

DR DIRK H

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

A
PRACTICAL
GUIDE TO
BECOMING
A WORLD
CHANGER

BOOK - 5
LEVEL
CELL LEADER

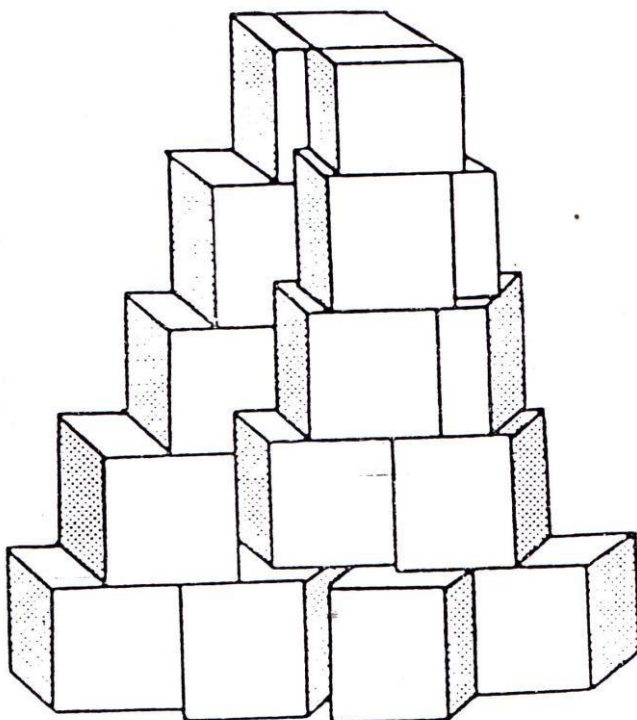
ENGLISH

MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

Level: **CELL LEADER**

Study book no: 5

LEVELS:



5. Minister

4. Leader / Pastor

3. **Cell leader**

2. Disciple

1. Beginner

Bible Study Course to grow to spiritual maturity making every believer in Christ a minister and to increase in effective and efficient ministry!!!

Easy to use for self-study as well as to teach others!!!

MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

PURPOSE:

TO KNOW HIM, THE ONLY TRUE GOD

(Growing / Maturing)

Josh. 1 : 8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success."

II Pet. 3 : 18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

II Tim. 1 : 15, "Study to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

Col. 1 : 27b - 28, "Christ in you, the hope of glory, Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ."

AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN TO OTHERS!

(Multiplying / Reproducing)

II Tim. 2 : 2, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

II Tim. 3 : 16 - 17, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Eph. 2 : 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

II Pet. 1 : 8, "For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

<p><u>PRINCIPLE:</u> "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things!" (Rom.11 : 36)</p>

(INCREASING IN KNOWLEDGE; MATURING IN CHARACTER; USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS)

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FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLICAL FAITH AND PRACTICE – A BRIEF REVIEW

Chapter 1 The Bible is The Word of God

God's Special Book

The Word of God – the Holy Bible – is God's special book. It is not like other books, but is a supernatural Book. It was written by many different people, who wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (see Timothy 3:16).

The Bible is the world's bestseller. It consistently outsells any other book. The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. It was originally written in three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The Bible you have has been translated by dedicated people so that you can have God's words, thoughts and plans in the language you can understand.

The Bible is also one of the oldest books in the world. The most ancient portions of the Bible date back almost 4,000 years. Yet it is still the most modern book in the world today; for in it we find the answers to life's greatest questions:

“Where did I come from?”

“Why am I here?”

“Where will I go?”

Even though the Bible is made up of 66 smaller books, it has only one central theme: God's loving plan to rescue mankind.

In the front of the Bible you will find an index list of the 66 books that can be found in the Bible.

The Bible is divided into two sections:

The Old Testament, and

The New Testament

The Old Testament tells us about God's work with His people (mainly the Jewish people) before the birth of Jesus.

The New Testament tells us about Jesus' birth, His life, His great ministry of healing, deliverance and forgiveness for sick and sinful people, His death on the cross, His being raised from the dead and His ascension (going back to Heaven).

It also tells us about the continuation of His healing, delivering and forgiving ministry through those who saw Him after His resurrection. Those who follow Jesus' teaching do many miraculous works just as He said they would (see John 14:12).

The teachings of those who saw Him after He was raised from the dead is contained in the Epistles (letters). Those were written within the first fifty years after Jesus' resurrection. These make up about half the New Testament.

STUDY THE BIBLE.

The most important relationship you can have in this life is with God. Through reading the Bible you come to understand what God is like – His thoughts, His plans, His purposes and His promises for you.

The list (index) in the front of the Bible will help you find the page number of the part of the Bible you may wish to study. To help you find specific parts of the Bible, the translators organized the text into:

1) Books; (2) Chapters within the books; and (3) Verses within the chapters.

HERE IS THE WORLD'S GREATEST PROMISE

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

THE PURPOSE OF THE WORD OF GOD

“... the holy Scriptures...are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:15-16). “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

THE WORD OF GOD PRODUCES LIFE

“...The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63). God's Word is creative. “By the WORD OF THE LORD were the heavens made, their host by the breath of His mouth... For He spoke and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.” (Ps. 33:6, 9). See also Hebrews 11:3.

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE WATER

1. It Cleanses

We start life in the Kingdom of God totally “washed clean” by the Word of God. “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you”. (John 15:3). See also Ephesians 5:25-27.

2. It Keeps Clean

The Word of God, planted in our hearts, keeps us free from sin: “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word...I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:9-11).

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIGHT FOR OUR LIVES

“And we have the Word of prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19). It gives understanding in a dark world. “... The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes” (Ps. 19:8) “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path... The entrance of your Words give light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Ps. 119:105,130).

THE WORD OF GOD IS SPIRITUAL FOOD

“... Jesus answered, it is written; “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). It causes spiritual growth. “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it...” (1 Cor. 3:1-2). “Like new-born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Pet. 2:2).

God's aim for each of us is expressed in Ephesians 4:12-15: “...that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

THE WORD OF GOD IS SEED

In Luke 8:14-15, Jesus told His disciples the parable of the sower. In verse 11 He said: “The seed is the Word of God.” God's will for our lives is fruitfulness (Psalm 1:3). “Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.” (2 Cor. 9:10).

J. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A SWORD

“Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17). See also Hebrews 4:12. Note how Jesus used the “sword” against Satan in His temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-14).

K. THE WORD OF GOD HELPS US TO PRAY

“If you remain in me and my Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7).

‘Ask whatever you wish’ literally means to ‘ask as one who has the right – with authority (to command)’. Now the creative word is in our mouth!

L. THE WORD OF GOD IS STRONG IN US

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundations on the rock” (Matt. 7:24-25). See also verses 26-27. Jesus said that the wise man who built his house on the rock was a picture of those who hear His Word and obey it. The Word of God builds inner concrete within our lives so that no matter what may come against us we will stand strong.

Chapter 2 GOD

God is far too great for us to fully understand. He has no beginning and He has no end. There is no place where His presence is not felt. The Bible asks in Job 11:7, “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?” God lives in Heaven and He rules over the whole earth. The Bible tells us: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool’” (Is. 66:1). “God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne” (Ps. 47:8). In this study we are going to be looking at special truths about God. These are facts about God’s unchanging character. Through these you will understand more of what God is like. You will come to understand God and how He cares for you personally.

A. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

God Is The Creator Of Everything

“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship You” (Neh. 9:6). “For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Ps. 139:13).

God Is All - Powerful

“...For who has resisted His will? Has not the potter power over the clay?” (Rom. 9:19-21). “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all” (1 Chron. 29:11). “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us” (Eph. 3:20).

God Is All – Knowing

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the, “eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13). “...God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything” (1 John 3:20).

God Is Holy

“There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides You; there is no Rock like our God” (1 Sam. 2:2).

God Is A Spirit

“God is a spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)

God Is A Person You Can Know

“Come near to God and He will come near to you...” (Jas. 4:8). “The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.” (Ps. 145:18).

God is A Loving Father

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1).

B. GOD IS TOO GREAT TO LIVE IN TEMPLES

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else... ‘For in Him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your poets have said, we are His offspring” (Acts 17:24-25, 28).

C. WE ARE:

1. Created By God

“I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. “When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Ps. 139:14-16).

2. Owned By God.

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

3. Called To Worship God

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Rev. 4:11).

D. MAKE A DECISION

Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). The Bible tells us about a man called Joshua. He was a great leader of the nation of Israel. The people had been wandering for forty years in the wilderness, without a land of their own. Joshua, under God’s direction, led them in victory against the evil nations living in Canaan, and possessed their land for the homeless nation of Israel. Joshua then challenged all the people to make a decision: “...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSEHOLD, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD**” (Josh. 24:15). The same challenge comes to each of us. Will you make the same commitment as Joshua this day?

MY COMMITMENT

This day I give my worship to the only true God of heaven and earth, and surrender my will, my life and possessions to Him. From this day I determine never to worship any other gods. My worship is for Him only, and I will teach others the truths about God.

Chapter 3 Man and Satan

A. MAN

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD – MADE TO HAVE DOMINION

God had a very real reason for creating man (male and female). He had a wonderful plan and purpose for them. Because God is love, He desired to have beings of like-mind and like-heart with whom He could share His life...all that He is and all that He is involved with... who would rule the heavens and the earth with Him like sons. So He created man – in His own image.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in His own image in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:26-27).

B. LUCIFER

God created many wonderful things before He created the heavens and the earth. Among them were the angels—spirit beings whose purpose is to fulfill God’s will. Angels worship God and serve Him continually (Rev. 5:11-14). However, when Lucifer, one of the great leading angels, understood about God’s plan to create man, he rebelled against God. He wanted the position and authority God had planned for mankind. He wanted to rule all creation from above God’s Throne in Heaven.

When Lucifer rebelled, God cast him out of Heaven. At the same time, one third of the angels joined in his rebellion and were cast out with Lucifer (Rev. 12:4). “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star (Lucifer), son of the dawn! You have been cast down to earth, you who once laid low the nations! “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of the assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High”” (Is. 14:12-14). Lucifer was cast to the earth, where he is now known as ‘Satan’ or ‘The devil.’ Separated from the glory of the Creator God, he lost the beauty and light he had once had (Ezek. 28:11-17) and became evil and full of darkness. The angels who fell with him also lost their glory and became evil spirits, in God’s newly created world. But Satan’s evil ambition did not change and so he set about with another plan to try and usurp (unlawfully take) God’s Throne...he went after the man God had created.

C. THE TEMPTATION

God gave His first man and woman (Adam and Eve) authority over all the earth, and told them to keep it under His dominion. To keep them safe from Satan and his evil spirits, God planted two special trees in the garden where Adam and Eve lived. God called them ‘The Tree of Life’ and ‘The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil’ (see Genesis 2:9,17). The Tree of Life represented the life and authority of God Himself – so in eating its fruit, Adam and Eve would be filled more and more with God’s strength and love and glory. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represented Satan’s life and authority, and as long as Adam and Eve did not eat its fruit they were safe from the evil spirits which filled the earth. The dominion of the whole creation would always be theirs if they obeyed their loving Creator God (Heb. 2:8). “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” (Gen. 2:15-17).

However, Satan deceived Eve. He told her the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil wasn’t really bad – rather it would make them like gods. She believed the lie and ate the fruit of the tree. Adam, although he knew it was a lie, also ate of the tree (1 Tim. 2:14). “When the woman saw that the fruit was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” (Gen. 3:6).

D. THE RESULT

Through that one act of sin, man lost the glory and image of God and the dominion over the creation. Satan then took the throne vacated by Adam and Eve and exercised his dominion over the earth, and death filled the world (Heb. 2:14-15). “...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because (in Adam) all sinned...” (Rom. 5:12). All the generations following Adam and Eve have inherited their fallen nature. All have come under the power and dominion of Satan.

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.” (Eph. 2:1-3).

People’s hearts, everywhere, are now filled with:

1. Idolatry

“For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave their thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.” (Rom. 1:21-23).

2. Immorality

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” (Rom. 1:24-27).

3. All Kinds of Wickedness

“Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.” (Rom. 1:28-32).

GOD’S GREAT PLAN TO RESTORE

God did not give up man because of his sin. No! Instead, He put into action another great plan – the plan to save mankind from Satan’s power and to restore him to His original plan of being His sons and sharing His Throne. He began to prepare the world for the coming of the Saviour – Jesus. “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15:22). The New Testament records the story of Christ, the One who would come to save us from our sins.

Chapter 4 JESUS

A. JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

Two thousand years ago a man appeared on the scene of history. He was born into the world and grew up into manhood just like every other person, but this man was different to anyone else. He was no ordinary man. A virgin conceived by the Holy Spirit to bring Him to birth. He was God Himself, coming to the earth in human form. He was the “Son of God” (Luke 1:26-35). “In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...the Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1,14).

B. JESUS CAME TO THE WORLD FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE

To Rescue Mankind From Satan’s Power

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” (Luke 19:10). See Colossians 1:13.

2. To Give His Life As A Ransom To Buy Us Back

“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:28).

3. To Destroy The Works Of Satan In Our Lives

“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” (1 John 3:8).

4. To Give Us Eternal Life

“And this is the testimony; God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (1 John 5:11-12). See also John 3:16-17 and John 10:10.

To Give Us New “Birth” Into The Family of God

“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1:12). See also 1 John 3:12.

To Restore Our Fellowship With God The Father

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3).

C. JESUS CAME TO SHOW US WHAT GOD IS LIKE

“If you really knew me (Jesus), you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him... Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work. Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me...” (John 14:7-11). See also John 1:18.

He Showed Us God’s Love

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9-10). See also Romans 5:8.

He Showed Us God’s Power

He healed the sick, the lame and the blind. “News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and He healed them” (Matt 4:24). See also John 9:1-7.

He cast out evil spirits. “And Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was” (Mark 1:34). See also Mark 5:1-17.

He performed miracles. “A furious wind came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped...(Jesus) got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ “Then the wind died down and it was completely calm...(His disciples) were terrified and asked each other. ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’ (Mark 4:37-41). See John 6:1-21.

He raised the dead. “...Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. “Jesus said to them, ‘Take off the grave clothes and let him go” (John 11:43-44).

D. JESUS SHARED OUR SUFFERINGS IN HIS LIFE

During His life on earth Jesus experienced all the troubles of life that we face, and so understands how we feel. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are yet without sin.” (Heb. 4:15). See also Matthew 8:17.

E. JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS FOR US

Wicked men took the Lord Jesus and executed Him by nailing Him to a wooden cross like a common criminal. He could have saved Himself, but He did not, for it was through His death on the Cross that God was going to save the world. Jesus died for us! (Read Mark 15:16-39). “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.” (1 Pet 2:24). See also Isaiah 53:5-6.

F. JESUS OPENED THE DOOR OF HEAVEN FOR US

When His work on earth was completed, Jesus returned to Heaven to be with God, His Father. But this too was for us...for He opened the way into God’s presence for us, where we can live now and

forever! “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.” (Heb. 10:19-22). See also John 14:1-3.

MY COMMITMENT

Today I acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God and that He came into the world to meet my great need of a Saviour. I will also tell others that He came to the world for them.

Chapter 5 THE CROSS

When Jesus Christ was put to death by being nailed to a wooden cross, wicked men thought they were just executing a man who was disturbing their way of life. They did not realise that the Cross was planned by God from the beginning of the world.

A. GOD DEALS WITH ALL SIN

Through His Son’s death on the Cross, the great Creator God was dealing with every person’s sin, suffering and sorrow. Jesus was dying in the place of every individual in the world. Receiving personally what He has done on the Cross brings the answer to all our needs.

1. God Reveals His Power Through The Cross

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). See also Romans 1:16.

2. God Shows His Love On The Cross

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

3. God Removed Our Sorrows On The Cross

“Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted” (Is. 53:4).

4. Jesus Took The Punishment For Our Sins On The Cross

“But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed... We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Is. 53:5-6). See also 1 Peter 2:24.

B. A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH THE CROSS

Because God is so holy and righteous, sin separates us from Him. No one with sin in their hearts is able to be on His presence. So, not only by dying on the Cross did Jesus suffer for our sins in our place, but also He made it possible for us to know God personally and to experience the love, peace and joy which fellowship with Him brings.

1. We Become Acceptable to God Through The Cross

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:21).

2. We Receive Forgiveness Through The Cross

“For He has rescued us from the domination of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Col.1:13-14). See also 1 John 2:1-2.

We Become Members Of God’s Family Through The Cross

“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praise’” (Heb. 2:11-12). See also John 1:12.

4. Racial Barriers Are Broken Through The Cross

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility.” (Eph. 2:13-16).

C. FREEDOM THROUGH THE CROSS

Jesus’ death on the Cross was a great victory for us. Because God dealt with our sin on the Cross, it means also that all the misery and suffering which is a result of sin was also dealt with. The Cross has won great freedom for us!

1. Freedom From Satan

“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross” (Col. 2:15). See also Colossians 1:13.

2. Freedom From Past Sins

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). See also Colossians 2:13.

3. Freedom From Present Sins

“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” (Rom. 6:14)

4. Freedom From Sickness

“This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and carried our diseases.” (Matt 8:17).

5. Freedom From The Curse

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’.” (Gal. 3:13). See also Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

6. Freedom From Judgement

“Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement.” (Heb. 9:26-27).

7. Freedom From Everlasting Death

“For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes on Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

D. LOVE AND JUSTICE MEET AT THE CROSS

The Cross is the place where the love of God and the righteous judgement of God meet. His righteous judgement demanded the death penalty for sin – the shedding of blood. His love met His own demands and Jesus, the Son of God, died in our place. “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Rom. 5:8-11).

E. THE CROSS IS THE CENTER OF HISTORY

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the center point of Mankind’s existence on earth. From the moment the first man and woman sinned (see Genesis 3), it was pre-planned by God that Jesus would die on the Cross. From that time on, people looked forward in faith to what God promised He would do on the Cross to save them. Today we look back and, by believing what Jesus has done for us on the Cross, receive forgiveness and new life.

Chapter 6 THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The shedding of Jesus Christ's blood on the Cross was a factor in order for us to receive forgiveness for our sins and acceptance into the presence of God. "...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Heb. 9:22).

A. LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves... it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." (Lev. 17:11). When we sin, we earn death. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus paid this penalty for us by shedding His blood (Dying for us – in our place).

Atonement (at-one-ment) means to be made AT ONE with God. Jesus gave His life (Shed His blood) on the Cross for our AT ONE MENT (atonement). This made it possible for us to be AT-ONE with God. Jesus' blood means we are no longer His enemy but His friend, His sons and daughters. By faith, we accept what Jesus did for us.

B. WHAT SIN DOES TO OUR LIFE

1. Separate Us From God

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." (Is. 59:2).

2. Makes Us Feel Guilty

"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear." (Ps. 38:4).

3. Allows Satan To Accuse Us

"The accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night..." (Rev. 12:10).

4. Demands The Death Penalty

"...The soul who sins is the one who will die." (Ezek. 18:4)

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST MEETS ALL OUR NEEDS

C. THE BLOOD IS FOR GOD

The blood of Christ wholly satisfies God's law – which requires a penalty for breaking the law. 1 John 3:4 says, "sin is breaking the law." The blood protects us from the penalty of breaking the law (death). In Exodus 12, God commands the people of Israel to put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts to protect them from the destroyer—who would kill all the first-born. This lamb was a picture of the Lamb – Jesus – Who would come later. God said, "...when I see the blood, I will pass over (protect) you..." (Verse 13).

Fellowship Is Restored

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him." (Rom. 5:8-9)

We Are Redeemed (Purchased Back From Slavery)

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Eph. 1:7)

D. THE BLOOD IS FOR MAN

The blood has satisfied God; now it is to satisfy us in the cleansing of our conscience from guilt.

1. The Blood Cleanses From Guilt

"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Heb. 9:14).

2. The Blood Sanctifies Us

"And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood." (Heb. 13:12).

3. The Blood Brings Us Close To God

“...and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you...” (Col. 1:20-22).

The Blood Gives Boldness To Enter God’s Presence

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, the body...Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb. 10:19-22).

5. The Blood Perfects Us In The Sight Of God

“...because by one sacrifice He has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.” (Heb. 10:14).

E. THE BLOOD IS AGAINST THE DEVIL

Satan’s most strategic activity in this age is as the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10) and it is at this that the Lord confronts Him in His special ministry as High Priest through His own blood (Heb. 9:11-14).

The Blood Puts God On Man’s Side Against The Devil

“...If God is for us, who can be against us? ...Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Shall God who justifies? Who is he that condemns? Will Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – and is at the right hand of God and is also interceding (praying) for us?” (Rom. 8:31,33-34). The devil has no ground for accusation against those who have received the work of Christ’s shed blood for them.

The Blood Dissolves All Satan’s Legal Rights Of Ownership

“... in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:14). ‘Redemption’ means ‘to buy back.’ We are under new ownership, and the price that was paid for us was the shed blood of Jesus. “...the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28). See also 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Timothy 2:6.

F. WHAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST HAS BROUGHT US

1. Purity Of Heart

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7).

2. Eternal Life

“Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’” (John 6: 53-54).

3. Approach To God

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.” (Eph. 2:13).

MY COMMITMENT

I now understand what the shed blood of Jesus means to God, to Satan and to me. I make my commitment to share with others the truth concerning the blood of Christ. I will remind myself often of the covenant God has with me, to forgive my sin and cleanse me from sin and protect me from Satan’s harm.

Chapter 7 THE RESURRECTION

After His death on the Cross, Jesus lay in the grave for three days (Matt. 12:40). Then – God raised His Son from the dead! (Read Matthew 28). “...and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from dead: Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 1:4)

A. GOD RAISED YOU UP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Jesus’ death was for you. So was His resurrection! “As for you, you were dead in your transgression and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air... “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” (see Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 3:1-3).

1. To Give You New Life

“...God...has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

2. To Give New Birth

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...” (1 Peter 1:3).

3. To Give You A New Beginning

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come.” (2 Cor. 5:17).

To Give You:-

...Victory Over Satan

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome the world, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world (Satan)...for everyone born of God overcomes the world.” “This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 4:4; 5:4-5).

...Authority Over Satan

After His resurrection, “...Jesus Christ...has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand – with angels, authorities and powers (this includes Satan) in submission to Him.” (1 Peter 3:21-22). See also Luke 10:17-19.

...Power Over Satan

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know...His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.” (Eph. 1:18-23). See also Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8 and 4:33.

To Make You A Son And Heir In God’s Kingdom

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...” (Rom. 8:15-17).

B. THE RESURRECTION MEETS NEED OF LIFE

1. It Is Your Deliverance From The PAST

Your old sinful life was put to death on the Cross with Jesus, and buried with Him in the grave. Then, when Jesus was raised to life again, you were raised with Him as a new creation – leaving behind your old life in Jesus' grave! "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life...the death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 6:4-11). See also Ephesians 2:1-7 and Colossians 2:12-15.

2. It Is Your Power For The PRESENT

Because Jesus is ALIVE we have now received the power of His Spirit to live a life of victory over sin and all Satan's attacks against us. "What then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Shall God who justifies? Who is he that condemns? Will Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – who is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble of hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us..." (Rom. 8:31-39).

3. It Is Your Hope For The FUTURE

The resurrection of Jesus gives us great hope for the future. He is called "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18). In His resurrection, He was opening the way for all those who would believe in Him to follow after Him—to be raised from the dead! One wonderful day in the future, Jesus Christ will return to the earth again—not as a baby this time, but revealing to the whole world who He really is—the glorious God and Ruler of all creation. At that time all those who have died, believing in Him, will be raised to life again! "...If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost..." "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first-fruit; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him" (1 Cor. 15:17-23). See also 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Chapter 8 REPENTANCE

Repentance is the first step we take to receive the salvation that God offers to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. "...God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.'" (Acts 2:36-38). See also Acts 17:30.

A. WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT

1. Not Just Feeling Guilty

Feeling guilty about our sin comes before repentance, but is not repentance itself. No one repents unless they first feel guilty about their sin, but not all who feel guilty actually repent. "As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgement to come, Felix was afraid and said, 'That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you'" (Acts 24:25). Felix felt guilty but did not repent.

2. Not Just Being Sorry For Your Sin

Some people are very sorry because of the consequences of their sin, or because they have been caught. Many people are sorry, not for what they have done wrong, but for the penalty they receive in being caught. “Godly sorrow leads to repentance that brings salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” (2 Cor. 7:10).

3. Not Just Trying To Be A Good Person

Many people try in their own strength to become a better person and change their way of life. Any self-effort has a root of self-righteousness in it, which does not acknowledge the need of repentance from sin. “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.” (Is. 64:6).

4. Not Becoming Religious

The Pharisees in the Bible were extremely religious in behaviour and practice. They fasted and prayed and had many religious ceremonies, yet never repented. “But when He saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where He was baptizing, He said to them; You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matt. 3:7-10). See also Matthew 5:20.

5. Not Just Knowing The Truth

Having an intellectual head-knowledge of truth does not necessarily guarantee that the truth has become a living reality in one’s life. Believing with the head and believing with the heart are different (see Romans 10:10). “You believe that there is one God...Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder. You foolish man, do you want further evidence that faith without righteous deeds is useless?” (Jas 2:19-20).

B. WHAT TRUE REPENTANCE IS

1. Being Sorry To God For Your Sin

True repentance is a sorrow not just towards one’s self, or towards another person, but first and foremost it is true sorrow towards God. “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...” (Ps. 51:1-4). See also Psalms 38:8.

2. Being Truthful About Your Sin

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you did not cover up my iniquity. I said ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’ – and You forgave the guilt of my sin.” (Ps. 32:5). See also 1 John 1:9.

3. Turning Away From Your Sin

“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whosoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” (Prov. 28:13).

4. Hating Sin

“You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore...God has anointed You...” (Heb. 1:9)
“...and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done...” (Ezek. 20:43-44).

5. When Possible, Paying Back To Others What You Owe

“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’” (Luke 19:8). See also Leviticus 6:1-7.

C. WHAT REPENTANCE INVOLVES

1. Turning From Sin

“Don’t be like your fathers were! The earlier prophets pleaded in vain with them to turn from all their evil ways. ‘Come, return to me,’ the Lord God said. But no, they wouldn’t listen; they paid no attention at all.” (Zech. 1:4). See also Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 5:5.

2. Turning From The World

“Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God” (1 John 2:15). See James 4: 4.

3. Turning From Yourself

“He died for all so that all who live – having eternal life from Him – might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them” (2 Cor. 5:15). See also Luke 14:26.

4. Turning From The Devil

“...to open their eyes to their true condition so that they may repent and live in the light of God instead of in Satan’s darkness...” (Acts 26:18). See also Col. 1:13.

5. Turning To God

“Therefore tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Return to Me, declares the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord Almighty.” (Zech. 1:3).

6. Turning To Right-Living

“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.” (Rom. 6:13).

Chapter 9 FAITH

Faith has always been the mark of a discipline of Jesus. The early disciples were known as BELIEVERS. Jesus said: “Everything is possible for him who believes.” (Mark 9:23).

Faith means total dependence on God. When Adam sinned, he stepped out of God dependence into independence (which is unbelief). This is the reason God has placed such a high priority on faith. Faith is the way we come back into relationship with God (God – dependence).

This dependence on God is called faith. Faith advances you beyond your five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. Faith releases you from your limited capacities. By faith you move from in-ability to His-ability. This is the walk of faith to which all of us are called – where “nothing is impossible”. (Matt. 17:20).

A. WHAT IS FAITH

Faith is obedient action in response to what God has said. True faith is expressed in: 1) Obedience, and 2) Action, in response to: 3) Hearing God’s Word (voice). “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (Heb. 11:1). Faith means having trust, assurance or confidence in another person or that person’s words. Having faith in God involves an exchange of self-trust for God-trust. We stop trusting in ourselves and trust Him. We abandon reliance on our limited source of knowledge and start receiving from His unlimited source.

B. TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on MEN’S WISDOM, but on God’s power. “We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. “No, we speak of God’s SECRET WISDOM, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.” (1 Cor. 2:4-7). See also verses 8 – 16.

Sense Knowledge

All knowledge that comes to the natural man comes to him through the five senses – seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. This is limited knowledge, described as ‘man’s wisdom.’

Revelation Knowledge

This knowledge is not based on the five senses, nor on natural reasoning but on an alternative source – the TRUTH of the Word of God. It is received through man’s spirit, and is described as ‘God’s wisdom’ – “We live by FAITH, not by sight.” (2 Cor. 5:7).

C. THE BASIS OF FAITH

The basis of having faith in God is in three important realities:

1. The Nature Of God

“When God made His promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for Him to swear by, He swore by Himself.” (Heb. 6:13).

a) He cannot change

“I the Lord do not change...” (Mal. 3:6). See also James 1:17.

b) He cannot fail

“I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted.” (Job 42:2). See also 1 Chronicles 28:20.

c) He cannot lie

“God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?” (Num. 23:19). See also Titus 1:2.

2. The Redemptive Work Of The Son Of God

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2). Christ has become the source of our faith in God. The fact of His death and resurrection provides ground for our believing. “...Christ Jesus...has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.” (1 Cor. 1:30). See also Romans 5:1-2.

3. The Word of God

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.” (Matt. 24:35). See also Isaiah 40:8. “The Lord said to me, ‘...I am watching to see that My Word is fulfilled.’” (Jer. 1:12). His Word stands true forever. Faith comes when God brings a specific word – out of all He has ever said – directly to us in our circumstances. Spoken in this way, the Word of God comes alive to us, releasing our faith.

D. HOW FAITH WORKS

The principle of faith (Rom.3: 27) is to operate in our lives continually, no matter what the circumstances (see 2 Corinthians 5:7; James 1:5-6). It works in the following way:

1. God Gives Us Faith

‘For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by (HIS) faith” (Compare Romans 1:17 and Habakkuk 2:4). The righteous live by HIS faith, that is the faith He gives us as a gift. “For by grace are you saved through faith, it (the faith) is the gift of God...” (Eph. 2:8-9). “...according as God had dealt to every man...faith” (Rom. 12:3).

2. Faith Comes By A Word From God

Firstly, God encourages us by speaking a “word” relevant to our circumstances. This may come as you read the Bible or by hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit inside your spirit. “...faith comes from hearing the Word, and is heard through the Word of Christ.” (Rom. 10:17). See also Genesis 15:3-5; 17:15-21; Joshua 1:8.

3. Obedience To The Word

For faith to operate in our situation, we must obey that word. Faith is ACTIVE, not passive. Most of God's promises are conditional – He will do His part, if we do our part. "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (Jas. 2:17). See also Jas.1:22-25; Gen. 15:6; Matt. 7:24-27.

The Crisis, Or "Trial Of Our Faith"

This is a period of testing. Everything happening around us appears contrary to what God has said, and there seems to be no natural evidence for our believing. At this point, our faith rests completely on God's Word (what He has spoken to us). "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. "These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:6-7). See also Romans 4:16-21; Psalms 105:17-19.

In faith we cast ourselves on HIS FAITHFULNESS. In our times of doubt and struggle, God is faithful and does not abandon us. "If we believe not, He remains faithful. He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim 2:13). He was faithful to Thomas and Peter when their faith was tested. Jesus didn't abandon them. "He will never leave us nor forsake us." (Heb. 13:5).

5. The Result

The end result is always victory on the part of the believer, bringing glory to God (see also James 1:2-4,12; Genesis 21:1-3; Psalms 105:19-22; Acts 3:16; Hebrews 6:13-15). "...for everyone born of God has overcome the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

MY COMMITMENT

Today I decide to live by faith and trust God in all areas of my life. I acknowledge my need to be totally dependent on God – which is faith in action. In problems, challenges and difficulties I will rely on His faithfulness. God's response will be His grace – His enabling power. I will teach others also to rely on God's faithfulness and walk with faith in God.

Chapter 10 GRACE

"With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and MUCH GRACE was with them all." (Acts 4:33). "From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been COMMITTED TO THE GRACE OF GOD for the work they had now completed." (Acts 14:26). Why was the grace of God so important in the experience of the early Christians? Why did the church in Antioch pray that the GRACE of God would be upon Paul and Barnabas, and later on Paul and Silas, as they set out on their missionary journeys?

A. THE MEANING OF GRACE

The most common understanding of the word 'grace' is "God's unmerited favor" in other words, even though we were sinners, deserving of judgement, God looked upon us in love and forgave us. (God's Riches At Christ's Expense).

This, however, is only half its meaning. It also means "**God's enabling power.**" "May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." (2 Thes. 2:16-17). Not only does His grace make us accepted into the family of God, but it also provides the power we need to live the Christian life. Two Scriptures indicate the two aspects of God's grace in every believer:

God's Unmerited Favor

"For it is by grace (God's unmerited favor) you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (Eph. 2:8-9).

God's Enabling Power

“In love He predestined to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will – to the praise of His glorious grace (enabling power), which He has freely given us in the one He loves.” (Eph. 1:4-6). Read also the whole chapter, which describes all that we have received by grace (by His enabling power).

In salvation, not only is God’s unmerited favor expressed (in that we receive forgiveness and restored relationship with Him even though we don’t deserve it), but so also is God’s enabling power – for it is only by HIS power that we can be transformed. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

This principle of grace continues throughout our walk with God. In every area of our Christian lives, it is God’s grace that causes us to grow and be strong – God’s enabling power given to us without any merit on our part. “...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (2 Pet. 3:18).

B. GRACE GIVEN TO THE HEROES OF FAITH

This operating force of grace is revealed in the lives of men and women throughout the whole Bible. Every hero of faith began his walk with God aware of his own weakness and inability. It was only through him allowing God’s grace – His enabling power – to work in his life that he was able to become the kind of person that God wanted him to be, and to fulfill the plan to purpose God had for his life.

C. GRACE IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Read Exodus 3:11-13; 4:1-13. The command the Lord gave Moses was no small task. Egypt was the ruling empire of the day. It was an evil nation, and Pharaoh, its satanic leader, held authority that was claimed to be divine. Every nation in the known world lived in fear of Pharaoh. When God told Moses to go down to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let His three million people go free from slavery, Moses immediate response – out of his own weakness and inability – was as follows:

3:11 “Who am I?”

3:13 “Who are You?”

4:1 “They won’t believe me!”

4:10 “I’m not eloquent!”

4:13 “Lord, send someone else!”

But with God’s grace, Moses did go down to Egypt, and with signs and wonders brought the people of Israel out as God told him to.

D. GRACE IN THE LIFE OF GIDEON

Read Judges 6:1-24. The call of God came to Gideon to deliver His people from the conquering armies of Midian. Israel had known only defeat for many years. Gideon’s response to God’s Word in verse 13 reveals his initial unbelief: “But Sir, ‘Gideon replied, ‘If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, “Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?” But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.” Even when the Lord encouraged him and promised to be with him, Gideon answered: “How can I save Israel? I’m the smallest member of the smallest family in our tribe!” (see verse 15). But despite his fear and inability, with God’s grace (enabling power) Gideon saved Israel. And he did it with just a small band of men. It was GRACE that made the difference!

E. GRACE IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Read Acts 15:40. Before Paul and Silas set out on their missionary journey together, the church at Antioch prayed for them and “commended (them)...to the grace of the Lord” for the work that was ahead of them. Read Paul’s description of his experiences in 2 Corinthians 11:22-33. It is understandable that he was first commended to the grace of God! He needed it to survive! The Lord’s answer to Paul’s confession of weakness is His promise for us too: “...My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness....” (2 Cor. 12:9).

F. GRACE RELEASED IN OUR LIVES

In our relationship with God – as we walk with Him each day – we constantly meet situations that would try to overwhelm us. Our response to God is to trust His Word. We express our trust through obedience. This proves we believe what God’s Word says despite what the circumstances might indicate. God’s response to our faith is His grace – His enabling power, which causes us to triumph in every situation.

G. TWO VERY IMPORTANT PROMISES

1. We Have Bold Access To The Throne Of Grace

“Let us then approach the THRONE OF GRACE with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find GRACE (divine enablement) TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED.” (Heb. 4:16).

2. God Is Able

“And God is able to make ALL grace ABOUND to you, so that in ALL things at ALL times, having ALL that you need, you will ABOUND in EVERY good work.” (2 Cor. 9:8).

Chapter 11 WATER BAPTISM

Jesus commanded all those who believed in Him to be baptised in water. “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...’” (Matt 28:18-19). See also Acts 2:38-41. To be “baptised” means to be “totally immersed.” When a person repents from his sin and believes Jesus died for him, before many witnesses, he (or she) is to be taken to water, put right under it and brought up again. Why would Jesus command that His believers do such a strange thing?

A. UNDERSTANDING WATER BAPTISM

Understanding what water baptism is all about is the key to a victorious and liberated Christian life. The act of going under the water and rising up from it again is a picture demonstrating what has happened to the Christian believer.

FOUR STAGES OF CHRIST’S WORKS PICTURED

He Died ...I Died In Him

“For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.” (Rom. 6:6-7).

He Was Buried ...I Was Buried With Him

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death...” (Rom. 6:3-4).

He Was Raised ...I Have A New Life In Him

“...in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection” (Rom. 6:4-5).

He Ascended ... I Ascended In Him

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...” (Eph. 2:6). See also Colossians 3:1.

WATER BAPTISM IS...

1. Your Funeral Service!

A burial service is not to kill a man off. It is only performed when the man is dead already. And so, because you have “died” in Christ, you bury your old life in water baptism.

2. Your Resurrection To New Life!

You rise out of the water demonstrating you are a new creation in Christ! “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once and for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 6:8-11).

D. THE TWO KINGDOMS

“For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.” (Col. 1:13). Every man and woman born into the world is born into the Kingdom of Darkness; born slaves of the dictator Satan. There is no way out of this kingdom except by DEATH, and there is no way into the Kingdom of God except by BIRTH. And so Jesus became both our death and new birth – and this we declare in water baptism!

E. THE TWO RACES

As there are two kingdoms, so within each kingdom is a different race of people. The Adamic Race populates the Kingdom of Darkness, and the New Creation populates the Kingdom of God.

1. The First Adam

“For as in Adam all die...” (1 Cor. 15:22). See also Romans 5:12. Adam was the father of us all, the entire human race. Adam’s sin alienated us all from God. Because of his sin, we all inherited his rebellious and diseased nature and became subject to death. Adam’s offspring are called “the Adamic Race”.

2. The Last Adam

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” (Rom. 5:6). There was no way God could change the fallen Adamic Race. He had to put an end to that race and begin a whole new race of humanity. Jesus was the Last Adam. He came as the last born of the Adamic race and the firstborn of a new race. As He hung upon the Cross, He hung there as the last Adam – the last born of the Adamic Race. When He died on the Cross, the Adamic Race and the Adamic sinful nature died. God put to death the fallen creation in Him. The Adamic Race died in Christ.

3. The Second Man

“...so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15:22). Jesus came as God’s new Man, through which a new race would be created. Jesus was raised from the dead not as the Last Adam but as the Second Man, the Head of the New Creation. “So it is written: ‘The first man Adam became a living soul’; the last Adam, (Christ) a life giving spirit... The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. “As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:45-49).

4. The New Creation

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17). See also Ephesians 2:10. In water baptism we declare to all our friends and acquaintances that we are no longer part of Adam’s race and the Kingdom of Darkness. We are a New Creation in Christ, belonging to the Kingdom of God!

