

UNLOCKING THE
POWER OF THE
HOLY
SPIRIT

myths and the truth uncovered



TIMOTHY GRACIE

HOLY SPIRIT:
UNLOCKING THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT

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CHAPTER 1: STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD:

The Promise

Throughout the history of men, God has guided us in the way of the promise of blessings or curses.

God has always laid the choice of good and evil before men and allowed them to choose. The future consequences of such choices were always made known to men even from the garden of Eden. Everything in the known universe is subject to cause and effect, including mankind.

The fall

When man fell in the Garden of Eden, creation was cursed as a result of mankind's sin.

Genesis 3:14-17 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁴ And the Lord God said unto the serpent because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

¹⁶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow, thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

¹⁷ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Our existence in the world was no longer to be the blissful paradise as it was created to be. After God pronounced his judgment on Satan and mankind, we find the very first promise in scripture

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

In the scriptures, the very first promise of God was that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. This promise is fulfilled in Christ our Savior. However, following this promise, there are several promises contained in the Word of God.

When we claim to stand on the promises of God, it is important to know what exactly this means.

The promise of Christ was God's redemptive plan for humanity. But between the first Adam and the last Adam (Christ), there are thousands of other promises.

The promises of God

When it comes to the promises of God, there are those who take every promise spoken by God and apply it to themselves and have an expectation that God is obliged to bring every promise to pass. There are those who analyze the word of God and make clear demarcations as to who God is speaking to and if the promises that were spoken apply to a Gentile believer. Some of us believe that every promise applies to us and some of us believe that the promises of God are contextual and the obligation to a promise is between the two parties that enter into covenant with each other.

Theology is an excellent tool for understanding the word of God, but God ultimately gave us the Holy Spirit to understand him and theology must be used only as a tool to assist us. The conclusion of truth is not a mental accent of theology but the guidance of the Holy Spirit in matters of our faith. To understand what the promises of God mean and how they apply to all believers we must not impose our intellect unto the 'word' and go beyond what is written.

In our understanding of the promises, we must first discern under what covenant it was made and to whom God was speaking. With this definition, we can break down the promises into 3 types

Promises made under the "Letter of the Law."

Promises made in Christ

Promises made in the Bible that are eternal in nature.

Context, Context, and Context

To simplify things, we can simply say the “Letter of the Law” refers to the old testament and the promises in Christ refer to the new testament. Many argue that all of God’s promises apply to us. Usually, this is because there is some promise of material blessing that believers find in the Old Testament that encourages them and they desperately want to hold onto these promises even if it’s a blessing that applies specifically to an individual or nation.

You see, the word of God must be read with a degree of integrity and honesty. We just can’t put our heads in the sand and ignore the truth, and we can’t carve out a false God from scripture to satisfy our desires.

If we claim that all old testament promises apply to us, this would mean that all old testament curses would also apply to us.

I have been to churches that teach that God will bless you exponentially if you tithe and will bring curses on you if you don’t. Some place their faith more in the erroneous pastors and their self-serving messages of tithing than they do in Jesus. Is your Faith in Jesus? Or a particular blessing of the Bible? Tithing is probably one of the most misunderstood ordinances for the modern believer and would take an entire book to breakdown effectively, but the issue is without a proper understanding of God’s word we will struggle in our walk with the Holy Spirit. Before we can grow to another level and dimension in our Faith, we must grow in understanding of God’s word. We must grow out of a desire to be spoon-fed by great theologians and pastors and return to a dependency of the Holy Ghost as the primary teacher of truth.

To think we are entitled to anything shows a lack of understanding of Grace. I am glad God has never dealt with us as we truly deserve. Even under the old Testament, we find the Grace of God on the people of Israel.

Many times as a young man, whenever I faced difficulty in life, I would search the scriptures looking for God’s deliverance. If I could find a promise in

scripture that remotely fits what I was going through, I would pray those Scriptures to God with an expectancy that he was obliged to do what he did for anyone of the biblical characters I read about.

However, I later began to realize that all promises provided hope even if they don't apply to us contextually; simply because they reveal the nature of God. Therefore, even when certain promises don't apply directly, I still take comfort in God who made those promises and know that I have better promises in Christ.

The Bible tells us that all Scripture "is God-breathed and inspired," but this does not mean that we can extract promises from the old Testament or that we can extract scriptures and like a recipe book to put together the perfect meal. We can certainly learn a lot from the old Testament promises as they revealed to us God's divine nature. They show his compassion and mercy and kindness towards people who are undeserving of his grace. This revelation of his divine nature is more than enough for us to be encouraged regardless of whether the material blessings apply to us or not. So rather than holding on blindly to material blessings of the old Testament I choose to believe in the God who can supply all my needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus both spiritually and materially as he sovereignly wills.

The point I need to drive home is this; if you hold on to the view that you are entitled to God's promises based on your performance and some combination of scriptures you have faith in, you will struggle to truly know the Holy Spirit as you will not be in agreement with the very Spirit who is here to encourage the nature of Christ in believers. You see today, the churches accommodate lust and call it ambition, the church accommodates sin and says it is seeker-friendly and it can even accommodate choices the Bible clearly calls sin by proclaiming that God's love, isaccommodating. Yes, I agree that God's love is accommodating, but it's also transformative. When we experience God's love, we are changed by it.

The Holy Spirit does not conform to false doctrines and ideologies just because everyone believes it. He doesn't accept our error. He will convict of sin whenever he finds it. When we in rebellion choose to ignore his convictions, we will end up in a state where his power and authority is not felt in the churches.

One of the great problems with us re-contextualizing everything is that we no longer allow the spirit of truth to guide us, as we become guided by our lust and

cognitive functions. The Good book tells us that 'all promises in Christ are yea and amen' have you ever wondered why it doesn't just say 'all promises are yea and amen'?

The Shadow –(Christ Concealed)

We know that the entire Bible speaks of Jesus. Either he is concealed and hidden in the text, or he is revealed, but all the word is about him as he is the word. When we receive the Spirit, we must then search out Christ even in the 'shadows.'

It's very illuminating when I read one of the apostles direct interpretations in which they reveal Christ and seeing a modern preacher open up the same scripture, and rather than reveal Christ; try to formulate a system for believers to subject their will on God rather than be subject to the will of God.

Our desire is what often leads us astray and away from the Spirit. We often claim we want to be filled but struggle to give up our desires and truly surrender to God. You see, the promises may reveal the character of God as a gracious provider, but they also reveal our carnal nature when we are unable to see Christ in the law just like the Pharisees.

While God promised the Jews the land of Canaan, the equivalent of this promise (In-Christ) to a Gentile is Heaven. But are we too engrossed in the material blessings of milk and honey that we lose sight of the fact that our Canaan today is Heaven?

As Christians, if we got swallowed by a fish in the ocean, would we expect to be spat out after 3 days? Yes, we can pray for deliverance, but the intent of the story of Jonah was not that all believers should believe that they can be swallowed whole and spat out in 3 days. The story of Jonah being in the belly of the whale for three days is a shadow proclaiming that Christ would be in the grave for three days. The Brazen Serpent that Moses raised in the desert was a shadow of Christ being hung on a cross to die for an equity and bring about spiritual healing for humanity. When there is sickness amongst us, it doesn't do us any good to find a dead serpent and put it on a stick and get all those with infirmities to gaze upon the serpent for healing. But how come we apply this faulty logic to just about every other material blessing we can find instead of searching for the revelation of Christ in the promise.

Even in the book of Genesis when God promises the serpent his head will be bruised by the seed of the woman God began to orchestrate and bring to pass through his sovereign will the redemption of humanity. Every story and every scripture point to Christ. It is not always apparent from the narrative, but it all points to Jesus. Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Just like the Pharisees we sometimes as Christians fail to see Christ in Scripture. We search for Scripture thinking that in Scripture we can find some magical combination to unlock the 'Word' and live as God's amongst men.

John 5:37-40 King James Version (KJV)

³⁷ *And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape.*

³⁸ *And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.*

³⁹ *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

⁴⁰ *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have a life.*

In the above scripture, we read about how the Pharisees despite having the Word of God and professing to know it, really didn't recognize God when he was standing before them. When we "search" the word the conclusion come to should lead us closer to Jesus. When Jesus taught the Pharisees that the Scriptures testify of him, he was saying to them that the Torah and the prophets (the Old Testament) spoke about him as the Messiah both directly in the prophetic sense and inferred in metaphors of shadows of things to come. This means that the underlining truth of the old Testament was Jesus Christ. There are many lessons we can learn from old Testament scripture. We can learn lessons in morality, we can learn about the divine nature of God, we can learn about the promises that he made to his people at various times, and how his people constantly disobeyed him and never really fulfilled the terms of the Covenant.

These are great lessons that we can extract from scripture, but the Scriptures in essence point to Jesus. Very often you must ask yourself, why am I searching Scripture? When we research the word of God, we must do so with the right intentions and motives. When we search the scriptures, looking for solutions to gratify carnal nature; we will naturally develop carnal-minded interpretations of Scripture. The scripture is supposed to be a mirror that shows us our carnal nature

in contrast to the divine nature of God. The Word of God doesn't just show us our carnal nature; it prescribes the solution in Jesus Christ. When we look at eternal life in the Scripture, we are supposed to be looking for Jesus Christ.

Many of us go into the word of God looking for 'blessing' and 'Favor,' but we are supposed to come to the scriptures with the intent of seeking and desiring God.

That's why the scriptures say "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," but the problem with many of us as Christians is that we go to the scriptures not seeking God and not seeking the Kingdom of God but rather seeking answers to our problems here on Earth. This attitude of the modern Christian has been exploited for gain by many modern-day pastors and evangelical preachers. Many of us go to Church looking for answers to our financial problems or looking for answers to our emotional problems. In this day and age of the mega-church do we still go to God seeking him for the answer to our greatest problem, SIN?

The preacher may have told you that your biggest problem is the devil attacking your finances, but believe me your greatest problem is not financial; your biggest problem is your walk and relationship with God. People are quick to accept that God that is Loving and Gracious but fail to accept that He is also Just and Holy.

Every Christian knows and recognizes that Jesus Christ came to die for sin, but somehow Christians will sit through erroneous teachings which tell them that Jesus came to die for their financial prosperity and economic empowerment without thinking twice. We live in the kingdom of this world which is ruled by Satan, but we have been reborn anew for the kingdom of God. It is for the kingdom of God that Jesus came to die.

Whether we go to churches that teach the prosperity gospel or if we merely casually flirt with the idea, if we allow this thinking to overcome us we; will lose the basic ability to understand even the simplest of Scriptures. As I have mentioned in other books, the Gospel of Peace is simply the Gospel of reconciliation. The Gospel of Peace is the good news that we were once far off from God and now can be reconciled to him through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament Jew is accustomed to the material blessings of God which indicated to him that he was in God's will, but to embrace the newness of the

new Testament, we must renew our minds. This is a struggle many modern Christians face in understanding the Bible; they simply cannot understand that the old Testament has been replaced with a new and better version. This doesn't mean that the old Testament is to be thrown away. There are so many wonderful lessons to learn especially about Jesus Christ even in the old Testament but we must understand that to truly embrace the Spirit of God, we must put aside the "former things."

In Philippians 3 we see a mix of contrast between the flesh and Spirit, or the old Testament and the new Testament. Paul tells his fellow Jew that if anyone were to take pride in being a Pharisee, it would be him. He reasons with them by laying down his credentials as a Pharisee, then in verse 8 he says that all these things he counts as a loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He expresses his desire to be resurrected again with Christ and sees this as the most important thing (Salvation). Whatever Paul knew as a Pharisee, whatever he did as a Pharisee, whatever doctrine he believed as a Pharisee; he laid them aside to be called for Salvation. For us to embrace the ministry of the Spirit', we too must lay aside the "Former Things."

Philippians 3 King James Version (KJV) 4-14

⁴ *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*

⁵ *Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*

⁶ *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

⁷ *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

⁸ *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

⁹ *And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

¹⁰ *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

¹¹ *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

¹² *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

¹³ *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do,*

forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I have heard the term “former things” been re-contextualized in many sermons. Some say it’s the past that holds you back. But Paul is very clear what the former things were as he mentions them in detail.

Laying aside the former things is important for one main reason; Jesus Christ. We are not capable of fulfilling the Law. The generations of Israelites before us never really fulfilled the Law. God is under no obligation to us in any way shape or form. When we think we can fulfill the law with our self-righteousness, we are effectually killing the Spirit in us. Killing the Spirit simply means we are quenching and nullifying his work. The devil understands the nature of the old Testament and very subtly and cleverly weaves in a misunderstanding of the old Testament so that instead of embracing the Spirit we embrace the law and effectively allow the Letter of the Law to kill the Spirit within us.

2 Corinthians 3 King James Version (KJV)

3 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

² Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

³ Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

⁴ And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

⁶ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

⁷ But if the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

⁸ How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

The old Testament contains both eternal promises about Christ and temporal promises made specifically to the nation of Israel and specific individuals. While we can learn a great deal about the nature of God through the promises made to Israel or even those made to specific people, our focus should be on the eternal promises of God to his people. This understanding of the old testament about the

new Testament sets the tone of our understanding of the promises of God for our lives. If we are truly living by the Spirit, then our hearts desire the promise of the Spirit rather than the letter of the Law. The Law was simply a schoolmaster designed to show us our carnal nature and to re-direct our focus on the one who would come and exchange his divine nature for our carnal nature. The Law though Eternal in nature was simply a shadow and a stopgap until Christ was revealed. Many of us still struggle however to determine what applies to a modern gentile believer. They are unable to understand that some ordinances while eternal in nature were also instituted transiently until the 'real deal' was to emerge.

Galatians 3:24-25 King James Version (KJV)

²⁴ *Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

²⁵ *But after that faith comes, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

If you can grasp the concept of the law as a schoolmaster, the next step is to accept that we are no longer under the schoolmaster as Paul said in Galatians. This is the reason why we can go before God; we are no longer condemned but justified in Christ. There is no need to search the old Testament Scriptures for temporal promises of prosperity when the new Testament contains promises of great spiritual prosperity in Christ Jesus. Simply put, the new Testament believer has a much better deal.

Remember, we're not saying that God has stopped providing for his people, neither has he stopped healing his people, neither has he stopped prospering people. But we must accept that there will be times when provision, healing, and prosperity are replaced with suffering so that his will might be accomplished. In fact not only does the word of God suggest that we will suffer as Christians, but suffering is 'promised' to us. You may be wondering what does this have to do with the Holy Spirit but please read on.

John 16:33 King James Version (KJV)

³³ *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

We are promised suffering but told to be of good cheer because we can have prosperity in the midst of our suffering. This doesn't mean that our suffering disappears, it just means even though we suffer we can have Joy and Peace. The

reason why we can be of good cheer is because even though we were promised suffering, we were also promised the great reward of the new Testament; the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16 King James Version (KJV)

16 And I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

Some promises transcend the old or new Testament and are eternal in nature, but regardless of what these promises are that we believe and “stand on“ the Holy Spirit is ‘The Promise’ and is essential to everything from your salvation to your sanctification and to just about every area of Christian living.

I have been to churches and heard that old song "Abrahams blessings are mine," sung with such convictions. However, we should ask ourselves; does the Bible out rightly say that the material blessing of Abraham is also for every single believer?

Galatians 3:13-14 King James Version (KJV)

¹³ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that wemight receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In this passage, we see that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. In other words, the chastisement for our iniquities has been paid in full as Christ has paid the price for our Sins. The law given to the Jew could not be fulfilled by no other than Jesus. It's important to understand what this means. God has shown us that we are deserving of his wrath and not deserving of his promises, yet he has given us the blessing we don't deserve and taken away the punishment that we do deserve. This, in a nutshell, is the new covenant for all believers. The problem, however, stems when Christians develop a sense of self-entitlement and start thinking they are deserving of the promises outside of the promise of Christ.

