

## HOW TO BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Somebody commented once that in the last centuries the Holy Spirit has been the most ignored person in the church! There is a terrible dearth of knowledge and understanding of Him amongst Christians even today.

The MOST important and often the LEAST UNDERSTOOD fact is that the Holy Spirit is a **PERSON**.

Learn how your life can be filled to overflowing by connecting with the Holy Spirit, the one the Lord Jesus referred to as our guide and comforter.

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## PART ONE: ACHIEVING MATURITY



By way of introduction I need to explain certain basic facts about the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Somebody commented once that in the last centuries the Holy Spirit has been the ***MOST IGNORED PERSON IN THE CHURCH!*** There is a terrible dearth of knowledge and understanding of Him amongst Christians even today. I'm going to begin with some words of Jesus found in John 16:12-15. He's taking farewell of His disciples at this point and He's explaining that He is going to leave but in His place He's going to send the Holy Spirit. And then He begins to explain to them what the Holy Spirit will do and how He will minister to them and the provision that HE will make for them THROUGH the Holy Spirit and this is what He says: ***"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."***

I want to point out to you four very important facts about the Holy Spirit that emerge from these words of Jesus:

1. The MOST important and often the LEAST UNDERSTOOD is that the Holy Spirit is a ***PERSON***. Jesus breaks the rules of grammar in the original Greek text. In promising the Holy Spirit He said, ***"when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."*** Now the Greek language has three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter and the appropriate pronoun for each is indicated by the gender. For the masculine, 'he', for the feminine, 'she' and for the neuter, 'it' and the word for 'spirit' in Greek, 'pneuma' is neuter. So the grammatically correct pronoun is 'it'. But the laws of grammar are broken in these verses to emphasize that the Holy Spirit is NOT an 'it' but a 'he'. Jesus says, ***"when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."*** So the first thing we need to understand about the Holy Spirit is that HE IS A PERSON! God the Father is a PERSON, Jesus Christ the Son is a PERSON and likewise, the Holy Spirit is a PERSON! And in order to be successful in our relationship with the Holy Spirit, WE HAVE TO LEARN TO RELATE TO HIM AS A PERSON.
2. The Holy Spirit is now the ***PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GODHEAD ON EARTH***. THE Father is in heaven, Jesus is in heaven (at the Father's right hand) but the SPIRIT IS ON EARTH. And as long as the present dispensation continues, the Holy Spirit is the RESIDENT, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE of the Godhead on earth – and we need to ***TREAT HIM THAT WAY!*** We need to treat Him with the same honor that we give to the Father and to the Son - ***HE IS GOD!***
3. He is the ***SOLE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE WEALTH OF THE GODHEAD***. That's very important! Jesus says, ***"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."*** So everything that the Father has, Jesus has. The Father and the Son SHARE their TOTAL INFINITE WEALTH. But the one who REVEALS and INTERPRETS that which the Father and the Son have is the Holy Spirit. I've told people many times, God has a STOREHOUSE that is just FULL

of every kind of good thing we will ever need for time and eternity. BUT THE ONE WHO *KEEPS* THE STOREHOUSE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT! So if you want to be rich in the blessings of God, you'd better make friends with the 'keeper of the storehouse' because if you don't relate rightly to the Holy Spirit you can be LEGALLY entitled to the WHOLE INHERITANCE but in actual fact enjoy none of it.

4. **EVERYTHING THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES GLORIFIES JESUS.** Jesus said, *"He shall glorify Me!"* That's very important because once we cease to glorify Jesus, in our lives, in our services, in our speech, in our actions – THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHDRAWS. He will not give Himself, He will not impart His grace and His wisdom and His power to *ANYTHING* THAT DOES NOT GLORIFY JESUS.

I remember in the local which i attend we had a specially blessed and anointed service and afterwards I said to the worship leader, 'do you know why this service was particularly anointed, particularly blessed because everything, from beginning to end focused on Jesus and glorified Him?' that pleases the Holy Spirit. And when we operate that way then the Holy Spirit ENDORSES us, He ANNOINTS us, He FLOWS THROUGH us. But the MOMENT we cease to glorify Jesus, the Holy Spirit is grieved and He withdraws and waits until we come back to our primary task of glorifying Jesus. You see, there are two essential roles the Holy Spirit plays in our lives as gods children:

1. It's through Him that we BECOME children of God, become members of God family.

It's through the Holy Spirit that we are 'born again', 'born from above' and become members of Gods family. Jesus speaks about this in John 3:5-8, Jesus answered, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."* Notice that phrase *'born' of the Spirit*, it's by THAT experience that you become a CHILD of god – THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO BECOME A CHILD OF GOD. The Holy Spirit comes in, THROUGH YOUR FAITH IN JESUS AND IN THE WORD OF GOD and He imparts to you a TOTALLY NEW LIFE, a SPIRITUAL life. A life which is the life of God which is projected through the Holy Spirit into you. Jesus says there are TWO KINDS OF BIRTH, that which is born of flesh is flesh and can never be otherwise and in the flesh we were born as sons of Adam and not as children of God but through the NEW BIRTH by the Holy Spirit we BECOME children of God, we become MEMBERS OF GODS FAMILY. But we are only CHILDREN, we're only BABIES. It's not Gods purpose for us to remain permanently children. He has a plan for us to grow up into mature sons but this is where we are again DEPENDENT ON THE HOLY SPIRIT.

2. It's through Him that we grow to maturity

Apart from the Holy Spirit we cannot grow up, we cannot mature. Paul says in Romans 8:14, *"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God."* The words 'sons' there is distinct from the 'born again child' implied in the previous passage. This word means a 'mature son'. One who is RESPONSIBLE. One who is 'IN CONTROL' of his life. One who knows how to act. One who has authority. How do we come to that place of maturity? Paul says, *"For those who are being led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God."* THAT'S THE SECOND GREAT PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES, TO MATURE US. But this only comes through ONE PROCESS - *BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD*. There **IS NO OTHER WAY TO MATURITY**. And it's a CONTINUING PRESENT TENSE – we have to be we have to be CONTINUALLY led by the Spirit – EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR, IN EVERY SITUATION. That's the only way we can live as mature sons of God. The tragedy in the church today is, that uncountable numbers of people who had been born again of the Spirit of God have never learned to be LED by the Spirit of God. Consequently they never achieve maturity. They always remain, in some sense, RETARDED SPIRITUALLY. Not because the

provision isn't there but because they haven't understood how to avail themselves of the provision. The provision is TO BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!

***THIS IS THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN EVER COME TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY AS A TRUE SON OF GOD***

## PART TWO: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

"You might as well try to see without eyes, hear without ears, or breathe without lungs, as to try to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit."

D. L. Moody

Until you learn to relate to the Holy Spirit as a person, not as an IMPERSONAL INFLUENCE, not as a THEOLOGICAL ABSTRACTION but as a *person*, as real a person as God the Father and God the Son, as real a person as your husband or wife, your father or your mother, your son or your daughter. UNTIL YOU LEARN TO RELATE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THAT WAY YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED IN TRULY BEING LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

I'm going to look at some words of Jesus in John 14:16, 17 where He's explaining the role that the Holy Spirit will play in the lives of the disciples when He comes, "***And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate*** [or comforter, helper, councilor] ***to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.*** So the Holy Spirit is to be the comforter, helper, councilor and Jesus says, 'that He may be WITH YOU FOREVER!' what He was saying in effect is, 'I've been with you just for a brief three and a half years. Now, in My personal presence, I'm going to leave you, I'm going to return to the Father BUT, IN MY PLACE – ANOTHER PERSON WILL COME! That word 'another' is very important. Jesus is saying, 'you know that I am a person. You know how real I've been to you as a PERSON. As a PERSON, I'm going. But once I've gone, then ANOTHER person will come in My place. You see how He EMPHASIZES the personality of the Holy Spirit in ALL that He says. So one PERSON left (when Jesus ascended to heaven) and 10 days later, on the Day of Pentecost ANOTHER person (the Holy Spirit) descended from heaven. But the fact that Jesus emphasizes here is that this OTHER PERSON, the Holy Spirit, is GOING TO BE WITH US FOREVER!

