

Stuart Gramenz



"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me..."
John 17:22-23NLT

The Spirit Led Life

THE SPIRIT LED LIFE

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TRANSLATIONS USED

There has been much discussion on which of the many Bible translations have most effectively interpreted God's truths. For the purpose of study, our preference is the original King James or New King James version. However all translations from the original Greek were done by men and therefore all can have strengths and weaknesses. When seeking the most appropriate translation, our evaluation is based on catching the Spirit of the writer.

Translations, other than the KJV can at times provide a greater insight into a truth and we have used these on such occasions.

To

Jesus Christ my Lord without whom I can do nothing of consequence but through whom I can do all things of worth.

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Certain sections of this book have been taken and adapted from our books, “Beyond Tradition”, “Where is Church?” and “Destined”

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Chapter 1

GOD'S ULTIMATE DESIRE

What is it that the Lord seeks of us more than anything else?

He places an incredibly high expectation on believers in many different areas;

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind” *Luke 10:27*

Yet how many of us feel we fall well short of this command?

We are instructed in the Bible;

“And above all things have fervent love for one another...” *Peter 4:8*

Nevertheless, how many of us have felt inadequate in our ability to love other believers fervently?

We are told;

“Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” *Gal. 5:16*

All the same, how many of us have been filled with guilt and discouraged when we have not been able to overcome a particular sin in our lives?

We are commanded;

And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. *Matt. 10:7-8*

Nonetheless, are there believers who have attempted to preach the gospel and believe for the miraculous but precious little has resulted?

Jesus tells us, ***“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”*** *John 14:14*

However, when circumstances of adversity come against many Christians, how many don't seem to get an answer to their prayers?

As a result, we have many disenchanted and frustrated believers who cannot understand why they do not receive these and many other promises of operating in His great love and power and holiness.

Why is this so? Why is it that so many sincere and dedicated believers are unable to appropriate the very things that God apparently wants us to have?

END OF THE END TIMES

The Bible tells us that we live in the end times, an era prior to the return of Jesus Christ. We are told regarding Jesus,

...He must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things as God promised long ago through his holy prophets. *Acts 3:21 NLT*

Most would agree that we are living at the end of the end times and as such there should be a greater expectation of the fulfillment of “*the final restoration of all things as God promised*”.

The early church exhibited an incredible level of love and power and as a result they were known as the ones who turned the world upside down. If they could do it, surely it must be possible for today’s believers to do the same ... at least.

In “*the final restoration of all things*” surely we can expect the truths in which the early church operated to be revealed and appropriated.

We believe that the Lord is about to restore the present day church with a new and greater level of understanding and revelation. This will release a wave of His influence not seen since the early disciples.

CHRIST-LIKE DISCIPLES?

What was it that the early church had?

First of all they saw Jesus as their role model and fully expected to do what He did.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ...”

John 14:12 NLT

... we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Eph. 4:13 NLT

These are incredible statements for many in today’s church to comprehend. The Lord is expecting *anyone who believes* in Him to come into the same level of maturity that Jesus exhibited.

Obviously, if we could reach His *full and complete standard*, then fervently loving others, overcoming sin and releasing the miraculous would be a possibility.

HOW DID JESUS DO IT?

Secondly, they knew how Jesus achieved it. If He expects us to imitate Him then surely it would only be reasonable to expect Him to reveal to us how this is achievable, otherwise His statement would be unfair. He does explain very clearly how He achieved His incredible results.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does ...”

John 5:19-20

“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

John 12:49-50 NIV

This was the secret of Jesus’ phenomenal success. Everything He said and did was done through an intimate relationship and personal guidance from God.

Why did he make these statements? Was He trying to make a big shot of Himself and show that He had some exclusive inside favor with the Father? No! He is our role model, teaching us the secret of His success ... so we could imitate Him.

However, not only does He expect you to do it, it's commanded, "*anyone who believes in Me will do the same works.*" This is not necessarily speaking of walking on water or feeding 5,000 with a few loaves and fish. God may not need or require you to specifically do those things.

It speaks of obedience. As we walk in obedience to the Lord's voice, we can love as Jesus did, with signs and wonders following.

ONE WAY

It should be rather obvious that, if we are expected and commanded to do His works, the only way to achieve this is the way He did it. This goes beyond our attempts "to try" to obey every Bible command or "to try" to have great faith.

The ability to hear from the Lord can only be achieved through personal and intimate relationship with Him. This obviously goes beyond simply obeying the Scriptures. It's hearing His voice. He repeatedly confirms this:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me...." **John 10:27**

"...the sheep follow him, for they know his voice...." **John 10:4**

He realizes, unless this is done, you will be left trying to achieve Christ-likeness in your own strength. As you learn to hear from Him you will grow from being a spiritual little child into a full-grown son or daughter.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **Rom. 8:14**

Because Jesus had the same mind, heart and goals as the Father, they became as one. He prayed that all believers could have exactly the same relationship and unity that He had with the Father:

"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me..." **John 17:22-23NLT**

He has given us the glory of the Holy Spirit and expects, believes and prays for you to come into this deeper level of relationship. We believe that this is His ultimate desire for you. Only out of this relationship and *such perfect unity* can you expect to fulfill all of His other great expectations.

HOW?

How are we expected to achieve this and overcome any doubts or unbelief?

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Eph. 4:11-13 NLT

Church leaders are to be role models of this lifestyle and equip believers to imitate them. The apostle Paul had this intimate relationship with the Lord and had this expectation of his disciples;

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

1 Cor. 11:1

Like Paul, leaders are to model a Spirit led life in this and sow the expectation of:

- Coming into full maturity
- Doing the works that Jesus did
- The sheep knowing and hearing His voice

If they sow and water ... then God can give an increase. If they don't, can there be a realistic expectation of God's vision for the saints being fulfilled? Can some in today's church be compared to the home-town crowd of Jesus?

And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. ***Matt. 13:58***

A FAITH-PRODUCING WORD

Even though they want to believe the Scriptures, many Christians still have difficulty believing that the Lord would want to have personal conversations with them. They know that God spoke to the spiritual heavyweights - Peter, Paul and the other disciples – and that He does speak to their present spiritual leaders. However, they have difficulty in breaking with that tradition of exclusivity to realize that God wants to talk to them personally.

A great example to increase our faith (confidence) would be that of Ananias. After Saul (later named Paul) had been blinded and converted, the Lord wanted to restore his sight and to fill him with the Holy Spirit. Surely He would need a great apostle for such an important mission. But no, He chooses Ananias, a new believer and someone not in "full-time" ministry. The Lord has the following incredible conversation with him.

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 9:10-17, NIV

As a result of this conversation, Ananias had the faith to go to Paul, pray for a miracle and empower Paul to do great things! The good news is that God still desires to have conversations like this with His sons and daughters today.

NOT FOR EVERYONE?

Again, because of our traditions, which expect very little from believers, there are some who would regard Ananias' experience skeptically as an abnormal situation. It would be prudent to compare this evaluation with other Scriptures to ensure that we are not putting a false expectancy in people's hearts. Jesus has already told us that every believer will do the works that He did, and greater things. He received every instruction from His Father. If we are going to do what He did, that means every believer will need to hear directly from the Lord as well. As we have already read, the sheep hear and know His voice.

It didn't say some sheep!

THE HEAD AND THE BODY

Do we really want to make Jesus the Head of the church?

...Christ is the head of the church;...we are members of His body. Eph. 5:23, 30

If so how do we do this?

For a hand to function correctly in a natural body, it has to receive a message directly from the brain. Jesus is "the Brains" of His spiritual Body and we are His hands, feet, and so forth.

If God wanted to use you as "a hand" for Him, how would you most effectively operate? You could read books on what a hand is supposed to do. You could listen to CD's on how a hand functions. You could be trained by teachers and hear testimonies of what other hands have done. All those things would be helpful. But in the end, if you are to be an effective hand, you need to hear directly from "the Brain."

Every believer has the potential to hear directly from, and be led by, the Head. If this were achieved, the Body would be incredibly effective and many of our present problems would be resolved.

Using the head and body parable, some may argue that a hand doesn't operate independently. It's connected to a wrist, an arm, and a shoulder, all of which work together to achieve a goal. Any parable has its limitations. If you go beyond the specific truth it is attempting to convey, you can end up missing the main point.

In a natural body, even if body parts are connected, each still receives its orders from the brain. Each part doesn't move under its own power.

As a "hand" of the Lord, Ananias received direct instructions from the Head, and this enabled him to help another member of the Body – Paul.

Likewise, each individual part of the Lord's spiritual Body – although interconnected (the hands, wrists and arms, etc.) – still needs to be directed by the Head. Only then, will we see the ultimate in coordinated movement.

There are some tasks that will be completed by working as a team and other times working as an individual, just as Ananias did.

The main point we are making is that, if we desire to function like Ananias, each one of us needs to become as one with Him and receive direction and encouragement individually.

THE MOSES' COMPLEX

In the past, many Christians have done the same as Israel did; they couldn't believe God would want to actually talk to them Himself. They preferred Moses to go up and relay the message to them.

We have many today who rely on hearing from God through their leaders. Many saints are unaware of the possibility of this personal relationship, feel too guilty to talk to God, or are still thinking traditionally that this is the leader's job.

Many church leaders have difficulty believing that each believer has the potential to do the works Jesus did. Therefore they don't expect any great things from them. They then feel that they, like Moses, have to direct everyone.

A leaders' job description is to equip every believer so that they can hear from the Head Himself and then to assist, where needed, in maintaining that relationship and communication.

Jesus, the ultimate equipper, trained His disciples personally for a time and then left them to be led by the Holy Spirit. He told them;

"It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you..." **John 16:7**

It was to their advantage not to have a person endlessly telling them what to do but rather to become led from within. We need instructors and equippers for a period but there does come a time when they must decrease so that the leading of the Spirit can increase and our dependence is then on God, rather than man. We need to be weaned from the basic teachings of the word and be hearing from the Lord and developing into sons who are into the meat of doing His will.

A PAIN IN THE NECK?

Equippers and leaders are not the Head.

They, like every believer, are members of His body. If so, what part do they play? Tradition has many operating as the neck. Many position themselves between the Head and the Body of believers. If they take on the job of directing members, they are attempting to do the work of the Holy Spirit and simply become a pain in the neck. This problem can occur in both traditional congregational gatherings, as well as in home churches.

If we truly desire Jesus to be truly Head of the church, it can only occur one way ... the same way a natural head and body operate.

Each individual part of His Body must be able to hear directly from Him (the Brain) and be obedient to what He says.

SEED FAITH

How does doing the works of Jesus actually operate?

The word of the Lord has been likened to a seed. In response to His disciples' unbelief, Jesus said:

"...for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you...." **Matt.17:20**

A mustard seed is an extremely small seed. Jesus was illustrating for us that even the smallest seed can achieve mountain-moving possibilities!

In Ananias' case the Scripture says, "*the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go!'*" The word "Go!" came directly from the Lord. Faith came by hearing that (rhema) word. That seed word empowered him to overcome a problem that, in his mind, was mountainous.

Similarly, the apostle Peter received a seed word from the Lord and this gave Him the faith to walk on water. Jesus simply said "*Come!*" Matt. 14:29. Without that seed word, that miraculous step of faith would have been impossible. Peter realized He had to have that seed word before attempting it.

"Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." ***Matt. 14:28***

Why didn't he just attempt to walk to Jesus on his own volition? He was aware that attempting something like this without that personal instruction was mere presumption.

THAT SINKING FEELING

Peter's walk on water ended dramatically when he took His eyes off Jesus and looked around at the wind and the waves. The Lord is restoring the church to a place where each believer can hear and receive seed faith directly from Him. To avoid having that same sinking feeling let us;

...fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.... ***Heb. 12:2***
NIV

The New Living Translation makes that last phrase even more explicit:

....on whom our faith depends from start to finish.... ***Heb. 12:2 NLT***

We can't make a seed. He starts or ignites our faith by giving it to us.

When negative or impossible circumstances surround us, He wants us to look to Him for those seed words. The Lord does not want us to try to "have faith" in our own strength.:

"...My yoke is easy and My burden is light." ***Matt. 11:30***

Once we receive His seed words, we don't need to "try" to get more faith. Another word for *faith* is *trust*. Still another is *confidence*. Once we receive His word, an inner trust or confidence empowers us to do His perfect will.

Obviously we can receive our foundational faith for many things by reading the Bible. These include our salvation and forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice. In a general sense, we can believe for God's provision and promises. Many times that seed word can come based on a particular Scripture. Therefore that word can be as simple as "Forgive your friend!" "Give money to that needy person!" or "Work harder for your boss!"

While you know that you should do things such as these in a general sense, when it is a seed word from the Lord, faith and the ability to achieve it accompanies it.

THE MISSING LINK

However, perhaps we can now see why many sincere Christians have believed the Scriptures and were told they could achieve great faith simply by confessing the Word of God repeatedly ... only to end up frustrated.

Many have used this Scripture as a foundation for their expectation.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Rom. 10:17

What's been missing? Ananias didn't minister to Saul simply because it was part of the great commission to heal the sick. He had a personal and specific word from the Lord. He was terrified of Saul. It would be a similar situation today if the Lord told you to preach the gospel to Osama Bin Ladin. How would you feel? Nevertheless, Ananias' received faith to overcome that fear by hearing a personal seed word. As a result, the great apostle was healed, empowered and released into ministry!

God gave us the example of Ananias so we could see that all Christians have the potential to hear from Him, and so be empowered to do the works of Jesus, and greater things.

Perhaps now we can understand why it is, for the most part, that we have been given a general commission to preach the gospel, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, many believers have not been very successful. We gain a general faith by reading the promises of God. However, we get specific seed faith through His personal direction and revelation.

When we see an unsaved person or a person in need, that word can be a simple "Go!"

IDEALISTIC OR UNREALISTIC?

Hearing directly from the Lord is not something new or "the latest thing". Throughout church history we have had so many pioneer saints who have developed this intimate relationship.

"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that I could sail from here to the Indies".
Christopher Columbus

"There is not in this life a thing more delightful than that of a continual conversation with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it."
Brother Lawrence

"Being in prayer, I saw, or rather (for I saw nothing, either with my eyes of the body or with those of the soul) I felt my Savior near me and I saw it was he who spoke to me".
Mother Teresa

"In the Garden" is a gospel song written by C. Austin Miles and published in 1912.

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses . . .
And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other, has ever, known!

However, in comparison to the number of believers, there have only been a relative few that have appropriated this level of relationship. We believe at end of these end times we are going to see an unprecedented number of believers who will enter into this as a lifestyle.

SUMMARY Chapter 1

1. What is it that the Lord seeks of us more than anything else? He places a high expectation on believers in different areas;
 - Loving Him and others fervently.
 - Having miracles operate through us and overcoming sin etc etc.
2. He tells us this is achievable, *“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ...” John 14:12 NLT*
3. It would only be reasonable to expect Him to reveal to us how this is achievable. He explains very clearly how He achieved His incredible results. *“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.”*
4. He prayed that all believers could have exactly the same relationship and unity that He had with the Father. *“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity.” John 17:22-23NLT* This is His ultimate desire.
5. The Lord spoke personally to Ananias to minister healing to Paul. He is a new believer and not someone in “full-time” ministry. He is an example to every believer.
6. For a hand to function correctly in a natural body, it has to receive a message directly from the brain. Jesus is “the Brains” of His spiritual Body and we are His hands, feet, and so forth. If you are to be an effective hand, you need to hear directly from “the Brain.”
7. The word of the Lord has been likened to a seed. In response to His disciples’ unbelief, Jesus said: *“...for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you....” Matt.17:20*
8. For Ananias to overcome his fear, that seed (rhema) word was *“Go!”*
What enabled Peter to walk on water? The seed word, *“Come!”*
9. Peter realized He had to have that seed word before attempting it. *“Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”* Why didn’t he just attempt to walk to Jesus on his own volition? He was aware that attempting something like this without that personal instruction was mere presumption.
10. God gave us the example of Ananias so we could see that all Christians have the potential to hear from Him, and so be empowered to do the works of Jesus, and greater things.
11. We gain a general faith by reading the promises of God. However, we get specific seed faith through His personal direction and revelation.

Chapter 2

LEADING A SPIRIT LED LIFE

While being tested in the desert for forty years, the Lord miraculously provided Israel with a special bread called “manna”.

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Deut. 8:2-3

Traditionally, many have limited “every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.” It referred exclusively to every word in our Bibles. This is simply not the case.

The word *proceeds* is written *proceedeth* in the King James Version of the Bible. This indicates continuous present tense, and conveys the original meaning that the word proceeds and continues to proceed from the mouth of God.

OLD TESTAMENT WORDS

The Old Testament is a record of God speaking proceeding words to mankind which they either chose to obey or ignore. Some of these were basic teachings for everyone such as the Ten Commandments. Let’s call them, the general instruction.

On the other hand, some received personal directions from the Lord. Those who were obedient to these personal proceeding words became spiritual giants.

