

U PLOOK

SEPT-OCT 2009

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

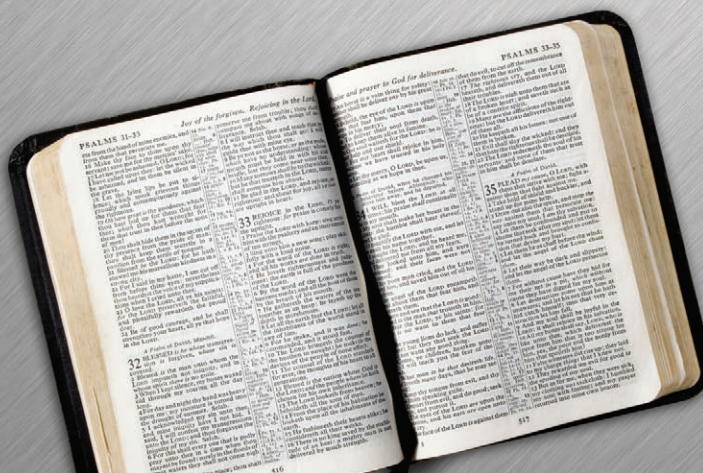
THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST
Wesley Ferguson

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT
Carl Knott

GNOM5
Meet the Team!



THE MARKS OF THE SPIRIT



How can I *know* the Spirit of God is at work?

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**"It is time for us to seek again the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Man's lordship has cost us too much."
— A.W. Tozer**

The Marks of the Spirit

How can I *know* the Spirit of God is at work?

Perhaps you've noticed that the Bible lists several different sins against the Holy Spirit: grieving, quenching, resisting and blaspheming, just to name a few. But I'd like to draw our attention to one sin against the Holy Spirit that isn't specifically mentioned in Scripture: blaming the Holy Spirit.

I once saw a chart of Christian phrases and their simple English equivalents. In the chart, "I feel led" translated to, "I want to." There is a great deal that the Holy Spirit gets "credit" for, that is nothing other than our doing what we feel like doing. Sometimes we convince ourselves that the Spirit mystically transforms our emotions into divine guidance. But "*The heart is deceitful above all else, and desperately wicked*" (Jer. 17:9). Surely emotions—even those of believers—are no safe guide.

How, then, are we to recognize the work and prompting of the Spirit of God? Thankfully, the Lord left us with a way to tell. According to the Bible, any genuine working of the Holy Spirit will be marked by the following:

The fruit of the Spirit of God. Galatians 5:19-22 gives us two checklists that help us to identify whether the Spirit or the flesh is working. According to this passage, envy and a bad temper are as clearly works of the flesh as immorality and idolatry. Carnal behavior—even when seemingly for a good cause—is evidence that it is not the Spirit who is in control. Instead, the Holy Spirit longs to reproduce the character of Christ in each believer. When He is truly at work, believers will radiate Christ.

The edification of the church of God. 1 Corinthians 12-14 outlines the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit. We note that a major theme in these chapters is the building up of the people of God. The gifts are given "*for the common good*" (1 Cor. 12:7). And the overarching guideline for the church meeting is, "*Let all things be done for edification*" (1 Cor. 14:26b). Furthermore, it is no coincidence that the picture of the church most commonly associated with the Holy Spirit is that of the building of God (1 Cor. 12:16; Eph. 2:21f). His activity will be marked by the growth and encouragement of believers (Acts 9:31).

Harmony with the Word of God. Starting at Ephesians 5:18 and continuing into chapter 6, Paul lists the characteristics and results of being filled with the Spirit. (Barking is noticeably absent.) The parallel passage in Colossians 3 and 4 lists the same elements. But in Colossians, they are a result of letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16). Other passages equate the working of God's Spirit with the working of His Word. For instance, Christians are born again by the Spirit (Jn. 3:7f) and by the Word (1 Pet. 1:23). Any action or teaching which is at odds with the Word of God is not of the Spirit.

Glorification of the Son of God. Above all, the Spirit's work and joy is to reveal Christ. "*When the Helper comes, ... He will bear witness of Me*" (Jn. 15:26). "*He shall glorify Me*" (Jn. 16:14). How do we know the Spirit of God is active? The same way we test every spirit: is Christ being exalted? "*By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God*" (1 Jn. 4:2). Any believer, church, or work that is empowered by the Holy Spirit will be one in which the Lord Jesus has the obvious pre-eminence.

A red signature or flourish, possibly the author's name, written in a cursive style.

U P L O O K

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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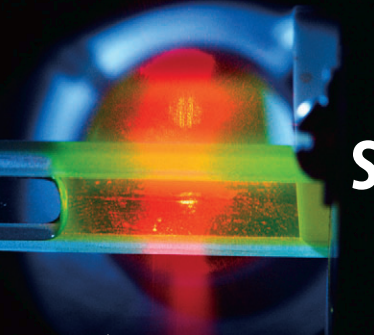
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Survivor

The horseshoe crab: Just lucky?

The North American horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*) is a real survivor. The standard evolution-based interpretation of fossil evidence is that horseshoe crabs have survived virtually unchanged for 445 million years despite living through times of massive geologic and environmental upheaval.¹ Recently, some conservationists have claimed that the horseshoe crab may need the help of humans to survive.² But does it? Why would such a stout survivor need our help when it seems to have done just fine on its own?

One of only four species of horseshoe crab worldwide, *Limulus polyphemus* is a mild-mannered arthropod which wears its horseshoe-shaped skeleton on the outside and bears a long tail or telson, which it uses to right itself when flipped upside down by waves. It lives along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida, and in the Gulf of Mexico as far south as the Yucatan Peninsula. Every year during May and June, millions of adults migrate to sandy beaches like those in Delaware Bay to spawn. Each female can lay between 80,000 and 100,000 eggs over several days and can live as long as 20 years. This massive release of horseshoe crab eggs not only ensures its own survival but also that of thousands of birds who eat the eggs as a vital energy source on their northward migration. The horseshoe crab is also a favored bait of fishermen, and its blood is part of a test to detect bacterial contamination in vaccines for human use.

But the horseshoe crab has survived more than human economic use and the predation of its eggs by birds. The geologic record shows that the earth has changed tremendously over time. A key testament to this change is that over 99 percent of all species of animals that ever lived are now extinct. There is also geologic evidence of a time past in which 95 percent of all ocean-dwelling species went extinct.³ And the horseshoe crab survived all of this without human help. No doubt the simple, rigid tail is one of many keys to its ability to survive and continue to reproduce.



“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to tend it and to keep it.” (Gen. 2:15)

Despite this track record for survival, a horseshoe crab conservation campaign has begun in Delaware Bay which is called “Just Flip ‘em”.² It asks beach goers to flip over upside down horseshoe crabs to help them get back into the ocean. Yet the animal already possesses a well designed solution to the problem in its long, rigid tail and biologists are still unsure whether horseshoe crab populations are declining and might benefit from such a strategy or not. Flip ‘em? Sure—it may not help much in the case of the horseshoe crab because they are survivors, but it makes us feel good to help animals. And since all people bear the image of God, however faded, it is not surprising that some respond to the ancient—but still compelling—command to cultivate and keep the garden even though they may have forgotten the One who planted it to begin with. 🍷

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

1 Royal Ontario Museum, “Oldest Horseshoe Crab Fossil Found, 445 Million Years Old,” *Science Daily* (Feb. 8, 2008), <http://bit.ly/sciencedailycrab>

2 Jennifer H. Mattei & Mark A. Beckey, “The Horseshoe Crab Conundrum: Can we Harvest and Conserve?” *Wrack Lines* 8:1 (Spring/Summer 2008), <http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/wracklines/37>

3 Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2009, s.v. “Extinction (biology),” <http://encarta.msn.com>

TnT Ireland 2009

A dynamite combination!

What do a lawyer, an engineer and a bed & breakfast host have in common? All left their jobs for a month of mission work in Ireland this year. The older members also included

a reporter, college professor, retired taxi driver, computer consultant and a homemaker. Short-term mission trips are typically thought to be the domain of the young, who are often able to go because they have the time. Teenagers and college students frequently make up the bulk of participants. But at least a third of the group that heads to Ireland each year with the Teach and Testify team is always over 30, says leader Ron Hampton.

Teach and Testify (TnT) Teams operate short-term mission trips in the Republic of Ireland and Canada. The focus is on evangelism – mainly door-to-door, open-air work, children’s clubs and ministering to Irish assemblies. Ron and his wife Robin were missionaries in the Republic of Ireland for 12 years until they returned to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1996. They’ve been bringing short-term teams to Ireland ever since.



Adults immersed in the working world often find themselves bound by job and family obligations. Many spend most of their working life never even considering a mission trip, assuming they’re beyond the opportunity, says Ron. Several of the participants were able to go this year as a result of the economic downturn, which prompted many companies to ask staff to take unpaid time off. Ron finds the balance of the old and young is dynamite. “The younger people bring the enthusiasm and the older people bring the experience,” he says. For more information, visit www.TnTTeams.org

FALL FAMILY CONFERENCE AT HOPE

Camp Hope will hold their conference Oct 30-Nov 1. John Heller (AR) will minister God’s Word to the adults and Nate Thomas (SC) will minister to the children. The conference begins Friday with registration at 6:00 PM and ends Sunday with lunch. There will not be a set charge or suggested offering to the camp. Many young families would not be able to meet the expenses of such a camp weekend but that the Lord would move in the hearts of others to give above the cost in order to supply the needs of others. **Contact:** Steve Roys 7011 Pony Lake Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533 ph: 770-536-4787 web: www.camphopega.org email: camphopega@arilio.com

KANSAS CITY AREA CONFERENCE

The believers at the Bible Chapel of Shawnee (KS) invite you to their Fall Bible Conference being held from Oct 31-Nov 1. In the will of the Lord, Thomas Wheeler (TX) will share from the Word. Meetings begin Saturday at 1:00 PM, with dinner served at 5:00 PM. Overnight accommodations and nursery care are available. **Contact:** Danny Chavez ph: 913-599-1358 email: info@shawneebiblechapel.org

IOWA MEN’S RETREAT

The 2009 Iowa-Nebraska Annual Men’s Retreat will be held Nov 6-7, at Willowbrook Bible Camp, 4375 NE 38th St., Des Moines. Mark Stevenson of Emmaus Bible College will speak

and lead discussions on “Knowing and Loving God.” **Contact:** Tom Baird ph: 515-276-1309 email: tomyrna57@aol.com Mike Eells ph: 712-254-2530 email: mjeells@yahoo.com

METROPOLITAN MISSIONARY CONF.

Good Tidings Gospel Chapel, Brooklyn NY, announces a missionary conference to be held Saturday, Nov 7 from 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM. The speaker is Claude Ashby (GA). **Contact:** Jim McCall ph: 718-994-1318 e-mail: Jimannabel@aol.com

LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

Randy Amos (NY) is the expected speaker at the fall conference hosted by Southside Bible Chapel, 4356

FRONT LINES *continued*

West Congress St., Lafayette LA. The conference begins Saturday Nov 14 at 3:00 PM concluding Sunday after lunch. **Contact:** William Walker, 103 Robert Drive, Lafayette, LA e-mail: wowalker@bellsouth.net ph: 337-232-6577

2009 Myrtle Beach Bible Conference

December 29, 2009 - January 1, 2010

Make your plans now to attend this year's conference! Conference features include:

- accommodations at 5-star resort right on the beach!
- ministry from the Word both morning and evening sessions!
- children's meetings & nursery provided for all sessions!
- 6 hours of free time to relax and enjoy the fellowship!