And then in John 16:7 Jesus goes on in the same theme and He says, "***But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.***" Now that's an AMAZING STATEMENT for most Christians! You often hear Christians say something like this, 'how wonderful it would be to have been on earth in the days when Jesus was personally present with His disciples, how much more we would have learnt and understood' But Jesus says, as wonderful as that was, it's MUCH MORE WONDERFUL NOW THAT HE (Jesus) IS IN HEAVEN AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ON EARTH. He said, 'it's to your ADVANTAGE! It's in your BEST INTERESTS! If I don't go away the Comforter won't come. But if I go away then the Father and I together will send the Comforter IN MY PLACE AND YOU'LL BE MUCH BETTER OFF! And the history of the book of Acts evidences that. The MOMENT the Holy Spirit came the disciples had a TOTALLY NEW CONCEPT of the work of Jesus, of His authority, of their own standing in God, of the message that they were to preach, of the Old Testament prophets. Peter stood up IMMEDIATELY and began to quote the prophet Joel. I would guarantee, a couple of hours earlier he wouldn't have been able to say ANYTHING about the prophet Joel! Immediate light, understanding, boldness and authority came upon them the MOMENT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME.

**WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT:**

1. He is not and IMPERSONAL INFLUENCE
2. He is not a THEOLOGICAL ABSTRACTION
3. He's not a 'SYSTEM',
4. He's not a SET OF RULES
5. He's not an ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY
6. He's not HALF A SENTENCE NEAR THE END OF THE APOSTLES CREED

**HE IS A PERSON**

I have sometimes summed up my view of church history in this way – NINETEEN CENTURIES OF TRYING TO FIND A SYSTEM SO SAFE, WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO RELY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT – but I want to tell you THERE IS NO SUCH SYSTEM. No system, no theology, no theory, no hierarchy, no human ministry can take the place of the Holy Spirit. HE IS *INDISPENSIBLE!* Therefore we MUST cultivate a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with the Holy Spirit!

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY REQUIREMENT TO CULTIVATE SUCH A RELATIONSHIP?

I would say it's the same as the primary requirement for ALL successful relationships weather it's between parents and children, husband and wife or friends. The KEY WORD I would focus on would be the word 'SENSTIVITY'. I believe that is the most ESSENTIAL FEATURE THAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON IN CULTIVATING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ONE MORE FACT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE - THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LORD!

2 Cor 3:17, "***Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.***" The name 'Lord' in the New Testament corresponds to the name 'Yahweh', the true God, in the Old Testament. So when Paul says, ***the Lord is the Spirit*** he's saying THE SPIRIT IS GOD! He's JUST AS MUCH GOD AS THE FATHER OR THE SON! And then he says ***and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom***, that's the KEY to TRUE SPIRITUAL FREEDOM. It's NOT a set of rules, it's not a kind of procedure, it's not clapping your hands or dancing or shouting or singing or falling around the ground or ANYTHING, and it's DOING WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DIRECTS YOU TO DO AT ANY TIME. If you get set in a rut, if you view liberty as simply one kind of expression, you're not in liberty, you're in BONDAGE! You're only in liberty when you let the Holy Spirit be LORD of EVERY MOMENT in EVERY SITUATION. The services that succeed are the ones where the Holy Spirit is ALLOWED TO BE LORD FROM BEGINNING TO END.

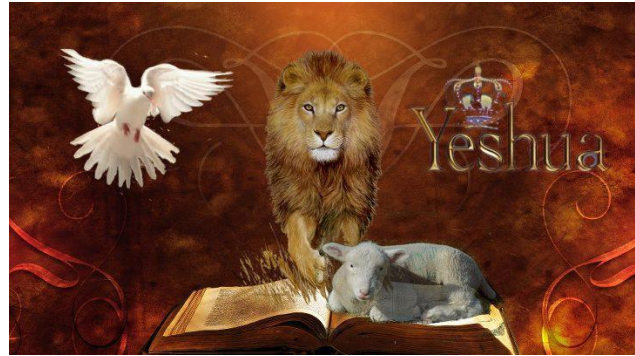
Let me put it this way - Jesus is Lord OVER the church; the Holy Spirit is Lord IN the church.

The lordship of Jesus over the church is NO MORE EFFECTIVE than the Lordship of the Holy Spirit IN the church.

ONLY IN SO FAR AS WE ALLOW THE *HOLY SPIRIT* TO BE LORD DO WE ALLOW *JESUS* TO BE LORD!

This is true of the church and it's *also* true of our individual lives!

## PART THREE: THE LAMB AND THE DOVE



## RECAPPING ON PART TWO:

In every kind of relationship, if it's to be successful, there's one primary requirement which is MUTUAL SENSITIVITY. The Holy Spirit, believe me, is very sensitive to US, but the relationship will not work unless WE learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Normally speaking the Holy Spirit doesn't act like a 'drill sergeant', He doesn't SHOUT orders at us, He's very gently, He's almost timid in a way. We read in the Old Testament about the prophet Elijah, of a WIND, an EARTHQUAKE and a FIRE passed before him but the scripture says, the Lord was NOT IN THE WIND, nor in the EARTHQUAKE, nor in the FIRE. In all those visible demonstrations of physical power the Lord's presence was not found. Then it says, 'there came a STILL SMALL VOICE' a 'whisper'. And the Lord was in the whisper. That's like the Holy Spirit. So, if you're going to hear the Holy Spirit's whisper, if you're going to feel His nudge. He's not going to push you, He's going to nudge you gently, or 'tap' you on the arm' or direct your attention to something. The KEY TO SUCCESS is SENSITIVITY.

The Holy Spirit is LORD! And our submission to the Father and to the Son goes NO FURTHER than our submission to the Holy Spirit. We can SAY we're submitted to God the Father and God the Son, we can CALL Jesus Christ 'Lord' but HE IS ACTUALLY NO MORE LORD IN OUR LIVES THAN THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LORDSHIP IS RECOGNIZED BY US.

Here we are going to look at the opening ministry of Jesus as we see how strongly the gospels emphasize HIS relationship to the Holy Spirit

JOHN 1:29 describes the introduction that John the Baptist gave to Jesus, it says, ***"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! What beautiful words! John introduces Jesus there as the LAMB OF GOD. Then John says in verse 32, "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One"***

Here is the threefold introduction of Jesus as:

1. The Lamb of God
2. The One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit
3. The Son of God

Now ONLY in John's gospel do we have the introduction of Jesus as the 'Lamb of God'. It's tremendously important and it's a glorious fact but it's very significant that in ALL FOUR GOSPELS, John is recorded as introducing Jesus as the ONE WHO BAPTIZES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT and yet for centuries the church has

said SO LITTLE about Jesus as the *BAPTIZER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT*. There are very few things apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus which are recorded in all four gospels but THIS IS ONE OF THEM! That JESUS IS THE BAPTIZER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. How did John identify Him? He said. 'I was told that when I saw the Spirit descend like a dove and *REMAIN ON HIM*, *THAT* would be the One who would baptize in the Holy Spirit.

So we have there two pictures from the animal creation. We have JESUS represented as the LAMB, the HOLY SPIRIT represented as the DOVE. What do we learn from the relationship between them? What are the characteristics that a lamb suggests to us in the light of scripture? I would suggest there are three:

1. Purity
2. Meekness
3. Sacrifice (that is a 'life laid down')

*THIS IS WHAT ATTRACTS THE 'DOVE', THE HOLY SPIRIT*. He's looking for the 'lamb' nature. *THAT'S* where He's going to settle and *THAT'S* where He'll remain.