The great promise of Scripture is the promise of the Holy Spirit to believers. God promised that he would send his Spirit to live within us and cause us to walk in his statutes. Whatever God has given to his people has always been

through his grace. There has never been any time when anyone with the sin nature has been able to satisfy the requirements of the law. God did "bless" many people, and we see many wonderful narratives, but all those he did bless would tell you that it was always by his grace. Take a look at some of the people God blessed, like David, Solomon, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, *etc.* none of these people were perfect, and they were all flawed in one respect or the other. It is important to get the right perspective on exactly what we are entitled to and what God gives to us. But let's look what God promised thousands of years ago to all believers across time

Joel 2:28-29 King James Version (KJV)

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, y our old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Hebrews 8:7-13 King James Version (KJV)

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The Bible says that if there was nothing wrong with the first (old) covenant, then there would be no need for a second (new) covenant. We would simply just carry on with the first. But Jesus came to fulfill the old and make way for the new. God's desire has always been for his people to know him. The old system

was a reward and punishment system. Even with the severity of the consequences of sin against God time and time again; God's people chose to turn away from him. The punishment did not deter them, and the blessings did little to keep them faithful. God promised a new covenant that he said would not be like the covenant he swore to the forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) but would be a covenant in which he would pour out his Spirit on his people. He would write his laws on their hearts and minds, and all the people that belonged to him would know him (based on an intimate relationship that was not like the reward and punishment system of before), and he would forgive their sins. This wonderful and great promise of salvation is the promise of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Hebrews, we learn that the new testament

Hebrews 8:6 King James Version (KJV)

⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Galatians 3:14 King James Version (KJV)

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The writer of Hebrews explains that the new covenant was established upon better promises. Not the same promises of the old but better promises. This means whatever you dig up in the old testament (which was only really a metaphor for the promise of the new) the promises and promise of the new testament are better.

Think of it like this, regardless of what God promised in the old testament there is nothing he can give us that is better than his Holy Spirit.

The things many of us desire in the form of blessings very often are things that were created. A new house, a new car, a successful career cannot compare to having his Holy Spirit.

When we are truly born again of his Spirit, we realize that there is nothing more precious than him. What can anyone offer you that's better than God? The promise of heaven is so profound I can't even imagine what it will be like.

John in Revelation gives us a glimpse of heaven and tries to articulate things that no eye has seen or mind ever conceived that have been laid in store in heaven for

those that love him. Yet, the treasure of heaven is God. I am sure that the floors of Gold are beautiful beyond anything that can be described but we are promised something more precious than heaven. We are promised, God. Jesus sums it up in the parable about the man in the field.

Matthew 13:44-46 King James Version (KJV)

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Jesus tells us what salvation is supposed to feel like. Being Born-Again is meant to fill us with such great joy that we are willing to sell everything just to obtain it. Only when we are filled with the spirit will we feel this way. Any form of Christianity that does not focus on heaven and Jesus, and encourage us to pick up our cross and forsake the world; cannot be of God.

Are you ready to sell everything to obtain this great treasure? Or do you look to God seeking him to fulfill your ambitions and desires under the presence that you want to be rich so you can ‘sow into the kingdom.’ Some of you may have read this first chapter thinking what does this have to do with the power of the Holy Spirit?

It's really simple; God promised it!

God prophesied and promised a day he would pour out his spirit on all flesh. Not just Jewish flesh but all flesh. Understanding how important the Holy Spirit is in the role of salvation and Christian living will free you from the beliefs or indoctrinations that may be holding you back.

Some of us don't experience the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we see the Act of the Apostles and Christian literature that happened two thousand years ago. Many think the power of God has been consigned to history as God no longer moves in this generation.

Others have fallen into error and bad theology and fashioned a Holy Spirit that has no root in the sound biblical revelation of who the Holy Spirit really is. Others have allowed excesses to open the door to dark spiritual forces that

masquerade as the Spirit with a wicked insidious agenda. Others believe in the Holy Spirit but are not quite sure what to believe as those who believe the gifts have ceased, and extreme the Pentecostals have muddied the water for everyone.

This book is for those who believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and looking to unlock his power on their lives. If that's you? Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before you in the finished works of your son Yeshua (Jesus). Lord, you promised us your precious Spirit, and we thank you for receiving him. Lord, we pray now for a deeper more intimate relationship with him. Through the scriptures, in this book, I pray you will open up each individual reader's eyes to a revelation that will release your full power. Father help us lay aside all doctrinal errors and anything that will get in the way of us fully partaking in the greatest promise you ever made. Pour out your Spirit now in abundance like never before. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ, I pray.

CHAPTER 2: ARE YOU TOO FULL TO BE FILLED? HAVE YOU RECEIVED SINCE YOU BELIEVED?

Selling everything

When I reflect on my Christian life, there were times when I struggled with understanding who the Holy Spirit is. There were times when I wondered if I was really filled with the Holy Spirit. I would often hear the reassuring words of the pastor telling me that as I have given my life to Christ and was baptized that I most certainly was automatically filled with the Holy Spirit. But inside of me, I knew something was wrong. I was still struggling with sin in my life, there were still strongholds that had a grip on me, and I just couldn't seem to break free.

When you read the word of God, you find the reassuring words of Christ that tell you "whom the son sets free is free indeed." In this time of my life, I certainly was not free (or didn't feel like it). In the age of the seeker friendly church, where all sinners are welcome. Where there is no expectation of holiness for members of the church, I really struggled with the things that held me captive. If I was "Saved" what was I saved from? If Jesus was my Saviour, then what did he save me from. In my struggle, I changed churches, and even in my ignorance back then, something told me, that salvation was not about economic empowerment. Something was convicting me of the Sin in my life.

It was not an overnight transition, but gradually the Holy Spirit dealt with the sin in my life. The problem that I had back then was that I was too full to be filled. I was full of ideas of how everything worked, full of pride, full of ambition, full of my own plans, full of many diverse gifts (both natural and spiritual). You could say I was too full of myself and there simply wasn't enough room for the precious Spirit of God. Like many, I tried to do everything in my own power, but it was futile.

There are many Christians today who have simply not "died to self." Many of us are simply not broken enough to receive all that the Spirit has for us. Some of us are so full of theology we have let our zeal for knowledge, affecting how much we truly 'know' and experience God and his power. Yes, we know all about Spurgeon, Wigglesworth, Calvin, St Augustine, and Wesley. Yes, we have read everything written by Gordon Fee to CS Lewis. But the question is, what have you learned about the Holy Spirit for yourself. Do you have an intimate relationship with God? While you may not hide behind Theology, are you hiding behind your self-righteous works? Maybe it's none of these; maybe you are still so deeply in love with the world that you are unable to have an intimate relationship with God. Many times we pray as if it is God that is holding back from us when truth be told it is us that is distant from God. Until we let go of all

our Intellectual, Emotional and Theological hang-ups, we will struggle to be filled by His Spirit. Imagine a cup that is filled with rocks to the brim. How much water could you fill the cup with? I'm sure with a lot of shaking and a bit of ingenuity you will be able to get some "measure" of water in the vessel. But imagine, if day by day you slowly began to remove the rocks that were in the cup, how much more water do you think you could get in.

Psalm 23:5 (KJV)

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

The Psalmist talked about being so blessed that his cup ran over. This is what all Christians should desire. The best way to ensure there is no argument as to if the cup is half full always half empty is for the cup to be filled all the way to the top until it spills over out to its surroundings. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is like the cup that is filled till it overflows. The overflow is what affects everything around us. As Christians, we need to be filled to the brim with God's spirit and goodness until Christ spills out in everything we do and say. Christians who are not filled with the Spirit tend to exhibit carnality. You may ask yourself the question how can one have the gift of the Holy Spirit and yet still be carnal? This is the conundrum the Apostle Paul faced in dealing with the Gentile church.

Galatians 5:19-26 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ Meekness, temperance: against such, there is no law.

²⁴ And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

²⁶ Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

When we read the epistles of the apostle Paul, it is evident that the early church just like the modern church dealt with Sin. When we walk in the flesh, we lust after the things of the flesh, but when we walk in the Spirit we do mind the

things of the Spirit. So to be filled with the Spirit we must rid ourselves of the flesh. We must understand that God desires to fulfill his promise by pouring out his Holy Spirit on all those who believe in Christ Jesus. It is his good will and pleasure to bless us.

Luke 11:11-13 King James Version (KJV)

¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

From time to time your desire is for God to bless you for various needs in life. Sometimes we need a blessing from God at our jobs, in our marriage, with our children, and in just about every daily walk of life; but there is no greater gift, and there is no greater promise than the promise of the Holy Spirit. As intently as we desire to be a blessing to our biological children, we are told that even more so God desires as a father to bless us with his Holy Spirit when we ask him for it. I wonder if we have become like the church of Laodicea or the rich young ruler. The rich young ruler seemed to have it all; he practiced the religion of his fathers, he was financially blessed and seemingly just wanted the "cherry on top" Blessing of Salvation. Jesus told him that to obtain Salvation; he should sell all and follow him. But the rich young ruler couldn't as the Bible accounts; he had so much.

As a modern Church, we are just like him, we just want Jesus as the cherry on top. We want to be in full control of our lives and don't realize that in Christ; we no longer belong to ourselves.

1 Corinthians 6:20 King James Version (KJV)

²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which is God's.

But back to the rich young ruler, why is it that we struggle so much to rid ourselves of the desire of this world? I wonder where the blame really lies, does it lie with the pastor whose job it is to encourage spiritual maturity or does it lie with the people who are sat in the pew (who draw after themselves preachers who tell them the things their carnal heart's desire). Millions of Christians go to church each Sunday, but you have to ask the question why do people really go to

church? You can

really tell why people are in the church by the nature of the sermons that are preached each Sunday.

Many Christians these days don't want things of the Spirit but have a stronger desire for the things of the flesh (things of this world). Sermons today in many churches are designed to satiate the desire of the congregation for worldly things.

All this deception goes on under the banner of "encouragement." The congregation is told that Jesus came for the brokenhearted, the hurting, the poor and the disenfranchised. While this is true as Jesus displayed the divine nature of God's kindness while he worked on the Earth, his mission here on earth was not to save us from earthly circumstances but to save us from the consequence of sin. The topic of sin has been deleted from the vocabulary of most modern-day preachers. A lot of churches are run as a business and pastors have become CEO's whose main objective is to make money and not save souls. By refusing to talk about sin and marginalizing Jesus we have created mega churches that are simply nothing more than multi-faith social clubs. Have you ever wondered what the Holy Spirit thinks about this? Some say he tells them to focus on love and not to 'judge' but, this must be a different Holy Spirit to the one that addressed false and anti-Christ doctrine through the words of the apostles.

Now, a lot of Christians sit on the fence when it comes to matters of doctrine. These Christians use love as an excuse not to address the damnable heresies that are taught in many of our churches these days, but we must ask ourselves this question; what would Jesus have done?

What does the Holy Spirit want us to do?

It is quite clear from scripture that Jesus never backed down from the Pharisees and the scribes and false religion. But how does this concern the Holy Spirit? Well, the answer lies in his name - "Holy Spirit."

Contrary to what a lot of us have been led to believe, the Holy Spirit does not condone evil doctrines and ideology. Jesus, the apostle Paul, John, Peter, Jude, and all the other disciples openly refuted rebuked and corrected fallacy at any given opportunity.

Many believers are not experiencing what God promised because they are filling

up on dangerous doctrine every week. As you will discover later on, there is a very close relationship between the Holy Spirit and the word of God. If you neglect the word of God in refusing to search for truth and refuse to reject error, you are also both, directly and indirectly, rejecting the Holy Spirit.

What we must understand is that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. To cultivate our Spiritual growth, we must cultivate an environment of truth and worship in an environment of truth. Whether we believe in lies or only tolerate lies, it has a direct impact. The Holy Spirit is given to us to help convict us of the sin of righteousness and of judgment. If the preaching in your Church does not fall along these lines and is not edifying in terms of your walk to become more like Christ, then I suggest you find a Church that does. The church of the body of

Christ was put here on earth primarily to win souls for Christ and to edify each other into becoming more like Christ. Ask yourself this question? In what Epistle of Paul did you find the apostle encouraging you to believe God in becoming a multi-millionaire? Then ask yourself the question, why are you filled with the Holy Spirit and yet not content with him?

For us to be filled and blessed to the degree God desires to bless us with the Holy Spirit we must rid ourselves of everything that hinders us. The Bible tells us that who the Son sets free is free indeed. But the devil has been so smart in getting us to attach ourselves to the very burdens that we have been set free from. We become so weighed down with life that we become ineffective in our ministry here on earth, and our growth in the Spirit.

Hebrews 12:1-2 King James Version (KJV)

12 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The problem we have is not that God does not want to bless us. The problem we have is that we have been encumbered by so many things other than God that there is simply no room for the Holy Spirit in our lives. To be filled we must rid ourselves of all the things that weigh us down and commit our hearts to God. Receiving more of God is a symbiotic relationship in which we yield more of

ourselves. The more of ourselves we are willing to give and the more we are willing to die to self the more room we create for the Holy Spirit in our lives. So, beloved, we must search ourselves truly and deeply and allow God to show us our wicked ways and pray to him for help in dealing with those wicked ways.

Once we have allowed the Spirit to deal with the issues of our heart, what next? The answer is we must pray. In my other book on prayer, I go into the details of what prayer actually is. When we look at the promises of God and especially those made by Jesus; it is easy to forget that the scripture was inspired for a reason and a purpose. Many of the promises are spiritual in nature. Very often scripture uses metaphors to reveal the blessing of Christ. The indwelling Spirit is the promise of the new covenant

This promise was sent to empower us to go out and win souls as faithful servants. As I often teach we cannot let our experience of the Holy Spirit determine our doctrine, but we must trust that the Holy Spirit inspired doctrine will determine our experience.

In other words, just because we go to churches that may never have expressed a valid gift of the Spirit in 100 years it doesn't mean we should discount such gifts and say because we have not seen those gifts in our midst; they are no longer for today. Far too often churches dismiss the presence of the Spirit if the manifestation does not fit into their experience rather than acknowledging the word of God.

The truth is virtually every ministry can be carried out without being "filled." You can preach, visit the sick, give to the poor and preach the good news all without being filled. It is even possible to understand the gospel, believe it and preach it to others with a measure of the Spirit but still not being filled. Let's look at some narrative below.

Acts 19 King James Version (KJV)

19 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him; We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. ⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should

come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus. ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

⁷ And all the men were about twelve. ⁸ And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

The account of Paul's encounter with some of John the Baptist disciples sheds some light on being filled with the Spirit. Firstly, we can deduct from scripture that not all believers are filled with the Spirit. If all believers were filled with the Spirit after they believed, then there would be no precedence for Paul to ask the disciples of John the Baptist if they had been filled since they believed. His question logically would have suggested that being filled doesn't always happen when we believe.

Secondly, the disciples while having a measure of the Spirit (as no man can confess Jesus is Lord but by the Spirit of God), they had no knowledge of the person of the Holy Spirit and had not experienced him personally and intimately in their ministries.

Thirdly, after Paul had baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus he laid hands on them and they 'received' the Holy Spirit and the Bible says they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Many are falsely led to believe that the signs and wonders were reserved for the Apostles, and the gifts of tongues were for the day of Pentecost only, but in this narrative, we see that tongues still accompanied the infilling for these specific believers. We are not saying that if you are filled, then you must speak in tongues, this is clearly not the case, but what I am saying is that on many occasions in the new Testament when the Holy Spirit came and filled people they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

In mathematics, there is a concept called proof by induction. This means in the absence of a definitive expression of truth; we can deduct from a sequence or repeated events that the outcome will be the same if

The sequence of events for each occurrence always produced the same results.

This is like saying if a colleague has been late to work by 5-10 minutes for 30 consecutive days there is a high probability on the 31st day he will also be late. No written law says he must be late, but we can deduct from logical reasoning from the past 30 days what the likely outcome would be on the 31st day. So there is no definitive proof we will always speak in tongues when we are filled. But observing biblical accounts of events in the Bible that refer to being 'filled' suggest very highly that tongues or gifts, in general, have a tendency to follow an infilling.

So while I do not think that every genuine experience of being infilled is accompanied by tongues, every experience is accompanied by signs and wonders if we objectively follow the account of recorded biblical narrative (in a corporate sense). So it is not unheard of to see someone filled and not speak in tongues, but it would be strange to see a church of 100 individuals with not one single member having any gifts of the Spirit like tongues or prophesy and it is equally as weird to go to a church where the entire congregation speaks in tongues (this is very unbiblical).

The next thing we can learn from the narrative is often overlooked. When these disciples received the Spirit, they didn't gather once a month for a prayer vigil where they all stood up and spoke in tongues without any interpretation, the Spirit in them made them witness for Christ and the Kingdom of God, and they disputed or stood up for the Gospel.

Every genuine infilling will lead ultimately to us being better witnesses for Christ. The Bible tells us when we receive the Holy Spirit he will speak to us about Christ.