Speakers this year:



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Jim McKendrick



Tim McNeal

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2 Bedroom
\$360.00

3 Bedroom
\$420.00

SPACE IS LIMITED - REGISTER EARLY!

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www.mbbibleconferences.org**

FALL CONFERENCE IN KANSAS

The Hutchinson Gospel Chapel Fall Conference will be held Nov 21- 22 at 6th and Elm in Hutchinson, KS. The scheduled speaker is Mike Atwood (GA). **Contact:** Andrew Hawkinson ph: 620-664-6496 email: ahawkinson@hutchgospelchapel.org

2010 BIBLE BOOK CHALLENGE

ECS Ministries invites your assembly to fellowship with other assemblies across the country in studying the letter of James, all at the same time, using the 12-lesson ECS course *The Letter of James*. Register your assembly by Nov 30. For more

details, visit www.ecsministries.org or e-mail: ecsinfo@ecsministries.org

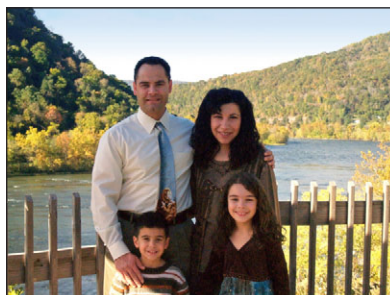
RESOURCES

Dan Snaddon served the Lord full time in North America since moving to the US from Scotland in 1959. A DVD of Dan recounting his experiences as a prisoner of war is available for \$20 CDN, shipping included. (A short biography about Dan was in the last issue of Uplook).

For fourteen years, a Bible Study was conducted in Oakville, ON for the study of God's Word by capable ministering brethren. Some of these brethren are at home with the Lord, but their ministry has been preserved on CDs and audio cassettes. A catalog has been produced listing the message titles and speakers. To request a free catalog or to order a Dan Snaddon DVD, contact H. W. (Bill) Allison, 3199 Sovereign Road, Burlington, ON Canada, L7M 2W1 ph: 905-336-8101 e-mail: hw.allison@sympatico.ca

COMMENDATIONS

Avedis & Susan Bastajian



The saints at Buttonwoods Bible Chapel, Warwick RI, are pleased to announce the commendation of Avedis & Susan Bastajian to the Lord's service at Riverview Chapel in Hinton, WV. Avi's passion for the health of the assembly was very evident and he gave of his time

and energy to see the saints and leadership at Buttonwoods built up and strengthened. While they will be missed, they will be a blessing to Riverview Chapel and to the surrounding community.

Terry & Shirley Wilson



The assembly of Christians gathered at Fifth Avenue Chapel, Belmar, NJ commend Terry and Shirley Wilson

to full time ministry with the work at Camp Li Lo Li, Randolph, NY for a period of two years. Worship, service, hospitality and faithfulness were hallmarks of their time at Fifth Avenue Chapel since their arrival from Zimbabwe in December of 1992. During the past few years in NJ, Terry was part of the assembly oversight and regularly taught both at Fifth Avenue and area assemblies.

David & Becky Jenkinson

The elders from Bible Fellowship Assembly, Porcupine-Timmins, ON, Canada are pleased to announce the commendation of David & Becky Jenkinson to full-time work for the Lord. They have been in faithful fellowship and serving the Lord at BFA for 27 years. During the past two years they have been burdened for and are conducting Gospel meetings with Christians in Shillington, ON. They conduct a home Bible study, are active in marriage counseling and minister to local northern assemblies as the Lord leads.



2009 International Conference

RISE UP & CHOOSE



Dec. 28-31, 2009
Dearborn, MI, USA

**Hyatt Regency Hotel
and Conference Center**

General Session Speakers

Alan Gamble
Roy Hill
Willie Burnett
William Yuille
Mike Attwood

Room Rates

Single: \$349.00 US
Double: \$249.00 US
Triple: \$219.00 US
Quad: \$199.00 US
Children Age 5-12: \$99.00 US
Children under 5: Free

Commuter Rates

(A) Entire Conference
All sessions & all meals: \$149.00 US
(B) One Day
(All sessions all meals): \$79.00 US

Seminars to Choose

Rise Up & Choose includes a series of conference seminars which focus on practical aspects of our life and love for the Lord, featuring leaders and general session speakers from across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. This is a great opportunity to meet and interact with like-minded believers.

Discipling	Dr. Steve Price	Serve in the Local Assembly
Witnessing	Chris Schroeder	Scott DeGroff
To Be a Student of the Word	Alan Gamble	Becoming a Mary
Your Vocation	Alan Gamble	Dr. Nadia Mikhael
Choosing a Local Church	Roy Hill	Deciding to be a Martha
Your Companions in		Nancy Trogdon
Business and Marriage	Dr. Boushra Mikhael	Make Biblical Distinctions
A Godly and Happy Marriage	Dr. Steve & Janet Price	Mike Attwood
Invest for Eternity	Rob Sullivan	Worshiping
Biblical Worldview	Rob Sullivan	Dr. Boushra Mikhael
Caring for Others	Rex Trogdon	Dare to Be a Daniel
		William Burnett
		Godly Young Woman
		Joyce Barinowski
		Team Workers (MSC Canada)
		Eric Kalmbach, Kirk Dupre
		Foreign Missionary Service
		T.B.A.

For more information: Call 704-843-9632
OR e-mail: rextrogdon@carolina.rr.com

REGISTER NOW

www.riseupconference.com

FRONT LINES *continued*

Oliver & Tisha Leigh John-Baptiste



The saints at Rockville Bible Fellowship, Rockville MD desire to commend Oliver

and Tisha Leigh John-Baptiste into God's care and His work in evangelism, door-to-door outreach, and evangelism training. Oliver and Tisha Leigh are available to assist in gospel efforts such as tent meetings, literature distribution, street evangelism, church planting, etc. **Contact:** ph: 301-461-2418 email: obljohnbaptiste@yahoo.com

NEW ASSEMBLY IN WALPOLE, NH

A new assembly known as Berean Gospel Assembly is temporarily meeting in homes for worship and fellowship. Meetings are on Thursday nights for Bible study and Sunday mornings for the Lord's Supper and Family Bible Hour. **Contact:** Robert Gentile ph: 603-835-6189 Alan Chidester ph: 603-495-1415 email: chidester5@gsinet.net

TEMPORARY LOCATION

The Christians meeting in the Gospel Hall, 195 Mountain Road, Moncton,

NB, Canada are pleased to advise that they are in the process of finalizing plans for the construction of a new building on the western outskirts of the city. Their present building has been sold. Meetings will be held at 161 Salisbury Road (Route 106) in Moncton during the construction period. Please note that the mid-week meeting will be held on Thursday evening instead of Wednesday during this transition.

Contact: Jim Stuart 506-386 7571 email: jimzoniam@nb.sympatico.ca

SOUTHEAST KANSAS MEETING

Seeking like-minded New Testament believers for a Remembrance meeting unto the Lord Jesus Christ in Southeast KS, "that in everything He might have the preeminence."

Contact: Clyde & Wanda Longan ph: 620-423-2509

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Lake Park Chapel

Due to the effects of Hurricane Katrina, the shelters for homeless children and shelters for battered women in New Orleans, LA lost all the clothing they had. Most items have been



replaced except children's pajamas (infants through mid teens). Because of the shortage, most of the children go to bed in dirty clothes. Lake Park Chapel is providing some pajamas as the Lord provides. Your prayers and support are desperately needed. Pajamas or funds can be sent to: Lake Park Chapel, 201 Schlieff Dr., Belle Chasse, LA 70037 ph: 504-393-7083

Emmanuel Bible Camp in PE, Canada is looking to the Lord for a camp manager for the upcoming season. Fifty-five years in presenting the gospel to boys and girls in the area, Emmanuel continues to emphasize Christ in all its ministry.

Contact: Gerald MacLeod email: gerald@pei.sympatico.ca web: www.emmanuelbiblecamp.ca

Parkside Ranch in Orford, Quebec has need of a couple to be involved full time. It would be ideal if they were commended and have a desire for camp ministry. Responsibilities include maintenance, farm management, administration and involvement in the camping program. **Contact:** email: registrar@parksideranch.com web: www.parksideranch.com

The Perfect Gift

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Listen to this CD to find out.

www.goodnewsnow.info/thegift



Whether you're a "keeper of days" or not when it comes to the Christmas season, most people agree that this is a prime time to find people open to the idea of gift giving. "The Perfect Gift" is a new CD condensed into a 30-minute message by Jabe Nicholson. The talk asks then answers the question: what would the perfect gift be? It includes a description of the five things everybody wants and explains how this gift can be received. The package looks like a gift decorated with a bow, but "Christmas colors" have not been used (nor does the message link it with the season) so it is suitable year-round. **TO ORDER, CONTACT UPLOOK:**

USA: (616) 677-6127 • hazel@uplook.org

CANADA: (905) 641-0651 • bill@uplook.org

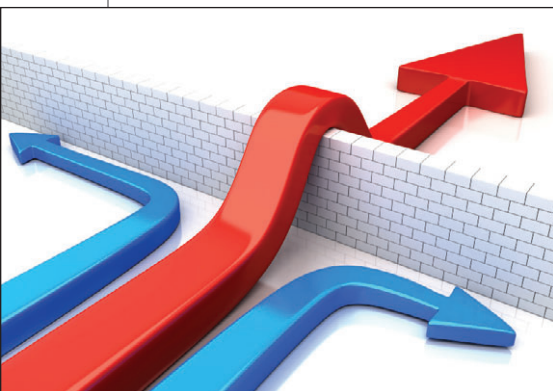
Our cost to produce them is 55 cents each, plus your shipping costs. Larger quantities preferably in multiples of 400 but smaller quantities also available.

The Power of the Spirit

Praying, witnessing, and living in His energy

The work of the Spirit cannot be accomplished in the power of the flesh.

I believe it is safe to say that those who are in fellowship in New Testament assemblies have an excellent understanding of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in worship. This is because it is our practice to set aside an hour each week, without prearrangement, to let the Holy Spirit guide us in the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so, we come to understand and experience the guidance of the Spirit. That is not to say that our sense of His guidance is infallible, or that our attempts at worship are always Christ-honoring; sometimes self intrudes. But with regard to the Spirit's guidance in worship, we experience it on a regular basis.



Hindrances

Where we often suffer is in our understanding of the power of the Holy Spirit. There are exceptions (praise God for the exceptions!), but most of us have little understanding and little experience of how the Holy Spirit moves with power.

There are two basic reasons for our weakness. First, our brethren in the charismatic movement have talked so much about the Holy Spirit that, in an effort to avoid their excesses, we sometimes go too far the other way. Since they often speak about the power of the Spirit and the explicitly miraculous, we seldom speak of such things. But the response to error should not be a withdrawal from the truth, but a clearer presentation of the truth. We can believe that the Spirit will move powerfully among us without our going to excess.

