

## THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH STUDY GUIDE

### NEW COVENANT & HOLY SPIRIT (John 13:1-30)

John 13:1 The night our Lord Jesus was taken into captivity, he presented the most comprehensive teaching on the spirit of truth, in which he made an inseparable connection between the spirit and the new covenant.

The entire presentation recorded in John 13-17 relates to Jesus' knowing that he was departing out of the world. Although the event took place before his suffering, death, and resurrection, his focus was upon the time he would ascend. The whole point is preparation for his disciples to function without his being physically present.

The introductory verse places emphasis on love: "having loved His own...He loved them to the end." Love is a major theme throughout these chapters. Repeatedly, we will be drawn to this all-important subject.

John 13:2 and 3 The motivation behind his actions was the knowledge of what God had done for him and what God was going to do for him. The reason he washed the disciples' feet had everything to do with God.

The right motivation is all-important to our godly service and the holy spirit.

John 13:4-7 As the months rolled by and Peter reflected on this night, surely he would marvel at the incredible act of love manifested forth by his Lord.

John 13:8-11 This was the first of many loving attempts directed at Judas to help him abort his evil mission.

John 13:12-17 His motivation for this loving service was not because they deserved such treatment. He washed their feet because of genuine selfless love and awareness of what God had done and would do for him.

Luke 22:22-30 All genuine service must be as Jesus demonstrated—with love for God, great humility, and no desire for gaining something back from the served ones. The reward gained will be received from the Father when His kingdom comes.

John 13:26-30 He gave him every possible way to exercise his free will in order not to do this terrible thing. He never forced him or tried to control him in any way, because this was not God's way. The loving service given that night was not only in what he did, but also in what he did not do.

John 13:31-35 The standard regarding love was the new aspect in this commandment—"even as I have loved you." If Jesus had said this at any other time in his ministry, the command would have been very hard to aspire to do. However, he waited until the exact right time when we could grasp the fullness of his incredible love. After washing the undeserving feet of all his disciples and Judas departed immediately to betray him unto death, he says to love like him!

John 13:36-38 The love that Jesus demonstrated that night ending with his crucifixion on the tree is the love we are commanded to live as his followers. The new covenant has everything to do with the promises God has made regarding our redemption and salvation, which will be completely realized when Jesus returns. Our responsibility in this covenant is to be Christ-like. The very core of our behavior is to be love—"as I have loved you" kind of love. The only possible way anyone could fulfill this commandment is with the holy spirit. The holy spirit enables the believer to love just like Christ. The primary purpose of the spirit is to make possible Christ-like love For God and Christ-like service to others.

- The most comprehensive teaching on the holy spirit is contained in John 13-17, our Lord's last teaching before his captivity.
- The instruction Jesus communicated that night had everything to do with preparing his disciples to live under the new covenant.
- The teaching was preparation for his disciples to function without him physically present, since he would shortly ascend into heaven.
- The motivation behind his actions was the knowledge of what God had done for him and what God was going to do for him. The most humble, loving, and illustrative act of service was the washing of the disciples' feet. His motivation and actions are what we are to follow if we too want to walk by the spirit.
- All genuine service must be as Jesus demonstrated—with love for God, great humility, and no desire for gaining something back from the served ones. The reward gained will be received from the Father when His kingdom comes.
- The new covenant has everything to do with the promises God has made regarding our redemption and salvation, which will be completely realized when Jesus returns. Our responsibility in this covenant is to be Christ-like. The very core of our behavior is to be love—the "as I have loved you" kind.

## THE DWELLING PLACE (14:1-12)

John 14:1-3 His concern during this final evening together with his disciples right before his passion was their preparation for life without his being physically present on earth.

John 14:6 "Unto the Father" is the place he was going, and he made clear how they could get to the same place—through Jesus who is the way to the Father. Important to note is that not once in this dialogue did Jesus mention heaven or state that the disciples were going to come to him; rather, he declared his coming to them.

Verse 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN."

Verse 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I WILL COME TO YOU."

Verse 28 "You heard that I said to you, I go away and I WILL COME TO YOU."

Verse 23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and WE WILL COME TO HIM."

The very essence of what Jesus is putting forth is that he would come and dwell within his people by means of the holy spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, this indwelling began and continues to this day when someone believes.

The dwelling place that Jesus went to the Father to prepare is in the believer and not in heaven.

John 14:23 The word "abode" comes from the Greek word *monē*, which is used only twice in the entire Greek text. Both uses are here in John 14, in verses 2 and 23.