“By faith, Noah being divinely warned of things not yet seen...prepared an ark”

Hebrews 11:7

How did he get the faith for that? The instructions weren’t in the Bible; at the time there was none! How did he get the measurements?”

So God said to Noah ... “Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Leave an 18-inch opening below the roof all the way around the boat.

Gen.6:13-15NLT

It was a personal instruction!

Moses led God’s people out of Egypt by receiving personally directed words along the way. The Lord told him exactly what to say to Pharaoh, and showed him how to part the Red Sea. Moses spoke to and heard personally from the Lord.

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. ***Ex. 33:11***

Joshua received precise instructions that led to the walls of Jericho falling down.

And the Lord said to Joshua: You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. ***Josh. 6:2-4***

GENERAL & PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Old Testament is bursting at the seams with stories of those who received these personal proceeding or seed words.

The Bible, therefore, has become a collection of the general commands of God and the specific words to individuals. Therefore, the underlying success principle for these heroes was;

- they were obedient to the initial basic written commands or will of God ... and
- they also obeyed the personal proceeding seed word.

Let's see how God revealed to Joshua the secret of the key to success:

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua...

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
Josh. 1:1, 8

This Scripture is often quoted today with the inference that, by simply acquiring total Bible knowledge, success and prosperity are assured. We must realize that the only Scriptures that were written and available to Joshua at that time were the first five books of the Bible ... Genesis to Deuteronomy.

Therefore, the secret to success lay in these relatively few Scriptures. What was it that he would have been meditating on or chewing over? Obviously, first of all he would have realized that it was essential to be obedient to God's general commandments. Secondly, he would have seen that God spoke to the likes of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Moses and that they received personal instructions.

Please also note that Joshua didn't read this instruction. It was also a personal word from God.

Therefore, the pattern of obeying both God's basic commands and His personal proceeding words they received, is the foundation of all the Old Testament heroes.

NEW TESTAMENT WORDS

In the Old Testament there are relatively few times recorded when God gave personal instructions to his people. However, this all changed in the New Testament with our role model Jesus. Every word He spoke came directly from His Father. *“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.”*

We are certainly not advocating that you neglect the rich truths of the Scriptures. The pattern of obeying both God's basic commands and His personal proceeding words is also the foundation of all the New Testament heroes.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

The Holy Spirit will help you remember what Jesus said. Obviously, to achieve that recall you will need to have learnt what He said in the first place.

Jesus knew the Old Testament and would often quote from it. However, He was not limited to the words of the Old; He received new words and instructions from His Father.

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies!" *Matt. 5:43-45*

While hungry in the desert, Jesus was tested by Satan. He overcame him by quoting the same Scripture which we previously quoted in Deuteronomy 8.

"It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" *Luke 4:4*

The children of Israel did not get their manna or bread in one great supply. Instead it was given every morning and if it was not picked up, it was unfit for consumption by the next day. Ex.16:20-22.

The Lord was revealing that His words are like that. He wants to give us fresh words each day, words that will give us life.

The bread (manna) was unheard of previously, totally new; *"which you did not know nor did your fathers know..."*

Jesus is our model; and He began receiving His manna, his fresh bread, each morning.

The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. *Isa.50:4*

God wants today's believers to continue to be obedient to the general commands of the Bible and also maintain our confidence and trust in our foundational faith truths. However, He also desires to give us His fresh "manna" words.

Just as we need fresh daily natural food, we need fresh daily words from the Spirit to lead, inspire and empower our spiritual lives. The Lord will bring life giving words every day which are to be used for that day and not for the next. If we are not picking these up, our lives can become humdrum and lifeless.

Jesus confronted people with this same problem. They knew their Bible back to front but were lacking hearing proceeding words.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. *John 5:39-40*

We have some people today who are relying totally on general Bible knowledge instead of His daily revelation to completely satisfy them. However, if they are simply storing away the same old bread day after day, week after week, year after year, even those words have the propensity to become stale and moldy. Coming to Jesus and receiving His fresh words daily is the only way of getting true life and breaking the old mould.

TODAY'S FAMINE

There is a prophecy in the Old Testament that warns us of a famine:

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." *Amos 8:11*

Because of our great Bible knowledge, we may think that this could not possibly apply to today's church. The Bible is the best selling book in the world. We have an incredible amount of printed material now being made available.

However, it doesn't say there is a scarcity of the Bible or reading His **word**. It says the area of starvation is one of hearing the personal "*words of the Lord*"! With many well-taught believers, there is a hunger in this area; they realize something is missing.

DAILY BREAD

Jesus explained that His words are the bread for New Testament believers.

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ...the words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." *John 6:35,63*

Let's eradicate the famine by hungering after a relationship and oneness with the Lord through hearing and obeying His words.

The disciples realized the importance of this kind of sustenance and they requested:
"Lord, give us this bread always." *John 6:34*

We believe Jesus gave them (and us) the answer to continually receiving His bread (His words) in what many call "the Lord's prayer". He instructs us to pray;
"Give us this day our daily bread." *Matt. 6:11*

Traditionally, when we pray this, many limit their expectations to natural bread (food). We have no problems with that! However, after telling us to pray for this daily bread, He immediately says;

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" *Matt. 6:25*

He tells us we are not to concern ourselves with the provision of food. In His mind it's a done deal, part of His covenant.

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? *Matt. 6:26*

If this is so, when He tells us to pray, “*Give us this day our daily bread*”, why not let it also be a reminder to believe for His spiritual bread, His life giving words to sustain us.

Why don't we also use the bread in our communion meal to help jog our memories as well and expect to hear from Him? *He who comes to Me shall never hunger.* Further teaching on this is available in our book or CD, “*Communion – Event or Lifestyle?*”

TOUGH TIMES

The Lord took Israel out into the desert as part of their journey to learn to totally depend on Him. We are told;

“These things happened to them as examples...and warnings for us...” 1 Cor. 10:11

Many dedicated and sincere believers are finding themselves in tough situations financially, physically or emotionally and are wondering why. Many are in a dry desert situation as part of their journey as the Lord leads them to their Promised Land.

What is their Promised Land? It is the fullness of peace and joy through becoming one with Him and being led by the Spirit just as Jesus was. To achieve this, a desert period in their lives is needed to take them up to their next level of greatness.

What did God do with Israel? “*So He humbled you....*” This doesn't mean to crush you, but to show you that you have need of Him. God also “*...allowed you to hunger....*” Many believers who know their Bibles are now hungry for more than knowledge; they will only truly be satisfied with fresh, daily proceeding words from God.

For those who are seeking more, the desert you are possibly now in is an opportunity to get closer to Him. In fact if you have been praying for the next level of growth, the desert is a vital part of that process and is an answer to your prayers.

Learn to receive those daily words and you will inevitably advance into new territory.

JOURNALING – A GREAT START!

Many Christians have been learning to hear from the Lord during their “quiet time” with Him by writing down the things the Lord says to them. This is an ideal way to learn to discern the voice of the Lord. However, the Lord wants us to hear from Him not just in our quiet times. He can speak to us as we go through the day and guide us spontaneously, just as He did with Jesus. Therefore, we would encourage those who sit and journal to take a further step of faith and believe for moment by moment spontaneous words.

Remember; ***In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.***

DAILY WORDS

Obviously, we can receive life and revelation as we read the wisdom of His past spoken words recorded in the Word. However, the exact answer to your situation may not be spelt out.

In a simple example, you may need to correct your child for misbehaving. On one hand you can read that if you spare the rod you can spoil the child. However, on the other hand, you are also instructed that we are to extend grace and forgive as Christ forgave us.

What do we do in this case?

The fresh word may be that on this occasion you forgive the child, and show grace. Nevertheless, when it reoccurs the next day you may have a fresh word which says a form of punishment is required.

This is just one example. However, every day we have so many instances where a general command doesn't quite give us the exact answer we require for our daily challenges.

"Sons" need to seek fresh daily words from the Lord to overcome the guesswork.

SUPER-SPIRITUALS?

Nevertheless, to maintain balance, I personally seek God's will in liaison with the Bible. If you look to the Spirit without the backing of the Word, you open yourself to delusion. This brings us to our next point.

A final warning; we must be on guard not to become what we term "super-spirituals".

There are those who claim to hear from the Lord and what they are saying may in fact line up with Bible commands.

These are the ones who are looking to hear the voice of the Lord and attempt to confine themselves to doing only what they consider to be "great things" for the Lord.

For instance, they may "hear" they have an all important ministry as a foreign missionary or T.V. ministry and are simply waiting on God for the doors to open.

In reality the theory of the Spirit led life is simple ... but it's not easy. The only way you can lead a total walk in the Spirit is to completely die to selfishness and independence (pride).

"... whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve ..."
Matt. 20:26-28

Those who desire to be great Jesus imitators are called to be servants and slaves. Therefore, as slaves, we will be following the general instruction of unconditional love by doing many "menial" everyday tasks. Preparing meals, getting someone a cup of coffee or cleaning the family toilet are just as much a part of the Spirit led life as healing the sick or prophesying.

Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.
Rom. 12:16

Once you start to renew your mind daily and you begin to die to selfishness, you will carry out impulsive acts of love. As you see a need, there will be an uninhibited response. Why? You are being a love slave to the needs of others.

For the love of Christ compels us ...
2Cor. 5:14

It is rather obvious that the majority of your time walking in the Spirit will operate through "normal" daily tasks.

In reality as we renew our minds, the vast majority of what we do and say will spontaneously come from that inner compulsion ... an urge that something is to be done.

However, as we seek Him in all our ways, when a need arises, we will receive made-to-measure instructions.

The Spirit Led Life

This doesn't necessarily mean you will always have a lengthy conversation. If you have your mind fixed on the needs of others, you will receive those simple confirming inner impulsive words, "Go!", "Come on!" or "Just do it!"

Seek Words for Others

Some of His words will be encouragement for you but the majority will be for the needs of others.

"And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh;" ***Jer. 45:5***

Ensure that your initial motive is to receive words for others. God will then give you the comfort and stimulation that you need personally... at the appropriate time.

THE SPIRIT-LED LIFE "MOVE"

Many times, as God restores His church, we hear about "the latest move". Each one of these brings with it certain truths. However, the "movements" seem to be here one minute and gone the next.

Over the past decades we've had, to name but a few, the charismatic, healing, spiritual warfare, home church movements. All of these have been simply steps along the way to God's ultimate move.

... for in Him we live and move and have our being... ***Acts 17:28***

This move "in Him" may end up being given many different names, but it will be based on these Scriptures;

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ***Rom. 8:14***

"... that they may be one just as We are one:" ***John 17:22***

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ..." ***John 14:12 NLT***

Call it what you want, we simply refer to this move as ... the Spirit-led life.

A FINAL MOVE?

Is it just possible that this could be the ultimate restoration truth before Jesus comes?

First of all, just imagine if you and other believers could overcome our selfishness and independence by walking in the Spirit.

Secondly, just picture what would happen if we could be "one" with Him, be led by the Spirit and know "what to say and how to say it" on every occasion.

We would release the love and power just as Jesus did and fulfill His expectations of duplicating His works. Would that make an impact on our families, other Christians and, most importantly, unbelievers?

"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me." ***John 17:22-23***

Therefore it's quite easy to comprehend that becoming one and entering into the Spirit-led life of *perfect unity*, could quite conceivably be the final revelation to the church before the Lord returns. As a result, all the knowledge of the former restoration truths (including home churches) will combine with this revelation and produce a new breed of Christ-like believers who will once again turn the world upside down.

We believe that Jesus' prayer, "*they may be one as We are one,*" resulting in a Spirit-led life, is God's ultimate desire. The intimate relationship we build here and our ability to hear from Him will be the foundation for His final purpose of having us ruling and reigning with Him throughout eternity.

THE ABILITY IS THERE

I know there are some who are waiting and praying for the Lord to give us something more ... more power, more fruit of the Spirit. However, we are told we already have all we need. Please carefully meditate on the following verses:

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him...

Col. 2:8-10

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

Eph. 3:20 NLT

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him...

2 Peter 1:3 NIV

The "more" that is missing is more revelation of what we already have and how to access it through Him. This was Paul's prayer;

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Eph. 1:17-19 NIV

Are we saying that every believer is going to reach a level of total obedience where they respond 100% of the time, to the leading of the Spirit? Of course not! Although there is an idealistic potential, this would be unrealistic. In the parable of the sower and the seed, the seed, the Word of God, was always good. However, there were varying results, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty and in some cases ... they will simply fold. Matt. 13:18-23

The question is, "Are you open to improving your relationship with Him and moving towards His ultimate desire of the perfect unity of a Spirit led life?"

Spirit Filled to Spirit Led

In many cases, believers are like a car parked in neutral with the engine running. They are continually pushing down on the accelerator making all the right noises, but going nowhere. They have all the power they need, but don't know to put the car into gear.

Let's transform believers from simply being Spirit filled to being Spirit led.

The Spirit Led Life

They need to expect “*that you may know Him better*” and receive the revelation of “*His incomparably great power*”. Why not pray Paul’s prayer for yourself and others instead of simply crying out for an indefinable “something more” to happen.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. Eph. 1:17 NIV

THE THIRD REFORMATION?

Teacher and author Bill Beckham wrote a book called, “The Second Reformation” referring to the restoration of the truth of meeting in small groups. This has been proven to be an appropriate title because of the great move of the Spirit that has arisen throughout the world.

Nevertheless, we believe that the “Spirit-led life” move will be so powerful that it will take the church to an incredible new level of influence, supersede its effect and eventually become known as “The Third Reformation”.

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Heb. 4:7

SUMMARY Chapter 2

1. The Old Testament is a record of God speaking proceeding words to mankind which they (either) chose to obey or ignore. Some of these were basic teachings for everyone such as the Ten Commandments. Let's call them, the general instruction.
2. On the other hand, some received personal directions from the Lord. Those who were obedient to these personal proceeding words became spiritual giants.
3. Therefore, the underlying success principle for these heroes was;
 - that they were obedient to the initial basic written commands of God ... and;
 - they also obeyed the personal proceeding word.
4. The children of Israel received their manna or bread every morning, and if it was not picked up, it was unfit for consumption by the next day. The Lord's words are like that. He wants to give us fresh words each day, words that will give us life.
5. The bread (manna) was unheard of previously, totally new; "*which you did not know nor did your fathers know...*" Jesus, our model, began receiving His manna each morning.
6. There is presently a spiritual famine of the personal "**words of the Lord**". Even with many well taught believers, there is a hunger, they realize something is missing.
7. Jesus explained that His words are the bread for New Testament believers. *And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger..."*.
8. When He tells us to pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*", or have a communion meal, why not let it also be a reminder to believe for His spiritual bread, His words.
9. Preparing meals, getting someone a cup of coffee or cleaning the family toilet are just as much a part of the Spirit led life as healing the sick or prophesying.
Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Rom. 12:16
10. It is rather obvious that the majority of your time walking in the Spirit will operate through "normal" daily tasks. In reality, as we renew our minds, 90% plus of what you do and say will spontaneously come from that inner compulsion ... without hearing a specific voice. *For the love of Christ compels us ... 2 Cor. 5:14*
11. Some of His words will be encouragement for you but the majority will be for the needs of others. Ensure that your initial motive is to receive words for others. God will then give you the comfort and encouragement that you need personally.
12. There are some who are waiting and praying for the Lord to give us more power, more fruit of the Spirit. However, we are told we already have all we need. We need to acknowledge what we already have and learn how to access it.

Chapter 3

A MISSING FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

If imitating Jesus by listening to, and being led by, the Spirit is so important, why has this truth not been emphasized by the church? Although many of our previously mentioned Scriptures are regularly quoted, traditionally, some church leaders have not been able to conceive or believe the possibility of actually being transformed to this “*full and complete standard of Christ*” and “*perfect unity*” themselves, let alone their church members. However the Scriptures continually confirm the Lord’s expectation in this regard.

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1John 2:6

If leaders don’t live this life, how can it be taught with any reality or conviction?

We believe a major part of foundational truth of the gospel of the kingdom of God has not been totally understood. The following section is adapted from our book, “Destined”:

SOLVING THE MYSTERY

We are told to preach the gospel of the kingdom, but we find some Christians are unsure of what it totally encompasses. If I asked you to write down what you think the gospel of the kingdom is ... what would you say?

Many believe it simply means, “Receive Jesus, have your sins forgiven and you will go to heaven”. Whilst the statement contains truth, it falls far short of all the Good News the King has for us.

“Kingdom” is made up of two words, “king” & “domain”. It means the king’s domain or territory over which a king rules. In Biblical terms it refers to the areas over which the Lord has authority and sovereignty. We simply translate the Kingdom of God as “God’s Government”.

Let’s now look at some aspects of His rule or government.

First of all, many of us are already aware that, as we repent and voluntarily commit ourselves to obeying our King, we can inherit the many benefits that His government can provide. Our sins are forgiven, and there is the potential to be healed, spirit, soul and body. Luke 4:18-19. Secondly, we are also aware that, in the not too distant future, He is returning to the earth, only this time He will have total authority over the entire planet.

“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”
Rev. 11:15

In the Lord's prayer we pray, “Thy kingdom come.”