Chapter 12 THE HOLY SPIRIT

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples for 40 days. Then, when they were all gathered together with Him on the top of a high hill, He was taken up into Heaven before their eyes (read Acts 1:1-11). However, before He left Jesus gave His believers a very special and wonderful promise:

“...I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth... I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you...” (John 14:16-18; 16:5-7). Jesus has not left us alone in the world. He has sent us the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The very first thing we must understand about the Holy Spirit is that He is indeed God.

“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied TO THE HOLY SPIRIT ... you have not lied to men BUT TO GOD.’” (Acts 5:3-4). See also 2 Corinthians 3:17. God has chosen to express Himself to mankind as Father, as Son and as the Holy Spirit. These are the expression of three distinct Persons (Personalities), yet the three are one.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God’s gift to every believer. When a person believes in Jesus, and receives the salvation He offers, the Holy Spirit comes to live in the believer, imparting spiritual life. “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.’” (Acts 2:38-39). See also John 7:37-39.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In The Believer’s Personal Life:

The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within the believer to minister to him personally:

a) He testifies of our relationship with God

“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Rom. 8:16). See also 1 John 3:24.

b) He teaches

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26).

He guides

“...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14).

He helps us live a pleasing to God

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Gal. 5:16). See also verses 17-25.

e) He helps us in prayer

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” (Rom. 8:26).

f) He gives life to our bodies

“And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.” (Rom 8:11).

2. In The Believer For Service:

As well as giving the Holy Spirit to dwell in the believer, God also wants to fill and baptize the believer with the Holy Spirit to empower him to serve and glorify God in the world.

a) The Holy Spirit gives power and boldness to witness

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem; and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). See also Acts 2:14-40.

b) He introduces the supernatural realm

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.... To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to

another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.” (1 Cor. 12:4,8-10). See also Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6.

c) He testifies that Jesus is alive

“The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead... We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” (Acts 5:30-32). See also Acts 4:31-33.

d) He brings a fresh understanding of the Word of God

“...as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him’—but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” (1 Cor. 2:9-10). See also John 16:13.

e) He fills our spirit with true worship to God

“...be filled with the Spirit, speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5:18-19). See also John 4:24.

f) He glorifies Jesus

“But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” (John 16:13-15). See also John 15:26.

D. HOW TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

God wants His Holy Spirit, Who indwells you because you are a believer in Jesus, to fill you to overflowing with power to serve Him (Eph. 5:18).

It Is A Gift Promised By God; So Ask For It

“...how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13). See also verses 9-12.

Begin To Praise God As You Receive In Faith

“Then they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.” (Luke 24:52-53).

You Can Speak With A Supernatural Language

“...the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues...” (Acts 19:6). See also Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 10:45-46; 1 Corinthians 14:5,18.

MY COMMITMENT

I thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit in my life. I make a decision today to respond to the Holy Spirit’s prompting and directing. I determine to learn to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart. I choose to be filled with the Spirit. I now open my spirit to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 13 TEMPTATION

Satan attacks the individual Christian mostly through temptation. And he focuses this assault in two spheres:

1. The Desires Of The World

He will seek to tempt a believer to become absorbed into the world system:

to make the material blessings that the world offers a central desire;

to make the honor and recognition of this world an important goal; and

to make the comfort of being one with those of this world our basis for security.

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15). See also James 4:4; 1 Tim. 6:6-11.

2. The Desires Of The Flesh

Through Christ's work on the Cross, the true Christian is delivered from the results of sin, and from the power of sin (Rom. 6:6-14). But he still lives in a physical body that is subject to natural appetites and desires. Satan will use these to try and get a Christian to place greater importance upon them than upon the promptings of the Holy Spirit within him (Rom. 8:5-9). See also James 1:14; Ephesians 2:3.

SATAN'S ORIGINAL VICTORY

It was in the areas of the world and the flesh that Satan won his original victory in the temptation of the first man and woman, and these are still his tactics today. "For all that is in the world, the LUST OF THE FLESH (craving for sensual gratification), and the LUST OF THE EYES (greedy longings of the mind) and the PRIDE OF LIFE (assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things) – these do not come from the Father but are from the world (itself)." (1 John 2:16).

Compare Eve's Temptation With This Verse:

Genesis 3:6

Good FOR FOOD

Pleasing TO THE EYE

Desirable for GAINING WISDOM

John 2:16

"Lust of the flesh"

"Lust of the eyes"

"Pride of Life"

Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all mankind has been governed by their flesh (the three things outlined above). The flesh is also corrupted by a sinful nature (Gal 5:19-21).

VICTORY WON BY CHRIST

1. Through His Life

Jesus was tempted in everything, exactly as we are, "yet was without sin." (Hebrews 4:15).

Compare Jesus's Temptation With This Verse:

Luke 4:1-13

Stones to bread

Kingdoms of the earth

Pinnacle of the temple

John 2:16

"Lust of the flesh"

"Lust of the eyes"

"Pride of Life"

2. Through His Death And Resurrection

Faith that appropriates (claims, receives) Christ's work releases the Christian from the power and dominion that sin had over him (Rom. 8:9). He is now free to choose to walk in obedience to God (Rom. 6:8-14). "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man... in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature (flesh) but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4).

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONTINUAL VICTORY

Based on the foundation of this great victory won for us by Christ, the Christian can now defeat any attack from the enemy. Here are seven keys to continual victory

Know The Victory Is Already Won

Because of his defeat at the Cross, the devil's strength now is found in a Christian's ignorance (Hos. 4:6). But when a Christian knows the complete work of the Cross and Resurrection in his life, the devil is stripped of any weapon against him.

Walk In Step With The Spirit

A new power is placed within the Christian – the Holy Spirit Himself. We are to walk in obedience to His inner promptings day by day (Gal. 5:22-25).

Recognise Temptation For What It Is

Temptation is NOT sin. YIELDING to temptation is! (Jas. 1:15). See Genesis 4:6-7.

Understand There Is A Way Of Escape Provided

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Cor. 10:13). James 4:7 details the way of escape: Submit to God, “resist the devil and he shall flee!”

Keep The Right Focus In Life

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” (Col. 3:1-2). See also Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 6:11-12; 2 Peter 3:11-13.

Keep Away From Obvious Areas Of Temptation

“I will set before my eyes no vile thing.” (Ps. 101:3). See also 1 Timothy 6:9-11.

Be Aware Of Satan’s Schemes

It is important for us to know the tactics that the enemy uses against us so that we are not outwitted by him (2 Cor. 2:11).

He is a liar (John 8:44)

He is slanderer and accuser (Rev. 12:10)

He is a deceiver (Rev. 12:9)

He is a tempter (Matt. 4:1-11)

He is an oppressor (Acts 10:38)

He is a hinderer (1 Thess. 2:18)

He is as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8)

He can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14)

As Christians and believers, **we are called to live in VICTORY!** Through Christ, this victory is ours:

Over the world (1 John 5:4)

Over the flesh (Gal. 5:16)

Over the enemy (Eph. 6:11,13).

Chapter 14 FELLOWSHIP

THE PURPOSE OF FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship of Christians together is very important, for it is in our unity together that... **1. The Believer Is Encouraged And Grows In Christ**

“I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” (Rom. 1:11-12).

2. The World Comes To Know That Jesus Was Sent Of God

“I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as we are one I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.” (John 17:22-23).

B. CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP

1. A Basic Commitment To One Another

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Rom. 12:10). Without a basic trust there can be no fellowship. The depth of fellowship will vary according to the depth of commitment.

Our Commitment Must Be Based On ‘Agape’

‘Agape’ is a love, which loves ‘in spite of’ not ‘because of.’ Such a commitment therefore will not be affected by the other person’s inconsistent behavior. “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34).

3. True Fellowship Is Christ-centered

Our fellowship with one another is founded in our common commitment to Christ. "...And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3). See Philipians 2:1-2.

Walking In The Light

Our fellowship embraces the need to be open, honest and truthful with one another. This at times may mean:

confessing our own sins to others, or lovingly covering another's sin. "If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin." (1 John 1:6-7). See also Matthew 18:15.

obedience to the light-general and specific commandments God has given.

the removal of any hypocritical-acting out a role, and is not genuine. "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart." (1 Pet. 1:22).

A Genuine Interest In The Other's Well – Being

There should be no hidden motives of self-gain. Our desire should be to give, not to get. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain deceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Phil. 2:3-4).

A Willingness To Lay Down One's Life

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12-13). Life involves more than physical life. It also includes our material possessions, our personal interests and preferences, etc. (Jas. 2:15-16). This also means a willingness to openly share of one's self. We can only know people to the extent they are prepared to reveal themselves.

FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH MEANS:

Sharing All Things

There were three stages of development in their fellowship in Acts 4:32 – firstly, they were of one heart (spirit), then they were of one soul (mind), and then followed the physical expression of having all things in common. "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need." (Acts 2:44-45).

Laying Down Their Lives

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them." (Rom. 16:3-4).

Devoted To Serving The Brethren

"You know that the household of Stephanas were the first believers in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints..." (1 Cor. 16:15).

Being A Channel Of Supply To Others In Need

"At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality." (2 Cor. 8:14). See also 1 Corinthians 16:17.

Sharing In Suffering

"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles." (Phil. 4:14).

Sacrificial Giving

"Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability." (2 Cor. 8:2-3).

Practicing Hospitality

“Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.” (3 John 5). See also Hebrews 13:2.

Building Up And Encouraging One Another

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” (1 Thes. 2:8). See also 2 Timothy 3:10-14.

D. RESULTS OF FELLOWSHIP

The results of fellowship in the early Church were:

- A fear of God (Acts 2:43)
- Joy (Acts 2:46)
- Favor with all people (Acts 2:47)
- Addition of new believers (Acts 2:47)
- All needs supplied (Phil. 4:19)
- Emergence of leadership (1 Cor. 16:15-16).

MY COMMITMENT

Through this study I now understand the importance of having fellowship continually with other Christians. Today I commit myself to being a part of a group of believers to whom I will give my loyalty, my love and my service.

Chapter 15 GENEROSITY

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”(Ps 19:1-2). Read also verses 3-4. From this Psalm, we learn that God’s creation (the heavens and the earth):

declare the glory of God
proclaim the work of His hands
pour forth speech, and
display knowledge

We can learn from God’s creation if we examine it carefully. Just as there are physical laws which bring order out of the chaos in the universe, God has also put into motion spiritual laws which govern life. One of these is the **Law of Generosity**. This teaches us that, “Whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” (2 Cor. 9:6).

PARTNERSHIP

As partners with God (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:20; 6:10), it is important for us to understand where responsibilities lie:

1. Ownership Is With God

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1). See also Psalm 89:11; Job 41:11; 1 Chronicles 29:10-14. We are not owners, but stewards. All ownership is with God. Every single created thing, living or not, ultimately belongs to Him—including everything material or immaterial that we may personally have in this life: possessions, careers, families. He has given us all these things for us to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17); and when we realize that they still belong to God, we can rest in the assurance that God also has ultimate responsibility for them.

2. Stewardship Is With Us

We are not owners, but stewards. A steward manages and takes care of that which belongs to someone else. God owns everything; but as stewards, we manage and take care of it for Him. We have an obligation to be faithful in this stewardship. The Lord holds us accountable for the special responsibility of managing and taking care of the things He has given us (read Matthew 25:14-30).

When we understand this Owner–steward relationship that we enjoy with God’s property, then it becomes easy to give.

Before God, stewardship covers every single thing that belongs to us:

Our life (Acts 17:25; 1 Cor. 6:19; Gal 2:20; Job 33:4)

Our time (Ps. 90:12; Eph 5:15; Col. 4:5)

Our talents and abilities (1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Cor. 12:4-7,11)

Our possessions (Matt. 6:19-21; Col. 3:1-2)

Our finances (1 Tim. 6:6-10; 17-19; Matt. 6:24)

The message of the gospel (1 Cor. 4:1; 9:16-17; 1 Tim. 6:20).

Even so, many Christians still struggle to give (tithes and offerings) no matter how much they may want to. But the action that releases a believer into the full blessings of good stewardship is SURRENDER – the unreserved submission of one’s entire life, possessions and plans to God’s will and purpose. It is only when we give OURSELVES that we learn what it means to give some of the possessions (or money) God has given us.

GIVING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need... No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.” (Acts 2: 44-45 and 4:32). This basic attitude of the early Christians laid the foundation for every expression to giving that was to come later. As the number of Christians multiplied, different methods of giving appeared. But all their giving expressed their understanding of STEWARDSHIP – that everything ultimately belongs to God.

1. The Church Supported the Needy

In the early Church, special men were chosen to serve as “deacons” – helpers in the distribution of offerings and gifts for the widows and needy (see Acts 6:1-3). These men made it their ministry to channel all the giving to where there was practical need.

2. Churches Gave Sacrificially To One Another

When the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were in famine, the poor, suffering Non-Jewish church helped them. “Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.” (2 Cor. 8:2-3). See also verses 1 and 4.

3. The Church Supported Travelling Ministries

The Apostle Paul traveled from place to place establishing new churches. On some occasions he worked with his hands to provide his own support (Acts 18:3; 2 Thess. 3:7-9). On other occasions the Philippian church showed the true spirit of giving which God commands, by supporting traveling ministries such as Paul. “I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied now that I have received...the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4:18). Read also verses 15:17.

4. Christians Worked To Be Able To Give

“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.” (Eph. 4:28).

5. Giving Was The Proof Of Their Love

“At this time, your plenty will supply what they need... Therefore show (by giving)... the proof of your love...” (2 Cor. 8:14, 24). See also verses 7-15; 1 Corinthians 16:12; 1 John 3:17-18.

GOD’S PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

In 1 Corinthians 10:11, we are told to learn from Israel’s example. We are to apply the principles given them by God. At the same time we are to avoid the mistakes Israel (and the leaders) made in the wilderness. In the area of giving, we find some excellent guidelines that can help us in our giving:

1. God Expects Us To Begin With A Percentage

“Bring the whole tithe (10% or one-tenth of all your earnings and increase) into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, ‘says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” (Mal. 3:10).

2. We Are To Give Systematically And Regularly

“Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple of the Lord, and this was done. Then they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes and dedicated gifts...” (2 Chron. 31:11-12).

3. We Are To Give The First And Best To The Lord

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine.” (Prov. 3:9-10).

MY COMMITMENT

I realize, through this study, the importance of having a generous heart and attitude towards others. Today I commit myself to begin a life of giving by starting to tithe (give a tenth of my income to the Lord’s work in my local church) and give offerings (to my church and those serving the Lord). I will also encourage and teach others to do the same.

Chapter 16 KINGDOM LIVING

CHANGE OF AUTHORITY

We have been delivered from Satan’s dominion (rulership or headship). We are now under a whole new authority – that of the Lord Jesus. As a believer begins growing in his new life in the Lord, he soon discovers that the only way we enjoy living in God’s Kingdom is in right RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS (Eph.1:17; Phil.3:10). At the very beginning of our new life with God, this relationship takes two distinct forms:

1. Saviour

This is the very first relationship we can ever have with Jesus. We cannot know God as Father or Friend until we first have a revelation of Jesus as Saviour – the One who died for us and rescued us from Satan’s kingdom. Jesus has saved us from:

God’s judgement (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rom. 5:9)

Satan’s power (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 1:18)

Our own selves (Phil. 3:19; 2 Cor. 5:25; Titus 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:18)

“Although He was a Son... He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him” (Heb. 5:8-9). See also Hebrews 2:10; 2 Timothy 1:10.

2. Lord

Knowing Jesus as Saviour brings us into God’s Kingdom, but that is not where our relationship with Him ends. Once we are inside His Kingdom, that relationship takes on dramatic new changes. Now we know Him not merely as Saviour, but as Lord – OUR LORD! He is KING in His Kingdom (Col. 2:6). “Therefore, I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed’; and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’, except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:3). See also John 13:13; Romans 1:4; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Cor. 4:5.

When we enter the Kingdom of Light, we can enjoy what we were created for – a loving relationship with the Lord. Because of this, when Jesus becomes Lord of our life, we find that His dominion in our lives brings us out of the chaos of sin into divine order and peace. See Colossians 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 8:6.

THE MODEL CITIZEN

“Let your attitude toward life be that of Christ Jesus Himself...” (Phil. 2:5). Jesus, though King of the Kingdom, became a servant. He is the example of what the true citizen of His Kingdom is like.

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:13-15). Read also John 13:5-17; Matt 20:26-28; Luke 22:27. As members of Christ’s Kingdom, we enter into a Master-servant relationship with Him (Matt. 6:24).

Jesus came to do His Father’s will (Heb. 10:5-9). In His day-to-day life, He displayed what the lifestyle of the Kingdom is all about: living to please God (Eph. 5:8-10). We are to have this servant-heart, just as He had a servant’s heart. Many Christians do not like the concept of being a servant because it seems to make one person inferior to another. But in the Bible, we find four interesting paradoxes:

1. In Slavery, There Is Freedom

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.” (Rom. 6:22). Read also Rom. 6: 16-23; Rom.12:1; 1 Cor. 7: 22; 2 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 6: 6-7; 1 Peter 2:16.

2. In Being A Servant, There Is Greatness

“The greatest among you will be your servant. For whosoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matt 23:11-12). See also Matt. 20:26-27; Mark 9:35; 10:43; John 12:26.

3. In Humility, There Is Exaltation

“Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:4). See also Luke 18:14; Proverbs 29:23; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5: 5-6; Matt. 19:30.

4. In Submission, There Is Authority

The Roman Centurion (a military leader over 100 soldiers) who came to Jesus understood this principle. “... I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You. But say the Word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go’ and he goes; and that one ‘Come’ and he comes. I say to my servant ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” (Luke 7:7-8). Because the Centurion was under authority, he was able to exercise authority, and he readily submitted to Jesus’ authority. Read also Luke 7: 1-10; James 4:7.

The lifestyle of the Kingdom of God is an attitude of SUBMISSION and OBEDIENCE TO GOD (See Matt. 12:50; Eph. 6:6; Heb. 13:21; 1 John 2:17; 1 Thes. 4:1). We submit ourselves to God’s will – not reluctantly – because of fear or duty – but rather:

Because Of All God Has Done For Us (Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1; Titus 3:4-7).

Because In Doing So We Find Fulfillment (Psalm 40:8).

Because Of Love (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

C. FRUIT OF THE KINGDOM

“For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children, encouraging, comforting and urging you TO LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF GOD, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.” (1 Thess. 2:11-12). See also 2 Thes. 1:5.

In Matthew 21:43, Jesus said that the Kingdom would belong to those who “produce its fruit.”

The fruit of the Kingdom is explained in a number of Scriptures:

Love, joy, peace (Gal. 5:22-23).

Goodness, righteousness, truth (Eph. 5:9; Jas. 3:13-17)

Righteousness, peace, joy (Rom. 14:17; Heb. 12:11)

Since we were created by God, we were also made for His Kingdom and its life style. The fruit of that Kingdom is simply the natural outworking of the miracle of rebirth that the Holy Spirit has performed in use (see Gal. 5:22-23). Our responsibility as citizens of God’s Kingdom is to live like the people we now are! (1 Peter 2:11). “We also pray that your outward lives, which men see, may bring credit to your master’s name, and that you may bring joy to His heart.” (Col. 1:10). See also Col. 2:6; Eph. 4:1; 6:8-10.

Chapter 17 WORSHIP

“BLESSING GOD”

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” (Psalm 103:1). It is awesome to consider that we have the ability to bless our Creator, but time after time in the Scripture we are exhorted to do just that. We bless Him through our praise and worship of Him. See Psalm 34:1-3.

PRAISE

Praise is an expression of admiration and appreciation. When we praise someone, we tell them how wonderful we think they are, or how great their accomplishments are. It is same with the Lord. Praise has to do with acknowledging God’s character and power. “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You. I will praise You as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.” (Psalm 63:3-4).

1. Why Do We Praise God?

Because of Who He is. “Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to Him a psalm of praise.” (Psalm 47:6-7).

Because of What He Does. “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; He redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:1-5).

2. Who Is To Praise God?

Those Who Seek God. “...they who seek the Lord will praise Him...” (Psalm 22:26).

Everyone That Has Breath. “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6).

Where Are We To Praise God?

Surrounded by God’s People. “He (Jesus) says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.’” (Heb. 2:12).

Among the Nations. “I will praise You, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of You among the people.” (Psalm 57:9).

On Our Beds. “I will praise You as long as I live...with singing lips my mouth will praise You. On my bed I remember You, I think of You through the watches of the night.” (Psalm 63:4-6).

WORSHIP

Whereas praise is an expression of admiration and appreciation, worship is an expression of love and adoration. It is possible to admire someone and appreciate what they do without being in love with them. In the same way, worship has to do with our love for the Lord. It can be expressed only with the giving of our whole heart and life to Him. “To love Him will all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:33). The religious rituals and ceremonies of Israel in the Old Testament became detestable to the Lord because their heart was far from Him (Is. 1:10-5; 29:13). Today also, God is only interested in genuine and sincere worship that comes from the heart. “Yet a time is coming, and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship in SPIRIT and TRUTH.” (John 4: 23-24). Read also verses 4-26.

1. In Spirit

Our spirit is called the “inner man” (Eph. 3:16). True worship takes place when the inner man, in response to the promptings of God’s Holy Spirit, expresses love and adoration to God. This can

take the form of spoken words, a love-song to the Lord or silent adoration. True worship requires the action of the Holy Spirit on our spirit. (Phil. 3:3). So, only those who have been “born again of the Spirit” through faith in Jesus Christ can truly worship God! (John 3:5-8).

2. In Truth

To worship God in truth is to worship Him as the Bible says we should. Nadab and Abihu (the sons of the high priest) offered strange fire before the Lord and died (Numb. 3:4; 26:61). This sober warning illustrates the need to study God’s plan (the Tabernacle of Moses) for priestly ministry. There was sacrifice, cleansing, anointing and clothing before worship (Exodus 30:17-38). You will note in Revelation 1:5-6 that we are, “...washed from our sins in His own blood” before being made “...priests unto God.” There was much preparation of the priests before they could go into the Holy Place to worship the Lord. To ignore the steps outlined was perilous. We must worship in truth – in the Bible way.

EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP IN SCRIPTURE

With The Mouth

Singing (Psalm 9:2,11)

Praising (Psalm 103:1)

With The Hands

Lifting (Psalm 63:4)

Clapping (Psalm 47:1)

Musical Instruments (Psalm 150)

With The Body

Standing (Psalm 134:1)

Kneeling, bowing (Psalm 95:6)

Dancing and leaping for joy (Psalm 30:11)

“Who among the gods is like You, O Lord? Who is like You – majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? ...Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted..” (Exodus 15:11,21). “Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord... For You are great and do marvelous deeds; You alone are God...I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.” (Psalm 86:8,10,12).

MY COMMITMENT

The greatest thing I will ever do in this life or in eternity is to worship God. I determine today to be a true worshipper and to make this my supreme goal in life. I will teach someone else this vital way of life also.

Chapter 18 PRAYER

“He will call upon Me, and I will answer him... and show him my salvation.” (Psalm 91:15-16). The time we spend with the Lord in prayer can release the most dynamic, history – changing power this world has ever known. The Bible describes many different operations of prayer, but in this lesson we are going to look at prayer as an individual first. Our prayer as a Body together can only be as strong as our personal time with the Lord.

THE SECRET PLACE

“But when you pray, go into your most private room, and closing the door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you in the open.” (Matt. 6:6). We have been invited into intimate prayer by none other than the Lord Himself.

This kind of “secret” prayer pre-supposes and ensures:

- The Right Motive (Matt. 6:5)

A Right Relationship With God As Father (Luke 11:11-13)

A Real Trust In The Lord (Psalm 55:16-17)

A Dispensing of False Fronts (Mark 7: 6-7)

As we express our feelings and burdens in conversation with God, it can be in the form of adoration (Psalm 34:1-4), confession (1 John 1:9), request (Matt 7:7) or thanksgiving (Eph 5:4-20).

FIVE COMMANDS RELATED TO PRAYER

1. Watch and Pray Always

“Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36). See also Mark 13:35-37.

2. Pray Lest You Fall Into Temptation

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” (Matt. 26:41).

3. Pray For Workers

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.’” (Luke 10:2).

4. Pray For Those in Authority

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone -for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

5. Pray For Your Enemies

“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:28).

WHEN TO PRAY?

The Bible gives many examples of people who prayed (1 Chron. 4:10). Many of the heroes of faith can be observed to have had regular times of the day set aside specifically for prayer, often three set periods a day – at morning, noon and evening. “As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and noon will I pray and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice.” (Psalm 55:16-17). See also Daniel 6:10.

The best example of a daily pattern of regular, whole hearted prayer – prayer that avoided meaningless religious ritual – can be found in the Lord Jesus Himself:

Early In the Morning (Mark 1:35)

All Night (Luke 6:12)

Before Each Meal (Mark 6:41)

D. WHAT TO PRAY?

1. For Ourselves

“Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh that You would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request.” (1 Chron. 4:10).

2. For One Another

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other...” (Jas. 5:16).

3. For The Ministries In The Body Of Christ

“Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you.” (2 Thess. 3:1).

4. For The Sick and Distraught

“Is there any one of you in trouble? He should pray...is any one of you sick? He should call for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up...pray for each other so that you may be healed...” (Jas. 5:14-16).

5. For Those Ensnared by Sin

“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life...” (1 John 5:16).

HELP IN PRAYER

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” (Rom. 8:26). Part of the Holy Spirit’s purpose is to teach us (Luke 12:12), guide us in prayer (Rom. 8:27), and to help us in our faith (Eph. 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit will sometimes anoint a believer’s prayer in a special way, and this is called “praying in the Holy Spirit”. (Jude 20; Eph. 6:18).

To help us in prayer, the Holy Spirit has also provided a special gift to the believer: The gift of tongues – speaking in another language to the Lord in prayer. See 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. “...the prayer of the upright is His delight....He hears the prayer of the righteous.” (Prov. 15:8, 29).

YOKE-FELLOW

Two joining together in prayer provides some very real advantages: “Again I say unto you: that if any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 18:19).

THE CHURCH PRAYING

If there is tremendous power when two people pray, what about the whole assembly of God’s people? See Acts 4:24. Today God is calling His people to prayer! The Church’s mission is to change individual lives, families, communities, cities and nations through prayer!

MY COMMITMENT

Through this study I realise the wonderful opportunities of prayer – not only in my relationship with God, but also the supernatural results that follow. I commit myself to make prayer always a priority in my life.

Chapter 19 HEAVEN

“...God is in heaven and you are on earth... Therefore stand in awe of God.” (Eccl. 5: 2, 7).

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

1. Heaven Is The Dwelling Place of God

“Is not God in the heights of heaven? And see how lofty are the highest stars!” (Job 22:12). See also Deuteronomy 26:15.

2. Heaven The Throne-Room of God

“The Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all.” (Psalm 103:19). See also Isaiah 66:1.

Heaven Is The Place Of God’s Full Glory

“As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was as white as snow, the hair of His head was white like wool, His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him...” (Dan 7:9-10). See also Acts 7:55.

4. Heaven Is The Home Of The Righteous (Believing) Dead

“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.” (2 Cor. 5:1).

5. Heaven Is The Future Home Of All Believers

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne. They were wearing white robes and

were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne...’ (Rev. 7:9-10).

THE NATURE OF HEAVEN

Heaven is a place far beyond anything we can possibly conceive (1 Cor. 2:9; 13:12). Heaven is like a place of holiness, full of glory and without end. But though the Bible doesn’t describe all the details of what Heaven is like, it does give us some clues as to its nature. It is:

1. A Place Of Great Glory

“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father..” (Matt. 13:43).

2. A Place Of Continual Worship

“After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting. “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God ...’ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns...’” (Rev. 19:1-6). See also Revelation 5:11-12.

3. A Place That Will Never End

“...and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:11). See also 1 Peter 1:4.

4. A Place Untainted By Evil

“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. 21:27). See also Eph. 5:5.

The Book of Revelation describes the New Jerusalem, coming out of Heaven, as a place without:

Night (22:5)

Curse (22:3)

Pain (21:4)

Crying, sorrow (21:4)

Death (21:4)

This is because the nature of Heaven is a product of the nature of God. Since Heaven is the full manifestation of His presence, what God is like, Heaven is like a place of holiness, full of glory and without end.

OUR LINK WITH HEAVEN

As believers, we now live our lives in a special relationship with Heaven because:

1. We Belong There

“But you have come to...the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly; to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven...” (Heb. 12: 22-23). See also Philippians 3:20.

2. We Are Enthroned There

“And God raised us up with Christ and enthroned us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:6).

3. We Have Our Source Of Life There

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). See also Colossians 3:1-4.

4. We Have Our Names Recorded There

“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20). See also Hebrews 12:23.

5. We Have Been Sent By The One Who Lives There

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. As You sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” (John 17:16,18). See also 2 Corinthians 5:20.

We Have Our Eyes Fixed There

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them

all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:17-18). See also Hebrews 11:9-10; 14-16.

7. We Have Our Treasure There

“...He has given us new birth into a living hope...into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you...” (1 Peter 1:3-4). See also Matthew 6:19-21.

8. We Are Being Called There

“...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14).

Jesus Himself, before returning to Heaven, made a very special promise to every believer: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:1-3). See also John 17:24.

MY COMMITMENT

I decide today to set my affection on things in Heaven, not on things of this earth. I realise my life on earth is only temporary, so I will live by priorities established by this truth. I will share with others the good news about this wonderful eternal home Jesus offers to all who will believe on Him.

Chapter 20 WHEN JESUS RETURNS – THE SECOND COMING

“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you have proclaimed the Lord’s death UNTIL HE COMES.” (1 Cor. 11:26).

THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN

The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth is one of the most important subjects for the Christian. The writers of the New Testament discussed it more than 300 times, and the language used was almost always imperative. The first thing we need to know about the Second Coming is that it is CERTAIN!

1. Jesus Spoke About His Own Return

“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.” (Matt. 24:30). See also John 14:2-3.

2. Angels Foretold It

“They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee, ‘they said, ‘why do you stand there looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.’” (Acts 1:10-11).

3. The Early Christians Encouraged One Another With It

“For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:16-18). See also Revelation 1:7.

4. The Holy Spirit Bears Witness of It

“Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” (2 Cor. 5:5). “But be patient my brothers, as you wait for the Lord to come. Look at the farmer quietly waiting for his precious harvest. See how he has to possess his

soul in patience till the land has had the early and late rains. So must you be patient, resting your hearts on the ultimate certainty. The Lord's coming is very near." (James 5: 7-8). See also Hebrews 10:37.

HOW WILL JESUS RETURN?

1. Unexpectedly

"Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying 'Peace and safety', destruction will come upon them suddenly..." (1 Thess. 5:1-3) Read also verses 4-11.

2. Like The Lightning

"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." (Matt. 24:27). See also Luke 17:24.

3. In The Same Way That He Left

"..This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11).

4. With Great Power And Glory

"At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud 'with power and great glory.'" (Luke 21:27)

5. In Full View Of All

"Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the people of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen." (Rev. 1:7).

DRAMATIC EVENTS TO TAKE PLACE

1. The Mystery Of The Ages Will Be Completed

"...There will be no more delay! But in the day when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced it to His servants the prophets." (Rev. 10:6-7). See also Romans 16:25-26.

God's People Will Enter Their Full Glory

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body." (Phil.3:20-21). See also 1 Corinthians 15:35-53.

3. The Dead In Christ Will Be Raised To Life

"...because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence." (2 Cor. 4:14). See also John 6:40; 11:25.

4. Those Believers Still Alive Will Be Caught Up To Meet Him

"And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." (Matt. 24:31).

5. Creation Will Be Set Free Its Bondage

"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.." (Rom. 8:19-21). Read also verse 22 and Isaiah 35:1-7.

6. Every Enemy Will Be Destroyed

"Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet." (1 Cor. 15:24-25). See also 2 Thes. 1:7; 2:8.

7. Satan Will Be Bound

"And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his

hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.” (Rev. 21:2). Read also verses 3, 7-10.

7. Judgement Will Be Meted Out

“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. “He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power...” (2 Thes. 1:6-9).

8. A Kingdom Will Be Set Up That Will Never Be Destroyed

“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” (Dan. 2:44). See also Revelation 19:15-16.

Chapter 21 CALL OF GOD

God has a plan for the life of every individual believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does His call involve a wonderful purpose for us throughout eternity, but we also have an expression of that call upon the earth now. “Who has saved us, and CALLED us with a holy calling....according to His own purpose and grace...” (2 Tim. 1:9). “Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.” (Rom. 8:17, 28). See also verses 29-30.

GOD HAS CALLED OF THE WORLD

1. From The Foundation Of The World

“For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will.” (Eph. 1:4-5). See also Eph. 2:10 and Matthew 25:34.

2. To Be Separated Unto Him

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9). See also Romans 9:23-26.

3. To Fulfil His Purpose

“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord...who has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace...” (2 Tim. 1:8-9). See also Romans 8:28 and Philipians 3:14.

OUR CALL ON EARTH

“Paul, a servant [slave] of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.” (Rom. 1:1). In describing his own ministry, the Apostle Paul gives us an example of the call that is upon EVERY believer. It has three aspects:

1. The General Calling – “A Slave of Christ”

Jesus paid a high price for us: His own life. “For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s free man; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave. You were bought with a price...” (1 Cor. 7:22-23). See also 1 Cor. 6:19-20. When Paul calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ, he is pointing to an even deeper meaning. According to the custom of his day, if a slave came to the time when he could be set free, but because of love for his master chose not to accept his freedom, he then received a mark pierced in his ear. This was the sign that he was a “love-slave” (Greek: “*doulos*”) to his master for life. (Ex. 21:5-6; Deut. 15:16-17). The Apostle Paul, by choice, declared himself a love-slave of the Lord Jesus.

The Special Calling – “Called To Be An Apostle”

Just as the Apostle Paul had a special calling upon his life, so does every believer. Paul was called to be an apostle, but there are many different callings in the Body of Christ. See Romans 12:3-5; Ephesians 4:7-16. The special part that God has for us to play will be revealed to us as we earnestly seek His will.

The Particular Calling – “Separated To The Gospel”

Within each special calling there is a particular calling. For example, Peter and Paul were both apostles, but one was the apostle to the Jews and the other to the Gentiles. See Romans 11:13; 1 Timothy 2:7; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. We move into our special and particular calling only as we prove ourselves as “love slaves,” for we must first learn to be wholly under the authority of Christ before we can be SENT by Him. See Matthew 28:18-19.

WHY DOES HE CALL US?

Because The World Is In Darkness

“We know that we ourselves are children of God, and we also know that the world around us is under the power of the evil one.” (1 John 5:19). See also Ephesians 6:12 and Colossians 1:13.

Because People Are Hungry And In Need

“When He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36).

To Prove His Wisdom

“His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Eph. 3:10-11).

Because The Time Is Short

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest!” (John 4:35). See also John 9:4.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE CALLED?

1. We Are Made By Him

“Come, follow me, ‘Jesus said,’ and I WILL MAKE YOU fishers of men.” (Matt 4:19). See also Jeremiah 18:1-10.

2. We Are Taught By Him

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26). See also 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 John 2:27.

3. We Are Sent By Him

“As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” (John 17:18). See also Mark 16:15.

When God calls, He comes and interrupts our lives. Some examples of this in the Scripture are:

Moses (a shepherd in the desert): “Go set my people free” (Exodus 3:1-12)

Samuel (a boy serving in the temple): “Wake up, speak for me” (1 Sam 3:1-19)

Ezekiel (a captive in a foreign land): “Stand up, I am sending you” (Ezek. 2:1-7)

Disciples (businessmen, fishermen): “Come, follow me” (Luke 5:27-28; Matt 4:18-22)

Saul (an enemy of the Church): “Go, I will tell you what you must do” (Acts 9:1-9)

MY COMMITMENT

Now that I realise that God has had a plan for my life even before the foundation of the world, I now make a total commitment to this plan and will follow the Lord all the way. I will teach others also about God’s call for their lives.

A FEW KEYWORD DEFINITIONS

Important Salvation Concepts

The “Foundation of the Church” rests firmly in our great Savior, Jesus! There are several other terms regarding salvation that are being used. Because of their importance, it would be good to list and define a few of them at this time.

1. SALVATION

This refers to the work of God’s grace in Christ by which we are:

Saved “from” the penalty, power and future presence of sin.

Saved “for” God’s purpose, and placed in His family in which we express the likeness of His Son.

When Christ died on the cross for our sins, He became our Savior. He died in our place and paid the price (penalty) for our sin. When we by faith receive Him as our Savior, we also receive the power of His resurrection life. As this new life flows into us, it brings wholeness (healing) for our spirit, soul and body. To be “saved” means to be forgiven, healed, released, made whole (or complete) and restored. We are safe, sound and set free. We are free to become everything God has called us to be as His royal and beloved sons and daughters.

2. REGENERATION

The term “generate” means to create or produce life. Re-generation, refers to the return or restoration of life after death. We are “dead” in our sins. Therefore we must have a “new input” of spiritual life (be born again) to be brought back into the family of God. There is only one way we can be born into an earthly family. That is by the impartation or input of natural life. This occurs through the process of biological reproduction. The germ or sex cells bring together the life that is needed to produce a new little baby boy or girl.

The same is true when it comes to being “born” into the family of God. There must be an input of spiritual life – a Divine seed. That “Seed of Life” is a Person – and that Person is Jesus Christ. When we receive Christ into our heart, He is the Life that brings us to birth in God’s holy family. Therefore every Christian has had two births: a **natural** birth and a **spiritual** birth. This is what it means to be “born again.” (See John 3: 1-8).

3. ATONEMENT

The word “atone” means to become “at-one” with another (at – one –ment). It speaks of agreement and peace which is the result of making wrongs right. Sin is a wrong against God. Therefore it separates or “alienates” us from God. We need to be “reconciled” or brought back into fellowship with Him. The only way the results of sin can be made of no effect is by “justification” (counting a sinner righteous). Justification is not the act (as some suppose) of overlooking sin or blindly ignoring transgression. A holy and just God can not overlook sin. Sin can be cancelled, covered or put aside only if the penalty of sin has been paid. Only then can justice be satisfied and the sin be blotted out. When the penalty for the wrong has been fully paid, fellowship can be restored.

The penalty for sin is death. Jesus, in His grace and mercy, paid that penalty for us when He died on the cross for our sins. In this way, we can say that His blood has covered and cancelled our sin. (“Cancel” means: to make of no effect). Atonement, then, is God’s action – through Christ’s death – by which our fellowship is restored. We are made “at-one” with God.

4. RIGHTEOUS

This refers to the holy character of God. He is ever “right” in thought, word and deed-in attitudes and actions. He is right, good and true in all ways and in all things. This is the “righteous” standard of the Law. Whatever is not righteous is wicked, evil and wrong – in short, sinful. For this reason, sinful man can never stand before a holy God. Righteousness and unrighteousness are forever against one another. There is no basis for fellowship. For this reason, God sent His Son to “atone” for our sins. When we accept Christ into our hearts as our Savior, our sins are covered and canceled. God no longer sees us in our sins, but in the righteousness of His Son. Not only is He in

us, but we are in Him. (II Cor. 5: 21). This is called “imputed” righteousness. The word “impute” is a legal term. It means that something has been put to our account by another. What is theirs now also belongs to us. Their position and possession becomes our position and possession. It is a joint account. The righteousness of Jesus has become our righteousness. The position of Jesus at the Father’s right hand has become our position (see Ephesians 1:20-22; 2:4-5).

