



LESSON 4

Barriers to Living in the Spirit

1 Did the *choose and ask* model help you turn to the Holy Spirit for help more often last week? How? Share some specific examples.

Introduction

We have learned that the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in our lives as Christians. Despite the interior battle against sin and temptation, living in the Spirit brings us fulfillment and joy.

Occasionally, however, it seems that certain obstacles block the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives, not unlike how clogs in a pipe prevent water from flowing freely into our homes. We realize we are not experiencing the strength, direction or assistance we have been promised. Today's lesson will concretely address typical yet significant barriers that prevent the Holy Spirit from having full influence in our lives.

Common Barriers

2 Read Hebrews 12:1. What prevents us from running the race Paul describes?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

3 Read Romans 12:2. What does Paul warn us to avoid?

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

4 Read Matthew 19:16-22. What does this young man's response indicate about his relationship with God?

Then someone came to him and said, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these; what do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

5 Read Hebrews 6:11-12. What does the author of Hebrews warn the believers to avoid?

And we want each one of you to show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope to the very end, so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

6 Read James 1:2-3. What barrier does James address?

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

7 Are you experiencing any of these barriers? Which one(s)?

8 How can we incorporate what we have learned about the Holy Spirit into our response to these barriers?

The Galatian Trap

We will now address what is perhaps the biggest barrier to our Christian walk. Since it is less obvious than the others, it can be more difficult to overcome. It can be called the *Galatian Trap*.

9 Read Galatians 3:1-3. Why is Paul upset with the Galatians?

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

10 By turning to the “law,” who are the Galatians ultimately depending upon?

11 What is the *Galatian trap*?

12 How can self-effort be a hindrance to the Christian walk? How could it be a help?

13 The Galatians were trying to earn salvation through careful observance of the law. How do we fall into this trap today?

Personal Reflection

14 List barriers you are currently facing in your spiritual life and strategies to invite the Holy Spirit into these areas. Share your barriers with the group. Together, try to think of more ways to overcome these barriers, and find Scripture verses that offer wisdom particular to your situation.

Barriers	Strategies

Summary

Awareness of barriers to a Spirit-filled life is essential for overcoming them. Equipped with this knowledge, we must turn to the Holy Spirit to empower us and give us the courage to live as children of God.

Living It Out

CHALLENGE

Put into practice your strategies to overcome one of your personal barriers to living in the Spirit.

MEMORIZE HEBREWS 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.