The Mystery

Nevertheless, we have one vital aspect of the kingdom which is not totally understood in many believers’ lives. It’s described as mysterious.

***“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.”
Mark 4:11***

It is relatively easy to understand that “God’s Government” provides benefits to us, spirit, soul and body and that He will have a future reign, so what’s the mystery?

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’...”

For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20-21

Thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom, this statement is mystifying. You can’t see it! It’s not visible! However, how can it be in us? Part of the mystery is relatively easy to explain to most believers, as they’re already aware of the answer; it’s Christ living in us.

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col. 1:27

LED FROM WITHIN

However, we have also just read “the kingdom” means “God’s Government”. Therefore we are told that “God’s Government” is *within you*. This has far greater implications than just the simplistic statement of “having Jesus living in our hearts”. **It’s the potential of having the Lord personally lead us and guide us from within.** This new form of government is an **internal, not an external rule.**

Obviously this internal, not an external rule, is mystifying to the non-believers. Unfortunately, it also remains a mystery to many believers because the majority of modern day versions mistranslate the original Greek word “entos”, which literally means “within” or “inside”. They interpret Luke 17:21 as “*the kingdom of God is ‘among you’ or ‘in your midst’*”, (referring to Jesus being among them). We believe this is an extremely poor translation as it conceals the major truth that Jesus was trying to convey.

Why the Poor Interpretation?

If you attempt to translate this Scripture with natural thinking it wouldn’t make sense.

Is it just possible that a logical academic interpretation would evaluate that Jesus couldn’t have possibly meant “*the kingdom of God is within you*” and look for a more rational and tenable explanation?

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1Cor 2:14

This is the promise given to the New Covenant believers;

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord.

Jer.31:33-34

A SPIRITUAL G.P.S.

How many of us when driving our car, have faced the inconvenience of trying to find a new address? First of all we have to look up a particular location in a large street directory and then continually stop to double check that we're on track.

One of the latest gadgets that you can buy for your car is a Global Positioning System or G.P.S. These incredible inventions allow you to receive exact directions via satellite. It also tells you the correct road speed, warns you of cameras on traffic lights and guides you around traffic jams. When you make a mistake, the system is so gracious. A polite voice simply says, "At the next opportunity, please turn around". With the inevitable improvements can you imagine the even greater assistance they will be in the future.

God has given us an incredible spiritual G.P.S. (God's Positioning System) to give us instructions "on the move" and it doesn't simply sit in your car. For convenience sake it's not an external system, but an internal one, enabling Him to lead and guide us from within, anywhere and anytime.

This system is not an extra optional feature. It is "factory fitted" and comes when you receive Christ and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Mystery solved!

Other familiar Scriptures, referring to the Spirit of God, confirm this inner guidance:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:13

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Rom. 8:14

There may be some who believe that everything God wanted to tell us is already in our Bible. However, the Holy Spirit's job description is to *teach you all things* and *guide you into all truth* and *tell you things to come*.

Surely that means that **all** things, **all** truth and **all** the things that are yet to come are not in our Bibles. Furthermore, if the Bible were to be our only guide, *sons of God* would not need to be led by the Spirit of God.

There are many unique aspects of the Christian faith, but none as exceptional as this truth of personal guidance. The good, no, great news is that, potentially, all believers can learn to use this spiritual G.P.S. and be led from within. As we mentioned earlier let's transform believers from simply being Spirit filled to being Spirit led.

OUR ROLE MODEL

Inner guidance is achieved by personal relationship and intimate fellowship with the Lord. Jesus was a role model for us to imitate.

***"Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does ..."* John 5:19-20**

“I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.” John 8:28

“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” John 12:49-50 NIV

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.”

John 14:10

This is a difficult truth for many believers who have traditional thinking to grasp. Nevertheless Jesus tells us very plainly, that this is expected of us;

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ...” John 14:12 NLT

Not only does He expect you to do it. It’s commanded, *“anyone who believes in me will do the same works.”*

JESUS’ EXAMPLE

Some time ago the Lord challenged me with a question, “What is the original apostles’ doctrine?” (Acts 2:42) As it was the “apostles’ doctrine” it was obviously more than the Old Testament teaching which Jesus had basically summed up in “Love God and love others”. (Matt. 22:37)

At this early stage, the apostle Paul had not written all his letters found in the Bible and the only New Testament teachings available to the church were those of Christ. Therefore my answer to the Lord (in the simplest of terms) was that it must have been Jesus’ teaching, plus Christ crucified and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

He then challenged me to collect all of Jesus’ teachings in one single document. I was overawed at just how small it was and, to add to my amazement ... it took just a few hours to read it all.

The early disciples repeatedly heard these rather brief truths over an approximate three year period. They knew them back to front and they then *“turned the world upside down.” Acts 17:6*

It was more than knowledge of this simple teaching that achieved this incredible result. The Lord then asked me, “They knew My words but what was the greatest thing that they learned from Me?”

I was silent.

He then went on to tell me, “They observed My relationship with My Father and saw that **everything** I said and did came as direct guidance from Him.”

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

Why is it that some people have interpreted the gospel of the kingdom to mean “Receive Jesus and you will go to heaven”? Traditionally many have interpreted “eternal life” as meaning “heaven”. Therefore, when reading the following Scripture we can assume Jesus came for the sole purpose of getting us to heaven.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” ***John 3:16 NIV***

We need to clear our heads of any former traditions and see how the Bible defines “eternal life.”

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ***John 17:3***

Eternal life is not a place. Eternal life is a life ... a life that goes on forever. It comes from a personal relationship with the Lord.

For example, before a person is married, they live an independent lifestyle. After the covenant of marriage their life changes; they have a new life of relationship with a lifetime partner. Before you received Jesus, you lived independently.

After making a covenant with Him, your new life now changes. We have a new life of relationship that will last not only “till death do us part”, but it goes on forever or eternally. It's an eternal life.

This was Jesus' prayer for our union with Him.

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” ***John 17:20-21***

JESUS TOLD UNBELIEVERS

Lets look at the last line of that previous Scripture as to a reason for this intimate relationship; *“that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*

Jesus was emphatic about this inward guidance when He spoke to unbelievers.

“Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.” ***John 14:10-11 NIV***

“But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” ***John 10:38 NIV***

I feel I need to repeat myself here ... He told this awesome truth to unbelievers! Is this vital aspect of the gospel of the kingdom preached and emphasized today?

Traditionally many people have thought “kingdom” and “eternal life” meant heaven. As a result we have a watered down version along the lines of, “Ask Jesus to come into your heart and you’ll go to heaven!”

As we have said, His goal and purpose is not just to get you to heaven but, through an intimate relationship, lead you from within. The miracles are His way of revealing this truth, “*that you may know and understand that the Father is in me*”.

And this gospel of the kingdom (including personal inner guidance) ***will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*** ***Matt. 24:14***

PAUL’S TRAINING

The apostle Paul didn’t have the advantage of listening to and observing Jesus in the flesh. He didn’t own a New Testament Bible (they weren’t printed). Therefore, how did he receive his great knowledge? The Lord took him to his own personal School of the Spirit in the desert where he learned to have a relationship with the Lord and to hear directly from Him.

When he planted churches in Galatia, he stayed only a matter of months before moving on. He didn’t even appoint elders (this was done about a year later).

What do you think he may have taught them that would enable them to mature over that period? Remember ... he hadn’t written his epistles at this stage.

He would have preached the full gospel of the kingdom and modeled the inward guidance of the Spirit.

They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God’s Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ...

Rom. 15:19 NLT

Please note how they were convinced. It was the miraculous and the power of the Holy Spirit being released from within Paul.

As it was with Jesus, this convinced them that the rest of the good news (including personal inner guidance) was real. *John 14:10-11; 10:38*. Please also note he said, “*In this way, I have fully presented the Good News...*” Is Paul indicating that without the evidence of the power of the Spirit the gospel is not being fully presented? We believe so.

MORE KINGDOM TRUTHS

To help us allow this truth to sink deep into our Spirits, let’s remind ourselves of Jesus’ expanded definition of God’s kingdom.

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’... For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Please remember this is His definition, not ours. For a deeper revelation, when we use the word “kingdom”, we will add the words “personal inner guidance” to help renew our minds.

Some of these following Scriptures may take on a greater depth of meaning as we take in the added concept of having an intimate relationship and His internal rule.

Some Scriptures use the term “kingdom of God” and others “kingdom of Heaven”, but remember, there is only one King and, therefore, only one kingdom. Take your time, meditate on them and ask the Lord to open greater revelation to you.

“Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God (personal inner guidance) as a little child will by no means enter it.” *Luke 18:17*

“Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter (personal inner guidance) the kingdom of God!” *Mark 10:24*

But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (personal inner guidance).” *Luke 9:62*

"And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.

But seek the kingdom of God, (personal inner guidance) and all these things shall be added to you.” *Luke 12:29,31*

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, (personal inner guidance) let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. *Heb. 12:28*

"Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God (personal inner guidance) present with power." *Mark 9:1*

“For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God (with this personal inner guidance) is greater than he.” *Luke 7:28*

SELLING OUT FOR GOD

There are, of course, many other Scriptures that refer to the Kingdom. Some deal specifically with the future rule but many others can be interpreted as the kingdom within. Look out for them whilst reading your Bible and be ready to apply Jesus' interpretation to them. This next one is a good example of this;

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value (personal inner guidance), he sold everything he owned and bought it!” *Matt. 13:45-46 NLT*

In many cases the “pearl” has been interpreted as going to heaven. However, let's apply Jesus' definition to it. When we realize that an intimate relationship with the Lord and His guidance from within is a priceless possession, we'll be willing to give anything to achieve it.

Paul initially thought that his vast education and pedigree were important but he changed;

I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. *Phil. 3:7-9 NLT*

Paul, in the ensuing verses reveals this was his sole focus.

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead...

Phil. 3:12-14 NLT

When it finally sinks in that the ultimate in your Christian experience is to achieve a partnership *and become one with Him*, everything else pales into insignificance. If this was Paul's ultimate goal then surely it should be ours as well.

We can then experience the truths of Jesus' words to us;

For apart from me you can do nothing. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ***John 15:5,7 NLT***

THY KINGDOM COME

With our new understanding, hopefully we can take the familiar prayer, "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" to another level.

We are not only praying for the future kingdom to come but also for His kingdom (personal inner guidance) to come into unbelievers. Therefore, we're actually praying for unsaved people to have God come into their hearts and be ruled from within.

If every person received and availed themselves of this personal inner guidance, then the second part of the prayer "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" would automatically take place.

Perhaps now when we pray the "Lord's Prayer" a new level of faith and expectancy can rise up for the salvation of our loved ones and friends.

FULL OR PARTIAL KINGDOM RULE?

The Lord gives believers the gift of righteousness. Righteousness means you have the right to confidently speak to God without shame or guilt. As you listen to Him and obey Him, righteous actions follow and the immediate rewards are peace and joy.

... for the kingdom of God (personal inner guidance) is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ***Rom. 14:17***

Because the Holy Spirit is in us, the potential is available to have Him governing us in everything we do. If we allow Him to totally govern us from within, we will experience the fullness of righteousness, peace and joy. If we don't give Him total rule, we will not have the fullness of His peace and joy. It's your choice.

Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God (personal inner guidance)? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade." ***Mark 4:30-32 NLT***

Make a decision that, like any relationship, your friendship with Jesus may be a small seed now, but as you work at it, spending time with Him each day, watering it with His words, it will grow. As you do, your ministry will grow with it, bringing rest and comfort to others.

This is foundational teaching and should be given to believers when they are first born again. Those who don't receive it or those who don't understand it will inevitably have a major hole in their relationship with the Lord. Therefore also pray "Thy kingdom come." for yourself and other believers to see the fullness of His personal inner guidance.

A GREATER FUTURE?

We can continue to look with awe at the heroes of faith in the Bible; Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, David, Gideon Enoch, John the Baptist and perhaps dream that God would work through us in some great way. However, being used by God to do great things is more than a dream; it's expected.

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he"

Matt. 11:11

We are told that John was the greatest of all the Old Testament heroes.

Nevertheless we are told that because we have the privilege of having the Holy Spirit to speak to us and guide us 24/7, we have the potential to do greater things. Jesus, our greatest hero, said the same thing about us.

"The works that I do he will do also and greater works than these will he do" John 14:12

For those who take advantage of the privilege extended to us by God and seek His daily fresh words, greater things lie ahead. Any Christian who humbles themselves and acknowledges Him in all their ways, can become God's 21st Century hero.

However, there is also a downside for those who neglect this important relationship:

Put your mind on your life with God. The way to life — to God! — is vigorous and requires your total attention. A lot of you are going to assume that you'll sit down to God's salvation banquet just because you've been hanging around the neighborhood all your lives. Well, one day you're going to be banging on the door, wanting to get in, but you'll find the door locked and the Master saying, 'Sorry, you're not on my guest list.'

"You'll protest, 'But we've known you all our lives!' only to be interrupted with his abrupt, 'Your kind of knowing can hardly be called knowing. You don't know the first thing about me.'

Luke 13:24-27 MSG

SUMMARY Chapter 3

1. 'Kingdom' is made up of two words, "king's" & "domain". It means the territory or empire over which a king rules, the areas over which the Lord has authority. We simply translate the Kingdom of God as 'God's Government' or 'God's Empire'.
2. As we repent and voluntarily commit ourselves to obeying our King, we can inherit the many benefits that His government can provide. Our sins are forgiven, and we can be healed, spirit, soul and body.
3. Secondly, He is returning to the earth, only this time He will have total authority over the entire planet. *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Rev. 11:15*
4. Jesus gave another perspective of God's government being in us. *He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'.... For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."*
5. This has far greater implications than just the simplistic statement of "having Jesus living in our hearts". It's having the Lord personally lead us and guide us from within. Therefore this new form of government is an internal not an external rule.
6. This was the secret of Jesus' phenomenal success. He followed His spiritual G.P.S. Everything He said and did was done through personal guidance. He tells us that this is expected and commands us; *"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ..."* John 14:12 NLT
7. Eternal life is not a place. Eternal life is a life. It comes from a personal relationship and inner leading by the Lord. *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. John 17:3*
8. Jesus was emphatic about this inward guidance when He spoke to unbelievers. *"But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."* John 10:38 NIV
9. The miracles were the proof that He had the Father guiding Him. Paul imitated Jesus to ensure that the gospel was fully presented; *They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ... Rom. 15:19 NLT*
10. Let's ensure that the truth of both the future and present kingdom is *fully presented. And this gospel of the kingdom (personal inner guidance) will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*
11. Be totally sold out; *"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value (personal inner guidance), he sold everything he owned and bought it!" Matt. 13:45-46 NLT*

Chapter 4

**W.W.J.D?
WHAT WOULD JESUS REALLY DO?**

One of the greatest challenges to leading the Spirit led life is achieving the balance between obedience to the written word of God (the Bible - the logos) and hearing directly from the Word Himself (the rhema).

W.W.J.D?

One popular method that has been taught when we are faced with a challenge is to ask ourselves, “*What would Jesus do?*” W.W.J.D has become a famous acronym and moniker around the globe, particularly with the youth. It is an obvious and wonderful question and for good reasons as it bases itself on this Scripture.

“I tell you in truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing.”
John 14:12

In a general sense, this question has been a great way to renew our minds and catch the spirit of loving others like the Lord. However, knowing exactly what Jesus would do in every situation can be a little more difficult than first anticipated.

The following examples show us that, in response to a situation, Jesus’ actions or words cannot always be instantly identified:

Example 1

When He confronted the moneychangers, the Bible tells us;
When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple ... and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ***John 2:15***

However, He previously stated;
“But I tell you not to resist an evil person.” ***Matt. 5:39***

Example 2

One moment Jesus says;
“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ... inside they are full of extortion and self indulgence....you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness....Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?” ***Matt. 23:25,28,33***

But another time He says;
“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ” ***Matt. 5:43,44***

Example 3

Jesus says; *“Blessed are the peacemakers...”*

Matt. 5:9

Then He boldly declares;

“Do you suppose that I came to bring peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.”

Luke 12:51

Example 4

Jesus warns us; *“For offences must come, but woe to that man by whom the offence comes!”*

Matt. 18:7

However, Jesus Himself is called; *“a stumbling stone and rock of offence.”*

Rom. 9:33

Example 5

After Jesus had healed a man, He told him;

“Return to your house, and tell what great things God has done for you.”

Luke 8:39

Nevertheless, He did the opposite after healing a deaf man;

“He commanded them that they should tell no one”

Mark 7:36 and Mark 8:26

Example 6

Jesus teaches us;

“But I tell you not to resist an evil person...and whosoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two”

Matt.5:41

However, when Jesus was compelled;

“Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hands.”

John10:39

Example 7

In one instance Jesus tells His twelve disciples;

“Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag, nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece”

Luke 9:3

All the same, later He instructs them;

“But now, he who has a money bag let him take it, and likewise a knapsack;

Luke 22:36

Example 8

On one hand Jesus says;

“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”

Matt. 26:52

On the other hand He states;

“... and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.”