Besides “imputed” righteousness, which is our legal position, there is an “imparted” righteousness. “Impart” means: to put something in. When we became Christians, something was “put into” our lives. Not only are we “in Christ” in the legal sense, but Christ is “in us” in a personal and practical sense.(Col. 1: 27).

In receiving Jesus, we also receive His holy, righteous nature. We have a new nature – a new source of inner power – by which we can now begin to live a “righteous” life. Our “old nature” died with Jesus on the cross, which gives us the right and freedom to express our “new nature” (see Romans Chapter 6).

5. JUSTIFICATION

To “justify” means: to make right before the Law, and therefore make free from guilt or condemnation. To “condemn” means: to judge someone guilty before the Law. Sin is breaking the laws of God. Therefore all sinners are guilty before God. The penalty for our sin is death. The demands of the Law cannot be satisfied without the penalty for sin being paid. “Justice” cannot overlook sin as if it didn’t happen.

In God’s plan of redemption, mercy and justice can join hands in only one way. And it is this: The Judge (God) not only passes the sentence, but also pays the penalty (Christ’s death) Himself! The guilty party is now “justified” and made right before the Law. The sinner can now go free because his Judge was not only **just** (which required Him to enforce the penalty of the Law) but also **full of mercy** (since He paid the penalty that His justice required Him to impose upon the sinner).

This is what God did for us in Christ’s death upon the cross. Sin was judged. The penalty was paid. And we were forgiven and set free! We were thus JUSTIFIED.

THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction: Is. 61:1-2; Zech. 4:6.

Hebrew word used for Spirit is: 'Ruach' and Greek: 'Pneuma' both meaning: invisible force or Spirit. Now is the Holy Spirit therefore:

A personal being who will use us for God's glory?

A power emanating from God to use for our advantage?

IS THIS HOLY SPIRIT GOD?

Many scriptures about one God in the Bible: e.g. Deut. 6:4; I Timothy 2:5; I John 5:7(King James Version). Can there be a multiplicity of persons in the one God? YES! Hebrew word used here as 'one' denote a compound (not single) unity. E.g. Gen. 1:26 – "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness.'" Gen. 2:24; Gal. 3:28.

One God, yet revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What qualities make God to be God?

Omnipotent – Luke 1:35

Omniscient - I Cor. 2:10-11

Omnipresent - Ps. 139:7-10

Eternal - Heb. 9:14

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit is God and therefore we need to revere Him, to worship Him; at the same time the Holy Spirit came to glorify Jesus; meaning: to enlarge, to give the place to, to give Jesus His right place. The Holy Spirit is very special, we can see that in the following Scriptures:

Is. 63:8-10, When grieving the Holy Spirit, God becomes our enemy.

Zech. 7:12, If the voice of the Spirit is refused, God sends wrath.

Matt. 12:31-32, Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, cannot be forgiven.

Within the Godhead, we see perfect love, harmony and unity:

* In creation, Gen. 1:1-2 and Heb. 1:2; Gen. 1:26, "Let us....."

* Baptism of Jesus, Matt. 3:13-17

* Last Commandment, Matt. 28:19

* In coming near to God, Eph. 2:18

* In the work of God, I Cor. 12:5-7. Several Jobs:

Lord Jesus	-	Administrator
Father	-	Operator
Holy Spirit	-	Manifestor

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON?

What makes a Person? Shape, form, personality?

I John 5: 7 (KJV), 'For there are three that bear record in heaven the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit and these three are one.'

Personality – A) WILL - I Cor. 12.11

B) MIND - Rom. 8:27

C) FEELINGS - Eph. 4:30 (grieved), Is. 63:10 (vexed), Rom. 15:30(love)

EMOTIONS

Conclusion: We see the Holy Spirit as a Person who thinks, feels, loves, purposes, wills, knows, grieves and speaks (e.g. Acts 13:1-2).

Therefore the invitation from the Holy Spirit to get to know Him, because He longs for fellowship,

Cor. 13:14. From Phil. 2:1 we see that Paul knew the fellowship / communion of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for fellowship – "kanonia": has seven meanings –

Communication and communion (also sharing)

Partnership

To partake

To befriend

Presence

Love
Companionship

What a great challenge to not only know the Father and our Lord Jesus but also the Holy Spirit.

We need the Holy Spirit so much in our lives because:

- we can't love God without the Holy Spirit, Rom. 5:5
- we can't wait on God without the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:5
- we can't obey without the Holy Spirit, I Pet. 1:2
- we can't worship God without the Holy Spirit, Phil. 3:3
- we can't pray without the Holy Spirit, Jude 20. ("in" means: "one with")

Let's look at some more things the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit. In John 16:7, Jesus said 'It is to your advantage that I go away, otherwise the comforter will not come to you' (John 14:16).

Thus some of the works and functions of the Holy Spirit are:

Our Comforter: The Greek word used here is: "*Parakletos*" which means: to call to ones aid, standby, Helper, Counselor.

Even as Jesus has meant everything to the disciples, He had been their provider, protector, sustainer and teacher, they would feel abandoned and left alone when the Master would leave. But Jesus said, I will send you "another" / "similar" / "same as me" counselor, comforter, strengthener, enabler who will be with you and even in you!

Our Advocate: The already mentioned word '*Parakletos*' means also: advocate, the one whom we call to our aid to plead our cause because 'He loves us'. He is the one who will plead our cause more effectively than we are able to plead on our own.

Our Teacher: John 14:26. He will teach us more about Christ and the things of the kingdom of God. Even I John 2:27 talks about the anointing or the Holy Spirit, who will teach you all things.

John 16:12-13 denotes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, who will guide us into all the truth. John 8:32, "you will know the truth and the truth will set you free", that's the purpose of the Holy Spirit teaching us, that we may be freed from any kind of bondage and sin, Rom. 8:2. Yet it's error to believe that we can do without human Bible teachers. Eph. 4:12 clearly states that Christ has given teachers to the Church who are anointed to teach the Word to perfect the Body of Christ.

Some others works and responsibilities of the Holy Spirit are:

Brings conviction – John 16:8, of sin, especially of not believing in Jesus. Note that the Holy Spirit not only convicts the sinner but also the believer of wrong doings and sin. Conviction is always specific whereas condemnation leaves us with a general feeling of failure.

Represents Christ – John 16:14-15. The Holy Spirit will never talk about Himself, but only about Christ and His work and love.

Regeneration / Salvation: Quickening / Life giving. When Christ is preached it is the Holy Spirit who gives life (or quickens) (John 6:63a) to the unbeliever. The unbeliever's spirit is dead to the things of God (II Cor. 3:6). He cannot perceive as a natural man the things of God (I Cor. 2:14). Spiritual food is indigestible and unacceptable to him.

So, how is a man going to be born again? By hearing the Word? Not only, but of incorruptible seed / the Word of God (I Pet. 1:23). Therefore, a person can only hear the Word and be born of this incorruptible seed, after he has been quickened by the Spirit to hear and respond. It is through this quickening and life imparting act of the Holy Spirit that truth is perceived, the seed placed in our spirits after which new birth takes place; know that life precedes birth; so that birth becomes a manifestation of life that is already existing!

Once a person has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, his spirit is able to respond to Christ and the Holy Spirit will woo (draw) him to receive the Lord, John 1:12-13, which results in salvation.

Sealing – Eph. 1:13, "Hearing – believing – sealing". II Cor. 1:22-23. This sealing by the Holy Spirit is done as evidence of divine ownership which gives us an assurance that we are owned, loved and cared for, but gives at the same time God the right to work on us – to change us and transform us into the image and likeness of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Bears Witness, Rom. 8:16. Witness to the fact that we are adopted into God's family, assurance of salvation, that we have received forgiveness, that God is our Father etc.

Lives inside us – Ezek. 36:27, I Cor. 6:19. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Transforms us into Christ-likeness – II Cor. 3:18, Gal. 5:22-23.

Leads and guides us – Rom 8:14. The Holy Spirit speaks to all believers, who walk in the ways of holiness, doing His will in His kingdom.

Intercedes for us – Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18.

Various ways the Holy Spirit speaks to you (yet humility is required, Ps. 25:9)

through the Word, (Ps. 119:105)

By the word of a prophet, (Acts 21:11)

By the word of knowledge, (I Cor. 12:8; Acts 21:4)

By a still, small voice, (I Kings 19:12; John 10:27)

With an audible voice, (Acts 9:7)

God can also speak:

By angels, (Acts 8:26)

By visions, (Dan. 10:7)

In a trance, (Acts 10:11)

In dreams, (Matt. 1:20)

By strong impressions, instructions, (Acts 17:16; 18:5)

By consulting godly wise men, (Jas. 1:5, Prov. 2:1-12)

A NOTE ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES

Scripture references from I Corinthians Chapter 12:

V.1. “Spiritual gifts”

Greek: “*pneumatika*”, literal meaning: "spirituals". In other words, ways in which the Holy Spirit works supernatural through the believer.

V.4. “Gifts”

Greek: “*charismata*”, literal meaning: "gifts of grace" (charismatic gifts). These are gifts of freely given grace, of extraordinary power and blessing, divine enablement or benefits.

V.7. “Manifestation”

Greek: “*phanerosis*”, literal meaning: a shining forth, an appearance, a making visible, and an open display. The Holy Spirit manifests Himself of lets one know of His presence by means of the charismatic gifts which are visible displayed.

Scriptures on tongues: Acts 2: 4; I Cor. 14: 5.

“Tongues”

Greek: “*glossolia*”, literal meaning: speaking in tongues. By speaking in tongues one speaks supernaturally in a language not known to the speaker and (generally) unknown to the hearers.

To avoid much unnecessary confusion we need to distinguish between two different kinds of tongues spoken about in Scripture:

Devotional Tongues

1. Edifies user
I Cor. 14:4
2. Man speaking to God
I Cor. 14:2
3. Requires no interpretation
I Cor. 14:28
4. Private in manifestation
I Cor. 14:18-19
5. Permanent ability
I Cor 14:18

Congregational Tongues

1. Edifies church
I Cor. 12:7
2. God speaking to men
I Cor. 14:4-5
3. Requires interpretation
I Cor 14:13,27
4. Public in manifestation
I Cor. 14:26
5. Only at at a certain time as the Holy Sprit wills
I Cor 12:11,30.

THE BAPTISM AND MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chapter 1 WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is probably the least known member of the Godhead. There is a sad lack of knowledge about Him even within the church. There are several strong reasons why this should not be so: -

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

As the third member of the Godhead, He is co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. It is fitting therefore that equal reverence, respect and honour should be ascribed to Him. We should never treat Him as some inferior Person. We should know as much about Him as we do about the other two members of the Divine Trinity.

2. THE BIBLE HAS TOO MUCH TO SAY ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

With the exception of 2nd and 3rd Epistle of John, every book in the New Testament contains references to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

HE IS ESSENTIALLY ACTIVE IN GOD'S PLAN REDEMPTION

He convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16:8). True children of God are 'born of the Spirit.' (John 3:5-6).

4. THIS IS THE AGE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

He is the "other Comforter" who has taken the place of Jesus (John 14:16). This present period of history is the 'Time of the Latter Rain' (Zech. 10:1-3) or the time of the greatest activity of the Spirit that the church has known. Therefore we need to know as much as possible about the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

Many Christians seem to feel that the Holy Spirit is merely an impersonal power or influence. They treat the Holy Spirit as though He were electricity or some other form of power which they can switch on and off at will. This concept is far from the truth. The Holy Spirit is a person. He is a person who **possesses** great authority and power, but He is **much more** than the power which He possesses. He is eminently worthy of the respect and honour that we reserve for Almighty God.

THE PERSONAL PRONOUN IS USED FOR HIM

"That HE may abide with you forever." (John 14:16).

"HE dwells with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:17).

"HE shall testify of Me." (John 15:26)

"However when HE, the Spirit of truth is come. HE will guide you into all truth: for HE shall not speak of HIMSELF: but whatsoever HE shall hear, that shall HE speak, and HE will show you things to come. HE shall glorify Me". (John 16:13-14).

HE POSSESS THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONALITY

INTELLECT. The ability to think and reason.

SENSITIVITY. The ability to feel things.

WILL. The capacity of choice and decision.

A mere power or influence would not be capable of feeling those things which the Holy Spirit is said to feel. For example, we are exhorted not to 'grieve' the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). Ananias and Sapphira "lied against the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:3-4). Now a power cannot be grieved. You cannot grieve or vex electricity. Neither can you lie to it or tempt it. An impersonal power is incapable of such feelings. But a person can be grieved and vexed, lied to and tempted.

Notice some expressions of personality attributed to the Holy Spirit:

He can feel (Eph. 4:30)
He can comfort (Acts 9:31)
He can think (Rom. 8:6)
He can speak (Acts 13:2)
He can pray (Rom. 8:26)
He can teach (John 14:26)
He can exercise His will (1 Cor. 12:11)
He can forbid (Acts 16:6)
He can work miracles (Acts 19:6)

All these things are expressions of personality, which an impersonal power does not have.

One of the reasons why many regard Him as merely a power or force is because of certain names which are ascribed to Him in the Scriptures to symbolise His ministry. He is called: Wind, Rain, Oil, Fire, Dew, etc. All these are symbols of various ministries He performs, but He is much greater than any or all of the ministries He performs.

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD)

The Holy Spirit is not only a PERSON, He is a DIVINE BEING. He is GOD!

1. THE BIBLE CALLS HIM GOD (Acts 5:3-4)

“Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...you have not lied unto men, but unto God.”

HE POSSESSES THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT GOD ALONE HAS

He has an eternal nature (Heb. 9:14).

He is OMNIPRESENT (Psalm 139:7-10). Capable of being everywhere at one time.

He is OMNISCIENT (1 Cor. 2:10-11). He knows ALL things.

He is OMNIPOTENT (Luke 1:35). Has the power to do anything.

HE IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FATHER AND SON ON EQUAL STATUS

“Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19).

Chapter 2 THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT PREDICTED

In the Old Testament we find the Holy Spirit upon and within certain key people. These people seem to be the exceptions rather than the rule. However God predicted, through His prophets, that a new day would come when His Spirit would be within and upon ALL of His people.

“And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.” (Joel 2:28-29). “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgements and do them...” (Ezekiel 36:27).

God’s promised Messiah would be Spirit-filled and empowered.

“Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles.” (Isaiah 42:1). “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound.” (This was fulfilled in Luke 4:18)

All of God’s people were to enjoy this outpouring

“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your seed; and My blessing upon your offspring.” (Is. 44:3).

SEVERAL NAMES FOR THE “FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT”

Experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit is described in several ways in the Scriptures. We shall look briefly at several of these terms.

“Receiving the Holy Spirit”

This is the phrase most commonly used in the New Testament to describe the experience of which we are speaking:

“...the Holy Spirit, who they who believe on Him should receive” (John 7:39).

“...receive you the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22)

“But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

“...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

“who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that might receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:15).

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” (Acts 10:47).

“He said unto them, Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?” (Acts 19:2)

2. Being Anointed with the Spirit

The “anointing” is a term with which we are very familiar, because of its employment in the Old Testament. The significance is that of ‘pouring upon one,’ as was the anointing oil. Thus the power of the Spirit is ‘poured upon’ the believer. This particular phrase is used to describe the Spirit upon Jesus. “How God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38).

3. Being Filled with the Spirit

This phrase describes the effect that the Spirit has within believers. They are ‘filled with the Spirit.’ It is employed on the Day of Pentecost. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4). The condition of being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing one. Paul speaks of it in Eph 5:18, employing the continuous tense; e.g. “Be being filled with the Spirit.” In order to maintain the fullness of the Spirit we need to drink from the source of supply.

4. Being Baptised in the Spirit

This is a somewhat controversial phrase which nevertheless has firm Scriptural backing. It occurs four times in the Gospels and twice in the book of Acts (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16) To baptise, means to ‘thoroughly immerse’ or to ‘submerge into’. It has an even deeper meaning which is to ‘submerge into an element which has the power to change that which it envelops’. A good example of this is the dyeing of a garment, which is submerged into an element which radically transforms the garment. To be baptised in the Spirit therefore is to be immersed, submerged, buried, completely surrounded by, enveloped wholly and fully by the Holy Spirit.

5. The Release of the Spirit

This is a term which is not actually employed in the New Testament but is definitely implied. It describes the release of the human spirit which takes place when it is quickened by the Holy Spirit. It is the release of one’s personality from bondage into liberty, from dryness into rivers of living water, from barrenness into fruitfulness. It surely describes what Jesus was speaking about in John 7:38. The release of rivers of living water from within the spirit of the believer.

This phrase probably describes most accurately what is transpiring today amongst so many thousands of believers. Hence its increasing usage with the world-wide renewal movement. Many Christians who believe they have received the Holy Spirit when they received Christ have never experienced a positive and powerful release in their spirit. Their experience of being baptised in the Spirit and especially the release of tongues seems to bring about that release and the experience has therefore been called “The Release of the Spirit”.

Chapter 3 THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

AN INITIAL EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

As we now consider, “What may be the initial evidence (first sign) that one has received the fullness of the Spirit?”...let us bear three things in mind.

We are concerned at this point with the INITIAL sign. It is agreed that there are subsequently many other signs and evidences of the Spirit’s fullness. However, what we are seeking to determine at this moment is the evidence which is most likely to be the first sign that one has experienced this new dimension of the Spirit’s power.

We are seeking for the SCRIPTURAL sign. Therefore we are not concerned with personal experience or human tradition, but rather what the Scriptures reveal as the basic common denominator of those who experienced this baptism in the Spirit in Bible days.

It is the BIBLICAL EXPERIENCE of the baptism in the Spirit rather than man’s idea of what the baptism is, that we are interested in. There are many spiritual experiences which men have loosely called the ‘Baptism in the Spirit’. These include the ‘Second Blessing’, ‘Entire Sanctification’, the ‘Holiness Experience’, etc. Though these are all valid and scriptural experiences which we neither despise nor depreciate, nevertheless it is that work of the Spirit which the Bible defines as the Baptism in the Spirit with which we are concerned in this study.

The main source of evidence is the Acts of Apostles in which there are five recorded instances of people receiving the fullness of the Spirit:

1. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)

This is the fullest account we have in Scripture. Exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ the promises made concerning the Spirit were fulfilled amongst the company of disciples waiting in Jerusalem. This was the commencement of an entirely new work of the Spirit as foretold by the prophets. There were several evidences that the Spirit had come to them. Firstly, there was a wind from heaven. A mighty, rushing wind.

Secondly, flames of fire.

Thirdly, speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them words to say.

In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for ‘spirit’ also means ‘wind’. So it was significant that there should be a mighty rushing wind as a herald of the Spirit’s arrival. Wind speaks of life, power, movement, force, all typical of the Holy Spirit. The symbolic fire was also extremely significant. John the Baptist had foretold that Jesus would baptise with ‘The Holy Spirit and fire’. Fire symbolises: purging, purifying, cleansing, burning up the chaff and dross.

Both of these factors occurred BEFORE the disciples were said to be ‘filled with the Spirit’. So they cannot truly be said to be evidences of the infilling of the Spirit. The evidence that came manifestly after the disciples were filled with the Spirit was that they ‘began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance’. There were 120 disciples in the company at that time. We are clearly told that they were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit and clearly, ALL began to speak with tongues. The clear evidence of every disciple on this occasion was the supernaturally given ability to speak in languages which they had never learned. Of the three manifestations which occurred that day only one was later to be seen to be a consistently occurring factor accompanying the Baptism in the Spirit. It was the speaking with other tongues.

2. The House of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48)

Peter was supernaturally instructed to visit the Gentile (Non-Jewish) household of Cornelius, a Roman centurion. He responded, against his better judgement for he was still persuaded that the blessings of God were for the Jews alone. Nevertheless, finding himself confronted with an audience eager to hear ‘all the things which God had commanded him’ (Acts 10:33). Peter began to speak to them about the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 10:34-43). While he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word. Peter’s Jewish companions were

initially unwilling to believe that this could actually happen to Gentiles (10:45) but they were all convinced because, “They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” This sign also prompted Peter to say, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Spirit, as well as we.” (Or ‘in the same manner or fashion in which we received Him.’) (Acts 10:47).

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he was called to give an account of what happened at Caesarea. They were actually contending with him (Acts 11:12). He therefore had to defend his actions by explaining that, “as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as on us at the beginning.” (Acts 11:15). He further confirms “For as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us at the beginning.” His argument is that God has blessed the Gentiles with the gift of the Spirit in exactly the same way that He had blessed the Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost, the main reason for his confidence being that they also had spoken in tongues. “When they heard these things the elders held their peace and glorified God.” (Acts 11:18).

Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)

Here we have a third extremely clear account. On his missionary journey Paul came to the Greek city of Ephesus where he found some disciples of John the Baptist. In response to his question, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?” They affirm, “We have not even so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.” Paul therefore explained the Gospel concerning Christ more clearly to them after which they were baptised in water. Paul then proceeded to lay hands upon them, whereupon the ‘Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied’.

We have seen in these three instances that the baptism in the Spirit is a concise, definite, instantaneous happening. In each of these occasions the one factor which is consistent is that ALL the recipients, on ALL of the occasions, were said to speak with tongues as a direct result of having seen filled with the Spirit. We therefore suggest that speaking in tongues is a genuine and reliable initial evidence of receiving the Spirit.

There are two other accounts in Acts, of believers receiving the Spirit:

The Revival at Samaria (Acts 8)

In this particular account it is not stated that the recipients of the Spirit spoke in tongues. However there are some interesting points to note. Firstly, there was a genuine response to the preaching of Philip – the immediate results of which were: -

“the people, with one accord, gave heed to the things which Philip spoke” (8:6)

“...there was great joy in the city” (8:8).

“when they believed...they were baptised...” (8:12).

“...as yet, the Holy Spirit was fallen upon none of them.” (8:16).

When Peter and John laid hands upon them, they received the Holy Spirit. Simon the magician, saw something happen as a direct result of their receiving the Spirit. Whatever it was it occurred suddenly, dramatically and in a visible way. Simon desired the ability to make this phenomenon happen. Much has been written and stated about what Simon actually witnessed. No one can say for certain but is it not feasible to assume that he saw the same sign that had occurred on the occasions when people received the Spirit in Bible days?

5. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9)

After Saul’s dramatic conversion experience, the Lord sent Ananias to visit Saul and say, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me that you might regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” (9:17). We know that he did regain his sight, we may surely assume that the other aspect of the mission was also fulfilled and that Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Whilst it does not say in the immediate context that he spoke in tongues we certainly know that he did so at a later date. In fact, when writing to the Corinthians to correct a misuse of tongues speaking, he nevertheless confessed, “I thank my God I speak in tongues more than you all” (1 Cor. 14:18). In the same chapter he also declared, “I would that you all spoke with tongues” (1 Cor. 14:6) and finally, “forbid not to speak in tongues” (1 Cor. 14:39).

On the basis of the foregoing evidence of biblical experience we humbly affirm that speaking in tongues is the first scriptural evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit. We also affirm that there are many other scriptural evidences which should follow this first evidence without which the experience is incomplete.

Chapter 4 THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER

Salvation is the first goal that the Spirit works to produce in our lives. Power for holy living and service is His second goal in us.

1. TO BRING ABOUT SALVATION

A. He Brings Conviction (John 16:8-11)

An important aspect of the Holy Spirit's work is to convict, reprove and convince unsaved people about sin, righteousness and judgement. Without the Spirit's work of conviction, we would remain ignorant of our sinful and lost condition. He makes us aware of the sinfulness of sin and how far short we come of God's standard of righteousness, and of the awful judgement which awaits every sinner.

B. He produces Salvation and Regeneration

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5). "And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph 2:1). "It is the Spirit who quickens." (John 6:63).

C. He liberates from the Power of Sins and Death

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2).

D. He gives Assurance of Salvation

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16). "And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth." (1 John 5:6). "For there are three that bear witness... The Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." (1 John 5:8).

E. He Guides us into Truth

"However, when he the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come." (John 16:13).

F. He Teaches us all Things

"But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26). "But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him." (1 John 2:27).

He "Quickens" our Physical Bodies

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwells in you." (Rom. 8:11). The word 'mortal' means 'doomed to die' and refers to our physical bodies. The word 'quicken' means: to 'impart life'. Therefore the promise of this Scripture is that the Holy Spirit, when He dwells with us will impart life, strength, health and vigour to our bodies. Living in the Spirit is a health promoting exercise.

H. The Holy Spirit Gives us Power for Service

“But you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be witness unto Me...” (Acts 1:8). Jesus used the word ‘*dunamis*’ from which we derive our word ‘*dynamo*’, a machine which self-generates a consistent and continuing supply of power. Thus the power of the Spirit within us generates power to enable us to be witnesses of Christ. Not only are we enabled to bear witness of Jesus, we actually become witnesses unto Him.

I. The Holy Spirit Empowers our Prayers

“Praying in the Holy Spirit.” (Jude 20). “Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” (Eph. 6:18). “In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will” (Rom. 8:26-27).

J. The Holy Spirit Inspires Praise and Worship to God

“We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” (Acts 2:11). “For we heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” (Acts 10:46). “We who worship God, by the Spirit of God.” (Phil 3:3). “Be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:18-19). “God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24).

Chapter 5 RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

The first qualification necessary to be a candidate for the Baptism in the Spirit is that you must have received Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. If you are a child of God, then you may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The second requirement is that you must deeply desire this blessing. Jesus expressed it this way, “If any man THIRST, let him come unto Me and drink.” Are you thirsty for the water of the Spirit? If you are, then you may come unto Jesus and drink. It is just as simple as that. Remember that you do not have to earn this blessing. If you did, then it would not longer be the ‘gift’ of the Holy Spirit. You could never earn or merit this wonderful blessing, nor do you have to. It is yours as a free gift. I would like to suggest three simple little words which could enable you to receive this previous blessing. The words are RELAX, RECEIVE, RESPOND. Let us look at them briefly together.

RELAX. So often people become tensed up when it comes to receiving the Spirit. There is no need for that to happen. It will hinder you rather than help you. Let me therefore encourage you to relax. Relax physically first and this will help you relax spiritually and emotionally. Why not sit down somewhere comfortably. On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were actually seated, so this is a good scriptural posture for receiving the Spirit. Sit back and relax. You are in good hands – the hands of Jesus. He is the baptiser with the Holy Spirit.

RECEIVE. It would be good, right now, for you to ask Jesus to baptise you in the Spirit. Ask simply, quietly and in faith. Do not begin to beg or plead. You do not have to shout or moan. Jesus is right there with you. He can hear your prayer. When you have quietly asked Him to fill you with the Spirit, then in faith, you must believe that He has answered your prayer and **RECEIVE THE SPIRIT BY FAITH!** Remember that the word for spirit is also the same word for breath. Why not just open your mouth, take a deep breath, and breathe in the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus referred to as ‘drinking’ of the Spirit. Just as you open your mouth to drink water, you can also open your mouth to drink in the Spirit. Open your mouth and breathe in as you do, believe that the Holy Spirit is coming into your life in a new way. Do it in faith. “What things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.” (Mark 11:24). You are doing this by faith. Remember, it is not feelings. You may not feel any emotional response. This is not an emotional experience. It is a spiritual experience.

There may, or may not be an emotional accompaniment. If there is, relax and enjoy it. If there is not, then do not worry about it. Emotions are erratic and unreliable. The important thing is not what you feel. It is what you believe. Believe that you have received the Spirit. This is the first step then. “Breathing in” – the Holy Spirit. As you do it, begin to give joyful thanks and praise to God for filling you with the Spirit. Let your heart begin to reach out to God in praise and keep drinking ever more deeply of the Spirit.

RESPOND. Now we come to the third step, your response to the Spirit who is now beginning to fill your whole being. Having breathed in, you must also breathe out. You breathe in the Spirit, now you must breathe out praise to God in faith, for His blessing. When you do this, do not speak in your own native or learned tongue. Aspire to praise God, but believe to do it in a new language (not learned) which the Spirit will give to you. Speaking in tongues is a miracle. It is a supernatural ability given by the Spirit. This does not mean that it is difficult to do. It simply means that you must co-operate with God. This is well illustrated by the story of Peter walking on the water (Matt 14:29). Jesus called out to Peter, “Come”, and then we read, “And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.” When Peter walked on the water he was not consciously doing anything supernatural. He was walking just as naturally as though he was on solid ground. The miracle was that he did not sink! It is like this when we begin to speak in tongues. We use our tongue and lips in just the same manner as we always do to speak. The miracle is not in the physical act of speaking. The miracle is in the language that we are given to speak. In other words, it is not HOW you speak, but WHAT you speak that is the miracle.

Speaking is a natural act, just as walking is. When you speak in tongues, the physical part of it is just as natural as any other time you exercise your power of speech. The miracle occurs when the Holy Spirit gives you words to speak in languages which you have never learned or possibly even heard before. I must emphasise this matter of the easy simplicity of speaking in tongues, because so many people have a problem at this point. They make it hard for themselves. They believe that it is too difficult for them to do. Some become tense instead of nicely relaxed. Many people are so sincere in their desire that it ‘should not be themselves’, that they sit frozen, inactive, waiting for God to take over their vocal chords and speak through their lips, without they themselves playing any active part.

Please notice in Acts 2:4, “They” – (the disciples), are the subject of the sentence. It was therefore the disciples who were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they, the disciples, who “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” They began to speak. When you begin to speak in tongues, it will be YOU who will initiate it. YOU will speak the words. But the Holy Spirit will give them to you. The Holy Spirit will furnish you with sounds, words, phrases in your mind. These will sound very strange to you. It is a language which you have never heard before. Very probably an angelic or heavenly language which sounds very different from any earthly language that you have ever listened to. As the Spirit gives you these words, speak them out. They come from within, not from the mind. Speak them forth boldly. Do not be afraid. Initially you may have only one or two words. You may find yourself repeating them over and over. Just do that. As you speak them out boldly in faith, the Holy Spirit will increase your vocabulary. The flow of words will increase until rivers begin to flow forth from your innermost being. Determine therefore, that when you have breathed in the Holy Spirit you will follow that by breathing out praise to God.

Determine to do it with your voice, but not with your native language. Expect the Holy Spirit to give you a new tongue at that very moment and by faith begin to speak forth that new language. Speak out forcefully whatever the Spirit puts into your heart. You may sense your lips beginning to tremble and feel that your mouth is full of strange sounds. Speak them out loudly. Once you begin to speak, keep it up. Do not stop. Let it keep flowing. The more it flows, the freer you will become. Do not worry what it sounds like, that is the Holy Spirit’s business. He will give you the particular language He desires you to have at this time.

As you continue to exercise the gift of tongues you may go from language to language, for there are different kinds of language (1 Cor. 12:10). Once you have spoken in tongues, as the Spirit gives you utterance, you can then exercise this gift whenever you wish. It will depend on your decision and initiative.

Paul says, “What is it then, I WILL pray with the Spirit, and I WILL pray with the understanding also.” (1 Cor. 14:15). Whether with the understanding, or with the Spirit you pray when YOU WILL. Exercise this ability every day and several times each day. Whenever you do, it will strengthen and bless you, for Paul tells us, “He that speaks in an unknown tongue, edifies himself.” (1 Cor. 14:4). You build yourself up spiritually every time you speak and pray in the new language. This is one gift of the Spirit which edifies the one who exercises it. All the other manifestations of the Spirit are for edifying others. This one is to enable you to build up yourself in your most holy faith (Jude 20).

Chapter 6 WHY SPEAK IN TONGUES?

What is the purpose or benefit of speaking in languages which one does not understand? The following is a brief list of some of the benefits of communing with God in languages given by the Spirit.

IT IS A SCRIPTURAL INITIAL EVIDENCE OF THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

“And they all began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4). “For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” (Act 10:46). “..the Holy Spirit came on them, and they speak with tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6).

IT IS GOD’S WILL FOR US

God says, (through Paul) “I would that you all speak with tongues.” (1 Cor. 14:5). Paul also said, “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.” Notice the intimate emphasis, “I thank MY God...” Speaking to God in languages of the Spirit increases and strengthens the awareness of one’s personal intimate relationship and fellowship with God.

Paul thanked God for the: -

ABILITY to speak in tongues, for this can only be given by God, through His Spirit.

PRIVILEGE of speaking such sacred and intimate mysteries (1 Cor 14:2).

AVAILABILITY of this rich blessing. That any time, anywhere, under any circumstances, one may intimately commune with God. We may pray, sing, give thanks, bless God in the Spirit. Our mind at this time is neutral, (1 Cor. 14:14) thus we are relaxed, refreshed and edified by this spiritual exercise.

3. A THERAPEUTIC MEANS OF CLEANISING AND RELEASE

In Romans 8:26, Paul tells us that one of our human weaknesses is that we do not always know what to pray for as we should. Sometimes we are conscious that we need help and assistance, but we do not understand what is really wrong nor how to pray about it. However, the Spirit overcomes this inadequacy for us. He searches our heart, and discovers just where we are and what is wrong. He also knows what is the ‘mind of the Spirit’ – the will of God for us. He then begins to pray for us ‘according to the will of God’, thus bringing us into harmony with that will. He prays out all the complexes, inhibitions, negative thoughts which have hindered us and He prays us into the positive, powerful, beneficial purpose of God for our life. This kind of praying is one of the most powerful means of ‘renewing the spirit of our mind.’

4. A SOURCE OF PERSONAL EDIFICATION

“He that speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself.” (1 Cor. 14:4). It is from the word ‘edify’ that we derive our word ‘edifice’ or ‘building’. To edify therefore is to ‘build up’. Whenever we speak in tongues, though the words may be a mystery to our human intellect, we are building ourselves up spiritually. We grow a little stronger every time we exercise this ability.

5. A REALM OF INTIMATE SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH GOD

“For he who speaks in an unknown tongue, speaks not unto men, but unto God, for no man understands him, however in the spirit he speaks mysteries.” (1 Cor. 14:2).

The primary purpose of this spiritual exercise of speaking in tongues is not that we speak unto men, but rather that we speak to God. Communing with God in this manner we are freed from the limitations and restrictions of our limited, small, and finite mind. We are not restricted to speak only of those things which we have learned and imbibed in our intellect. We are released to speak also of things which we are taught intuitively by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2). We commune with God about deep things, which remain a mystery to our finite mind. This is the depth of communion of which David spoke. “Deep calls unto deep.” (Psalm 42:7). The depth of our spiritual being communes with the depths of God’s being, and vice-versa.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES KEEPS US CONSCIOUS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN

Whenever we speak in tongues we are immediately aware of the Holy Spirit’s movement and activity within us. Our intimate awareness of the Spirit within us is increased as we commune with God in those words which the Spirit is speaking through us. We are channels or vehicles which the Spirit uses to convey worship and praise to the Father.

IT ALSO HELPS US TO LEARN TO TRUST GOD MORE COMPLETELY

Developing in the life in the Spirit is a walk of faith. Every expression in tongues is an act of faith. As God begins to bring us from the realm of personal edification to the sphere of Body edification (1 Cor. 14:6), every new phase is a step of faith.

8. A RELEASE OF POSITIVE EMOTION

The Baptism in the Spirit is not an emotional experience, it is a spiritual one. Nevertheless our emotions inevitably respond to this experience and become involved in it. Our emotions are frequently stirred by the Spirit, and we give expression to them at the Spirit’s unction. This is not a harmful or negative thing. On the contrary, it is health-giving and beneficial. Too many Christians seek to completely deny or suppress their emotions as though there were something evil or sinful about emotional expression. This is not so. We are beings with emotions because God made us that way. In order to function fully, there needs to be emotional expression from time to time. When that expression is induced and encouraged by the Spirit within us, we can be sure that this is the healthiest and finest emotional expression possible. It will cleanse and release us. It will strengthen and edify. Do not be afraid of it. Give vent and release to such expressions. You will be healthier and happier for the exercise.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ‘GIVE THANKS’ TO GOD ACCEPTABLY

Have you ever felt unable to adequately express your thanks and appreciation to God? He has been so good that mere words seem so weak to express the reservoir of thanks that you feel within. Then here is a fulfilling way to do it. Paul says we can ‘give thanks well’ by speaking it to God in the Spirit, in the language He gives. This giving of thanks supersedes anything that our human mind could furnish. It goes beyond the realm of poetry and ministries to God in the Spirit.(I Cor. 14:17-18).

ENABLES ONE TO PRAY “IN THE SPIRIT”

“What is it then, I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” (1 Cor. 14:15). “...but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Rom. 8:26-27). “But you beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” (Jude 20).

11. IS A SOURCE OF REST AND REFRESHING

“For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing:” (Is. 28:11-12). Communing with God in tongues is a most relaxing and refreshing experience. The body and mind can relax completely. We do not have to think what to say next or how to say it. The Spirit flows

through us in perfect communion with the Father and we receive the benefit of that beautiful communion. It is a tonic, for spirit, soul and body.

12. A MINISTRY OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP TO GOD

“...we do hear them speak in our tongues, THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD.” (Acts 2:11). “For they heard them speak with tongues, AND MAGNIFY GOD.” (Acts 10:46). “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, (songs which the Spirit gives) singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:19). Very often, when we speak in tongues, the Spirit is worshipping, praising and blessing God. The Holy Spirit is magnifying the wonderful works of God through us. What a privilege and joy that He would use our lips to speak forth such high praise to God!

13. SINGING IN THE SPIRIT

“I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.” (1 Cor. 14:15). “...spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:19). See also Col. 3:16.

14. A SPIRITUAL MEANS OF MAINTAINING THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

“But ever be filled with the Spirit speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” (Eph. 5:18-19). Ministering to God in other tongues is a valid means of keeping filled with the Spirit. Therefore we ought to do this every day, and many times each day.

15. WITH INTERPRETATION, IS A MEANS OF EDIFYING OTHERS

“greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (1 Cor. 14: 5b). Our personal, devotional tongue, or prayer language is edifying to the one who exercises it. He alone is built up by the use of it. However the gift of tongues which usually functions in congregational settings, may be a blessing to others also if it is interpreted for them. So the one who speaks in tongues a message from the Lord in a gathering or fellowship should pray also that he many interpret, that other believers present may receive edification too. (1 Cor. 14:12-13).

16. A KEY TO BRINGING IN THE MIND OF CHRIST OVER OUR OWN MIND

(James 1:26; 3:1a). James teaches that the tongue is the ‘control centre’ of a man. It is like a ship’s rudder, and the bridle in the horse’s mouth (Jas. 1:26; 3:1-18). When we offer our control centre to the Holy Spirit He begins to bring our conversation under Christ’s control. Our surrender to the Holy Spirit in the gift of tongues is a release of the sweet water of life, God’s words. By regular daily use of this gift we will find strength to resist negative and critical talk. What James calls “bitter water”. (Jas. 3:11). It is a means of producing Christ’s mind in us, so that we speak only those things that are useful to build up ourselves and our hearers (Eph. 4:29). Speaking in tongues purifies and renews our mind, which is the source of our conversation and way of life.

