



Importance of Spirituality

Often today the talented Christian, the Christian with a tremendous amount of human hustle and ability, the Christian with a naturally meek and mild temperament, and the Christian with the great personality are considered by many to be spiritual giants, or at least spiritual persons. The believer does not depend upon the flesh, but the Spirit of God and the Word of God. 2 Cor. 10:3-4.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." (2 Corinthians 10:3-4, NASB)

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit empowered specific people for specified jobs. The Holy Spirit gave some people special understanding and wisdom. They became great leaders of God's people, such as some of the judges. They revealed God's word as writers of the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit gave some special skills or unusual physical strength for use in God's service such as workers on the tabernacle and Samson. The Holy Spirit was then removed because either their work was finished or because of sin.

It was not God's purpose to fill or live in every believer in the Old Testament. God chose to give certain believers the Holy Spirit for His purpose. The Holy Spirit empowered some believers in the Old Testament, but not all. It was not their qualification, but was God's sovereign decision. It is not who and what they were, but who and what God is. Psalms 135:6.

"Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps." (Psalms 135:6, NASB)

In Old Testament times, one could ask for the Holy Spirit and receive Him under special conditions. For example, Elisha's request was granted in 2 Kings 2:9 and 2 Kings 2:15.

"When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.'" (2 Kings 2:9, NASB)

"Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him." (2 Kings 2:15, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah illustrates the principle of the importance of being controlled by the Holy Spirit. When the believer's soul is controlled by the Holy Spirit, the believer is a power for God, when not in control, the believer is pitiful and a cowardly sort of person. Remember the Holy Spirit indwells permanently every Church Age believer, but controls the believer's soul only when they are in fellowship after having used 1 John 1:9 to confess their known sins biblically.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah had had a mighty victory. Elijah had used faith-rest and had put the problem into the Lord's hands knowing that the battle was the Lord's. In 1 Kings 19:1, Ahab was a little tattle-tale and ran to Jezebel and told her what happened.

"Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword." (1 Kings 19:1, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:2, this was a threat note. She was too smart to send an assassin, but real smart to get him



out of town without hurting him.

"Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."" (1 Kings 19:2, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:3, Elijah arose and fled for his life to Beersheba. He must have really covered the ground in a hurry as this is located in the extreme south of Palestine.

"And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there." (1 Kings 19:3, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:4, Elijah went down into the desert and sat under a juniper tree. Note the "wish I were dead routine!" Is this Elijah? Pitiful!

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."" (1 Kings 19:4, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:6, he was 200 miles away from where he should have been. Did he deserve this food? No. This was God's grace.

"Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again." (1 Kings 19:6, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:9, he went to the hills in the Sinai Peninsula and lodged there. Elijah, what are you doing here?

"Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"" (1 Kings 19:9, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:10, note the emphasis is on "I." He is feeling sorry for himself, everybody is wrong, etc.

"He said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."" (1 Kings 19:10, NASB)

In 1 Kings 19:11, God says, "Come out of the cave Elijah, you've got a lesson to learn."

"So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake." (1 Kings 19:11, NASB)

Note that as Elijah watched, the wind tore up the mountains and rocks. The wind represents human power at its maximum! This illustrates the principle that God does not operate in the believer on the basis of human power. In 1 Kings 19:12, the earthquake illustrates this same principle, as does fire in 1 Kings 19:13. A voice that doesn't speak audibly, but it is the most powerful force in the world is God's power! Elijah needs to be convinced that human power, human dynamics is nothing.

"After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing." (1 Kings 19:12, NASB)

"When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"" (1 Kings 19:13, NASB)



A Christian can read books, biographies, and can try to duplicate other believer's experiences, compensate by some works system, try to humble themselves, practice the presence of God, or practice some system of developing a Dale Carnegie personality, or practice the power of positive thinking and never cut it and never please God! It is not human energy, human dynamics that impresses God. It is the believer empowered by the Spirit of God using Bible doctrine, the Word of God.

A tombstone of one of the saints that was canonized has this description: "He lived upon a dung heap, ate lettuce leaves and lemon peels." Tremendous? Not at all! It is humanly impossible to love all the believers all of the time. It is humanly impossible to practice the presence of God, to forgive others as Christ forgave in the flesh. It comes out phony every time. Consequently, many churches today are mutual admiration societies, the phoniest bunch that ever walked. Or the church has legalistic double standards.

Your Christian experience depends entirely upon the filling of the Holy Spirit! If you do anything for God, it has to be done in the power of the Spirit, that is, in control of your soul (in fellowship). Zechariah 4:6 tells us that operating by means of the old sin nature cannot please God.

"Then he said to me, 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.'" (Zechariah 4:6, NASB)

So there was Elijah, a man who was a power for God on Mt. Carmel, but he was out of fellowship and was a total flop, a timid coward. In 1 Kings 19:14, did Elijah get the point? No! Actually, Elijah was put on a shelf and three men took his place. But before he died, he did get the point. How do we know? Elisha asked one of his successors for a double portion of what? Elijah's spirit. Not power, not personality, but Elijah's spirit.

"Then he said, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.'" (1 Kings 19:14, NASB)

In conclusion, no human ability, powers, talents, high IQ, wonderful personality, none of these are substitutes for the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Believers just cannot please God in the energy of the flesh, even though they may do many wonderful things! And you can't buy your way through to spirituality and you can't work your way to becoming a spiritual Christian.

Sometimes ministers say, "I'm losing some of my members, but if I could just get them to work." They don't need to work! They need to walk in the Spirit. They need to confess their sins biblically and to mix the promises of God with faith using faith-rest. Only by doing this will come divine dynamics and activity and a very busy, balanced life.

Many churches get into programs geared to entertain the kids and amuse the adults. What they really need is the Word! The local church is not a glorified country club or a lonely hearts club or a meeting place for people who can't get along with anyone else. So you cannot substitute human dynamics for spiritual dynamics and get anywhere. The Word of God must be our only criterion, not human hustle.

If there is a conflict between what you think and what the Word of God says, then you are wrong! If there is a conflict between what you experience and what the Word of God says, then you are wrong! The Word of God is reality. Nothing can substitute for the controlling power of the Spirit of God for the absolute state of spirituality!