The Holy Spirit does not approve of:

1. Arrogance
2. Self-seeking
3. Boastfulness
4. Aggressiveness

He's looking for purity, meekness and a *LIFE LAID DOWN*. The KEY FACT in all of this is not just that the dove DESCENDED on Jesus but that the dove REMAINED on Jesus. In ALL His ministry, Jesus never said or did ONE THING that would frighten the dove away. In the natural, the dove is a somewhat timid bird. He's easily scared. And that's true in a sense in the spiritual. The dove (the Holy Spirit) is timid. If we say and do things that He can't accept, He'll leave. He'll just take wings and fly off. The marvelous thing about Jesus is, He *NEVER SCARED THE DOVE*. This relationship to the Holy Spirit is the KEY to the ENTIRE MINISTRY OF JESUS. When He spoke in His own city, Nazareth in the synagogue, this is what He said, Luke 4:17-21, "***And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."***" What was the scripture? "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. . . He has anointed Me.*" To do what? *To preach good news. To proclaim freedom for the prisoners. Recovery of sight for the blind. To release the oppressed.* The entire ministry of Jesus, both His preaching and His ministry to the oppressed, to the sick, to the demon possessed was based on *ONE THING ONLY*, THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON HIM. It's a very significant fact that the New Testament does not record a single sermon Jesus preached or a single miracle He performed UNTIL the Holy Spirit came upon Him. He was TOTALLY dependent on the HOLY SPIRIT. He was OUR PATTERN. He had emptied Himself of His divine majesty and power. He'd made Himself like US. He'd taken on the form of a servant, the likeness of a man but when the Holy Spirit came upon Him then the POWER and the PURPOSES of God were RELEASED THROUGH HIM by the Holy Spirit.

***AND IT SHOULD BE THE SAME WITH US!***



When Peter went to the house of Cornelius and preached the gospel message for the first time to that gentile household, he introduced them to Jesus of Nazareth and this is what he said in Acts 10:38, ***“John preached how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the HOLY SPIRIT and POWER, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”*** You see Peter again, states the same thing, the whole ministry of Jesus, His public ministry, came out of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Once the Holy Spirit came upon Him He was released to the needs of humanity.

I always liked this thought that in this ministry of healing, God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit are ALL UNITED. The FATHER anointed the SON with the SPIRIT. And as children of God, God desires that He can anoint us with the *SAME SPIRIT WITH WHICH HE ANOINTED JESUS*.

Finally, let’s consider the things that ATTRACT or REPEL the dove

And they’re stated in Ephesians 4:29-32, ***“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”***

WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. Unwholesome words
2. Bitterness
3. Rage
4. Anger
5. brawling
6. slander

All these are contrary to the nature of the Lamb

WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT ATTRACT THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. kindness
2. tenderheartedness
3. mutual forgiveness

You see, when He doesn’t find the ‘lamb’ nature, He cannot abide.

The KEY to having the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit with us is to cultivate the *NATURE OF THE LAMB*

## PART FOUR: POWER, LOVE AND A SOUND JUDGEMENT



RECAP OF PART THREE – if you want a permanent, on-going relationship with the Holy Spirit, the three things you need to cultivate are: PURITY, MEEKNESS and a LIFE LAID DOWN in Gods service – for God AND His people. That’s what attracts the dove and THAT’S WHAT WILL CAUSE THE DOVE TO *REMAIN ON YOU*. But ANGRY WORDS and JEALOUSY and STRIFE and ARGUING and SELF-ASSERTEDNESS, those SCARE THAT TIMID DOVE AWAY. And sometimes it takes a long while to coax Him back again when we’ve indulged in such FLESHLY EXPRESSIONS.

Here I’ll share with you three important results which ONLY the Holy Spirit can produce in us

First I want to emphasize that there IS NO OTHER AGENT, NO OTHER POWER, NO OTHER PERSON who can do for us what the Holy Spirit can do. He is *ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE*. If we do not receive from Him, there is *NO ONE ELSE* FROM WHOM WE CAN RECEIVE WHAT WE NEED.

Zechariah, 4:6, “***So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT,’ says the Lord Almighty.***” So God RULES OUT might and power.

**MIGHT** you could understand as that which you have BY YOUR *NATURE*, like:

- TALENT
- ABILITY
- STRENGTH

**POWER** you could understand as that which you could *ACQUIRE*, like:

- EDUCATION
- FINANCE
- SOCIAL INFLUENCE
- Other such things

But God says, ‘*neither one nor the other can do what I want done.*’ There’s ONLY ONE AGENT IN THE UNIVERSE WHO CAN DO IT AND THAT’S THE HOLY SPIRIT! It’s very significant that it was the ‘Lord of Hosts’ who said those words, the ‘Lord of Armies’, the One who has ALL the might and ALL the power in the universe at His disposal, but THAT’S NOT GOING TO DO WHAT HE WANTS DONE. So that’s why God REFRAINS from using His might and His power. Sometimes we’d really like to see God turn loose and deal with the wicked and blast them into eternity and so on, but God restrains Himself because THAT KIND OF POWER CANNOT ACCOMPLISH THE RESULTS IN YOU AND ME AS GODS CHILDREN which is actually God’s number one priority. God can deal with the wicked in due course but at the moment His

priority is dealing with His children, His people and producing in us results which can be produced *ONLY BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD*.

Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7, three things about the Holy Spirit which I want to emphasize. He says, ***“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and a sound mind.”***

Those are the three of the main results which God wants to produce in us through the Holy Spirit, POWER, LOVE and a SOUND MIND (or SOUND JUDGEMENT)

LET’S LOOK AT THOSE BRIEFLY IN TURN:

A. POWER - What *kind* of power does the Holy Spirit bestow?

Jesus said to His disciples just before He left them and ascended back to heaven, this was in fact the LAST SENTENCE HE EVER SPOKE ON EARTH, Acts 1:8, ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”*** And He said, ‘don’t go out and begin your ministry, don’t begin to preach until you’ve received this supernatural power which can come *ONLY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT*’ Now that was not military power. The apostles had NO military power. It wasn’t physical power. It wasn’t intellectual power. They didn’t spend a lot of time arguing and theologizing, it was a *SUPERNATURAL SPIRITUAL POWER*. And you see, the message of the gospel is *TOTALLY SUPERNATURAL*. It centers in the record of A MAN WHO DIED, was THREE DAYS IN THE TOMB, was RAISED UP FROM DEATH and was RAISED UP TO HEAVEN. Now *THAT IS SUPERNATURAL*. What Jesus implies is, IT’S *UNREASONABLE* TO PRESENT A MESSAGE ABOUT A *SUPERNATURAL SET OF EVENTS WITH MERELY NATURAL POWER AND REASONING*. He says, ‘the POWER YOU NEED must FIT IN with the message that you’re commissioned to bring.’ The MESSAGE is supernatural, the POWER must be supernatural. As SOON as the Holy Spirit descended, *ABSOLUTELY IMMEDIATELY*, a *TOTALLY NEW KIND OF SUPERNATURAL POWER WAS RELEASED IN JERUSALEM* and, according to Jesus’ plan began to spread outwards from Jerusalem to the utmost parts of the earth. So the FIRST THING WE NEED TO SEE, as imparted by the Holy Spirit is a *DIFFERENT KIND OF POWER* from the power that this world understands. In fact Paul says, ‘*GODS strength is made perfect in weakness.*’ When we seek to imitate the methods of the world, when we covet the kinds of success that the world esteems we are actually TURNING AWAY from the REAL source of true spiritual success which is a spiritual power that’s of a *TOTALLY DIFFERENT KIND* and can come *ONLY FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT!* A supernatural power that EXALTS JESUS, PRODUCES MIRACLES, CONVICTS MEN AND WOMEN OF SIN, of RIGHTEOUSNESS and of JUDGEMENT, WRITES GODS LAWS IN THEIR HEARTS and brings them into a *TOTALLY NEW KIND OF LIFE*. That’s ALL that God is concerned about with His children. As I said before, God can deal with the wicked in due course but at the moment He’s bringing up a family for Himself, He’s creating a people for Himself and the agent of creation is the Holy Spirit and ***THERE IS NO OTHER!***

A. LOVE

Paul says this in Romans 5:5, ***“hope does not put us to shame, because God’s LOVE has been POURED OUT INTO OUR HEARTS through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”*** That is an amazing statement, the love of God *HAS BEEN POURED OUT IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT*. Not *SOME* of God’s love but just ‘*GODS LOVE.*’ I always tell people who’ve been filled with the Holy Spirit, ‘you really don’t need to ask for MORE LOVE, what you need to do is release the love that’s *ALREADY BEEN POURED OUT IN YOU!*’ In fact to ask for more love, in a certain sense, is a statement of unbelief! Because it *ALL BEEN RELEASED!* The Bible says, ‘*God doesn’t give the Spirit by measure.*’ He doesn’t RATION the Spirit out, He’s so generous. Even the Spirit Himself is called ‘the ‘FREE’, or the ‘GENEROUS’ Spirit of God.’ There’s no stinginess with God. God pours out the *WHOLE* of His Spirit and the *WHOLE* of His love

into our hearts. Our problem is not that we don't HAVE enough love, it's that we don't YIELD to the love that we have.