The second reason why we ignore a consideration of the power of the Spirit is because we live in a technologically sophisticated society and the church is taking its cues from the lost. Doubtless it is different for our brethren in developing countries, but in Western nations, the church has bought into scientific rationalism. We give mental assent to the idea that the Holy Spirit could move among us with great power, but we don't really think He will. We believe that God will always act using naturalistic processes. So for example, if we want to be more effective witnesses for Christ, the obvious answer in our society is education; we will read a book on evangelism. Now that's not to say that reading a book on evangelism is bad! Knowledge is necessary, but it isn't sufficient. Yes, read your book on evangelism but also pray continually and specifically that God would give you the opportunity and wisdom to share your faith. It is the same with health issues. We pray for the sick, but in our heart-of-hearts, we believe that all the healing will be done by the doctors. Again, we must repeat that there is nothing wrong with going to a doctor. God does often use doctors to heal. But we ought to pray fervently that God will heal, either through medicine or through a miracle.

Results

One outcome of a refusal to believe in the power of the Spirit is a weakness in all that we do as Christians. Yes, we should pray that God will heal the sick among us, provide employment, and meet a host of other needs. But in our prayers, we should be specifically praying that God will give strength and enablement in the ministries we have been given. If the Holy Spirit is the giver of

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT *continued*


gifts (1 Cor. 12:11), then we should pray that we will be able to use those gifts powerfully in the service of Christ. The work of the Spirit is not something that can be accomplished in the power of the flesh. Yes, we might occasionally show mercy or demonstrate faith or be a help to others because that is our personality. But what we do through our personality is not enough to make a lasting difference. Without the enablement of the Holy Spirit, mercy will be exhausted; faith will turn to fearfulness; and the helper will become resentful. Therefore, we must pray and ask the Father to have the Spirit help us use our spiritual gifts.

It is also important that we pray for others in the exercise of their spiritual gifts. When we look around the assembly, it is not too hard to see weaknesses. But for every weakness in the assembly, Christ is working on a plan of resolution. He has big plans for His bride! This plan involves the power of the Holy Spirit unleashed in the assembly as believers identify, develop, and use their spiritual gifts. Each of us has a personal responsibility to be strengthening the assembly through prayer for each other. For example, if you feel the teaching in the assembly is not strong enough, don't complain about it to your fellow believers. Instead, pray fervently for the teachers in the assembly that you would see the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in their teaching.

A second outcome of a refusal to believe in the power of the Spirit is a lack of Christ-likeness. We read in Luke 4:14, *"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."* It is futile to try to understand when the Lord Jesus Christ exercised His own power and when He was specifically empowered by the Holy Spirit, for the godhead is one. And yet if we desire to be like the Lord Jesus Christ, we too will seek to be walking daily in the power of the Spirit. For us to walk in the power of the Spirit doesn't mean we will always know how God will act. And it most certainly does not mean that we have supernatural power to compel God to do what we want! To be walking daily in the power of the Spirit means we know that God is working

in us and through us. It means that we face each day with a joyful and curious expectancy as to what God is going to do that day. How will His purposes be worked out? We don't know at the start of the day; but we know that by the end of the day, we will be changed and so will the world around us.

A third outcome of a refusal to believe in the power of the Spirit is a lack of effective witness. In Romans 15:18-19, we read that Paul would dare not speak of anything except what Christ accomplished among the Gentiles by the power of the Spirit. Paul's declaration was, *"I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."* Whether you are an evangelist by gift or whether you simply have good news to share, is it your desire to fully preach the gospel of Christ? I certainly hope so! But by ourselves we are insufficient for the task. And that is where we need to see the power of the Spirit. For example, before we share our faith we need the Spirit to convict the lost of sin and righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8). This is where we should pray for the lost by name, that the Father would send the Spirit to provide conviction, and that we would see opportunity to share our faith.

To be open to the power of the Spirit is not something to be afraid of. To acknowledge that the Spirit can and will move among us with power should be the expectation of each believer and each assembly. To do so means we will need to avoid the excess of some of our precious brethren and it means we will need to overcome Western rationalism. But a Bible-believing, truth-teaching, and Christ-honoring assembly must have the power of the Holy Spirit. 



"To be open to the power of the Spirit is not something to be afraid of."

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ

Moving our focus from self-satisfaction to pleasing God

“The Spirit dwells in the believer— He is not just an occasional guest.”

The opening words of Romans chapter 8 look back at what has been established in the first seven chapters of the epistle. The basic message of the gospel in those chapters was that the believer is justified when he exercises faith. That is, he is legally free from condemnation because of the work of Christ, in whom he has placed his trust. Chapter 7 has shown that the believer is not accepted on the basis of keeping the Law of Moses. It was a law which said, “Do this and you will live.” But nobody could achieve life in this way because all fell short. This is the sense of chapter 7 verse 10: *“And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.”* Failure to keep the Law in its entirety led to conviction of sin and a realization that

this was a death sentence. The question in chapter 7 was, “How can we be set free from this condemnation?”

Chapter 8 explains how a person who has seen the value of the death of Christ and rested his hope on Christ, is freed from this condemnation which haunts chapter 7. The believer now does not suppose that he can be right with God by his relationship with the Law of Moses. It established his sin and could only promise him

death. It was therefore a “law of sin and death.”

God has now intervened in grace—we are justified freely by God’s grace. Christ has shed His redeeming blood—we are justified by His blood. We have put our confidence in Him for our acceptance with God—we are justified by faith.

The law of the Spirit

The new life into which God’s grace has now brought us is energized, not by our determination to rise to God’s standards, but by the indwelling Spirit of God. This is the first dimension of a new principle: the law of the Spirit. It is God’s intention to change us from within by His Spirit. Our confidence before God is based on what Christ has done at the cross. The Spirit within us works a change, but our security is based on the work of Christ on the cross. The Spirit’s work within us is the evidence of our new life in Christ. This new principle is contrasted with the old bondage to a law which declared us guilty and in itself gave no assurance that we could be free.

The law of life

The positive nature of the Spirit’s enabling is expressed in this new principle being described as a “law of life.” The Law of Moses said, “Do this and live,” but it led to death because it exposed people’s sin. The new law of the Spirit brings us through Christ’s justifying blood into a place beyond condemnation. It is a place where life is now enjoyed by God’s grace, where the Spirit actively leads us in the formation of Christian character to please God. This theme, developed in chapter 8, brings us to a new confidence and a clear hope of glory. The law of life is a law of liberty, the liberty of the sons of God.

In Christ Jesus

It is vital that we see this all as found “in Christ Jesus.” Who shall condemn us now? The answer to this question is found, not in our being so holy, so victorious, that no accusation can be brought against us. The chapter does show that genuine faith in Christ will be



THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST *continued*

evidenced in a changed life and a new loyalty. But the triumphant note of confidence in our freedom from condemnation is struck in verse 34. The work of Christ for us, His resurrection, and His present place and work at God's right hand—these are our sure anchor.

How the Spirit works

Much of Romans 8 sets out how the Spirit works in our experience to bring about what people's best endeavors could never achieve as they sought to obey the Law of Moses. In verses 5-11, we see the Holy Spirit working in the believer to produce a new mindset, a new vision of life. Self-will and self-centeredness can be replaced by a mind that is alive to what God wants for us and in us. Every believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God. His gracious influence within us moves our focus from self-satisfaction to pleasing God. The Spirit is said here to "dwell" in the believer—He is not just an occasional guest.

We learn in verses 12-17 that the indwelling Spirit makes us conscious of our place as sons of God. Shortly after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus the evidence was seen: "*Behold, he prayeth.*" The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father..."; this involves an awareness of relationship and an intelligent acceptance of our position as we approach God, our Father. This can be experienced only as we know our link with Christ and our place "in Christ Jesus." We are joint-heirs with Christ. This inevitably involves our suffering as He did. But it will also entail—praise God!—our being glorified with Him before long. This is all ours as we are in Christ. The Spirit leads us into this awareness.

Verses 18-25 teach us to set our suffering with Christ in a broader context. In Christ, we have a great inheritance. This helps us to look at our suffering as something which we can endure because we look confidently to future glory. Without this confidence, our suffering would overwhelm us with despair. The work of the Spirit in our hearts and lives assures us of our future. He is a kind of firstfruits of our future inheritance (v. 23). We need not bow numbly

beneath the burden of groaning which rests on a sin-stricken world. The indwelling Spirit enables us to persevere as we wait expectantly for the future day of what is here called "the redemption of the body."

In verses 26-28, the help of the Holy Spirit is developed further. Our power to persevere is not a matter of our being strong enough to bear trials stoically. The Spirit "helps our infirmities." There is a power here which goes beyond even great courage and human heroism. It is the divine upholding of people who are conscious of their weakness and inadequacy. Our wordless groanings are taken up by the gracious Spirit of God as He gives them articulacy before the throne of God. Prayer is not a matter of eloquence! It is an expression, however limited, of our inadequacy and the confidence we have in the God of all sufficiency, the God of all comfort. We have in the Spirit an intercessor who can give form to our formless, clinging cries to our God. And we know that the suffering is a prelude to the glory.

And where does all this lead?

Chapter 6 ended with the assurance that "*the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" This is the climax of the truth of justification, our judicial standing before God. Chapter 8

emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in working out this eternal life through the phases and affairs of life. Sanctification is a vital aspect of this process, but it is wider than that. It is inevitable that this doctrine should be climaxed with a triumphant look at the end of the believer's life in Christ Jesus. That end is glory. At this point, Paul goes back to the sovereign purpose of God as the spring of every blessing. God's grace carries us through justification and quickly through brief suffering to certain and eternal glory. 🕊



"The law of life is a law of liberty."

The Mind of the Spirit

He understands and sympathizes with human sufferings

“The creation groans, the believer groans; but, most surprisingly of all, the Holy Spirit groans.”

The human heart craves sympathetic understanding—someone who can perceive its deepest sorrows and urgent needs. Characterized as this life is by rigorous trials and pervasive pain, “a shoulder to cry on” is required gear for journeying in this fallen world. Christians are not exempt from this natural desire for comfort and encouragement. So it is with great joy that one reads of the magnificent work of “*the mind of the Spirit*” in Romans 8:27. It tells of the Spirit’s ministry on behalf of suffering saints. All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in this beautiful passage. How blessed it is to know that the triune God is vitally interested in the well-being of the saints! What is more, He will faithfully and adeptly conform them to the glorious image of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

The Comforter’s credentials

The Holy Spirit is a person with the same attributes as the other members of the Godhead. Like the Father and the Son, He possesses all of the characteristics of divine personality, including omniscience. His intellect not only encompasses all knowledge, but also is in full agreement with the other persons of the Trinity. As 1 Corinthians 2:10 expresses it, “*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*”

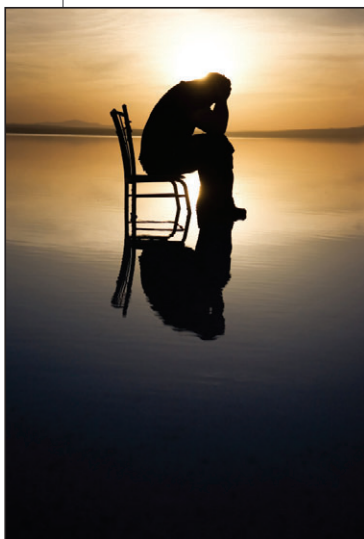
When the Lord Jesus was preparing to leave the world in order to go back to the Father, He told His disciples that He would send “*another Comforter*” (Jn. 14:16). Just as He had looked out for all of their needs and instructed them in the things of God, so the Holy Spirit would also reveal the things of

Christ to them (Jn.14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15). Like the Old Testament servant showing tokens of Isaac’s wealth to Rebekah, so He woos and instructs the saints by manifesting the inheritance that they share with Christ (Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14). As the Lord Jesus showed love and grace to His own while on earth, even so the Spirit of God faithfully ministers to them throughout the vicissitudes of their pathway home.

