Life in the Spirit Seminar
SEMINAR 7
Transformation In Christ

GOAL

To help people avoid discouragement over problems they experience, and to help them become part of a charismatic community or prayer group.

“Not that I am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”(Phil. 3:12)

The final seminar is a combination of two things: more instruction on how to grow in the Christian life and direction on how to make the kind of connection that is necessary in order to go on growing in the life of the Spirit. The last seminar can be a time of great warmth and love. It can also be a time of working through difficulties. It should be a time of commitment to go on and encouragement to go on.

A. The Talk

1. The Holy Spirit is at work in us to change us and make us holier.

2. We can expect to experience trials and difficulties as we grow: they can be a means of growth.

3. In order to grow and overcome difficulties we need much more than what the Life in the Spirit Seminars have been able to give us.

Explain fully how to make contact with the community or prayer group.

SEMINAR 7
Expanded Outline of the Presentation

I. The Holy Spirit is at work in us to change us and make us holier.

A. He is working to draw us into a deeper union with God and one another, to give us a fuller experience of the new life.

B. He is working to make us realize the need for to turn away from wrongdoing, to reorder priorities, to take away all those things that make us less loving.

   Include personal sharing on how the Lord is changing us.

II. We can expect to experience trials and difficulties as we grow: they can be a means of growth.
A. Problems, difficulties and trials are normal and to be expected.

B. The Lord uses them for our growth.
   1. “God works for the good in everything with those who love him” (Rom. 8:28).
   2. We now have a new power to deal with difficulties.
   3. The Lord will teach us things through our coming difficulties.
   4. 1 Thess. 5:16-17.

C. Help is available from the leaders of the community and from members of the community especially those more mature in the life of Spirit.
   Include personal sharing on how trials and difficulties can be overcome.

III. After the seminars (this part at least should be given by the team leader)

A. In order to grow, we need much more (the LSS is only a beginning):
   1. We need to learn a great deal more about the Christian life — it is important to take advantage of the teaching which is available in the community.

   2. We need the strength and support of others, the sharing of experience, advice — a good way to put out a fire is to pull the logs apart, a good basis for starting a fire is to put them together in the right way.

   3. We need a situation in which we can learn how to serve the Lord.

Include personal testimony to the value of community and its importance for growth in the life of the Spirit.

B. Explain clearly and at length about the life of the community or prayer group and how to get into it.

COMMENTS ON THE PRESENTATION

The seventh seminar, like the sixth seminar, is an instructional seminar. Many people, even at this point, still have the feeling that once baptized in the Spirit nothing can go wrong. Such people are in a dangerous position Satan can use any setback to destroy their faith. The seventh seminar should make clear both that they should expect difficulties and that those difficulties can be a source of great advance.

The seventh seminar should convey a sense of the power and victory of the Lord. Difficulties come, that is true. But the Lord has given us a new power. He is setting us on the path of growth. We do not have to be fearful. We are in his hands, and he will be faithful to us. He wants to make us new men and women. The seventh seminar should also be the time in which the need for a definite commitment to a definite community or prayer group is presented. The previous week laid the foundation. This week the specifics are presented.
In some ways this is the most important part of the talk. If the people in the seminar do not make the commitment to go on with others, they will probably no be able to go on nearly as well.

The first two parts of the talk should be given with personal examples. The more it is presented in an experiential way, the more effective it will be.

(I) Jesus wants us to enter into a deeper relationship with him every day. He wants us to more and more become as he is—holy and perfect. But how can man make himself holy and perfect as God is holy and perfect? He can’t God himself must bring about our holiness and perfection, and he will if we let him. “God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). “May the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit an soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it” (I Thess. 5 23-24). Just as Jesus is the one who redeems us and baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, so too is he the one who perfects us. There is no part of our lives which Jesus does not want to perfect in himself. We must for our part, allow him to show us our imperfections and allow him to change us.

(II) Problems, difficulties and trials must be seen a an opportunity for the grace of God to triumph. The Lord has given us a new power, and that power is at work in every situation.

Problems like doubts, fears, lack of trust, self pity, temptation; difficulties like distractions and dryness in prayer, mistakes in following the leadings of the Spirit, and trials like persecution or misunderstandings are commonly experienced in these weeks.

(III) The team leader should give the last part of the talk as “fatherly advice”. The people in the seminar need to take some concrete steps if they are to go on. They should understand the things they need to do in a clear way, and they should understand that experience indicates that they will not grow without taking these steps.

Unless impossible, the team leader should explain exactly what the people in the seminar have to do to be part of the prayer group or community. He should not just say “you need to be part of some group, and this is how you can be part of this one”. Sometimes the advice will simply amount to coming to a weekly prayer meeting each week. Sometimes more will be involved.

HELPFUL MATERIALS

Many books in the Living as a Christian series help Christians overcome personal weaknesses and obstacles to growth in the Spirit. Especially recommended are: How to Repair the Wrong You’ve Done by Ken Wilson; Getting Free and The Angry Christian by Bert Ghezzi; and Living with a Clear Conscience and The Self-Image of a Christian by Mark Kinzer. Other books in the series discuss growth in Christian character and improving personal relationships. How to Become the Person You Were Meant to Be by Peter Williamson offers basic teaching about growing in the Spirit. (See the discussion of reading material on pp.