Luke 22:36

In each one of these cases, if you had to make an instant decision based on *“What Would Jesus Do?”*...you may encounter some difficulties! Just possibly, with a lot of deliberation, you may (in some cases) give a good theological answer for His different responses. However, there are also many cases where a good theological answer is not possible.

OTHER EXAMPLES

Case 1

How would you heal a speech impediment and deafness?

Jesus tells us to; “...*lay hands on the sick, and they will recover*”

Mark 16:18

Nonetheless, what did Jesus do?

“*And He took him aside from the multitude, put His fingers in his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue*”

Mark 7:33

Case 2

How do you heal blind people? What did Jesus do?

“*He spat on the ground, and made clay with saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay*”

John 9:6

However, in another situation;

“*So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything*”

Mark 8:23

So what is it? Spit on the ground, or spit in their eyes? If you want to use this method, pray you don't have a chest cold!

Case 3

Now meditate on this one. What would Jesus do when He had to cross a lake?

“... *He got into the boat with his disciples.*”

Luke 8:22

But also consider this;

“*Jesus went to them walking on the sea*”

Matt. 14:25

Does He sail, row or does He walk?

CONFUSED?

If we attempt to follow the exact actions or words of Jesus in each case, we could end up somewhat confused! There are (what we call) the *general commands* of Jesus which could guide us in many cases. However, there are many instances where He would do things *out of the box*. Yet, in every situation, Jesus did the perfect will of the Father.

How can we become Jesus imitators without an exact set of guidelines to follow? He does give us a guideline to follow and there is an answer to “*What Would Jesus Do*”? In every situation Jesus was led by His Father and was totally obedient to what He said to do.

“*For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me, commanded me what to say and how to say it...So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say*”

John 12:49-50 NIV

“*I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself, he can only do what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does*”

John 5:19 NIV

WHAT WOULD JESUS REALLY DO?

By either hearing directly from the Father or receiving instruction by vision, Jesus was able to do the perfect will of God. If we are to ask ourselves “What would Jesus really do?” we need to imitate the principle of listening, not simply trying to copy His methods.

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? John 3:8-10

Do we still have teachers who *do not know these things*? Are we still in need of restored instruction that tells us that we can’t put the Spirit in a box of New Testament rules?

WHY?

Why wasn’t Jesus more consistent with His actions? Surely it would have been easier to understand and follow? The trouble is, once we know what to do on each occasion, we really do not need His advice or even His relationship any longer. The majority of older Christians have an overall grasp of what the will of the Lord is. However, if we simply apply the New Testament principles without the relationship and life of the Holy Spirit, **even the New Testament can become a book of rules and law!**

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Gal. 5:18

Put around the other way this Scripture can read: *If the Spirit does not lead you, you are under law!*

I know many of us would be horrified to think that we could still be under law, but, if we attempt to fulfill the instructions of the New Testament in our own strength, that’s exactly what we do.

Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence? Gal. 5:18 MSG

However we must maintain the balance! As we said in a previous chapter;
“We are certainly not advocating that you neglect the rich truths of the Scriptures. The pattern of obeying both God’s basic commands and His personal proceeding words is the foundation of all the New Testament heroes.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

The Holy Spirit will help you remember what Jesus said. Obviously, to enable you to recall it, you will need to have learnt what He said in the first place.”

TOTAL DEPENDENCE

The original sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was independence from God. The total restoration of believers today will have us become fully dependent on Him, just as Jesus was on the Father.

The independent nature of even a sincere believer simply wants to have a set of rules to follow. This allows them to live relatively “good” lives without having to have an active relationship with Him.

Being able to follow His perfect will partially, gives us partial blessing.

For those who desire to go to another level, it will mean coming into a closer and more intimate relationship with the Lord and being totally led by His Spirit.

We are told about Jesus healing everyone, “*who went around doing good and **healing all ... for God was with Him.***”

God was not simply a spectator or bystander, “*for **God was with Him.***” They acted as one, in perfect unity. It meant His Father was **in** Jesus, directing and encouraging Him. Jesus told His disciples, “*I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” *Matt. 28:20*

It is just possible that, if we (at the end of this age) are able to do this, we may begin to see great signs and wonders which are largely missing in the western countries.

For those of us who are maturing and desire to have God with them in the same way that Jesus did, we now need to go to this next level for the *greater things*.

ALL YOUR WAYS?

Jesus was an example of receiving continual life-giving seed words from His Father. This does not necessarily mean that the Father spoke to Him continuously without any breaks. Just as we consume food and snacks when we have need, the Spirit will give us words as we minister to those who have need. Therefore, we can expect to hear from Him from time to time, not necessarily non-stop.

How can we get His bread, these continual “proceeding words” for your specific needs? We are given a key to this in the book of Proverbs;

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Prov. 3:5-6

It is vital to note that Proverbs tells us: “*in **all** your ways acknowledge Him.*” I wonder how many of us really look to Him for all of our decisions.

An incredible conversation takes place between David and the Lord in 1 Samuel 30. David returns with his soldiers to find the enemy has raided their camp and kidnapped their wives and children.

There was great grief and the soldiers spoke of stoning David. With all the pressure on him, the natural thing to do was to form a posse, chase after the invaders and bring back their families. This would also have been in line with the basic general commands of the Bible in that a father is to care for and protect his family.

However, David was aware that his strength was in the Lord. He inquired of the Lord saying, “*Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?*” The Lord gave him the go ahead and they went out and were successful.

Our point is that the decision to chase after them would be rather obvious in the flesh ... or Bible knowledge. The question for us is, would we have checked with the Lord first? David did. If he hadn't, the Lord would have seen it as independence and presumption.

The Spirit-led life means our relationship is so close that we can be led by Him in *all* our ways, even when an action or decision may seem obvious.

Sometimes He may say “Rest in Me, I’ll do it.” Secondly, He may send others to help or thirdly, He may speak to you (just as He did with Jesus) and, as you obey His directions, His enabling power will be released into the situation.

How do we acknowledge Him? Each time we find ourselves faced with a challenge, simply turn to Him and acknowledge He is our source. An easy way to remember this is W.D.W.D.? That is, “What Do We Do, Lord?” This means the “we” is both you and Him together. How great is that?

Why is it that God only gives us a small portion of all the information needed to lead successful lives? Why doesn't He produce a Bible the size of an encyclopedia or even better, put it on a computer disc? We could just click on and the answer would be there. It's because He wants relationship with us. Every challenge we face is an opportunity for a talk with Him.

Every problem is an opportunity for us to get an answer directly from Him. Each trial teaches us to get closer and closer. If all answers were in a book, then, with our fallen human nature, we'd end up praising and loving the book instead of the Author.

MY EXPERIENCE

I can remember when the Lord was attempting to remove more of my independent ways and He reminded me that I was to acknowledge Him “*in all of my ways.*” Like many of us when we hear a Scripture we know by heart, I immediately said, “Yes, Lord. I know that one.”

There was complete silence and the Lord just let me think about what I’d said.... After He had my undivided attention, He said, “Do you acknowledge Me in *all* your ways?”

Initially, I was about to give the religiously correct answer, “Yes!” but I was beginning to realize that *perhaps* He wanted to put His finger on something. Therefore I didn’t answer and thought about that question for a day.

In our next conversation, I admitted that if I said I acknowledged Him in half my ways I’d be stretching the truth. I repented, with an intention to include the Lord in everything I did. However, within a short period of time the rebellious side of me emerged.

“Wait a minute, Lord.” I said. “In **all** my ways? I feel like I’m a little schoolboy who has to put his hand up every time he wants to go to the toilet. Being a Christian is supposed to bring freedom. I feel like I’m now being restricted and tied down.”

In the Spirit, I saw His countenance drop and a sadness come over His face. He then said quietly to me, “Stuie, I don’t care if you put on your right shoe before your left shoe. I don’t care whether you buy a red car or a blue one. But I do want to be involved in the important things in your life.”

He went on to share how, like any good father, He wanted to help me through my challenges and advise and direct me so that I could be successful in life. I was totally ashamed, because my traditional thinking had made me misread His heart and intentions for me. He wanted to be my partner, to talk and relate to me!

REALITY HITS HOME!

I was with a team in the Philippines and took the morning off to do some shopping with my wife Mary. As we disembarked from the taxi, the Lord said to me, “You’ve left something behind!”

I quickly looked through the window of the cab and could see nothing on the seat. Immediately my rational thinking took control. "Wait a minute. I haven't done any shopping as yet. How could I have possibly left anything behind?" As the cab slowly began to pull away once again I heard, "You've left something behind!"

"Don't be stupid!" I corrected myself, "You didn't have any parcels!"

Once inside I soon discovered my boo-boo ... my wallet was missing. I quickly realized that it had worked its way up my trouser pocket and must have slipped out and fallen onto the floor of the taxi beside the seat.

Had I bothered to ask the Lord, He obviously would have shown me what had happened. It was a practical lesson to "in all my ways" acknowledge Him.

Undaunted however, I began to pray for its return. I had great "faith" for this as on a prior occasion my missing wallet had been returned to me after prayer.

I also rang the cab company and offered a reward. Totally confident of its return I began thanking and praising the Lord when suddenly He totally took me by surprise.

"You won't see that wallet again." He said quietly.

I was about to rebuke that thought but instead I asked, "Er ... What was that?"

"You won't see that wallet again." He repeated.

"Why not?" I questioned.

"This was another lesson for you in listening to my voice. Even when it doesn't seem to make sense to you, you are to have an ear to hear."

He went on to explain, "This was only a few dollars lost, but what if it was a person's need or their very life that depended on your obedience ... and you ignored Me?"

This was a cheap lesson in the importance of hearing His fresh moment by moment words.

The point was driven home by the reality of going through the pain of canceling and replacing cards and the loss of money. As well, the Lord instructed me to share the story of my stupidity with my team members. However, as a result of that practical tutorial, the significance of the lesson has not been easily forgotten.

W.W.J.D? or W.D.W.D?

We can get to a point where we feel we don't need to acknowledge Him in all our ways because we basically already know what to do; we know our Bibles! Yes, we can do it **by the book** and be "good believers", but life can become rather boring and mundane. What's the answer?

If we do not lean on our basic understanding but acknowledge Him in all our ways, we can be led by the Holy Spirit and expect God to lead us to do *out of the box* things on a daily basis. How exciting would that be?

This will mean He will take you out of your present comfort zone of knowledge, and bring you to new levels of faith, trust and confidence with Him. As a result you will no longer be just a *good believer* but a great one!

It means that you will be taken out of your present depth and be expected to act boldly when He speaks to you. You will be expected to do whatever He requires of you to meet the needs of the person to whom you are ministering. Just think, your ministry of spitting in someone's blind eyes could start tomorrow!

How then do we acknowledge Him? We acknowledge that, without Him, we can do nothing but through Him we can do all things; this is praise! I no longer think to myself W.W.J.D? What would Jesus do? I simply say W.D.W.D? What do we do Lord?

WHEN IN DOUBT ... DO SOMETHING TRADITIONAL

We can run into difficulties even when we appear to be doing the Lord's work, but are actually following our own agenda.

When Jesus was transfigured before three of His disciples, Elijah appeared to them with Moses, Peter blurted out;

"... and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" - because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

Mark 9:5-6

Because Peter was blown away by what he was witnessing, he didn't know what to say or do. He was trying to do the right thing based on his religious upbringing and teaching. However, he immediately simply shifted into a religious mode that was familiar to him.

Like Peter we can have our own religious agendas. Those who are starting small groups and sense they are a little out of their depth can, like Peter, become fearful. The old thinking quickly arises and, instead of asking "W.D.W.D Lord?" they adopt a safe option, "When in doubt ... do something traditional". They then run a meeting based on a conventional church format and wonder why it doesn't achieve their high expectations.

A GOOD IDEA or a GOD IDEA?

We can also see from this next Scripture that even our attempts to imitate Jesus can miss the mark and be motivated by our independent agenda.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Matt. 7:21-23

In their minds, these people were doing the Lord's work but were amazed to find out that appearances can be deceiving. They were considered lawless because Jesus *never knew* them. In other words there was no relationship and no personal instruction. They would be likened to a soldier who is given a rifle and does not listen to his commanding officer.

We must be sure that what we do is not just a good idea, but a God idea. The difference between good and God is "O" ... "Oh!"

SPIRIT CONQUERS SIN

Another ongoing consequence of being led by the Spirit or walking in the Spirit is that it has the effect of neutralizing the power of sin. We are told:

"I say walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." *Gal. 5:16*

What an incredible Scripture!!! How do we overcome our selfish flesh? He didn't simply say, "Don't do it!" or, "Pray for it and hope it goes away." He says that, as we live a Spirit led life, we won't give in to our selfish desires. How does it work?

A person goes into the biggest and best smorgasbord restaurant in town and leisurely, over a couple of hours, totally 'pigs out', devouring the most sumptuous food in town. Finally, when they simply can't eat another thing, and feeling more than contented, they get up to leave. The waitress comes over with something special the chef has just made, a huge piece of double layered chocolate cake with fresh cream, and reminds them that it's included in the price.

Because they are totally satisfied, not only is it unappealing to them, they are repulsed by the thought of something that would normally be extremely enticing.

As we "dine" with Him and saturate our lives with selfless acts, we are filled with His peace and joy and enter His rest.

When we are totally fulfilled we are not enticed with the fleshly junk that would normally lead us astray. If you sit and have an up-close-and-personal conversation with the Lord and He speaks to you, you don't need to get drunk or take drugs. You are already on a high.

If you are led to give money or things to a needy person, you are so contented that you don't feel the need for an anti-depressant. If you lead someone to the Lord, you are so excited you don't immediately feel the need to fly into a rage. If you prophesy over someone and see their huge smile, do you suddenly get an urge to steal?

The righteous acts of a Spirit led life give you a flow of peace and joy and, if it's maintained, it continuously neutralizes the power of sin. Therefore, we no longer have to directly fight sin. God's answer is to walk in the Spirit and replace unrighteous acts with righteous ones.

When the Lord directs you, either through the written word or a personal word to you, you then have to make a decision to walk in the Spirit. Paul said,

"But I discipline my body and bring it under subjection...."

1 Cor. 9:2

Christianity is not a life of "Don't Do's". It's a life of "Do Do's". If you do the "Do Do's" you won't have the time or desire to do the "Don't Do's". Therefore, we really need to turn our thinking around. It's obviously not a question of "How do I overcome sin?" but rather "How do I walk in the Spirit?" The decision is up to you.

YOUR UNTAPPED G.P.S.

In our previous chapter we said that God has given us an incredible spiritual G.P.S. (God's Positioning System) to give us instructions "on the move". The only time you need a natural G.P.S. system in your car is if you're going into unfamiliar territory. You don't need it if you simply go to the same places regularly.

If you are going to lead the same familiar life style (usually jam packed with independence and selfishness), you really have no need for His spiritual G.P.S.

That's why many believers don't hear from God as much as they should! You need to take yourself out of your present comfort zone (usually boring) and place yourself in uncharted territory ... among those who are in need (that includes unbelievers).

SUMMARY Chapter 4

1. In a general sense, this question, “What would Jesus Do (W.W.J.D?) has been a great way to renew our minds and catch the spirit of loving others. However, knowing exactly what Jesus would do in every situation can be a little difficult.
2. How did Jesus heal blind people? Spit on the ground, or spit in their eyes? What would Jesus do when He had to cross a lake? Sail, row or walk?
3. Following that principle of listening, not copying His methods, is the only sure fire way of fulfilling the W.W.J.D? recipe.
The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."
4. Why wasn't Jesus more consistent with His actions? Surely it would have been easier to understand and follow? The trouble is, once we know what to do on each occasion, we really do not need His advice or even His relationship any longer.
5. The majority of us have an overall grasp of what the will of the Lord is. However, if we simply apply the New Testament principles without the relationship and life of the Holy Spirit, even the New Testament can become a book of rules and law!
6. *"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."* Gal. 5:18 Put around the other way this Scripture can read: *If the Spirit does not lead you, you are under law!*
7. The original sin of Adam and Eve was independence from God. The total restoration of believers today will have us become fully dependent on Him, just as Jesus was on the Father. The independent human nature simply wants to have a set of rules to follow. This allows us to live “good” lives without having to have an active relationship with Him.
8. How can we get His bread, these continual “proceeding words” for your specific needs? The key is in the book of Proverbs; *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Prov. 3:5-6*
9. If I absolutely satisfy myself at a smorgasbord, being offered junk food immediately after it is repulsive to me. If we lead the Spirit led life and are totally filled with His peace and joy, we find the attraction of sin less captivating.
10. Christianity is not a life of “Don't Do's”. It's a life of “Do Do's”. If you do the “Do Do's” you won't have the time or desire to do the “Don't Do's”. It's obviously not a question of “How do I overcome sin?” but rather “How do I walk in the Spirit?” The decision is up to you.
11. To activate your spiritual G.P.S. Take yourself out of your present comfort zone of independence & selfishness and place yourself in uncharted territory ... those in need.