Divine prayer brings eternal security

With its monumental teaching on the unshakeable security of the believer for time and eternity, the eighth chapter of Romans is one of the most encouraging passages in the New Testament. It begins with “no condemnation” and ends with no separation (vv.1 & 39). Nonetheless, in a world where suffering and pain are endemic, how may one be sure of joining Christ in glory? After all, the creation is groaning under the weight of the consequences of man’s fall (Gen. 3). Natural disasters and diseases plague this cursed planet. The poet Tennyson graphically described the animal kingdom as “nature, red in tooth and claw”¹. The saints are not exempt from the deficiencies and pains inherent in fallen creation. The believer also groans, awaiting “the adoption...the redemption of the body” which will transform our bodies of humiliation into glorious bodies like that of the Lord Jesus (Php. 3:21, JND).

Integral to the Almighty’s sovereign plan is the intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26). He aids believers in their infirmities, ministering to them in the weakness and pain that accompany life in this sin-afflicted world. The creation groans, the believer groans; but, most surprisingly of all, the Holy Spirit



groans (v. 26)! Such is the depth of His sympathy with suffering saints.

Some balk at the idea of such unvarnished emotion coming from God, but this verse fully agrees with the other emotions that the Scriptures attribute to the Almighty: perfect love, unparalleled mercy, and matchless compassion. The true and living God is not impassive; nor is He cold and austere. Certain Greek philosophers, such as Plato, imagined that deity had no emotions. Throughout the Scriptures, the Lord describes Himself in emotional terms. He is not fickle, capricious, or mutable like fallen men; nevertheless, He thinks, feels, and wills—all in perfection. He hates sin yet loves sinners (Rom. 1:18; Jn. 3:16). He loves righteousness and hates iniquity (Heb. 1:9). Rather than cling to a neo-Platonic conception of God, one must adhere to the explicit teaching of the Bible.

Instead of being an undignified expression of garish emotion, the groaning of the Spirit encourages us that He understands and sympathizes with human sufferings. He is not aloof from the rough and tumble trials of this world. He enters into the deepest human thoughts, desires, and pleadings; and ministers accordingly in the way that best suits each need.

Minding God's business

What is more, though these groanings are unutterable (v. 26), the Father understands what the Spirit is saying, for “[the Spirit] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (v. 27). The Holy Spirit always prays for the believers in complete harmony with the Father’s will; moreover, there is no possibility of misunderstanding within the Godhead. Put simply, the divine persons understand One another perfectly. Verse 27 speaks of “the mind of the Spirit”; well-known Greek scholars define the word *mind* in this passage as “aim, aspiration or striving”². Another explains it as the “intention of the Spirit, what He means by these unutterable groanings”³. Thus, what the Spirit wants is clear to the Father, and the intercession is effective. The Spirit’s omniscient mind knows how to pray for the suffering saints in their necessity, and therefore brings incomparable power to the process of working out the divine will in the lives of Christians.

The famous “*all things work together for good*” would be impossible, but for the will of the Father and the



“The Spirit is not aloof from the rough and tumble trials of this world.”



intercession of the Spirit and the Son (vv. 26-27, 34). One person of the Trinity intercedes for us in heaven (v.34), another on earth (v. 27). Each of them perceives the exact requirement of the moment, and uses all the circumstances of life to bring about God’s purpose of glorifying the saints with Christ (v. 29). Every experience, every trial, and every tear are masterfully employed to conform us to the altogether lovely image of Christ, God’s ideal “second man” (1 Cor. 15:47), “*the firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom. 8:29). Like a brilliant surgeon skillfully wielding the scalpel to cut away extraneous flesh, or the genius sculptor applying the mallet and chisel to a piece of granite, so God employs all things to bring about His purpose for His glory and believers’ eternal blessing. In his classic hymn, Darby rhetorically asked “And is it so, I shall be like Thy Son?” According to Romans 8:28-29 the answer to this interrogative is a definite and resounding “Yes!”

David’s claim, “*For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust*” (Ps. 103:14) accurately describes the mind of the Spirit. In the saints’ weakness, He demonstrates sympathetic understanding and compassionate strength. The Spirit of God is mindful of Christians. His exhaustless intellect and omnipotence tirelessly and unalterably work to bring about the divine will. This results in the eternal well-being of the saints who will forever dwell in glory with the ascended Christ. The mind of the Spirit agrees with the will of the Father, and the Spirit knows how to pray and work for His people. Such incomparably massive mental powers are marshaled on behalf of Christians. Indeed, one could not ask for more effective labor to bring about the most good for God and man. ☪

Endnotes

- 1 Alfred Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* A.H.H., canto 56.
- 2 W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 866.
- 3 Charles Hodge, *Commentary on Romans*, electronic edition, comment on v. 27.



Prepared to Give an Answer

Educational television is rarely without an agenda.

On May 25th of this year, The History Channel broadcast a primetime program entitled *The Link*.

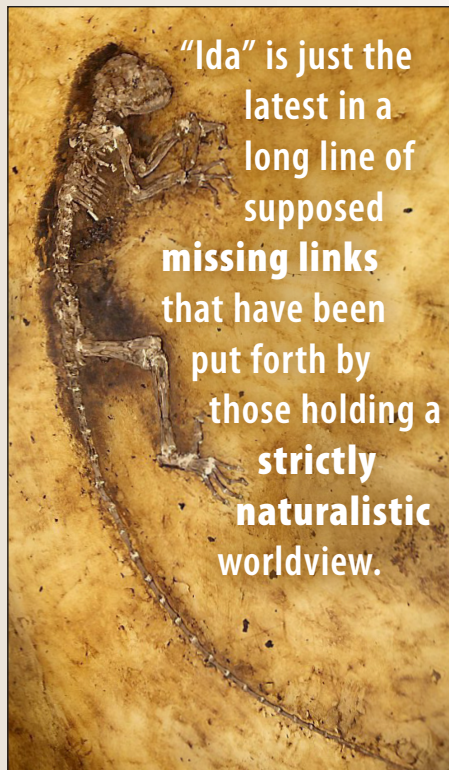
Advertisements for the premier stated, “Missing link found! An incredible 95 percent complete fossil of a 47-million-year-old human ancestor has been discovered and, after two years of secret study, an international team of scientists has revealed it to the world. The fossil’s remarkable state of preservation allows an unprecedented glimpse into early human evolution.”

A byline included with the story tried to humanize the supposed 47-million-year-old fossil: “Ida was only a child when she died, but she’ll change history forever.”¹

The fossil had not only been given the name “Ida,” but also was identified as being a child at the time of her death. To say that such a campaign is clever would be an understatement. The History Channel is one of my favorites, and they do know how to produce interesting programs!

It is an amazing coincidence that such an important find would be made known to the world in the same year as the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth. The cynic in me could not help wondering if the program’s airing had more to do with this than it did with any new scientific data. The History Channel and its ilk (Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel, and The Learning Channel) do produce some very good programs. But accuracy and historical analysis may not always be the prime motivation. After all, one of the more popular shows on The History Channel is *Monster Quest*². The producers traipse around the globe in search of Big Foot, Yeti, the Loch Ness monster, and even Chupacabra. If you don’t know what Chupacabra is, don’t worry—you’re probably better off.

The uninitiated might miss something else that is bothersome. Notice that the ad mentions a secret study



that has been going on for two years. Science is not supposed to work this way! Whatever happened to sound scientific practice that calls for results to be published and for peer review to take place?

Even more troubling is the impression given that this is a recent discovery—that we now have found the “Missing Link”! Ida was uncovered in Germany back in 1983.³ The amateur fossil hunter who located it kept it in uncertain conditions for more than 20 years!

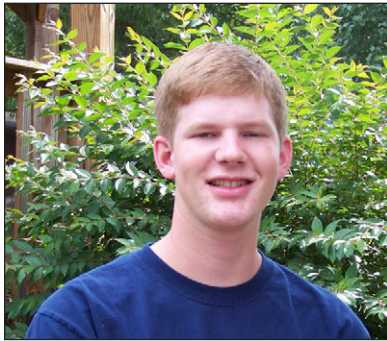
My main purpose in this article is not to rebut the claims some are making about Ida. A quick search for “Ida Fossil” on sites such as Answers in Genesis

(www.answersingenesis.org) or the Institute for Creation Research (www.icr.org) reveals the mounting evidence against Ida. Some have already come to the conclusion that she is nothing more than a species of extinct lemur.

My primary purpose is to say that most people will never hear the evidence against Ida’s being a human ancestor. Ida is just the latest in a long line of supposed missing links that have been put forth by those holding a strictly naturalistic worldview. Others include Java Man, Piltown Man, Archaeopteryx, and Australopithecus Afa-rens (like Ida, this fossil was given a girl’s name, “Lucy”). Each of these either proved itself to be false or gave rise to more questions than were supposedly answered.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18 >

GOOD NEWS ON THE MOVE *anticipating another year of blessing*



Jonathon Baker, 18, has been in fellowship at Pittsboro Bible Assembly in Pittsboro, NC since 2006. Privileged to be raised in a Christian home, and the eldest of four kids, he constantly heard the gospel and memorized Scripture from an early age. But it wasn't until the age of eight that he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ to be his Savior. He has spent the last two summers serving on staff at Mountain Top Youth Camp in northwestern North Carolina. He is thankful to be able to serve Him with other likeminded young men, and that the Lord has opened this door of opportunity for him to serve on GNOM. During the year with GNOM, Jonathon desires to be a bold and an effective witness for his Savior and Lord, and prays that he would grow closer each day to Him.



JJ Ferrier was born in Simcoe, ON, Canada and was raised in a Christian home. Now 19 years old, he came to know Christ as Saviour at the age of 8. He's in fellowship at Elmwood Bible Chapel, Renfrew, ON (1 hour w. of Ottawa). He has recently been involved at Galilee Bible Camp where he was given more responsibilities which helped him in his spiritual growth. Last year JJ met up with the Cross Canada Cruisers team and was encouraged by the work they were doing. He hopes this coming year will be a great experience for spreading the Good News, in his walk with the Lord, and that he'll be challenged to get more involved in the outreaches and the assembly as a whole when he returns home. Like Joshua (Josh 24:15), he wants to serve the Lord with everything he has.