John 15:26 King James Version (KJV)

26 But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

When I meet Christians who proclaim to be filled with the Spirit, it is easy to discern if they are truly filled. If they are, the Spirit within will witness of Christ and Christ alone. I have gone to church meetings where the congregation does not obey the instructions given to the church in regards to speaking in tongues (only if the interpretation is available). Invariably the prophecies are also out of line and usually in direct contradiction to the teachings of Jesus, so it doesn't really take much to discern what manner of spirit is in operation in a church. The

good books says "my children know my voice and another they will not follow." Once you are familiar with the authentic voice of the Spirit of God, the utterances of demons and the vain imaginations of men will become foreign to you.

I have heard preachers tell the congregation that the Holy Spirit was there to teach them to be millionaires. I remember asking the Spirit "you're telling me to get rid of the lust in my heart, and longing for things in this world. But the pastor is telling me, you are telling him to tell us all you want us all to be millionaires, I mean help a brother out here." I can still remember the Spirit of God reply "Yes, he is speaking in tongues and he is praying in the Spirit, but I am not interceding for millionaires, I am interceding for the sin in his life and those around him."

The Spirit then told me to write to the head pastor and warn him of his error. Excitedly I wrote as I found this all exhilarating, but to my horror, the pastor did not budge and maintained the same old error. But within 1 year of warning he was wheelchair bound, and within 2 years he was dead. I was invited to Germany to a wedding and was singled out by some church members who had heard of my stance against the prosperity gospel and was made to debate theology at an airport. They brought out a lady in her 60's who was extremely wealthy and had built an empire through real estate (their champion of the prosperity gospel, their role model). This lady knew my wife when my wife was a teenager and seeing that we were struggling financially wanted to help my wife out by setting her up in business. This lady was very kind and everything in me just wanted to get out of this debate, but God didn't want me to. Then through the Spirit, I asked her a question "if the Lord was to require your life back of you then who will these goods you have stored belong to?"

A few years later I discovered that that rich elderly lady had died in her beautiful home not long after and decomposed for weeks before people finally figured out she was dead.

I had no idea the pastor would die I had no idea that this rich lady would soon die but they both did and maybe what I said to them was the last time they got to hear the unpolluted gospel. Another time I was called to pray for a young lady who was dying of cancer, almost out of nowhere I told her father who was a renowned pastor of a large church "the Spirit of God says you have allowed and practiced witchcraft in his house, and as you were unrepentant in how you have defiled his house he would take your cherished child's life unless you repent". At

the time I was young and clueless and would even doubt what the Spirit was saying was true. I was almost panicking thinking “what have I just said to this man whose daughter is dying” then suddenly the ‘Man of God’ looks down at the floor and tears start falling from his face as he says “it's all true, I have done evil but how do I get out its too late for me, I have done too much evil”.

This was one of the first powerful manifestations I had of God's voice, and it changed me. Firstly I had no right to be standing before a man of his stature in my mind, and secondly, I am struggling with sin myself, yet God allowed me to experience his power. This is one of the most powerful lessons I learned about unlocking the power of the Holy Spirit, just listen, believe and accept you have a blood-bought right to experience the power of God. We are so easily impressed with the accolades and the qualifications of men that we pay more attention to what men say than the Holy Spirit. I went to the hospital night after night to pray for Suzzy and there were many preachers who would come in and prophecy that ‘this sickness was not unto death’, eventually Suzzy died as her father even with his tears couldn’t give up on the black magic in which he was using to operate his church.

Back to the issue of false doctrine and prosperity gospel, ask yourself one simple question if you believe in these health and wealth doctrines, will the Holy Spirit teach doctrine which contradicts the message of contentment and seeking God’s kingdom? And if we are told that the Spirit will not speak of his own power and will remind us of the things taught by Jesus, where do we find the artistic license that justifies the new age teachings that don’t align with the word of God?

Just like the disciples that Paul found in Ephesus it is possible that we may believe in Jesus, we may even be pastors who preach Jesus, or teach Sunday schools or even be the choir director or even dare I say it speak in tongues (psychosomatically) and not ever truly have experienced a true infilling of the Holy Ghost.

I remember going to a church as a young man and being ‘filled’ and speaking in tongues, but this made really no difference In my maturity and faith as I was still overcome with sin and was surrounded with many young men and woman who were also ‘filled’ and also spoke in tongues but were wrapped in sin just like me. This made me seek for a true infilling from God, and one blessed Sunday he filled me with a genuine infilling of his Spirit, and I just knew I wasn't the same man.

But what was different? Quite simply I was a new man. The Bible says

2 Corinthians 5:17 King James Version (KJV)

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new.

It is really not important if we speak in tongues or not when we are filled with his Spirit, what is important is that we are truly born again.

Our relationship with sin is a more reliable indicator overtime, but for apostles who laid hands on believers or for church leaders, this was not an immediately obvious sign. The purposes of the signs and wonders were to show the world and the new converts that something miraculous has just happened in the life of the new converts.

Most churches have issues with sin, and this is across all denominations. I would beg your forgiveness to speak candidly. But the church across all denominations is filled with scandals of pedophilia, homosexual abuse of children, adultery amongst bishops and pastors, men of God divorcing their wives for the younger women, pastors fleecing the flock and living like Rockstar millionaires. Regardless of what denomination we come from or if such denominations believe in speaking in tongues or not; no denomination has been immune from the rampant immorality. Whether these servants of God spoke in tongues or not, this had no bearing on the evils that they committed. The point I am trying to make in summary is that we need to let go of our cessation or hyper-Pentecostal doctrines and the pride we place in the gifts and seek the infilling that impacts our lives so profoundly that we can truly say we have been born again.

The question I would ask all who read this book, just like Paul asked the disciples he met in Ephesus, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" If you know that you need more of his Spirit in your life, then pray for the Spirit today, but make room in your life to receive him.

CHAPTER 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Holy Spirit is evidently prevalent in the old testament as it is in the new testament. Its presence in times past before the Pentecost is well documented and uncontroversial in the Bible. Interestingly, some of the people upon whom the Holy Spirit came and dwelt recognized and acknowledged that it was God's spirit thus highlighting that the Holy Spirit is not utterly foreign in the old testament. Moreover, the Holy Spirit performed numerous wondrous and awe-inspiring deeds through specific individuals in the old testament. Let us begin by examining the earliest mention of the Holy Spirit which occurs in the very first book of the Bible, Genesis.

Genesis 1:2 clearly indicates that God's spirit was moving about over the vast waters of the earth. This statement gives the impression that the Holy Spirit existed before the earth's creation, and was an indispensable tool that God used during the creation process. To further support the empirical evidence that the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation process, subsequent Bible books in the old testament make a mention of this phenomenon. For instance, the book of Job 33:4 begins by saying this thrilling words, "God's own spirit made me..." thus alluding to the fact that the Holy Spirit was actively involved in the creating mankind. Similarly, the psalmist would go ahead to mention this mind blowing fact numerous times in the Bible book of Psalms. One of those mentions occurs in Psalms 33:6 which states: "By the word of God the heavens were made and by the spirit of his mouth everything in them." Under divine inspiration, the Psalmist acknowledged the role of the Holy Spirit in the creation of the heavens and everything in the heavens. Furthermore, Psalms 104:30 offers further plausible support to that notion.

Away from creation, the Holy Spirit can be identified in the old testament through the powerful and awe-inspiring abilities that it gave those whom it rested upon. One of the earliest mentions of an individual who possessed the Holy Spirit, and as a result, left a wonderful impression on people to the degree that they were driven to acknowledge that God's spirit was in him, is Joseph. The account recorded in the book of Genesis 41 tells of two troubling dreams that the powerful Pharaoh of Egypt had, and which he was trying to decipher the meaning to. After all the consultation from all the wise people and magic

practicing priests of Egypt bore no fruit, it was brought to Pharaoh's attention that a young Hebrew man by the name of Joseph, who was incarcerated at the time, had the capacity to decode and interpret Pharaoh's troubling dreams. Pharaoh thus ordered for Joseph to be brought before him. After Joseph successfully interpreted the dreams, Genesis 41:38 informs us that Pharaoh identified God's spirit in Joseph, it reads: "Pharaoh then said to his servants, "Can another man be found like this one in whom there is the spirit of God?" Hence, through the Holy Spirit, Joseph was able to perform an extraordinary feat in harmony with God's purpose, consequently convincing those around him that God's Holy Spirit was indeed with or in him. It is not surprising that wisdom, which is the quality that Joseph displayed in this context, is mentioned in the Bible as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Another occurrence of the Holy Spirit in the old testament was evidenced in the selection process of leaders. For instance, in the book of Numbers 11, Moses seemed to be overwhelmed by the judicial role that he was performing unilaterally. Indeed, when the people of the nation of Israel were complaining and grumbling over many issues, including the fact that they were finding the God-given manna too monotonous and were hence demanding meat, this took its toll on Moses. Moses pleaded with God to relieve him of this burden. Numbers 11: 16,17 captures the favorable response that Moses received from God, it reads, " God replied to Moses, "Gather for me 70 men from the elders of Israel, men whom you recognize as elders and officials of the people, and take them to the tent of the meeting, and have them stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take away some of the spirits that are on you and place it on them, and they will help you in bearing the burden of the people so that you may not have to bear it alone." This scripture brings into perspective two pertinent facts, first, that Moses had the Holy Spirit in him which enabled him to serve as an efficient leader. Secondly, this spirit would be taken away from Moses and shared unanimously among 70 elders of Israel.

Equipped with the Holy Spirit, these 70 would help Moses in handling the day to day judicial and leadership cases among the Israelites. In an exciting and dramatic turn of events, the 70 people who received the Holy Spirit began to prophesy as is captured in Numbers 11:25. This prophesying is strikingly similar to what happened during the day of Pentecost when the apostles received the Holy Spirit, thus reassuring us that the 70 men indeed did receive the Holy Spirit. Subsequent verses such as verse 29 of the same chapter reiterate this fact. Because the basis of the 70 receiving the Holy Spirit was to aid in judicial and

leadership matters, how pertinent then that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit happens to be the gift of right judgment or counsel. Thus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, they would offer Godly counsel and judgments to the chosen nation of Israel.

Likewise, in the same vein, Numbers 27:18, captures a conversation between God and Moses, in which God commands Moses to "take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom there is the spirit, and lay his hands on him." God chose Joshua and put in him the Holy Spirit so that he could serve in the capacity of a leader in Israel. Several chapters later, we find a similar occurrence whereby the Holy Spirit is involved in the process of anointing a leader for Israel. 1 Samuel 11 narrates how the nation of Israel demanded a king so that they would be like other nations. God accepted their plea and granted them a king, Saul. 1 Samuel 11: 6 says, "The Spirit of God empowered Saul when he heard these words, and he burned with anger." When the Holy Spirit descended upon Saul, he burned with anger, and subsequent verses inform us that he performed a mighty act of cutting into pieces a pair of bulls and sent it back to the camp of Israel as a sign of the fate that would befall anyone who would deny his kingship. The result as is explained by 1 Samuel 11: 7 was that the people became frightened and unanimously agreed to this threat.

Before that, the Holy Spirit had descended upon Saul and to the astonishment of many, caused him to have a changed heart and a different personality. 1 Samuel 10:10 says, "So they went from there to the hill, and a group of prophets met him. At once the Spirit of God empowered him, and he began to prophesy among them." The next verse expresses the disbelief and amazement that filled the Israelites upon seeing this unusual conduct of Saul, even to the extent of saying, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" The very act of prophesying about God is in direct harmony with yet another gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of reverence which inspires one to want to serve God joyfully. This could have been what Saul experienced.

Not so longafter that, however, Saul was involved in gross disobedience to God, and the Holy Spirit left him as is indicated in 1 Samuel 16:14. Before this, Samuel had anointed David as the new king of Israel and 1 Samuel 16: 13 says in part that, "the spirit of God began to empower David from that day forward." Thus David was filled with the Holy Spirit and chosen as a leader. Later on, when David himself came to sin against God, he prayed for the spirit not to be taken away from him as is recorded in Psalms 51:11.

Another individual who is recorded as having received the Holy Spirit in the old testament is Othniel. During his time, the Israelites openly flouted and disregarded God's commandments, and as a result, God took a punitive step against them and gave them up to the King of Mesopotamia where they served as slaves for 8 years. However, stricken by the harsh and deplorable conditions that they were in, the Israelites became fully remorseful for their sinful deeds and called upon God to deliver them from the hands of the Mesopotamian King. Judges 3: 9-10 reads, "When the Israelites called to God for help, God raised up a savior to rescue them, Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the younger brother of Caleb. The spirit of God came upon him, and he became the judge of Israel. When he went out to battle, God gave Cushanrishanathaim, the king of Mesopotamia, into his hand so that he prevailed over Cushanrishanathaim." Thus filled with the Holy Spirit, Othniel went ahead to become a judge of Israel and a fierce war commander winning victories against the enemies of Israel.

The same Bible book of Judges tells of other individuals who were filled with the Holy Spirit in the old testament. Judges 6:34 has this to say about Gideon, "Then God's Spirit came upon Gideon and he sounded the horn, and the Abiezrites rallied behind him." Gideon was evidently filled with the Holy Spirit as he led the Israelites in a victorious battle against the Midianites. When fighting against the Ammonites, Jephthah was also empowered by the Holy Spirit. Judges 11:29 says, "God's Spirit came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh to go to Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he continued to the Ammonites." Jephthah filled with the Holy Spirit fearlessly matched into battle against the Ammonites. It can rightly be said that the Holy Spirit filled these men with courage and fortitude and helped them to fare well against their enemies.

One of the most outstanding individuals described by the Bible book of Judges as having received the Holy Spirit in the old testament was Samson. Judges 13:25 has this to say about him, "In time God's spirit started to impel him in Mahanehdan, between Zorah and Eshtaol." The Holy Spirit would make Samson an extraordinary individual by giving him incredible and astounding strength. Judges 14: 5 tells of Samson encountering a lion on his way to Timnah. Judges 14: 6 says, "Then God's spirit empowered him, and he tore it in two, just as someone tears a young goat in two with his bare hands..." As can already be imagined, Samson seemed to perform this task of killing a lion in an effortless manner, a true testimony that indeed he was impelled by the Holy Spirit. He

would later be recorded in the Bible performing other similarly exceptional and amazing acts.

To go off track a little bit, we can see from the narrative that the Holy Spirit can empower men to perform unexplainable superhuman acts both physical and cognitive. Empowered by the Holy Spirit men have walked on water, ripped Lions to pieces, outrun chariots, and men have been 'snatched' from one location to the other in the Spirit.

While we have to be careful not to derive erroneous theology from the narrative, we cannot also limit the ability of the Spirit based on what we have personally experienced. Doesn't matter how many personal testimonies I tell you about some of the amazing things the Spirit has done through me, all matters of belief and doctrine should be settled solely by Scripture. Experience or lack thereof is not empirical evidence, God's word is. I have never outrun a horse before, but I cannot consign the power of the Holy Spirit to past narratives. To fully experience the Holy Spirit and his power you must believe that you have received the same Spirit of might that Joshua, Moses, Elijah and others had.

But let's back on track, another mention of the Holy Spirit in the old testament occurs several Bible books later, in the book of 2 Chronicles 24:20, which reads, "God's Spirit came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood up above the people, and he said to them, "Why are you violating the commandments of God? You will not be successful because you have abandoned God, he will, in turn, abandon you." In the midst of chronic spiritual deterioration in the nation of Israel, and at a time when the chosen nation of God had relapsed and drifted into spiritual sleep, God's Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah and impelled him to warn the wicked nation to repent of their sins or face the dire consequences that would follow. Azariah, the son of Obed also received the Holy Spirit as is recorded in 2 Chronicles 15: 1.

An enthralling aspect of the Holy Spirit in the old testament is the unique and superlative abilities which it empowered people with. For instance, Bezaleel under divine influence of the Holy Spirit was given craftsmanship and artistic knowledge and wisdom. Exodus 31: 2-3 says, "See, I have chosen Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I will fill him with the Spirit of God, giving him wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of every kind of craftsmanship, for making artistic designs, for working with gold, silver, and copper, for cutting and setting stones, and for making every kind of wood

product." The Holy Spirit would enable Bezaleel to make the artifacts that God had commanded to be made which included; the tent of meeting, the utensils of the tent, the altar of incense and the garments of Aaron the priest, among many other things that were to be used in worship to God. Clearly, before this Bezaleel did not possess such artistic knowledge and skill and the task of making the items would have been a far-fetched possibility for him; indeed a tall order for him without the aid of the Holy Spirit. This is another instance where we see the Holy Spirit empowering someone with the gift of wisdom and understanding.