Chapter 5

STAGES OF GROWTH

When you see the fullness of Christ as your goal everything else becomes like a piece of garbage in comparison. Paul said;

Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. Phil 3:8-9

Notice that he said, "I may gain Christ". He was a born again believer; therefore Christ was already in Him. Nevertheless, he was aware of the process of becoming more like Him. Even as a maturing father in the faith, Paul was aware that there was a greater level yet to be attained. This was Paul's anguishing prayer for the new-born Galatians;

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you...

Gal. 4:19

Christ was in them ... but not fully formed.

GROWTH IN STAGES

We can be overawed by the promises and possibly look at our present inability. However, God does not expect you to be able to hear perfectly from Him immediately. He has a stage-by-stage plan for us to reach this fullness.

I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you young men because you have overcome the wicked one... 1 John 2:12-13

John talks about three basic stages of spiritual growth.

- Little children
- Young men (and women)
- Fathers (and mothers)

We are now going to look at these areas and show how we can progress into full maturity. As we do so, you may also note which level you are at right now. This will enable you to know which stage of your growth is coming up next.

Remember, maturity is not about how many years you've been a Christian. In the natural we can have fifteen year olds who carry on like little children. It does not rely entirely on Bible knowledge - the Pharisees knew their Bible backwards. Maturity is based upon your ability to hear from God and then be obedient to Him; in other words, how much like Jesus you've become.

LITTLE CHILDREN

When parents first see their new-born baby they don't scream out in dismay, "Where are its teeth?" or "This child doesn't seem to understand what I'm saying". They obviously understand that the process of growth has to take place.

Nothing is expected of a baby. It is the one who receives all the attention. It's like a customer at a hotel who is receiving 7 star (not 5 star) service. The first cry means, "I want my food and I want it now!" Another cry means, "I want a change of underwear and, by the way, my bath had better be at exactly the right temperature." A further cry can mean, "Rock me gently and rub my back so I can lull off to sleep."

In this period of their lives, babies learn that their parents love them, protect them and will provide milk, clothing and shelter for them. All their "sins" of crying in the middle of the night, dirtying diapers and vomiting over their parents are forgiven.

Spiritual newborn babies have spiritual parents and a heavenly Father who will look after them. The babies do all the requesting. The Father doesn't expect total obedience because they don't as yet know His voice. They are aware that they also "sin" but are learning that their sins are forgiven them.

They cry out for help: "Pray for this. Help me with that. Sorry I blew it again".

They are learning through their spiritual parents that their Father God is not expecting them to clean up their act immediately and, instead, they learn about His grace, His provision and His protection. So, at a baby stage of life, a child knows that its parents will do everything for him and very little is expected of them.

Natural parents don't try to make the child grow up too quickly and neither do good spiritual parents. However, little children do not remain little.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Our natural children don't receive 7 star hotel treatment for the rest of their lives. They grow up and become useful members of the household, washing up, making beds, mowing lawns etc. They are able to do this because they have learned to understand what their parents are saying and obey them.

After receiving "the milk of the Word", spiritual children are expected to grow up.

A 'little child' has a relationship with the Lord that is based on requests. The conversation is one-way traffic. A 'young man' not only requests but also listens and, as a result, he is now led by the Spirit.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Rom. 8:14

Sons, not babies, are led by His Spirit.

They 'overcome the wicked one' and their independence and selfishness, through the Spirit led life.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

God has works of love and power for you to complete. The ability to achieve them comes as you learn to hear the Lord's voice and obey Him.

It is self evident that every Christian who wants to become fully mature must be a person who can be led by Him.

Childlike Fulfilment

Little children are contented by being fed and comforted. They also gain further pleasure by watching the accomplishments of their parents.

They are fascinated when their mum blows up their first balloon. They are overawed with the strength of their dad when he lifts them up and throws them into the air.

In contrast, however, teenagers don't want to spend all their time watching their parents do things. They want to be active and are fulfilled through doing rather than watching. Spiritual children are kept contented by being fed the Word of God, being prayed for and watching their spiritual fathers operate in God's power and preach wonderful messages. However, they eventually become fed up.

A 'little child' also needs constant reassurance that God is real and trustworthy. They love to hear about or read books on the testimonies of those who have experienced the miraculous.

A 'son' doesn't need to be reassured by others' experiences. They have developed an indisputable confidence through their own personal relationship with the Lord. They experience God's reality, not by stories or the occasional sense of God's presence at a meeting, but by what He's doing through them.

- They get their own revelation from God's word as they meditate on Scripture.
- They receive His direct encouragement and peace floods their hearts.
- They see God's power change hearts as they witness to others.
- They see changed lives as they prophesy and use other gifts of the Spirit.
- They are full of joy when they use the power of the Spirit to heal the sick.
- They have total trust as they see their daily material needs met.
- They sense His presence on a continual basis, not occasionally at a meeting

When these happen on a regular basis they develop an unshakable faith and don't need constant external reassurances.

Discontented Sons

Spiritual sons have been created to release the love and power of the Spirit and, if this is not achieved, they will soon develop a sense of dissatisfaction. Discontented, they will not have total peace and joy and will wonder what is missing. They think back to the memories of their happy spiritual childhood and try to duplicate it.

They will go from church to church, meeting to meeting, trying to fill the void. Although they receive more spiritual food, more prayers, respond to more altar calls and have many opportunities of watching others minister, they will still remain unfulfilled.

Their peace and joy will not be found in going back to a childlike environment but in going forward to be led by His Spirit and doing the works that Jesus did. Paul said not to dwell on the past, but look to His goals for us.

... I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead ...
Phil. 3:12-14

Me or Them?

The focus of a child is always on itself. “What about me?” The focus of a mature son has now changed. He is trained and equipped to think about others. “What about them?” As a child we **receive** by faith, as a son we **give** by faith.

A baby receives salvation	...	a son preaches salvation
A baby receives love	...	a son gives love
A baby receives healing	...	a son prays for the sick
A baby receives finance	...	a son is a giver of money
A baby receives gifts of the Spirit	...	a son delivers gifts of the Spirit.

Sons no longer have to cry out like a baby for their needs. They have learned that their Father provides for his obedient children. They have also learnt the principle of abundance. They seek the kingdom of God first (personal inner guidance) and all things are added to them. As they put others first, God supplies all their needs and beyond.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS

The third level of maturity that John gives us is that of parents. Parents not only reproduce babies. They also nurture, protect and feed their children to enable them to grow up to full maturity.

Being a spiritual “father” is not exclusive to those who are in full time ministry. This is for every Christian. It’s for “he who believes in Me”. We are now seeing baby Christians growing quickly and becoming mothers and fathers of others within a year, just as it was with the early church. However, finding parents in the early church was not easy.

In the natural, a good father wants to raise children to their greatest potential and (hopefully) surpass what he has achieved. He will sacrifice himself so they can achieve this. Good spiritual fathers will believe God for great spiritual sons and daughters, and will pour their life into them in the hope that their spiritual children will have a greater ministry, just as Jesus did with His sons.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” John 14:12

“OLDER BROTHER” COMPLEX

On the other hand, some don’t have a father’s heart and instead, have an “older brother” complex. What do we mean by an “older brother” complex?

Back in the mid eighties we conducted many power evangelism ‘Jesus Heals’ Crusades in India and as a result, hundreds of thousands heard the gospel. One day the Lord told me that I was at a crossroads in my ministry. He showed me that if I continued with these crusades my ‘reputation’ would grow and eventually my name would be recognised world wide.

“That doesn’t sound all that bad,” I thought to myself. However, He went on to explain there was another road I could take.

“I really don’t need another healing evangelist.” He explained. “I have taught you many things in regard to the leading of My Spirit and I have need for many who can equip My people.”

It was rather obvious that the potential of having tens of thousands of believers reaching into every nook and cranny of society with His power could do much more than one healing evangelist.

He then went on to tell me that my goal was to raise up those who could and would have a greater impact on that world than my own ministry. Immediately I responded with, "That's exciting!" However, within a few short days my enthusiasm waned.

"Greater impact than me?" I questioned. "What about **my** ministry?"

"You've got a problem!" He quickly responded.

"What's my problem?"

"You've got an older brother complex."

I was mystified. "An older brother complex....What's that?"

He reminded me of the story of the prodigal son, who on his return, received many blessings from his father.

"Who had a problem with that?" He questioned.

"The older brother," I replied.

"What was the problem?"

"He didn't want the younger brother to receive greater blessings than him," I replied ... with a growing conviction.

"That's the older brother complex and that's your problem. You really don't want to see your younger brothers and sisters do greater things than you!" He said quietly.

I was shocked at what was being revealed in my heart. However, my mind was still battling how I was to release others to do greater things and continuing my own ministry. I had an expectation of my own ministry and reputation continuing to grow. Although those I was discipling were growing as well, I pictured them endlessly remaining a little less in stature and reputation than myself.

"Can't we all continue to grow together?" I asked Him. I then quickly reminded Him of His promise, "You told me in John 14:12 that the works that You did I would do also."

"There's that older brother again", He answered.

"No Lord", I quickly replied. "I'm just quoting your Scripture."

"Do you really want to be like Me?" He asked patiently.

"Of course!" was my immediate reply.

"I wanted My spiritual sons to do bigger and better things than I ever did."

"No!" I protested. "Who could do it better than you? You're Jesus!"

He went on to say, "You only quoted half of John 14:12. What did the other half say?" Of course, He goes on to tell His disciples;

"...the works that I do will he do also and greater works will he do..."

"If you want to fully mature into My image, your next stage of growth is to develop from an elder brother into a father. A good father in the natural wants his children to grow up and do bigger and better things than himself."

Further Clarity

He then gave me the following parable.

A man is a successful state manager of a company and is earning in excess of \$250,000 per year. He is offered the chance to run the national office in another country where, with all the incentives and bonuses, he would be a multi millionaire within a few years.

He turns down the offer, explaining that his son is doing a specialized course at university and at this time needs all the family support he can get. The man is overlooked for future promotion because he's not considered a "company man".

Many years later, the son starts his own enterprise and one day comes to his father and says, "Dad, I've made over a million dollars this year." What does the father do? Does he start to complain, telling his son what he sacrificed and what he could have been? Does he accuse the son of being big headed? No, he puts his arm around him, looks him in the eye and says, "That's my boy, I'm proud of you son."

Jesus is the model of the perfect spiritual father. He poured his life into His sons and then sacrificed His own life and 'career' to enable His sons to potentially achieve more than He did. When Jesus saw His disciples doing what He did and even greater things, His heart would have burst with pride and joy.

He had proven himself to be a successful father.

FINAL EVALUATION

The Lord went on to show me that 'my' ministry was to continue to model and to raise 'sons' as He has done.

"When you stand before Me I will ask how many sons and daughters with great ministries you raised. Your glory will not so much be in what you did in your personal ministry but in the greatness of your sons and daughters."

Older brothers, by nature, want to have the limelight and are highly competitive with the younger. "Older brother" ministries will be threatened by others, will want to control and suppress them and are more than happy for them to leave "home". The few who have this tendency will need to grow up and leave their insecurity behind them. This need for recognition leads to suppression not only of our future leaders but all of the saints who are subject to them.

This spirit, unfortunately, does not confine itself to a congregational pastor or a home church leader. The spirit of competition flows across the whole Body. An "older brother" ministry sees themselves competing with the churches in his area or within his own denomination. The spirit of it says, "He who has the most people attending - wins."

Wrong! This attitude directly cuts across the spirit of the unity God is restoring to His church. Instead of seeing themselves as "**the**" local church, they should see themselves as one of the communities of the local church. They will need to see themselves as part of the five fold ministry in that locality. 1Cor 1:12

HOME CHURCH BABY SITTERS

The challenge extends to many who are presently leaders of home church meetings.

Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you to imitate me.
1 Cor. 4:14,15 NIV

I asked what the Lord meant by the word "guardians". He showed me that it was equivalent to being a baby sitter. A baby sitter, minds the kids for a few hours, accepts no further responsibility for their upbringing and expects some recompense.

In home churches we have some baby sitter leaders who “mind the kids” for a few hours with no further responsibility.

An “older brother” baby sitter will want to display **their** ministry gifting to impress their younger siblings and seek recompense in the form of recognition and approval.

The real heart of spiritual parents is that they no longer see “their ministry” as the most important thing. They take responsibility for younger Christians with an expanded ministry goal of modelling, training and releasing them so that they can go through the stages of little children, sons and then become spiritual parents as well. Hopefully, their “sons” will have a greater ministry than them.

If every generation of Christians trained, modelled and believed God that their spiritual kids could do greater than they had, what kind of church would we have?

Basically we have the same simple model as a natural parent.

- Loving God
- Loving Others
- Teach your spiritual children the same

SPIRITUAL GERIATRICS

If we do not grow up into the people He desires, there is a downside. Picture a nurse in an old people’s home feeding a man who is sitting in a wheelchair looking blankly at the wall. She feeds him strained porridge with a spoon, with some going into his mouth and the rest dribbling down his chin. The man looks as if he is mature but he is actually like a child.

Those who just desire simply to sit and be spoon-fed the word of God each week can become spiritual geriatrics. God’s best is not for us to be simply fed by someone else every week but rather for us to get into some solid food for ourselves.

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.” John 4:34

Those who do not eventually get into the real food will end up with blank looks on their faces, bored, dissatisfied and unfulfilled. They can end up in spiritual wheelchairs, unable to walk in the Spirit and needing to be pushed around by carers (pastors/home church leaders) if they are to do anything for the Lord.

Although being referred to as a spiritual geriatric may seem a strong analogy, the Lord does want to shake us out of our complacency and get us back to His vision to bring us to full maturity. There are many Christians who would look as though they are mature through their knowledge and attendance but, by their actions, reveal their true level of growth.

Growing older is inevitable, growing up is optional!

As those who are doing some work for the Lord, hopefully we can now turn our eyes away from the distraction of our traditional limitation and set ourselves to become sons and daughters. Finally, we can mature into mothers and fathers in the Spirit who can do the works that Jesus did and greater things. Why don’t you evaluate the level of maturity you are at presently and then look forward to your next stage of growth?

GROWING UP QUICKLY

I worked as a volunteer prison chaplain through Prison Fellowship for some years. As inmates receive Christ, we formed discipleship groups. As part of that equipping, we have them study and discuss our book *Weapons of Mass Distraction*.

In essence, the book points out some traditional teachings and practices which distract us from having an intimate, loving relationship with the Lord. One part discusses how Jesus interacted with His disciples. They were friends. They didn't go around in fear of Him, and we are told that one lay his head on His chest. They were in daily face-to-face contact. To help build the same kind of relationship, we teach the inmates to meditate on Jesus sitting opposite them and to begin a conversation in the same way His disciples would have. Ps. 63:6 Heb. 12:2

One man, whom we'll call Rob, had only been saved a few weeks. He told me that he had received a vision of a person visiting him, but he wasn't too sure whether or not it was God.

"What were His eyes like?" I asked him.

"They were beautiful, brown eyes, full of love," he replied.

"I think you've got the right person," I said with a smile.

He and the Lord had a conversation that went on for around ten minutes. I told him that it was unusual for the Lord to appear like that and that it may not happen again. "But remember that voice," I told him. "He *will* speak to you again."

The following week, Rob came to the group very excited. He told us how there were two men in his unit who had been continually brawling and how the unit was locked down each time it happened. He said, "They were sitting at a table arguing, and I could see that another fight was about to erupt. The Lord told me to go and sit between them."

Now no one, even the hardened criminals, will get involved in a situation like this. In the natural, this was a crazy thing to do. However, Rob was obedient. He sat with them and resolved the dispute!

I said to the rest of the group, "The Lord has called us to be peacemakers. That does not mean pacifists who do nothing. Peacemakers *make peace*."

A week or so later, the mobile librarian (an inmate) told one of the men that their unit was the quietest and most peaceful unit in the whole jail. The boys had been at work, being peacemakers, led by the Spirit.

Rob continued hearing from the Lord, and the following week, he brought a new member to our group. The man was a drug addict who had a habit that cost him hundreds of dollars a day. When he first came into the unit, he was causing all kinds of problems for the guards.

"The Lord told me to go to him and give him a message," Rob said. "I gave him exactly what the Lord told me to say and he accepted Jesus as His Lord. Peace and joy flooded him and he was delivered from his addiction." The man then shared his story. He told us how he had changed so dramatically that the prison officers began asking the reason for it. Rob was able to give them the good news as well!

The following week, a similar situation arose and Rob led another prisoner to the Lord by sharing with him the exact message the Lord had given him.

Here we have a "baby" Christian being led by vision, personal instruction and prophetic preaching from the Lord. It reminded me of the instructions given to the early disciples about when they were arrested and had to testify.

“...do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit...” *Mark 13:11 NIV*

What is Rob’s secret? He simply accepts, like a little child, that speaking to His Father and hearing from Him is completely normal...and expected. He takes the time to listen for that inner voice when he’s by himself in his cell or when he’s looking for opportunities to touch the lives of others.