Justin Humes grew up in New Jersey, and attended a Catholic church, but rejected religion completely by the time he was 14. While in college, he met his wife-to-be, Jocelin, and got to know, for the first time, people who not only claimed to be Christians, but who believed the Bible and shared the gospel with him. He came to see that his perceived troubles were caused by the real problem of having to one day stand before a holy God and answer for his sin. Through much conviction and wrestling, he came to repentance, and placed his trust in Christ. Justin and his family have been meeting with Grace Fellowship Bible Chapel in Union, ME, since 2000, and were commended to the Lord in 2008 for gospel outreach and equipping assemblies in evangelism throughout the US.



Jeremiah Moffitt, from Houston, TX is in fellowship with the saints at Colonial Hills Bible Chapel. He was born in Bartlesville, OK, and grew up in a Christian family, accepting Christ at a early age. After high school Jeremiah went on to attend one year at Letourneau University. He has worked at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp, in Missouri the last two summers. This summer while working at camp the Lord revealed to him that he was not using his time at school for the Lord, and was led to be a part of GNOM V just a couple of weeks before it started. Jeremiah realizes that although he grew up in a Christian home and attended Christian schools his entire life, he knows very little and will greatly benefit from the training and mentoring provided by GNOM.

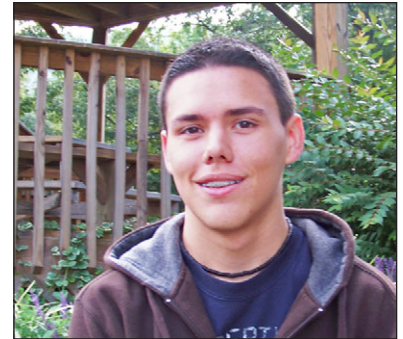
Daniel Morell has just graduated from high school and is currently in fellowship at Fox Valley Bible Chapel in Little Chute, WI. He was born the second of six children into a Christian home in Rheinlander, WI on October 3, 1990. He is forever thankful for the wisdom of his father, the love and care of his mother, and the friendship of all his brothers and sisters. At the age of seven he fully understood that he was destined, not for heaven, but for hell. Only minutes later, he put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since then he has had the great privilege of working with every GNOM team so far. He has three goals for this year with GNOM: to be a witness to the lost, an encouragement to believers, and for himself to grow closer to the Savior.



Jimmy Sanders, age 18, hales from Lyndonville, VT and fellowships at Wheelock Bible Chapel. He grew up in a strong Christian home, was saved when he was 12, and baptized shortly after. For several years he was not spending time in fellowship with the Lord and did not grow in Him. About a year and a half ago he began to understand that Christ came to seek a Bride and that He wanted Jimmy's whole heart. For some time he has had a heart to do gospel work, was at the surges in Waterbury and Georgetown and has had the opportunity to be involved in camp work the last two summers. Jimmy hopes to be used by the Lord this year and learn so he can help in gospel work at home and wherever else the Lord leads him.



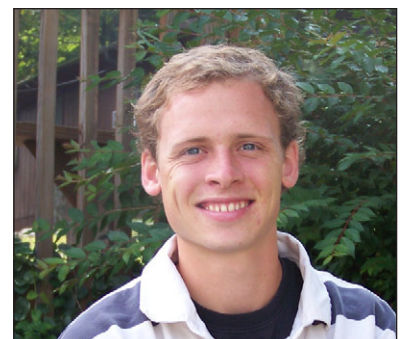
Eric Toney was born in Greensboro, NC on July 19, 1991, but grew up in the nearby town of Reidsville. He has a saved mother, an unsaved father, and two older Christian sisters. He has attending Reidsville Bible Chapel since the age of four and accepted Christ as his Savior at age 6. Since then, he has grown to love spending time in God's Word, handing out tracts, and going to Kentucky every year to help teach God's Word to mentally challenged youth. His decision to join GNOM was made during the recent outreach in Richmond, KY. There he saw how important it is to share the Word with those he meets. During this year he hopes to learn more about the Lord and to help spread his newfound knowledge of the Savior to all unbelievers he encounters.



Eric Smith called on the Lord Jesus to be his Savior while he was young. At 16, he more fully submitted to the Lord and His direction in his life. This is Eric's fifth year working with the GNOM team. Two years ago, Eric was commended to the work of the Lord, and His leading by his home assembly, the believers of Bellevue Gospel Chapel in Schenectady, NY. Eric is involved in training the young men in evangelism and is looking to the Lord for direction in staying behind in some locations this year to assist with outreach follow-up. His prayer is that each of us will finish our *"course with joy, and the ministry"* which we have *"received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God"* (Acts 20:24). Eric's hometown is in Altamont, NY.



Seth Bjorlie was born in Grand Rapids, MI on April 9, 1989, but experienced the second birth when he was 7. His parents encouraged him in every spiritual pursuit as he was growing up. He has been involved with various outreaches from his home assembly, Grace & Truth in Grand Rapids. This past spring and summer, while doing gospel work in his home town, Seth has experienced a snowball effect in his life with a desire to see people saved from their sins and living a life wholly devoted to following the teachings of the Word. This year Seth wants to be better equipped for effectively sharing the Good News with our needy world and to grow in self discipline in the study of the Bible and in living a life that pleases the Lord.



EVIDENCES *continued*

On a number of occasions, Chuck Colson has said, “Culture is religion incarnate.”⁴ We live in a culture whose religion is based on secularism and whose viewpoint is that truth is relative. As such, any evidence that challenges this worldview is simply not going to be brought to light apart from the church.

As believers, it is important to be armed with the knowledge that there has already been a number of “missing links” espoused by evolutionists that were subsequently proven wrong. We are commanded in Scripture to be ready to give a defense of the faith.

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” (1 Pet. 3:15f)

This means we are to be prepared with an explanation for our faith. Since our faith stands in total on what is found in the Bible, we should be informed enough to defend it.

Christianity has always been a rational faith and one that is built on facts. When Thomas asked for evidence of Christ’s resurrection, the Lord provided it to him (Jn. 20). When the two disciples were on the road to Emmaus, they questioned how Jesus could be the Messiah and yet have such an ignoble death. In response, the Lord reasoned with them from the Scriptures and dem-

onstrated that the Messiah had to suffer these things (Lk. 24). The Lord’s pattern was to provide evidence and to reason with people.

The evidence for the reliability of the Bible is overwhelming! We also ought to be about the task of sharing that evidence with others. After all, the heart of being a witness is to testify to that which is true.

Today, the overall public discourse concerning the Bible is one that is rife with error. The Scriptures are assailed by our culture on every front. It’s not just the media outlets. Our educational institutions are presumptuous when it comes to Holy Writ! Worse, much of Christendom itself has a bent against God’s Word. Most mainline denominations now teach in their seminaries



and universities that the Bible is something less than the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Having attended the University of Notre Dame, I know this first hand.

With the advancement of science and the development of archeological techniques, we have more information available to us than ever before. The more we learn, the more proof we have that the Bible is a supernaturally engineered book whose Author is outside of our time-space-matter universe.

Today, there is a wealth of material available to equip believers with the evidence. Any good library should include works such as:

- *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell
- *Know Why You Believe* by Paul Little
- *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe
- *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences* by Norman Geisler and Ronald Brooks

Dr. Dave Reid of Growing Christians Ministries (www.growingchristians.org) has put together as good a series as you can find in this area. His courses entitled Christian Evidences I and Christian Evidences II are invaluable. In fact, his coursework inspired some of us to found Christian Evidences Ministries. The entire website (www.christianevidences.org) and ministry is dedicated to providing evidence that shows the reliability of the Bible.

So be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you! ☺

—ROB SULLIVAN

- 1 <http://www.history.com/content/the-link>
- 2 <http://www.history.com/content/monsterquest>
- 3 <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2009/05/19/ida-missing-link>
- 4 Chuck Colson, “BreakPoint” radio broadcast, 11/19/07

Explore many powerful Christian evidences at www.christianevidences.com where Rob shares manuscript-based, archaeological, prophetic, scientific evidences and more for a strong faith despite the popular sound bytes of our day.



The Manifestation of the Spirit

Gifts for the benefit of all.

What a blessing to see not only the spiritual gift itself, but also the results of the gifts having been given.

Paul writes to the church at Corinth, “*but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*” (1 Cor. 12:7). The apostle further emphasizes that the manifestation of the spirit is given to each and every believer when he writes just a few verses later, “*but one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills*” (1 Cor. 12:11).

These verses reveal a vital New Testament principle, describing for us one of the essential ministries of the Holy Spirit. Yet this ministry of the Holy Spirit is often overlooked and even more often misunderstood. If the Lord’s people were to truly grasp this essential truth, the church, and even the world, would be dramatically affected.

There is a manifestation of the Spirit associated with spiritual gifts. The Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary defines manifestation as “a perceptible, outward, or visible expression.” Using this definition, one should grasp that spiritual gifts are supposed to produce the visible expression of the Holy Spirit living within each and every believer. What does this manifestation look like?

Let’s first think about what a spiritual gift is before we think about what it may produce that’s visible. A spiritual gift may be understood as a capacity to serve in such a way as to positively influence the spiritual growth of an individual or the assembly. As already mentioned, the gift is a direct product of the Holy Spirit living within each believer.

Four passages

There are four major portions of Scripture that give Bible students detailed teaching about spiritual gifts. Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4 contain a wealth of truth regarding spiritual gifts while each emphasizing different aspects of the subject.

Romans 12 presents God as the giver of the gifts. The focus in Romans 12 is that the believer should use his gift with great fervency. The apostle writes, “*Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly...he who exhorts, in his exhortation, he who gives, with liberality, he who leads with diligence*” (vv. 6, 8). In this section of Scripture, it is clear that God is the one who is said to have “*allotted to each a measure of the faith*” (Rom. 12:3).

In 1 Corinthians 12, the Spirit is revealed as the sovereign gift giver. The emphasis in this passage is the commonality of the benefit of the gift: the gift is given for the good of all.

In Ephesians 4, the ascended Lord Jesus, the Head of the Body, is seen as the giver of the gifts. In this passage, the idea seems to be that the recipients of the gifts are themselves gifts to the church. And, once again, the purpose is for the benefit of the church.

Finally, in 1 Peter 4:10, we are reminded that, “*as each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” Here the stress is on our stewardship of the gifts. Are we using them faithfully and whole-heartedly for the glory of God?

The challenge

With all of these verses available to believers, why is there such a misunderstanding about this ministry of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps the



THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT *continued*

answer lies in the fact that the manifestation of the Spirit is not what it ought to be! With that said, clearly the author is not blaming the Holy Spirit. Equally clear, the fault is not with the gifts themselves. The problem must therefore lie with the recipients of the gifts. In other words, either the gifts are not being used by each and every believer, or they are not being used properly, for the common good. If the use of gifts is flawed, then the manifestation of the Spirit will be hindered.

To be clear, the manifestation of the Spirit is not the ability to see the spiritual gift itself, but, rather, to see the results of the gifts having been given. What results should we see? First and foremost: *“the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ”* (Eph. 4:12, 15).

If the Lord’s assembly, and the saints that make up that assembly, are being equipped for the work of service and if the body of Christ is being built up, then there will be no doubt that that Spirit of God is manifesting Himself through the results of His gifts working through the believers’ lives.