Chapter 7 THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The great spiritual revival which has swept the world during the last decades has often been called the “Charismatic Revival”. This phrase has been employed to describe an extremely important aspect of this revival, which is the restoration to the church of the supernatural manifestations which were so powerfully obvious in the New Testament church. These manifestations, or gifts of the Spirit, have been noticeably absent from the church for many centuries. In the past fifty years, God has been restoring these features and His restoration program has been accelerated greatly in the last twenty years. The Charismatic Renewal has invaded every part of the Christian church, bringing new life and power to the Body of Christ. The restoration of these blessings creates a great need for teaching on these important subjects.

Paul told the church at Corinth, “Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” (1 Cor. 12:1). God certainly does not want believers today to be ignorant either.

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (EPH. 5:18)

Jesus predicted that when the Holy Spirit came, believers would have “power to become witnesses unto Him.” (Acts 1:8) What He intended was that we would receive power to become His representatives in this world. Power to live and act as He did. This involves power to “be like Him”, and “power to act like Him.”

There are two major factors that comprise our human identity:

Character

Personality

Character is the passive aspect of our being, - what we are!

Personality is the active aspect of being, - what we do!

The character of Christ is formed within us by His Spirit and is called “The fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23).

It is manifest in us personally through: Love, Joy and Peace.

It manifests itself in our, relationships with others in: Longsuffering, Kindness and Goodness.

It is revealed in our relationship to God in: Faithfulness, Meekness and Temperance.

As we continuously surrender to the Spirit of Christ within us, His character is formed within us and is manifested in and through us in the characteristics we have just mentioned, i.e. The fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23). This is to enable us to live as He lived. It enables us to relate to God, others and ourselves as Jesus did.

However, God also wants us to do the works that Jesus did and He has given us His Spirit and the manifestations (gifts) of His Spirit to accomplish this.

There are many charismatic gifts mentioned in the Bible. The main areas of reference are Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30; Ephesians 4:11.

For the purpose of this brief study we will limit ourselves to a consideration of the nine manifestations listed in 1 Cor. 12:8-10.

To simplify our study of them we will classify them in three categories: -

GIFTS OF SPEECH (Utterance)

Tongues

Interpretation of Tongues

Prophecy

GIFTS OF REVELATION (To “see” in the Spirit)

A Word of Wisdom

A Word of Knowledge

Discerning of Spirits

GIFTS OF ABILITY (To “do” the works of God)

Gift of Faith

Gift of Healings

Working of Miracles

I have often heard a person claim to “have” a certain gift of the Spirit. For example they may say, “I have the gift of healings”, “I have the gift of interpretation”, “I have the gift of prophecy”.

I do not personally believe that anyone “has” a gift of the Spirit. (I Cor. 12: 11). What has happened is that we are now filled with the Spirit and He may manifest His presence in any way and at any time that He wishes. He will do so, with our co-operation, through any of the manifestations, as He desires. We should not limit ourselves or the Holy Spirit to any particular manifestation that we think we “have”. We should be available to the Spirit at all times so that He may manifest Himself in any way He wishes as He finds appropriate to the situation.

WHO MAY THE SPIRIT USE IN THE OPERATION OF SUCH GIFTS?

1. Any Spirit-filled member of the Body may be used. 1 Cor .12:7, 11; 14:26,31.

No member should come behind in any gift. 1 Cor. 1:7.
We should all be continuously filled with the Spirit. Eph. 5:18.
We must be desirous of being used in this way. 1 Cor. 12:31.
We should not be ignorant concerning the operation of the gifts. 1 Cor.12:31.
We must be desirous of spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 14:1.
We should be motivated by genuine love for the Body. 1 Cor.13. A pure desire to edify the Body. 1 Cor. 14:12.
We should seek to excel in the operation of the gifts. 1 Cor. 14:12.

THE OPERATION OF THE SPEECH GIFTS

1. THE GIFT OF TONGUES. (1 Cor. 12:10)

This manifestation of the Spirit has two functions. Firstly, as ‘devotional tongues’ for our own personal use, the purpose of which is to edify the person using it. Secondly, as the gift of tongues that functions in gatherings with others and which used in conjunction with the companion gift of interpretation of tongues is for edifying of the whole church, and not merely the individual.

GUIDE LINES FOR THE USE OF TONGUES IN A PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.

Its use should always be motivated by love (1 Cor. 13:1).

Must always be accompanied by interpretation (1 Cor. 14:5; 13,28).

Should be confined to three utterances in any one gathering (1 Cor. 14:27).

Any believer, who has ever spoken in tongues, is capable of edifying the Body through an utterance in tongues. You should therefore be prepared to do so at any time. Seek to be yielded to the Spirit. Be relaxed in your mind and be open to the Holy Spirit. Develop a sensitivity to what the Spirit is seeking to do or say in any particular service through you. When the Holy Spirit wants to bring a tongue utterance through you, there will often be an inner awareness of this for some time before you actually speak. This is often a gentle stirring in your spirit, a growing excitement and anticipation. This develops into a deep awareness that the Spirit is going to bring an utterance and that this utterance is within you.

You do NOT have to speak out immediately. The Spirit, within the prophet, is subject to (the control of) the prophet (1 Cor. 12:32). You can wait quietly for the right moment to speak. The Holy Spirit will prompt you clearly at that time. He will not interrupt what is already happening in the service. He will never cause confusion, for He is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).

Remain calm and relaxed and when the Spirit prompts you, speak in a normal but clearly audible voice. You do not have to shout or scream. You can speak in a normal voice, at a measured pace, seeking all the time to quietly flow with the Spirit who is giving you utterance. When the utterance is complete, all must wait upon God for the interpretation. Often some other believer will be given the interpretation but when this does not happen, then the one who has spoken in tongues must pray quietly that he may also be given the interpretation (1 Cor. 14:13).

2. THE INTERPREATION OF TONGUES. (1 Cor 12:10)

This is the companion gift to that of Tongues operation in a service, and is always used in conjunction with that gift. It is the supernatural enablement, by the Holy Spirit, to interpret an utterance in tongues into the natural language of the congregation. It is NOT the gift of translation. The interpreter does not understand the tongue employed in the utterance which was given. The interpretation is just as supernatural as was the utterance. However, by this gift of the Spirit, the believer concerned is able to render the utterance intelligible to the congregation so they may receive it and be edified by it.

WHO MAY USE THIS GIFT?

The interpretation of tongues is given, ‘as the Spirit wills’ (1 Cor. 12:11). Any Spirit-filled believer may be chosen and anointed by the Spirit to manifest this gift. Here again, we must seek to develop a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Whilst you are worshipping God in gathering of

believers keep your mind and spirit open to the Holy Spirit. Frequently you will sense beforehand that there is going to be an utterance in tongues and that God is giving you the interpretation of it. When that utterance comes, wait quietly until it is concluded. Initially you may only have the first sentence of the interpretation and a brief idea of what is to follow, when you first begin to speak. Like all other gifts of the Spirit, this one operates by faith as well. As you commence to give forth what the Spirit is giving you, speak in a normal, clear, audible voice. Take care not to speak 'beyond the proportion of your faith' (Rom.12:6). Strenuously avoid letting any personal thoughts, feelings or ideas creep into the interpretation. Let your own thoughts be in neutral, and your mind be a clear channel for the Holy Spirit to flow through. When the interpretation is complete and you sense that the Spirit has finished all He wishes to say, then stop! Do not then try to interpret the interpretation. In other words do not begin to tell the people what you 'think' the interpretation means. Leave that to the people themselves. Having delivered the interpretation keep quiet whilst the utterance is judged by those who sit by. If there are any believers present who are regularly used in the vocal gifts, they should judge whether the words are truly from God. The standard by which one may judge is similar to that which we would use for judging prophecy which is the next manifestation that we shall consider.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY. - "Inspired utterance" (1 Cor. 12:10)

Simply translated the word prophecy means 'to utter inspired words'. According to 1 Cor. 14:31 all believers may exercise this gift at some time, as the Spirit wills. Everyone may prophesy, one by one, and not more than three in any gathering (1 Cor. 14:29-33).

The purpose of such prophetic utterance is to:

Edify the Church. This means to build up, strengthen the believers.

Exhort them. Stir up the believers. Confront and challenge them.

Comfort. To speak encouragingly, words of comfort. (Sometimes a prophecy may include all three of these elements.)

THREE MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT PROPHECY 1.

It Should Not Be Confused With Preaching.

Many today insist that the gift of prophecy is the ability to preach well. However, preaching and teaching are usually the result of prayerful meditation in the Word of God and careful preparation of one's mind and spirit in order to minister understanding to the people. In contrast, the gifts of prophecy is not the result of careful study. It is a spontaneous speaking forth by the Spirit.

2. The Gift of Prophecy is Not for Foretelling the Future.

This gift is for 'forth-telling' rather than fore-telling. Its purpose is for Edification, Exhortation and Comfort and not for seeking to predict future events. Whenever there is an element of prediction within a prophecy it is usually there because there is another gift (word of knowledge or wisdom) working along with it.

3. This Gift is not for Personal Guidance.

If we are in need of personal guidance we should ask Jesus Himself for it (James 1:5). We may also seek such guidance in the pages of God's Word, the Bible. If a prophetic utterance comes to us with instructions for the future it should only be to confirm what God has already shown us personally.

SCRIPTURAL TEACHING ON THE GIFT OF PROPHECY.

IT IS FOR SPEAKING SUPER-NATURALLY TO MEN (1 COR. 14:3).

Thus conveying the mind of the Lord to the church. The prophet is speaking on behalf of God to the believers for their edification, exhortation and comfort.

PROPHECY REQUIRES NO INTERPRETATION.

The gift of tongues requires an interpreter, prophecy does not.

PROPHECY CONVINCES THE UNLEARNED. (1 Cor. 14:24-25).

Through the operation of the gift of prophecy he will: -

- Be convinced of all.
- Be judged of all.
- The secrets of his heart will be made manifest.
- He will fall before God in humility.
- Acknowledge that God is truly amongst you.
- Worship God.

PROPHECY FUNCTIONS IN ORDER THAT BELIEVERS MAY LEARN.

1 Cor. 14:31. This does not refer to the teaching which normally comes from the exposition of the Word of God through the ministry of a teacher. Rather it is the learning of spiritual truths through the anointing of the Spirit. Such teachings should be tested by the written Word of God before being digested.

EVERYONE SHOULD DESIRE AND COVET THIS GIFT.

1 Cor 14:1, 39. For by such a means we may be used of God to the encouragement of His people.

THE PERSON OPERATING THE GIFT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS USE OR ABUSE.

Cor 14:32. Prophecy is NOT an uncontrolled utterance. Nor is the prophet under any kind of trance or mind control. He is neither doing anything nor saying anything against his will. The Spirit of prophecy is subject to the prophet. It is the prophet who is speaking, on behalf of God, and the prophet has control at all times of all that he or she is saying.

BECAUSE THE HUMAN ELEMENT IS FALLIBLE, PROPHECY MUST BE JUDGED. (1 Cor 14:29).

HOW SHALL WE JUDGE A PROPHECY?

To know if it is a genuine, Spirit inspired prophecy.

WILL NEVER CONTRADICT THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

Therefore every prophetic utterance should be 'tested' by the Word of God.

God would never tell you by prophecy, to do anything which His Word forbids.

IT WILL ALWAYS EXALT JESUS CHRIST, AND NEVER DENIGRATE HIM.

IT WILL EDIFY, EXHORT AND COMFORT THE BELIEVERS. It

should never leave them confused, distressed, uncertain.

IT SHOULD "WITNESS" WITH THE MAJORITY OF BELIEVERS PRESENT.

Especially the more mature ones who are themselves frequently used in operation of vocal gifts.

IT WILL NOT BREAK THE SPIRIT OF THE MEETING, THOUGH IT MAY CHANGE THE COURSE OF IT.

IF THERE IS A PREDICTIVE ASPECT, IT WILL COME TO PASS.

THE "FRUIT TEST". (Matt. 7:16). Speaking of false prophets, Jesus declared, "You shall know them by their fruit". We should reject any so-called prophecy coming from one whose life and practice are a reproach to the cause of Christ.

How to Prophecy

- Be relaxed. Do not be under a strain.
- Quietly wait upon the Lord in your Spirit. Keep your mind open to His voice within you.
- When you feel the prompting of the Spirit within your spirit, commit yourself afresh as a channel for Him to flow through. Remember the gift operates by faith.
- Begin to speak out whatever God gives you. Keep it simple.
- While you are speaking, be waiting upon Him quietly for the remainder of the message. -Do not prophesy beyond the proportion of your faith. (Rom. 12:6) -Discern when the Spirit has finished speaking and stop!

A WORD OF KNOWLEDGE. (1 Cor 12:8)

DEFINITION: A Word of knowledge is a fragment or small portion of God's knowledge, given to a person by the Holy Spirit.

It gives us certain facts and information through the supernatural revelation of the Holy Spirit. This information was previously unknown to the person and the knowledge could not be gained by any natural means. It is supernaturally imparted.

N.B. It is a “word” of knowledge, not the gift of knowledge. It usually comes quietly to one’s mind as do most thoughts. However, it is information and knowledge that could not be gained or collected by any natural means. It is a certain knowledge about a person, event, or circumstance that one could never know by natural means of observation or deduction. It often comes so quietly and unnoticeable that it may seem to be merely a natural thought, but the fact that it conveys information that could not be naturally deduced or known indicates that it is a word of knowledge given by the Spirit.

Examples from Scripture:

In the Ministry of Jesus.

John 1:47-50. Jesus knew certain facts about Nathaniel before He ever met him.

John 4:18-20. Again Jesus knew many facts the women of Samaria although He had never previously seen her. She was amazed by the accuracy of His knowledge concerning her past and present life. The exercise of this Word or knowledge eventually brought about a great revival.

In the Early Church.

Acts 9:10-20. Ananias received specific information in great detail about Saul, whom he had never met before. He knew exactly the street and house in which Saul was staying. He knew that he was presently praying and that when he, Ananias, laid hands upon him he would receive his sight.

Example from the Old Testament.

2 Sam.12:1-14. God revealed to Nathan certain facts and details regarding David’s transgression

Distinction: A Word of Knowledge is distinct from human knowledge gained by natural means. It is not merely human knowledge sanctified by God. A word of knowledge cannot be gained by intellectual learning. Such knowledge cannot be gained by studying books or pursuing an academic course of study in college or university. Nor is it the ability to study or understand or interpret the Bible.

Its Employment in Scripture:

To Uncover Sin. 2 Sam 12:1-10; Acts 5:1-11.

To Bring People to God. John 1:47-50; 4:18-20.

To Give Guidance and Direction. Acts 9:11.

To Minister Encouragement in Periods of Despondency. 1 Kings 19:9.

To Impart Knowledge of Future Events. John 11:11-14.

To Reveal Hidden Things. 1 Samuel 10:22.

The Operation of this Gift:

It is supernatural in character – not obtained by logic or deduction, reasoning, etc; nor by the natural senses, but by supernatural revelation through the Holy Spirit.

It operates by faith – The person receiving the revelation does so by faith.

The revelation is received in one’s spirit – not in the intellect or the emotions.

It is not essentially a vocal gift (Acts 9:11). It is received quietly and inaudibly within the person’s spirit.

It may become vocal when shared with others. (John 1:47; 4:18).

Any Spirit-filled Christian who is willing to listen to God may experience a function of this gift.

It is an invaluable asset in the ministry of counseling.

Obedient action and response is essential to the continuing function of this manifestation in one’s ministry.

The Word of Wisdom is frequently manifested in conjunction with it. This is the divinely imparted wisdom to know what to do about a word of knowledge and how to apply it correctly and wisely.

A WORD OF WISDOM. (1 Cor. 12:8)

Introduction.

This gift stands at the head of the list because it is so important. It enables us to speak and act with divine wisdom and thus ensures the correct use and application of other gifts. When the word of wisdom is absent, the other gifts can be used wrongly which often causes much confusion.

Definition:

The word of wisdom is a fragment of divine wisdom supernaturally imparted by the Holy Spirit. It supplies one with the immediate wisdom to know what to say or do in a given situation.

God frequently gives it together with the word of knowledge so believers can know how to apply that word of knowledge correctly. God revealed to Ananias, the whereabouts and condition of Saul through a word of knowledge. He also showed him, by the word of wisdom, what he should do in this difficult situation.

Notice: It is The Word (logos) of wisdom, and **not** The Gift of wisdom.

Illustration

A man gets into legal difficulties and consults his lawyer. The lawyer does not give his client all the wisdom and knowledge he has. He extracts the word, or portion of his knowledge that applies to his client's needs, and imparts that word. Likewise, God, who knows all things, extracts from His infinite store of wisdom, the particular portion of wisdom needed for one of His children. He sends this by the Spirit.

Distinction:

THE WORD OF WISDOM

- It is not natural wisdom.
- It is not the wisdom gained from academic achievement.
- It is not wisdom gained from experience.
- It is not even the wisdom to understand the Bible.
- It is supernatural in character.
- It is given as the Holy Spirit wills (1 Cor. 12:11).
- It is given for a specific need or situation.
- It is not the gift of wisdom, but the word of wisdom.

Some Biblical Examples:

A. Luke 4:1-3. Jesus, tempted in the wilderness. The replies which Jesus gave to Satan were words of wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 20:22-26. The Scribes tried to trap Jesus; but the word of wisdom, given by the Spirit, confounded them all.

John 8:3-11. Again the Scribes and Pharisees sought to trap Jesus, but His wise words and handling of the situation confounded His adversaries.

Acts 6:15. Giving wisdom in church administration.

Acts 15:28. Solving a church crisis.

Acts 27:23-24. Gave Paul control of the situation, resulting in the salvation of many lives.

Notice: The Word of Wisdom is promised to all Christ's disciples. "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to mediate before what you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." (Luke 21:14-15).

Observation: The Word of Wisdom is not essentially a vocal gift, but rather, a gift of revelation. It is received quietly within one's spirit. It comes out when vocalised in counseling, preaching or prophesying or when acted upon.

6. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS. (1 Cor. 12:10)

Discerning of Spirits is a more important subject than we generally realise. If this spiritual gift were used more frequently with its counterpart, casting out demons, many of the problems we face today would be greatly minimised.

Discerning of Spirits is the third of the revelation gifts; the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge are the other two. It is a divine ability imparted by the Holy Spirit so that we can penetrate the spiritual realm and distinguish between the spirit of Satan (evil spirits), the Spirit of God, and the human spirit. By it we can discern the origin of certain actions, teachings, circumstances, etc., that have been inspired by spiritual beings.

This gift is more limited than the other two revelation gifts. The revelation given in this instance is limited to the origin of the behaviour in question. Nonetheless, the discerning of spirits is just as supernatural in its operation as are any of the other eight gifts. It supplies the Church with information available in no other way.

The Function of the Gift.

The gift of discerning of spirits gives one a supernatural understanding of the nature and activity of spirits. It enables him to distinguish between the divine, satanic and human origin of spiritual activity and reveals the nature of the spirits themselves.

It is not always easy to distinguish between the works of Satan and those of the Spirit of God. Satan always tries to counterfeit the works of the Holy Spirit. Satan is known as the deceiver, the father of lies, and the serpent. All these titles signify the subtle, crafty deceptiveness that he uses to bring about evil whenever he can. Many times his counterfeit is so reasonable that one will be entirely deceived unless someone is present who functions with the supernatural gift of discerning of spirits. If demon activity were always so obviously reeking with evil and wickedness as we tend to imagine, there would be no reason for this particular gift of the Spirit.

In the account of the girl with the spirit of divination in Acts 16, Paul challenged the spirit which might easily have deceived other servants of God. The girl gave a perfectly true statement when she said, "These men are servants of the most high God who show to you the way of salvation," but the spirit speaking was an evil spirit. Why would an evil spirit advertise the apostles in that fashion? Because it was of no credit or help to the gospel or its ministers to have such a person following them and no doubt causing many to think that she was one of them.

The Operation and Need for the Gift Today.

The gift of discerning of spirits is experiencing its own revival in much of the world today. It can be seen in action in the ministry of many men of God in the present renewal. It is absolutely essential that this gift operate if the Church is going to accomplish her full mission and destroy the works of the devil. There are as many demons in the world today as there were when Jesus walked the earth and in the days of the Early Church. Their purpose is equally as evil though their operation today is frequently more sophisticated and reasonable. This supernatural gift is especially necessary for Christian workers in nations where spiritism, satanism and false worship systems abound.

How the Gift of Discerning of Spirits Operates.

The first and most obvious function of this gift is to reveal the presence of evil spirits in the life of people or situations. However, it also functions to evaluate the source of a prophetic message, a particular teaching, or some supernatural manifestation. The person functioning with this gift will be able to tell whether the source of the message or act is demonic, divine or merely human. If the source is discerned to be demonic, the person functioning in this gift will also usually be able to reveal the following:

The nature of the demon. This is what his work is, whether lying, causing infirmity (such as cancer, blindness, dumbness, etc.), unclean behaviour and the like.

The name of the demon. This is usually revealed with the nature of the demon, although it isn't all uncommon to reveal a demon's proper name.

The number of demons. This is the case of “Legion”, of Mary out of whom Jesus cast seven devils. It is not uncommon for a person to be demonised by more than one spirit at time. This is part of the information revealed by the gift of the discerning of spirits.

The strength of particular demons. Often during an encounter with an evil spirit, the one who functions with the discerning of spirits will know by revelation which of several demons is strongest and has greatest authority.

Obtaining information. Often demons will give much information verbally themselves to the one they know has supernaturally discerned their presence and who has power to cast them out. However, since demons can be counted on to lie, it is a good idea to treat the information they give with suspicion and count on information supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit.

Discerning of Spirits doesn't always involve Faith to expel Demons.

Although the gift of discerning of spirits is essential for effective deliverance, it is not sufficient by itself. It must work in concert with the gift of faith and the effecting of miracles. It is those who function with these gifts who usually have the greatest success in casting out demons.

THE GIFT OF FAITH. (1 Cor. 12:9)

Since faith deals with the future and the unseen – things not physically experienced – the gift of faith is the special endowment given to someone called upon to exercise an extraordinary capacity of trust. God supernaturally empties him of any doubt and fills him with special faith that enables him to accomplish God's purpose despite every contrary and contradictory circumstance of life. Joshua, in commanding the sun and moon to stand still (Josh. 10:12-14) is probably the clearest Biblical example of this. Firstly, he spoke to God (prayed), then he spoke by faith to the sun and moon. This would have to be a supernatural manifestation of uniquely remarkable faith. It is certainly not the kind of faith that one has every day. It is a special dispensation of faith God grants a believer when the task He has given that believer requires more than ordinary or general faith.

The gift of faith has a vastly superior function to that of general faith, which grows from the original seed of saving faith which God has planted in our hearts (See Romans 1:17). The degree of general faith varies with stages of development of the believer (“little faith”, “great faith”, etc.). General faith grows as a result of feeding on the Word, being exercised through the circumstances of life, and the like. It can develop to a very high degree. However, the gift of faith has a superior function to even the highest degree of general faith.

Some translators refer to the gift of faith as special faith. This indicates a faith bestowed by the Holy Spirit to meet our need in special and unusual circumstances. This suggests further that the gift of faith is not permanently resident in any believer, but rather that each manifestation is a separate gift of faith. An episode in Elijah's life illustrates this when he declares to King Ahab that there will be no more rain until he speaks the word and then it will rain again at his word (1 Kings 17:1). His gift of faith produced the miraculous fulfillment of that prophecy.

Contrariwise, this extraordinary faith was lacking when Elijah sat under the juniper tree, fearful, discouraged and wanting to die because it was not needed at that time (1 Kings 19:4). He had not lost his faith in God or His Word. His own faith was strengthened and taught him to believe God and take courage when God told him He had 7000 other faithful followers in Israel.

God wants you to know you can go forth confidently, knowing that when special demands are made upon you, He will supernaturally give you special faith to enable you to fulfil His purposes.

How Does the Gift of Faith Work?

The gift of faith seems to operate in a passive manner, but this is not always so. Daniel's protection from the lions (a passive instance of the gift of faith) seems to contrast with Samson's slaying the lion which is an example of man's active involvement in the manifestation of the power of God. This would be an example of the working of miracles. This impression that the gift of faith functions actively is because it often works in cooperation with more dramatic gifts (e.g. the working of miracles, the gifts of healings, etc.). The gift of faith also operates through the speaking of words of faith “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” (II Corinthians 4:13) – whereby those words a man of God speaks when inspired by the Spirit are backed by God as His own Word. The

results are not always immediate, but they are sure. And this gift can function in many ways (e.g. for blessing, for cursing, for creating, for destroying, etc).

There are some notable examples of the gift of faith working through the spoken word:

Joshua commands the sun and moon to stand still (Josh 10:12-14). Elijah controls the weather by his word (1 Kings 17:1) – “There shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word...and it rained not upon the earth for the space of three years and six months.” Paul judges Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). The Scriptures teach the principle of the word of faith: (Mark 11:23) “...he shall have whatsoever he says...” in relation to the injunction, “have faith in God”, and Job 22:28 “You shall decree a thing and it shall be established unto you”.

8. GIFTS OF HEALINGS. (1 Cor. 12:9)

The three references to this gift in 1 Corinthians 12 are in verses 9, 28 and 30. In each of these, the original reading is "charismata iamatōn". Both words are plural, making the correct translation of this phrase, gifts of healings.

Gifts of healings operate supernaturally to heal diseases and infirmities without natural means of any sort. It is the power of the Holy Spirit which comes upon a person's body, dissolving their disease, driving out their pains to heal them. The use of the plural nouns here emphasises the abundance of God's healing gifts to afflicted mankind. It may also emphasize that Jesus' healing will deliver from every sickness, infirmity, weakness, plague, deformity, and affliction. It also implies that there is a great variety of the manifestations of this gift . (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

The exercise of the gifts of healings does not give the gifted an ability to heal all the sick all the time. Some have misunderstood this and have asked why we do not go into hospitals and the like and raise up all that are sick. Even Jesus did not do this. He only went to what may correspond to a modern hospital once, when He went to the Pool of Bethesda where there were multitudes of sick people. Even then He chose one from all of them and healed him. On other occasions we read of great crowds of sick folk who came to Jesus and we are told He “healed them all”. An important principle of divine healing is that the person must come to Jesus as an exercise of faith and cooperation.

The Purpose of Gifts of Healings.

To deliver the sick and suffering and to destroy the works of the devil in their lives. (1 John 3:8; Acts 10:38; Luke 13:16).

To prove Christ's claim to be the Son of God (John 10:36-38).

To confirm the Word (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 7:29-30,33).

To attract people to the sound of the Gospel (Matthew 4:23,25).

To bring glory to God (Mark 2:12; Luke 13:13; 18:43; John 9:2-3).

The Holy Spirit gives Gifts of Healings to the servant of God to pass on to whomever the Lord desires to heal for His own purpose. Like all other gifts, the gifts of healings not only have to be given, but also must be received. Just as there is a principle of faith which regards how to minister these gifts, there is also a principle which deals with how to receive them. Hezekiah had difficulty receiving the gift of healing which God sent him. His faith had to be built up in a special way by the miracle recorded in 2 Kings 20:8-11 (See also 2 Kings 5:10-14). Naaman had difficulty receiving the gift of healing which God had sent him through Elisha. Healing requires often a double act of faith: faith to receive and faith to administer the gift of healing.

Although there are exceptions to this rule, it is always God's desire to heal. However, sometimes the normal channels through which His healing virtue would flow are not working too well. This may require that God send a special gift of healing. Sometimes God communicates gifts of healings through the normal healing channels; at other times through extraordinary means, according to His will (e.g. Peter's shadow - Acts 5: 15-16).

9. WORKING OF MIRACLES. (1 Cor. 12:10)

A miracle happens when God supersedes the ordinary course of nature. The gift of the working of miracles comes when God endues us with power by the Holy Spirit to do something completely

beyond the range of human ability. He gives it to us at a specific time for a special purpose. A miracle is usually an instantaneous occurrence as distinct from a manifestation of healing which may be gradual.

All the gifts of the Spirit are miraculous, but the use of the word 'miracle' in this instance refers to acts of power. The Bible is a book of miracles. God is a God of miracles. Christianity is a faith founded upon miracles. Without the manifestation of miracles Christianity is lacking in credibility for God attested the ministry of Jesus through miracles, wonders and signs. (Acts 2:22).

MIRACLES GIVE US UNDENIABLE PROOF OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

If Jesus were not alive, His name would have no power to heal the sick and work miracles (Acts 4:33). Peter convinced the unbelieving Jews of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and their need of repentance on the strength of the fact that Jesus' name still had the power to heal the sick and work miracles. Therefore:

It gave boldness to the believers to preach Christ (Acts 4:29-30). People recognised that they had been with Jesus – the miracle worker – (Acts 4:13).

It made believers hungry to have more of God (Acts 4:31).

It convinced and convicted men of their sins (Acts 5:28,33).

Five thousand were saved in one day through one miracle (Acts 4:4; 5:14).

All men glorified God for what was done (Acts 4:21).

It spread the gospel quickly (Acts 5:14-16).

Before Jesus started to work miracles, no one followed Him anywhere. He must have preached often in the synagogue, for Luke 4 says it was His custom. But, when the miracles in Luke 4:33-35 took place, "His fame went out into every place of the country round about." From then on the multitudes pressed in upon Him to hear His words and to see His miracles. "A great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them which were diseased." (John 6:2).

EVERYWHERE THE DISCIPLES PREACHED, HEALED THE SICK, CAST OUT DEMONS AND WORKED MIRACLES, MULTITUDES TURNED TO CHRIST.

Samaria gave heed to Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (Acts 8:5).

All the inhabitants of Lydda turned to the Lord when Peter told Aeneas, "Jesus Christ makes you whole; arise and make thy bed." And he arose immediately (Acts 9:34).

Many people in Joppa believed when Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:42).

The people at Lystra thought the gods had come down to them when they saw the crippled man walk and leap at Paul's word (Acts 14:8-18). "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people...and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed everyone." (Acts 5:12-16).

The Book of Acts closes with miracles in full swing (Acts 28:8-9). When the people saw Publius healed, they believed that if God would heal one then He was able and willing to heal everyone that had need. When people think and believe right about God, then they get from Him what He wants so much to give to them.

The working of miracles is the enabling of the Holy Spirit, giving the believer the ability to work a miracle, in contrast to God working miracles in the life of a believer. Thus many who have never received the gift of working miracles have often experienced astounding miracles which God has wrought on their behalf.

SOME EXAMPLES

Miracles of deliverance such as Peter's in Acts 5:17-20 and again in Acts 12:1-10. Also Paul and Silas in Acts 16:15-30.

Miracles of transportation (Acts 8:39). “The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip that the eunuch saw him no more.”

These, and many other instances, are miracles performed by God in the lives of believers, sometimes even without the cooperation of the believer. These are not, therefore, instances where the gift of working of miracles was operating. Examples of where this gift was in operation:

Acts 19:11, “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.”

Acts 9:40, Peter raised Dorcas from the dead.

Acts 20:9-12. Peter restored Eutychus to life.

Practical Operation of the Gift.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit to create special confidence and authority.

A spoken word of faith and authority. Elijah said that the God who answered by fire should be Israel's Lord. The fire which came down was an example of the working of miracles.

A bold act of faith.

EPILOGUE.

In this brief teaching on the Holy Spirit and His manifestations we have sought to keep to what the Bible declares on this subject rather than what our own human experience may be or what position our particular denomination holds. Nothing is ever achieved for God by taking a negative position on anything that the Bible declares. God works through our faith not our unbelief. So, irrespective of what your traditional theology, or your personal experience may be, may I encourage you not to close your heart and mind to the possibility of the supernatural and the miraculous. Read the Bible and this study with an open heart. Commit yourself to God in regard to your response to it. Tell Him sincerely that you are open to whatever He declares and that you want to experience the fullness of all He has for you.

BEING LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT – Divine guidance and living with priorities

Chapter I – Several Ways God Leads His People

Many of us find ourselves in situations and we don't know what to do. But God has answers for us. God never intended that those who are in leadership in the body of Christ would carry out their work empowered by the flesh. The work of ministry was never meant to be carried out just by the means of human intelligence. God has designed that those who are in leadership be led by His Spirit. If we are going to obtain spiritual fruit in our ministries, our ministries must be Spirit-directed and Spirit-empowered. One of the most frustrating things in the world is to be in ministry and don't know how to be led by the Spirit.

God has given us His Spirit to help us make right decisions. When it comes to dealing with difficult and rebellious people in the Church, we must be led by the Holy Spirit. When we face persecution, spiritual attacks and under pressure, we must be led by the Holy Spirit. When it comes to purchasing land for building, we must be led by the Spirit. Whether we are choosing leaders, preaching sermons or helping people, we need the help of the Spirit of God.

As leaders, many lives are affected by what we do or what we do not do. All our decisions are never meant to be left just to human intellect. God has given us His Spirit so that we can make right and wise decisions. But we must learn how to listen to Him. When we are listening to the Spirit of God, we are hearing things that other people do not hear.

Read: Deut. 4:5- 6.

GOD LEADS US THROUGH HIS WRITTEN WORD

The written word of God is the wisdom of God. (Luke 11:49).

Do you need the wisdom of God today for your church, home meeting, the Bible is the first place to look for it.

The written Word of God assures success in ministry (Josh. 1:7- 8).

The written Word of God shines light on our pathways (Ps. 119: 105, 128).

God leads us by His Word.

We must adopt the right attitude to God's Word.

That attitude should be one of obedience (Isaiah 8:20).

God does not lead contrary to His written Word.

The Holy Spirit leads into all truth by the Word of God (John 16:13; 17:17)

Look into the Word of God for guidance.

Find out what the Word of God says before you make decisions.

Before appointing leaders, find out what are the Biblical qualifications for church leadership.

It is when we depart from the Word that we get into trouble.

GOD GUIDES US BY OUR INTEGRITY (Prov. 11:3)

A. Integrity means: uprightness of character and honesty (Job 27:3-6). When we make decision to live by integrity, life becomes easier.

A.Pastors must lead by integrity (Ps. 78:70-72).

People are not put in leadership positions in the Church because they give money.

If they are not God's choice, it will break the principle of integrity to put them in leadership.

Integrity means that I will not use questionable means to raise funds.

Pastors, guard your ministries with integrity.
Be honest with people when you speak.
Don't violate your conscience.
Anytime you compromise the truth in order to get something, you will eventually lose it.

III. GOD GUIDES US BY HIS PEACE (Col. 3:15)

Let the peace of God decide and settle with finality all questions that rise in your mind. Like the umpire between God and your heart!
As you start to pray about doing something, ask yourself, do you have peace in your heart or do you feel hesitant and uneasy?

Walking in the pathway of wisdom leads to peace (Prov. 3:13, 17).
Many major decisions can be made on the basis of having peace about them.
Jesus is the prince of peace.

IV. GOD GUIDES US THROUGH THE COUNSEL OF OTHERS (Prov. 20:18; 24:6)

God has given us the Body of Christ to help us.
No man or woman is an island to themselves.
If the counsel you are receiving from others is different from what God has placed in your heart, take more time to pray about it.
You alone will have to answer to God for your decisions.
But others can help us see things in a new light, consider things we've never considered before.
They can help us to take a look at our own motives and to consider the right timing.

We must be open to those who love us (Prov. 18:1).
Remember that as leaders in the body of Christ, the decisions we make affect others. So let us go to the word of God, walk in the integrity with the peace of God and the counsel of others.

Chapter II - How God Leads Us Through our Spirits

Read: Zechariah 12:1

MAN IS A SPIRIT BEING

Notice in this text that God forms the spirit within man.
Man has spirit within him.

1 Thes. 5:23 also teaches that man is a three-part being: spirit, soul and body.

There is difference between the spirit and soul of man.
The spirit is the real person that lives inside the body.
The soul is made up of the will, mind and emotion.
The body is the house man lives in.

God is the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9).
Jesus confirms this in John 4:24 that God is Spirit.
If God is Spirit, and man is created in the image of God. Gen. 1:27; 2:7.
The Bible says the body without the spirit is dead. (James 2:26).

The spirit in man died in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15-17:3).
God is speaking about spiritual death to Adam and Eve.
This means to be out off from God (Gen. 3:8-9).
Adam and Eve are the fountain head of the human race.

Man then becomes by nature, the children of wrath. (Eph. 2:1-3).

GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION CHANGED MAN'S NATURE (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

That plan was fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

The New Spirit in Man (John 3:1, 8).

Man must be born-against to receive this new spirit.

This speaks of spiritual birth through the Spirit of God.

The change takes place on the inside.

When a person receives Christ, he receives a new spirit.

We contact God through our spirits and He contacts us through His Spirit.

If God is going to guide us and lead us by His Spirit, He will do it through our spirits.

God illuminates us through our spirits (Prov. 20:27).

The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit (Rom 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:14).

God reveals what he has prepared for us by His Spirit, and the Spirit bears witness with our spirit. (1 Cor. 2:9-12).

HOW GOD DEALS WITH OUR SPIRIT (John 13:2, 21)

A. Being troubled in the spirit (John 13:21).

When you get around people who have a wrong spirit or motivation, your spirit will be troubled.

They may be saying the right thing or doing the right thing, but when you get around them, something in your spirit bothers you.

When you sense an inward agitation be on your guard, God is communicating with you.

Being grieved in the spirit (Acts 16:16-18).

A certain people or place may cause you to be grieved in your spirit. When that happens to you, be on your guard; learn to pay attention to it because this will keep you out of trouble.

Being restless in the spirit (2 Cor. 2:12-13).

There will be no rest in your spirit when something is not right.

If you don't seem to have rest in the direction you are going, stop and wait on God.

Being provoked in the Spirit (Acts 17:16-17).

When that happens to you, you need to open your mouth and share.

Get involved, God is directing you.

The word "provoke" means: to prod, to softly push.

If you learn to listen to God this way, your ministry will be well defined.

Being compelled in the spirit (Acts 18:5).

An inward compelling to speak.

The way to become more sensitive to how God deals with your spirit, is to spend time in God's Word.

His Word is Spirit and life.

Also spend time in prayer especially praying in other tongues.

When you pray in tongues, your spirit is praying.

Pray and get into the Word.

Listen to you spirit.

Chapter III - How to Receive Direction in Difficult Times

Sometimes when we are under great pressure, it can be difficult to hear from God. But those are the times we need to hear from God the most.

Read: 1 Kings 19:1-19

OUTLINE OF THE PASSAGE

The nation of Israel had fallen into a backsliden state

They had fallen into idol worship.

Elijah had prayed and heaved had shut up without rain.

He called all Israel to meet him on top of Mount Carmel.

There Elijah called down the fire from heaven and the nation repented and came back to God.

He prayed again and the rain began to fall.

Elijah had many fantastic supernatural experiences that won victory for the Lord.

Then came the greatest trials of his life.

Many times our greatest trials follow our greatest victories.

Some of the greatest temptations you will ever experience will come to you after your highest and sweetest experience with the Lord.