The second stage of Rob’s development would be considered even more important. Rob was facing the problem of losing around \$2,000,000 worth of property including his house. In liaison with his lawyer I was assisting him with his problem. After about a month he told me to let everything go.

“I’m in here facing fraud charges.” He told me. “Everything I have was gained illegally and the Lord has told me that I could get it back ... but I have to let it go.”

This “little child” was convicted by the Holy Spirit and was growing up quickly into the level of a “son” ... all in a matter of months.

We can expect fast growth in those we connect to the Lord. Is it just possible that this is the reason that the apostle Paul was able to stay only a matter of months in some places, leaving his new believers to be led by the Spirit?

JOSHUA’S STORY

Josh was in prison for arson. After getting to know him and discovering his soft heart, I found it difficult to believe that he was capable of such a crime. As we taught on a personal relationship with the Lord, his problem surfaced. Ben was hearing voices, however, they were not from God. My first instinct was to cast the spirits out of him, but to my surprise the Lord told me not to pray.

The following week Josh was not at the meeting. He was in solitary confinement as he had climbed onto the roof of the jail and refused to come down voluntarily.

Upon his release back into his unit, I asked him why he had done such a crazy thing.

“The voices told me to do it.” He explained unashamedly.

I immediately wanted to deliver him but once again was restrained by the Lord.

At our meeting the following week Josh turned up with a swastika which he had personally “tattooed” on his cheek. It had been cut roughly into his face and filled with ballpoint ink.

“The voices told me to do it”. He said, before I had a chance to open my mouth.

“No!” the Lord said to me. “No prayer.”

We continued teaching on our personal relationship with the Lord and within a couple of more visits the old voices stopped and were replaced with a new one, the voice of the Spirit. We have seen various mental disorders simply disappear and physical healing as the relationship with the Lord developed.

A CURE FOR REJECTION?

What is the principle behind this? Doctors inform us that stress is a major source of medical problems. One of the greatest sources of stress is a breakdown of interpersonal relationships.

The Spirit Led Life

The vast majority of these men came from dysfunctional families and were victims of varying degrees of rejection which transferred into emotional stress. What is the cure for rejection? Love!

On one of my overseas trips, I was sending a postcard to my boys who were very young at the time. My short message included, "Love you guys so much and missing you."

The Lord said, "When your sons read this they will be encouraged by this message. However, just imagine if your friend accompanying you went back home earlier than you. You told him to personally drop in and tell your kids how much you loved and missed them. This would be an even greater blessing to them. Nevertheless, there is nothing as powerful when you arrive home, look those boys in the eye and tell them, 'Dad loves you so very much.'"

The Lord went onto explain, "I have sent my postcard (the Bible) to my sons and daughters and they can read how much I love them. I have sent my friends (my many disciples) to tell them how much I love them. However, there is nothing as powerful and potent as when they hear personally from Me, 'I love you so much.'"

Once these inmates heard the voice of the Lord and He told them personally of His love for them, a river of healing flooded their hearts.

Nevertheless, realize this;

We all suffer from some degree of rejection and we all need to hear those words!

SUMMARY Chapter 5

1. God's final purpose is to bring us to a fully matured person *measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ*. When you see the fullness of Christ as your goal everything else becomes like a piece of garbage in comparison.
2. There are three basic stages of spiritual growth; little children, young men (and women), fathers (and mothers).
3. Natural babies receive 7 star treatment. They learn that their parents love them, protect them and will provide milk, clothing and shelter for them. All their "sins" of crying in the middle of the night, dirtying diapers and vomiting are forgiven.
4. Spiritual newborn babies have spiritual parents and a heavenly Father who will look after them. The babies do all the requesting. The Father doesn't expect total obedience because they don't as yet know His voice. They are aware that they also "sin" but are learning that their sins are forgiven them.
5. A 'son' doesn't need to be reassured by others about the reality of God. They experience God's reality, not by stories or the occasional sense of God's presence at a meeting, but by what He's doing through them. They've developed an indisputable confidence through hearing His voice and seeing the results of their ministry.
6. The focus of a 'child' is always on itself. "What about me?" The focus of a mature 'son' has now changed. He is equipped to think about others. "What about them?"
7. As a 'child' we **receive** by faith, as a 'son' we **give** by faith.
A baby receives salvation a son preaches salvation
A baby receives love a son gives love
A baby receives healing a son prays for the sick
A baby receives finance a son is a giver of money
A baby receives gifts of the Spirit ... a son delivers gifts of the Spirit.
8. Every believer can grow up to be spiritual 'fathers', not just full time ministers.
9. Functional parents want their children to do better than them. Jesus desires for all of His disciples to do greater things than He. ***and greater works than these he will do.***"
10. Growing old is inevitable; growing up is optional. Spiritual geriatrics are unable to hear personally from the Lord and walk in the Spirit. They become spiritually crippled and need to be totally spoon fed. Evaluate the level of maturity you are at presently and then look forward to your next stage of growth.
11. Even "baby" Christians can learn to hear from the Lord and as a result can receive healing.

Chapter 6

WHY HOME MEETINGS FLOUNDER

Many believers have been part of the recent vital restoration truth of meeting in smaller numbers, usually in the home. There have been many forms and names given to them; house church, cell groups, organic church and more recently simple church.

In western and other nations, home meetings have been a great step forward in the restoration of the church. They have released many believers to be able to minister to some degree and have provided greater levels of love and fellowship. However, in many cases, those joining home churches have been largely disillusioned and many of the home church leaders have been burnt out.

Anyone who is presently pinning their hopes on home churches (in their present state) as being **the** answer for the final end time move are going to be sadly disappointed.

SMALL GROUP COMPLACENCY

As we're all aware, God is continually restoring truth to us. In the natural, for a growing child, last year's clothes don't fit. When they grow out of wearing a diaper, it doesn't mean the diaper was inappropriate at the time but it needs to be discarded for the next stage of development. As the child continues to grow, the clothes change even from season to season, according to its needs.

As the church grows into full maturity, we need to put on new truths. It doesn't necessarily mean what we did last year was all wrong. It was simply needed at that stage of our growth. However, if we don't change with God's different seasons, we may find that what we've been doing doesn't fit the present level of development. God is restoring truth at an incredible rate and we need to keep up with the present growth spurt.

A danger to us is that, with the present truth we're receiving, we can have the sense that we've finally "arrived". Some will think that because they moved into small groups, they're up with God's next step of restoration and have become the "new wineskins". Church, in the home or small groups, is not **the** move. Just simply being in a home group or a cell church doesn't make you a new wineskin.

Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."*

John 14:6

Being equipped to be led by His Spirit in small groups and being encouraged by one another to go and do the works that Jesus did, **is** the move. This will take a whole new breed with a transformed mindset. It will take further truths to be revealed so we can put these on and grow into full maturity.

MAKE DISCIPLES

As important as they are, Jesus didn't say, "Go into all the world and build house churches." He told us to make disciples.

Meeting in smaller numbers is obviously part of God's restoration plan and it does provide the potential for deeper personal relationships and also greater participation of all in attendance. We stress the word "potential" because just having a small group does not automatically guarantee this is going to happen.

It's relatively easy to convince people that church in the home could be a solution for their frustration and a place where they could be fulfilled.

However, many have excitedly joined small groups and, after the honeymoon period, found they were not all they were cracked up to be. This is usually because we simply take the traditions of spectator Christianity from the larger gathering and transfer them into the home.

It becomes a case of “Honey, I shrunk the church!”

Let's realize that for years many have been told that going to a meeting will enable their needs to be filled and bring them the joy, peace and satisfaction they are seeking. Expecting that attendance will enable you to be filled with enough of God's life to last you for the next week will eventually leave you disappointed.

The Solution

How can we change meetings that don't seem to have the life in them as originally portrayed? If the group simply becomes a mini version of a larger, spectator gathering, it will end up in trouble. The goal of any leader or spiritual parent in the group should be to help each member to receive their daily bread by hearing from, and being led by, the Spirit. They do this by example, showing their dependence on the Lord in “all their ways” and then encouraging them to spend time with the Lord each day, expecting to hear from Him. As they do this, each member will not only be fulfilled personally, they will come with an overflow of life to give to others.

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit... John 7:38-39

River or Drain?

If they don't come to a meeting with a river of life, they will become dry and will eventually become a drain. They will eventually drain the life out of the leader or anyone else who has a water supply.

It is self evident that all of us have our dry times where we need the love and refreshing of others. However, there is a mile of difference between an occasional dry spell and a drought that goes on for years.

Meetings Aren't the Oasis

We must realize, for those who are spiritually parched, even the overflow of the group cannot provide all the life needed to totally refresh someone.

Believers looking to meetings, large or small, to totally satisfy their thirst will be, at best, temporarily fulfilled, only to find within a day or two they feel dry again. Our meetings can provide a few mouthfuls of living water, not the entire supply.

God obviously wants to provide more than one or two drinks a week, so how does He do it? A few mouthfuls of His blessings and goodness should encourage you to desire more. However, He doesn't necessarily want you to go to more and more meetings but rather to meet more frequently with Him. He desires each believer to be directly connected to Him, so He can become their perpetual water supply.

He wants to become their spring which will continuously satisfy them, enabling them to water others. Meetings aren't the oasis. He is!

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."
John 4:13-14

The greatest thing those in a meeting can do for you is to equip you to be connected to **the** thirst quencher and then continually encourage you to draw more and more from Him. *"If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink..." John 7:37.*

Can we see that if we maintain the traditional misconception that the meeting is the oasis, it will distract believers from total dependency on Him?

"Find rest O my soul, in God alone, my hope comes from Him." *Ps. 62:5 NIV.*

When you experience the fullness of God's love, you can set others free from your unjust expectations. You can then appreciate the comparatively precious little they have to offer without expecting or demanding more.

WHAT ABOUT THE BODY?

"Does the Lord operate through His Spiritual Body?" you may be thinking. "Doesn't He work through us?" Of course He does. However the issue is, "On whom are we depending ... man or God?"

As we relate to Him on a daily basis and share with Him our hopes, dreams and challenges, He will meet our needs. Some of them He will handle directly Himself. Some of them will be resolved as He shows us personally how we can overcome them. Other times He will direct those around us to assist and encourage us, both in meetings and outside of them.

The issue, as we said, is dependence on Him and not on others. As a result, if you start to live a Spirit-led life, releasing your overflow and touching others, then the Lord promises you;

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.
Isa. 58:11

"And he who waters will also be watered." ***Prov. 11:25***

"DIRTY HARRY" CHRISTIANS

Some of us might have seen a series of movies where Clint Eastwood plays the role of a detective named Dirty Harry. One of the well known lines from one of the movies was when he said to a criminal, "Go ahead ... make my day!"

Tradition has taught many Christians that going to a church meeting is all about them being blessed or entertained. Instead of going with a mindset to be equipped for their ministry, they come with a mindset, "Go ahead ... make my day!"

If the meeting does not give them a great day, it is considered poor. If equipped "Jesus' style" they will receive the message, "Go ahead, make somebody's day!"

A SPIRITUAL PARTY

In a natural birthday party, could you imagine what it would be like if there were no decorations, no cake and no one brought any presents? It would be a flop. A birthday party needs the participation and efforts of all those invited for it to get off the ground.

When we meet in a home, we are there to celebrate and, therefore, there should be a party atmosphere, with each person contributing toward its total success.

Gifts of the Spirit, fruit of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit should all be brought along and given to others.

If everyone contributed something, the celebration would be a knockout. However, we can see the obvious problems that will arise if everyone turned up thinking, "Wow, they're throwing this party for me. I wonder what everyone is going to give me this week." The meeting is destined to be a failure.

The leader cannot alone provide enough gifts and blessings to satisfy every person. After some time we'll end up with a room full of bored and disappointed people because the meeting didn't deliver. If people are retrained to bring His power and love along, we can have the best of both worlds with everyone giving and receiving. What great celebrations we could have in the home if everyone did this! Even a new Christian can share something, the success of answered prayer or a revelation of what the Lord had shown them in the Bible that week.

Although this kind of meeting is the aim of those who gather in small groups, and in some cases it's happening to a degree, in many cases it is not. The power of the Spirit is rarely evidenced and, if "the program" is followed, the meeting eventually dries up.

PARENTAL BURNOUT

Natural parents expect their children to grow up, become useful around the house and eventually have children themselves. They initially put huge amounts of time and effort into their offspring and then see the rewards of having them stand on their own two feet. Can you imagine a parent who would want to carry their children all their lives? They would eventually become worn out and miserable.

Because of traditional, spectator Christianity, the childlike mindset of many of those who transition from large church meetings to a smaller one will accompany them. If the spiritual parents don't quickly identify the problem and help and equip these spiritual "little children" into "sons" and "fathers" who walk in the Spirit, they will end up carrying them and become wearier and wearier. Depending on the individual strength of the leader, the time frame may be months, a couple of years or several years but, eventually, the incessant draining will do its work.

This leads to at least early retirement and, at worst, spiritual burnout. Christianity is a lifestyle. There should be no retirement...only re-fire-ment.

MOTIVATED SONS

Realizing that each believer is to be a contributor and that everyone (including the leader) needs your participation should motivate you to attend meetings. As a spiritual child you may have had an attitude which says, "I don't really feel like going today, I'll just stay home and relax." As a spiritual grown up you realize that, without your contribution, someone is going to miss out on a gift or blessing.

Those who consider they have little to offer are in error ...*those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 1 Cor. 12:22* We reveal our maturity by coming with a mindset that says, "I'm necessary Lord ... show me what to do today".

COMPLACENCY

While many may be contented with their present progress, how many of us could really say they are total love slaves to His will and purpose? Could we honestly say, "*In Him we live and move and have our being*"? *Acts 17:28*

We can set up a home church or a cell structure, teach core values and give vision but, unless we are motivated from within by a love for Him and the leading of His Spirit, it will be just like any other past move.

Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; Ps. 110:3

Surely, with the restoration of our theology, power, authority and structure, what we need is to combine these and operate as we should, to be directly led by Him.

Ideally, if we could get every part of the Body hearing directly from the Head, then the Body of Christ would do the work it is supposed to; *Let us throw off everything that hinders ... Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*" *Heb. 12:1,2*

Let's learn what we can from the movements, but keep our eyes fixed on the Mover.

SIMPLE CHURCH OR SIMPLE LIFE?

Tradition has dictated that the word "church" means a meeting and as a result "good" Christians are expected to "go to church". Most of us are aware the word "church" (ekklesia) is referring simply to God's people ... wherever they are, in meetings or not.

Generally "a church" is evaluated on the quality of the service. In other words, if the singing, preaching and ministry were considered of a worthy standard, then it receives the rating of a "good church". Unfortunately, in many cases, this same tradition has been adopted by those involved in home churches.

The Lord does not evaluate the church (the people) on the quality of the meetings. He is more interested in what they do during the rest of the week, not just for a couple of hours at a gathering. Jesus summed up what being a believer was all about...loving God and loving others ... and acted as our role model.

ROCK OR SAND?

There are many who have already fallen into the trap of thinking that simply forming home churches is the answer for the restoration of the church. Without the daily personal relationship with the Lord, spiritual parents will dry up. If the spiritual children are not equipped to hear from the Lord, they will remain little lambs and be a constant drain. In the past, home/cell groups have failed and will continue to falter and flounder because of it.

In one of the parables of Jesus, two men built homes, one on rock, the other on sand. As the floods hit, the home built on rock stood strong and the other fell apart.

I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the rock.
Luke 6:46 NIV

Traditionally we have interpreted this as simply obeying what is written in our Bibles but to whom was he actually speaking?

The words Jesus used when introducing this parable are very interesting. He talks about a person “*who comes to me and hears my words*”. This is a step beyond simply reading our Bibles. It’s someone who comes to Him personally and hears His words.

Of course He does speak to us through His words in the Bible as basic principles. However, He has a lot more to say to us as we come to Him and hear His personal words.

Church custom has taught us that prayer was a one way conversation and we do all the talking. Jesus model of prayer was a two way conversation resulting in Him only doing what the Father told Him to do.

The way we talk to God reveals our level of maturity. A spiritual little child will be mainly in request mode. A spiritual son will principally be in listening mode.

Church tradition says, “I pray and God obeys.”

Yonggi Cho said, “I pray and I obey.”

The man, whose house withstood the flood, “*dug down deep*” to find the rock. Those who work at developing a deep relationship with Him, will not only be able to withstand anything the enemy throws at them, they will counter-attack with a flood of good works.

This intimate relationship will transform them from “good” believers who know their Bibles into great ones who hear his personal instructions and then are empowered to change the lives of those around them.

But each one should be careful how he builds. For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. *1 Cor. 3:10,11*

The foundation of faith of “each one” is not our meetings... it’s our relationship and meeting with Him.

Individual believers need their feet firmly planted on;

- Coming to Him,
- Hearing His words,
- Doing what He says.

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Heb. 4:7

If members of our family home church aren’t grounded in this truth, they will find themselves on a shaky foundation. When the enemy floods in, the house will eventually fall apart. Let’s ensure we establish our family home churches on His substance, not on human form.