The Holy Spirit in the old testament is also seen performing a restraining function in harmony with God's purpose. For instance, the Bible book of Numbers 23 narrates of an individual named Balak who was seeking to curse the Israelites. To this end, he commissioned the services of the prophet Balaam so as to get this motive achieved. However, God's Holy Spirit evidently restrained Balaam from proclaiming a curse to the nation of Israel and instead, he declared a blessing for the nation. Numbers 24: 2 says, "When Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped by his tribes, then the spirit of God came upon him." To the disappointment of Balak, he then proceeded to declare a blessing to the nation of Israel instead of a curse.

In a strikingly similar scenario to the one in which Joseph found himself in before the King of Egypt, the prophet Daniel would years later find himself standing in front of the King of Babylon, who had a similar predicament to the one that King Pharaoh had decades earlier. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was undergoing much distress due to a dream which he had and which frightened him. He summoned all the wise men of Babylon, as well as the magicians and astrologers so that they could help him in interpreting the dream. However, all of them proved ineffective and incapable of making the interpretations of the dream known to the king. He would later summon Daniel to help him clarify his dream. In his words, we read this in the book of Daniel 4: 8, " At last, there came in before me Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar after my god, and in whom there is the spirit of the holy God's, and I told him the dream." Nebuchadnezzar evidently identified Daniel as a man who had the spirit of God's in him. This expression highlights the reputation that Daniel had in Babylon, and which can be attributed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helped Daniel to interpret the dream to the king with utmost precision, just as he did with Joseph.

Years later, King Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor, King Belshazzar would find himself in a similar predicament and in desperate need of the services of a person who had the capacity to interpret words which were mysteriously written on the wall by the fingers of a man's hand. Daniel again found himself in the presence of a perplexed king. After all the wise men of Babylon had failed to decode the handwriting on the wall, Daniel was summoned before the king. In Daniel 5: 11, the Queen says this about Daniel, "There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy God's. In the days of your father, enlightenment and insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the God's were found in him..." The queen endorsed the fact that Daniel was filled with the Holy Spirit, and as Daniel was brought before the king, this proved to be true, and he accurately interpreted the handwriting on the wall.

This fact would make Daniel a very favored man before the king as is described by Daniel 6:3 which states, "Now Daniel was distinguishing himself over the other high officials and the satraps, for there was an extraordinary spirit in him, and the king intended to elevate him over the entire kingdom." The mention of an extraordinary spirit was evidently alluding to the Holy Spirit which made Daniel an outstanding man among his contemporaries.

The Bible book of Nehemiah chapter 9 describes a period when the Israelites were remorseful for their sins, and as a result, the Levites proclaimed and prophesied to God. Verse 20 of the same book says, "And you gave your good spirit to them in insight..." This statement declared by the Levites clearly indicated that the nation of Israel was well aware of the fact that God had given them the Holy Spirit in times past.

The prophet Isaiah also in one of his prophecies clearly brought out the fact that God had given his Holy Spirit to the Israelites. Isaiah 63: 10 begins by saying these words, " But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. He then turned into their enemy, and fought against them." Isaiah here indicates that the Holy Spirit of God was indeed with the Israelites, but that they had to face the wrath of God because of grieving his Holy Spirit. The next verse further supports this by saying in part, "...Where is the one who put within him his Holy Spirit?" But this was not the first time that mankind had upset God's Holy Spirit, for during the days of Noah, wickedness had filled the earth. Genesis 6:3 clearly brings out God's take on the horrendous spiritual state of the world during those times. It begins by saying, " Then God said, my spirit will not tolerate man indefinitely, because he is only flesh." The spirit that God referred to in that verse could only

be his Holy Spirit.

The prophet Ezekiel in a similar fashion brought out the amazing and transformational abilities of the Holy Spirit in the old testament. In one of his prophecies, recorded in the book of Ezekiel 36:26, Ezekiel says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh." The removing of the heart of stone and replacing it with a heart of flesh signifies a profound transformation and improvement. Thus, it undoubtedly reassured the Israel nation of the Holy Spirit's ability to completely change a man and give him a new personality, as was evidenced in the case of Saul when he began to prophesy. Therefore, the Israelites in the old testament were made aware through this prophesy that God's Holy Spirit would transform them and accord them in harmony to God's standards.

Given the facts above, it is satisfying to say that the Holy Spirit in the old testament was indeed very active and vibrant in accomplishing God's purposes.

Now that we have seen that the Spirit of God has been present in the affairs of his people even since the old testament, in the next chapter we will look at how the Holy Spirit empowered his church with gifts.

CHAPTER 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We cannot rely solely on human abilities or talent in the completion of God's work here on earth. As Christians, we're faced with many challenges and needs. Spiritual gifts can be described as supernatural empowerments which are given to believers.

While the power of the Spirit is no different than the old testament, it is important to understand what his purposes are for the gifts of the Spirit that manifest. The Spirit is the great enabler that empowers us to build his church and function in our calling.

In the early church, we see gifts primarily manifest to build up the Church and extend God's kingdom. They are manifested in different ways through various people. Many of us Christians especially those with charismatic leanings use the Gifts of the Spirit as an excuse to practice lawlessness and disobedience to God's word.

In the early church, Paul had to deal with the Corinthians in regards to order in the churches. It's sad to see that today we are in my opinion even more lawless than the Corinthians.

Paul's issues with sobriety were clearly issues of vanity and extravagance and some women causing trouble as they had a misinformed understanding of eschatology. Fast-forward to today, and the issue is not women covering their heads properly, but rather their bodies and modesty that is better reserved for the gaze of their husbands. I have seen female worship leaders, who to the undiscerning eye are 'lost in the spirit.' But do you honestly believe that these scantily dressed worship leaders truly have the relationship in the Spirit they appear to have?

This will upset a couple of readers, but I am not trying to upset anyone but rather trying to shed light on the truth; GOD'S SPIRIT IS HOLY.

Yes, God is more concerned about the inside but often how we dress, reflects our inner thoughts and values. When we go to the hospital we recognize a doctor by

how they dress; werecognize a police officer by how they dress, we recognize a construction worker by how they dress. But how about the modern Christian? Are we dressed in the robe of righteousness given to us by the grace of our Lord Jesus or do we look just like the carnal people we are trying to save (on the inside and outside)?

Too often we confuse emotions with spirituality, and we are swept off our feet in worship by the emotions and performing ability of worship leaders who pull funny faces, groan, shout and mumble a few unintelligible words and call it the 'Holy Spirit.' Have you ever wondered why there is such a high divorce rate amongst modern pastors and worship leaders? Before you throw this book down in anger and leave a negative review, I would encourage you to read this book to the end. As someone who was saved by grace and deserving of hell for the things I did before I was saved and even after I was supposed to be 'saved,' I do not want to come across as judgmental, but s I will constantly re-enforce in this book 'HE IS HOLY.'

Under the dispensation of the old testament, men knew that if they messed up the Holy Spirit might be taken away from them ("take not your Holy Spirit from me")

There is a very close correlation between our relationship with God and our relationship with sin.

Everything that the Bible asserts about spiritual gifts is a pointer that they're still needed in this sin-dominated world. They're part of what the Lord has appointed and designed for the Church. It's similar to how He created the various organs in the human body to fulfill their right function. God is always ready to be with us through the Holy Spirit's gifts.

We will look at the gifts of the spirit objectively in a second, but before we do, we need to address the big elephant in the room. There is a school of thought that suggests that the gifts of the Spirit have ceased. This is commonly based on two things a:) 1 Cor 13 and b:) the western churches experience of lack or lack thereof of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 (KJV)

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect comes, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a

child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now, we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

This passage is the famous scripture that most cessationists use to make the argument for the gifts of the church ceasing. There are a couple of things we need understand before we make up our minds either way.

“When that which is perfect comes.”

Some use the argument that ‘that which is perfect’ refers to the Canon (the Bible itself). The chain of thought is that when the word of God was Canonized into the Bible as we know it today, that which is perfect is nowhere. But this could not be what Paul meant. Paul was not referring to a completed Canon. God's word has always preceded his power; his word appears with power and not the other way round. There is no biblical evidence to substantiate the completed Canon would cause the cessation of gifts.

Paul is referring to us ‘knowing in part,’ is not referring to any Canon. If we are to look at this with sound hermeneutical methods we cannot look at this one scripture in isolation we must look at the whole of the new testament and see which interpretations align most with the apostle's teachings.

But let's think about this, Paul who wrote 2/3 of the new testament says "WE." There is no revelation of Christ that we currently have that Paul of the early church didn't have. Yet, he says "we know in part." We also know that Paul knew mysteries that he was not permitted to write about, yet he says "WE KNOW IN PART." If Paul who had a revelation that is not in our Bible today, then how can our Bible be that which is complete or perfect? Please don't misunderstand every word we need for eternal life and godliness is contained within the pages of the Bible but this is not the ‘KNOWING’ Paul is referring to as he later suggests ‘KNOWING’ is a two-way thing as he says ‘but then I will know even as I am known’. Paul is speaking of a specific event in which all our ‘knowing in part’ will be done away with as we behold ‘face to face’ that which is perfect if I can paraphrase. What event was Paul looking forward to in which he would behold face to face and know even as he is known? What event harmonizes with the hope of the entire new testament?

The Canon may not have existed in its current form but the word of God did in

the early church, and yet Paul still says 'now we know in part.' The very completed Canon is still us 'knowing in part' and cannot be a cause for the gifts to cease as the early church shared the epistles and were taught by the apostles and didn't lack any information we now have (Canonized or not). Now that we have the completed Bible, can we say our knowledge of God is complete? Objectively we cannot come to any other conclusion but that we still only know in part.

How do I know that I still only know in part? Well firstly the spirit of truth bears witness to this, and secondly, there are many questions about God even the very best theologians cannot answer. For example, what is the exact date Jesus is coming back? Look back at your Christian history, and you will see it is littered with people who thought they 'knew' when he would be coming back and were wrong. Why is this important because Paul says 'but then shall I know' Paul admits he only knows in part but alludes to an event or time when he would come 'face to face' when he would 'know' and be known. So at what point does Paul know? At what point is his knowledge which is in part done away with? At what point does he know because that which is perfect has come. The mere fact that Paul includes himself and the early church in the argument means that which is perfect cannot be the Canonizing of the logos. When Paul refers to that which is perfect he is not referring to the Canon as there is nothing new in the Canon to Paul or even the early church who are included in the context of 'we,' he is referring to the return of Christ and the consummation of the church. How do I 'know'? Because it is what is said in revelation and an entire central theme of the new testament; the return of Christ.

Revelation 1:8 King James Version (KJV)

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

When Paul talks of that which is to come, he is talking about the return of Christ in glory. This makes more sense regarding us 'knowing.' When we think of 'knowing' we often assume Paul is talking contextually only about our understanding of the written word. Knowing God is more than cognitive appreciation for the written word it is also a divine relationship with him.

John 17:1-3 King James Version (KJV)

17 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as

thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The point Paul was making is that the gifts that were causing issues in the early church were gifts that would one day fade away. He makes the point that of all the impressive gifts they all experienced, the gifts that would transcend even the return of Christ and endure eternally were love, faith, and hope. Which makes sense as God is love. Paul is simply trying to say that speaking in tongues, prophesying and most of the gifts that were causing problems would all fade away at the return of Christ as we would behold him 'face to face' and both know and be known by him. If that which was to come was the Canon why would Paul say he would also be known by that which was to come? It is my personal belief that God promised he would pour out his spirit on all flesh and the Spirit will remain here to empower us until the return of Christ. While he is here, he continues to empower the church. Having said that there are some gifts which in the western church might seemingly have become less prominent, but these gifts have not ceased, as they are still recorded in third world countries where they are more needed.

Western Church

Experience should never be the determining factor for our belief but rather God's word. But in the western church, I have often wondered if the advancement in modern technology and medicine has led to us pushing God's word to second place in our lives. When we are sick do we just give lip service to prayer and rely on the doctors (who God often uses) for the answers to our problems.

But what happens when the doctor gives you bad news? Do you accept the prognosis? Or do you pray for healing? Do you still believe that demonic possession is real or do you accept that majority of manifestations are just mental illnesses? I have lived in European countries where the unemployed are taken care of by the social care system and are financially better off than the majority of people on this planet. We live in countries that have great doctors, cheap food, excellent transport systems, great educational institutions and I can go on and on.

The problem is that we have become so used to being cared for and protected by the government that we have started to rely more on the Babylonian system than

God.

The same Spirit of God that healed in the early church is the same Spirit in us today, but have we become so rich and comfortable that we now think we don't need his power? I have seen people with mental illnesses in the West sent to mental institutions to be medicated, and I have also witnessed firsthand believers in Africa casting demons and curing an insane woman.

The point I am trying to make is when you are desperate for God and have no other solution but God that's when we turn to him in belief.

When you are in a third world country and need a healing because there is no hospital around or you can't afford it, you learn to believe desperately. When you are in an environment where poor means you are only a few days away from starving to death if God does not provide it is different from living in a western country where the poor are not allowed to starve.

The reason why we do not see the gifts in the modern western church as much is not because the gifts have ceased but more because we have become too reliant on ourselves and our governments, technology and science. The Bible recalls "blessed is he who hungers and thirst for righteousness for he shall be filled."

To be filled and receive the Holy Spirit requires a thirst and hunger that is missing from the western church. James says if we lack we should simply ask

James 1:5-8 King James Version (KJV)

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let, not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Rather than ask for the gifts of the spirits some have chosen to doubt the power of God is still here and justify it by saying the gifts have ceased because we now have a completed Canon.

Mark 16:17-18 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

The problem with cessation is that it is based on modern western experience and not scripture. The Spirit is here to empower his church until the return of Christ and is a sign for all believers. The scripture above refers to all those who believe. But the cessationist view is that the signs would follow up until the church had a completed Canon. God promised he would send out his spirit and empower his people in the later days and until Christ comes back, we are living in the later days. There is no mention in the old testament of God pouring out his spirit and empowering his people until they would complete the Canon and God would then cease to manifest his power in believers. Now some of you may be thinking 'is Timothy a hyper-Arminian'? As I have said in previous books; NO!!!!.

I believe in God's sovereign will over all things and believe that we have a choice also. But just like Paul, I cannot reconcile sovereignty with free-will, so I simply choose to 'know in part' rather than to try and cognitively come up with erroneous doctrine due to the vanity of my tiny mind. God has pre-determined the outcome of many events already, but there are numerous occasions in the Bible in which men wrestle with God to change the outcome of that which he has already determined. This is why we pray. This may be ordained, but God listens to our prayers and intercedes in our affairs according to his plans and purposes.

Some subscribe to a theology that says God's grace is irresistible. But this is not what the Bible teaches

Acts 7

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

If scripture says that men resist the Holy Spirit and are stiffnecked, then the concept of irresistible grace is a fallacy. Accepting Christ is a grace given to us but he can be resisted. Both God's Sovereign will and our ability to make choices both good and evil are parallel truths we must just accept as something we won't understand here on earth (fatalism is not what the Bible teaches) The power of God is very real and many churches especially those in third world

countries still experience the signs and wonders that Christ said would follow all those who believe him. I am yet to see any sound scriptural basis that suggests that the power of the spirit in the manifestation of gifts will be present for a few years and then disappear. The prophecy of the power of God being on poured out on all flesh transcends gender, age, race and even the church periods we live in. There are times when the church seems lifeless and dead and in desperate need of some power. There are times when it seems like the Holy Spirit is not here anymore but in these times we have a free-will choice. We can either hunger and thirst for his power to change our lives or we can use theology to convince ourselves that the power and gifts are gone.

If you want to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life you must have an unwavering and undoubting belief that all the things Jesus said about the Holy Spirit are true. Get a Bible with the words of Christ in red and meditate on all things Jesus said about his Holy Spirit and believe them, it's that simple. BELIEVE!!!

But a word of warning belief without logic is nothing more than myth and superstition. There is a lot of funny stuff I have seen in churches that is not the Holy Spirit. I have seen people 'slain' in the Spirit, get out of wheelchairs, speak remarkable prophecies all under the influence of Satan. Not every manifestation is genuine, and that's where a sound understanding of God's word comes in. If you hold a view that the gifts have ceased I pray that God's truth as relates to the gifts today will be revealed to you and I (regardless of which of us is right or wrong), but for my friends who do believe in the gifts and have been swept to an even more dangerous extreme where demons are running riot in certain churches without a single soul in attendance who can discern the satanic influence I pray you will be set free and experience the genuine, authentic power of the Holy Spirit. Personally, the grace afforded to us to be free from sin is one of the authentic hallmarks of a genuine infilling. How we treat each other and all those in our circle of influence is what makes us Christ-like. There are things in our walk that are arguably more important than gifts but that will come later.