#### B. SOUND JUDGEMENT (or a sound mind)

I understand that to mean EVALUATING THINGS AS GOD EVALUATES THEM. I've told people many times, 'the *GREATEST REALIST ON EARTH TODAY IS THE HOLY SPIRIT.*' He's never sentimental. He's never impressed by the external. He always sees right to the heart of every situation, every person, every problem. And He *TELLS US THE EXACT TRUTH ABOUT IT.* There's been a generation that wanted people to tell them things 'the way they are.' 'Tell it like it is!' I always tell those people when I minister to them, 'if you want anybody to tell you "like it is" YOU WANT THE HOLY SPIRIT. Because HE NEVER SENTIMENTALIZES, He NEVER EXAGGERATES, He NEVER PUSHES, He JUST TELLS IT LIKE IT IS! It's up to YOU to respond! Paul says in Romans 12:2, "***Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.***" So our minds have to be TRANSFORMED, they have to be RENEWED in order that we can HAVE this kind of judgement. And *THE RENEWING AGENT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT!*

In very similar language in Ephesians 4:23, Paul says this, "***that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind***" Notice: it's the *SPIRIT* that must renew the *MIND*. It's not psychology, it's not education, ***IT'S THE SUPERNATURAL OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD THAT RENEWS OUR MIND.***

You see, Religion, preoccupied with externals, works from WITHOUT. God renews us from WITHIN. He renews our MINDS, the way we THINK. And when we *THINK DIFFERENTLY*, we *LIVE DIFFERENTLY*.

OUR part is yielding to the Holy Spirit in ***EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES!***

So let me sum up those three results:

The Holy Spirit comes to do WHAT NO OTHER POWER OR PERSON CAN DO, TO IMPART TO US: POWER, LOVE AND A SOUND MIND (or JUDGEMENT) and these we receive as we *YIELD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT*

## PART FIVE – THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD



Here I want to speak about the RELATIONSHIP between the *SPIRIT OF GOD* and the *WORD OF GOD*.

The first thing I need to say is that THERE IS ALWAYS *PERFECT HARMONY* BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD. They NEVER ARE IN DISAGREEMENT. There is TOTAL INTIMACY and COMPLETE HARMONY.

We take first of all an example from creation. In Psalm 33:6, the psalmist says, ***“by the word of the Lord the heavens were made and by the breath of His mouth all their host”*** Now where the English translation says ‘breath’, the word in Hebrew is ‘Spirit’ – so the *WHOLE CREATION* originally, came into being through two agents, the *WORD OF THE LORD* and the *SPIRIT OF THE LORD*. It’s important for us to see that they operated together in *PERFECT HARMONY*. Neither operated without the other, and that’s true in our lives today. God’s results are achieved in us by *HIS WORD* and by *HIS SPIRIT WORKING TOGETHER*.

If you turn back to the original record of creation in Genesis 1:2-3, we find this account, ***“the earth was formless and void and darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters...”*** So there we see the Spirit of God ‘hovering’ (like a ‘dove’) over the surface of the waters.

It’s interesting that the *first* specific person of the godhead mentioned in scripture is the *HOLY SPIRIT*.

Then God said, ***“let there be light’, and there was light”*** In that verse we see Gods *WORD* went forth. He *SPOKE* the word ‘light’ and the *THING* ‘light’ came into being. But *IT WAS NOT WITHOUT THE SPIRIT OF GOD!* First of all the spirit of God *MOVED* and *PAVED THE WAY* for the *WORD* of God then the *WORD* was *UNITED* WITH THE SPIRIT and the ***WORD AND THE SPIRIT TOGETHER PRODUCED CREATION!***

Now it’s so important to understand this because this is *PRECISELY HOW GOD OPERATES IN OUR LIVES*. By His Word and by His Spirit working in harmony. *NEVER THE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER!*

I WANT TO SAY TWO THINGS ABOUT THE PART OF THE *HOLY SPIRIT* IN GIVING US THE *WORD OF GOD*.

The Holy Spirit is both the *AUTHOR* and the *INTERPRETER* of the *Word of God*. Not merely the author but also the interpreter.

FIRST OF ALL LET’S LOOK AT HIS PART AS **AUTHOR**:

In 2Tim 3:16, Paul says, ***“all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness”*** Now that ‘word’ translated there *‘inspired by God’* is literally ‘in-breathed’ by God. It’s a single word. And the word ‘breathed’ is directly related to the word for ‘spirit.’ Spirit is ‘PNEUMA’, breathed is ‘PNEUSTOS.’ They’re from *EXACTLY THE SAME ROOT*. So, what it tells us is that the Holy Spirit was the *AUTHOR OF ALL SCRIPTURE*. No matter who was the human writer, the Holy Spirit was the one who gave the word, who breathed it into the writer so that the authority behind all scripture is the authority of the author and *THE AUTHOR IS THE HOLY SPIRIT!*

Peter touches on this also in 2 Peter 1:20-21, when he says this, ***“but know this first of all, that no prophesy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation. For no prophesy was ever made by an act of human will but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”*** So here we see that, again, prophesy, the prophetic revelation of scripture came *FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT!* It was never just the product of a human mind or human thinking or rationalization but *ALWAYS BEHIND IT WAS THE POWER AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!*

THEN LET’S LOOK AT THE PART OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS **INTERPRETER** OF SCRIPTURE.

We can read again the same words of Peter in 2 Peter 1:20-21, ***“but know this first of all, that no prophesy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation”*** None of us can approach the scripture and say, ‘well, this is how I understand it, this is how I interpret it’

**THERE’S ONLY ONE AUTHORIZED INTERPRETER AND THAT’S THE AUTHOR HIMSELF!**

How wonderful Gods provision is that He’s given us the author to be the interpreter! So none of us can take a scripture and just choose our own interpretation or work it out simply by our own rationalization.

**THE ONLY VALID INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT WHICH COMES BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Jesus said about the part of the Holy Spirit in presenting the scripture to us in John 14:26, ***“the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things, He is the author and teacher of scripture”*** and again in John 16:13, ***“but when He the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth for He will not speak on His own initiative but whatever He hears, He will speak and He will disclose to you what is to come”***

So always, as we come to the Word of God, *WE ARE DEPENDENT ON THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE US, TEACH US, TO LEAD US INTO ALL THE TRUTH.* And we need always to bear in mind that *BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURE, HE NEVER CONTRADICTS HIMSELF. HE NEVER, NEVER LEADS OR TEACHES IN ANYTHING THAT IS CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD WHICH HE HIMSELF GAVE.*

I like to take a little picture of a piano and a piano player. The piano is a picture of the Bible. The piano has a set number of notes, so many white keys, so many black keys. It has a keyboard, it’s completely finite in a sense. That’s like the Bible, it has so many books, so many chapters, so many verses, so many authors and so on. You can pick it up in your hand and hold it. But the piano by itself is no good, it doesn’t produce anything. In order to have what the piano is designed to produce we have to have a piano player. And if a real piano player comes, there is no limit to what he can produce from that piano. He not limited to ten pieces of music or a thousand pieces of music. What can be produced out of that one finite musical instrument is **LITERALLY INFINITE.** And that’s how it is with the Word of God, **THERE IS NO LIMIT TO WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN PRODUCE WHEN WE ALLOW HIM TO PLAY ON THE PIANO.** But when we try to play the piano for ourselves the result is just terrible, it’s cacophonous. It’s without harmony. **ONLY THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PLAY ON THE PIANO OF GOD’S WORD.**

One more thing about the Spirit and the Word:

The word is the **MIRROR** of the Holy Spirit. 2 Cor 3:17-18, ***“now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, but we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord, the Spirit”*** Now the apostle James in his epistle tells us very clearly that one of the functions of God’s Word is to be a ‘mirror’ which does not reveal to us our external appearance but reveals to us our inner nature and being. James 1:23, ***“anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets***

**what he looks like** “ And Paul is using the same figure here and he says, ‘*while we are looking in the MIRROR of the Holy Spirit and seeing what were really like within, then the Holy Spirit works on us to TRANSFORM us into the image of what we SHOULD BE as revealed in scripture.*’ The Holy Spirit gives us a ‘self-image’ which is not our own image but the image of what we are in Christ. And as we continue to look in that image, the Holy Spirit transforms us into the likeness of what we see. That’s is why the Word of God is so important in relationship to the Spirit because when the MIRROR isn’t there the Holy Spirit doesn’t work, HE ONLY TRANSFORMS US WHILE WE ARE LOOKING AT WHAT WE SEE IN THE MIRROR OF GOD’S WORD. Once we turn away from the Word, the Holy Spirit ceases to work. But the beautiful thing is that Paul’s says HE’S TRANSFORMING US FROM *GLORY TO GLORY*.