We believe this new home church move will rise or fall on this truth.

JESUS’ EXAMPLE

When Jesus came to earth as an apostle and prophet, He simply equipped and released a group of men to imitate Him.

Why was there a need for change? God’s people had the Old Testament, a book of rules that they were trying to obey. They however, had no ability to keep the commandments despite their best efforts.

Jesus had to give them a new foundation, a completely different way of overcoming sin and changing the world ...the Spirit led life. What's happening today? The majority of believers have been saved, cared for and well taught. Like their Old Testament counterparts, many are "trying" to be obedient to the New Testament.

Despite their best efforts, believers continue to fail and are guilt ridden because of it. As it was with His early apostles, Jesus is restoring the revelation of an intimate relationship with Him.

He is planting His foundational truths in the hearts of His end time disciples, who will model and lead the church into the Spirit led life enabling them to overcome sin and duplicate His works of love and power. As a result of this the church will grow and multiply. If He is our role model, let's imitate Him, not man's traditions.

OUR VISION

Now I plead with you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
1 Cor. 1:10

At the moment we have many in the Body of Christ with opposing views based, not only on doctrine, but on church structure.

Is God's best supposed to be a Traditional Sunday service, a cell church structure, independent house churches or a network of small groups? If we have the common goal of building Jesus imitators, we can be of the *same mind* and remove many of the present divisions among ourselves.

If equipping and releasing Spirit led believers becomes the goal, rather than based on a foundation of simply trying to have great meetings, then the structure will evolve to achieve that purpose. We are also realizing that one ministry gift cannot achieve this on their own. Each of the five fold ministry gifts need to impart to the believers.

There are four basic progressive needs for every believer.

- **Receiving Christ**
- **Care**
- **Equipping**
- **Releasing**

This is a statement of purpose that our community has come up with to enable every believer to have a common vision. It is based on Ephesians 4:11-13

We are a community of believers equipping people to live the Spirit led life, doing the works that Jesus did, by walking in intimacy with the Lord, eternally loving and serving one another daily, taking the gospel and healing to our community, our nation, and the nations of the world.

A paraphrased version; ***Win and equip people to lead the Spirit led life.***

SUMMARY Chapter 6

1. Home meetings have been a great step forward in the restoration of the church. They have released many believers to be able to minister to some degree and have provided greater levels of love and fellowship. However, in many cases, those joining home churches have been largely disillusioned and many of the home church leaders have been burnt out.

2. As important as they are, Jesus didn't say, "Go into all the world and build house churches." He told us to make disciples. In many cases we simply take the traditions of spectator Christianity from the larger gathering and transfer them into the home.

3. The goal of any leader should be to help each member to receive their daily bread by hearing from, and being led by, the Spirit. They do this by example, modeling their dependence on the Lord in "all their ways" and then encouraging them to spend time with the Lord each day, expecting to hear from Him.

4. As they do this, each member will not only be fulfilled personally; they will come with an overflow of life to give to others. If they don't come to a meeting with a river of life, they will become dry and will eventually become a drain. They will eventually drain the life out of the leader or anyone else who has a water supply.

5. Believers looking to meetings, large or small, to totally satisfy their thirst will be, at best, temporarily fulfilled, only to find within a day or two they feel dry again. Our meetings can provide a few mouthfuls of living water, not the entire supply.

6. There are many who have already fallen into the trap of thinking that simply forming home churches is the answer for the restoration of the church. Without the daily personal relationship with the Lord, spiritual parents will dry up.

7. If the spiritual children are not equipped to hear from the Lord, they will remain little lambs and be a constant drain. In the past, home/cell groups have failed and will continue to falter because of it.

8. In one of the parables of Jesus, two men built homes, one on rock, the other on sand. As the floods hit, the home built on rock stood strong and the other fell apart. Jesus talks about a person "*who comes to me and hears my words*". That's building on the rock.

9. Individual believers need their feet firmly planted on;

- Coming to Him
- Hearing His words
- Doing what He says

If members of our family home church aren't grounded in this truth, they will find themselves on a shaky foundation. When the enemy floods in, the house will eventually fall apart. This new home church move will rise or fall on this truth.

Chapter 7

THE MISSING LINK

I know there would be some who would say that we are already seeing the world turned upside down in many areas. Therefore, why is the Spirit led life so important?

Over the past few decades we have seen great evangelistic moves of the Spirit in third world countries. In Nagaland in northern India, it is reported that up to 90% of the nation committed their lives to the Lord amid a great outpouring of signs & wonders. However, within a relatively short period of time there was a great falling away with many of those excited believers eventually becoming what many term, “nominal” Christians.

We have reports around different parts of the world and in revivals in the past where a similar pattern takes place after a major move of the Spirit.

In recent years, particularly in third world countries, we have seen incredible numbers come to Christ through home churches. We recently took a team to the Philippines and planted over forty-five village house churches in a week. Many believe that these kinds of gatherings are the final piece of the restoration jigsaw. They believe the house church movement has launched a great ongoing end time move of God.

However, we believe that many of these are destined to eventually suffer the same deteriorating fate as Nagaland and other great evangelistic moves in the past.

How could such a great move of the Spirit in home churches possibly fade?

As we have just discussed, a fundamental truth is that every new believer needs to be equipped to lead a Spirit led life. They will then pass the power and love on to others. If this is not done, the move will continue to depend on the ground breaking leaders. Given ten or fifteen years, the initial fire will have been doused and it will leave in its wake a group of uninspired and unfruitful believers simply singing songs and doing Bible studies.

We need to establish a move that will not depend on a few inspired pioneering leaders but an army of believers that will provide a continuous and ongoing demonstration of love and power. The early church who raised spiritual “sons” saw this take place.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 8:1-2,4

This can only be accomplished today by equipping all believers to be “sons” led by the Spirit.

WHY THE TRADITION?

How did we get into our tradition of evangelism and the attending meetings (large or small) being the goal? The Lord has restored truth to the church at a pace that we could receive (unfortunately we’re slow at receiving change). Presently, we are still influenced in the main by the truths restored through pastors, teachers and evangelists. Church tradition teaches the roles of these ministries:

Evangelist: We are saved to get us to heaven.

Pastors: We are cared for until we get to heaven.

Teachers: We are well taught until we get to heaven.

We then receive a church vision of getting people saved at meetings, caring for them, teaching them the Bible and meeting continuously ... for the rest of their lives. As a result, the majority of the body of Christ are treading water until they reach their goal of getting to heaven. It's quite easy to see that if this is your goal, then meetings to achieve this end become the vision.

THE MISSING LINK

As vital as the components of evangelism teaching, shepherding are, the foundation of the church is not based on these ministries, but;

“... having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone...”
Eph. 2:20

Apostles and prophets lay the foundation on which all the other truths stand. That foundation is the cornerstone teachings of Jesus and Christ living His life through you, or, as we have already said ... the Spirit led life.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 3:10-12

How do you have a foundation which is in Jesus Christ? It's more than just believing!

I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the rock.
Luke 6:46 NIV

It's coming to Him, hearing what He says and doing it. Unfortunately this foundation has been eroded and is in dire need of restoration.

TEACHERS FIRST?

Equipping the church has been largely achieved by the teaching ministry. The Godly order for equipping is;

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers ...

Cor. 12:28

In God's order, the teachers are not to be the first in line to equip. The apostles and prophets are. What is their message? It is revealing the mystery and equipping the saints to be personally led from within.

... how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:
Eph. 3:3-6

SPIRIT LED NOT JUST SPIRIT FILLED!

While Bible teachers would agree and teach that the foundation is Jesus Christ, that foundation can mean different things to different people.

As we mentioned, some would teach the kingdom foundation is simply having Jesus in your heart and being baptized in water and the Holy Spirit. We have already shown that the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom is being personally led by the Lord from within.

Other teachers would claim they've been teaching the Spirit led life for years. That's probably true. Nevertheless, there is a mile of difference between being filled with the Spirit and being led by the Spirit.

There is also a major difference between simply telling people what they should do and a God-given anointing to provide effective modelling and equipping that enables them to actually do it.

PAUL'S FOUNDATION

The apostle Paul didn't teach all his epistles to the church at the beginning of his ministry. They weren't written, as there was no need for them at this elementary stage.

He placed in them a strong and sure foundation of a relationship with the Lord and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

This simple apostolic message of the gospel of the kingdom enabled believers to turn the country upside down. Many years later when they began to stray from these basics, Paul gave teaching through his letters to bring them back to the foundation of relationship with the Lord and the Spirit led life. We believe this type of correction is the fundamental gifting of a teacher:

... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine... Eph. 4:14

However, in many cases the full revelation of the apostles and prophets has not been given. The foundation of learning to walk in the Spirit has been sadly neglected or quickly passed over in the desire to move onto "the meat" or "the deeper things" of God.

This next Scripture can be used to make us feel the foundation or elementary principles are not all that important.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection... Heb. 6:1

Perfection is not just perfect knowledge of more of the Scriptures. Going on to perfection is maturing into a Jesus imitator.

Regarding meaty subjects Jesus said;

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34 KJV

The elementary principles included;

"and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come..." Heb. 6:4-5

In many cases, Jesus' practical "meat" ministry is replaced with a half a dozen or so theological lessons, without a kingdom of God (walking in the Spirit) foundation. Surely, if being led by the Spirit is "elementary" or the foundation, then a reasonable amount of time should be spent on it.

This will ensure the "little children" can grow into "sons" and walk in the Spirit.

STEP BY STEP

Even when the apostle Paul brought correction through his letters (many years later), it was specific to the particular need of each church. To one it was the warning of not going back under law, to another the lusts of the flesh and to others the error of particular false teaching etc.

In many cases today, all of Paul's epistles are given as "the meat", a substitute for basic foundations rather than a correction when and where it is actually needed.

Why is this so important? It's of little use of teaching a little child all the dangers of walking across the road ... unless they can walk.

Similarly, teachers will inevitably bring instruction on all of the Biblical "Don't do's". However, we are told God's answer is to be taught how to walk in the Spirit.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

How can we possibly be people who can overcome the "Don't do's" of sin unless we first learn how to walk in the Spirit?

But the word of the Lord was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line..." Isa. 28:13

Teaching to overcome error is needed but it should come in the order that God requires it; "*first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.*"

Teaching without the knowledge of achieving everything through Christ the cornerstone who strengthens them, can quickly become a work of the flesh. Believers will try to become better Christians through their own ability and continually fail.

"...for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13

The end result in churches which are predominantly equipped by a teacher, can be that knowledge of the word can become the priority, in contrast to the ability to do it.

Are we against teachers? Of course not! I love hearing anointed teachers and have been inspired and encouraged many times by this incredible gift. We are simply being candid about the content and order in which the Bible instruction is given.

APOSTLES & PROPHETS

Are we saying there are no apostles and prophets in the church teaching this? Of course not!

Nevertheless, there are many with prophetic and apostolic anointing who presently are limited in their ability to operate fully in their gifting. Their spiritual wings are kept

clipped by church tradition and structure. I know there would be those who would refute this and feel they are already filling this role. Some do equip believers to operate in the gifts and power. Nevertheless, in the main, the ministry remains confined to the church meetings and therefore limited.

In contrast, Jesus' ministry of preaching, healing and releasing gifts of the Spirit was predominantly conducted outside of the temple and synagogues. He modelled and equipped His disciples to live it as a lifestyle, not just for the occasional meeting.

There are today, many ministries who are claiming to be apostles or prophets. How do we know if they are authentic?

When I was with you, I certainly gave you proof that I am an apostle. For I patiently did many signs and wonders and miracles among you. 2 Cor. 12:12 NLT

Those operating fully in their anointing will move around in humility, fully presenting the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom and restoring the faulty foundations with signs and wonders following.

EVANGELISTIC OR APOSTOLIC CHURCH?

The early non-traditional church had no restrictions and the life of Christ flowed through them as they followed God's strategy. The apostles would win a core group of believers in an area, equip them and release them to share their faith. They knew they were God's ambassadors, His priests and His kings.

They shared the love of Christ, house to house, through relationships and with demonstration of His power.

Traditionally, our church planting doesn't operate like the early church. One example of this could be a gifted "church planter", operating in the perfect will of the Lord, who goes into an area and initiates a move of the Spirit where hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands may receive Christ.

Tradition dictates that they see their ministry as the main soul winner - and the ministry of the saints is to bring unbelievers to their meeting.

While this is true in the baby stage of the church, they can still miss the bigger picture of maturing the saints by equipping and releasing them to personally win souls.

Instead, they continue to build the church based on "their ministry" of soul winning.

The church can end up simply celebrating the leader's spiritual anointing.

Obviously, because they got Part A (their ministry) correct, there's initial blessing, but because they didn't see Part B (the ministry of the saints) as equally or even more important, the flow of God's Spirit was in the main restricted to one person's gifting.

Because the saints weren't equipped to hear directly from God themselves, enabling them to move in the fullness of His love and power, the move is choked.

Although relatively successful, it never reaches a "turning-the-world-upside-down" level. This is the difference between an evangelistic and apostolic church.

POURING OUT HIS SPIRIT

There have been many Christians who've prayed fervently for God to pour out His Spirit with the purpose of pouring life and power into His church.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.” *Acts 2:17*

Many then wonder why we’re only seeing relatively small or spasmodic results instead of the great on-going moves witnessed in such countries as China. Although these prayers are sincere, are they praying in line with the Lord’s will?

There have been some who thought that God was going to ‘somehow’ pour out His Spirit on everyone in a mystical, sovereign way while the church sit back in amazement. No, we’ve already solved the mystery. He is going to pour out His Spirit through us, just as He did through Jesus, His disciples and the early church. He explains very clearly how this outpouring occurs.

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” *But this He spoke concerning the Spirit ...* *John 7:37-39*

The preaching of the gospel, healing the sick, casting out of demons and gifts of the Spirit were all poured out ... through obedient believers.

Prayer, as Jesus modeled, was not simply a series of requests for His Dad to do things **for** Him. He asked what the Father wanted to do **through** Him.

There needs to be less of the traditional crying out to God to do something and more of the Jesus style of hearing what He wants done through us.

Perhaps our little saying, “You have one mouth and two ears ... use them proportionately!” could be useful at times.

To add to the problem, some have limited the term “spiritual warfare” to prayer requests. Therefore prayer can quite easily be turned into a substitute for the ‘hands on’ spiritual warfare of preaching, healing and gifts of the Spirit.

PRAYING ASTRAY?

In the natural, if a person has a build-up of cholesterol in their arteries around the heart, they become physically dysfunctional, incapable of performing the tasks they’d normally be expected to do. How would we help such a person? Do we pray for the heart so it will pump more blood? The heart isn’t the problem. It’s doing its job, but the life it’s producing is restricted by the cholesterol clogging its arteries.

Obviously, the offending cholesterol needs to be removed. If that is achieved, the body will receive the fullness of the life from the blood and become vibrant and healthy again.

When we receive Christ, we receive a new spiritual heart. Eze. 36:26

The new heart of the Lord is continuously attempting to pump His life and power through His Body. One major blockage, our spiritual cholesterol, is our traditions.

At the moment they’re restricting the life the Lord is attempting to pump into the Body of Christ. The end result;

“... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” *Mark 7:13*

Obviously then, the Lord and His Word, His promises are **not** the blockage. Once the restricting effects of traditions are eradicated, the Body will be able to receive the fullness of His life and power and be revitalized, performing to its highest potential.

Some may protest and defend our present position by indicating that we're seeing good results in some places.

A person who has a cholesterol problem will have a degree of life, but it will be restricted. The question is, are we content with the life the Body of Christ is exhibiting presently, or do we want, as the early church did, to be so healthy and powerful we can once again turn the world upside down.

MOVES THAT FADE

God hasn't stopped attempting to pour His life in and through every believer.

Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
Rev. 3:19-20

He's continually knocking on the door of our hearts looking for an opportunity to have intimacy with us. Traditions choked the Lord's life and relationship with us from reaching its highest potential. We have given you just a few examples; however, customs and traditions can come in many and various forms. Add to that independence and selfishness of many believers and you have a cocktail of obstruction. *Therefore be zealous and repent.*

We can now, perhaps, see why many great moves go for some time but eventually fade after a few months, or at best after relatively few years.

We know there are times and seasons of harvest and we could excuse ourselves by saying that, in our particular area, they're too materialistic or hard hearted. The Lord said there's always a harvest. John 4:35

Therefore, let's not continue to petition the Lord to pour out more life. First things first! Let's get our foundation sorted out and petition Him to pour out more revelation! Pray that the saints would be able to receive the fullness of His Word and receive what's already available to them.

When saints grasp the revelation of their potential, many will be zealous and repent from any tradition, independence and selfishness that would block, restrict or choke their relationship with the Lord. That's when they'll see the on-going acts of love and power. We then will have an army of end time believers who can pour out His Spirit on all flesh.

PAUL'S PRAYER

We trust that learning how to walk in the Spirit combining the different kinds of meetings with individual leading of the Spirit has become clearer to you.

Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus that their relationship with the Lord would grow.