This section looks at the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit as discussed by Paul in 1st Corinthians 12:1-11. Any believer who has been baptized by the Holy Spirit can experience these gifts:

1. Word of Wisdom
2. Word of Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Gifts of Healing

- 5. Working of Miracles
- 6. Prophecy

7. Discerning of Spirits

- 8. Different Tongues' Speaking

9. Interpretation of Tongues

Ignorance is, often, a result of lack of knowledge. Without knowing these gifts, one can't desire or even experience them. For that reason, we'll go into detail about each of these gifts. However, bear in mind that all of them are given for comfort, exhortation, and edification. They shouldn't be used for promotion or self-gain. Additionally, no gift is greater than the other.

The Holy Spirit grants all believers the ability to have these gifts as needed. He can manifest any of the nine gifts through a believer whenever HE WILLS. We receive them by the measure of the grace of God towards us. We can divide these different gifts into three different categories: **A. Revelation Gifts** – They reveal something. They're inclusive of the discerning of spirits, words of wisdom and knowledge as discussed below.

1. Word of Knowledge

Word of Knowledge is a tiny fragment of God's knowledge that is supernaturally imparted through the Holy Spirit. It is divine information that is imparted by the Lord for a purpose and at a given moment. This gift reveals the mind of Christ, that is, something which only God knows about a person, situation, place, event *etc.* It's a gift that enables one to see, perceive, and hear what others can't see or hear. It allows you to know what other people don't know.

The Lord can reveal knowledge to a person through multiple, diverse ways, like an audible voice, visions, dreams, and so on. A perfect example of this can be derived from Acts 9:11-16. Ananias knew a man's name and his residence after

the Lord spoke to him.

Another example can be found in 2nd Kings 6:8 where Syria's king had an attack plot against Israel. But, the Holy Spirit imparted that knowledge to Elisha who, in turn, warned Israel's king. Jesus made use of this gift when talking to a Samaritan woman (John 4). He had knowledge about the woman's married life.

2. Word of Wisdom

It's a tiny fragment of God's immeasurable wisdom given at a time and for a specific purpose. It operates through the same revelation of the mind of God. Through Word of Wisdom, the Holy Spirit supernaturally brings about His purposes and desires by influencing certain things and situations.

No natural wisdom is involved here. However, that doesn't imply that you shouldn't keep yourself lined up with God's Word. Everything that you do, in fact, comes down to intent and motive. One can't gain the Word of Wisdom through natural knowledge or study. According to Ephesians 1:17, God's wisdom is a supernatural impartation of facts received from the Lord alone. God instructs us not to lean on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). From Isaiah 5:21, we learn that we shouldn't be wise in our own eyes.

We can see this gift's manifestation in various sections of the Bible: Jesus responding to a question about taxes (Matthew 22:15) and the temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1). Also, Paul appeared before the council and talked a word that brought about confusion to those who wanted him dead (refer to Acts 23:6). King Solomon made use of this gift, too (1st Kings 3:16-28).

There's a significant difference between the words of Wisdom and Knowledge. The former is directive – it gives direction. Wisdom becomes profitable when giving direction (Ecclesiastes 10:10). Wisdom directs or points to knowledge. It makes use of that knowledge efficiently and accurately.

3. Discerning of Spirits

This gift makes known real and false prophets, reveals false doctrine, discerns demons, defines the source of spiritual manifestations, exposes the intent of people's hearts, and much more. You ought to maintain a close relationship with God, with the assurance that the gift of discerning of spirits will manifest.

A banker will instantly recognize counterfeit money because he/she has studied real money. Similarly, you'll only be able to discern spirits through the Holy Spirit. You need to spend time with Him, smell, touch, hear and taste Him. With this gift, you can perceive which kind of spirit is operating in certain circumstances, regardless of whether it's good or evil.

In 2nd Kings 6:13, Elisha's servant discerned the angels. In Acts 16, Paul was able to discern that the girl that was following him was being used by evil spirits, despite saying good things.' In Mark 9:14, note how Jesus called the demons by their names when healing some people.

B. Power Gifts – They're the gifts of healing, faith, and working of miracles. They enable one to do things supernaturally.

1. Gift of Faith

This manifests on behalf of a believer to do something that's unattainable through natural human efforts. The Lord makes use of His glory and divine sovereignty to perform miracles for us. According to 2nd Thessalonians 1:3, this gift enables one to believe in miracles. It allows one to believe in what seems impossible.

We can see this gift's manifestation in several sections of the Bible: a man who was afflicted with leprosy getting healed (Matthew 8) and a disabled man getting healed (John 9). Daniel had been cast into a lions' den (Daniel 6:16). He didn't resist being thrown into this den at all. Such were seemingly impossible situations. The results were, however, miraculous.

2. Working of Miracles

The working of miracles is a power gift in which supernatural events occur. Miracles have always accompanied God's people according to God's will.

Among the most notable examples of this gift is when Moses divided the Red Sea (Exodus 14). In total, Moses performed ten miracles between Exodus 7 and Exodus 12. Also, the sun stood still upon being commanded by Joshua (Joshua 10). Besides, Jesus fed 5,000 people with just bread and fish (Matthew 14).

The word miracles' is derived from the Greek term *dunamis* (dynamite). It means might and power which multiplies itself. This gift works together with the other two Power gifts.

3. Gifts of Healing

They're gifts that eliminate diseases from one's body, spirit, and soul. A clear manifestation of such was when Elisha instructed Naaman, the Syrian, to dip himself seven times in water as found in 2nd Kings. The result was that he was free of leprosy. These gifts are accompanied by a touch of faith, in agreement with James 5:14. Jesus healed a lot of people (read Matthew 8 and Matthew 15).

Those who have the gift of healing, can pray and lay hands on the sick for them to recover. We see many examples of biblical narrative in which people were healed instantaneously from the disease. Till this day many (including myself) have been healed by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, but with many sicknesses being curable or treatable with modern medicine many Christians rely more on medical doctors than the word of God for their healing and come to God as a last result. God is still in the business of healing, and sometimes we may have to rely on his grace to be enough, but he is a healer, and the gift of healing is still around in his church.

C. Utterance Gifts – These include the gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy. Each of them involves bringing a revelation of God via spoken work.

1. Gift of Prophecy

1. Gift of Prophecy

It brings to light motives and/or secrets of an individual's heart. It speaks life, edification, exhortation, vision, revival, comfort, guidance, and restoration. The Prophecy Gift (1st Corinthians 12) is different from the Prophet's Office (Ephesians 4:11). This gift is a divinely inspired and anointed expression, coming directly from God. It's a Holy declaration but in a known or recognized tongue. It's an expression of God's Spirit.

As you'll read in 1st Corinthians 12, this gift doesn't come from man's intelligence. It implies listening to what the Lord is saying before declaring it. It can manifest in anyone who has the Holy Spirit, according to 1st Corinthians 14:31. All prophecy ought to glorify Jesus Christ (1st John 4:1). As well, it should be in line with the Bible (read Isaiah 8:20). It is important when receiving prophecy in the church for each prophecy spoken to the church to be scrutinized and authenticated by others who have the same gift of prophecy.

In certain church denominations prophecy, has been abused. Here are a few pointers to help you discern if you are hearing authentic prophecy.

- It must align with the written word
- It must be validated by 2/3 other people to be authentic
- It must come to pass if it was inspired by God
- it should not encourage your flesh and worldliness

2. Gift of Different Tongues

This gift glorifies the Lord through singing and/or spoken languages. In Acts 2, the Church the gift of tongues allowed Christians to speak in known languages under the function of the Spirit. The gift of Diverse tongues is often mistakenly confused with the unintelligible utterings of the manifested prayer language. One is a corporate gift while the other is for your private prayer. One edifies the body of Christ while the other edifies you and builds up your inner man. But, speaking in tongues can be of tremendous help to our prayers.

This gift grants one the ability to speak and communicate in languages; a language(s) which isn't learned. They're tongues which are only understood through interpretation. They edify the Church (1st Corinthians 14:15). The Spirit gives a person the utterance. The individual then does the talking. Remember, any believer who is infilled with the Holy Spirit can receive the gift of speaking in tongues (corporate gift to speak in known languages without learning) or speak in tongues (private prayer language which cannot be understood)

3. Interpretation of Tongues

It implies a supernatural interpretation of various tongues. Interpretation, in this context, means bringing out the gist of something that's being said. It's a gift which also only comes from God. Prophecy is manifested when the gift of different tongues is combined with interpretation. This is the only gift which depends upon another gift (1 Corinthians 14:13). The Bible instructs those that can speak in tongues to pray that they may interpret. Interpretation of tongues is a gift that's intended for edification (1st Corinthians 14:12).

How Do You Discover Your Spiritual Gift(s)?

One thing I have learned is that while we may argue if the gifts of the spirit are still needed or relevant for today, none of us can argue that we need the Spirit. The Bible says that the Spirit gives gifts as he pleases and wills. Many Christians with gifts laud it over those who don't, and many Christians without gifts develop theology which negates the need for gifts. But for us to function in our calling we need gifts.

We are born as men who are natural beings that are spiritually dead in Adam. When we give our lives to Jesus, we are reborn Spiritual beings who die daily to the natural man, but are supposed to grow daily in our Spirit man.

Jesus should be your focus.

Completing His mission ought to be your mandate.

The gifts are intended to serve God's purposes in the world.

The Holy Spirit's fruit is the key evidence of a Spirit-filled life.

Free yourself from human motives or agendas.

Desire the Gifts

Spiritual gifts aren't innate or natural talents. Rather, they're empowerments which the Holy Spirit grants to believers. According to 1st Corinthians 14:24, these gifts may have a witnessing purpose to non-believers. When an unbeliever comes in while everyone is prophesying, he'll be convinced that he's a sinner. His secrets will be known to the person prophesying.

Desiring these gifts earnestly is among the most crucial steps to flowing with them. Paul has emphasized that fact several times (1st Corinthians 12:31 and 1st Corinthians 14:1). Jeremiah 29:13 boldly says that one should seek the Holy Spirit's gifts with all their heart. You shouldn't neglect any gift that's in you. You shouldn't let these gifts lay unused and dormant in your life.

From 1st Timothy 4:14, we learn that our progress, due to these gifts, ought to be evident. Also, you shouldn't use the spiritual gifts to feed a desire for attention or exalt yourself. Offer yourself to God as a willing vessel for the manifestation of the Spirit's gifts. These gifts aid in making us part of the Body of Christ. These nine gifts are meant to profit all' (read 1st Corinthians 12:7).

Paul puts it across that his speech and preaching wasn't with man's wisdom. Rather, it was a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and His power (1st Corinthians 2:4). Jesus' ministry was a clear demonstration of these gifts. They were working through a man who had fully surrendered himself. With the above guidelines, believers ought to embrace the Holy Spirit's work in their lives.

Jesus said that all true believers would flow in miraculous ways (Mark 16:17) – that in His name, the Devils will be cast out, believers will speak in new tongues, and they'll take up serpents, and will heal the sick by laying hands on them. We can't presume that there's one person who has received all that the Holy Spirit has in store for them. God is always seeking to provide more through these gifts. Put yourself in a mode to serve as His vessel, and these gifts will surely flow.

CHAPTER 5: ROLES OF THE SPIRIT

1

His role in empowering grace.

The Holy Spirit comes with God's power in our lives. In Philippians 4:13, Paul explains how Christians can do all things through Christ by the power that works in us.

Philippians 4:10-13 King James Version (KJV)

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

For many years I used to believe that Philippians 4:13, meant that as a Christian I could accomplish anything I desired. This was the common interpretation I would hear from pastors and preachers. Sitting in the pew I was often told...

“you can buy that new house, you can launch that successful business, you can be promoted at work, you can have a successful ministry, you can have a happy family you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.”

While for many Christians who are going through struggles this interpretation of Scripture is encouraging, it is not the primary interpretation of the scripture. Paul is simply saying that Christ had strengthened him through the Holy Spirit and this allowed him to endure all situations that came his way throughout his Christian life and walk on this earth. It is not a motivational scripture, designed to make us feel 10 feet tall and that we can accomplish the impossible. It is more of a motivational scripture designed to let us know that we can endure hardship and even abundance of financial wealth through the strength of Christ alive within us. The resident Spirit of God gives us the grace to cope with life here in this world. Why do we need grace? Well, if you remember the words of Jesus Christ in John 15 in this world we will have many trials and tribulations. God

gives us his grace to allow us to deal with those trials and tribulations, as we are persecuted for the gospel. Very often we are guilty of re-contextualizing what persecution means. I have heard people refer to struggles in their businesses as “trials” or “tribulation” about a boss at work that doesn't like them. While things like this are certainly challenging, this is not the trial and tribulation and suffering that Christ is referring to. The suffering that results from our faithfulness in preaching the gospel is the trial and tribulation that is being referred to. The challenges we face by being openly Christian in our workplaces and as a result being victimized or even forced out of our jobs are the sufferings he is referring to. The loss of our physical life that results in us being martyred to preach the gospel to unreached people, this is true suffering. The point I'm trying to make is suffering relates to the gospel not to our experiences in this world as we simply live our lives. When you look at what most of us complain of as Christians, or what most of us refer to as suffering you soon realize that it is just simply life. We just about blame the devil for everything. Our broken marriages, our failed businesses or even our estranged children. However in reality sometimes our lives are just like the lives of unbelievers (remember he makes it rain on the just and the unjust). Jesus told us in Luke 12:33 that he had not come to give us peace on earth.

Luke 12:51-53 King James Version (KJV)

⁵¹ Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: ⁵² For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

⁵³ The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

So, in summary, the apostle Paul is simply saying that Christ empowers us to cope with the trials and tribulations that result from persecution for the gospel sake. Regardless of what you're going through the spirit of God is there with you to enable you to cope. He does this by realigning your hope away from the things or events that happen in this world and points you back to Christ. Through the Grace given to us, we can fix our eyes on Jesus and live. Don't get me wrong, let me be perfectly honest with you, God is good. He's kind and he is merciful,

and he has not given to us the wrath we truly deserve but blesses us with great spiritual blessings we simply do not deserve. He doesn't just bless us spiritually he takes care of us as we go through this world. Paul presents a balanced account of true Christianity in which he experienced times where he was so blessed that he could be a blessing to others, and times when he suffered lack and had nothing. In both extremes and everything in-between God is always enough. This is the balanced view of Christianity that we should all have. There are church denominations who teach that following certain key principles will ensure that all the days of your life on this earth you will never lack, but the funny thing is the disciples were not exempt from lack or even sickness even though they were often used as instruments of provision and healing. The idea of a perpetual paradise here on earth after we give our lives to Christ is simply not realistic or even scriptural. We ought to embrace the power of the Holy Spirit within us as God has given us the grace to cope with all things.

His role in empowering change.

The Holy Spirit works in our lives to reveal the plans and the will of God in our lives. In the seeker-friendly mega-churches, the focus seems to be on earthly circumstances. This taints and negates the real reasons why he is here. The job of the Spirit is to focus on Jesus. When you have teaching that is not focused on the Jesus, the presence will often systematically dwindle. This applies to our personal walk as well, as we cannot have two masters. The rhetoric I have often heard was, If you were financially poor, then when you give your life you will become rich. The most significant change in our life that the Spirit brings is transforming us to the image of the son. This is one of the primary roles of the Spirit in our lives, and the degree to which we yield is a factor in how much of his power we experience. Some people deal with anger management issues for years and yet wonder why our ministries have stagnated. Some of us have issues with the lust of the world and wonder why he never shows up when we preach and why hearts are not convicted. If you want to experience an overflow of his Spirit start listening to what he says about how you are living your Christian life.

He is not here to condemn us but rather convict us of sin as we transform into the glorious sons of God we were called to be.

He is here to change us and he does this by bearing fruit in our lives. The book of Galatians 5:22-23 describes the Holy Spirit's fruit in our lives. The Holy Spirit's fruit which is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-

control, and gentleness.

If you have given the Holy Spirit control of your life, it is impossible not be changed.

For change to happen in our lives, it's essential for us as Christians to allow the Spirit in our lives and also to give him full control. God hates a double standard, and many times we are in love with the idea of intimacy with the Spirit but not the reality of what is required of us.

When we are saved, we are called to salvation from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Very often the backgrounds we come from can be very instrumental in how the Lord uses us to save others. But the problem is after we have been saved and spent years under the tutelage of the Spirit, being unable to let go of our old self. These strongholds can take many forms. Sometimes it's old friends, sometimes its music, literature or movies within the appropriate content. Other times it's the standard of a corrupt world that still intoxicates us. Some say that Jesus was full of Grace and was often found with sinners. This is true but the difference is that the Spirit within Jesus was compassionate towards all sinners and desired to see them saved. But today we often use grace as an excuse to tolerate sin in ourselves and others. There is no problem hanging out with sinners, the problem is them hanging out with you and not being changed or led to salvation over time.