It’s a PROGRESSIVE revelation of what we are in Christ into which the HOLY SPIRIT brings us.

## PART SIX – THE SPIRIT’S PART IN PRAYER



Here I’m going to look at the part the Holy Spirit plays in our prayer life. We must see that the Holy Spirit is the *ONLY SOURCE OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER*.

Any prayer that does not come by the Holy Spirit is:

1. not an effective prayer,
2. it will not accomplish anything and
3. it is not acceptable to God.

Paul makes this very clear in Romans 8: 26-27, he says this, ***“in the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God”*** Paul points out that as the ‘sons of Adam’ in our fallen nature we all have one innate weakness and it’s not a physical weakness, you could call it a ‘weakness of understanding’. It is this: THAT WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO PRAY FOR. Even if we know what to pray for, we don’t know HOW to pray for it. Now I have spoken to very large audiences and challenged them and said, ‘is there anybody here who always knows what to pray for and how to pray for it.’ Never has one person ever challenged the truth of Paul’s statements. This is a universal problem for all of us. It’s the lack of understanding of what we should be praying for at certain times. And Paul explains that one of the main purposes for which God has placed the Holy Spirit within us is to guide us in prayer, to show us *HOW TO PRAY*. It says that when we do not know what we should pray for the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning’s too deep for words. Sometimes no human words can express the kind of prayer that we need to pray but the Holy Spirit gives us the appropriate prayer.

I would say the real key to successful praying is to allow the Holy Spirit to keep up a continual prayer meeting within you. And I believe that can go on even when we’re not praying with our minds or with our mouths. I believe the Holy Spirit is an ETERNAL INTERCESSOR and when we give Him liberty, He’s interceding within us day and night. Also the Holy Spirit gives us the POWER that makes our prayer effective. In Ephesians 3:20, speaking about prayer and what God is able to do through prayer, Paul says this, ***“now to Him (that is God) who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His great power that is at work in us”*** THERE IS NO LIMIT THAT WE CAN SET WITH OUR MINDS OR OUR UNDERSTANDING AS TO WHAT GOD CAN DO IN ANSWER TO OUR PRAYER. But the EFFECTIVENESS of our prayer is ACCORDING to the power that works WITHIN us. What is that power? Paul has already made it clear in Romans 8, it’s the *POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*.



We see this in reality, you can have two Christians each pray identical words, maybe for the healing of a person. One person gets everything he prays for, the other gets nothing. Now there's no difference in their words, the difference is in the POWER that's IN the words. WE HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE US IN PRAYER AND TO EMPOWER US IN PRAYER. And we need to bear in mind what Paul says in 1 Cor 4:20, ***“for the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power”*** It's not all the WORDS we pray. In fact I think sometimes we pray too many words and some prayers are too long. But it's the POWER that works THROUGH those words.

We have to learn how to CULTIVATE the Holy Spirit, how to UNDERSTAND the Holy Spirit, how to YIELD to the Holy Spirit, how to LET HIM GUIDE US and EMPOWER us in our prayers.

I WANT TO GIVE YOU FOUR EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYERS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN GIVE:

1. PRAYER BASED DIRECTLY ON GOD'S WORD. We take a promise of God and we turn it back to Him and say, 'God, do what You've promised to do.' David prayed like this in 1 Chronicles 17:23, God had told him that He was going to build him a family line and a house that was much greater than anything David had conceived. But when David received this prophetic word from the Lord he said this, ***“now Lord, let the promise You have made concerning Your servant and his house be established forever. Do as You have promised”*** That's the key, ***“Do as You have promised”*** When the angel Gabriel came to the virgin Mary to announce that she would be the mother of the Son of God or the 'Messiah', that was far above anything she had ever contemplated in her whole life but her reply was this, ***“behold the bond slave of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word”*** That's the key! YOU CAN NEVER PRAY A MORE POWERFUL PRAYER THAN WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES YOU RELEASE TO CLAIM THE WORD OF GOD IN YOUR EXPERIENCE.
2. PRAYER THAT'S DIRECTLY INSPIRED. In Psalm 81:10, the Lord says to His people, ***“I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it”*** So sometimes we don't know what we're going to pray. I don't know whether you've ever been in that situation. You just open your mouth and let the Lord give you the prayer, let Him pray it through you. That's one of the ways, sometimes, that you can discover God's will! When you begin to pray something that you never thought of praying, maybe about yourself or a certain situation, THAT'S THE PRAYER THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIVEN YOU, ***THAT'S THE REVELATION OF GODS WILL!***
3. SUPERNATURAL PRAYER. In 1 Cor 14:14-15, Paul is speaking about praying in an unknown tongue – entirely supernatural, possible only through the Holy Spirit. And he says this, ***“for if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit but I will also sing with my mind”*** When Paul says, 'I will pray or sing "with my spirit"' he means I'll pray with words given me by the Holy Spirit in an unknown tongue. Words that I do not understand. But he also says, 'that's not the only way I'm going to pray or sing, it's just one kind of way.
4. TRAVAILING PRAYER. In Romans 8:23, Paul speaks about this and he says, ***“not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly”*** He's talking about a prayer that cannot just be expressed in words. It's so deep it goes so far beyond our natural understanding that we just have to let the Holy Spirit travail through us. It's very important to remember that in the kingdom of God there is no birth without travail. Just the same as in the natural order.

There was a great move of God in the year 1904 in the little country of Wales and the man whom God used as His instrument to bring about this tremendous revival was named Evan Roberts. But his brother recorded later that months before revival broke out, they were of a

poor family, they shared the same bad and he said night after night his brother would be writhing and groaning in his sleep uttering terrible groans which the brother couldn't understand. That was the travail of prayer that brought forth the Welsh revival. So we have to learn how to yield to the Holy Spirit. How to let Him be effective in our prayer life. He is Lord and one of the areas in which we have to yield to His Lordship and trust Him in faith is in the area of our prayer life.

## PART SEVEN – BE PREPARED TO BE FOOLISH



The way the Holy Spirit directs us is often TOTALLY CONTRARY TO NATURAL REASON OR WISDOM