The manifestation of the Spirit should be visible (as the definition implies). Every believer should be exercising the spiritual gift(s) given to him or her. While using those spiritual gifts, the whole body is equipped to do the work of serving the Lord. Ultimately, the manifestation of the Spirit is the visible evidence of equipped believers doing the work of ministry. This can and should be seen! But sadly, it often is not.

In some local assemblies, professionals are hired to do the work of ministry and the rest of the believers sit back to be fed. The New Testament knows nothing of this! Such a concept is as foreign to the New Testament as American football is in Peru! But even those local assemblies that supposedly practice New Testament principles can fall prey to this practice in more subtle forms. Having a few believers exercising their gifts is certainly better than just one man. But biblical principles aren’t only for a few believers

or even for a majority of believers. These principles apply to all believers. The testimony and effectiveness of the assembly is at stake. If every believer is not fully utilizing their gifts, then the manifestation of the Spirit is hampered significantly. Is there any wonder that the church seems so powerless today? Think of the impact that the first few generations of believers had and then compare it with the impact of our generation. Today, the church in the United States is known for our political involvement and our business acumen. Sadly, these are two things the Bible never endorses as important characteristics of the Lord’s people.

The common good

Another characteristic of the manifestation of the Spirit is that the entire assembly benefits from a variety of gifts, ministries, and activities. The gifts are “for the common good.” This is one area where much improvement is needed. One often overhears a well-meaning saint say, “That brother is really gifted.” We all know what is meant by that statement, but that ought not to be. Every brother and every sister is gifted, not just those who take the platform and exercise a public gift. The manifestation of the Spirit is damaged when one gift is honored above the rest. The manifestation of the Spirit is fully visible when the full complement of gifts is used for the common good.

The proper use of spiritual gifts is essential for a local assembly to fulfill its God-given function. The proper use of spiritual gifts is also necessary for the manifestation of the Spirit to be evident to all as an encouragement to the saints and as a witness to the world. May the giver of gifts give us help in understanding these truths and applying them in our individual and corporate lives. 🕯️



The proper use of spiritual gifts is essential for a local assembly to fulfill its God-given function.

The Ministry of the Spirit

Nothing can duplicate the effect of the life of God in the believer.

“The Lord was with His own; He is now in His own.”

In considering the ministry of the Spirit as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 3:6-8, we would like to consider the following four areas concerning the ministry of God’s Holy Spirit in the New Testament era: replacement, liberty, role, and life.

Replacement

“Who hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter [the Law], but of the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:6).

In 2 Corinthians 3:11, we see the ministration of the Spirit to the church has replaced the ministration of the Law given to Israel. We are not under the Law. Instead, we are possessors of His Spirit. Israel had a code of conduct written on tables of cold stone. The church has the righteousness of the Law written on the tables of their living hearts via the Spirit. The Law in stone was something to conform to—if you could. The Spirit programmed (written) in our hearts, transforms us into the glorious image of the Lord Jesus Himself (Heb. 10:16, 17; Rom. 7:1-6; Gal. 4; 2 Cor. 3).

Liberty

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).

The Law promised a curse if it was not kept (Deut. 28:15-66). That’s why it is called *“the ministration of death”* (2 Cor. 3:7). It governed by demand and penalty, and led to condemnation and death. The gospel promises only blessings to the believer (Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:13,14)—never curses like the Law. This is because “the Spirit giveth life.”

When one can lose something by a poor performance, the prescribed rules can be used to control one. These make you a slave to that system if you want to retain the blessings. The Spirit is a gift that is given immediately upon trusting the gospel of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:13). Therefore, the Christian is not subject to the bondage of prescribed rules in order to keep the blessings—he already has them. Thus, our behavior unto the Lord comes out of the desire of love not the demand of fear. This is true liberty. I do because I want to, not because I have to. It turns the service of drudgery into the liberty of joy. It turns legalism into love.

Liberty is not the western concept of the right to choose. The world believes liberty is the freedom to choose one’s leader, lifestyle, body decisions, sexual preferences, etc.

Biblical liberty is having the ability to serve God according to His choices and His will. When there are restrictions, one does not have the ability to do something. For example, Israel could not serve God in the wilderness since Pharaoh restricted them with force (Ex. 5:1-6). Once the Lord freed them from Egypt, they were free from the restrictions that hindered their service. For the first time, they were free, not to do what they chose, but what God chose.

God has not left the church without righteousness. He obtains it in a better and a living way.



THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT *continued*

In the gospel, the believer has been freed from the Law, which stirs up the passions of sin and rebellion against God. By being given the Spirit, which produces love, we, for the first time, have the ability to serve the Lord. *“We are delivered [restriction removed] from the Law...that we should serve in newness of Spirit”* (Rom. 7:6).

Role

“How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be even more glorious?” (2 Cor. 3:8).

The ministry role of the Spirit on earth today is twofold. Firstly, to the unbeliever, *“He will reprove the world of sin”* (Jn. 16:8). He is not reforming politics or changing the world into a Christian kingdom. He is convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. This can lead a sinner to the Saviour and into God’s family (Jn. 16:11).

Secondly, to the believer, the Holy Spirit is revealing the things of Christ. *“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you”* (Jn. 16:14). This edifies the Christian in Christ-like growth (Eph. 3:16-21). The Spirit never speaks on His own authority. He conveys only what He has heard from the risen Son. Thus, the Spirit will never tell someone something that doesn’t first come from the Lord, as revealed in His Word. The Spirit’s ministry is to glorify the absent Son, not Himself. You find Christians that are spirit-filled, and you will find that the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are their main focus (Jn. 16:13-15).

We have a picture of the Spirit’s ministry in Genesis 24 in the story of Isaac and his bride, Rebecca. Here, Abraham the father sends his eldest servant into a distant land, not to change it, but to obtain a wife out of it for his beloved son. This was his son, Isaac, who was offered in sacrifice and received in resurrection as a figure (Heb. 11:19). The servant (who depicts the Spirit) is entrusted with all the riches of the son given to him by the father. The servant then reveals the son’s inheritance in order to woo the bride out of Mesopotamia to be united to the unseen son in marriage.

Life

“For the letter [the Law] killeth, but the Spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3:6).

God the Son has replaced Himself on earth with God the Spirit. While the Lord was with His own at select times in select places for over three years, He is now in



His own. This means that His living presence is everywhere, all the time, and forever (Jn. 14:16-20).

To live in the Spirit is to have available His dynamic ministry in growth, holiness, and service. What are some of the works a believer may now expect the Lord to do in him by His Spirit?

- He puts the love of God in our hearts, which will assure us of His love by the death of Christ for us ungodly sinners. *“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”* (Rom. 5:5-8).
- He gives power to put to death the sinful deeds of the body (not its desires but its deeds). By walking in the Spirit, one won’t fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). The desires won’t become deeds; the fantasies won’t become fruit; and the attitudes won’t become actions. *“If ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live”* (Rom. 8:13).
- He bears witness to us that we are the children of God, giving us personal assurance. *“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* (Rom. 8:16).
- He intercedes for us in prayer so that our requests reach God, according to His will. *“He [the Spirit] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God”* (Rom. 8:26, 27).
- He reveals the things of God to our hearts for now we have the wisdom and the mind of Christ through His Spirit. *“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit”* (1 Cor. 2:9-16).
- He gives the ability to know how to serve effectively in the body of Christ because of His gifts. *“The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”* (1 Cor. 12:7).
- He gives power to have a positive character change. *“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance [self control]”* (Gal. 5:22, 23).

This is true life which the world with its programs, drug therapy, training centers, marketing strategies, and psychologies cannot duplicate. While true Christians get passionately concerned about the work of the Son being added to and replaced by man for justification, we also need to be passionately concerned when the work of His Spirit is replaced by man’s ways in the church for sanctification. 🕊

The Teaching of the Holy Spirit

Excerpts from *"In the School of Christ"* by David Gooding

By now the little party of eleven apostles, clustered closely round the Lord Jesus to catch His every word, must have been getting near the Garden of Gethsemane. Soon all instruction must cease for the time being. Many things that the Lord had to say to them would have to be left unsaid. It was not simply lack of time that would prevent Him from saying them: it was that the apostles could not have borne them, even if He had said them. Months before, they had come to believe and confess that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Mt. 16:16). But how, before they had seen and felt His glorified, resurrection body and experienced His ascension, could they have formed any adequate concept of these further things: of the fact, for instance, that this One whom they would presently see sweat in agony in the garden, and crucified on a cross and buried in a tomb, was the One through whom the universe was made? He would not, therefore, tell them these further things now; but He would tell them later on. And this is how He would do it.

"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He shall guide you into all the truth." (Jn. 16:12)

The source of His teaching

Notice that having said that the Spirit *"will guide you into all the truth,"* the Lord Jesus immediately added an explanation as to how the Holy Spirit would be able to do this when the Lord Jesus Himself did not do it during His lifetime on earth. The explanation made clear three important things about the source of the truth that the Holy Spirit would communicate to Christ's disciples:

A. The Holy Spirit is not Himself an independent source of truth

"He shall not speak from Himself," says Christ.

B. The Holy Spirit does not replace the Lord Jesus as the Teacher of Christ's people

Yes, of course, the Holy Spirit's gracious, divine ministry includes that of teaching the people of God. Our Lord had earlier said explicitly (Jn. 14:26): *"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things";* and, of course, the

Lord Jesus is not denying here what He said there. But what He is informing us about here is the source of the Holy Spirit's teaching: *"He shall not speak from Himself, but what things soever He hears, these shall He speak."* So the teaching which the Holy Spirit imparts to the people of God He has first heard from Someone else. From

whom? From the Lord Jesus, who in turn received and receives all His words from the Father (Jn. 14:10).

Let's take an actual example of this which we find in the New Testament itself. The Book of the Revelation describes itself as *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass."* Then it tells us who actually communicated this revelation to Christ's servants ... it leaves no doubt that it is the Lord Jesus who is dictating the letter. But at the end of the letter, the Lord Jesus says: *"He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"* (Rev. 2:7).

C. The scope of the Holy Spirit's teaching to the apostles

On this topic the Lord Jesus indicated that the Spirit of Truth would guide the apostles into all the truth, and that He would declare to them the things that are to come (Jn. 16:13).

To see the proper significance of this wonderful promise we must be good historians and notice to whom the Lord Jesus was speaking when He made the promise: *"the Holy Spirit will guide you into all the truth."*

"He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"
(Rev 2:7)



THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT *continued*

He was talking to the apostles, not to all the subsequent generations of believers. And He was talking about the revelation to His apostles and prophets—who formed the foundation of the church—of truth that no one had ever heard of before because it had not been revealed before. As the Apostle Paul later put it: “*By revelation there was made known to me the mystery...which to other generations was not made known unto men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit...*” (Eph. 3:3, 5). Christ was not talking about that other gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit by which He helps us today, for instance, subjectively to understand more and more the meaning of what the Lord Jesus revealed to His apostles after Pentecost.