We are called to be the salt of this world or the light of this world. The imagery of scripture is that we are supposed to be a stark contrast to the status quo of the world which is darkness. As the Lord put it, what use is salt that is not salty? When you put salt into any beverage or food, the taste will change. Likewise, we are supposed to be agents of change in any environment we find ourselves. But change always starts with us first. Before we can be effective ambassadors we must embrace change in our lives.

The role of the Spirit in Prayer

If you are struggling with your old man, do not lose courage or hope as we are not alone in this battle against sin. We have an advocate in heaven and here on earth that constantly pleads our case. In heaven, Jesus is praying for us, and here on earth, the Holy Spirit is also praying for us. The Book of Romans 8:27 describes how the Holy Spirit prays for us. It states that the Spirit prays for us

according to the will of God for our lives.

Without the Holy Spirit, we are incapable of praying the will of God. Many Christians even after receiving the Holy Spirit do not seek the will of God for their lives. As Christians, sometimes we are so preoccupied and focused on the things of this world that they completely dominate our prayer lives. We all like to think we truly love God, and we love the things he loves, but we often don't realize until we are broken by the Holy Spirit just how far our hearts are from him. I remember an experience I had with the Holy Spirit once, I was worshipping and feeling really blessed and remembered singing "you are Alpha and Omega, " and suddenly I heard a very soft and gentle voice say "Really, am I the pre-eminent thing in your life?" I fell to the floor immediately, weeping bitterly, as he began to search my heart I realized he was not the pre-eminent thing in my life even though I loved him and love ministry there were things in my life that came before him even if I didn't want to admit to myself. Is your marriage more important than God? Are your children more important than God? Is your business more important than God? Is your ambition more important than God? Is your success more important than God? Is your ministry more important than God? Or is your Theology more important than God? The problem that many of us have is that we do not cherish the Holy Spirit enough. We want things of this world more than we want the Spirit of God that lives within us. So what if we're not healed, so what if our marriages fail and there was nothing we could do, so what if we lose another one, so what if our ministries crumble and fall, so what if we go without anything and become homeless in the streets. We have the greatest treasure God could ever give us alive within our hearts, is this not enough? For those who are truly saved and have truly received an infilling; the Holy Spirit is more than enough, He is the very joy that is unspeakable. You see, even though I thought He was Alpha and Omega I didn't truly esteem him to be so in my heart and God is not mocked, while we can deceive ourselves we cannot ever deceive God. This is why we need the help of the Spirit to pray for us because our desires often lead us to pray for the wrong things, we simply do not know what we are supposed to pray for. Cognitively we know we're supposed to pray for lost souls all around us to be saved and brought into the kingdom of God, but how many times as Christians do we pray for the lost out of true passion for their salvation and not because it's what we have been religiously taught to do? How many times do we pray for forgiveness of our sins? How many times do we seek his guidance in the decisions we are about to make in our lives?

That is why he is so important as our intercessor; he prays for the important things that we don't pray for. He also prays for events that are yet to happen that we have no knowledge of. To truly unlock the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives we must pray that he will teach us to pray in both the understanding and the Spirit, for the first perfect will of God to be fulfilled in our lives.

The role of the spirit as a teacher

Everything that we need to learn in our Christian walk, we learn it from the Holy Spirit. Everything that God is saying to us; the Holy Spirit is there to help us understand. God mostly speaks to us through his word that is written in the Holy Bible, and it is the role of the Holy Spirit to give us revelation for the word for us to understand the will of God in us. The Holy Spirit tends to speak to us and through us to the degree of understanding, we have received. The written word is the litmus test that allows us to discern if the voice we are hearing is God, our thoughts, or an evil spirit. I have been to churches where evil spirits speak through men and people think it's the Holy Spirit and other churches where men are directed more by their intellect than the Spirit of God. When you watch moneyloving preachers on TV, you must realize there are only three ways in which men of God can have bad theology.

They are not of God (Anti-Christ)

They are genuinely mistaken and misled by their intellect or denominational doctrines.

They are not truly saved (they have brought into the idea of Christianity but have not been genuinely born again)

Anyone can slightly get it wrong and even be misled but you cannot possess the spirit of God and remain in damnable error.

As we have seen previously, he also teaches us how to pray. The Holy Spirit teaches us everything that we need individually. He understands us better than we even understand ourselves. Therefore, he knows the best way to teach each one of us differently. In John 14:26, Jesus explained to the disciples how the Spirit was to educate them in everything and remind them of all things that he had taught them. As Christians, we need to submit to the Spirit, and we will learn all the secrets and everything that we need to know and learn in this world. Everything that God has hidden from us mere men, it is the role of the Spirit to

reveal it to us. 1 Corinthians 2:9 explains how no one has the knowledge of what God has prepared for them that are in love with him but God, for his love; he has revealed to us by His Spirit. We only know what God limits us to know, but the Holy Spirit searches all things and the hidden things of God, and he reveals them to us. I have seen many misunderstand the role of the Spirit as a teacher so let's spell out what he teaches us so you can recognize his voice more when he speaks to you.

a: **Theology** – He brings a deeper revelation and understanding of God's word as it was inspired for us to understand.

b: **Righteousness** – He instructs us in how to live our lives as born-again sons of God.

c: **Direction** – He mentors us in our ministry and helps us with the choices we make.

Like with any tutor you have it helps if you have spent time going over the material first. We cannot consistently receive revelation from him if we are not saturating our spirit with the Word of God. Having the word of God in our hearts allows the Spirit to teach us sound theology but also makes it possible to receive a revelation of God when we go through discouraging circumstances. As we are comforted in times of discouragement we are also taught through the circumstances we go through more about God's divine nature.

The role of the Spirit as our helper

Jesus before his crucifixion told his disciples that he would send them a helper who is the Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to help us. Everything that he does into our lives he does it with one main motive, to help us. The reason why the Holy Spirit prays for us is to help us to receive the will of God in us. The reason why the Holy Spirit teaches us the ways of God is to help us to have a deeper understanding of God in our lives. The Holy Spirit brings change in our lives so we can live right with God and people. This, in turn, brings peace to us. Everything that concerns us also concerns the Holy Spirit no matter how complex or simple it looks to us. Every time we ask, the Spirit helps us he always avails himself for us in every situation. He is able and willing to provide the help we need. We should always turn to the Holy Spirit for help. He can help where our best friends cannot help. Many times we try and do everything in our own power. But eventually in our walk we will get to a place that only God can help us. Learn to put everything in prayer. Now, I am not saying you need to ask

God what to eat for dinner, but you can pray over your food. Before you decide to change jobs, buying a house, getting married, studying a new course you should seek the will of God. Self-important people often ignore their friends. They are not good at reaching out to others, they are always too busy *etc.* but is this how we are treating the Holy Spirit? Are we ignoring him and only make that phone call when we want something? If that's how someone treated you, how would it make you feel? Yet, this is how many treat the Spirit of God. If you took a friend to see a movie and they were greatly offended by the content, would you take that friend or spouse to see the sequel? No, we wouldn't, would we? But how many times have we subjected the Spirit of God to the garbage we watch on TV? The filth on Radio?

Our any other gratification of carnality?

I'll be honest, we all struggle in this in one way or the other. But the point I am trying to make is we should not take the precious helper for granted in how we treat him. He is here to help us and we should be grateful for him and demonstrate this in how we live.

The Spirit's role as our Comforter

The Holy Spirit is very important in the lives of Christians. Before Jesus was crucified, he informed his followers that he was going to send a helper and he would not leave them behind like orphans. He promised them to send them a helper when he departed and went to his father. The helper he was referring to was the Spirit of God. In Acts (in the Bible) it is written clearly how the Holy Spirit was poured out to three thousand Jewish believers on the day of Pentecost. Jesus did not leave us as orphans. After he had gone to heaven, he sends to us a comforter which he had promised (John 14:16).

Jesus saved us by laying down his life and if we are to be faithful servants and expand his kingdom we must lay down our lives for him. Discipleship is not easy as it has always led to persecutions and even death. Therefore, we were sent a comforter, so that when we went through trials and tribulations for the gospel's sake, we would have a powerful ally on our side encouraging us to keep up the good fight.

We go through life and often get pummeled by the devil like we were in a

boxing match. But this is a fight we have already won and all we need to do is overcome and make it to the end.

Even though we know we will ultimately win, we get tired of getting hit in the sixth round and want to throw in the towel. The Holy Spirit is the corner man, that is there to heal the bruises and cuts, give us wisdom in how to tackle the opponent before us and encourage us to keep fighting to the end.

When he gave his followers the news that he was going to leave them he had to, send them Holy Spirit who replaces the role of the comforter that Jesus had when he was on earth. Jesus offered comfort to all those who were hurting and broken. This is the role the Holy Spirit plays in us. He comforts us when we need comfort. Most of the times we look unto people when we are hurting only to find that we cannot get the help that we need from them. The Holy Spirit lives in us, and he knows us better than anyone else. He is best suited to bring help to us and bring healing together with strength where we hurt. The Bible in 2 Corinthians 1:3, tells us that God is a God of all Comfort. So was we suffer for the gospel, we can be encouraged that he is with us to care, heal and comfort us.

His role as our counselor

Many struggles with the Holy Spirit as a counselor. As many have a theology that has led to a still and lifeless spiritual walk. They often argue, "we don't really hear from God anymore as that was a different dispensation." But what does the Bible say; **Proverbs 3:5-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your understanding;*

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,

And He shall direct[a] your paths.

When we ask the Holy Spirit for help with our daily issues and problems he is there to counsel us honestly. He reveals to us many things that we could not know in our power. He is always ready to help us solve every situation of our lives (no matter how insignificant we may think the circumstances are to God). Very often when we take positions of truth, we take extreme positions. I have a friend who believes God is sovereign but has an almost fatalist viewpoint of

existence. His views were forged due to a bad experience growing up in a hyper-Arminian Pentecostal church system. After the Spirit showed him the truth, it was like releasing a pendulum. He ran with such energy away from the lies and error of one belief system to the extreme opposite (fatalism / extreme Calvinism). While he agrees, we have a part to play as part of the church in spreading the good news; he was divorced from the idea that God cares about us. There are many who share this almost hyper-Calvinist viewpoint; they agree that God loves us but have a theology that embraces suffering, beyond what is written (scriptural). Suffering is part of the Christian walk, and we are encouraged to suffer for Christ, but Paul says in Philippians that he had learned to do both (suffer and abound). The embrace of either suffering or prosperity to the exclusivity of one or the other is not a balanced understanding of scripture. Life here on earth is like a rollercoaster. As we travel through life, we can expect both ups and downs, good and bad, joy and sorrow. The point I am making is if you have a fatalist view of scripture in which God is a cosmic tyrant that pretty much does what he wants, then you will not naturally seek God's counsel as there would be no point asking the grand tyrant for wisdom when he has pretty much made up his mind.

Even if every eventuality were predisposed and determined by God before the beginning of time, we can't negate that God asks us to pray and seek him in times of trouble. Whether God is sovereign or not we are commanded to pray, we are commanded to seek him for direction. Any theological viewpoint that leads us away from a direct commandment of God is most likely to be an error. When you lose your job, yes you can say God is sovereign, and you are right. But you losing your job is an opportunity for you to seek the wisdom of God for that situation. When you are diagnosed with a terminal illness and are given two months to live, you can indeed say God is sovereign and make your peace with the suffering, or in these circumstances, you can look to the divine nature and character of God in which he reveals himself to us a healer and a restorer. If we position ourselves at the extreme of hyper-Arminianism, then we have a self-entitled expectation that God must do our every bidding and is ultimately subject to our counsel and wisdom as we petition him to do our bidding. If we take the other extreme of the pendulum and accept all defeat because God is sovereign and willed every trial we encounter, then we do not seek his counsel or will in all situations. The balance is found in the middle ground where we accept the Lord is sovereign over all, but we also accept he is loving, kind, merciful and just and hears us when we call out to him. Only then can we seek his counsel and are aligned with his sovereign will in all outcomes.

Going through bad times in life is not the same as suffering for Christ.

While we are encouraged to embrace suffering for Christ for the sake of the gospel, we are not encouraged to put our head down and surrender when we go through bad times or challenges in life. We are told to bring them all to him in supplication and prayer.

So, no matter what it is we are going through, no matter if it is a spiritual, physical or emotional problem God has something to say about it, so seek his counsel.

His role as our Advocate

Satan is the accuser of brethren, but our advocate is the Spirit of God. He pleads on our behalf to God (Revelation 12:10). If Satan had his way, he would have destroyed us as Christians by now. Or at least he would have led us completely astray from the light of God. But no matter how our great adversary tries to outsmart us and destroy us, even when we are not up to par, thank God that we have an advocate on our side that is pleading our case.

Satan's role as the accuser is recorded in the book of Job. But why do we need an advocate? It's simple really; God's law demands justice. I wish we could all say we were saved and born again and never committed a single sin again but this is simply not the truth. We all fall short of his glory and are deserving of his wrath, but he never gives us the true recompense of the sin we deserve, even after we miss the mark again and again. While we have one lawyer in the courtroom of God that points to our sin, immaturity, and disobedience, and demands like Job to be given access to destroy us, we have an advocate on our side that points to Jesus and his finished work on the cross. Face it, if it was down to human effort and some religious grading system we are all doomed. But we are spared because we have received the imputed righteousness of God and as we go through our rehab or probationary period in this world we have a friend who pleads our case with our father (the judge) and prays and asks for the things that will continue to help us in our journey of being transformed into the image of Christ.

The Holy Spirit's role in conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment

The Holy Spirit convicts us in different ways. First, he gives all believers and

nonbelievers the sense of sin. To unbelievers, he gives them the sense of the sin, and he convicts them to turn to Jesus Christ to save their lives. To believers, he provides us with the sense of all sin, and we can know when we are heading for sin and he warns us in advance. The second thing that the Spirit does is to affirm the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He calls us and convicts us to look unto Jesus alone as the 'Perfector' of our faith. He convicts everyone to look unto Jesus as the only way to the salvation of Human Kind.

Lastly, the Holy Spirit gives the knowledge of God's judgment on disbelief and against the evil one. He helps us understand the benefits of living a righteous life. He also helps us understand the risks of living a life of disbelief so that when we enter it, we have the full knowledge of what we are entering into.

The Holy Spirit Seals Believers

Everyone who is born of God has the Holy Spirit in him. The Holy Spirit is the seal that comes to us to show that we belong to God. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove came down to confirm that Jesus was sent by God (Matthew 3:16). Everyone who receives Jesus Christ is filled with the Holy Spirit to seal the salvation of Jesus Christ. In Mark 16:17, Jesus gave the works of Holy Spirit as the sign of believers. The role of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers is also to prepare us for the second coming of our Savior Jesus Christ and overcome this world. The context of 'seal' is that of the type you put on an official document to confirm its authenticity. Many may claim to be sons of God and heirs to the kingdom, but without the signature of the Spirit that confirms the authenticity of our adoption, then our outward confession is merely just that. The Spirit is confirmation that we are the inheritance of Christ. Because we belong to him and he belongs to us, we can take comfort that one day we will reign with Christ for eternity in a kingdom of eternal joy and bliss .

CHAPTER 6: HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Many in the modern church do not experience the full blessing of the Holy Spirit as a direct result of bad teaching. However, before we can understand what the 'evidence' is that we are filled with the Spirit, we must understand that the Holy Spirit is the evidence that we are saved.

When we are saved, we are marked with the Spirit and also changed by him. The true evidence is not an outward appearance of religion, and it's not a manifestation of supernatural abilities and gifts, being filled is an inward transformation in which we are possessed by the Spirit of Christ and compelled to act in ways just like Christ would act.

If a man was possessed by a demon, how would you know? For starters, you would expect such a man to engage in very blasphemous utterances, to speak of things that are humanly impossible to know, to speak in foreign languages and possess supernatural abilities that defy logic.

If someone is filled with an evil Spirit, there are outward manifestations in what they say or do.

Likewise, if there is a discernable difference in a man who operates with an evil spirit, there should be a difference in how a man speaks or acts when under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

It is possible sometimes for men with medical conditions to show symptoms similar to demonic possession (this is why we need spiritual discernment to tell the difference), it is also possible for men to speak in tongues, heal the sick, and perform miracles, and yet not really belong to God.