Paul states this paradox very clearly in 1 Cor 2:12-14, ***“now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us from God,*** notice there are two sources of ‘spirits’, one from THIS present world order. The one that comes from this world order is NOT the spirit of God, its ANOTHER KIND of spirit! ***“Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words*** so the wisdom that comes by the Holy Spirit is not couched in the language of human wisdom. I have to confess, I sometimes get nervous when I hear a preacher extensively quoting and using the language of such disciplines as psychiatry or psychology. They’re alright in their place but they are NOT the words that God uses to release divine wisdom. Paul goes on to say, ***“but a natural man [a man who’s limited to his own natural understanding without the Holy Spirit] does not accept the things of God for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised”*** so while we are merely in our own natural reasoning and understanding, no matter how highly educated or sophisticated or cultivated we may be, we cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, I fact that are FOOLISHNESS to us. That doesn’t mean they’re foolish, but it means they seem foolish to us. You see, God is not impressed by the wisdom of this world. Listen to what Paul says in 1 Cor 1: 18-20, ***“for the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness but to us who are being saved it is the POWER OF GOD.”*** See, the MESSAGE doesn’t change, it our RESPONSE. If we receive it in the natural, it’s FOOLISHNESS. If we let the Holy Spirit interpret it to us it becomes the POWER OF GOD! Paul goes on, ***“for it is written, I will DESTROY the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside. THAT’S GOD SPEAKING!*** And the Paul asks, ***“Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God not made foolish the wisdom of the world?”*** that’s a very solemn thought today because so much of the church is bowing before the altar of the wisdom of this world. But God has made that foolish! Paul goes on again in the same theme in 1 Cor 3, 18-20, ***“let no man deceive himself, if any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise.*** Now perhaps I can interject a word of personal testimony. I had the privilege of a very elaborate advanced education in Britain and my special field of study was what Paul calls the ‘wisdom of this world’ which was philosophy and primarily Greek philosophy, the VERY THING Paul had in mind when he wrote this epistle. And I have to say that when I came to God and knew Him I had to become a FOOL FIRST before I could begin to enter into the wisdom of God. So if any man SEEMS to be wise in THIS WORLD, Paul says, the FIRST THING HE HAS TO DO IS TO BECOME A FOOL in his own eyes and in the eyes of others that he may become TRULY wise. Paul goes on again, ***“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, He, God is the One who catches the wise in their craftiness. The Lord knows the reasoning’s of the wise, that they are useless”***

And then Paul kinds of sums all this up with one kind of ‘hammer blow’ in 1 Cor 8:2 where he says, ***“if anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has no yet known as he ought to know”*** Paul says the

kind of natural knowledge you have does not fit in with Gods revelation. The first thing you have to do is come to the END of all the NATURAL REASONING and RELIANCE on your won intellect and your education, humble and abase your mind before God and acknowledge that what you have is NOT divine wisdom THEN THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BEGIN TO IMPART TO YOU DIVINE WISDOM. But there is this process of self-humbling that has to take place first and I think the people who find it hardest in this world to humble themselves before God are intellectuals. I think the cultivation of the intellect strengthens pride in man perhaps more than any other. Wealth tends to made people proud. Political power tends to make people proud. Personal beauty tends to make people proud. But I think the STRONGEST FORTRESS of pride in natural man is that which comes through the cultivation of his own intellect.

You see, it isn't that God doesn't have any wisdom, God is indeed the SOURCE of all thru wisdom and He makes this available to His people but God has another KIND of wisdom and the KEY to Gods wisdom is THE CROSS. You see, the cross, to natural thinking, is the SUM TOTAL to God foolishness. He sent His Son into the world to save the world and allowed Him to be seized by sinners, given a false trial, condemned to death to die in agony and shame. What could be more FOOLISH than that if you are seeking to release your power to save mankind? But Paul says that what happened on that cross is the key to ALL WISDOM and ALL POWER that comes from God. This is what Paul says in 1 Cor 2:4-8, ***"my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of man but on the power of God.*** That's so important. A generation ago I studied contempory philosophy (what WAS contemporary in those days) the real exciting thing in those days was what they called 'linguistic philosophy' and I sat at the feet of best known of all the professors Ludvik Wittgenstein, I was his pupil to two years. But I have to tell you, today all that's out of date. It's completely changed. So if I had based my faith on that kind of wisdom, today I'd have no basis for it! You see? So it NOT a safe basis for your faith. Your faith has got to be based on the power of God, not on human wisdom because the power of God doesn't change. Then Paul goes on to say, ***"Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away, but we speak Gods wisdom in a mystery,*** O I love that! Gods wisdom in a mystery! God HAS wisdom. Secret, hidden wisdom of God. See, as a philosopher THAT'S what I was REALLY LOOKING FOR! I was looking for wisdom. The word philosophy MEANS 'the love of wisdom!' and I was searching and searching for it but I was frustrated, I couldn't find it. But then, one day, by God's grace and mercy I came to the place where the doors opens to Gods secret hidden wisdom. This is what Paul says about it, I can never read these words without getting excited, ***"we speak Gods wisdom in a mystery the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory.*** That's an exciting statement, you have to admit! That God had a wisdom that He ordained before creation and the PURPOSE of His wisdom, listen to this, THE PURPOSE OF HIS WISDOM is to bring US to HIS GLORY! That's an ASTONISHING statement! No human mind could EVER have worked out a system like that! It HAS to be from God! And then Paul goes on about this wisdom ***"The wisdom, which none of the rulers of this age has understood, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"*** you see, the door to this secret wisdom is THE CROSS. To the natural man, Paul says, the word of the cross is foolishness. O I can remember how foolish it seemed to me when I first heard it. Everything in me revolted against it. What a HORRIBLE picture. A naked man, dying in agony on a cross. How could GOD be behind such a scene as that! What does THAT have to offer to us? But then the Holy Spirit opened my understanding. I had a personal encounter with the man who hung on the cross and I found that the cross is the doorway and the ONLY doorway to the secret hidden wisdom of God. But to come to that doorway before you become wise in THAT wisdom, you have to become foolish in the natural wisdom. Paul said, if any man SEEMS to be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise. I know very very well from personal experience how true that is. I know what that's like because I had

cultivated my intellect intently and I had to lay ALL of that down to find the wisdom that comes through the cross

## PART EIGHT – BE PREPARED TO BE WEAK

God is not impressed by HUMAN strength – if you want real divine strength and power, first of all you HAVE TO BECOME WEAK BY THE STANDARDS OF THIS WORLD. And again, the KEY to this divine weakness which gives strength is *THE CROSS*. You see, the cross symbolizes not only foolishness, as I spoke about before, but also weakness. This is what Paul says (and we're back again in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians because this is one MAIN THEME in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, the difference between HUMAN WISDOM and DIVINE WISDOM, the difference between HUMAN POWER and DIVINE POWER) 1 Cor 1: 22-29, "***Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles***, there you are, we're confronted by something that appears to one set of people 'foolish' and to another set of people 'weak' ***but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God***. You see, the two go together, POWER and WISDOM ***For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength***. That's what I want to focus on here, the WEAKNESS of God is STRONGER THAN HUMAN STRENGTH. There IS a kind of weakness that is the key to real strength ***Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose*** and I want to emphasize all through my talk today, 'GOD HAS MADE HIS CHOICE! It's no good our arguing with God because He's MADE the decision! ***But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are***, So God has chosen the VERY OPPOSITE of what man would chose with his wisdom. And then Paul gives the reason, ***so that no one may boast before him.***"

Before God can really come into our lives and be to us all that He wants to be there is one thing that He has to CAST DOWN and that is HUMAN PRIDE. And there are TWO GREAT SOURCES of human pride, one is WISDOM and the other is POWER. And God has to DEAL with those, they are BARRIERS against the real revelation of God because human wisdom and human power do not impress God and they do not accomplish the purposes of God. We have to turn away from them. We have to be SET FREE from them before we can experience the REAL WISDOM and the REAL POWER of God. It's for that reason God has chosen the unlikely people.

I've seen several groups of Christians who've decided to be really strong and really have it all together and really do it right and the extraordinary thing is that God passes them by time and time again and He finds some little group somewhere that doesn't have much to claim in themselves but they're open to HIS Holy Spirit, to HIS wisdom and to HIS power. Paul then gives his own testimony about this source of divine power. He speaks about a very painful experience where he was tormented by some kind of satanic angel and he besought God to deliver him from this, and God DIDN'T! God didn't answer his prayer that way. Sometimes people tell me, 'my prayers don't get answered!' and I answer them in return, 'perhaps you've forgotten that 'NO' is also an answer!' God DID answer Paul's prayer but it was with a 'NO' and this is how Paul explains it, 2 Cor 12: 7-10, "***or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me***. Notice the words, 'I WAS GIVEN...' would YOU like that kind of a gift? ***Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*** That's a TREMENDOUS REVELATION. God's power is only FULLY revealed in man's WEAKNESS. As long as man has his own strength, as long as he has got it all together, he knows what to do, he's got the situation under control, there's no room for God! And God doesn't get the glory! But when we've come to the LIMIT of our own strength and our own wisdom and we have no more resources, THEN God can release HIS wisdom. HIS strength through