Similarly, when He earlier said: “*I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now,*” He was not talking to us and telling us that there are many things in the truth which He revealed to His apostles and prophets which we as yet cannot grasp, but which He will explain to us later on; though that may well be true. He was telling His apostles that, though He had already revealed much truth to them, there were still truths which He could not reveal to them at the moment, because they were not yet able to bear them. But after the resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost they were able

to bear these further revelations, and did actually receive them to the full. They were guided into all the truth. And by the time Jude, one of our Lord’s half-brothers, wrote his epistle, he could describe the faith as having been “*once and for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). It would take centuries to understand it fully and to draw out all its implications; but the faith itself would never need addition or modification.

The content of His teaching

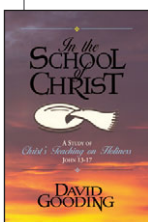
“*He shall glorify Me,*” said Christ; and this has been the supreme and delightful object of the Holy Spirit right from the very first moment that He came on the Day of Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter pointed out to the crowd on that occasion not only that the ascension of Jesus had been followed by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, but that it was the risen and ascended Jesus who Himself had poured out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). But then the Holy Spirit is not some impersonal power. He is a member of the great Tri-unity that is God. If Jesus Christ, then, has poured out the Holy Spirit, who must Jesus Christ be? Only One who was Himself God could pour out the Spirit of God. And so the Holy Spirit Himself through Peter draws out for the crowd the implication of this amazing phenomenon: “*Let all the house of Israel therefore know assur-*

edly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). So did the Holy Spirit from the very first glorify the Lord Jesus. ... We shall never know more about God than the Lord Jesus reveals to us through the Spirit.

This then is, always has been, and always will be, what the Holy Spirit teaches Christ’s people. All theories of holiness that claim that by the use of certain disciplines and techniques people can come to a fuller knowledge and vision of God, and a fuller union with God, than Jesus Christ could give us, are thereby shown not to come from the Holy Spirit’s teaching. They are false. Let us resolve to shun them entirely.

An example of His teaching

Now as we come to the end of this particular lesson, what could be more fitting than to read slowly, attentively, and thoughtfully one instance of the Holy Spirit using an apostle to reveal to us the glories of the Lord Jesus: His relationship with the Father, His relation to creation, and to the reconciliation of the universe, His relationship with the church, His work on the cross for us in the past, His dwelling in us in the present, and His future manifestation in glory along with His redeemed at His return. And having read these things, let us worship Him once more. See Colossians 1:12–2:15. *Reprinted with permission.* ↗



In the School of Christ by David Gooding. Join Jesus’ disciples in His school and learn lessons on holiness with this study of John chapters 13 through 17. **Format:** Paperback, 272 pages. **Code:** B-ISC **Price:** \$15.99 USD. Available from the publisher: **Gospel Folio Press**, 304 Killaly St W, Port Colborne ON, L3K 6A6 **(Online)** www.gospelfolio.com • **(Toll Free)** 800-952-2382 • **(Phone)** 905-835-9166 • **(Fax)** 905-834-0012

Grieving and Quenching the Holy Spirit

We're useful when we're obedient

Is there any stifling or distressing effect to the Spirit of God causing us to be ineffective for God?

When taking up a study of the Holy Spirit, our focus is often in one direction: we consider all the ways the Holy Spirit affects our lives. But there is another side of this relationship: how the believer affects the Holy Spirit. This second aspect is just as important to the child of God as the first.

There are two words found in the epistles that define our influence on the Spirit of God: "grieve" and "quench." Both are placed within a negative context and a strong negative command:

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30)

"Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thes. 5:19)

First, we must understand the meaning of

these two words. Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries inform us that *grieve* in Ephesians 4:30 means "to distress, to cause grief, to be sad, to be in heaviness, to be sorrowful, to make sorry." And *quench*, as used in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, means "to extinguish, to stifle, to put out." The meanings are similar to how the words

are used in the English language today. These words form a progression: grieving the Holy Spirit repeatedly will lead to quenching the Holy Spirit. Let's consider them in that order.

Grieving the Holy Spirit

The context of Ephesians 4:30 provides us with an indication of what causes the Holy Spirit to grieve. Verses 25 to 32 list a variety

of sins which sadden the Spirit of God living within us. Anything that is ungodly is distasteful to Him. We learn two important truths from this passage:

1. The third member of the Godhead is a real person who has genuine feelings and emotions. He loves us and grieves over our failures.

2. Our sinful conduct can bring heaviness and sadness to the heart of God the Spirit. He is the *Holy Spirit* who grieves in the presence of sin. By our sin, we actually negatively affect the very heart of God.

Before the cross, our sin brought the Son of God from the realms of eternal glory to earth as the "*man of sorrows...acquainted with grief.*" He won the victory by suffering the penalty of sin at Calvary. He has imparted to us the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to have victory over sin. When we yield to sin instead of submitting to the Spirit's work within us to resist sin, the Holy Spirit becomes the Spirit of sorrow, acquainted with grief.

The Holy Spirit is the seal or security of the saving work of God in each believer. His presence within us marks us out as children of God. This sealing work of the Spirit continues unto the day of redemption. He indwells us until we are eternally removed from the very presence of sin. This was not true of the Old Testament saints. In past dispensations, God's Spirit came upon men temporarily for a variety of purposes according to God's will. He was not a permanent resident. In the dispensation of grace, the Holy Spirit cannot leave the human temple of the believer. This then becomes the setting for His grief.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the



GRIEVING AND QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT *continued*

name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2:19)

The Holy Spirit longs to dwell in a morally clean temple. He is holy. He is God. His work within us is to bring us more and more into the image and likeness of Christ. He has the power to do it. Sin in the life of the believer hinders this process. This is a grief to Him. Under Old Testament conditions, the Holy Spirit could leave a defiled human temple. However, within the New Testament believer, He is permanently assigned to stay within us, no matter how distasteful the human temple may become to Him. No wonder He can be grieved, consigned to live in a dirty house. And there He remains sadden, heavy with sorrow, grieving until sin is confessed and the energy of His power is appropriated for future victory over sin. The process of being conformed to the image of Christ can then be resumed.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18)

Quenching the Spirit

When a believer consistently disregards sin in his life and fails to yield to the Holy Spirit's power within, the grieving leads to a quenching. As you may have sensed, this is a far more serious matter for the child of God. As already identified, the word quench means to extinguish or put out. We have already established by Scriptures that the Holy Spirit will not be put out of the life of the believer. Take note of a few more passages that confirm this truth.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. 8:9-10)


"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Eph. 1:13-14)

The convicting, prompting, and admonishing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer can be resisted, hindered, stifled, and even quenched. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the word quench is used in relation to fire. It is the process of snuffing out the flame. The illuminating light of a candle is quenched as the wick is pinched. The candle is still there, but it has ceased to give any illumination. Quenching the work of the Holy Spirit would deprive us of His ministry.

Notice the strong negative not coupled with the word quench. It is in the present continuous tense. The phrase could be more accurately translated, "stop continually stifling the Spirit" or "desist from attempting to extinguish the fire." Whether the Holy Spirit's power and voice could be completely extinguished or silenced is uncertain. Scripture seems to leave open the possibility. It commands the believer to stop the process before the Holy Spirit's work in our life is extinguished or rendered nonfunctional. If and when that could occur is known only to God.

A positive reversal of this process is called for in 2 Timothy 1:6. Paul challenges Timothy to "stir up" or "rekindle" the gift of God within him. It literally means "fan the embers to a flame."

Instead of allowing sin to stifle the working of the Holy Spirit within us, we should be making every spark of spiritual activity and zeal into a flaming fire for the Lord. We can only do this by yielding to the voice and power of the Holy Spirit who enables us to resist temptation and flee from the sin which so easily sets us back.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1) 



Paul challenges Timothy to "stir up" or "rekindle" the gift of God within him.

The Sword of the Spirit

“There is none like that; give it me.”

“The devil knows what we hold in our hands, but do we?”

Some people like knives; others like guns; others like bows and arrows. I have a favorite weapon that is extremely effective at close and long range, day or night, in all weather. It can get through any metal detector or x-ray machine. I know! I have taken it with me on all kinds of public transportation. And what will you think of me when I tell you that I keep this weapon in plain sight and within reach of all my children and grandchildren, and even let them handle it?

Let me tell you about it. My all-time favorite weapon is the Bible, the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). It is listed as a vital part of the Christian's armor, and we should note that it is the only offensive weapon he is given. Like it or not, we are in a spiritual war with powerful, astute, and veteran enemies arrayed against us in

relentless conflict. Scripture exhorts us to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). To go forth without armor or weapon is not faith but insanity.

A unique weapon

And what a unique, impressive, and effective weapon it is! In 1 Samuel 21:9, when David sought a weapon as he fled from Saul, the priest told him the only weapon available was “the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou

slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod.” David replied, “There is none like that; give it me.” Now Goliath's sword was unique, but it doesn't even begin to compare to the Bible! Hebrews 4:12 gives the specifications of this weapon: “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

It's alive, and powerful; it's the sharpest weapon in existence. A surgeon's scalpel is dull in comparison. This sword doesn't draw blood, but it does get into the soul and spirit of a person. It does inside work! Sometimes I hear people say, “You can't know what's in another person's heart.” My reply is, “I have something that penetrates and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.” God knows all about what is in the human heart, and has written a book about it!

A powerful weapon

That's why the devil hates the Scriptures and tries to distract and discourage Christians from using them. He knows the damage that the sword of the Spirit can do. He knows that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). The devil knows what we hold in our hands, but do we? The Bible can expose sin and bring about conviction. It can reprove and rebuke. It can pronounce judgment. It can illuminate the darkness, break the chains of spiritual bondage, and bring a person into the light of salvation. It is a key instrument in the new birth (1 Pet. 1:23).

The story is told of a Buddhist monk who sat on the ground to rest and picked up a



THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT *continued*

scrap of paper near him. It had been torn from a New Testament. There were only a few words on that little scrap of paper: “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*” The sword went to work and pierced his conscience. He said, “If that is true, then I will never see God, for my heart is not pure.” And that led to a search for the book from which that scrap had come, which led to the gospel and salvation. Such is the power of the sword of the Spirit. God blesses and uses His Word, not our clever arguments or tear-jerker stories. Preach the Word!

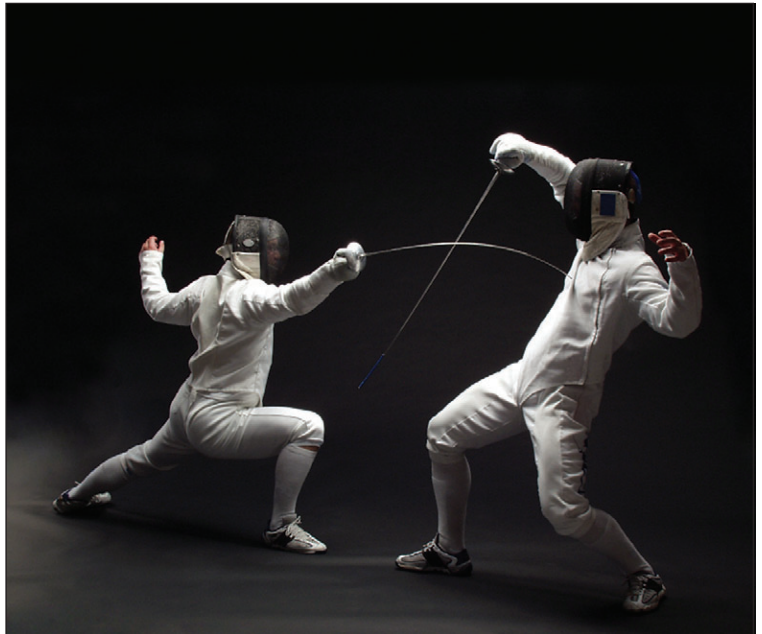
That’s why when Spurgeon was asked to participate in a debate on the validity of the Bible, he said he would come but not present any defense of the Bible. He would preach the gospel. He said, “The Bible is a lion. You don’t defend a lion, you turn it loose!” It’s the same with the sword. A sword doesn’t need to be defended, but used. If the other person says he doesn’t believe in your sword of the Spirit, don’t put it down. That’s what the devil wants you to do. Quote the Scriptures; read them; cite them; obey them. Let your adversary feel the point of the sword. He won’t like it, but he will certainly know it’s real!