Matthew 7:21-23 King James Version (KJV)

²¹ *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many*

wonderful works?

²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

What I find interesting about what Jesus says here is that he 'never knew them.'
Now if we understand that Jesus says in John 17:3

John 17:3 King James Version (KJV)

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Eternal life is described as us knowing God, but knowing in this context denotes a mutual intimacy of a consummated relationship. This imagery is similar to how a man intimately knows his wife. Knowing God is not one-sided we must also be known by God. The scripture in Matthew 7 implies that it is possible to perform virtually every wonder in the church without being saved. The modern church points to a host of things that have no scriptural basis all in the name of either inclusion or deceptive wickedness.

So, while the observable gifts, fruits, and power of the Spirit are displayed in those who are genuinely saved and filled with the Spirit, they are also replicable by Satan and his workers and cannot be used as a litmus test to confirm the workings of the Spirit. The people of God perish because of lack of knowledge above everything else. (Hosea 4:6)

Evil spirits who masquerade as Men of God are quite adept in Theology and often know how to act and what to do to seem like they are filled with the Spirit of God, but one thing they cannot fake and they cannot replicate is Salvation.

I have met Christians who speak in tongues but are not saved, and I have met Christians who don't speak in tongues but are saved. Speaking in tongues is a gift we find in many encounters in the Bible in which people were filled, and by logical deduction and reasoning we can make the following assertions

Many people who encountered the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues in the new testament

Paul states that not all who are saved have the gift of corporate tongues.

So by rational deduction, we cannot suggest all who are saved and filled speak with tongues, and we cannot also ignore the vast biblical evidence that suggests; after Pentecost, many encounters of the spirit were accompanied by tongues.

The narratives tend to be, "and such and such was filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues."

I do not want to offend anyone here, but while I accept that 100 people can be baptized by the Holy Spirit and filled by him and only a handful ever are gifted with speaking in tongues, it is extremely unbiblical to have 100 people all baptized with the Holy Spirit, and not even one of them speak in tongues. There is no biblical evidence to support that the charismatic gifts will cease. Many Christians over the years have misunderstood the term 'last days', you often hear after a world event 'We are living in the last days.' But truth be told we have been living in the last days for 2000 years, and many Christians try to pinpoint an exact time to the term 'last days'. But the last days started when the helper was sent to earth to help the saved. But why is this important? Well, quite simply we are living in the last days in which God promised to pour out his Spirit. He not only promised to pour out his Spirit he told us what the outpouring of his Spirit would look like in the life of his children. So for clarity we should believe every word when Jesus declares 'and these signs will follow all those who believe' we cannot add or subtract from the signs that Jesus prophesied would follow, but we cannot use these signs as the only factors in discerning the true presence of God's Spirit in a man and especially the church.

So while signs and wonders are a good starting point for us to discern we must seek guidance from God and not seek signs or gifts as evidence but rather that we walk in the Spirit. No matter how Satan does his best impersonation of Christ, Satan and his followers cannot fake walking in the Spirit. So in our discernment of ourselves primarily and others (as God wills) we should look for the evidence of walking in the Spirit and use God's word to discern if the will of God is being done. The real evidence that we are re-born of God's spirit is that we were, and we are continually transformed into the nature and image of God.

Demons and the demonically possess speak in tongues, witches and sorcerous speak in tongues, so speaking in tongues in isolation does not denote the Holy Spirit if there is no evidence you are truly born again. So if you are one of those like me who ever wondered if they were born again, don't look for signs and

wonders as the evidence but rather the grace by which you supernaturally have come to overcome the sin which once held you bound. We will now take a look at the real evidence of the Spirit in the next chapter in more depth.

CHAPTER 7: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Before you understand what walking in The Spirit is. You must first understand God's character and desire. God asks in the book of Amos, (Amos 3:3) whether two people can walk together unless they are of one accord. This is very true for a walk in our with The Spirit. Unless we are of the same mind as He is, we cannot walk together.

Walking in The Spirit is the total subjection of our will to His every day. So, what is His will?

God's Will for Us

Being One with God, The Holy-Spirit's will for us is God's will for us.

God does not change (Malachi 3:6). The very will He had for mankind when He created Adam and Eve is the very same will He has for you and me.

What is this will?

(Genesis 1:26) "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness....." This is the whole story of man and God. This is what He intended for us back in Eden; this is what He intends for us now, this is what He will forever intend for mankind. That we should bear His Image and likeness. Adam and Eve were made in the image and likeness of God.

Two things 'Image' and 'Likeness.'

The image is a reference to appearance. This means that the form of God is like the form of man.(Ezekiel 1:26) Ezekiel says it best, "Upon the throne was One with the figure like that of a man..... So you see God has a form like a man. This is the image aspect. We never lost it even after the fall in Eden.

The likeness part is where the problem is.

The likeness refers to the character of God. Mankind was endowed with the character of God. To fully comprehend this, think back to Eden. Was there any law? Now, remember the very same God in Eden was the very same adultery-

hating, blasphemy-loathing God with the Israelites in the desert.

So what is different? Why does He not give Adam and Eve a command against blasphemy, murder, and every other sin?

The answer is the likeness. Mankind had the character of God.

As much as God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13), so couldn't man! Not in Eden! Not while he still bore the likeness of His maker! Paul tells Timothy that the law is for the unrighteous (1 Timothy 1:9). This is because the righteous have no need for it. It is their character to do God's will. They do not need tablets of stone to guide them. The law of their God is in their heart. It is a part of them!!!

How Man Lost the Likeness of God

The sixth chapter of Genesis is one of the saddest in the whole Bible. The fullness of man's fall can be felt in this book. The first chapter of Genesis closes with God's review of His creation after He has made Adam and Eve. Up until this point, before man's creation, God's view of creation is that it was "good." After the creation of man, things escalated from "Good" to "Very Good."

This is because when God looked at what He had created, He saw His image.

In Genesis chapter 6, the opposite is true. The Bible says that God looked at men, once the pride of His creation and "His heart was filled with pain (Genesis 6:6)." The inclinations of the heart of man were evil all the time.

Who taught man evil?

The forbidden fruit was the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. For Adam and Eve, it would have been more aptly named the tree of evil. This is because the man was like God. He already knew good by default! All that the tree could give him was the knowledge of evil.

With Adam and Eve's disobedience, the image of God was lost. Genesis 5 talks of Adam's genealogy. Adam was made in God's image and likeness. He, however, bears children in His own image and likeness..... his fallen image. That is the whole problem of humanity; we were all born with a corrupt image.

This is what Jesus Christ came to rectify. This is what The Holy Spirit does; restoring the image of God.

The real evidence for The Spirit is, therefore, the restored likeness of God. "By their fruits, you shall know them" (Mathew 7:16). The character of God upon a man is the only sure way to tell he Has the Spirit of God. Thorn bushes do not, and cannot, bear figs!

Walking In The Spirit

As discussed in the previous chapter in Mathew 7:22 verse Jesus warns he would deny entry into heaven to a very peculiar crowd. This are not your everyday believers!

They have walked in the power of The Spirit! These people have done more than the average Christian will ever do. They have prophesied in The Lord's name, cast out demons, healed the sick, yet still, Jesus says He never knew them.

Why?

Not all who call Him Lord shall enter into the Eternal Kingdom. NO!

This promise is reserved for those who have done the Father's will. The 'Father's will' pertains to the Father's character. That man should be like Him!

Walking denotes progression. Walking in The Spirit is, therefore, progression under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A Christian's walk progresses from glory to glory; as the Bible describes the kingdom as a seed which grows. Once it is planted in the human heart, it grows towards one goal, " The fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13)"

Walking in The Spirit encourages a continuous growth in all aspects of our life to match the very character of God.

Walking in The Spirit is more about character than it is about power! I do not mean that you should not desire Spiritual gifts, NO!!! We ought to desire the mighty manifestations of The Holy-Spirit; just never at the expense of the character of God. Just like Paul says, desire Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31), but here is a more excellent way, pursue Love.(1 Corinthians 13) This is the main character of God.(1 John 4:7)

The Bible outlines very key strategies for walking in The Spirit:

1) The Word

2) Prayer

The Word

The Psalmist, in 119:10, talks about hiding God's word in his heart lest he should sin. God admonishes Joshua in (Joshua 1:9) to meditate upon the word day and night. God says this will make Joshua 'careful' to do all that is written therein. So the word of God does something very key. Meditation upon it aligns us to God's will. Jesus told the Jews who had believed Him that they would know the truth, and the truth would make them free. The truth is God's word. Continued revelation in this word makes us free from the corrupting desires of the flesh and this world.

You see the flesh is sold to sin (Romans 7:14). The Spirit is, however, keen on doing the will of God. Since God is a Spirit, a walk in The Spirit entails the Spirit being Stronger than the flesh. This can be achieved by the revitalizing effect the word of God has on the inner-man.

Another key thing the word does is to constantly cleanse us and sanctify us (John 17:17). Sanctification is a must if we are to walk with the holiest of all, our God.

Prayer

Prayer is crucial. Paul encourages us to " Pray Ceaselessly"(1 Thessalonians 5:17). Christ also asked His disciples to pray that they do not enter into temptation. Prayer releases God's power. It brings us into contact with the glory of God.

In the old testament, something very special happened to Moses. When he spent time with God. His face Glowed! This is because the glory of God rubbed off on Moses. This is exactly what happens when we spend time with God in prayer.

His character rubs off on us!

If as a Christian you are to finish this race, if you are to keep the Faith, then prayer should be a lifestyle. Even though He was God, Christ prayed harder than anyone else recorded in the Bible. Why?

He understood how important those few hours in the night were to His walk with His Father. Christ, who was without sin, was not exempt from prayer. Then how much more we who are saved from the slimiest pits of sin?

The Fruits of The Holy Spirit

The sign of maturity for a tree is the fruition. This is also the sign of maturity for the Christian. (Job 14:4) Asks whether anyone can bring out a pure thing from an impure thing. "No one can." Is the answer he gives. This is because ONLY God can do this.

This is what the fruits represent. The end results of the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification in a Christian's life. Fruits are not the results of legality. No! You do not struggle with them. When The Holy Spirit brings out the fruit of faithfulness, you do not force yourself to be faithful, you just are.

You should from the onset distinguish this from the legalities of the law.

Fruits vs. Legality

Paul brings out a distinction between legality and true fruits in (1 Corinthians 13). Here he paints two very interesting scenarios, someone who has given all he has to the poor, and, someone who has given their bodies to be burned. The interesting thing is that the apostle claims that these two are without love!

Isn't that something? You can have the learned, behavior associated with fruit but be totally void of the Spirit. The reason they are called the fruits of the Holy Spirit is that they are exactly that. Only the Holy Spirit can give them to you. The only way you get them from Him is if you spend enough time with Him. Then they automatically rub off on you.

You can only get them from God. Therefore, the law is powerless to accord righteousness. It requires you to do perfectly, what only God can help you do.

True Fruits of The Holy-Spirit

True fruits of the Holy-Spirit have the overall effect of making one humble. They do not come with the pride that is attached to learned behaviors. " Oh, God! I thank you that I am more humble than all the people I know, I thank you that I am... I am..."

The reason that learned behaviors fall short of God's threshold is because sin is not a physical thing. It is a spiritual thing.

Fruits, therefore, have to be born in the spirit and not in the flesh. As men, we may give you credit for being very loving because you are generous when giving to the poor. We may even adore you for it, but not God. God sees into the spirit. He sees the very motive for doing what we do. This is where people with the best of intentions fail.

We have no possible way of purifying the spirit person. Only God can do this.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are outlined in the Galatians 5:22. You read this, not so that you may know how to make yourself behave. No! Not so that you may learn what to fake. No!

You read this to see the result of spending time with God.

God is very privy of the company He keeps. To be part of that, you must be willing to obey God's every word. This is easier said than done.

The book of Isaiah 1:18-20 outlines restoration as beginning with willingness and ending with obedience. God will however never require from us what he cannot empower. If you desire to walk in deeper revelation, understanding, and power of God, He will enable you.

Having the Spirit is one thing, but walking in him is another.

It's like a family getting together to pay for a personal trainer to help an overweight member we will call John. Now, technically John may have a personal trainer, but if his life is not transformed after a year, you begin to doubt if he is using the personal trainer. Someone else has paid the price for John to have the personal trainer to help him, but if John spends the whole year ignoring the advice of his personal trainer, he will end up no better off than before. The evidence that John has a personal trainer and he is following instructions is the physical condition John is in after a year.

Likewise, claiming we are born again means nothing if our Spiritual condition is not transformed under the council of the Holy Spirit.

The gym membership card is not the real evidence you are going through a physical transformation, but the real evidence is that you are noticeably healthier and physically changes in your body are observable. This is also true of our walk

with God; the most reliable evidence is the transformation of our spirit man.

CHAPTER 8: ACTS OF THE SPIRIT, UNLOCKING POWER

In the first chapter of the book of Acts, the apostles were promised by Jesus that they shall receive power once the Holy Spirit has come upon them. Jesus further stated that then they shall be witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the world.

This promise by Jesus is fulfilled in the in the second chapter of Acts. It is imperative to say that the book of Acts was written because the apostles, and other like-minded characters mentioned in the book, acted in the will of God; under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit is contingent to a believer acting within spiritual principles. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit, but we can fail to experience the actual power that comes with Him if we don't act.

When we act in the will of God, possibilities brought to life by the power of the Holy Spirit is beyond human comprehension and imagination. Such is the God of Ephesians 3:20, and through His Word, obedience, and prayer we can unlock this power of the Holy Spirit that is unfathomable.

The Word

We have covered this already but let's look more at the word of God and its effects on us Spiritually.

In the book of John 6:63, Jesus says that the word He speaks is the Spirit and the Spirit gives life. Before this in the 1st chapter of the same book, the scripture speaks of Jesus as the Word. Since Christ does what He sees the Father do, we must go to the foundations of the Word in Genesis to learn from the workings of the Father.

In the beginning, God spoke everything into existence during the six days of creation. God demonstrated the power of His word right from the start, and He put into action the words that He uses. The Lord created and held everything in the universe in place by the power of His words. His word is more than an assurance of the things He has promised His children, His word is potent, and every believer has been conferred the power of attorney to exercise this power.

The Old Testament was a foundation for the future, and everything pointed to Him who was to come, Jesus Christ. And when He came, John testified of Him as the Word that was in the beginning with God. Jesus says that the word He speaks is the Spirit and they are life. Here, Jesus reaffirms what God the father did in Genesis, and points to the fact that God's power lays in His word. The Bible in its entirety is the Word of God, by reading the Word the spiritual being is quickened and manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit is sure. A believer draws spiritual authority from the word of God. The word gives life because without Him we are condemned to eternal death (both physical and spiritual death) and have no part in the kingdom of Christ.

The human flesh profits, not a thing, and it is only the spiritual being that is either lost to the Satan or saved and redeemed by Jesus Christ. In reading the word of God as written in the Bible and exercising His authority as commanded by Jesus; this Faith unlocks the power of the Holy Spirit. When we speak the word of God, it is a reaffirmation of our belief in His Word (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit who is our helper brings to the manifestation of that which we speak. As prophet Isaiah said, the word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God does not return to Him void, but accomplishes His will and prospers in the purpose for which He sent it.

Now, before you run you burnt his book, I do not subscribe to the word of faith rhetoric you hear in many churches today. It sounds a little like this

“I DON’T KNOW WHAT YOUR GOING THROUGH.... BUT I KNOW A MAN WITH THE ANSWER.....I DON’T CARE HOW LONG YOU HAVE BEEN SICK.... I DON’T CARE HOW LONG YOU HAVE BEEN BROKE.... JUST SPEAK THE WORD TO THAT SITUATION”

You get the picture; grace is subtly replaced with legalism in which the captive audience are told that all they need to do is speak God’s word and the mountains of life will have no choice but to move. Like all the best lies, there is always an element of truth.

But God’s word is clear “Who is he that speaks and it comes to pass when the Lord your God has not decreed a thing?” LAM 3:37

The Bible was full of prophets who prophesied good tidings to believers, telling them that their situation was about to change when God had not willed it so. The balanced view of scripture is that there is a season for everything (even suffering).

What God sometimes says in the text is for specific situations and people, even if what he says might have eternal ramifications and truths we can learn from (‘all scripture is profitable’), but we can’t ‘apply’ scripture out of context and think God is obliged to do our bidding.

I once heard of a pastor who was so captivated by the story of Daniel he decided he would test his faith by sneaking into a zoo and climbing into a lion's cage at night.