His grace. So Paul goes on to make a statement that I really find difficult to say 'amen' to. I think I'm getting there but I'm not sure I've arrived, ***Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*** I don't meet many Christians nowadays that are boasting about their weaknesses. I hear a whole lot of preachers that are telling about their strengths and their gifts and their accomplishments. Paul goes on with an even more amazing statement, ***that is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*** "Would YOU say that? Would I say that? 'I'm well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties.' For *CHRISTS SAKE* mind you! It ALL has to be for *CHRISTS SAKE*! Its only when we're in the service of the Lord and doing everything for HIM. Then Paul sums it up in those simple words, ***when I am weak, then I am strong.*** That's a lesson we ALL have to learn sooner or later, and the sooner the better if we were really going to experience the POWER OF GOD RELEASED IN OUR LIVES. HE *WILL NOT* RELEASE IT THROUGH HUMAN STRENGTH, *ONLY THROUGH HUMAN WEAKNESS*

You see, actually, doing it in our own strength brings a CURSE! That's a statement that most Christians have never absorbed. But in Jeremiah 17:5 it says, ***"This is what the Lord says: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, and 'man' includes YOURSELF! who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.'"*** You see, you cannot depend on you OWN strength and the Lord at the same time. If you're depending on your own strength, your heart has turned away from the Lord *AND YOU'RE UNDER A CURSE!* God's grace and mercy is aimed to KEEP us from being under that curse! And sometimes He has to do very drastic things to us to do that.

Let me sum this all up in Ephesians 2:8-10. About the grace of God Paul said, ***"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"***

I want to bring out certain truths from that:

1. GRACE BEGINS WHERE HUMAN ABILITY ENDS. As long as YOU are able and you can DO IT BY YOURSELF and in YOUR OWN STRENGTH – GODS GRACE IS NOT RELEASED! When you've come to the END OF YOUR ABILITY, that's the BEGINNING of God's grace.
2. GOD'S GRACE IS RECEIVED ONLY BY FAITH. We cannot earn it
3. IT LEAVES NO ROOM FOR PRIDE. Paul says repeatedly in this epistle, 'so that no one can boast!' you see the great enemy of God's grace is our pride! (so that no one can boast!)
4. ALL THE GLORY GOES TO GOD. Not to us! You see that's where the Holy Spirit comes in. Jesus said, 'when HE [the Holy Spirit] comes, HE will glorify ME' He hasn't come to glorify US. He hasn't come to make us seem big or important or clever or strong, He's come to reveal the grace and the power and the wisdom of Jesus in our weaknesses.

## PART NINE – DON'T GO BACK TO RULES

Today I want to warn you about what I have been led to believe is the COMMONEST hindrance to being led by the Holy Spirit and if I gave you fifty guesses most of you would not guess what I have in mind. The hindrance that I see as the commonest is LEGALISM, RELIGIOUS LEGALISM!

I'll give you two possible definitions of legalism so that we'll have some idea of what I'm talking about. They're related but they're distinct.

1. **SEEKING TO ACHIEVE RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH GOD BY KEEPING A SET OF RULES.** That's LEGALISM! Christianity is *NOT A SET OF RULES*. Christianity is primarily a relationship with a PERSON and that person is Jesus and the relationship is through another PERSON, the Holy Spirit.
2. **IMPOSING REQUIREMENTS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH GOD HIMSELF HAS NOT IMPOSED.** God has laid down, in the Bible what He requires to achieve righteousness with Him and NO BODY, NO CHURCH, NO GROUP has ANY AUTHORITY to add ONE requirement to Gods requirements. And to add even one requirement is to trespass in the area of legalism. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LORD AND HE WILL NOT SHARE HIS LORDSHIP WITH A SET OF RULES!

I'll give you a very simple little example: it's pictured in two different ways of finding your way to a certain destination. One way is a 'personal guide', the other is a 'map'. The 'personal guide' is the Holy Spirit, the 'map' is a set of rules or 'the law'. Now human nature is such that through the fall, every one of us would rather rely on ourselves than on the Holy Spirit. You see, the ESSENCE OF THE FALL and the ESSENCE OF SIN is NOT PRIMARILY TO DO EVIL, it's the *DESIRE TO BE INDEPENDENT OF GOD*. And so, when we're confronted with a choice between the map or the guide we say, 'give me the map, I'm clever enough, I can find my way' Now the map is absolutely perfect. The law as given by Moses is a PERFECT LAW. If you keep it all you'll make it BUT NOBODY HAS EVER KEPT IT ALL!

So we set out with the map and we feel so strong and confident and healthy and the sun is shining and we see the road before us... but about 48 hours later something's gone wrong and it's pitch dark and it's raining and we're on the brink of a precipice and we don't know whether we're facing north, south, east or west and we say, 'HELP!' And a gentle voice says, '*can I help you?*' You know who that is? The Holy Spirit! 'O Holy Spirit, I really need You, I'm desperate!' '*Well, give Me your hand and I'll lead you out of this desperate situation.*' And sure enough He does. And then the next day you're walking on the road with the Holy Spirit at your side, the sun is shining, the birds are singing, you can see the highway and you think, 'well really, I was dumb, I could have made my way out of that mess without all this' and you say to the Holy Spirit, 'listen, I've got a wonderful map here, would You like that?' The Holy Spirit says, '*thank you son, I don't need the map, I know the way, and as a matter of fact I was the One who MADE the map in the first place!*' And after a little while you think, 'I just don't like having this person lead me by the hand all the way, it looks a little 'demeaning'' So you think to yourself, 'I could have made it, I could use this map.' And while you're thinking that, this 'guide' has disappeared and He's nowhere to be found. So off you go again with the map and 48 hours later you're in the middle of a bog and every step you take you're sinking deeper and you know that it won't be long before you won't be able to take another step and you say 'HELP!' And the Holy Spirit says, '*can I help you?*' '*Give Me your hand, I'll lead you out*'

My question is, how long do we have to go on like that? How long do we have to go on spurning the Holy Spirit and going back to the map which we are not capable of using a right? It's not that there's anything wrong with the map. The problem is with US, NOT with the map. You see, the New Testament continually warns us against seeking to achieve righteousness by keeping laws. Romans 3:20, "**Therefore**



***no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.***” God says emphatically, ‘no human being will ever achieve righteousness in My sight by struggling to keep the law.’ You say, ‘why was the law given? Well, one MAIN reason the law was given was not to make us righteous but to show us that we’re sinners and we need God’s grace and the help of the Holy Spirit. Then Romans 6:14, ***“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”*** Notice the implications of that. If you’re under law, SIN WILL HAVE MASTERY OVER YOU. If you want to be FREE from sin you CANNOT BE UNDER LAW YOU HAVE TO BE UNDER GRACE AND THE TWO ARE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. You’re either under the law or under grace but not under both. And then in Galatians 5:18, ***“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”*** And remember, being led by the Spirit is the ONLY WAY TO MATURITY. So if you want to achieve maturity you cannot afford to do it by trying to keep the law.

