, it focuses upon basic means of growth, not the presence of Christ in groups of committed Christians, the body of Christ, or the sacraments. In the course of the presentation we want to encourage people to participate in the regular life of their churches, but this talk is simply designed to recommend certain practical means which they can grow as Christians.

(II) The section on prayer should be an encouragement to spending time in prayer. It can be a simple presentation but should have personal sharing. The speaker should describe different ways that he prays and that other people pray so that the people in the seminar can get a feel of the range of different things that can happen in prayer.

There is a very helpful book on prayer that the speaker can recommend here—Ralph Martin’s Hungry for God Practical Help in Personal Prayer. The book explain sin greater depth the role of prayer in a relationship with God. Its practical advice is excellent for people who are trying to build or maintain a regular prayer life.

(III) The purpose of the section on community is to begin the process of winning people to commit themselves to other Christians and to an ongoing effort to grow with them and to serve with them in the Christian life. In the section we mainly stress the fact that community is part of God’s plan. In the next seminar, the practical need for help from others is stressed. Personal testimony can be used effectively in this section. If the speaker can share how community has been of personal value, the people in the seminar will be more open to it.

(III. C) Most Christian parishes and congregations do not constitute the kind of community in which people share their lives with one another and help one another to grow in the life of the Spirit. Prayer groups and communities of the charismatic renewal are meeting a need which a great many are feeling today.

We want to encourage people to be active church members and good members of their congregations. This is not necessarily an encouragement for them to get involved in many church activities. Many will, in fact, need to cut down on the activities in their lives. We should encourage them to seek the right kind of involvement so that they are good church members and so that they are growing in the Lord and serving the Lord better. Whether they should take on more church activities is a matter for individual discernment.
(IV) In the fourth section of the talk we want to do two things: 1) we want to encourage the people in the seminars to tell others about Christ and about the new life they have found (explicit, verbal witness/evangelism); 2) we want to avoid having them come on too strong or too hard or too fast. Evangelism with those who are close to us has to proceed carefully. But it should proceed and not be avoided.

(IV.A) If we love others, we will want to share with them the good things we have found. It will be a natural overflow of our new life.

(IV.B) Those who are close to us can be threatened easily. If they see a sudden change in us or if they feel that we are trying to convert them or otherwise change them, they can become very fearful and closed. We have to make our first concern to make them know that we love them more, not to make our first concern to preach the gospel to them. Once they experience something new in us they like, they will be more open to listen.

Different people react different ways to what we want to share with them about our new life in the Spirit. When Our relationship with someone is bad or problematic in some way, it is usually good to go slow. We can be freer when we have a close, warm, trusting friendship with someone.

(IV.C) On the other hand, we should not be unwilling to speak to people about what we have discovered. The will rarely find the new life we have found if they are not told something about it.

HELPFUL MATERIALS

During the sixth seminar, the team members might help new people choose reading material which will help them grow in the Christian life. New Covenant magazine provides regular monthly teaching articles to foster spiritual growth. (A New Covenant subscription blank can be found in the back of the booklet Finding New Life in The Spirit.

Several books in the Living as a Christian series are especially useful to help people grow in the Christian life. These include Growing in Faith and Knowing God’s Will, both by Steve Clark; God First, Decision to Love, and Sons and Daughters of God, all by Ken Wilson; and Growing Closer to God by Tom Gryniewicz. The team members might also recommend such books as Reading Scripture as the Word of God by George Martin and The Purpose of Temptation by Bob Mumford. (See the discussion of reading material on pp. )