Well, you can guess how this story ends? The pastor's assertions were correct; God is still able to protect his believers supernaturally even to this day, but God did not ask him to go into the lion's den and hence he was out of God’s will and paid for his ignorance.

The point I am trying to make is that God’s word is not like witchcraft and cannot be wielded to do our carnal wills.

Those who practice evil are in alignment with the wickedness of the forces that empower them hence why the evil spirits do the bidding of the witch because ultimately evil forces are wicked and desire evil and wickedness.

But those who will be used to demonstrate the power of God must be aligned

with God's ultimate purposes and will and desire to bring him glory.

If your will is not aligned with God, do not presume the "the word" is a magic book of incarnations in which you can compel God to do your bidding.

If you desire the gift of healing, ask yourself if you have compassion for those who are sick. If you desire to be an evangelist, ask yourself if you have a burden for the lost souls around you.

To unlock the power of the Spirit through God's word, we must be in complete harmony with God's will and must accept what he says to us as the absolute truth and be unshakable once we receive that truth.

If you minister to a thousand people and no one seems like they have received the message keep faithful and stand on the word that says 'faith cometh by hearing.' It could be God's will that the 1003rd person you preach to will become the next Charles Spurgeon or John Westley.

To unlock God's word, we must walk by faith and not what we see. Take your Bible and read everything you can about the promise of the Spirit and believe that those spiritual promises are yours and will manifest in your life according to his purpose and will. Many have 'walked by sight' and come to the wrong conclusion about the ministry of the Holy Spirit here on earth today, as they are deceived by their human wisdom and senses.

Obedience

In as much as God is all knowing and ever present, to obey Him or not is a choice left to the human will independent of God's influence. Human free will can get us to make decisions that can potentially build or destroy our lives regardless of whether one believes in God or not.

If an employee doesn't follow instructions from his supervisor or employer, then such a person can receive a warning letter. If a disobedient attitude persists, then one can be fired. The opposite is true for an obedient person.

A classic example of repercussions of disobedience is found in the fifteenth chapter of the 1st book of Samuel. The LORD instructed King Saul, through Prophet Samuel, saying that he should go forth and attack the Amalekites, and destroy every living thing; livestock and human beings alike. Prophet Samuel paid King Saul a visit after his return from Amalek. Before King Saul was assigned to battle the Amalekites, Samuel advised him to obey the words of God. Coming from Amalek, Samuel knew that King Saul didn't heed to the command of GOD. King Saul had instead chosen to save the best livestock and Agag, the King of the Amalekites, and Saul brought them back with him to the land of Israel. Prophet Samuel equates disobedience to witchcraft and declares to Saul that God has rejected his kingship.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and gave Satan the power to exert his authority over the world; this was an act of their free will. Let's take a moment to reflect on Romans 5:19. Through one man's disobedience, the human race became subject to sin. It took a single act of disobedience and since creation; everyone ever born under the sun is a sinner and must accept Jesus to redeem themselves from the curse of sin. On the other hand, through one Man's obedience, many are made righteous. This part of the scripture speaks of Jesus, who obeyed His Father in heaven. Even though He was God He came and walked amongst His creation as one of them; he became sin for all that we might receive redemption and be the righteousness of God through His son Jesus Christ.

A New Testament believer should know that obedience is a key ingredient in releasing the power of the Holy Spirit. How? One may ask. Well, to obey God is doing what His word is telling you to do. Abiding in his Word is a genuine show of our love to God and thus an act that comes from the heart. A believer should

pray to God that He may teach him how to obey because to God obedience is better than sacrifice.

In Hebrews 13:17 we are advised to be obedient to those in authority. God has an organized structure in His heavenly kingdom, and so it is here on Earth. Your obedience towards God is reflected in your relationship with those in authority. God not only uses a societal structure of governance to bring law and order but also to bless His people through the leaders and existing leadership structures. Such may include the President, your Pastor, Father and Mother, Teacher, a Prophet or any other individual in a leadership capacity. Those in authority are not an exception, and they too are expected to obey God as they are His appointed stewards to oversee the human population.

Prayer

Prayer life is important for a healthy and fruitful Christian life. A believer communes with God by praying in truth and Spirit and prayer impacts one's spiritual growth. When you pray to God, you are exercising the relationship between your spiritual being and God. God is a Spirit, but within us, there is a spiritual man that influences and is articulated by our physical bodies. If we are strong in Spirit, then we cannot submit to the works of the flesh for the flesh is weak. Every earnest prayer made to God releases the power of the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and to act in our circumstances.

A proper prayer can be described as one which is aligned with the will of God in our lives. How then can we know the will of God in our lives? We can only do this by the power and help of the Holy Spirit. Unlocking the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer is a great benefit to a believer. It is only through our Lord's sacrifice on the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit that we can come before the Most-High God in prayer (Hebrews 4:16). To be able to unlock the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer is a real necessity in a Christian's life.

The desire of the Holy Spirit is to reveal to us the incredible truth about the Lord we serve and thus elevate our spiritual lives. However, it is the ability to pray in Spirit and in truth that we can unlock the power of the Holy Spirit. Many believers are frail in knowledge, and the advantage of having the Holy Spirit is that it helps us in our weaknesses. A believer, though in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior; may still not know what to pray for but the Holy Spirit makes an intervention for all prayers before the Lord (Romans 8:26). A prayer that is real and effective is that which the Holy Spirit speaks to you, in the name of the Jesus, through the believer's repentant heart.

While interceding for us in prayers, the Holy Spirit intervenes for us conferring the will of God for us in our lives. By the power of the Holy Spirit in the intercession of prayer, Christians can pray according to the will of God and thus pray for our actual necessities. Consequently, we are adapted to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is not a single thing that the Holy Spirit does not really know about, but to unlock the power of the Holy Spirit is to allow Him to pray for us and show us God's will for us. The influence of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives is so

immense. It brings about the submission and surrender of our tongues so that we know what to say before God. Another benefit of the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer is that it shapes up the entire being of a believer, in Spirit, Soul, and Body (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Not only does the Holy Spirit help Christians to pray, but also strengthen them in prayer. Many times a Christian may be overwhelmed with the temptations and troubles of the world and may lack the strength even to pray. Realizing the power of the Holy Spirit now becomes a benefit. The Holy Spirit will give you the Faith and confidence that God will answer the prayers that we submit to Him, even in our weakness (John. 5:14-15). The Holy Spirit, therefore, becomes the strength to our prayers.

The Word of God was written by people inspired by His Spirit. His word is powerful, and that power is given by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came as a helper for all who believe in Jesus Christ. All Christians are guided, protected and clothed with the Holy Spirit to walk a Spirit-led life in this world full of darkness. True Christianity is an active life for which we live in honor and glory of God. Our God is glorified when the vessel He uses is spiritually strengthened to make evident the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first-hand experience of the power of the Holy Spirit appeals to a persistent and dedicated prayer life, obedience and grounding in the word of God. God's power is limitless, and these three areas are a key pillar in getting the Holy Spirit to work through us. Many at times we give credit to the works rather than God, this is a wrong way of living an active and spirit-filled life. It is not so much of what you do but the understanding that you utterly depend on God in His word by obeying it and asking Him through prayer to release the workings of the Holy Spirit in your life.

CHAPTER 9: FALSE SPIRITS

One thing that we need to understand is that calling out and identifying false spirits is neither fun nor is it popular; However it is necessary. The subject of discerning spirits is essential in our Christian lives. There are a lot of naïve Christians out there who are susceptible to wolves in sheep's clothing. The Bible is very categorical about it, and that is why God says in His book that not everyone who preaches in his name is of him.

Christians need to be very careful and wary of those false prophets who are dressed in sheep's clothing. In the book of John, the Bible warns that not all spirits are necessarily from God. (1 John 4:1-6) John was very categorical earlier in chapter 2 where he gives a stern warning about spirits. If you have ever studied the letter of 1 John, you will notice that it is written in a circular structure where it comes again and again to the same subject. It is very concerned much about right belief, concerned much about our obedience and very much concerned about our love life. Loving well means that we expose those who are dangerous to the flock of God and in this case the people who teach false doctrines.

In this passage in the letter of first John, the servant of the Lord shows a very sharp contrast between false prophets and true prophets. It should be noted that John was the last living apostle who was a witness when Jesus was performing miracles, and it should be noted that his comparison and contrast is very accurate. John draws a very sharp contrast between the true Christ and the Anti-Christ. And between what he identifies as the Spirit of God and the spirit of the evil one. If you study the book deeply, you will notice that he uses the phrase "from God" and six times he uses the phrase "the World" What he is really concerned about is the fact that those who are from the world have found their way into the local church. That is again another reminder that our greatest enemies are not from without but rather from within. In verse 1 John warns us of believing every spirit we come across but rather tells us to test every spirit and find out they are from God. But again, the question is, how do we tell that a spirit is from God or from another source?

There are four tests that determine whether a spirit is from God or not. In this

writing, there are four questions that will enable us to identify spirits.

Are you following false prophets?

John begins with a word of affection as he always does "beloved, dear friends" This is an outright indication that he deeply cares about his brothers and sisters and he wants them to have the best that they can in their Christian walk. He is pretty much aware that danger is lurking and tragically may have found its way into the midst of the believers. He wants them to know that not every spirit is from the Lord. He wants them to come to the understanding that not every spiritual leader out there is of God, and sometimes false teachers stand in the pulpit. These are the spiritual teachers and liars out there intending to bestow false spirits on the souls of the believer. Part of what makes them very effective in spreading their lies and malice to the believers is their General acceptance and wide reaching broadcasts. They may claim that they follow Christ but don't give into their Gimmicks, just test their spirit first. You have a manual which you can use to test them and if everything they say matches what the scriptures say then their spirit comes from the Lord for sure.

But, one of the reasons why we can't identify false prophets is that the modern false preacher works on destroying sound hermeneutics (rules for a correct understanding of the Bible) that many modern Christians, can't respond to the truth even it is shown to them in black and white. The final authority is no longer the word but what their pastor says as they have no ability to understand and rely on the pastor who feeds lies and reinforces his dogma with various psychological and even outright demonic tactics. Whatever the Bible says about the standards that preachers should lived by is ignored, and so it's the contradiction of their messages to what Jesus preached.

Take note of the terms that the servant of the Lord uses in the book of John, "believe" and "test." The two terms are both imperatives; they are words of command. They are commanding us to perform a vigilant examination and determine whether a spirit is from God or from somewhere else. Furthermore, the two words that the servant of the Lord (John) uses are in the plural which implies that this is a community responsibility. It is the responsibility of the entire congregation to test the spirit to know whether they are from God. Every believer is called to be a detective here. Every believer is called to be a theological investigator (Berean). We need to watch, listen and test. When you read further in that chapter, the servant of the

Lord goes further saying that false prophets have spread all over the world. There is not a single place where false prophets are not located. They are satanic missionaries on assignment for the evil one. It is a biblical truth that false prophets have been around for a long time; with the mission of confusing and shaking Christians standing in the Lord. Moses spoke about them in the book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 13:1-5) and in the same book in chapter 18 verses 22.

Jesus had earlier spoken about them, Peter spoke of them, and Paul spoke of them too. The Apostle Paul was very categorical about false prophets and false spirits. (2 Corinthians 1-4) Take note of three phrases; another spirit, another Jesus, and a different gospel. The apostle Paul warns if you subscribe to another spirit other than the one you know, if you subscribe to another Jesus other than the Jesus we know and if you take heed of another gospel other than the one we know, then you have been deceived the same way the serpent tricked Adam in the garden of Eden. Most of us have a tendency to always ascribe to any type of unusual supernatural phenomenon and yet if you have read the Bible in between the lines you recognize that the evil one can fabricate miracles and fabricate supernatural events and make them seem like they came from the Lord. One cunning aspect of the devil is how he can take anything authentic and come up with a replica version of the same (he can even transform himself into an angel of light). However, in actuality, it is fake! That is why the apostle Paul is trying to prove a point here that religious or spiritual activity is not necessarily a Godly activity! And therefore we watch, listen, wait and evaluate whether whatever is presented before us is Godly. As we also have the commission to spread the word of the Lord, so do the false prophets. They also have a great commission as well to spread deceptions and malice all over as well. Jesus spoke of this in Mathew chapter 7, Jesus spoke of this in Mathew chapter 24 and Mark chapter 13. Peter spent an entire letter speaking about false prophets and false spirits.

Are you confessing the true Jesus?

If you believe in the one and only Son of God who gave His life for us, then you are confessing the true Jesus. There are so many denominations or churches in the Christian arena that are offering the message of the Bible, but they do not confess the true Jesus.

These false teachers and spirits will ultimately lead you away from Christ and heaven and are designed to feel empowering and gratifying. Salvation is reduced

to an act of local assembly membership, and virtually every sermon is about everything else but Christ for example how you can have financial abundance, how you can prosper, how to overcome negativity in your life, how to confess the word of God and get the victory and it goes on and on. In these types of setups, God's will is not preeminent, and any manifestation of the Holy Spirit should be scrutinized heavily, as the Spirit of God cannot be manifested in the middle of so much sin and do nothing about convicting it.

The primary litmus test to the agenda of any spirit is how long is spent during each sermon on Jesus or salvation. He is the way and the Truth and whoever does not believe in Jesus will never see the kingdom of heaven.

The job of the false spirit and teacher is to keep you distracted from the path and source of truth salvation and to offer hope to 'mis-believers' that every earthly care and trouble will be taken care of. By repeating this false prosperity gospel over and over again, people become completely desensitized to the presence of the Spirit of God who in stark contrast has an entirely different focus and ministry.

The test of the spiritual question is greatly aided by asking the question "are you confessing the true Jesus?" Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah of the Lord. He came in the form of flesh, and he is the body version of the Lord. This is not a filler in the Bible. They are not just words but mind engaged and heartfelt phrases that show that you confess for your whole lifetime in believing Jesus Christ. When you are confessing of the true Jesus, you are confessing of the wedding between humanity and the eternal Son of God who is Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches us that the Spirit of the Lord always honors Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. Jesus himself teaches us that the Spirit of the Lord always honors Him. (John 14: 16) If there is no glorifying of Jesus as our penal substitute, if there is no glorifying of Jesus as the suffering servant of the Lord who bore our sins for us, then we need to back off from such teachings. Those are false spirits, and we should flee away from them as fast as we can. The spirit of the Lord is not there. Not at all. John tells us that there are those who do not confess that Jesus of Nazareth is from God and these are the kind of teachings we are supposed to avoid at all costs.

Are you trusting in the greatest spirit?

In verse 4 of the same book of John, he starts again with a word of kindness "little children" believe in my spirit that is the spirit that is part of the God-head.

Just as you recognize God the Father, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit. If you teach or you have been taught about receiving the Spirit of the Lord after you have been converted then that is not biblical. At that moment you don't need more of the Holy Spirit because you got it all. The moment you accept Jesus as your personal Savior, you receive all the privileges of being the son of God, and you receive the Spirit of the Lord.

Anyone can be led veer off course temporarily in our Christian walk, and when you are in error, it is often difficult to detect. Very often no matter how you try to be loving when going through scripture, you may be attacked. People will say vile things about you as it is easier to demonize the bearers of truth than to accept that for 10, 20, 30 years we may have believed error.

To unlock the power of the Holy Spirit, you must surrender your theology over to him and let him teach you. It's not about what John Calvin or St Augustine believed it's about what we believe in our hearts after we are taught by the Spirit of God. Many of us allow ourselves to be segregated by intellectualism or emotionalism or spirituality.

But it is his Spirit we are supposed to be drawn to. In his Spirit, there is wisdom (which is a greater blessing than our theological intellectualism), of his Spirit there is comfort beyond whatever spiritual or psychosomatic experience the false spirit may offer in churches. Seek his spirit, seek to know him, hunger and thirst for him and him alone, and you shall be filled.

In your quest to unlock the power of the Spirit be careful not to wonder into false teachings.

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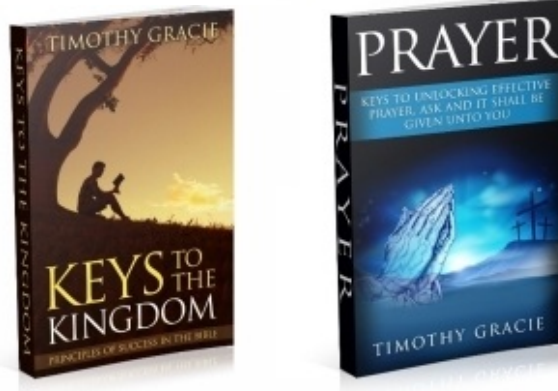
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