He prayed for revelation (that the light would go on) revealing what potential they have and what understanding of the power which would enable them to achieve it. Read through his prayer, mediating on each part and believing for yourself and other believers.

“I have never stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future He has promised to those He called.

I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance He has given to His people.

I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of His power for us who believe Him.”

Eph. 1: 16-19 NLT

LAMBS GROW INTO SHEEP

Because Jesus had the same mind, heart and goals as the Father they became as one. He prayed that all believers could have exactly the same relationship and unity that He had with the Father:

“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me...”

John 17:22-23NLT

Please note, He didn't pray for us simply to make it to heaven.

He expects, believes and prays for you to come into this deeper level of relationship. We believe that this is His ultimate desire for you. Only out of this relationship and *such perfect unity* can you expect to fulfill all of His other great expectations including *“that the world will know that you sent me...”*

Although the thought of hearing from the Lord directly and being totally obedient may be daunting to many of us, we must keep in mind that He tells us it's possible ... and expected.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me....” *John 10:27*

“...the sheep follow him, for they know his voice....” *John 10:4*

Perhaps you are still relatively new in building your relationship with the Lord. You may be at the “child” or “lamb” stage (that is, you are just following what the other sheep do). Pray the prayer, “Please give me this day my daily bread, your personal words to me.”

Realize that He wants you to be able to hear from Him directly and He will help you to achieve this step by step.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

1 John 5:14-15

If this is His will and yours, surely that makes it a step by step inevitability.

SUMMARY Chapter 7

1. We need a move that will not depend on a few inspired pioneering leaders but an army of believers that will provide a continuous and ongoing demonstration of love and power. This can only be accomplished by equipping all believers to be “sons” led by the Spirit.

2. As vital as the components of evangelism teaching and shepherding are, the foundation of the church is not based on these ministries, but; “... *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone...*”

3. In God’s order, the teachers are not to be the first in line to equip. The apostles and prophets are. What is their message? It is revealing the mystery and equipping the saints to be personally led from within.

4. There is a mile of difference between simply telling people what they should do and a God given anointing to provide effective equipping that enables them to actually do it.

5. The foundation of learning to walk in the Spirit has been sadly neglected or quickly passed over in the desire to move onto “the meat” or “the deeper things” of God.

Regarding meaty subjects Jesus said;

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34 KJV

6. Teaching without the knowledge of achieving everything through Christ the cornerstone, who strengthens them, can quickly become a work of the flesh. Believers will try to become better Christians through their own ability and continually fail.

“...for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

7. If the saints aren’t equipped to hear directly from God themselves, enabling them to move in the fullness of His love and power, the move is choked. Although relatively successful, it never reaches a “turning-the-world-upside-down” level. This is the difference between an evangelistic and apostolic church.

8. God is going to pour out His Spirit through us, just as He did through Jesus, His disciples and the early church. He explains very clearly how this outpouring occurs.

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit ... John 7:37-39

9. Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus that their relationship with the Lord would grow. He prayed for revelation (that the light would go on) revealing what potential they have and what understanding of the power which would enable them to achieve it.

10. Jesus expects, believes and prays for you to come into this deeper level of relationship, His ultimate desire for you. Only out of this relationship and *such perfect unity* can you expect to fulfill all of His other great expectations including “*that the world will know that you sent me...*”

Chapter 8

DON'T GET STUCK WITH A STICK!

I was thinking about the many truths being restored to the church, when the Lord began to reveal some of the things that would hinder leaders from receiving and entering into what He is presently doing. To help me understand, He reminded me of some aspects of Moses' life.

Israel was told they were going to enter a Promised Land, a land of rest. (Heb.3 and 4). Even though he was Israel's leader and a great man of God, Moses did not enter into the Promised Land.

WHY?

"Why didn't he enter into the Promised Land?" the Lord asked me. I really didn't have a reasonable answer and He then began to reveal some things to me.

God of course had used Moses to do many great miracles using his rod. He had cast it onto the ground and it became a serpent and he used it to turn a river into blood and divided the Red Sea. (Ex. 4:3,4; 7:17; 14:6)

At one stage of their journey in the desert, water was needed for the thirsty Israelites and the Lord instructed Moses to use his rod once again.

"Behold I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and the water will come out of it, that the people might drink".

And Moses did so...

Ex. 17:6

At a later date the same problem of a lack of water arose and, once again, Moses was given an instruction by the Lord. However, this time there was a difference in the command.

"Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water..."

Num. 20:8

He was to speak to the rock, not strike it!
Nonetheless, what did Moses do?

Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly...

Num. 20:11

What was the result?

But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

Num. 20:12 NIV

Wow! He was going to miss out on the big one...the Promised Land.

At first glance it seemed to me that Moses was judged rather harshly. All he did was to hit the rock instead of speak to it. After all it accomplished the same end result and they still received their water.

Why was God upset with him over what would seem a minor mistake? After all Moses was a good guy, he knew God's word backwards and would have obeyed the Ten Commandments to the letter of the law.

A Personal Relationship

First of all, God was expecting far more from him than simply obeying the previous commandments. The reason; Moses had a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord.

So the Lord spoke to Moses as a man would speak to his friend. *Ex.33:11*

God had additional specific and individual instructions for Moses to follow, therefore He expected him to hear and obey.

Past Experience

Secondly, because those instructions were different for each particular occasion, He expected Moses to be adaptable.

Even though Moses knew God's voice, he didn't have an ear to hear this particular tailor-made instruction. He failed to be open to the new way that God wanted to move and instead, acted out of past experience.

Moses had many years experience of using that rod. God instructed him to use it to do miracle after miracle. He knew how to get water out of the rock; he'd done it before and knew the method. The method worked, but God was displeased. Why?

It wasn't what Moses achieved; it was how he achieved it. God was trying to wean Moses off using the rod onto another way of releasing His power; that of simply declaring what the Lord told him to say. God said, "... *you did not trust in me enough*".

WHY THE STICK?

Why did he have to use the stick at all? Did it have some magical power? Of course not! A rod was used originally to help someone when walking on a journey. It was like a crutch or form of support.

God initially told Moses to go and speak directly to Pharaoh (Ex. 3:18). Moses, however, was totally insecure.

"But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" *Ex. 4:1*

Moses needed some support, a crutch.

So the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

He said, "A rod."

And He said, "Cast it on the ground."

So he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent.... *Ex. 4:2-3*

God did of course do other things to reassure Moses, but the rod was used time and time again.

MADE BY MAN

The Lord went on to show me that the stick wasn't something that He created...it was man-made from a branch. He simply used something man had leaned on and then used it to achieve His purposes. God was transitioning Moses from using something made by man to simply relying on His spoken words.

OUR PROMISED LAND

We are told regarding Moses and the people of Israel;
These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings to us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! *1 Cor. 10:11-12*

Their Promised Land was a life of rest. Heb. 4:11. The church is also given a promise of a rest.

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. *Heb. 4:9*

Some Bible commentators see it as a future rest, the time we enter heaven. However, there is a present day rest that we can enter into.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Heb. 4:10

Jesus is our role model for this life of God's rest. However, He didn't sit around with his feet up all the time. How did He rest? He ceased from his own works and only did what the Father told Him to do.

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. *John 14:12 NIV*

He was totally led by the Spirit of God...at one with the Lord. This absolutely fulfilled Him, resulting in complete peace and joy...a life of rest.

We are given this Promised Land Scripture;

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to My Father. *John 14:12*

Many believers have tried to be obedient, going all out to witness to people, attempting to pray for the sick and working hard for the Lord. They didn't feel rested. They felt worn out, tired and frustrated because they saw minor results in comparison to all their efforts. They were certainly faithful in obeying the Lord's commands in a general sense, but they didn't do it like Jesus.

Jesus didn't read His Bible and simply try to keep the rules. He only did what the Father told Him to do.

As with Moses, this promise goes way beyond learning the Scriptures and trying to obey them. We are to have a personal relationship with the Lord and He desires to have “face to face” talks, giving us specific and individual instructions.

This is the Promised Land, a new era, which the Lord is taking us into, where we cease from doing our works (even attempted “good” works). It’s the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer for us. ...*that they may become one as We are one. John 17:22*

However, here are two different groups of believers who will **not** be able to move into this restoration truth:

GROUP ONE

First of all there will be one group of Christians who will find this new level of relationship and ability to hear from God hard to believe.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; *Cor. 2:14*

Secondly, the majority of Israel, including the leaders, knew of the giants in the land and they could not believe they could enter in. The task was too great and overwhelming.

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. *Heb. 3:19*

Like Israel, there will be some who will not be able to enter this truth. The thought of a Spirit led life is too gigantic, too overwhelming. Some leaders will find it hard to trust the Lord or believe for themselves, let alone the people.

GROUP TWO

There is, however, a second group of believers who believe in, and are expecting a greater flow of God’s love and power through His people, but, like Moses, they will not be able to enter in.

As with Moses, the church in the past has been very insecure. We have seen Scriptures that tell us we can walk and talk just as Jesus did, but the majority has not been able to totally fulfill it.

Many have not had the confidence, faith or understanding of how to walk in the Spirit. We have needed a walking stick or crutch, something man-made for us to lean on. As with Moses, God operated at the level of faith the church was at and the power and Spirit of the Lord flowed.

The props that have supported us come from various sources. Unlike Jesus, many have relied on printed material to hand out, “packaged” gospel messages and “getting people to church” to see people saved.

One of the greatest crutches has been the dependence on the Sunday church meeting. Many have looked to the pastor, the song leader and the musicians, depending on them and the meeting to release the flow of the Spirit.

As baby Christians there is no initial problem with this, for little children must depend on others. However, we are supposed to be equipped at meetings, enabling us to grow into sons who are led by the Spirit ... just as Jesus was. (Eph. 4:11-13; Rom. 8:14)

The Spirit Led Life

If we are expecting the church meeting to be the only place the Spirit moves, or if we are looking to it as our total support and crutch, we will not grow into the fully matured person God wants us to be.

***The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He leads me beside the still waters.....
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.***

Ps. 23:1-2,4

**He is our Shepherd.
He is the one who leads us
He is to be our crutch and our support.**

The Lord is taking us into greener pastures where we are fed and led directly by Him.

***...the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.
My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.***

John 10:4,27

Jesus is our only role model. He didn't rely on buildings and programs. He wasn't burdened by mortgages and administration and was free to hear one voice...His Father's. Every day there were meetings....meeting with His Dad, and then meeting the needs of others.

This does not mean that the Lord won't use something in the natural or man-made to achieve His will. When Jesus prayed for a blind man He put mud in his eyes. However, it only happened once. It wasn't a method He depended on.

The Lord is now weaning us off our dependence on anything apart from Him and His leading.

Is there anything that you are using as a crutch, which would hinder you from hearing His voice? The indicator or evidence of this would be a decline or absence of your peace and joy.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, I will counsel you and watch over you.

Ps. 32:8

LEADERS WHO DON'T GET IT

There will be some present day leaders who, like Moses, will not be able to make the transition into this new Promised Land. They may have been highly successful in the past and have used buildings, programs and entertainment to see people saved and for the Spirit to flow. Again, as with Moses, God has used these men to see the people receive the benefits of His Spirit. Nevertheless the size of the outpouring that God is now releasing is far too great to be contained in a building.

Like Moses, these leaders have been faithful and obedient to God in days gone by. They can honestly say, "God told me to do it this way!" However, it's a new day. Just as with Moses, if they continue with the way they've always done it, they will miss the new move.

Will the people still be blessed? Yes! Even with Moses' disobedience the people still received the water.

The people will receive the blessing, but the leaders won't enter in.

This will be the hardest part for them to grasp. Not understanding what God is now saying, they will think that, because there is still a degree of blessing, they are in God's will.

A DISTANT VISION

After disobeying God, Moses was led by the Lord to a high place and shown the Promised Land from afar.

Many leaders have seen the upcoming move from a distance. They know there is a great outpouring of the Spirit on the horizon. Unfortunately, they can only see it from afar and are unsure how it is going to happen. They are still looking to the old ways.

Under Moses, all the people watched as the Lord worked through him, but in the Promised Land, God took the land through the people.

In our present church system, most of the people still look to the leader as God works through them. In the new move, God is going to take the land through the people.

The Lord wants leaders to discard the rod...the rod on their backs. He wants to release them from the stress of administration, enabling them to do what they are anointed to do. They are to imitate the works of Jesus in their daily walk, relying on His specific guidance and as a Christ-like role model, equip others to do the same. They too will then be able to enter the rest.

WHAT'S YOUR ONE THING?

If I told you that you could have the same anointing as the apostle Paul, what would be your first and foremost goal?

- Incredible miracles, signs and wonders
- Revelation and a great teaching gift
- Preaching to hundreds of thousands
- Planting successful churches
- A ministry on T.V.

Remember Paul's goal. It was to develop such an intimate relationship with the Lord that he might become one with Him and work in perfect unity with Him.

For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead...

Phil. 3: 7-9, 12-14 NLT

Note the words; *gain Christ ... become one with him, to possess that perfection ... I focus on this one thing.*

This was his major vision, his pivotal all-important indispensable goal. Can we like Paul, focus on *this one thing* knowing that all other ministry will fall into place once this foundation is established?

MY CHALLENGE

As I have begun sharing about this new move, there have been a few who seem to have been unsettled by it. Criticism began coming my way in various forms and, without realizing it, I started to become defensive. There was a propensity to become critical myself. Fortunately, the Lord was on hand to give me this correction in the form of a prophecy from a Godly acquaintance.

**Do not drop your guard in regard to criticism and start moving in the flesh.
It is My work ... don't try to prove the work.**

By your reactions you can allow a critical spirit to enter the work. Guard against this. Be all things to all men.

This is a special work I am preparing; established movements will not understand the working of My Spirit. In this case, only those that I choose to open their eyes will see.

It is not your concern who accepts or who rejects the work.

You move on and do what I have told you to do.

Guard your emotions. Do not let them dictate your peace.

I included this simply because, as with me, there is a possibility of others losing their peace and joy...the very things the Lord is trying to establish in our hearts.

Some believers may be openly critical, others will be afraid, just as the Israelites were and many will simply not understand, thinking it's all too radical.

How are we to react?

Pray for revelation for them.

HONORING PATRIARCHS

The Lord asked me, "Moses was disobedient and didn't enter in, nevertheless how do you remember him?"

"I really only think of his humility, leadership and the great things You did through him." I replied

"There will be many of my faithful humble servants who will see this new move of My Spirit from afar but they will not be able to enter in. Honor them as you would honor Moses."

Let's ensure that we do not become critical of those ones who have served the Lord magnificently in their generation. Instead, let's remember the great things they have achieved and remember:

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings to us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!
1 Cor. 10:11-12

Let's not be like Moses and get stuck with a stick.

SUMMARY Chapter 8

1. Israel was told they were going to enter a Promised Land, a land of rest. Even though he was Israel's leader and a great man of God, Moses did not enter into the Promised Land. Why?
2. The Lord instructed Moses to strike his rod against the rock to release the water for the thirsty Israelites. Later, the same problem of a lack of water arose. Moses was given an instruction by the Lord to speak to the rock, instead he hit it with his rod.
3. Even though Moses knew God's voice, he didn't have an ear to hear this particular tailor-made instruction. He failed to be open to the new way that God wanted to move and instead, acted out of past experience.
4. The method worked, but God was displeased. It wasn't what Moses achieved; it was how he achieved it. God was trying to wean Moses off using the rod.
5. That the stick wasn't something that God created...it was man-made. The Lord simply used something man had leaned on and then used it to achieve His purposes. God was transitioning Moses from using something made by man to simply relying on His words.
6. Jesus is our role model for this life of God's rest. However, He didn't sit around with his feet up all the time. He only did what the Father told Him to do. He was totally led by the Spirit of God. This absolutely fulfilled Him, resulting in complete peace and joy...a life of rest.
7. As with Moses, this promise goes way beyond learning the Scriptures and trying to obey them. We are to have a personal relationship with the Lord and He desires to have "face to face" talks, giving us specific and individual instructions.
8. This is the Promised Land, a new era, which the Lord is taking us into, where we cease from doing our works (even attempted "good" works).
9. Many have not had the confidence, faith or understanding of how to walk in the Spirit. We have needed a walking stick or crutch, something man-made for us to lean on. As with Moses, God honored that level of faith we were at and the power flowed.
10. Like Moses, some leaders have been faithful and obedient to God in days gone by. They can honestly say, "God told me to do it this way!" However it's a new day. Just as with Moses, if they continue with the old ways, they will miss the new move.
11. Will the people still be blessed? Yes! Even with Moses' disobedience the people still received the water. The people will receive the blessing, but the leaders won't enter in.
12. Can we like Paul focus on *this one thing* of intimate relationship, knowing that everything else will fall into place once this foundation is established?

The Spirit Led Life

For those who have difficulty in hearing or identifying the voice of the Lord, we suggest you go through our book “Up Close & Personal with Jesus” which contains 40 ten minute daily activation exercises.

Resources: www.spirited.com.au

Online Ministry School: www.spiritedacademy.com