At this critical and difficult time for Elijah, he needs a fresh direction from the Lord.

II. PRINCIPLES FROM THE PASSAGE

There are some principles from this passage that teach us how to receive directions from the Lord in difficult times.

Don't quit.

When the crisis arose, Elijah knew he had to hear from God.

He decided to go to Mount Horeb.

This is now known as Mount Sinai.

This is Elijah's destination.

But before getting there, he wanted to quit (1 Kings 19:4).

You will reach your place of break-through if you don't give up.

Cut away unnecessary things (1 Kings 19:3).

He left his servant in Beersheba.

This servant was not God's choice to succeed Elijah but Elisha (1 Kings 19:16).

Elijah never returned to take this servant.

Sometimes we add things to our life that God never intended for us.

Are you staying within the boundary God has set for you?

Or have you added a lot of things to your life and ministry that God never ordained? (II Cor. 10:13- 14).

What is the last thing that God told you to do?

Have you finished it or left it undone?

If you need God's direction, especially in difficult times, you need to rethink, reexamine and re-experience.

Realize that a new direction from God will come out of the overflow of the old.

You will not find step two in the will of God until you complete step one.

You need to rest (1 Kings 19:5- 6).

Spiritually, you need to rest in God.

Worry will cut off the flow of God's wisdom into your life.

Even naturally it is important to rest.

Spend time in the Word of God and prayer (1 Kings 19:6).

Bread is the type of the word of God while water is the type of the Spirit of God.

If you want direction from God, you need to eat and drink.
Get into the Word of God, prayer and fellowship with the Spirit of God.
If you do, God will speak to you through His Word (Prov. 6:22).
If you commit yourself to the Word and prayer, you will get to the place where you will hear from God.

Remind yourself how God leads you (1 Kings 19:11- 12).

Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai is the place that God spoke to all Israel (Ex.19).
God is saying He is not going to lead you through the physical signs of your senses but through the still small voice of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 12:18, 26).
What is the still small voice saying to you when you are quiet?
The most important event that can ever happen to a person is getting saved.
This is confirmed by the Spirit witnessing with our spirit (Rom. 8:16).
Why should we expect more when it comes to lesser issues in life?
Develop spiritually so you can know when God is talking to you.
All of the decisions we make in life are less important than salvation.
Don't expect spectacular things to happen to you before you can hear from God.
God speaks in a still small voice.

Realize that you are not alone (1 Kings 19:16).

You are not the only one experiencing pressure today.
Many people of God are going through the same trial you are going through now.
They heard from God and have made it through their trials.

Act on the direction you have received (1 Kings 19:19).

If you know you have received a direction from God, act on it.
Get into the middle of God's flow and go with it.
Your best days are ahead of you.

Chapter IV - The Priorities of Life

When you have your priorities right, it helps you to make good decisions. If your priorities are out of line, you are going to have much trouble in your life and ministry.

Some decisions are very easy to make when we look at our priorities. There are four main priorities we want to deal with in this study. These are: ministry, family, relationship with God, and recreation. Think for a moment, what order would you put them in? Priorities are determined by what we see as valuable and precious. When you are on your own, the things you pursue during that time will let you know where your priorities are.

Let me share with you the way your priorities should be:

PRIORITY #1: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

PRIORITY #2: FAMILY.

PRIORITY #3: MINISTRY.

PRIORITY #4: REST AND RECREATION.

Anytime any of these priorities jumps up, it is heading for number one spot.

This world was plunged into darkness because Adam and Eve got their priorities out of line.

Eve put material above spiritual.

Adam put his wife above God.

God is God of order.

God has specific order for doing things.

You can avoid so many problems in your life and ministry if you will prioritize your life according to biblical patterns and principle.

PRIORITY # 1 - PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (Deut. 30:19- 20)

Definition

Preaching is not relationship with God.

Preaching is the overflow of relationship with God.

Praying and studying is not relationship with God.

Personal relationship with God is your friendship and fellowship with God.

The time that you spend in His presence with prayer and worship.

The time that you spend in His word in order to know Him.

That is the first priority in life.

Fellowship with God through prayer and the Word.

All effective ministry will be overflow of the outgrowth of this personal fellowship with God.

Jesus is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:4- 5).

The only way we can be fruitful is to maintain a living communion with Him.

Notice that Jesus appointed the apostles first that they might be with Him and then to preach. (Mark 3:13-15).

Knowing Him comes before knowing His power (Phil. 3:10).

It is possible to be working for God without having time to spend with God.

Martha was over-occupied and too busy serving the Lord and His disciples. But she lacked the time to sit at Jesus feet (Luke 10:38-42).

Pastors, leaders, take time to sit at the feet of Jesus. We have to choose to be with God.

PRIORITY # 2 - THE FAMILY

Priority with the spouse.

The spouse comes after God and before the children.

Adam's wife completed him and not the ministry (Gen. 2:18).

Ministry is people; hence it must start with the spouse (1 Tim. 3:1-5).

If you can not care for your bride how can you take care of the Bride of Christ?

If you can not take care of your family, how can you take care of the family of God?

The spouse comes before any other person in the ministry beside God.

Priority with the children.

Your children are your first mission field.

After getting them saved, they become the first church.

The minister's family must be in order first before he can qualify to minister to others.

Remember the story of Eli, the priest (1 Sam. 2:22-36).

You can be a great preacher, but if you don't take time with your family, your ministry can end in disaster.

PRIORITY # 3 - THE MINISTRY (Col. 4:17; II Tim. 4:5)

Give yourself fully to the ministry.

Ministry is co-labouring together with God to change people's life and destiny.

Ministry can be broken into several areas:

A time or prayer and study.

In order to have fresh message from God to feed the flock of God, we must spend time in prayer and study of God's Word.

Take time with the staff-workers and the leaders of the church.

Observe the pattern of Jesus:

Three closest disciples to Him: Peter, James and John.

Then the other twelve.

Then the group of seventy disciples.

Then the masses and the multitudes.

You must take time with the leaders in your church.

After that, your minister to the congregation.

Be available to them and be touchable. Relate to your people.

Ministry is work (1 Pet. 5:1-5).

Ministers are not dictators.

They must lead by example.

IV. PRIORITY # 4 - REST AND RECREATION (Mark 6:31)

Take time to rest.

Ministry can be so busy that you can spend all day every day and yet not get to everyone.

There are times when Jesus will say to you, come aside and rest a little while.

If you don't take time to rest your body will break down.

Take time to exercise (1 Tim. 4:8).

Do something for recreation.

Find something that you like and will benefit your body.

This helps to clear your mind.

There must be a balance of rest and exercise along with ministry.

Take time to rest and exercise. Make decisions based on the priorities of life.

Chapter V - Pitfalls and Dangers in Seeking Guidance From God

In this study we will look at some practical wisdom that will help you make wise decisions and not be deceived. Be careful not to make your decisions based on outward appearance or popular opinions.

Read: Acts 27:9-15.

PAUL'S INWARD PERCEPTION

This was something Paul perceived in his spirit.

Everything outward contradicted what Paul perceived in his spirit.

Three things that contradicted Paul:

The expert contradicted him (Acts 27:11).

The majority contradicted him (Acts 27:12).

The circumstances contradicted him (Acts 27:13).

They were all wrong, but Paul was right.

Learn to listen to the inward witness of the spirit.

So many times in our lives we don't listen while God is speaking to us through our inward spirit.

SEEKING OUTWARD SIGNS TO DETERMINE THE WILL OF

GOD Judges 6: The story of Gideon.

As Christians in the New Testament, should we seek for signs as Gideon did?

First of all we need to understand certain truths:

Gideon was not a born-again believer.

He was not living under the new covenant.

He was living in a backslidden generation.

His father was a worshipper of Baal.

He did not know God in a personal way.

But Christians have the light of God in them that Gideon did not have.

- We are under the new covenant.

- We are born of God.

- God's Spirit dwells in us.

- We have access to God's Word.

- If we begin to seek for signs or putting up a fleece, we are likely to find ourselves in trouble.

- The only time we find anything like this in the New Testament is Acts chapter one.

- But in Acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit came. He came to live within us. Never again in the New Testament do we find any one doing that.

If we are looking for signs to know will of God, we will end up being deceived.

We are to be led by the Spirit of God dwelling in us instead of outward signs.

Remember the deception of outward signs in the life of Joshua (Joshua 9:3-16).

Therefore we need to be sensitive.

If something doesn't seem right, take time to wait on God.

God wants to guide us.

God leads us through our hearts.

III. SEEKING TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD THROUGH PERSONAL PROPHECY

Some important things regarding prophecy:

Prophecy that is truly from the Spirit of God, will never contradict the written Word of God.

The New Testament gift of prophecy is not for guidance.

The New Testament does not teach us to be led by prophecy.

In 1 Cor. 12:7-11 we find the nine gifts of the Spirit mentioned which can be divided into three groups for the purpose of study.

Power Gifts.

Revelation Gifts.

III. Vocal Gifts.

The purpose of prophecy in the N.T. is according to 1 Cor 14:1-5:

Edification: to build up

Exhortation: to call near to God.

Comfort to console.

We are not to be guided by prophecy.

The Holy Spirit may confirm things that God was already spoken to our hearts through others.

The key is we must develop personal relationship with God.

Prophecy is to edify, exhort and comfort the Church.

B. Welcoming the move of God in the Church (1 Thes. 5:19-21).

We should not despise prophecy.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit may reveal future events.

But we must test all things.

Prophecy can be judged.

Because human beings can make mistakes.

We can test prophecy against the Word of God.

We can judge prophecy by the inward witness of the spirit in our hearts.
If it is from God, embrace it.
But don't fall into the trap of letting someone guide your life through
personal prophecy.

Several means of guidance by God in the New Testament.

Through dreams.

Through visions.

By hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit.

This is more than inward impression.

God may lead us through any of these methods anytime He chooses.

Don't begin seeking to be led those ways.

If you do, you may end up being deceived.

You always have the Word of God to go to.

You always have the abiding presence of His Spirit.

God will always lead you through peace in your heart.

Look to those things. If God chooses to lead you through something spectacular,
that is His prerogative.

If you have a dream, a vision or a revelation, or if you hear a voice, it will
never contradict the written Word of God.

Develop a close and intimate relationship with the Lord.

Learn to recognize the Holy Spirit.

Learn to listen and sense His inward impressions.

Know the Word of God.

AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils (expel demons); they shall speak with new tongues.” (Mark 16:17).

Here Christ joins closely together two manifestations of supernatural power which are to confirm the testimony of Christian believers. The first is the casting out of demons; the second is speaking with new tongues. Today in the church at large, we hear much about speaking with new tongues (especially as the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit), but very little about the casting out of demons. How is it that these two manifestations have become so completely divorced from each other?

Actually, Christ places the casting out of demons before the speaking with new tongues. There is significance in this order. The intention is that people shall first be fully delivered from demons before they seek the baptism in the Spirit and the speaking with new tongues. However, through lack of discernment and understanding, this is not normally practiced in the church today. The result is that people nowadays are quite often baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak with new tongues, but still need deliverance from demons after that. It is time for the church to devote prayerful, open-minded study to the subject of demonology.

The New Testament Greek word for “demon” is “*daimonion*”. This is the diminutive form of another Greek word “*daimon*”. In Greek mythology and folklore these words were used to describe a special class of beings to whom were attributed varying degrees of supernatural influence or power. Various cults and superstitious observances centered around these beings, and they played an important part in the daily life of the common people.

In the King James Version the Greek word “*daimonion*” is often translated “devil”. However, this is incorrect. The word “devil” is formed from the Greek word “*diabolos*”, which means literally “slanderer.” In Scripture, this is normally reserved as a title of Satan himself.

Associated in the New Testament with the noun “*daimonion*” is the passive verb “*daimonizomai*”. The literal meaning of this verb is “to be demoned” - that is, to be in some way under the influence or power of demons. Thus the meaning of the verb is very general. In the King James Version this verb is usually translated by some phrase such as: “to be possessed”, or “to be vexed by demons or by evil spirits”. However, there are no distinctions in the original Greek text to which these various different English words correspond. Some preachers have worked out elaborate distinctions between possession, oppression or obsession by demons. However, there is nothing in the original Greek to support these distinctions.

Two other phrases normally used in this connection in the New Testament are “evil spirit” and “unclean spirit.” A comparison of Revelation chapter 16, verses 13 and 14, would seem to indicate that the two phrases “demons” and “unclean spirit” are used more or less inter-changeably.

Psychology normally recognizes three main elements that are associated with the concept of “personality.” These three elements are: knowledge, will, and emotion. It is important to see that all these three elements of personality are found in the New Testament picture of demons.

Demons possess knowledge. In Mark 1:24, the demon in the man in the synagogue at Capernaum said to Christ: “I know You, who You are, the Holy One of God.” In Acts 19:15, the evil spirit in the man at Ephesus said to the seven sons of Sceva: “Jesus I know (acknowledge), and Paul I know (know about); but who are you?”

Demons possess will. In Matthew 12:44, the unclean spirit who has gone out of the man, but can find no place of rest, says, “I will return into my house from where I came out.” In Luke 8:31-33, the demons in the plain of Gadara displayed very strongly their will not to be cast into the abyss, but rather to be allowed to enter into the swine.

Demons possess emotion. In James 2:19 we read: “the demons also believe, and tremble.”

Another fact that attests the personality of demons is their ability to speak. This is recorded in many passages of the New Testament. From the standpoint of psychology, we normally attribute the concept of personality to anything which is able to express its meaning in intelligible speech.

By every accepted standard therefore, we see that demons display all the attributes of personality. This is of tremendous importance. Christian believers are in no position to deal with demons successfully until they recognize that they are persons, not things. A demon is not a habit, or a mental state, or a psychological condition. A demon is a person.

One means by which the presence or activity of demons may be detected is the supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit called, in I Corinthians 12:10, “discerning of spirits.” Many Christians who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit manifest some measure of this discernment, but quite often they do not fully realize the nature of this operation of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and therefore they do not make effective use of it. Discernment of this kind needs to be cultivated by regular exercise. For this reason, we read in Hebrews 5:14 of believers, “that are of full age (maturity), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” In the church today there are all too few believers who exhibit this mark of spiritual maturity.

If Christians are willing to exercise their spiritual senses, they will soon begin to discover that there are many different symptoms which commonly indicate the presence or activity of demons. Some of the most common of these symptoms are set forth below, under two headings: first, psychological, related primarily to the inner nature and personality; second, physical, related primarily to the outward bodily appearance and condition.

I. PSYCHOLOGICAL

Persistent or recurrent evil or destructive emotions or attitudes that can dominate a person even contrary to his own will or nature: e.g. resentment, hatred, fear, envy, jealous, pride, self-pity, tension, impatience.

“Moods”—unreasonable, sudden, extreme fluctuations: e.g. from talkative exhilaration to silent depression.

Various forms of religious error or bondage: e.g. submission to unscriptural asceticism; refusal to eat normal foods; superstitious observances of all kinds; all forms of idolatry.

Resort to charms, fortune telling, astrology, mediums, etc.

Enslaving habits: e.g. gluttony; alcohol; nicotine; dope; sexual immorality or perversion of all kinds; uncontrollable unclean thoughts or looks.

Blasphemy, mockery, unclean language.

Persistent or violent opposition to the truth of Scripture or the work of the Holy Spirit.

II. PHYSICAL

Unnatural restlessness and talkativeness; muttering.

The eyes glazed, or unnaturally bright and sticking out, or unable to focus naturally.

Froth at the mouth; bad smelling breath.

Palpitation, or unnaturally accelerated action of the heart.

Shunning or fighting against the power or the Holy Spirit.

In many cases, one of these symptoms alone would not be a conclusive indication of demon presence or activity. But where several of these symptoms are found together, the probability of demon activity is extremely high.

In addition to these symptoms, the New Testament indicates plainly that demons are often the cause of purely physical sicknesses or infirmities. For instance, in Luke 13:11 we read of “a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” As soon as this woman was delivered from this spirit of infirmity, her physical condition became completely normal. Jesus Himself described her as “a daughter of Abraham.” That is to say, she was a true believer. There is no suggestion that she was guilty of any special sin. The power of the demon was manifested solely in her physical body.

Again, in Acts 19:11, we read concerning the ministry of Paul in Ephesus: “from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the disease departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” Here “evil spirits” and “diseases” are associated together in a way that plainly implies some kind of casual relationship between them.

The following are some common mental or physical conditions that are sometimes caused by demons: insanity; insomnia; epilepsy; fits; cramps; migraine; asthma; sinus infection; tumours; ulcers; heart disease; arthritis; paralysis; dumbness; deafness; blindness.

What are the conditions for deliverance from the destructive influence and power of demons?

The first condition is a correct diagnosis. In I Corinthians 9:26 Paul describes his ministry as follows: “so fight I, not as one that beats the air.” Where Christians are confronted by demons, but do not realize the nature of their enemies, they are like a boxer who lashes out wildly with his fists but never lands his blows upon his opponent’s body. They may expend much time and energy, but they never make real “contact” with the unseen enemies who oppose them. For this reason, relatively little is accomplished.

Once the presence and activity of demons have been correctly diagnosed, there are a number of further conditions for deliverance. Some of these concern the believer who is seeking to minister deliverance; others concern the person who needs deliverance.

For the sake of convenience, we will call the believer who is ministering deliverance: “the minister.” The following are five important conditions.

The minister must recognize the authority delegated to him in the name of Jesus. Jesus Himself said: “In my name shall they cast out demons.” In Luke 10:17 we read: “The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through your name.” In Acts 16:18, when Paul spoke to the spirit of divination in the girl at Philippi, he said: “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her...”

The minister needs the power of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 12:28, Jesus said: “If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.” He thus attributed His ability to cast out demons to the power of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, in Luke 4:18, He attributed to the anointing of the Holy Spirit His ability to “preach deliverance to the captives...to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

The minister must understand and apply to each case the relevant principles of Scripture which define the conditions for forgiveness of sins and the legal basis of redemption through the blood of Jesus.

The minister must often be prepared to provide both time and place for intimate personal counseling. Generally speaking, the most unsuitable time or place is at the front of a church during a public service!

The minister must beware of spiritual pride in any form. He should be motivated by sincere, God-given compassion for the one who needs deliverance. In all the outreaches of the church today there is no more needy or pitiful class of persons than those who require deliverance from demons.

We may now turn to the case of the one who needs deliverance, whom for convenience we will call “the patient.” The following are some requirements for deliverance:

Humility. The patient must, in humility, submit himself to God before he can resist the devil (see James 4:6-7).

Honesty. This demands a full and frank acknowledgment both of the patient’s condition and of any sins that may have contributed to that condition (see Psalm 32:1-5).

Confession. The patient must specifically confess to God all known sin (see I John 1:9). In addition, he may also have to make confession to the one who is praying with him for deliverance. This is implied by the words of James 5:16 – “Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another.” This speaks of confession not merely to God, but also to man. The order is: first, “confess”, then, “pray”.

Renunciation. It is not enough to confess sin without also renouncing it. “He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:7). The sinner must forsake not only “his way” (his outward acts), but also “his thoughts” (any inward sinful leanings or desires, even though these are not expressed in outward acts). “Forsaking” must come before “mercy” and “pardon”.

Forgiveness. The one who desires forgiveness from God must first forgive his fellow men. Resentment and an unforgiving spirit are two of the most common hindrances to deliverance.

In Hebrews 12:15, we are warned against “any root of bitterness.” Wherever bitterness has poisoned the heart, it must be totally removed, so that not even a root of it is left. There is special significance in the order of words in the Lord’s Prayer. First, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” (that is to say, our forgiveness from God is in proportion to our forgiveness of our fellow men). Then, “deliver us from the evil one...” That is to say, forgiveness must come before deliverance. Without forgiveness, we have no right to deliverance.

When the patient has met the above five conditions, he is then in a position to claim the promise of Joel 2:32. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” Calling aloud upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ normally sets in motion the process of deliverance.

It is important to realize that deliverance is normally a process. This process may be brief, or long drawn out; it may be tense and dramatic, or it may be quiet and hardly perceptible. But whenever a person is delivered from a demon, there is some definite experience or reaction. Where there is no definite experience or reaction, it is questionable whether deliverance has really been effected. In this connection, certain very simple, common-sense principles apply. If there is a demon anywhere within a person, then that demon must come out. Unless the demon actually comes out, there has been no deliverance. Normally, a demon will seek to remain in hiding, rather than be compelled to manifest its presence and come out.

Now a demon is a “spirit.” The Greek word for “spirit”, “*pneuma*” also means: “breath.” A person’s breath normally enters or leaves his body through his mouth or nose. The same is true of demons evil spirits. When a demon comes out of a person, it normally comes out through his mouth. At this point there is usually some definite manifestation. The following are some manifestations, connected with the mouth, which commonly mark the culmination of the process of deliverance: a hiss; a cough; sobbing; screaming; roaring; belching; spitting; vomiting.

The phenomena of screaming or roaring are referred to in Acts 8:7 – “Unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them.” However, these are only two out of various possible phenomena connected in some way with the mouth. Experience has convinced me that different classes of demons exhibit different types of behavior. For example, demons of sexual uncleanness normally come out with same form of spitting or vomiting (and quite often large amounts of slimy, mucous material are brought up in this process), the demon of fear normally comes out with a kind of hysterical sobbing or crying. The demons of lying and of hatred utter a loud roar. The demon of nicotine (smoking) comes out with a cough or a gasp.

It sometimes happens that demons virtually set aside the personality of the patient, and manifest and express their own personality through him. At times, they take control of the patient’s organs of speech, and use these to utter their own words. Sometimes this causes an obvious change of voice. A gruff, masculine type of voice may be heard out of a woman’s throat. It sometimes happens also that the demon within a person may understand and speak a language not known by the person himself. In such cases, the minister may exercise the authority delegated to him through the name of Jesus, and may command each demon to name itself, thus revealing its nature and activity. The following are some of the names that I have heard given: Fear – Hatred – Lies – Doubt – Envy – Jealousy – Confusion – Perversity – Schizophrenia – Death – Suicide – Adultery – Mockery – Blasphemy – Witchcraft.

Today, by divine Providence, the veils of convention and carnality are once again being drawn aside, and the Church of Jesus Christ is being confronted by the same manifest opposition of demon power that confronted the church of the New Testament. In these circumstances, the church must again explore the resources of authority and power made available to her through the truth of Scripture, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and the Name and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

THE BIBLICAL RECORD: SIGNS AND WONDERS IN THE GOSPELS, ACTS AND THE LETTERS

PROPOSITION

SIGNS AND WONDERS were (and are) at the heart of the ministry of Jesus. In the great commission, the authority of God was imparted to the Church. At Pentecost the power of God was imparted. Jesus began His ministry after He was empowered by the Spirit at His baptism. Jesus saw Himself in conflict with Satan. He and the Gospel writers viewed sickness as a work of Satan. The ministry of Jesus in Signs and Wonders was based on His relationship with the Holy Spirit, who is imaginative and creative. Therefore, one should not try to reduce the ministry of Jesus to a group of simplistic principles for the purpose of developing a Signs and Wonders ministry.

The disciples, who were the embryonic Church (the church in formation), were empowered to work the same ministry that Jesus worked. The result was Signs and Wonders, which occurred throughout the Book of Acts. There is a close relationship between their occurrence and the growth of the early Church. The Church grew whenever the Gospel was preached, and Signs and Wonders happened. The activities of the New Testament Church demonstrated an anticipation of supernatural involvement. The Church was led by supernatural means, i.e. visions, visitations, prophecies, etc. When a power encounter took place, Signs and Wonders were happening at the same time. Both success and failure are recorded for us in the New Testament. The letters especially share some apparent failures.

Signs and Wonders were often performed as a witness to apostleship and the Gospel message. They were and are the emblem of God's compassion toward His people.

DOCUMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 14:26-29 we read the account of Jesus walking on the water and Peter's request and attempt to do the same: "And when the disciple saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, "It is a spirit!" and they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" and Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus." Learning how to heal is like learning how to walk on water. In both areas it is useful to know relevant Biblical principles, to understand that Jesus is the Lord of all creation, to talk to others who have been successfully involved in the activity, and compare notes on why various approaches succeed or fail. All this is helpful. However, when the time comes to "get out of the boat" all the best ideas and insights on "water walking" are of very little value. The ability to successfully transcend the laws of nature is not discovered by mastering techniques or methodologies. When it comes to ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit, many people know why certain things can or should happen – but few people actually see them happen in their own experience.

The how of the healing ministry of Jesus is a mystery! But there is an even more perplexing question – why? Why would Jesus pass on to His followers the wonderful privilege of continuing His healing ministry? The fact is that He has chosen to do so! However painful, there are some members of His Body who are responding in obedience to Him by choosing to move into the realm of the miraculous. Remember, eleven of the disciples stayed in the boat. Only Peter ventured out onto the water. As a result it was Peter alone who enjoyed the privilege of overcoming the laws of nature in response to the Lord's call.

A ministry in the Spirit is withheld from those who seek to perform it in the power of the flesh. Pride and ambition are hindrances in the spiritual realm. A person who seeks to share the glory along with the risen Lord is limiting his usefulness to Him. Sadly, many who are greatly used in a healing ministry succumb to this subtle and destructive error. Occasionally what begins in the Spirit, unfortunately ends up in the flesh. Knowing the potential for casualties, we should approach

a ministry of healing with reverence and sincere dependence on the Holy Spirit. Jesus is still doing today what He was doing on the storm – tossed Sea of Galilee – calling common people to move above and beyond natural laws and walk with Him in the realm of the miraculous. In the realm of the Spirit one thing is certain – much more is unknown than is known! But our Lord is calling us to follow Him. As we follow Him together, may He give us eyes to see what He is showing us; ears to hear and understand the language of the Spirit; and hearts that are strong enough to endure the thrill of living a miraculous life moment by moment.

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS

Everywhere Jesus went He functioned as a healer. Forty-one distinct instances of physical and mental healing are recorded in the four Gospels, but this by no means represents the total. Many of the references summarize the healing of large numbers of people. The accounts described in detail are simply the more dramatic instances of the healing ministry of Jesus. Toward the end of his account of the life and ministry of the Savior, John writes: "Many other signs therefore, Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written." John 20:30-31; 21:25.

Nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts is devoted to Jesus' healing ministry and the discussion occasioned by it. Out of 3,779 verses in the four Gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical and mental illness and the resurrection of the dead. Except for a discussion of miracles in general, the attention devoted to the healing ministry of Jesus is far greater than that devoted to any one kind of experience. It is startling to compare the emphasis on physical and mental healing with the scant attention given to moral healing. In the following chart, the forty-one accounts of Jesus' healings recorded in the Gospels are organized. Please note the diversity, the very numerous nature and the prominence that the Gospel writers give to this ministry. The second chart shows the healing ministry of Jesus by category, while the third shows the miracles of Jesus other than healing.

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS: OVERVIEW

(Refer to key below for A, B, C, etc.)

Description	Matt	Mark	Luke	John	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1. Man with unclean spirit		1:23	4:33		X	X								
2. Peter's mother-in-law	8:14	1:30	4:38			X	X	X						
3. Multitudes	8:16	1:32	4:40			X	X		X					
4. Many demons		1:34			X					X				
5. Leper	8:2	1:40	5:12			X	X				X	X		
6. Man with palsy	9:2	2:3	5:18			X			X					
7. Man with withered hand	12:10	3:1	6:6			X					X			
8. Multitudes	12:15	3:10			X									
9. Gardens demoniac	8:28	5:1	8:26		X	X								
10. Jairus' daughter	9:18	5:22	8:41			X	X		X					
11. Woman with blood	9:20	5:25	8:43								X		X	
12. A few sick people	13:58	6:5					X							
13. Multitudes	14:34	6:55							X				X	

14.Syro-ph.'s daughter	15:22	7:24						X	X					
15. Deaf and dumb man		7:32				X	X	X						
16. Blind man		8:22				X	X	X						
17. Child with evil spirit	17:14	9:14	9:38			X	X		X	X				
18. Blind Bartimaeus	20:30	10:46	18:35			X	X				X	X		
19. Centurion's servant	8:5		7:2					X	X					
20. Two blind men	9:27					X	X				X			
21. Dumb demoniac	9:32				X									
22.Blind &dumb demoniac	12:22		11:14		X									
23. Multitudes	4:23		6:17							X				X
24. Multitudes	9:35									X				X
25. Multitudes	11:7		7:21							X				X
26. Multitudes	14:14		9:11	6:2								X		
27. Great Multitudes	15:30									X				X
28. Great Multitudes	19:2													
29.Blind & lame in Temple	21:14													
30. Widow's son			7:11			X						X		
31. Mary and others			8:2		X									
32.Woman bound by Satan			13:10			X	X							
33. Man with dropsy			14:01				X							
34. Ten lepers			17:11			X					X			
35. Malchus' ear			22:50			X								
36. Multitudes			5:15											
37. Various persons			13:32		X									
38. Nobleman's son				4: 46		X			X					
39. Impotent man				5:2		X					X			
40. Man born blind				9:1		X	X							
41. Lazarus				11: 1		X								

Key:

- Drove out demons
- Word spoken
- Touched by Jesus
- Prayer of another
- Faith of another
- Preaching of Jesus
- The person's faith
- Jesus moved by compassion
- The person touched Jesus
- Teaching of Jesus

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS

BY Category

DESCRIPTION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Lameness, Palsy, Paralysis				
Centurion's servant	8:5		7:1	
Man with palsy	9:1	2:1	5:18	
Man with withered hand	12:10	3:1	6:6	
Woman bound by Satan			13:16	
Blind and lame in Temple	21:14			
Leprosy				
Leper	8:2	1:40	5:12	
Ten lepers			17:12	
Fever				
Peter's mother-in-law	8:14	1:30	4:38	
Nobleman's son				4:47
Blindness				
Man born blind				9:1
Blind Bartemaeous	20:30	10:46	18:35	
Blind man		8:22		
Two blind men	9:27			
Blind and lame in Temple	21:14			
Deaf				
Deaf and dumb man		7:32		
Dropsy				
Man with dropsy			14:1	
Restored Physically				
Malchus' ear			22:50	
Dealt with sin				
Man with palsy	9:2	2:3	5:17	
Impotent man				5:14
Demonic				
Gadarenes demoniac	8:28	5:1	8:26	
Syro-phoenician's daughter	15:22	7:24		
Child with evil spirit	17:14	9:14	9:38	
Man with unclean spirit		1:23	4:33	
Mary Magdalene and others			8:2	
Dumb demoniac	9:32			

Multitudes	4:24			
Multitudes	8:16			
Blind and dumb demoniacs	12:22		11:14	
Many demons		1:32,39		
Multitudes		3:10; 6:13		
Multitudes		4:36		
Multitudes		6:34		
Multitudes		7:17		
Raised From The Dead				
Jairus' daughter	9:18	5:22	8:41	
Lazarus				11:1
Widow's son			7:11	
Healed On Sabbath				
Man with unclean spirit		1:21	4:35	
Man with withered hand	12:9	3:1	6:6	
Woman bound by Satan			13:16	
Man with dropsy			14:1	
Impotent man				5:2
Man born blind				9:1
Flow Of Blood				
Woman with issue of blood	9:20	5:25	8:43	
Multitudes				
A few sick people	13:58	6:5		
Multitudes	14:34	6:55		
Multitudes	4:23		6:17	
Multitudes	9:35			
Multitudes	14:14		9:11	6:2
Great multitudes	15:30			
Great multitudes	19:2			
Multitudes				
Various persons				
Multitudes	11:4			
All Kinds Of Disease				
	4:23	6:5		
	9:35			
	12:15	6:55		
	14:14			
	14:35			
	19:2			

Similar Wording				
Demon possession added	8:16	1:32	4:40	
		3:7	6:17	
			8:2	
These and Other Categories				
	4:24		7:21	
	15:30			
	21:14			
Miracles Other Than Healing in Nature, Grace & Judgement				
A catch of fish			5:1-11	
Calming the storm	8:23-27	4:36-41	8:22-25	
Water turned into wine				2:1-11
Feeding the 5,000	14:15-21	6:32-44	9:12-17	6:1-13
Walking on the water	14:22-23		6:45-52	6:15-21
Feeding the 4,000	15:32-39	8:1-10		
Transfiguration	17:1-9	9:2-10	9:28-36	
Coin in the fish's mouth	17:24-27			
Curtain torn and earthquake	27:51	15:38	23:45	
The catch of 153 fish				21:1-14

SOME KEY PRINCIPLES AND PATTERNS IN THE HEALING WORK OF JESUS

Jesus began healing after His baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-19). He delivered all who came to him from every kind of sickness (Mark 7:31-37), demonic possession and related effects (Matthew 17:14-21), and even physical death (John 11:43-44).

The Gospel writers frequently note that Jesus' healing works were motivated by compassion and pity for the sick. He had compassion for crowds (Matthew 9:36; 14:14), as well as pity on two blind beggars (Matthew 20:34). He seemed to be more able to heal in the presence faith in Him and in His power to heal. He was especially moved by the "great faith" of the centurion (Matthew 8:5-13). He observed supernaturally the faith of the "bed carriers" as they carried the paralytic, Several other illustrations are the blind men (Matthew 9:27-31); the hemorrhaging woman (Mark 5:24b-34); the father of the demoniac boy (Mark 9:14-29). He was not so effective in His own home town (Luke 4:23-28) where there was no faith demonstrated in who He was. Jesus sometimes healed when He alone believed, but He was clearly limited by an unbelieving (negative faith) atmosphere. He could do no mighty work in Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:23-28), and He had to lead the blind man out of Bethsaida to heal him (Mark 8:22). Jesus seems to have healed at all times, but as He flowed with the Spirit He was apparently aware of times when the Spirit was especially ready to move in power e.g., "power of the Lord present to heal" – Luke 5:17.

He was always willing to heal those who came to Him with faith as did the leper (Matthew 8:1-4), the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13), and the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30). Frequently the Lord would heal many people, one after another, in large meetings or gatherings (Matthew 4:23-25; 14:13-14; 15:30-31), but would not do miracles for those who only wanted to test Him or be entertained e.g., the Scribes and Pharisees – Matthew 12:38-42. Resistance on any grounds to healing the needy grieved the Lord! Two illustrations are the man with the withered hand healed on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6); and the woman with a spirit of infirmity who was also healed on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17).

Our Lord used many patterns and methods in healing. Sometimes it was a touch, as with Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:15); other times it was a prayer as with Lazarus (John 11:41-42). He would often speak a word of command like "Go" to the centurion (Matthew 8:5-13); "Rise" to the paralytic (Luke 5:17-26); "Stretch out" to the man with the withered hand (Luke 6:6-10); and "Arise" to the son of the widow in Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Sometimes His pattern would include both a touch and command as with the leper (Luke 5:12-16). Other times it was someone touching Him, like the "many" in Matthew 14:34-36; and the hemorrhaging woman in Luke 8:24b-48. On several occasions He used spittle or mud (deaf and dumb – Mark 7:31-37; blind man – Mark 8:22-26; blind man – John 9:6-7). Often He required those being prayed for to perform some act of faith. Some examples are: "Stretch out your hand," to the man with the withered hand (Luke 6:6-10); "Go wash," to the blind man (John 9:7); and "Go, show yourself to the priest," to the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19).

Jesus most often healed in public, though sometimes He withdrew (especially in negative environments) and would heal privately, as in the case of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:35-43), the blind man from Bethany (Mark 8:22-26); and Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39). He often asked questions regarding the healing, indicating that: 1) While He sometimes received words of knowledge, other times He did not; 2) He wanted His focus exactly on target. He asked the blind man, "...Do you see anything...?" (Mark 8:22-26); Of the Gerasene demoniac He asked, ".....What is your name...?" (Mark 5:1-13); to the father of the demoniac boy He asked, "....How long has he had this....?" (Mark 9:14-29); of Bartimaeus He asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:46-52). Jesus frequently directed the ones He healed to get "medical proof" (See Leviticus 13:49; 14:2-32), and was positive about the work of the physicians. Some examples are: the leper (Matthew 8:1-4); the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19); need of a physician (Mark 2:17).

Sometimes Jesus had to pray more than once for the needy person to be healed e.g., the blind man of Bethsaida – Mark 8:22-26. He continued to pray for the Gerasene demoniac. The word translated "He had been saying" (Greek: "elegen"), is an imperfect active indicative. The kind of action the verb has is continuous action. He frequently delivered the demonized and healed them of related effects using various patterns. He demanded the demons' names in Mark 5:1-13; He required silence from the demons in Luke 4:31-37; 40-41; and cast them out with a command (Luke 4:35-36). Finally He issued very strong warnings against labeling healing done in His name and by His Spirit as demonic in origin. Such words would blaspheme the Spirit and could move Him to permanent wrath! E.g., Pharisees blasphemy of Spirit (Mark 3:19b-30).

FOUR IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF JESUS' LIFE

A. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, became flesh. The secret of the sinless life of Jesus and His miraculous ministry is grounded in His relationship to the Father. Even though He was God, Jesus drew His power from an intimate, child-like relationship with the Father in heaven. The ability to hear what God is saying, to see what God is doing, and to move in the realm of the miraculous comes as an individual develops the same intimacy with and dependence upon the Father! How did Jesus do what He did? The answer is found in His relationship with the Father. How will we do the "greater works than these" which Jesus promised? By discovering the same relationship of intimacy, simplicity and obedience.

John shows the nature of this relationship and how the ministry of Jesus flowed out of it. In John 1:1, he tells Jesus' relationship with the Father has always been (was-imperfect tense). This relationship, he goes on to show, was continued on earth. John also shares in 3:10-13 that Jesus speaks of what He knows (Greek: "oida" – knowledge through experience). His speaking flows out of His experience with the Father. Jesus works together with the Father; He does nothing on His own initiative. He acts and speaks only what He sees the Father doing (John 5:17-21). This brief overview emphasizes the relationship of the Father and the Son. John has more to say on the subject which is well worth studying.

B. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is that sovereign member of the Godhead who comes to indwell the Christian's life. Although his work is manifold, one indispensable reason for His presence in the Christian's life is to give power. The role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of the Christian is covered most sensitively and perceptively in Luke's Gospel. The Spirit is the Christian's sole resource for supernatural power in doing the work of God. Luke is careful to record this role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. He leaves no room for doubt that the Holy Spirit alone is the key to Jesus' power and effectiveness in His ministry. Review these passages in Luke covering Jesus' preparation for ministry: Luke 3:21-23; 4:1,14,18; 5:17. Five times in just a few paragraphs, Luke gives us vital information about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. These opening paragraphs show the launching of Jesus into His ministry. He preached and healed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit healed through Jesus in the same way He heals through us.

C. HIS PRAYER LIFE

Prayer as it relates to healing is stressed throughout the New Testament. It was particularly marked in the life of Jesus. On one occasion Jesus inferred that prolonged prayer may be a necessary element in very difficult cases of healing (Mark 9:29). It is interesting to trace prayer in the life of Christ, especially as it relates to His healing ministry. Luke seems to make a point in this regard. We have already noted Luke's captivation with the relationship between Jesus' ministry and the Holy Spirit. He seems to imply the same in regard to prayer. At Jesus' baptism Luke says that Jesus was praying. Before Jesus launched into His ministry, He spent forty days in the wilderness fasting and praying (Luke 4:1-13). The next mention of prayer by Luke is of Jesus getting up early in the morning for a quiet time alone with God prior to a very crowded and busy schedule of ministry (Luke 4:42). Then he tells us about the crowds of people that came to hear Jesus and to be healed, and how He withdrew from them to pray (Luke 5:15). Jesus prayed all night before selecting the twelve apostles whom he sent out to preach and to heal (Luke 6:12-16).