Now rules have a place in life. That’s very clear. How do we relate to them? Well I would offer you this simple thought. If rules are scriptural, and if you’ve been made righteous by faith THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO KEEP THE RULES – BUT YOU DO NOT ACHIEVE RIGHTEOUSNESS BY DOING SO. GRACE WILL NOT MIX WITH LAW. Paul uses a picture in Galatians 4:28-31, he speaks about the two sons of Abraham, one by a slave woman, Ishmael, one by the free woman Sarah whose name was Isaac and he said when Isaac came, Ishmael and his mother had to leave. The message of the scripture was, ***“Get rid of the slave woman and her son for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.”*** So there are the alternatives and see, they are MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. If you want Ismael, the ‘law’, your ‘fleshly ability’, there’s no room for Isaac and the grace of God. If you want the grace of God, there’s no room for the law as a means of achieving righteousness. You see, this was the error of the Galatians, they’d KNOWN Jesus Christ, they’d RECEIVED the Holy Spirit, they’d EXPERIENCED miracles but Paul said to them in Galatians 3:1, ***“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?”*** I want to tell you frankly that I think that’s the COMMONEST SINGLE PROBLEM IN THE CHURCH! People BEGIN by the Spirit, they have a REVELATION and EXPERIENCE of the grace and power of God through the Holy Spirit AND THEN THEY GO BACK TO THE MAP! They are not willing to *continue* relying on the Holy Spirit. Paul points out that going back to the law BRINGS A CURSE! He says in Galatians 3:10, ***“For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”*** I believe many, many Christians and denominations, churches are under a CURSE! They’ve forfeited the blessings of God because they’ve dishonored the Holy Spirit and gone back to their own efforts! We return again to the words of the Lord through Jeremiah 17:5, ***“This is what the Lord says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.”*** You see! There are only two alternatives but they are MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. We can try to find our way by the MAP or we can be led by the GUIDE, the HOLY SPIRIT. But the Holy Spirit, being Lord, being God, is NOT GOING TO SHARE HIS LORDSHIP WITH THAT MAP. He’s the One who GAVE the map! He knows the map far, far better than any of us do! He understands all the motivations and the reasoning for the map. but if you want to grow to maturity the only way is to be led by the Holy Spirit and if you want to be led by the Holy Spirit you are NOT UNDER A SYSTEM OF LAW. You DO NOT ACHIEVE IT BY KEEPING ANY SET OF RULES! Lots of Christian churches say, ‘we’re not under the Law of Moses’ but they’ve made their OWN SET OF RULES! Almost every denomination has its OWN LITTLE LAW. I want to tell you, if the Law of Moses couldn’t do it which was given by God, no religious denominational law can do it either. There is no hope that way of achieving maturity. You need to repent if you’re in that condition and turn back to the Holy Spirit

## PART TEN – UNION WITH CHRIST



Jeremiah 17:5 contains a warning, ***“This is what the Lord says: Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.”*** When we turn back to a system of rules or law to achieve righteousness, we’re trusting in man, we’re trusting in our own carnal strength and our heart has turned away from the Lord and IT BRINGS US UNDER A CURSE! This is a surprising thought to many Christians but it’s extremely relevant to the situation in the church today. I would have to say that the church has MANY problems but THE GREATEST AND THE COMMONEST IS LEGALISM!

Today I want to point you to the POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. And this positive alternative to LEGALISM is DIRECT, PERSONAL UNION WITH CHRIST. This is a ministry of the Holy Spirit which I consider to be perhaps His GREATEST SINGLE MINISTRY but one about very little is said in the contemporary church. In Romans 7:1-6, Paul paints a picture of the alternatives,

1. union with our FLESHLY NATURE UNDER THE LAW, which brings death or
2. being DELIVERED FROM OUR FLESHLY NATURE THROUGH THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS ON OUR BEHALF and being UNITED THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH THE RESURRECTED CHRIST.

Those are the TWO ALTERNATIVES. The first alternative is LEGALISM, the second is God’s PURPOSE for every believer in Christ. It’s a PERSONAL, SPIRITUAL UNION WITH THE LORD JESUS *THROUGH* THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Romans 7:1-6, ***“Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? Once you’re under the law, the only way OUT from under the law is death *For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man. So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that’s the Lord Jesus in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. It’s an amazing statement, isn’t it? *‘The sinful passions aroused by the law.’* How can that be? The answer is that when we rely on our own carnal ability to keep God’s law we are UNDER THE POWER OF OUR CARNAL NATURE, and our carnal nature is not capable of ANYTHING good! NOTHING GOOD CAN COME OUT OF OUR CARNAL NATURE. Paul says, *‘I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing.’* The only problem with most of us is not that we’re different from Paul, but we don’t know what Paul knew because he knew he****

couldn't produce ANYTHING GOOD out of his fleshly nature. Then Paul concludes this passage in Romans 7 by saying, ***But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*** Do you understand the picture of 'marriage' which Paul uses? He says, 'when a woman is married to a man, she has to remain that man's wife as long as he lives. If she departs from that man while he lives, she becomes an adulteress. But, he says, if the husband dies then she is free to marry another man. She doesn't have the stigma of being an adulteress and this is the way Paul explains it: Under the law we were 'married' to our carnal nature. We were COMPELLED TO RELY ON OUR OWN NATURAL ABILITY TO DO WHAT GOD REQUIRED. Now there was nothing *wrong* with the law. The problem, as Paul points out again and again, is in our CARNAL NATURE. We can HEAR the law, we can give ASCENT to it but we lack the power to carry it out because there's something in each of us, a rebel nature, that is made even MORE rebellious by the law. Paul says a little further on in Romans 7, 'I didn't know covetousness until the law said, 'don't covet' and when the law said, 'don't covet' it PRODUCED in me ALL KINDS OF COVERTOUSNESS! That's the rebellious reaction of our carnal nature. But as long as our carnal nature continues to live we cannot be married to anybody else. We are BOUND to it as long as it lives. But the message of the Gospel is that our carnal nature, our 'old man' WAS crucified IN Christ ON the cross! And we are to reckon ourselves to be 'dead' to that carnal nature. Paul says, 'you have become DEAD to the law.' So when we see that our carnal nature was put to death IN Jesus ON the cross, we are FREE to enter into a new marriage! If our carnal nature was still alive and we had been married to it, if we turned away from it and thought to marry somebody else, we would have been in the position of the adulteress! But once we grasp the fact that through the death of Jesus on the cross, that carnal nature was put to death, then we are NO LONGER BOUND TO IT! So we CAN be married to another. And ONCE that carnal nature was put to death we were RELEASED from the obligations of the law. Paul says the law has jurisdiction over a man AS LONG AS HE LIVES. The LAST THING the law can do to ANYBODY is put you to death. Once it's put you to death, you're not under that law. So through the death of Jesus on our behalf, as our representative, we were put to death and RELEASED from the claims of the law. Now we are FREE to be married to another. To whom? To the ONE WHO ROSE FROM THE DEAD! How can we be united in our marriage relationship to Him? NOT through the law BUT THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

I believe personally, this is the GREATEST SINGLE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE UNITED IN A KIND OF MARRIAGE UNION WITH THE RESSURECTED CHRIST!

According to whom we are MARRIED to, we will bring forth the fruit of that union. If we're still married to the flesh, we will bring forth what Paul calls the '*acts of the flesh*'. Now Paul lists these in Galatians 5:19-21, ***"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.*** There's NOT ONE GOOD THING IN THAT LIST! THE FLESH IS CORRUPT! WHATEVER it brings forth is corrupt. It is EVIL. It is UNACCEPTABLE TO GOD! As long as we're married to the flesh, no matter how hard we TRY to do good, we'll bring forth that union with the flesh. But once we're set free from that union and once we're married to the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit THEN we'll bring forth the CORRESPONDING FRUIT of THAT union! And in Galatians 5:22-23, Paul speaks about THIS kind of fruit, ***"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law"*** When you're bringing forth THAT kind of fruit in your union with the resurrected Christ, YOU DON'T NEED TO BE CONTROLLED BY A LAW! Because there IS NO LAW AGAINST THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT!

Let me give you a picture of the kind of union that the New Testament speaks about. In 1 Corinthians 6:16-17, Paul joins together two things that at first seem very surprising. He says, ***"Do you not know***

***that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit”*** Now that’s an astonishing parallel that Paul uses. ‘*in the flesh*’ and ‘*in the Spirit*.’ In the flesh he speaks about a man being united by an immoral sexual union with a prostitute and he says they become ‘one flesh’, ‘one body.’ But in the SAME CONTEXT he talks about being united with the Lord Jesus and becoming ‘one Spirit.’ You understand? There are TWO KINDS OF UNION. There’s a ‘fleshly union’ and there’s a ‘spiritual union.’ What the Holy Spirit does is *ENABLE* us to be united in spirit with the lord Jesus. Once we’re united with HIM we will NATURALLY (not a matter of effort), bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. You see, the question is not our effort, the question is TO *WHOM* ARE WE UNITED? Effort won’t do it. UNION is the only answer. And I believe that this particular UNION WITH THE LORD is consummated in ONE WAY – through *WORSHIP!* God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. I believe the CLIMAX of our union with Jesus through the Spirit in THIS dispensation comes in worship. When we become TOTALLY UNITED with the Lord in worship something happens within us that is going to release all the grace and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. So bear in mind those two alternatives:

1. United with your flesh through the law
2. United through the Holy Spirit to the resurrected Christ