Sword training

Now here’s the catch. We need to train if we desire to wield the sword properly. In order for us to effectively use the sword of the Spirit, we need to be guided by the Spirit and be spiritually-minded, not worldly-minded. We need to be familiar with our weapon and with its intended use. How can we as Christians be effective in using the Scriptures if we spend more time surfing the internet, sending text messages, watching TV and movies, and listening to the Top 40 than we spend in the Bible? If our home, study, and business responsibilities consume our lives, and we spend mere minutes in the Bible on a weekly basis, then how can we hope to skillfully use the great sword of the Spirit?

When temptation or trouble arises, or an opportunity to witness presents itself, if we haven’t been practicing with the sword, we aren’t going to know what to do with it. It never ceases

to amaze me that people can be in churches for years—even decades—and never read through the Bible even once. The remedy for that dangerous deficiency is to start reading right now and to do so every day until you finish the whole book. That’s basic orientation, step one. Continue your “weapon training” with Bible study (2 Tim. 2:15), Bible meditation (Ps. 1:2), and Bible memorization (Ps. 119:9, 11). When in meetings and Bible studies, pay attention and take notes. Taking notes is a proven aid to study and memory. Get to know the sword of the Spirit, and become adept at using it. There is none like it.



Spurgeon wrote, “You know the old proverb ‘Beware the man of one book.’ He is a terrible antagonist. A man who has the Bible at his fingers’ ends and in his heart’s core, is a champion in our Israel; you cannot compete with him: you may have an armory of weapons, but his Scriptural knowledge will overcome you, for it is a sword like that of Goliath, of which David said, ‘There is none like it.’”¹ 📖

Endnote

1 Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures To My Students* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), p. 180.

Now here’s the catch. We need to train if we desire to wield the sword properly.

The Filling of the Spirit

God is not our “co-pilot”

Being Spirit-filled: Not just what we do, but how we think and live.

We read in Ephesians 5:18, “*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.*” What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? It means to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

God wants us to enjoy our relationship with Him. When the Lord Jesus was going back to the Father, He promised not to leave us as orphans, but to send One like Him, the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16; 16:7), to come alongside us as our Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1), to guide us into all truth (Jn. 14:17; 16:13), and to teach us all things (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Since this Helper knows what is best for us, we should yield to His control. We are to neither grieve Him nor quench Him, but to be filled with Him!

Romans 8 is one of the most Spirit-centered chapters in the Bible. It begins with no condemnation, ends with no separation, and, in between, teaches us that we are under no obligation to live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. He is the third person of the godhead, and no one is closer to us than He. God the Father is for us; God the Son is with us; and God the Spirit is in us. This chapter teaches us seven aspects in which the Holy Spirit guides us along in our lives.

Seven spiritual steps

We begin by walking in the Spirit. The principle in Romans 8:1-4 clearly teaches us that “*what the Law could not do...God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the*

flesh but according to the Spirit.” Walking in the Spirit is the evidence of being Spirit-filled. It is like taking the high road over self and sin and is the only way that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

Secondly, the wonderful truth of being Spirit-filled is more than a pastime: it is a way of life. It is not just what we do on certain days or around certain people, but how we think and how we live. Romans 8:5-8 declares that the mind set on the flesh is death and the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. We are talking about a matter of life and death. The Lord Jesus said that our new birth was carried out by the Spirit (Jn. 3:6, 8). Therefore, we are to live in the Spirit and not according to the flesh. We are alive, wonderfully walking and living in the Spirit.

Thirdly, being Spirit-filled is only possible for believers, because they alone have been indwelt by the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9-11 states that everyone who has received Christ as their Saviour has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This began on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us (Jn. 14:17). He is the earnest of our inheritance and has sealed us for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). He dwells in us and will never leave us nor forsake us. He is our surety and security. We cannot have more of the Spirit of God than what we have been given. If a believer desires to be Spirit-filled, he must ask himself, “Does the Spirit have all of me?”

Fourth, it stands to reason that with such a blessed person dwelling in us, we should let Him lead. The Spirit-filled believer is led by the Spirit. God is not our co-pilot. Hand over the controls to Him! This is how Romans 8:12-14 identifies believers: “*As many as are led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God.*” We

Hand over the controls to Him!



THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT *continued*



are debtors, but not to the flesh to live according to the flesh. We are no longer under any obligation to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We are free. Not free to sin, but free to serve the One who has broken sin's dominion over us. We follow Him and are led on into victory.

Fifthly, being born of the Spirit, we have been brought into the family of God. Romans 8:15-17 tells us of the family privileges into which we have been brought. These family privileges are made manifest in three areas: caring, bearing, and sharing. By the Spirit of God we cry, "Abba, Father." *Abba* is the Greek word for father, but there is a shorter version. It is simply *Ab*, and it is the first word in the Hebrew dictionary. Who is the first person you go to for help? As sons of God, we go to our heavenly Father who cares for us.

The Spirit also bears witness that we are the children of God. To bear witness is not just a feeling but agreement with the Word of God. I'm saved by what Christ did on the cross; I'm sure by what God wrote in His Word. To this Word, the Spirit bears witness saying, "It is true, you are a child of God!"

Our family privileges also include sharing. If we are children by birth and sons by adoption, then we are heirs by right. God has declared that we are His heirs and joint heirs with Christ. He will share all things with us, all because we are born of the Spirit into God's wonderful family. The hymn writer, John W. Peterson, wrote:

*Born of the Spirit with life from above
Into God's family divine;
Justified fully through Calvary's love,
O what a standing is mine!*

Sixth, we hope in the Spirit. Romans 8:18-25 describes a yearning in the Spirit-filled believer that

is true hope—a definite expectation of glory. At the present, the whole creation groans, longing to be set free from the futility into which it was subjected in hope by the Creator—hope that one day God will restore and renew this weary creation. We are assured in Romans 8:18, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Suffering in the present and then glory in the future is indeed the order. The Lord Jesus said, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

Not only the creation groans awaiting redemption, "but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." It is this hope in the Spirit that gives us the right perspective.

Lastly, praying in the Spirit. The things we have discussed are bigger than we are. How would we even know what to pray? For help, we turn in this great chapter to verses 26-27. The words, "*Likewise the Spirit*," tie the Spirit to the groaning of the creation and our groaning as He "*prays for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*." He helps our weaknesses for we do not know how to pray as we ought. How? First, God knows our hearts, and, second, He knows the mind of the Spirit. Therefore, He knows what to pray for us, even when we do not. Since it is the Spirit doing the praying and not us, how should Spirit-filled believers pray? We should pray in the Spirit, as Paul and Jude both exhort. John clarifies, writing that we should pray "*according to His will*" (1 Jn. 5:14).

Thank God for His Spirit who seals us and fills us. May we never get over the wonder of it all as we live in the fullness of His Spirit. 📖

FOR YOUR STUDY



OF THE SPIRIT

- The **power** of the Spirit (Lk. 4:14; Rom. 15:19) • The **law** of the Spirit of life in Christ (Rom. 8:2) • The **mind** of the Spirit (Rom. 8:27) • The **love** of the Spirit (Rom. 15:30) • The **things** of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5; 1 Cor. 2:14) • The **manifestation** of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7) • The **ministry** of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:8)
- The **promise** of the Spirit (Gal. 3:14) • The **fruit** of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) • The **unity** of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) • The **sword** of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17) • The **provision** of the Spirit (Php. 1:17)



Alistair Cotton

I would like to propose that our faith—and the ongoing need to exercise it—is greatly increased as we allow Scripture to lead us from flower back to foliage and stem, then right back to its root.

The Roots of Truth

The New Testament is rich with helpful ideas—if we know where to look.

A good gardener of biblical ideals is not only occupied with truth's flower but with the whole dynamic of growth from seed thought to full realization. We are often so attracted only by the colorful petals that reveal the mature teaching of a truth that we end up simply with a bouquet of cut flowers. Fragrant for a while, they do not last in our lives. We need to transplant the whole truth from tendrils to tip. Here's one example.

1. The flower of Christian grace towards God's people: The epistles are full of exhortations to show grace towards fellow believers. Perhaps it is assumed that we will naturally know *how* to show that grace in our daily interactions. It might be expected that we would know that spiritual relations are even closer than human relations, and that no Christian should need an invitation to my home, since my home is his. But these details are not elicited in the epistles, except perhaps in reverse when Paul warns the Corinthians not to show favoritism.

Four simple directives are given in the epistles: "*Given to hospitality*" (Rom 12:13); "*A bishop then must be...given to hospitality...*" (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7-8); "*Use hospitality one to another without grudging*" (1 Pet 4:9). But we must go back to the Acts to see this idea put into practice.

2. The connecting stalk of daily fellowship: It's always a danger that we read the epistles as they sound to our Western ears, or as they appeal to our hearts unconsciously conditioned by The American Dream. But a wise question to ask is: How would the original recipients have understood them? We know that by looking at the church in Acts. Hospitality was not practiced in a semi-annual *Better Homes and Gardens* style, with stiff formality and five-star service. The saints were in each others' houses every day and simply shared what they had in common, an expression of hospitality only found in the Acts, not included in the epistles.

3. The truth at its source in the heart of the Master: Our Lord was often seen at table with friends and strangers. He longed for that relaxed family spirit among His own: "*Rabbi, where are You staying? He said to them, Come and see*" (Jn 1:38-39). But He went even farther. "*When you give a dinner...do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind...because they cannot repay you...*" (Lk 14:12-14). It isn't that we refuse family and friends, but that we make sure we also include those without kitchens. This important fact regarding hospitality, that we should not be seeking reciprocation and should include those outside of our circle of friends and family, is only found in the ministry of Christ.

This is just one example of the importance of allowing the Savior's words and the practices of the early believers to enlarge our understanding of the epistles. If our list of "New Testament Church Truth" is compiled only from the epistles, it will be missing key practical components that illuminate the true intent of our Lord and helpful examples of the early saints. 🍷

INDWELLING LORD

“It is asserted many times in Scripture, that the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost. God dwelleth in you: you are the temples of God. Now, do not cut that down, and say that it means that He influences us and operates upon us. It does mean that, but it means a great deal more; it means literally this - that the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the sacred Trinity actually dwells in every regenerate man and woman, that He made our bodies to be His shrine, and He is the indwelling Lord.”

—C. H. SPURGEON