The vital relationship between the prayer life of Jesus and His power-filled ministry, both in teaching and in healing, provides a helpful model for the Church today. Good preaching, to some extent at least, can be developed through close study and application of sound principles of speech, homiletics and communications; but the awesome demands of ministering to someone who is hurting can only be met by an active and believing prayer life. Learning to use the weapon of prayer in the healing ministry is certainly not unrelated to other aspects of the Christian life. The failure to be actively engaged in one aspect of the Christian life tends to affect the whole. Active, believing prayer included in the ministry of Christian healing will add a new vibrancy to all aspects of the life of the Church.

D. HIS PERSPECTIVE OF SICKNESS

Jesus was motivated to heal men not only because of His love for them, but also because of His hatred of the forces that bound them. A word of rebuke was often on the lips of Jesus when He was dealing with demons. The first demon Jesus met at the beginning of His ministry started to scream, until Jesus rebuked him (Luke 4:35). Jesus did this on other occasions, once even rebuking a fever as if it were an animate thing that could respond to the orders of Jesus (which it did, Luke 4:39). Another time Jesus rebuked the elements of nature that were about to sink the boat He and the disciples were in (Luke 8:24).

There is other evidence that Jesus was hostile to the forces of evil besides the specific use of the word "rebuke." One instance of this comes from Mark 3:1-6. Here we see Jesus in a synagogue on the Sabbath day. A man with a paralyzed hand was there. The Pharisees were watching to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath. Jesus called the man to come up front and told him to stand there. He then turned to His antagonists and asked them if the Law permitted one to do good on the Sabbath. Phillip's New Testament adds: "There was a dead silence." Then Jesus, deeply hurt as He sensed their humanity, looked around in anger at the faces surrounding Him, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." Here we find one of the few times when Jesus is said to be angry with their lack of compassion. Jesus' underlying attitude was that the demon-possessed and the

physically ill were under the influence of an evil power. Some evil source-demons, Satan, something destructive and uncreative – the very opposite of the Spirit, seemed to have gained control or at least a partial influence over the sick person. Since Jesus by His very nature was opposed to this power and hostile to it, He wanted to bring it into subjection and in that way to free man. Jesus healed because He was opposed to anything which bound or enslaved men. He recognized that the forces of darkness were in some way connected with man's physical infirmities, and in opposing these infirmities, He was in essence showing His opposition to Satan and his kingdom.

JESUS AND THE HEALING MINISTRY OF OTHERS

Jesus came not only to bring the Kingdom of God, to save and heal people, but also to impart to others this healing ministry that they might share in bringing people under the Rule of God. We as the Church, were commissioned by Jesus almost 2,000 years ago to announce the Good News to all creation through the healing "signs" that would accompany and authenticate the message wherever it was preached. Today we find that about half the world's population has yet to hear the good news about Jesus. Therefore, the transference of Jesus' healing ministry to others (the Church) and the powerful exercise of it today is of utmost importance if we hope to see the Kingdom of God reach the ends of the earth.

THE MODELING OF MINISTRY

Jesus transferred His healing ministry only after He had adequately modeled it. He chose and called twelve disciples with the purpose that they should first be with Him, and then be sent out to heal. They learned first by watching Jesus model healing. Everyday while living with Jesus they saw the power, the joy, the responsibility, the strain and tiredness involved in healing. They learned from His example exactly what to do. Jesus' method was clearly to minister while His disciples watched, then to have them minister with Him watching them or receiving their reports, and then to leave them doing it on their own.

THE GIVING OF MINISTRY

Jesus gave this ministry to committed people. The Twelve were called to commitment to the Person of Jesus. They were basically a mixed bunch with backgrounds varying from rough, to status quo, to radical. But through mutual commitment Jesus made disciples out of them. He developed character and leadership within them. Yet when He sent them out they were by no means perfect. That is the risk involved in training. The seventy seem to include a wider group of committed people in training who were sent out after the twelve had done what Jesus did. After this it becomes clear that Jesus has given this healing ministry to the Church, and that any Spirit filled believer can heal.

THE COMMISSIONING AND GIFTING FOR MINISTRY

Jesus transferred this ministry by commission and gifting. After He had modeled healing, He commissioned His disciples to go and heal, and gave them the power to do so. Therefore, they were operating with His authority (commission) and His power (gifting). Since Jesus has left the earth, the impartation of His ministry has not changed. His commission still stands for all believers and the gift of the Holy Spirit has been sent to empower us to fulfill the commission.

THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERING

Jesus gave some instructions. He told them where and to whom they should go. (He is still doing this every day through His Spirit in the hearts of listening believers). They were to pronounce the Kingdom of God upon the recipients and give healing freely, no matter what the need was, because they had received freely. A simple lifestyle of trusting God, travelling light and healing the sick was developed. They were to give themselves to the hospitality and the support of receptive people, and avoid wasting time with persons who might reject God's Kingdom. Persecution was to be expected, therefore, they were to operate wisely and keep their innocence. The Holy Spirit within us is our Helper and Instructor for every situation.

THE DIFFICULTIES IN MINISTRY

Those to whom this ministry was given encountered difficulties. Their initial excursion was greeted with great success and joy. Even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' Name! However, they soon encountered difficulties with their own pride and carnality e.g., trying to stop others who were healing in Jesus' Name. They lapsed back into unbelief and Jesus had to rebuke them. The early Church also encountered vicious persecution, especially from the religious leaders of the day.

THE ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT IN MINISTRY

The ministry of healing was carried out through the followers' assertive faith quickened by the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit. The main elements in the carrying out of the healing ministry by them to whom it was imparted was faith and the anointing of the Spirit e.g., when Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate called Beautiful, Peter explains that it was not because of their spirituality, but Jesus' Name and faith in his Name that made the man whole. It is prayer of faith that saves the sick. Therefore, assertive faith means a confidence without need of proof or regard for evidence, a conviction of truth and willingness to stand by it. There were obviously other elements present in this healing (they spoke a word, laid hands on, etc.), but all was done by the direction and anointing of the Spirit. This resulted in a quickening of faith, either in the recipient or the healer. It is also important to note that they usually ministered in teams.

THE EXPANSION OF THE MINISTRY

The expansion of the ministry of healing from one to many had cosmic and universal effects. When Jesus sent out the twelve and later the seventy, He not only vastly increased the possibilities for people to be healed, but as Jesus himself said, He saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). The kingdom of darkness suffered defeat. The extension of the Kingdom of God is relative to the number of people who heal the sick. In the early Church it was the most effective means of evangelism. This was the way they turned their world upside down and almost took over the Roman Empire. Whole towns turned to Jesus. Commerce and society were changed; there were persecutions and uproar; churches were planted. This was all due to the continuous expansion of the healing ministry.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING TODAY

The healing ministry is valid for today. It is for you to exercise now, as the references we have shared show that this ministry is valid for today. Our concern is that you begin to do what Jesus and the apostles did, because that is what you are meant to do. We were not told to study healing although this course gives you a Scriptural basis for your faith and ministry. We were commissioned and empowered to actually heal people. This is where the emphasis must be.

ACTS: AN INTRODUCTION

Why did the early Church grow as it did? Is there any pattern to show God acted to make His Church grow? Could signs and wonders have played a part? Let's see if we can answer some of these questions. The Book of Acts is basically broken up into six sections. Each of the sections takes us a step further, from Jerusalem to Rome, in fulfillment of Acts 1:8. The Spirit's ministry starts in Jerusalem, moves to Judea and Samaria, among Gentiles (Non-Jews), then to Asia, Europe, and finally to Rome. Acts is a story of the people of God empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring the Rule of God into Satan's domain. Luke is the theologian of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and he wants his readers, then and now, to understand that it is the empowering Spirit of God who moves the Church beyond her own boundaries to risk doing and becoming what God desires. The Holy Spirit is basic to understanding the growth of the Church in Acts.

POWER EVANGELISM – THE BOOK OF ACTS

Let us look now to the text of Acts to see if Luke has left us any pattern indicating how God acts. What I see here is what we call Power Evangelism. Luke (Acts 1) begins by telling us that this is a companion volume to his Gospel, in which he dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach. The

emphasis seems to be that Luke now continues the story of Jesus' doing and teaching through his disciples whom he empowered by the Holy Spirit (see v.5). The disciples still somewhat misread him concerning the Kingdom as verses 6-7 shows. The key to the progress of Acts is in Chapter 1:8. Then Jesus ascends, leaving them with the promise of His return.

Luke begins by seeming to contrast the unempowered group before Pentecost with the empowered group after Pentecost. This group in chapter 1 is still doing things according to the Old Testament pattern. Notice that in their choice of one to take place of Judas they cast lots, recalling the "Urim and Thummim" of the Old Testament by which God's will was decided. After the Spirit came, when someone needed to be chosen none of this occurred (see 6:1-6). The full details of the Spirit's coming are spelled out in chapter 2.

There are at least ten kinds of sign phenomena occurring in the Book of Acts which result in evangelistic growth of the Church. They are listed here:

SPEAKING GIFTS – These occur four times (three in which the Church grows).

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Tongues – 2:4	3,000 added – 2:41
Tongues – 10:44	Baptized believers – 10:47
Prophecy (?) – 13:1	Conversion of John the Baptist's disciples – 19:7
Tongues / Prophecy – 19:1-7	

VISIONS – There are four instances recorded.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Cornelius – 10:1	Baptized believers – 10:47
Peter – 10:9	
Paul, Macedonia man – 16:8	European churches
Paul – 18:9	Church at Corinth

POWER ENCOUNTER - There is one recorded between Paul and Elymas at 13:4ff. The result – the proconsul believed.

DEAD RAISED – There are two cases of bringing back to life recorded.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Dorcas – 9:36	Many believed – 9:42
Eutychus – 20:9	

MIRACLES (specific) - These occurred six times.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Ananias / Sapphira – 5:1-11	Fear – 5:12
Spirit caught up Philip – 8:39	
Paul blinded – 9:1-9a	
Blindness of Elymas – 13:11	Proconsul believed – 13:12
Paul stoned / raised – 14:19-23	Disciples – 14:21
Viper bites Paul – 28:3-10	Church established – Not recorded in Acts but recorded in Church history).

HEALINGS (specific) – These are seven recorded.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Lame Man – 3:1	5,000 men – 4:4
Sick and unclean spirits – 5:16	Healed – 5:16
Paul blindness healed – 9:1-9a	
Aeneas' paralysis healed by Peter – 9:32-35	All Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord – 9:35
Lame man – Lystra – 14:8	Disciples – 14:21
Demon expelled – 16:16	Brethren – 16:40

Publius' Father – fever / dysentery – 28:3-10	All sick on Island healed – Church started according to Church history
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LAYING ON HANDS – This occurs four times.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Seven chosen – 6:6	Signs and Wonders / Stephen – 6:8; Signs / Philip – 8:6
Samaria / receive Spirit – 8:17	Simon brought in – 8:24
Ananias to Paul – 9:17	
Church to Paul & Barnabas – 13:1-3	

SENSE PHENOMENA – This occurs three times.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Sound like wind / tongues like fire – 2:4	3,000 saved – 2:41
Gate opens for Peter – 12:8f	
Earthquake, fetters unfastened, doors opened – 16:25ff	Jailer saved – 16:34

SIGNS AND WONDERS – These occur nine times, and are the most frequent. Luke refers to them (at 2:22) and records that they are the things which Jesus did when with the disciples. These would include healing, expelling of demons, miracles with nature and food, raising the dead, being transported from one place to another.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
By disciples – 2:43	Daily adding to Church – 2:47
Power of God shown in mighty works – 4:33	
Hands of apostles – 5:12	Multitudes added – 5:14
Stephen – 6:7	
Philip – 8:6	Samaria Church – 8:12
Hand of Lord with them 11:20-21 cp/w 13:11	Great number believed and turned to the Lord – 11:21
Full of Spirit – 11:24-25 cp/w Stephen – 6:8	Lord added to the Church – 11:24
Paul and Barnabas – 14:1-7	Believers – 14:4, 20
Extraordinary miracles / teaching at Ephesus – 19:11	All Churches in Book of Revelation started during these two years.

ANGELIC VISTIATION – There are three recorded.

EXAMPLE	RESULT
Philip – 8:26	Baptized eunuch – 8:38
Peter – 12:8	
Paul – 27:21	

RELATIONSHIP TO TEACHING / PREACHING

Another point needs to be made regarding Signs and Wonders. There are fourteen times in Acts when Signs and Wonders occur together with preaching and church growth. Let us examine the following table given below:

Signs and Wonders	Preaching	Church Growth
2:4	2:14	2:41
3:1	3:12	4:4
8:6	8:6	8:12
8:26	8:35	8:38
10:3, 12, 44	10:34	10:47
11:20-21	11:20	11:21
11:24-25	11:25	11:24b
13:1-3		Churches in Asia, Europe
14:1-7	14:3	14:4, 20
14:8-18	14:15	14:21
16:16	16:14	16:40
16:25ff	16:31	16:34
18:1	18:1-18	18:18
19:11	19:10	Churches in Asia

There are at least two significant observations which need to be made: 1) There are twenty occasions when church growth is directly related to Signs and Wonders. 2) Only once is church growth attributed to preaching alone.

It seems clear from this survey of Acts that Signs and Wonders played a vital and integral part in the spread of the gospel. Has this stopped being the case? Surely not! The Holy Spirit still seeks to become involved in a similar way in churches today, as He has sought to do down through the centuries, so that the spread of the gospel might be accelerated.

THE LETTERS – POSSIBLE FAILURES

The New Testament pages are full of the miracles which occurred in the ministry of Jesus and the disciples. There are, however, four instances of men who appear to have not received healing. No reason or purpose is mentioned for their lack of healing, with the possible exception of Paul (Galatians 4:13-16). They are 1) Paul with a probable eye affliction (Galatians 4:13-16); 2) Trophimus whom Paul left ill at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20); 3) Epaphroditus was ill and almost died (Philippians 2:25-30) – God had mercy, but does this mean he was healed? 4) Timothy who was advised by Paul to take some wine for his stomach and frequent ailments (1 Timothy 5:23). There is one more often disputed text concerning Paul himself – he writes about his “thorn in the flesh” in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. This text is usually combined with the Galatians text (4:13-15) to suggest that the “thorn” was a physical ailment for which Paul never received a healing. The context, however, in which this appears seems to indicate that his “thorn” was opposition from others (cf.v.10). Nevertheless, this whole area needs further investigation and clarification.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE - AN INTRODUCTION

A Definition : Spiritual warfare is a conflict in the spiritual realm the forces of darkness and evil (satanic powers), against God, His creation, and His dominion in the heavenlies and on earth. (See Ephesians 6:12).

Spiritual warfare began when Lucifer (or Satan), one of God's angels, rebelled and lead a rebellion of other angels, which we now call demons, against God in an attempt to usurp (unlawfully seize) the position, power, and authority which belongs to God alone, and to receive His glory. In Isaiah 42:8, God clearly states through His prophet; "I am the Lord, that is my name, I will not give my glory to another."

But we see that Satan sought to take the place of God, due to his pride, and desired to be exalted as God. Two Scriptures that describe his sin and rebellion are found in Isaiah 14:10-15, and Ezekiel 28:12-17. Although these words are against the kings of Babylon and Tyre, symbolically, very clearly, it refers to an angelic being, which Biblically can be non other than Satan the devil. In Luke 10:18, Jesus also refers to the fall of Satan from heaven. The Scriptures in Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4, speak of the fall of his followers with him. We can read about real battles in the heavenlies between God's angels and the forces of darkness, (fallen angels), or demons, in Daniel 10:13,21; Jude 9. A future conflict of this nature is spoken of in Rev. 12:9.

Pertaining to how and when man entered into this warfare, we find the first reference in Genesis 3:1-16, where Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempts and deceives man, resulting in him sinning, and bringing a separation between him and God. See Isaiah 59:1-2. Evidently Satan is the enemy of God and His creation, (mainly people), and he will never repent, resulting in his final judgement written in Revelation 20:7-10.

There are some important facts to keep in mind concerning our enemy the devil:

He is a deceiver – Gen. 3:13; Rev. 12:9

He is a liar – Gen. 3:4; John 8:44

He is an accuser – Job 1:11; 2:5; Zech. 3:1-2; Rev. 12:10

He is a killer – John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8

He is thief – John 10:10; Matt. 13:19.

Since Satan cannot attack God directly, he chooses to attack people, who are created in the image and likeness of God. Thus, how do we defend ourselves against his attack, and gain the victory over him? First we must realize that Satan defeated mankind because he caused him to sin, separating him from God, who alone is more powerful than the devil. But the good news is that God sent His Son Jesus Christ to shed His blood on the cross, to give us forgiveness and victory over sin, and the power of death and devil. Read the following important passages of Scripture: 1 Cor. 15:22-26; Rom. 5:12,15. Also look at Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8. It is only by the blood of Jesus that we have the victory in this battle and can defeat the enemy. This is realised by receiving His gospel, His Word, His testimony and surrendering our lives completely to Him. See Rev. 12:11.

Looking at the significance of Jesus' death on the cross in relation to the authority He now has over our enemy the following Scriptures give clarity: Philippians 2:7-11; Col. 1:13-16; Matt 28:18. Once again the truth is established from the Word that only Jesus Christ has the victory over the devil and all the powers of darkness, and we can enter into that victory only through faith in Him.

In this study, we'll continue by taking a brief look at who we are in Christ, and the authority we have because we are in Christ, over all the powers of darkness in the heavenlies and on the earth.

In order to be IN CHRIST one needs to have the following requirements met in obedience to God's Word:

Those who are born again and know Jesus personally as Lord and Savior – John 3:3-5; 1 John 5:4-5,18; Rom. 10:9-10.

Those who have repented, been baptized and have their sins forgiven – Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:8-9.

Those who are totally submitted to God's authority – James 4:7; 1 Pet .5:6.

Those who abide in Him and in whom His Word abides – 1 John 2:3-6; John 15:7.

Those who are walking in obedience to God's revealed Word to them – 1 John 2:3.

Those who are led of and baptized in the Holy Spirit – Rom. 8:9,14; Gal. 5:24-25; Matt. 3:11.

Then we can see our identity, (who we are IN CHRIST), and know our inheritance as per the promises in God's Word concerning us (2 Cor. 1:20). Let us look at some of the main Scriptures in relation to who we are IN CHRIST: (P.S. - Study for yourself for a complete overview and understanding all the Scriptures with "IN CHRIST/ IN HIM and THROUGH CHRIST/ THROUGH HIM which will be a great and spiritual enriching blessing for you!! Or study them in Book No. 12)

A new creation – 2 Cor. 5:17

God's children – John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-16

Heirs and co-heirs- Rom. 8:17; James 2:5

A chosen generation and a royal priesthood – 1 Pet. 2:9

Temples of the Holy Spirit – 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20

Friends – John 15:15

Co-workers – 1 Cor. 3:9

Servants – 2 Cor. 3:5-6

Soldiers – 2 Tim. 2:3-4

Overcomers – 1 John 4:4; 5:4

More than conquerors – Rom. 8:37-39

We will proceed to look at our position of authority IN CHRIST, and how we can exercise this authority in Spiritual Warfare. We know from Matt. 28:18, that all authority in heaven and earth belongs to Jesus, and that He disarmed demonic powers and authorities, triumphing over them by the cross. (Col. 2:14-15). This has rendered the devil powerless over us according to what is written in Heb. 2:14-15. From the time of Adam's fall until Calvary, Satan had the keys of death and hell, and had the authority to keep us in spiritual death, and to take us to hell. But Jesus broke Satan's authority over us, by recapturing those keys. The word "keys", speaks of authority. In Rev. 1:17-18, we see that Jesus now possesses the keys after His death and resurrection, and swallowed up death in victory. (see also 1 Cor. 15:54-57). Satan is already judged, (his destiny already determined), according to the words spoken by Jesus in John 12:31 and 16:11. The devil has nothing in Jesus, and therefore those of us who are IN CHRIST, will not be touched by the devil too. (John 14:30 and 1 John 5:18). Pertaining to our authority, Jesus gives us the "keys" to kingdom of heaven, to bind and loose things in heaven and on earth as per Matt. 16:9. In Spiritual Warfare this speaks of binding demonic forces in their activities against people, and losing their hold over peoples lives, as well as losing God's blessings upon them.

More specifically we can define "binding and loosing" in the following manner:

To BIND means: to tie up or render ineffective, to break its power and authority. What we bind are things or beings not permitted in Heaven, such as demons, sickness, demonic attacks. Even natural conditions that are not in the flow of the things of God, such as storms, negativity and contrary circumstances.

To LOOSE means: to release. There are 2 different applications here:

To loose a sickness or a demon, which simply means: to command the sickness to loosen and leave the person's body.

To loose healing, prosperity, or the blessings of God upon the person. In this case, we loose that which is allowed in Heaven.

We can do these things because of our spiritual position of authority IN CHRIST in the heavenly places. (Eph. 1:3). Again the Bible states in Eph. 2:6 that we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS; and according to Eph.1:20-22 this is a position far above all rule, authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named....and that the devil is now under His feet and also ours!

Another important principle in the area of our authority, is the permission Jesus has given us as believers, to use His name in Spiritual Warfare, and in every area of our lives, to accomplish His will and the divine purposes in our lives which bring glory to God. In John 14:13-14 Jesus gives the right to use His name to those who are chosen and appointed by Him (believers), and to those we abide in Him (have a personal relationship with Him), and who recognize the authority of His Word when asking for things according to His will. (Read John 15:16; 15:7 and 1 John 5:14-15. Realise that using a person's name, and the things that he has said, is a representation of the person. So when we speak things in the name of Jesus, in a sense it is Jesus speaking what we speak. We bring Him on the scene when we use His name; His authority is released through us. (See John 16:24 and Matt. 18:20).

WARNING: It must be remembered, that in and of ourselves we do not have power and authority to resist or defeat the devil and his demons in Spiritual Warfare. (John 15:5). Only those who are IN CHRIST have this authority.

We see two cases in the bible, where there are those who tried to exercise authority in the name of Jesus without knowing Him personally, and this to their own harm and destruction. One is in general spoken of in Matt. 7:22-23. The other is a specific incidence recorded in Acts 19:13-16, when the sons of Sceva tried to cast a demon out of a man.

But to all His disciples, Jesus gives authority over ALL the power of the enemy, and promises that nothing shall harm us. (Luke 10:17-20). Note that in verse 20 Jesus places more emphasis on our names being recorded in heaven, which speaks of salvation and knowing Him, even as we carry on with His work.

Recognize the power and authority of the Word of God (the Bible), 2 Tim 3:16-17! Taught and guided by the Holy Spirit as to how to use the Word (John 14:26 and 16:13) is vital when waging war against the enemy.

What are some of the subtle ways that the enemy tries to attack us? And how we can defend ourselves and thwart the devil's attempts, defeating him, and walking in the victory already won for us on the cross.

First note the fact that much of the demonic attacks and defeats Christians experience are due to being unaware, caught off-guard, and allowing themselves to become engrossed with things other than God in their lives, thus giving the devil opportunity to tempt, deceive, trouble, and harass. Instead we should be "sober and alert", resisting the devil when we sense his presence. (1 Pet 5:8-9). Believers open up themselves for sure attack when they allow themselves to fall into areas of sin, and give the enemy access or a foothold in their lives. See Eph 4:26-27. These areas of unchecked, unrepentant sin, can be called ENTRY POINTS, through which the devil can come in and influence and oppress believers, leading them astray and back into bondage. See Gal 6:7-8. Below are some examples of this:

SIN / ENTRY POINT	RESULT / DEEPER SIN / ATTACK	GOD'S SOLUTION / WARFARE
ANGER Eph. 4:26-27	Unforgiveness, Bitterness, Resentment, Hatred, Broken relationships. Matt. 6:14-15; Heb. 12:15, Tit. 1:15-16	Repent, Forgive, Turn away, Pray. Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:8,13; Matt. 5:44. Resist – James 4:7
PRIDE Prov. 16:5	Rebellion, Destruction. 2 Pet 2:10-12; Prov. 16:18	Repent, Humble yourself, Submit to God, Resist devil- 1 Pet 5:6,8; Jas. 4: 6-7

SEXUAL IMMORALITY Prov.5:1-23	Perversion, Degradation, Bondage, Sickness, Death. 1 Co. 5:1-5; Rom. 1:26-28	Repent, Abstain from, Submit, Resist.... 1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:22
IDOLATRY Deut. 5:7-9	Deception, Falling away from God. 1 Kings 11:1-9; Rom. 1:25	Repent, Flee from it, Submit, Resist 1 Cor. 10:14; Rev. 2:5

Other sin areas to avoid are mentioned in e.g. Gal. 5:19-21, 2 Pet. 2:13-22. As we see from the above, the devil likes to use the things and pleasures of the world to lead God's people astray, and to give other things or people more importance in their lives than God, thus hindering or breaking their relationships with Him. Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15-16. Notice the solution is always to repent (turn back to God), and obey His word! In doing so, we wage war against the enemy by, "submitting ourselves to God", and then we can with His authority, "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Even as Jesus said in John 14:30, "... the ruler of this world (Satan), is coming and he has nothing in me", may we also by His power stay clear from sin, so that when the enemy tries to accuse or attack us he will find NO ENTRY, and have nothing in us!

THREE BATTLEFIELDS

Scholars distinguish three strategic areas in our lives which we must fortify against attack from evil. These are: the Mind, the Heart and the Mouth. These are critical positions in Spiritual Warfare, and we must fight to protect them.

THE MIND:

Every thought that enters our mind has three possible sources:

God: God speaks to our mind through revelations, guidance and the gifts of a word of wisdom and knowledge by the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:8; 14:26.

Ourselves: God created us with the creative ability to produce our own thoughts. Prov. 23:7 (King James Version only).

Satan: Although demonic forces cannot read our minds, they can put evil thoughts and temptations there. John 8: 44.

We can see a clear example of this from the life of Peter:

1st God: Mat 16:16-17

2nd Himself: Mat 17:4

3rd Satan: Mat 16:22-23.

Although we cannot always prevent thoughts from entering into our minds, we can discern where they come from, and do something with them once they are there. Above all we need not fear for 2 Tim. 1:7 says that, "God has not given us the Spirit of fear or timidity, but of power, love and a sound mind." Therefore the Holy Spirit gives us the power to do two things in this area:

Cast down imaginations, and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (To cast out evil and demonic thoughts from our mind). See 2 Cor. 10:3-5.

Enables us to think the thoughts of God, and reminds us of His Word. See Phil. 4:8; John 14:26. (We need to discipline our minds to do so.)

Also in the area of our imagination, we need to be on guard how we use them. God gave us active imaginations, and the ability to create with and in our minds. That is how so many inventions useful to man have come over the years. But mainly God gave us imaginations for faith, to imagine what God has spoken as though it was already complete. I am not talking about imagery, but only that which God puts in our minds to believe Him for, according to His Word (the "Rhema" Word). Demonic forces try to pollute our imaginations, so that we worry and imagine bad things happening

to us or these forces try to tempt us with pleasurable fantasies, sinful and illegitimate in nature, which can lead us into unbelief, fear, bondage and other sin. See Mat 5:27-28; Rom. 14:23b.

In 2 Cor. 10:4 it says, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." There are two mental strongholds that the enemy often tries to establish in the minds of believers which are: "INFERIORITY and "CONDEMNATION". Inferiority feelings arise when Satan tries to tell people things like: "you are not good enough, smart enough, you don't measure up or you are worthless, etc..." Condemnation occurs when Satan can lay on us guilt feelings, like: "you are a sinner, you are not spiritual enough, your prayers are not answered because God is not pleased with you etc..." We pull down these strongholds by refusing them, and believing what the Word of God says about us instead. Heb. 4:12; Eph. 2:10. And learn to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and not the devil! See Rom. 8:1.

There are basically two types of FEAR that we need to be aware of. One comes through faith in God, and the other comes through unbelief.

The fear of the Lord: A holy reverence and awe for God and His Word, knowing that disobedience will bring separation, corruption and destruction. Deut. 13:4.

The fear of anything or anyone else: Ps. 31:13; I John 4:18c.

If we fear the Lord and trust in Him, the other and demonic fears will be eliminated, as we will be secure in His Love, 1John 4:18a, thus having the confidence that He is in control and if He be for us, no one can be against us! Ps. 118:6; Rom. 8:31.

There are also two kinds of WISDOM:

Godly wisdom: Jas. 3:13,17

Worldly or demonic wisdom: Jas. 3:14-16.

In Ps. 111:10, it says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...." God promises His wisdom to any of His children who will ask in faith. See Jas.1: 5-6. So by fearing the Lord, and receiving and walking in His wisdom, we do spiritual warfare, and guard ourselves from demonic fear and wisdom.

TEMPTATION: According to Jas. 1:14-16, we are tempted when we are lead away by our own lust which gives birth to sin, then death. Satan likes to build up and add to these lustful or greedy thoughts, and when sin occurs, he gets his entry point to attack and leads us into deeper destruction. But God provides protection and a way out, by His power, to take control of our thoughts, avoid evil situations, make right choices, and walk in His ways. See 2 Pet 1:3-4; 2:9; 1Cor 10:13. Jesus gave us the example of battling temptation in the power of the Spirit, and the use of the Word of God to break the lies of the enemy. Luke 4:1-14.

DECEPTION: It has been called Satan's chief tactic in the world. When one is deceived, he is convinced that what he believes is true, no matter how false it may be in reality. He believes and lives in the lie of the enemy. The Bible gives us solid warnings to guard against deception. Study the following Scriptures that apply to these groups of people.

Non-Believer	Carnal Believer	Mature Believer
Is. 44:20	Jas. 1:22,26	Rom. 16: 17-18
Jer. 17:9	Gal. 6:3,7	1 Cor. 10:12
Heb.3:13	1 Cor. 3:18	2 Pet. 3:17
2 Cor. 4:4	1 Cor. 15:33	1 Tim. 4:1
1 Cor. 6:9-10	1 John 1:1-8	2 Cor. 11:14

Deception is broken and spiritual warfare is applied when we humble ourselves before God and each other, and we pray and fast taking authority over every deceptive spirit in the name of Jesus, casting it out from our midst. See 2 Chron. 7:14; Luke 22:31-32; Mark 9:29.

THE HEART:

In regard to spiritual warfare, the matters of the heart often refer to two things in the Bible – Attitudes and Emotions. Many times we only focus on the sins of action, and often overlook the sins of the heart such as rebellion, independence, contention, pride, arrogance, bitterness and resentment, which almost always precede the sins of action. These hinder our walk with the Lord, and provide an opening for Satan to attack. See Ps. 66:18. In Jer. 17:9, the Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?” But God who knows the hearts of all men (Acts 1:24) has created in His children a new heart according to His promise in Ezek. 36:26-27 and sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Gal 4:6). But even as God’s children, at times our hearts grow cold and we take on bad attitudes towards God, people, and situations, because of what they said or didn’t say, or because of what they did or didn’t do, or provided for us according to our own desires. From these wrong attitudes spring up wrong emotions and when we depend more upon our feelings instead of God we get ourselves in trouble. Satan likes to distort things and continues to trouble our hearts further, but Jesus said in John 14:1, “Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, also believe in Me.” The way we do spiritual warfare here is to: First, “ Watch over (guard) our hearts with all diligence...” Prov. 4:23. Second, pray the prayer of King David in Ps 51:10-12. Third, let the love of God fill hearts continually by the Holy Spirit. Rom. 5:5.

The MOUTH:

Often, we who are supposed to be encouragers of the brethren and proclaimers of the truth, allow our mouths to become tools of destruction in the hands of devil instead. Our words can be vehicles of the Holy Spirit for truth, righteousness, and life, or vehicles of Satan for deception, accusation and death. The Bible says in Prov. 18:21, that "Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit." Satan loves to inspire our words at any chance he can get. It often happens when we gather together with friends. It starts with an innocent comment about someone not present. The comments become observations, the observations become concerns, concern can become criticism, and criticism can become accusations. According to Jam 3:8-10, we can either release God’s blessing from our mouths or we can aid the enemy’s attack on people. That is why we need to be very careful of what we allow in our hearts and minds because the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and out of the heart comes evil thoughts. See Mat 15:18-19. To do warfare in this area we must first pray the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 141:3. Secondly, obey the Word of God in Eph 4:29,31. Thirdly, again let the love of God fill our hearts so that we can speak words of love that edify people, for Jesus said, “The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.” Matt. 12:34. We need to get into the habit of speaking words of faith based upon God’s Word instead of negative words of unbelief to each other. Lastly, as a matter of ministry in building up God’s victorious army, we need to heed to the exhortation given us in 1 Cor. 14:26. So let us not use our mouths to resist each other, but to resist the devil, and he will flee from you!

DEALING WITH DEMONIC STRONGHOLDS - How to overcome

The writing is on the wall, plain and clear. The trumpet is sounding loud and near. The cries of those in bondage echo throughout the land. I can hear the flood gates of hell shattering as they open wide to increase the flow of sensuality, erotic filthiness, immorality, and the demons of lust, perversion and nudity. We are living in a frightening time in history when principalities and powers are swirling around us like flies in a dead body, when addiction, brutality, religious apostasy and every manner of evil seems to be increasing rapidly. Our world seems to be totally rampant with sin, devoid of love and peace. The writing on the wall spells “DANGER! WAR! TROUBLE! ATTACK!

Demonizing is more becoming a common thing, particularly in the youth sub-culture. A new wave of fascination with occult, horror movies, and demonic books is making Satan more popular than ever. BUT, in the midst of all these the Lord is calling out His own people to engage in Spiritual Warfare. This is war where every believer is supposed to be on the front line. It is a war of victory and the battle plans are already drawn. In this war we are commanded to destroy Satan’s insidious (treacherous) and pervasive works. Though we can’t eliminate every evil, we can help save people from it. Though we can’t destroy Satan, we can bind his works and activities. We can hinder his advancements, his moves and strategies, we can frustrate his objectives and establish the Kingdom of God in people’s life.

1. PRAYERS AND FASTING

“Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bands of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke?” Isaiah 58: 6. It is impossible to stand against the enemy if your life is not given to prayer. It is prayer that will generate God’s anointing over your life. Prayer and fasting will discipline your spirit, soul and body to be in tune with the Spirit of God. It is through this spiritual avenue that we can enter into the spiritual world and mitigate (make less severe) the powers of darkness. God has given us the power and authority through Christ Jesus to do this work. Through prayer and fasting we are able to confront the enemy and stop his activities. “Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.” (Matthew 18:18-20).

Binding means: to confine or tighten something with ropes or chains. The Word of God gives us the authority to bind the works of the enemy. This involves restricting, constraining or forbidding him from operating. For example, you can say, “Devil, I constrain you from working in the life of “X” in the name of Jesus”. Or you can say, “You spirit of rebellion, fear, strife or rejection (or whatever it is), I bind you and forbid you from working in my life in the name of Jesus. I cover myself with the blood of Jesus and you are not going to have part in my life.”

Several things I would like to stress which I believe are the keys to binding and loosing:

You must be specific in your command. Don’t just say, “I bind you, demon or spirit, in the name of Jesus”, but specify what demon – identify them.

Be commanding; take authority; stand your ground.

Believe; have faith that the spirits will obey you.

After binding, command them to leave. Don’t bind and leave them in there, but tell them to go to dry places, or in the sea, or in space. Be specific, because you are dealing with cunning entities.

Learn to use the power and the authority that God has given you. Let your prayer be filled with words of life, power, authority, love, confidence, and strength. After binding Satan’s work, establish God’s works in the place – such as love, peace, obedience or health. These may take time before they can be fully expressed, so be patient. It is like planting seeds in a garden, it takes time before harvest time.

Through prayers and fasting we are able to destroy the works of the enemy. This is one of our homework assignments. Christ wants us to destroy everything that is of the enemy. "[But] he who commits sin (who practices evil doing) is of the devil-takes his character from the evil one; for the devil has sinned (has violated the divine law) from the beginning. The reason the Son of God was made manifest (visible) was to undo (destroy, loosen and dissolve) the works the devil [has done]." (1 John 3:8) (Amplified Bible). "Since, therefore, [these His] children share in flesh and blood—that is, in the physical nature of human beings—He [Himself] in a similar manner partook of the same [nature], that by [going through] death He might bring to naught and make of no effect him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrew 2:14) (Amplified Bible).

There are many times when I have gone to a meeting and Satan has distracted the people or particular individuals from hearing the Word. Usually he may use normal circumstances like crying of babies or people coughing. Sometimes he may cause confusion or misunderstanding before the meeting, or he may cause things not to work out according to the plans. In such a case I have learned that it helps a lot to take authority over the enemy rather than sit down and see him destroy the meeting. I bind his works and command him to stop working in the name of Jesus.

I remember one day I was having an open-air meeting in a community when all of a sudden, about ten drunken men came to the meeting and started causing disturbances. They called people from their homes and others who were passing by to come and see crazy people (us)! People responded and within 15 to 20 minutes we had our meeting doubled by people who were attacked by these men. Then we took authority and commanded them to be silent in Jesus' name. We bound Satan's work and we prayed for peace. Satan was defeated because our meeting was doubled and many souls gave their lives to the Lord. Satan will always lose when he tries to interfere with God's work, so if anything like this happens, just be calm and let God fight your battles. "There shall no man be able to stand before you; the Lord your God shall lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you." (Deut. 11:25).

2. READING AND MEDITATING ON THE WORD

Some people go back to their old habits or allow themselves to be under the control of demonic activities because of neglecting the Word of God. Being delivered from Satanic influence is one thing, but maintaining that freedom is another story. If your mind is not filled with God's thoughts, the enemy will fill it with his thoughts. "Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came"; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes, along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will be with this evil generation." Matt. 12:43 – 45.

The Word of God helps us to crowd out the world from our minds and also helps us build our faith, without which we can not receive God's blessings. In the natural realm a doctor can put a patient on a particular medication for a long period of time. If a patient doesn't follow the doctor's order, he may put his life in danger. For example, I knew a fellow who was an alcoholic. He was bound by the spirit of bondage which used alcohol to chain him to the ground. The doctor told him not to drink anymore, otherwise he would die, but he disobeyed the doctor's orders and soon died. Likewise in the spiritual realm, there are people who have to be kept in the Word to keep the enemy away from them. This is important, especially with those people who have previously been involved with Satanic activities and have been under the influence of Satanic powers. The Word will keep their minds renewed and their spirits strong in the Lord.

God's Word has enough power to free anyone from the spirit of bondage. Believers need to realize the power that is in the Word of God and not only read the Word but also apply it to their personal lives. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2).

3. LIVING A CLEAN LIFE

All Christians are equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit to fight and conquer the power of sin. Sin brings impurities in one's life which can easily make an opening for the spirit of bondage, perversity, or unclean spirits to gain entry. There is no substitute for purity. God demands this from every believer. Purity allows the anointing of the Holy Spirit to flow without hindrance in one's life. There are many times we pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to be manifested in our lives but with no results. One reason is that our lives have to be cleansed before we can contain the power of the Holy Spirit. God's desire is to use clean vessels and Satan's desire is to defile clean vessels so that he can use them – or at least stop God from using them.

In the ministry of deliverance I have come to realize that unless one's life is kept clean after being delivered from Satanic bondage, the enemy is going to come back in no time. I know of a man who was demon possessed for several years. He had several demons living in him. He walked naked in the streets, eating from garbage piles. There was no hope of his ever becoming normal again, but he was prayed for and all the demons were driven out of him. He was given a warning not to indulge himself with the lusts of the flesh, to abstain from strong drinks, to read the Word and to stay away from the enemy's territories. All these he obeyed for a while, but one day he decided to go back to drinking. He was warned again, but he didn't heed the warning. The demons came back and this time they were worse than before.

What does the Word say about purity? "Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.... Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." (Romans 6:6,12-13). "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (Just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God." (1 Thessalonians 4:1-5). "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (Romans 12:1). "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:11-12).

One more point I would like to make: there are times in our lives when prayers or Bible studies are of no use. When we harbour sin or go against God's will! Unless we repent and make things right we are wasting our time trying to pray. Sin opens the door of defeat, and it can even open a door to sickness or destruction. Unless it is repented it will continue to hold you on the ground.

4. COVERING BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18-19). The blood of Jesus is powerful because it is divine blood. All of our blood runs from the first man, Adam, but Jesus' blood was not from Adam. He was not conceived by man but by the power of the Holy Spirit. His blood came from God Himself. When a child is conceived, its blood is passed through the father not the mother. So it was in the case of Jesus. Since He has no human father, His blood was directly infused by the Holy Spirit. It wasn't contaminated with sin. It was holy and full of life and power. This is why Satan is scared of it. He cannot stand it. This is the blood that purifies us from every impurity of this world. This blood is so pure, so holy, that neither Satan nor his demons can dare touch it!

"And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death." (Rev. 12:10-11).

What is the word of our testimony?

That we have been purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28)

That we have been washed by the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7)

That we have peace with God through the blood of Jesus (Col. 1:20)

That we have been justified by the blood of Jesus (Rom. 5:8-9)

That we have been sanctified through the blood of Jesus (Heb. 13:12)

That we have fellowship with God through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 2:13)

That we enter the presence of God through the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19-22)

That we have been redeemed through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7)

And the testimony goes on and on. Every believer should learn to make this confession, because it is a reality.

5. PRAISING AND WORSHIPPING

"Through Him then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." (Hebrews 13:15). Praise leads us into triumph against the powers of Satan. It creates the atmosphere of joy, victory, power and, above all, it ushers the presence of God in our midst. For example, when Paul and Silas were in prison after being beaten, they did not sit down and mourn, but instead they praised and worshipped God. The result? Read on, in Acts 16:25-26. Praise and worship will help energize your spirit to the point that you can declare yourself free from Satan. Read another fantastic story about praise and worship in II Chronicles 20:1-30. Also read Psalm 149.

6. PRAYING IN TONGUES

If you have received this gift do not let Satan rob you of it. This is a dynamite power. It is a demon-buster! Praying in tongues will energize your spirit, and this will enable you to discern and confront the kingdom of darkness. Praying in the Spirit brings confusion in Satan's kingdom and spoils his schemes against us. "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." (Roman 8:26).

Some sincere Christians have never experienced this wonderful gift. Others are afraid of it; because of some misrepresentation by some immature Christian you don't have this gift, please do not be left out. You can still experience the depth of God though in a different way. However, I do encourage you to seek and be open-minded. Get all the power God for your life.

7. TAKING AUTHORITY

Note that all demonic entities are wicked and immoral. However, we don't need to be afraid of them. Jesus has given us the power and authority over them. We have complete authority and victory over every satanic or demonic entity. Jesus overcame them for us. He conquered every power, authority, principality and ruler for us. He stripped Satan and his demons of their authority. Always keep in mind that Satan is a created being just like you and me. He may seem strong, but he is no more stronger than a grasshopper before the Lord. He is no match. His powers are limited in every aspect. For example, he couldn't touch Job in any way until God gave him permission. Job had a hedge of protection around him and Satan couldn't go through it. When you are protected by the power of God, you have no reason to fear Satan. (Read Job 1:11-19; Psalm 124:5-6 and 1 Peter 5:8).

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENEMY: SATAN AND DEMONS

THE PERSON OF SATAN

In The Old Testament - The only direct references to Satan in the Old Testament are (Gen. 3:1-15; 1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7, Zech. 3:1-2).

In The New Testament – There are several references e.g. (Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 10:18-19; John 13:2,27; Rev. 20:1-3, etc).

Satan Is A Person – Study the following Scriptures (Job 1:8-10; Is. 14:13-14; Matt 4:10; John 8:44; / Jude 9).

The Twelve Names Of Satan:

SATAN – the term means: an “adversary” of God and man (1 Chron. 21:1; 1 Tim 1:10).

DEVIL –the term means: "slanderer, accuser of the brethren" (appears only in the N. T.)

He slanders God to man (Gen. 3:1-7).

He slanders man to God (Job 1:9; Rev. 12:10).

SERPENT – by this term his crookedness and deceitfulness are pointed out (Job 26:13; Cor 11:3).

DRAGON – A dragon is a sea animal (serpent or sea – monster) and may refer to Satan’s activity in the seas of the world (Is. 51:9; Rev. 13:2).

BEELZEBUB / BEELZEBUL – In Syriac it means: “lord of the dunghill” – “lord of the flies” (Matt 10:25, Luke 11:15,18-19).

BELIAL / BELIAR – (2 Cor. 6:15) In the Old Testament the term was used in the sense of worthlessness (1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Kings 21:13).

LUCIFER – means: the “morning star” (Is. 14:12).

THE WICKED ONE – A description of his character (Matt. 13:19; 1 John 5:19).

THE TEMPTER – A description of his activities (1 Thess. 3:5).

THE “god of this world” – (2 Cor. 4:4). He is the founder of all the false cults and satanic worship practices. He has his “ministers” (2 Cor. 11:15), “doctrines” (1 Tim. 4:1), “sacrifices” (1 Cor. 10:20) and “synagogues” (Rev. 2:9).

THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR – (Eph. 2:2; 6:12) He is leader of the evil angels (Matt. 24:41) and prince of the demons (Matt. 12:24).

THE PRINCE OF THE WORLD – (John 12:31; 16:11). This appears to be the influence he holds over governments of this world.

THE WORKS OF SATAN

Satan’s various names give indication of the nature of his work. His purpose is stated Is. 14:14. "I will make myself like the Most High". Satan uses various methods for the realization of his purpose as he cannot attack God directly, he attacks God’s master creation: man, in the following ways:

Lying – (John 8:44, 2 Cor. 11:3)

Tempting – (Matt. 4:1)

Robbing – (Matt. 13:19)

Harassing – (2 Cor. 12:7)

Hindering – (1 Thess. 2:18)

Sifting – (Luke 22:31)

Impersonating / Imitating – (Matt. 13:25; 2 Cor. 11:14)

Accusing – (Rev. 12:9-10)

Afflicting with disease – (1 Cor. 5:5; Luke 13:6)

Possessing – (John 13:27)

Killing and Devouring – (1 Pet. 5:8; John 10:10)

THE DESTINY OF SATAN

He will be cast down to earth during the tribulation period for a short time (Rev. 9:1; 12:9; 10, 12- 13).

From there he will be cast into “Abyss” when Christ comes back to earth in power and glory to set up His Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3).

He will be loosed for a short period during which time he will attempt to frustrate the purpose of God on earth (Rev. 20:3).

His plan will fail, fire will rain down from the heavens to destroy his armies, and finally he and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire where they will be tormented for all eternity (Rev. 20:7-10; Matt. 25:41).

THE EVIL ANGELS

We shall see two classes of these: a) Angels that are kept in prison and
Angels that are free.

A. ANGELS THAT ARE KEPT IN PRISON

They are mentioned in 2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6.

2 Pet. 2:4 – Peter merely states that they sinned, and were cast down to “Tartarus” and reserved till the day of judgement.

It is suggested that these angels were “the sons of God” who co-habited with the “daughters of men” resulting in unnatural offspring or giants (Hebrew “*nephilim*” means: “fallen ones” –Gen. 6:1-4) this is the “strange flesh” flesh spoken of in Jude 6-7, and the habitation they left was heaven, when they came to earth and assumed human bodies for such abomination.

ANGELS THAT ARE FREE

They are mentioned sometime in connection with Satan, their leader (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7-9) or sometimes separately (Ps. 78:49; Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 6:3; Rev. 9:14).

They are included in the “ruler and authority and power and dominion” – (Eph. 1:21).
They are explicitly referred to in Eph. 6:12; Col 2:15.

THE WORKS OF EVIL ANGELS

God may release them to torment and trouble a wicked person (Ps. 78:49).

They co-operate and help Satan in the carrying out his plans and purposes (Eph. 6:12).

They oppose the good angels in their work (Dan. 10:12-13).

They try to separate the believers from Christ and His perfect will through physical affliction, persecution and slander against God and His Word (Rom. 8:38). Believers will have a part in judging these evil angels, who will ultimately have their part in the lake of fire along with their leader, Satan.

THE DEMONS

THE WORD DEMON

“DIAMONION” this Greek word is rightly translated by most of the modern translations as “DEMONS”. It is quite unfortunate that the King James Version translates these as “DEVILS” when it should have been “DEMONS” (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; Matt. 8:31; Mark 1:34; Luke 8:2, etc.).

“UNCLEAN / EVIL SPIRITS” – also used to refer to demons (Matt. 10:1; Lk 9:42, etc).

WHAT ARE DEMONS?

The Bible is silent about their origin, however we know for sure that:

They are not the spirits of bad men who have died. The Scriptures constantly claims that the spirits of the unsaved dead are in "Sheol or Hades" – not roaming the earth (Ps. 9:17; Ezek. 32:17-24; Luke 16:23; Rev. 20:13). Only Jesus has the keys of Hades (Rev. 1:18)

They are not fallen angels:

We do not have record of fallen angels seeking to inhabit human bodies, and

Their sphere of activity is in the heavenly rather than on the earth

They seem to be a class of spirits beings thought by some Bible scholars to be the disembodied spirits of a Pre-Adamic Race or of the Giant–Race mentioned in Gen 6.

THE WORKS OF DEMONS

Demons too, work in obedience to and co-operate with their leader Satan, in working out of his evil plans and purposes.

They have an intense desire to possess bodies. They not only possess human bodies in large numbers, but are willing, in some instance even to possess animals (Mk. 5:8-14; Acts 16:16)

They inflict disease (Job 1:5-10; Luke 9:37-42)

They cause mental disorder (Matt. 5:4-5; Luke 8:35)

They lead many into moral impurity (Mark 1:23-27; Luke 4:33)

They spread false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1)

They attempt to hinder the spiritual progress of God's children (Eph. 6:12)

They are sometimes used by God in carrying out of His purposes (Judges 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14).

There are three basic kind of involvement with demons:

Spiritualism or Spiritism: e.g. Seances, Table-Rapping, Occult, etc.

Fortune–Telling: e.g. Necromancy, Divining, Palmistry, Horoscope, etc.

Demon Worship: Demonic Rituals, Black Magic, Witchcraft, etc.

As believers, we have to stay clear of all these, and have nothing to do with them.

OUR AUTHORITY OVER SATAN, EVIL ANGELS AND DEMONS

The Scripture is quite clear that Christ has already won the victory over Satan and all his evil forces (1 John 3:8; Luke 10:18; Col. 2:15).

Christ has given us ALL authority over them (Luke 10:19; Matt. 28:18-19). Therefore, if we are in right relationship with Christ, we have nothing to be afraid of.

The Scriptures exhort us to:

RESIST the powers of Satan (1 Pet. 5:9; Jas. 4:7), and

STAND against him (Eph. 6:11,13-14).

Our armor of defense consists of: Truth, Righteousness, The Gospel of Peace, Faith, Salvation and Prayer (Eph. 6:14-18).

Our offensive weapons are:

The Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

The Blood of the Lamb.

The Word of our Testimony – (Rev. 12:11).

The Name of Jesus – (Mark 16:17).

Note: When you recognize the clear presence of a demon / demons in a person's life or activity in a particular station, you must take authority and cast the demon / demons out. That is not the time to pray over a person or situation, but to rebuke and command the forces of darkness to respond to the authority of Jesus the Son of God, and be gone in Jesus' mighty Name!

THE GOOD ANGELS

THE ANGELS

The word “ANGEL” in both Hebrew and Greek merely means: “messenger”. Only the context can clarify, if the word denotes human or super-human messengers (e.g. Luke 7:24; Rev. Chapters 2 and 3). They are described as winged beings (Dan. 9:21; Rev. 14:6).

THE CHERUBIM

Though the meaning of the term is uncertain, it is thought to mean “to cover” and “to guard”.

It is gathered that they are chiefly the guardians of the more of the throne of God (Ps. 18:9-10; 80:1; 99:1; Rev 4:6-ff). Satan must have been a Cherub before his fall. (Ezek. 28:14-16).

THE SERAPHIM

They are mentioned by name only in (Is. 6:2,6).

They are distinct from Cherubim as:

God is seated above the Cherubim (1 Sam. 4:4; Ps. 80:1; 99:1), but the Seraphim stand above Him (Is. 6:2).

The Cherubim are guardians of God’s throne, and also serve as His ambassadors or messengers. The Seraphim lead heaven in the worship of God and purify God’s servants for acceptable worship and service.

THE ARCHANGELS

Archangel mentioned twice in the Scriptures (1 Thes. 4:16; Jude 9).

Michael is referred to as an archangel, having his own angels (Rev. 12:7).

Gabriel is also thought of as being an archangel.

GOD'S HEALING POWER

Chapter 1 WHERE DID SICKNESS ORIGINATE?

In order to develop the kind of faith that can minister the healing power of God it is first necessary to understand the origin of sickness and the reasons why God is against it. We must go back to the origins of the human race, to the creation of man to understand something of what transpired there. We can then begin to understand God's attitude towards sickness and His desire to make men whole, freed from the results of the Fall.

ADAM WAS CREATED SPIRITUALLY PERFECT

Adam and Eve were created sinless, guiltless and perfect in the image and likeness of God. (Gen. 1:26) They had a strong relationship with God and enjoyed untainted fellowship with Him. They were innocent, free from all sense of moral wrong. They enjoyed inner peace and harmony and they knew no fear. They were not plagued by inhibitions or complexes, nor were they self-conscious in any harmful or destructive sense. They were naked, but had no embarrassment, guilt or shame about it (Gen. 2:25). All these factors contributed to their condition of perfect health. Fresh from the hand of their Creator, they were perfect beings – spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. They were a splendid product of God's creative genius, created in His own image and likeness. (Gen.1:26).

ADAM WAS CREATED MENTALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY PERFECT

Fashioned in the image and likeness of God, Adam inherited from Him a remarkable and brilliant mind and intellect. Part of its remarkable capabilities was the ability to think in positive patterns that were wholly conducive to good health. In acknowledgement of Adam's amazing intellectual powers God delegated to Adam the task of naming all the animals of the creation (Gen. 2:19-20). He also gave him the task of governing and exercising dominion over the earth and every living creature. The general impression conveyed is that Adam was psychologically competent to a degree that made it possible for him and God to enjoy a harmonious and mutually enjoyable relationship and fellowship together. Adam had been created "a little lower than God Himself" in a manner that allowed them to experience a considerable degree of compatibility. (Psalm 8:5).

ADAM WAS CREATED EMOTIONALLY PERFECT

I believe that in his original condition Adam experienced only positive emotions. He experienced only what was "good", - emotions such as love, peace and joy. It was only after his tragic disobedience that he began to experience the negative range of emotions such as fear, anxiety and panic. Powerful negative emotions that were just as detrimental and harmful as the positive ones which were creative and sustaining. God had warned him of the danger of eating the fruit of the tree of the **knowledge of good and of evil**. If Adam had not disobeyed God, he and his descendants would only ever have experienced good, but now, because of the Fall, mankind knows all the tragedy that negative emotion introduces as well as the wonderful realm of positive and enjoyable emotions.

ADAM WAS CREATED PHYSICALLY PERFECT

God personally designed and created every detail of Adam's body, "God looked upon His whole creation and declared that everything was very good" (Gen. 1:31). The human physique and anatomy is still the most remarkable machine that has ever been created. With all the recent advances in modern science and the amazing things that man has made, nothing begins to compare with the wondrous intricacy of the human being. King David spoke for all of us when he said that man was "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). When everything is functioning properly as God intended, we know how wonderfully we have been made. However, when things go wrong we also discover how fearfully we are made.

PERFECTION OF THE TOTAL MAN

God has always been committed to the total man. He created us perfect and His saving power in Jesus Christ has vital importance for the total man. The healing power of God is still vitally rooted in God's concern for the total man.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

There was a moment in history when man stood on the edge of tragedy. An act of disobedience plunged the human race into a long, dark fall from the presence of God. The original couple had access to every tree, herb and fruit in the garden. The only exception was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17).

God warned Adam and Eve that if they ever disobeyed Him, they would die spiritually. As a direct result of that spiritual death, they would ultimately die physically as well. God literally said, "In dying you shall die." Because they died spiritually, the law of death would become active within them and they would eventually die physically. Physical death was the direct result of the spiritual transgression which caused Adam and Eve to be driven from the presence of the Lord. Because they were cut off from the presence of God who was their life-source, the law of sin and death began to operate within them. A process of deterioration began. This would never have come upon mankind had he remained in right relationship with God. The process of deterioration is called sickness and aging. It has afflicted man ever since the tragedy of Eden.

This single act of disobedience, introduced into the world every negative thing which curses mankind today, spiritually, psychologically and physically. It is the source of: -

DIS – EASE
DIS – ORDER
DIS – ABILITY
DIS – TRESS
DIS – COMFORT
DIS – ASTER
DIS – CORD
DIS – COURAGEMENT
DIS – HARMONY
DIS – INTEGRATION

All of these negative attitudes and emotions, which are harmful to good health, stem from disobedience. They are destroyers of health. The word disease has the prefix "dis," which means "a lack of". Therefore disease is a lack of ease. A lack of being completely at peace with God and with oneself. Disease originated through disobedience and opened the door to all the other "dis"-factors.

THE SPIRITUAL TRAGEDY OF THE FALL

As an immediate and direct result of their disobedience Adam and Eve forfeited their glorious relationship with God and all the attendant benefits that went with that relationship. They lost their innocence and inherited guilt and condemnation. They were driven from the Divine Presence for the rest of their days. Man also lost his dominion. This true dominion depended upon his being in the image and likeness of God and on being in right relationship with God. Man was God's representative in the Creation. Ever since, man has been striving to re-assert his dominion over the Creation. All Adam's descendants were to have inherited God's likeness. Instead they inherited the likeness of Adam's fallen humanity (Gen. 5:3).

THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL TRAGEDY OF THE FALL

Through disobedience man lost his mental and psychological perfection. Today he still strives by every possible means to regain the knowledge that will give him mastery, but truth depends upon right relationship with God, for God is the author of truth. Man lost his psychological freedom, his

God given ability to think correctly and through this he sustained the loss of his emotional wholeness too.

Adam sold himself to the devil who became the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). Adam mortgaged all his God-given rights and privileges. From that time mankind has been the prey of the devil and his demonic host. Since the Fall mankind has never been free from sorrow, suffering and hardship (Gen. 3:15-19).

THE PHYSICAL TRAGEDY OF THE FALL

“And unto Adam, He said, Because you have listened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it; cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken; for dust you are, and unto dust you shall return.” (Gen. 3:17-19).

Mankind inherited an earth which was cursed, from which he would have to struggle by the sweat of his brow to gain a living. Thorns and briars would be fruitful, adding to men’s labours. He was driven from God’s presence and from the tree of life. He was death doomed: “unto dust you shall return.” As for Eve, she also inherited a particular woe which she would pass on to women of all generations. This included sorrow, pain and travail in child bearing, and subjection to the rule of her husband. (Gen. 3:16)

Man lost his health and inherited sickness. The present scourge of sickness which afflicts all of humanity has its origin in the tragedy enacted in Eden. Sin entered the world then. With sin came sickness. Death is the ultimate result of unrestrained sickness. If Adam had not sinned, mankind would never have known suffering and disease. He chose to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. Sickness is part of that evil. So all sickness comes indirectly from Satan. God is not the author of sickness. In Chapter Two we will discuss some of the numerous causes of sickness.

Chapter 2 HOW PEOPLE BECOME SICK

SOME OF THE CAUSES OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE

Let me summarize some of the causes of sickness and disease:

1. Sickness entered the world when Adam fell

Sickness is part of the curse which came upon mankind as a direct result of disobedience. Therefore, directly or indirectly, sin is the root cause of all sickness. It is part of the “wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23). Disease suggests lack of ease, lack of peace. This was the state of Adam’s mind and emotions after his transgression. The weight of conviction, guilt, condemnation and shame which he inherited left him open and vulnerable to sickness.

We have good reason to believe that until the Fall, there was no infectious organisms, bacteria or germs in the world. At the conclusion of His creative work, God saw that “everything was very good.” He could not have said this if there were already present germs, cancer cells, and a whole host of disease-carrying bacteria. These dreadful destroyers came with the curse.

2. Sin, - separation from God, still causes sickness

Since sin is basically the rejection of God’s rule, which isolates us from the life of God, we may see that this alienation is still the major cause of sickness. In the coming manifestation of the Kingdom of God, when all rebellion is put down, there will no longer be any pain, sorrow or death (Rev. 21:4).

3. Hereditary genetic weakness may cause sickness

Certain weaknesses that may cause sickness are sometimes passed from one generation to another. They are an aspect of the weakness and frailty of fallen humanity originally occasioned by the Fall

and transmitted from one generation to the next. Certain sickness may occur in one generation after another and be seen to be a “family weakness”. However, this destructive chain may be broken and its power nullified through the use of spiritual authority. It is important for a Christian to understand that Almighty God is now his heavenly Father and to believe that God now determines his destiny rather than the influences of human ancestry.

4. Sickness is frequently caused by infectious organisms

The reality of life around us is a constant reminder that we are living in a fallen world. At the original creation there were no viruses, infectious organisms or plagues. Everything that God created was “very good”. Man’s disobedience and his consequent separation from God occasioned the advent of infection and disease into this world. Since then mankind has had to contend with the ravages of sickness and disease introduced into our environment by Satan’s deception. This is certainly not the world as God intended it to be. He is not the author of sickness and disease. Conversely He is moved with compassion as He witnesses the suffering of mankind and longs to relieve and heal our diseases. It was in part to heal our diseases that Jesus suffered and died, - to provide and antidote for sin and sickness.(I Pet. 2: 24)

5. Sickness is part of the process of decay and death

One of the symptoms of fallen humanity is inherent human weakness which will cause a break down at the weakest point if too much pressure is applied. Every fallen child of Adam inherits this weakness and the pressures of life find their weak spot whether it be physical, mental, emotional. So, a great deal of sickness is the result of those pressures of life wearing away the specific area of weakness in a given person.

6. Accidents can cause sickness

Accidents are another obvious cause of ill health. People may incur all manner of injuries and disabilities as a result of some form of accident. Most accidents do not have any hidden spiritual cause or reason. They happen because of certain factors which unfortunately may occur and they can happen at times to Christians as well as non-Christians.

One of the bi-products of sudden serious incapacity through accidents is emotional distress and depression. This can be even more devastating because Christians frequently tend to link everything to a supernatural cause thus attributing the accident and its results to either God or the devil. This can lead to heavy introspection as to why God allowed it or even caused the problem. Questions may arise such as, “Why has this happened to me?”, “What have I done wrong?”, “How have I displeased God?”, “Is this a punishment from God?” Such heavy introspective searching can increase the person’s dilemma immensely and plunge them into spiritual darkness and torment unnecessarily. We need to realize that most accidents do not have any hidden underlying and sinister reasons behind them. They are the result of some natural circumstance and are not usually directly linked to the way we live our lives.

7. Neglect of health causes sickness

We must face the fact that our health can suffer if we neglect various basic factors of health and vitality. To stay in health, a proper diet must be maintained. There are certain nutriment and vitamins which must be included in our regular diet. Deficiencies and lack in the diet will ultimately cause a breakdown of health. Inadequate rest and sleep will also adversely affect the condition of health. Too much work and too little time for rest and relaxation will take its toll upon one’s health. Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30) was one example of this. He came very close to death and the cause of his condition was that of overwork, in the service of the Lord and His people.

8. Natural aging reduces physical strength

When one is young there is a youthful vitality which is conducive to good health. The Bible speaks of the “dew of youth” (Ps. 110:3). David also speaks of “renewing one’s youth, like the eagle” (Ps. 103:5). Isaiah makes it clear that this refers to renewing of our youthful strength (Is. 40:31). Jeremiah tells us that, “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” (Lam. 3:27). The early part of life is the time for hard work. It is the prime of life and the peak of physical strength.

Solomon describes so graphically the limitations of advancing years. He urges us, “Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth” (Eccles 12:1). Love God and serve Him while you still have strength and vitality to do it vigorously.

It was considered remarkable that Moses, when he reached more advanced years still had good eye sight and physical strength (Deut. 34:7). The usual thing is that strength diminishes and eyesight deteriorates once the prime of life is passed. Does this mean that we cannot expect to have health and strength in advancing years? Does it mean that we cannot expect physical healing in later years? Certainly not! God promises, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” (Deut. 33:25).

I believe this teaches that we can expect to have good health all through our life in proportion with our age at that given time. I have met many Christians, advanced in years, who have thought that signs of physical deterioration and diminishing strength have indicated that God is no longer interested in them. Sometimes they worry that perhaps they have committed some sin and their bodily weakness is judgement upon them. Many sincere Christians come under great condemnation in this regard, feeling they must have committed some terrible, unforgivable sin. It has helped them enormously to realize that there is a natural process of physical deterioration in advanced years, which affects Christians and non-Christians alike. The later years of one’s life also have their compensations and are not to be despised.

9. Evil spirits may cause sickness

Evil spirits can sometimes be the direct cause of sickness and affliction. In Matthew 9:32-33 we read about “a dumb man possessed with a devil.” When Jesus cast out the dumb spirit, the man was immediately able to speak. His vocal chords had obviously been held in bondage by the dumb spirit. In Mark 9:17-27 the story is told of a young man who was brought to Jesus, having a dumb spirit, which was actually causing both deafness and dumbness. Jesus cast out the deaf spirit and the young man was delivered. In Luke 13:11-16 we have the account of a woman who “had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years.” Her spine was curved, her face was bowed towards the ground. Modern medicine would say she had a chronic curvature of the spine. Jesus loosed her from her infirmity and immediately her spine was made straight, and she glorified God for her deliverance.

There are several occasions in the Scriptures where persons were said to be afflicted with spirits of infirmity. The only way for them to be healed was for those spirits to be overcome by the word of faith and authority. Once the spirit had been cast out, the symptoms disappeared. Such persons can never be healed through any means other than a deliverance ministry. The demons must be overcome and cast out by the authority vested in the name of Jesus that is above every name. Once this happens the victim is released from the various symptoms and able to make a full recovery. It is essential that such people surrender themselves completely to God, feeding regularly on His Word and seeking to follow and please Him in every aspect of their life. Failure to faithfully do this may invite back the demonic spirits and their condition may be worse afterwards than it was originally. (Matt 12:45; Luke 11:26).

10. Sickness is an aberration from what God desired

An aberration is a “deviation from the normal”. Sickness was not part of the original creation as God fashioned it. Nor is it part of His plan or desire for mankind today. God is not the author of sickness. He is against sickness, disease and the suffering occasion by them. He is filled with compassion towards people who are afflicted or ill in any way. His true desire is expressed many times in the bible, one of the clearest occasions being in 3 John 2.

“Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers.”

Chapter 3 GOD’S PROVISION FOR HEALING

THE REDEMPTIVE NAMES OF GOD

We begin to understand something of God's concern for the total man – spirit, soul and body when we consider the redemptive names, or titles, of Jehovah. Jehovah means "The Self-existent One who reveals Himself." It is used with special references to the redemptive work of God.

There are seven compound names in the Scriptures which are used in conjunction with the name Jehovah. Each one of them reveals a particular aspect of the redemption which He has provided.

Jehovah Jireh (Gen. 22:14): "The Lord will provide."

Thus Jehovah announced Himself to Abraham on Mount Moriah. Faced with the awful prospect of sacrificing his only well-beloved son, Abraham heard the voice of the Lord cry, "Lay not your hand upon the boy." God saw the need and had provided a sacrifice in the bush nearby. "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh." How wonderful to know that God has committed Himself to provide for us a Redeemer!

Jehovah Rapha (Ex. 15:26): "I am the Lord that heals you."

Shortly after God had brought His people out from Egypt, He revealed Himself to them as their Healer. He had already proven Himself to them as their Saviour and Deliverer. Now He reveals Himself also as their Healer.

The Old Testament clearly shows healing as an integral part of redemption. Paul tells us that the new covenant is a "better covenant," superior in every way. If the old covenant made provision for the total man, surely the new covenant would not do less.

Jehovah Nissi (Ex. 17:15): "The Lord our banner or our victor."

This revelation came immediately after God had given a great victory to Israel over the Amalekites. Moses stood with hands outstretched towards God and the Lord destroyed all their enemies before them. A great victory was won. Moses built an altar to the Lord and called the place Jehovah Nissi, the Lord who has spread the banner of His victory above us.

Jehovah Shalom (Judges 6:23): "The Lord our peace."

This redemptive title reveals to us the glorious privilege of knowing and possessing the peace of God through the redemption that is ours in Christ. It is a fullness of peace, which literally means, "the possession of all things needful for one's peace." The Scriptures say of Christ, "He is our peace" (Eph.2:14). The word peace ("shalom" in Hebrew), means well-being, wholeness, everything necessary for our total well-being.

Jehovah Raah (Ps. 23:1): "The Lord, my shepherd."

This Psalm of David describes the bliss and security of one under such a Shepherd as the Lord. The Lord as Shepherd emphasized His caring concern. Since we are the sheep of God's pasture, it is wonderful to know that Christ's redemption had afforded us the protection of so thoughtful and kind a shepherd.

Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer. 23:6): "The Lord, our righteousness."

Jesus made it possible for us to become the righteousness of God in Christ. (II Cor.5: 21). He accomplished this by becoming sin for us and bearing the penalty and judgement of God in our stead. Christ's redemption does not only save us. It declares our righteousness before the Father. "[For Christ] is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:30).

Jehovah Shammah (Ezek. 48:35): "The Lord is present."

The presence of God has been restored to our life through Jesus. Adam was driven out from God's presence, but we have been brought back into His presence through Christ. As His redeemed people, we have the blessing of His presence continually.

Each of these redemptive names reveals the various blessings God has made available to us through Christ. Healing is not the special privilege of a favoured few; it is a redemptive right of all who fulfil the covenant requirements. God was Jehovah Rapha to Israel, and He declares, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6).

HEALING THROUGH CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

Every blessing we receive from God comes to us through Christ's victory at Calvary. This includes healing. The word atonement means to make AT-ONE-MENT with God. The purpose is to restore us to one-ness with God and to restore to us all that man has lost as a result of the Fall. One of the things he lost was health and strength. So health is restored through the atonement. Sin and sickness are the double curse which came on mankind. Jesus provided a double cure for the double curse. Isaiah tells the story graphically. "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Is. 53:4).

Numerous reliable scholars have pointed out that the word "*kholee*" which is translated as "griefs" is most frequently translated as sickness. It is derived from the word "*chalah*" which means to be weak, sick or afflicted. Also, the word translated as sorrows ("*makob*") is generally rendered as pain. With this in mind, we can understand Matthew's comments on Isaiah 53:4. "He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." (Matt. 8:17). Matthew's translation is a more accurate one and it supports the fact that physical healing is through the atonement of Christ.

There are two verbs in Isaiah 53:4 which have great significance. The first one, borne, is the same verb that is employed in Isaiah 53:12, "He bore the sins of many." Since the same verb is used in both verses, we understand that Christ bore our sicknesses in the same manner in which He bore our sins. We know that He bore our sins by suffering as our substitute. This must also be true of our sicknesses. Christ suffered them for us. Because He bore my sins as my substitute, I am free from them. Because He also bore my sicknesses, I am free from them as well. Christ bore both our sins and our sicknesses in Himself, so there is forgiveness and healing for all who will accept them by faith.

The second verb, carried (Hebrew: "*cabal*"), can mean to bear something, as a penalty. It is used in Isaiah 53:11 where we read, "For He shall bear their iniquities." In both instances, the same Hebrew verb is used, in respect to our sins and our sicknesses. The glorious conclusion is, if Christ bore the penalty of my sins, I do not have to bear it. If Christ bore my sicknesses, I do not have to bear them.

HEALING WAS PURCHASED AT CALVARY

We are clearly justified in believing that Christ's atonement on the cross provides a perfect remedy for the whole man – spirit, soul and body. Christ purchased wholeness (perfect soundness) for mankind through His death.

The Greek New Testament confirms the conclusion that our redemption in Christ includes healing as well as forgiveness. The common verb used for "save" is the Greek word "*sozo*" which conveys the idea of wholeness, perfect soundness. The word translated "saved" in Romans 10:9, "You shall be saved" is the same word which is translated "whole" in Mark 6:56. "As many [sick persons] as touched Him [Christ] were made whole." The word "*sozo*" is used in both cases. No Christian today would deny that Christ's sufferings still atone for our sins today. Why then should we imagine that healing is not for today?

Since He was a healing God in the Old Testament, He is still a healing God today. He is still Jehovah Rapha, The Lord our physician, for He changes not! God is consistent. His character, nature and disposition are unchanging. Therefore, His will is unchanging also.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY OF HEALING

Jesus Himself is our best guide to the ministry of healing. The true heart and nature of God is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Philip asked, "Lord show us the Father and it will be sufficient." Jesus answered, "Don't you know me, Philip ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:8-12). This passage teaches us that Jesus came to show us by His life and ministry what God is like in His unchanging nature. Jesus shows so clearly that He is interested in the total man. He healed when healing was needed. He fed the multitude when food was needed. He showed the Father's love for man as He had created him – spirit, soul and body.

We also learn something about how Jesus valued His miracles. For Him, miracles confirmed the truth of His words. We are also encouraged to believe for Christ's healing power in our own ministry, "for anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing."

WHY DID CHRIST HEAL?

1. Christ healed to fulfil His prophetic ministry.

When the crowd gathered after the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, Matthew tells us, "He healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'" (Matt. 8:16-17).

2. To express His compassion

Numerous Scriptures mention the compassion of Christ motivating Him to meet the needs of the people. Jesus was "moved with compassion, and healed their sicknesses" (Matt. 14:14; 20:34; Mark 1:40-41; 5:19; 9:22).

3. To convey the mercy of God

Speaking of Epaphroditus, Paul says, "But God had mercy on him, and on me [Paul] also, and He healed Epaphroditus." (Phil. 2:27).

4. To prove that God had truly sent Him

The miracles and healings which attended the ministry of Jesus were signs or credentials to prove that God was with Him. Peter calls Him, "A man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you." (Acts 2:22).

5. To destroy the works of the devil

"For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8). "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38). "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2:14). Sickness is a work of the devil and Jesus was manifested to destroy it.

6. To manifest the works of God

Jesus and His disciples one day saw a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples were curious to know the cause of this man's blindness. Was it the result of his sin, or that of his parents? Jesus, however, was interested in something else. He said: "That the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work of Him that sent me, while it is day" (John 9:1-4). He then proceeded to heal the man, showing clearly that one of the reasons He healed the sick was to make manifest the works of God.

7. To manifest the glory of God

The mighty works of God were performed by Jesus, that His Father might be glorified. Standing before the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha, "Said I not unto you, that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).

In Luke 13:10-17, we read the story of the woman bound by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and how Jesus loosed her from her infirmity. Verse 13 tells us, "And He laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Notice that it was after she was healed that she glorified God.

SOME METHODS JESUS EMPLOYED TO HEAL

Jesus did not employ only one method to heal people; He ministered to them in a variety of ways. Let us consider briefly a few of those ways.

1. Jesus spoke the word of authority

The Roman officer who approached Jesus (Matt. 8:5-13) on behalf of his servant recognized Christ's word of authority. As an army officer, he was accustomed to both giving and receiving orders. He knew that a true word of authority gained immediate response. So impressed was he with Christ's authority that he besought Him, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be

healed.” Later he discovered that his servant was actually healed at the very hour that Jesus spoke the word.

We also have authority in Jesus’ name. Christ Himself said, “Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be you removed, and be you cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe those things which he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says.” (Mark 11:23).

2. He laid hands upon the sick

Jesus frequently laid hands upon the sick to minister healing. Because of their cultural background, people had great faith in the laying on of hands. Jairus besought Jesus that He would come and lay hands on his daughter, who lay at the point of death (Mark 5:21-23). When Jesus came to Nazareth, His home town, He “laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them.”

3. He rebuked sickness

Jesus actually verbally addressed sickness at times, rebuking it and commanding it to leave. Luke records two interesting incidents in the fourth chapter of his gospel. The first concerns a man in the synagogue who had an unclean spirit. Jesus rebuked the spirit, commanding it to “hold your peace, and come out of him.” The spirit obeyed immediately and left the man (Luke 4:33-37).

Jesus and some of the disciples went straight from the synagogue to Peter’s house, where his mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. Luke tells us that Jesus rebuked the fever; and it left her, and immediately she arose and ministered unto them. The interesting thing is that the word for rebuke is the same in both instances. Jesus treated the fever just as he had treated the spirit. He rebuked them both verbally, commanding them to leave, and they did so.

4. He touched people

“And Jesus put forth His hand and touched him saying, I will, be you clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” (Matt. 8:3). “Then touched He their eyes saying, according to your faith be it unto you.” (Matt. 9:29). When Peter smote the servant of the High Priest and cut off his ear, we read, “And He touched his ear, and healed him.” (Luke 22:51). There are many other instances where Jesus touched people and healed them.

5. People touched Christ

“And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased; and besought Him that might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched Him were made perfectly whole.” (Matt.14:35-36).

“And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years . . . came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.” (Mark 5:25-29).

Chapter 4 CHANNELS OF HEALING

SOME OF GOD’S WAYS OF HEALING

God has many ways to make His healing power available to us today. He can work in any way He chooses. Do not make the mistake of trying to dictate to Him which way He is to heal. He knows best. Let Him do it His way. Let us look at some of the means through which he may choose to work.

Natural Healing

One of the reasons why I personally believe that God is a healing God is the natural law of healing and recuperation which He has built into the human system. The body has amazing resistance to sickness and powers of recovery. Given adequate opportunity it will often restore itself to health.

Think for moment of a wonderful substance God has placed in the blood. Fibrin is a protein in the bloodstream. It is soluble and travels around the circulatory system continually without causing any problems. However, if a person is wounded and the blood begins to pour from the wound, the fibrin begins to stick together and form a clot. This fibrin, which is like a white thread, on contact with the outside atmosphere, begins to form a mesh of white fibers and a clot is formed. This stops the flow of the blood from the wound.

White blood cells are also part of the body's wonderful defense mechanism. They are the defense force of the body. When infectious organisms enter the body, the brain immediately sends a signal to the white corpuscles. They quickly rally to the point at which the bacteria have entered and begin the attack by devouring the foreign organisms. As they overcome the invading army, the dead bodies of the enemy begin to pile up. This is essentially what a boil is, the building up of bacteria which the white blood cells have defeated. Eventually the boil bursts and the body casts off the remains of the enemy which unsuccessfully tried to infect the system.

There are many other wonders within the human body which together constitute the marvelous system of resistance to disease. They seek to protect the body at all times from enemy invasions and preserve the condition of health which God has ordained for it. Remember that sickness is abnormal. Good health is God's normal condition for His wonderful creation.

Dietary and general care of the body

Inadequate care of the body can lead to a condition of ill health, in which case the body not only requires a physical healing, but changes to take place in priorities which will provide adequate care and attention in the future.

I am not suggesting that we Gentiles should follow the Jewish laws to the letter. I am saying that we should learn from them the necessity of giving consideration to the matter of diet and hygiene. When a person is suffering from malnutrition (the consequence of an inadequate diet), there is really only one cure, a definite improvement in the diet. One needs to ensure, to the best of one's ability, that the diet is balanced and the food nutritious, containing the proteins and vitamins which the body requires to maintain good health. In some countries this is not always easy. Serious food shortages make it difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain proper supplies of necessary food supplements. However, even in countries where this is not so, many people often fail to recognize the importance of nutrition. Some even feel that they cannot afford to eat properly but eventually have to pay out money for medical attention. It is much better to spend money on food than on hospital bills.

At the other extreme there are people who damage their health through overeating, or eating too much of the wrong foods. They eat too many fatty foods and too much starch. This creates fat tissue instead of energy. Such people become overweight and their health suffers as a result. It has been said that many people today are 'digging their graves with their teeth'. Their eating habits are causing ill health and even premature death. There is a need for discipline in such matters. Our bodies are no longer our own. They have been bought with a price. They now belong to God and we are to glorify God through the proper care of them (1 Cor. 6:20).

Medical care and attention

In cases where the body's health has deteriorated through inadequate attention to the natural laws of health, it is frequently necessary to have medical advice and care. No doctor can heal. Only God can heal! Medical science cooperates with the laws of God in order to help the patient recover. A famous physician once said, "I tend, but God heals." That is a true statement. Since God is essentially against sickness and disease, doctors are therefore cooperating with God towards the fulfillment of His purposes. Hospitals are 'houses of mercy helping to combat the great plague that is in the world because of sin.'

Psychological and emotional healing

1. Correct attitudes and thoughts

One of the important developments in medical science recently has been in diagnosing and treating "psychosomatic" sickness. By this we mean physical sicknesses which start in the mind of the

patient. These are not imaginary sickness. The person is actually physically ill. However, the illness has been produced originally by the patient's mind. Solomon touched on this principle when he said, "As he thinks in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7a). Whatever a man allows his mind to dwell upon, he will become! If a person is afraid of sickness, and always morbidly contemplates the possibility of becoming ill, those very thoughts can produce the actual ailment of which he is afraid.

Job was also very much aware of this principle. It seems that even though he was healthy and extremely prosperous, he harboured negative thoughts that one day he would lose everything. Perhaps he would think to himself, "this is too good to last. Things are going too well for me, I cannot expect this to last forever." Whatever his specific thoughts were, they were quite obviously negative and pessimistic. When tragedy did overtake him and he became so ill he wished he had never been born, he said, "For the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." (Job 3:25). Job realised that the fears which he had allowed to captivate his thoughts had attracted into his life the very things he had feared. Fear has torment, the Bible says. (1 John 4:18). Fear is a destroyer. It is destructive of both mental and physical health. This is one reason why Jesus admonished, "Fear not, believe only" (Luke 8:50). We are made for faith, not fear. Faith strengthens and fortifies us. Fear demoralizes and destroys.

2. Uncontrolled emotion

Negative emotions which are not brought under control are also destructive to health. Many Christians allow themselves to be controlled by their emotions instead of ensuring that they control their emotions. They depend too much upon "how they feel!". If they are a little depressed, they allow that depression to rule them. Every small disappointment, upset or reversal plunges them deeper into despondency. Such emotional indiscipline ultimately undermines the health and can cause serious sickness. Christians were never intended to be ruled by their emotions! Rather, they were meant to rule over their emotions, imaginations, moods and feelings by faith in the Word of God (II Cor. 10: 4-5). God's Word is reliable, our emotions are unreliable. If we feed regularly on the Word, it will stabilize our emotions. The Word-filled believer is no longer tossed to and fro. He becomes as steady as the Word is. The Word adds qualities of strength, purpose and fortitude to the mind and heart.

Certain reliable medical authorities have said that more than 30% of all physical sickness originates initially in the mind or emotions. Such mental and emotional attitudes as worry, fear, anxiety, insecurity, morbid (gruesome) introspection, nervous tension, jealousy, frustration, anger and pessimism are powerful and destructive forces. If left unchecked, they will tear in pieces the fabric of one's health. They are the main causes of many of the most serious physical ailments. High blood pressure, heart problems, circulatory diseases, asthma, stomach ulcers and chronic headaches are but a few of the many illnesses typical of those induced by wrong mental and emotional attitudes.

When a person's sickness is psychosomatically induced, he needs not only the physical sickness to be healed, he also needs an inner healing of his emotional and mental processes. It is a simple thing for God to heal the physical symptoms, but if the mental attitude is not radically altered, the person will soon be ill again with the same or similar sickness.

For instance, it is a simple matter for God to heal a stomach ulcer. What is more difficult is the inner healing of the mental attitudes which caused the ulcer. If the person concerned insists on carrying a great burden of mental stress, worry, and anxiety, those attitudes will quickly cause another ulcer. David gave an effective formula for the healing of such chronic problems:

A. Cast your burdens on the Lord

David encourages us to "Cast the burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you." (Ps. 55:22). This entails the casting of every anxiety, worry, fear or negative attitude upon the Lord. Before we can do this, we must surrender our life completely to the Lord. When our life is totally yielded to God, it has become His personal property. He is then responsible for the upkeep of it. He will maintain it in good health and strength. It is only as we are willing to get rid of

those burdens by casting them upon the Lord, and He is then able to sustain us. If we insist on carrying those cumbersome burdens, not even God can sustain us in health!

Mediate on God's Word

David also describes the blessings of the man who meditates in God's Word day and night. "He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he does shall prosper." (Ps.1:3). Meditating in God's Word has great therapeutic value. Solomon, son of David, further states that God's Word "is health to all their flesh." (Prov. 4:22).

C. Bring your thoughts into captivity

Every thought can be brought into captivity to Christ. Sometimes there are troublesome thoughts that never leave us alone. They are like satanic strongholds in our mind (2 Cor. 10:3-5). There is no reason to remain ruled by these thoughts. Tackle them with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Take passages of Scripture that are the God-given solution and fight against the fear. "God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7). Don't say it just once. Dwell on it. Let God make you powerful and victorious. Confess it aloud. Strengthen your heart in it. The strongholds of the enemy will come tumbling down!

D. Fix your mind upon God

"Great peace have they which love your law; and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165). The peace which comes to some one through constant love for God's Word is a healing peace. The mind is kept "in perfect peace, as it is stayed upon God, trusting in Him implicitly." (Is. 26:3). God wants His people to be completely free from every mental and emotional problem, and also from the various sicknesses which are ultimately caused by the retention of those wrong attitudes.

3. Releasing the human spirit

At spiritual birth, eternal life is restored to the human spirit. This life is not an impersonal force; it is the Holy Spirit Himself who comes to dwell within. (1 Cor. 6:17). He is the life of God that we receive. Sadly, many believers are untaught in the things of the Spirit or tragically, taught incorrectly. Many have been taught that the age of miracles has passed. Many have been taught that the gifts of the Spirit were only for the Apostolic Age. Many are ignorant of the power there is in the Word of God. Because of this ignorance, their spirit is like an innocent man in jail. There is nothing wrong with the human spirit of the man, but ignorance and error have blinded and stunted spiritual growth.

As the mind is renewed by the Word of God (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10,16), the revelation sets the human spirit free and growth takes place. Those who minister the Word in the power of the Spirit are God's instruments to bring this spiritual release. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free..." "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:31-32, 36). "But when He, the spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13). "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). The Holy Spirit uses people who yield to Him as His instruments to bring spiritual release and well-being. When this release takes place, we move into real spiritual health. This is the foundation of total man well being.

Correct teaching helps people to avoid many of the pitfalls and traps that produce sickness and trouble. A primary objective in teaching the Word is to strengthen the influence of the God conscious born-again spirit; or, in other words, to develop the spiritual senses or sensitivity of the believers. So many Christians are unable to distinguish between their natural judgement and the counsel of God in their hearts. This is like spiritual malnutrition. By feeding them on the Word of God, they will learn to identify the voice of God, because they will recognize that it harmonises with their knowledge of the Word. This brings spiritual release and consequent health to the total man.

God's concern is for the total health and well being of man. Physical healing is a vital way of producing this health. God inspired teaching is another way of producing this divine health.

Evangelistic healing

This is the ministry of healing which Jesus said would follow the preaching of the Gospel. It is one of the five evidences He promised would always follow the proclamation of the true Gospel (Mark 16-18). Several things are required in order to see the manifestation of this kind of healing:

The command which preceded the promise was, “Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15). This is an evangelistic ministry; going into new territory and proclaiming the Gospel to the unsaved. Paul followed this rule. He sought to preach the Gospel where Christ had not yet been made known, rather than build upon a foundation which someone else had already laid. In consequence, his ministry was attested by God with “. . . might signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.” (Rom. 15:18-20). The result being that the Gentiles were made obedient to the Gospel by “word and deed”.

The proclamation of the Gospel in the New Testament setting included an emphasis upon physical healing as well as the hope of eternal salvation. A great portion of the ministry of Jesus was taken up with ministering to the sick and afflicted. They came to Him in Jesus was taken up and we are told that on many occasions, “He healed all that were sick”. (Matt. 8:16).

In a similar manner crowds of sick people came to the Apostles. On at least one occasion, the shadow of Peter upon the sick as he passed by brought healing deliverance (Acts 5:15-16). Many wonders, signs and miracles were wrought by the Apostles (Acts 5:12). It was largely as a result of such signs that great multitudes were subsequently added to the church (Acts 5:14).

The laying on of hands was also a specific feature of this particular aspect of healing. Consider some aspects of the significance of this act. In the cultural setting of the people, the laying on of hands was frequently used in order to confer something upon a person. Usually it was the conferring of an honour or a blessing, a privilege etc. Thus, those upon whom hands were laid, would traditionally be expecting to receive something. Notice what Jesus said about this matter. It is “them that believe” who should lay hands on the sick. It must be done in the name of Jesus. The believer’s hands must be stretched out towards, and laid upon the sick. Jesus declared, “they shall recover”. (Mark 16:17).

By reaching out our hands towards the suffering, we identify ourselves with them. We do so in the name of Jesus. As we do this in faith, we become an extension of the hands of the Lord. God has no hands but our hands with which to reach a needy world. Preaching the Gospel and laying hands on the sick is a command of Christ. We must be obedient to Him. We must do it in faith. When you touch the afflicted ones, claim the promise of God at that moment: “They shall recover.” Recovery is not necessarily an immediate, instantaneous healing. It may be a process. It begins at the moment of contact, but it may be some time before it is finally complete. Do not lose faith. Do not start to doubt. Maintain an attitude of positive faith in God’s statement. His word is true. It cannot fail.

This ministry of healing should accompany every evangelist. That is the promise implicit in this commission. It should accompany every “believer.” These signs shall follow them that believe.

Ecclesiastical healing

Whereas evangelistic healing is primarily a ministry to the unsaved, to convince them of the truth and reality of the Gospel, ecclesiastical healing is a ministry within the church. The Scripture which forms a basis for our consideration of this channel of healing is James 5:14-16. “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” The instructions in this passage are addressed specifically to Christians. “Is any sick among you?” clearly indicates that James is addressing those within the church. The instructions which follow are quite different those in Mark 16:15-20.

The sick one is to “call for the elders of the church.” The initiative is with the sick one. He is to make the request, calling for the elders to minister to him.

There is to be a confession of faults. If any sins have been committed, they are to be confessed also. We have already considered the fact that a great deal of sickness begins on the inside. There may be sin inside. Perhaps there are wrong attitudes. Often times there are harmful thought patterns and detrimental emotions. These are spiritual diseases which also produce physical ailments. There must be an acknowledgement and a confession of these sins. Confession brings these hidden destroyers into the open. There can never be a healing of these inner problems until they have been confessed and repented of.

Many people find it hard to acknowledge that they have any faults. Consequently they never obtain healing for them. We must be willing for God to search the heart and put his finger upon any attitude or thought which is displeasing to Him. Be open and honest before God. He is a loving Father who wants to heal you, not a dreadful monster who wishes to punish you. He does not want to uncover these problem areas to embarrass or shame you. He wants to get them out of your heart and mind because they are poisoning and destroying you. If God makes you aware of some sin or resentment which is out of harmony with His will, confess it to the elders (leaders). It is better for this to be done in privacy rather than before a public meeting. However, there are times when a confession to the whole body is required. This is generally where the sin has been committed against that group. Otherwise, the confession should be received by the elders privately and the details should remain confidential to the elders.

Though the confession is made in the presence of the elders, we are actually making out confession to God. We may have offended our brother, but it is God against whom we have sinned and we must earnestly seek His forgiveness. Confession should also be made to the person we may have sinned against or offended. We should confess in a spirit of humility, sincerely seeking his forgiveness. Under the Old Covenant God required a trespass offering to be made in respect of an offence against a brother. (Lev. 6:1-7). One of the requirements of that offering involved the making of full restitution, plus 20%. (Lev. 6:5).

The principle here is that we must seek to make a generous restitution to the one we have offended. We should try to make up to him for the harm or hurt we may have caused him by our actions.

They should be anointed with oil.

Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. When we anoint someone with oil we are symbolically calling upon the Holy Spirit to come upon this person for whom we are about to pray.

The disciples evidently used this method quite frequently. In Mark 6:13, we read, "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

Oil symbolizes light. The candlestick in the Holy Place was actually an oil lamp. It was oil, therefore, which gave light in that Holy Place. Thus, when we anoint someone with oil, we are also saying, "Father, we recognize that we are performing this act in the light of your presence. We understand that nothing is hidden from You. You know all things. Therefore, help us to be totally honest in this situation, for nothing dishonest or insincere will escape your attention. If this sick person, now seeking You has any faults of which they are genuinely unaware, may the light of your presence reveal these things that they may be dealt with."

Oil, further, is symbolic of healing. It contains healing properties. It was probably the oldest medicine known to man. It has a soothing, healing effect. The man rescued by the Good Samaritan had oil and wine poured into his wounds. The wine was to cleanse the wounds, the oil to heal them. Now when we anoint with oil, we are not applying it as a medicine, but as a symbol of healing, looking to the Holy Spirit to impart His healing to the sick one. Having anointed with oil, the elders must now pray the prayer of faith. James says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up". (Jas. 5:15).

Healing through Holy Communion

In 1 Corinthians 11:23,32 we have a clear indication that participating properly in the Holy Communion meal will result in healing and health. Paul maintains that improper participation has resulted in many of the Corinthians being ill and some of them actually dying prematurely. "For

this cause many are weak and sickly you and many sleep.” (I Cor. 11:30). It therefore follows that proper participation will promote good health. Let us look together at this important matter.

HOLY COMMUNION TYPIFIES THE PASSOVER MEAL

When Jesus first instituted Holy Communion, it was at the time of celebration of Passover (Matt. 26:19). The disciples who gathered around Him that night were keenly aware of the implications of this meal. They were mindful that it symbolized the original pass-over some 1,500 years previously. They remembered the covenant which God had made with their fathers. He had brought their ancestors out of Egypt on the first pass-over and they had experienced a glorious deliverance from Egypt and all its bondage. By the mighty outstretched hand of God, they were brought out from slavery.

The original pass-over meal comprised of roast lamb and unleavened bread. The blood of that lamb had been applied to the door posts and lintels of their homes. That blood was a sign to God. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Ex. 12:13) He told them. They came out through those blood stained door posts into the freedom of salvation. The blood was for their redemption. God also told them to roast the lamb with herbs and eat every part of it before they commenced their journey into freedom. This nourishing meal was to strengthen their bodies in preparation for the difficult journey. It was to minister physical strength to them. Thus, the pass-over meal was for salvation and health.

As Jesus shared the bread and wine with them that night, He was making a New Covenant with them. The wine symbolized His blood, soon to be shed for their salvation. The bread typified the pass-over lamb to be eaten for health and strength. Paul shares some meaningful principles relating to our partaking of Holy Communion.

A. Remembering Jesus

Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 24:19; 1 Cor. 11:24). As Jesus sat at the table with them that night, He was the embodiment of human perfection. Throughout Jesus’ life Satan had tried, in every way to attack and destroy Him. He had sought to seduce Him. (Matt. 4:1-11). I am sure that he had tried to put many dreadful diseases upon Him. Jesus moved among so many sick and diseased people during His ministry, many of whom would have had contagious diseases. I am sure that Satan sought to contaminate Jesus with them. But every effort of Satan had failed miserably. At the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus was able to say, “Thus prince of this world [Satan] comes, but has nothing in Me.” (John 14:30). Despite all the efforts the devil had made, here was Jesus sitting in their presence, robust with health.

As a perfect specimen of manhood Jesus was saying, “When you celebrate this event in future, think about Me. Picture Me in your mind as I am this night. Healthy and strong, -kept by the power of God, preserved from all evil and disease by the Father’s protection and providence, realise that the Father wants you to be like this too.”

B. Celebrating His Death

As He passed around the bread and wine Jesus said, “This is my body, which is broken for you... This cup is the new testament in my blood.” Paul says, “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord’s death, till He comes.” (1 Cor. 11:26). In the deepest sense Communion is a celebration. Of course there is some sadness as we remember that it was our sins which caused Jesus to be nailed to the cross. However, as we meditate on Christ’s death we cannot remain sad for very long. Calvary was not a defeat; it was Christ’s greatest triumph. Through His death He “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.” (Heb. 2:14). As we celebrate that victory we rejoice to remember that Jesus has purchased perfect freedom for us from sin and all its evil effects. Jesus has restored to us everything that Adam lost. We are complete in Christ. (Col. 2:10) He has restored us to wholeness through His triumphant victory.

C. Discerning His Body

Here is the crux of the whole matter. Our problem is often a failure to discern Christ's Body as we celebrate Holy Communion. This has resulted in much sickness amongst Christians. (1 Cor. 11:27-32) So, what does it mean to "discern the body of the Lord?"

Firstly it means to understand that the body of Jesus was healthy and strong and that God wants us to enjoy health and strength.

Secondly, that as we eat the bread, it is by faith the body of Jesus. (1 Cor. 11:24) Inherent within it is the life, health and strength of Jesus. We should therefore eat in faith appropriating to ourselves the health that is in Christ.

Thirdly, we are to discern the mystical body of Christ. I believe this is the deepest and most significant aspect. This is the very point at which so many Christians fail. Paul calls the whole church, - the Body of Christ. (Eph 1:22-23). Every born-again person is a member of that Body. As we discern our relationship to Christ, so we must recognise our relationship to every other child of God. Failure to do so is "eating and drinking unworthy." Partaking of that holy meal, whilst failing to recognise the oneness of Christ's mystical universal Body is participating unworthy. Please notice that word "unworthy" is an adverb, something we do. It does not refer to the worthiness or unworthiness of the persons themselves. It refers to whether or not this act of taking communion is done in a worthy or unworthy manner.

D. A Time for Self Examination

"But let a man (person) examine himself, and so let him eat the bread and drink the cup." (1 Cor. 11:28). The Apostle Paul, in this powerful treatise on the Lord's Supper, reminds us that the celebration is also to be a time for self-examination. This is an extremely important aspect of the meal. Just as the Jews had been admonished to remove all traces of leaven from their homes before keeping the pass over celebration, (Ex. 12:15,19) so we are commanded to examine ourselves before partaking of the emblems of Christ's body and blood. As we examine our hearts in this manner we must confess to God any sin or rebellion we may become aware of and sincerely seek for and receive His forgiveness. As we turn from such sin through confession and repentance, God has promised that He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9).

Thus the celebration of Christ's death on a regular basis can become a real source of spiritual, mental and physical health and strength. But in order for this to be effective and beneficial we must genuinely observe the admonition to confess any sin we are aware of and receive Christ's forgiveness. In this manner we are able to eat and drink in a worthy and beneficial manner. Paul also reminds us that "If we judge ourselves we shall not be judged or chastened of the Lord." (1 Cor. 11:31-32).

There is both cleansing and healing at the table of the Lord. We should celebrate this meal regularly and do it in a worthy manner, rightly recognizing the Body of the Lord. In so doing we shall enjoy the glorious blessing of divine health in spirit, soul and body.

PRAYING THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Faith is based solely on what God's Word declares

The foundation upon which the prayer of faith stands is the integrity of God's Word alone. It does not look to any other source for confirmation or encouragement. It believes implicitly that God's Word is the only source of ultimate truth. "Let God be true, but every man a liar..." (Rom. 3:4). Bible faith has its origins in God's Word. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17). It follows that if we are to pray the prayer of faith, we must familiarise ourselves thoroughly with God's Word, relative to His will about healing. We must know, from His Word, that it is His will to heal. There must be a sound foundation of faith deep within us, built by God's Word alone.

B. Faith knows the will of God

A leper once said to Jesus, "If you will, you can make me clean." (Matt. 8:1-4). This leper had no doubt whatsoever as to the ability of Jesus to heal his condition. His doubt was in the area of

whether or not it was His will to do so. Jesus settled this immediately when He replied, “I will; be you clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed!” We must also be firmly settled in our heart that it is God’s will to heal. If any uncertainty or doubt within causes us to conclude our prayers with “If it be Your will”, then we have NOT prayed the prayer of faith!

In addition to knowing from the Bible that it is God’s will to heal the sick, we should also seek God earnestly to know His will specifically for the person for whom we are praying. In other words, while it is always God’s desire to heal, sometimes His healing is delayed for certain reasons and we need to ascertain that it is indeed God’s will to heal this person right now. Sometimes when we seek this specific knowledge, God reveals some hindrance that is blocking the manifestation of His healing power. We can then seek to rectify that problem and clear the way for healing to take place. James goes on to make clear that such a doubting person shall receive nothing from the Lord (Jas. 1:7). The prayer of faith is, therefore, totally committed to the confidence that God is going to answer prayer and heal the sick one. There is no room for doubt, uncertainty or hesitancy. This prayer is one of supreme committed confidence.

C. Faith has a definite object

Jesus frequently asked, “What will you, that I should do unto you?” In modern terminology He was asking, “What is your specific desire?”. What is the specific nature of your requests?” Christians are often so non-specific in their prayers that they would not even know afterwards whether God had answered their prayers or not. If we pray vaguely, we shall not receive anything. We must define specifically what it is we are believing and expecting God to do, and make that request known to Him in prayer, with thanksgiving.

A blind man to whom Jesus addressed such a question replied immediately, “Lord, that I might receive my sight” (Mark 10:51). He stated his desire definitely, specifically and concisely. Jesus responded to his request at once and the man received his sight.

D. Faith asks and receives

Many sincere Christians have failed to understand that the prayer of faith is both asking and receiving. To ask and keep on asking indefinitely can sometimes be an indication of our unbelief. Jesus said, “Ask and it shall be given you.” (Matt. 7:7). So when we have asked Him, we need then to receive our request from His hand with appropriate thanks.

E. Faith has a right motive

James explained two main reasons why we sometimes do not receive the answers to our prayers (Jas. 4:2-3). The first that we sometimes simply do not pray! The second reason is that we pray, but with the wrong motive. James says, “we ask amiss” for selfish reasons. So we ought to ensure that our motives are pure. Do we want this request for the right reason? The right reason is that God should be glorified and His Name exalted. Anything less than is frequently suspect in its motivation.

Many desire things for extremely selfish reasons. God does not generally respond to self-centred prayers. It is good to clarify one’s motives and make sure they are worthy ones. The minister whom God may use to impart healing must also ensure that his motives are worthy ones. Some pray for the sick because of vain and superficial motives. Too many ministers begin to think that the power comes from them instead of through them. Many are puffed up with pride because God is using them. They frequently disqualify themselves from greater effectiveness through this carnal attitude. Still others would seek to use the gift of God for personal gain. In doing so they pervert that gift. The principle is always: “Freely you have received, freely give.” (Matt. 10:8).

F. Faith has a bold confession

A positive confession is essential to the functioning of faith. “I believed and therefore I have spoken.” (2 Cor. 4:13). “For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10:10). “Let us hold fast to the profession [confession] of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful who promised.” (Heb. 10:23).

Jesus explained the relationship between our confession and receiving what we ask of God. “For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be you removed, and be you cast

into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass he shall have whatsoever he says.” (Mark 11: 23).

If your confession does not agree with the Word of God then it is not faith speaking. Faith always agrees with God’s Word. The literal meaning of the verb to confess, in N.T. Greek is: to agree with, to say the same thing. If we are to pray the prayer for faith, without doubting, then our conversation, speech and confession must also harmonize with our prayer.

G. Faith acts in agreement with our confession

Our faith confession is a verbal statement which agrees with the attitude of faith we hold about the healing of this sick person. We must go somewhat further than speaking words of faith. We must take faith actions. These are actions that agree with the faith statements we have made. This is literally acting upon God’s Word. James says, “Faith without works is dead.” (Jas. 2:20). If we profess to believe something but do not act upon it, then our profession is empty. So often Jesus demanded faith action from those whom He healed. “Arise take up your bed and walk,” He commanded the lame man (Mark 2:9). It is usually at this precise moment, when one begins to act in faith, that a miracle takes place. In contrast, many do not receive healing because at that moment at which they should act in faith, they fail to finally act on the promise.

H. Faith continues steadfastly

Hebrews 10:23 says, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised.)” Very often our faith is tested in that the result we believe for is not immediately manifest. This is a very critical and important factor in the exercise of faith. True faith has an enduring quality that continues to believe steadfastly even when the results are not immediately evident. True faith does not “cast away its confidence, which has great recompense of reward.” (Heb. 10:35).

Bible faith relates solely to what God’s Word declares. It does not depend upon feelings, symptoms or evidences discerned by the natural senses. It believes, confesses and acts upon the Word of God. So when there is no apparent change or improvement, it goes on believing that God’s Word is true. Faith always confesses that the Word is true and acts accordingly

I. Faith gives the glory to God

Abraham is well known as a man of great faith. His example in this regard is both inspiring and instructive. Romans 4:17-21 gives us some helpful principles concerning the operation of his faith. These include the fact that Abraham was careful to give the glory to God. The trouble with many Christians is that God cannot trust them with great exploits of faith because they will take the glory to themselves. They would make themselves appear to be someone great. God is extremely jealous of His glory. He will not share it with another. We also need to be mindful of this fact. Always be careful to give honour and glory to God for the wonderful things He accomplishes. It is not your faith that has performed the miracle; it is God’s power. Your faith, at best, has been but a channel for God’s power to flow through.

Chapter 5 NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM AND HEALING

We have seen clearly in preceding chapters that God is a healing God; “I am the Lord that heals you.” (Ex. 15:26). Christ is a healing Christ: “By whose stripes you were healed.” (1 Pet. 2:24). The Word is a healing Word: “He sent His Word and healed them.” (Ps.107:20). The New Testament Church was a healing community: “And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.” (Acts 5:12).

New Testament evangelism included healing

When we speak of New Testament evangelism, we mean that type of evangelism which is inspired, anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and attested to by the same signs, wonders and miracles which followed the ministry of the early church. Unfortunately many ministers today rely

upon talent, training, personality, organizational ability, publicity etc., and place little dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Hence the scarcity of miraculous signs accompanying their ministry!

The early church had so little of the things in which many today put their faith. They enjoyed no prestige or standing in the community. They did not have magnificent buildings, colleges and universities. They had very little of the social refinements which come from education, culture and social position. Instead, they were the social outcasts of their society. Despite all these apparent disadvantages, they succeeded in turning the world upside down for Christ! If we employed the principles evident in their ministry, we would see the same results today!

Signs, wonders, miracles and healings were an essential factor in the growth of the early church. The Acts of the Apostles is full of great miracles that Christ did through those early believers. The book of Acts is not only on historic account of that period; it is the divine blueprint for the Church in all ages. God never intended the miraculous to disappear with the death of the apostles. Miracles were not only for the Apostolic Age; they are for our day too!

Let us look at the dynamic effect of miracles in the program of the Early Church.

1. Miracles attracted crowds

This was true in the ministry of Jesus. “Many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.” (John 2:23). “And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased.” (John 6:2). It was also true in the ministry of the early apostles. The miracle wrought at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-16) resulted in 5,000 people turning to Christ. (Acts 4:4). “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” (Acts 5:12,14). “There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one.” (Acts 5:16).

2. Miracles confirmed the message

Jesus predicted that supernatural signs would attend the preaching of the true Gospel. “These signs shall follow them that believe.” (Mark 16:17-18). One of those five signs was, “They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (Mark 16:18). “And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” (Acts 8:6). The inference is clear. The people were impressed by Philip’s authority when they saw the miracles attending his ministry, and consequently gave close attention to what he had to say. So great was the response that great joy filled the city (Acts 8: 8).

3. Miracles met the real needs of communities

There was always a tremendous crowd around the apostles because so many sick folk wanted to be healed. They came for the healings. Many people left with far more – they received the Kingdom. Healing and miracles always attract great crowds. This is as true today as it was in Bible days. It is often hard for people to admit they are sinners in need of a Savior, but it is not difficult to convince a sick person that he needs healing. He is very much aware of this need. True New Testament evangelism meets the physical needs of man as well as the spiritual ones.

4. Miracles proved the resurrection of Christ from the dead

Many disputed the facts of Christ’s resurrection. The many miracles which God began to perform in the name of Jesus convinced the multitudes of the reality of the Resurrection. If Christ were still dead, then His name would have no power. When Peter spoke to the elders concerning the healing of the man at the Gate Beautiful, he said, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified; whom God raised from the dead, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole.” (Acts 4:10). Peter was obviously referring to the miracle, to prove to them that Christ was indeed risen from the dead.

5. Miracles brought glory to God

We read concerning the blind man who was healed, “And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.” (Luke 18:43). On another occasion Jesus healed a man who was sick of the palsy. “And immediately he

arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion” (Mark 2:12). Concerning the healing of the lame man at the gate, we read, “For all men glorified God for that which was done.” (Acts 4:21).

6. Miracles established new believers in the power of God

Paul told the Corinthians that he had come, “Not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1 Cor. 2:4-5). When the Gospel comes in the supernatural power of God, the new believers are established in and by that power. The wisdom of men (philosophy, logic, rationale) can never establish men and women in the Christian faith.

Early Church Principles and Practices That Produce Healings:

1. They preached the Word of God

Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) and Stephen’s address (Acts 7) are fine examples of the Biblical content of the preaching of the early church. Preaching the Word of God carries a divine weight of authority. God always stands behind His Word. “I will hasten [watch over] my Word to perform it.” (Jer. 1:12). Preaching the Word of God will also create faith within the hearers as nothing else will. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Rom. 10:17). Their preaching exalted Jesus Christ. He was the grand theme of their message. They quoted all the prophecies which related to Him. They showed how God’s Word had predicted His coming and how He had fulfilled all the prophecies. They showed clearly that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. Their preaching clearly announced the Lordship and authority which God had placed upon Jesus. The title, Lord Jesus Christ featured strongly in their preaching and teaching. They taught that God had made Jesus the ultimate authority over all things. Jesus Christ is Lord was the underlying theme of all their teachings:

He is Lord over all things.

Lord of Creation.

Lord of Redemption.

He is Lord over Satan, having spoiled principalities and powers through His death on the cross.

He is Lord over fear, sickness, disease and demons.

The people were helped to see that when Christ’s Lordship was established in their lives, it was also established over their circumstances.

2. They exercised spiritual authority

These leaders of the early Church had a deep awareness of the authority which God had placed upon them through Jesus Christ. He had clearly told them, “Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name; He will give it you.” (John 16:23). He had conferred upon them the “power of attorney,” a legally constituted right to act in His name. This means to act in His behalf. Faced with a pathetic cripple, lame since birth, they had their first opportunity to use their newly given authority. “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I to you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6). Peter later made it clear to the astounded audience that it was through the authority in the name of Jesus, and by faith in that name, that the cripple now stood before them whole (Acts 3:16; 4:10).

Jesus had commanded them to go forth in His name and to use the authority of His name. (Mark 16:17-18; John 14:12-15; 15:16). This authority is still vested in the Church. The early disciples knew who they were and what their authority was. They had no confidence in their natural abilities or resources. They had supreme confidence in the authority which lay in the name of Jesus. They knew that the power of God’s throne was behind that name. God made all His power and authority available to mankind, in the name of Jesus. There is healing and wholeness in the name of Jesus. As we speak in that Name, demons have to obey us. Sickness has to retreat before the might and authority of that name. Jesus has given you the authority of His Name!. He wants you to go forth and exercise authority. Speak in His name. Command sickness to go in that name.

3. They encouraged people to be healed

Peter reached down, took the cripple by the hand and began to lift him to his feet. It was at that precise moment, as the man began to rise in faith, that the power of God went through his body and completely healed him (Acts 3:7). Without the active encouragement of Peter, the miracle might never have happened. Ministering healing involves much more than instructing the sick one, giving only verbal encouragement. Having spoken to him with spiritual authority, in the name of Jesus, Peter now actively assisted him to do what he could never do before. This faith action released the power of God into the up stood, and walked, and entered with the into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God.” (Acts 3:8).

4. They spoke by the power of the Spirit

In the upper room, the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a life transforming experience. They were different men when they emerged from that room. One of the more remarkable changes that occurred was the new boldness they manifested. Peter was a prime example. Prior to Pentecost, he had been fearful and acted in cowardice; frightened to even confess that he knew Jesus; afraid of admitting to a young servant girl that he was a follower of Jesus. Now he emerged, filled with new confidence and a holy boldness. He immediately began to release that boldness as he preached Christ to the multitude. These were the very people who had crucified Jesus and of whom he had been so afraid. Now he proclaimed to them the Lordship of Christ with great authority and boldness. Acts 4:8 is in an example of bold speech inspired by the Holy Spirit, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them...”

Much modern preaching lacks this quality of boldness. Instead, it is apologetic and weak. One reason is that preachers often present their own ideas and thoughts instead of faithfully proclaiming the Word and the counsels of God. Another reason is that they rely on their powers of oratory instead of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They preach with the enticing words of men’s wisdom rather than demonstrating the power of the Spirit. Paul declined to do this. He, above all others, had the ability to do so. His education and religious training afforded him the ability to speak with the wisdom of men, but he chose instead to rely wholly on the inspiration and anointing of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

5. They also acted with boldness

People marveled at the boldness of Peter and John and recognised this quality of boldness as a result of their having spent time with Jesus (Acts 4:13). It had the same marks as did the boldness of Jesus. It was not the brashness (impudence) of self-confidence, but the quiet authority of those who know that God is with them to confirm and attest His Word in their mouth and actions. When the local authorities strictly forbade them to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, their response was to seek God earnestly in prayer for an even greater measure of boldness (Acts 4:29). Bold action is born in one who knows his divinely given authority and acts within the areas prescribed by it. In the healing ministry, such action is the result of:

- Knowing that God has made a healing covenant.
- Having a thorough understanding of the Word of God relative to healing.
- Knowing God’s will in the matter of healing.
- Possessing an assurance of faith that God will heal this person.
- Believing that God will confirm His Word with signs following.

6. They performed many signs and wonders among the people

The early Church had a tremendous entrance into the local communities through the great ministry of miracles which God was granting them (Acts 5:12). Miracles dramatise the presentation of the Gospel.

Miracles confirm the truth of the message.

Miracles attract the multitudes (Acts 5:14).

Miracles convince the unsaved that the work is truly of God.

This emphasis on miracles, signs and wonders was one of the vital keys with which the Church opened the doors to the heathen world. The Gospel spread so rapidly during those years because of the authority evident in a ministry confirmed by miracles.

Such miracles are still an essential part of the Gospel. The argument of some that miracles no longer attract or convince because people have become too sophisticated, is not substantial. The sections of the church today which are making the greatest impact and experiencing the most rapid growth are largely those groups who are exercising the ministry of the miraculous.

7. They consistently taught daily of Jesus Christ

The message of the early Church was a relatively simple one; they preached and taught Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42). Their message was not complicated by denominational emphasis. It was not diluted and compromised by modernistic doctrine. Their teaching was not composed of theological theories. They did not teach a doctrine, they introduced a Person. They did not teach the “letter of the law” which kills. They ministered the Spirit of the Word, which gives life! (2 Cor. 3:6b). Their teachings were not restricted to the temple area. They also taught daily in every home. Jesus was introduced into the practical reality of their daily life. He was not contained in a small religious closet marked, “Open on Sunday only.”

When they taught Jesus Christ, they exalted Him as supreme Lord (Acts 2:36).

They introduced Him as the only Saviour (Acts 2:38; 4:12).

They represented Him as the mighty Healer (Acts 3:6-8,16).

They presented Him as the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

They constantly and consistently exalted Him in their preaching and teaching.

Their ministry was inspirational as well as instructive. It was faith inspiring.

The Bible says that, “Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.” (Rom.10:17). Unfortunately, faith “leaves” under much modern preaching. Many preachers today tend to undermine and destroy faith rather than create and strengthen it.

The consistent emphasis upon the miraculous in the ministry of the early Church encouraged the emergence of charismatic leadership. Both Stephen and Philip were originally appointed as deacons to assist in administration (Acts 6:1-7). The next time we hear of Stephen, he is preaching a tremendous message to a great crowd of people (Acts 7). The next reference made to Philip describes his miracle ministry in Samaria, “He preached Christ unto them.” (Acts 8:5). The scope of his message and the indication of matters he mentioned in preaching Christ is revealed in those things which began to transpire among his hearers.

Luke says that Philip preached the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus, (and all that the authority of that name could mean to them). What glorious subjects! What scope he had, preaching on these great themes, to proclaim the fullness of the Gospel of Christ.

In the atmosphere of faith created by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, miracles began to happen. “For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken were palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:7-8). Philip is the only person in the New Testament who is specifically designated as evangelist. His mission to Samaria must, therefore, be recognised as an example of the ministry of an evangelist. It included preaching Christ, but also the ministry of healing and exorcism. The impact made upon Samaria could never have been so great without the miraculous elements in his ministry.

God wants His Church to be an instrument of Healing today

God’s purpose and desire for the Church of our day is that it might also make a tremendous impact upon the heathen world. This can only happen as we believe God for a great restoration of His miraculous power upon the Church. The Holy Spirit is working throughout the earth to accomplish this. May our hearts and minds be open to the Spirit, that He may accomplish His purpose in us!

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