The introductory words of Jesus in John 14:1-3 are explained as we continue to read in the chapter. To attempt interpreting these three verses while ignoring everything that he continues to say is not an honest or accurate interpretation.

John 2:6 The temple was called the house of God. (It is used over 80 times in the Old Testament.)

1Corinthians 3:16 and 17; 6:19; Ephesians 2:20-22 While speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus said a time was coming that the worship of the Father would not be in Jerusalem where the temple was located, but that "the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." After the Lord's ascension and the day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was first given, the temple of God switched to mean the whole Christian Church. The word "Church" is the Greek word *ekklesia*, which literally means "called out." The called out are the people of God, those who believe. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD and never rebuilt. The Apostle Paul makes plain that God changed the meaning of "the temple of God" from the building at Jerusalem to refer to the entire Christian Church (the people of God). Thus, the house of God, which is the temple of God, is the entire Church made up of all the individual members

Acts 2:33 The habitation (dwelling place) of God today is the Body of believers. We are God's dwelling place, for which Jesus lived and died. God raised him from the dead, and he ascended into heaven so that this dwelling place could be a reality today. When Jesus said, "In My Father's

house are many dwelling places [or abodes]," he was talking about each and every person who would believe and receive the holy spirit. At the time he spoke, it was necessary for him to complete all his work and then ascend to the Father in order for the holy spirit to be sent forth. This would enable that he and God could dwell within the believer.

Jesus did not go to heaven to prepare a place for believers to follow. Rather, he went to the Father to prepare in order for us to receive him and the Father through the holy spirit. After Jesus stated what is recorded in John 14:3, he was asked questions which he answered. After the dialogue was complete, he went back to the topic he originally introduced, which concerned his coming and the dwelling place of God.

John 14:6-11 The unified relationship Jesus maintained with the Father was based upon two very significant things:

1. The spirit that God gave Jesus, which enabled consistent communication and
2. Jesus' ardent determination always to do the will of God above his own will.

John the Baptist saw the spirit out of heaven descend upon Jesus and testified that the spirit remained upon him (John 1:32 and 33). As the believers before him, Jesus received God's spirit so that God could influence him. According to John 3:34, the spirit Jesus received was without measure, indicating he received all there was to receive. The spirit connected Jesus to God and enabled the unified relationship he explained to Philip. God did His part by granting the spirit; Jesus had to do his part by obeying God's communication that came via the spirit. The words and works of Jesus gave absolute proof of the oneness of his relationship with God.

John 14:12 Jesus did many mighty works, but the greatest work that he did (which is explained in the context) is to maintain the oneness of his relationship with God. Again, this was available because Jesus had the spirit and was always obedient to the Father, thereby solidifying his unity with God. We, too, can do this work and enjoy the same relationship, not only with God, but also with the ascended Christ.

- Our Lord's teaching during the last supper focused on the relationship his disciples would have with him and God after his ascension; therefore, it is central to our faith.
- The dwelling place that Jesus went to the Father to prepare is in the believer and not in heaven.
- After the Lord's ascension and the day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was first given, the temple of God switched to mean the whole Christian Church.
- When Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places [or abodes]," he was talking about each and every person who would believe and receive the holy spirit.
- Jesus did not go to heaven to prepare a place for believers to follow; rather, he went to the Father to prepare for us to receive him and the Father through the holy spirit.
- The unified relationship Jesus maintained with the Father was based upon two very significant things: 1) the spirit that God gave Jesus which enabled consistent communication and 2) Jesus' ardent determination always to do the will of God above his own will.

## THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (14:12-31)

John 14:12 The word "truly" is from the same Greek word that is translated *amen*, which means certainly, so be it. The word comes from the verb to confirm, to establish, to be truth. When Jesus said "truly, truly" (or as other translations have it, "verily, verily") as a preface, great emphasis was placed on that which followed. Jesus has gone unto the Father, and if we believe on him, then we can do the works he did and greater works than he did.

John 14:13 and 14 Prayer is the first great principle, followed by obedience.

John 14:15 With this statement, Jesus begins a subject of repeated concern throughout his teaching, that is obedience. He makes an inseparable connection between obedience to his commands and the holy spirit. The holy spirit enables God and Christ to dwell within and to communicate with the believer, which has no logical point if the person is unwilling to be obedient. What purpose can the spirit serve in an individual who is unwilling to obey?

Obedience to his commands and the holy spirit are always connected.

John 14:15 and 16 The word "helper" is translated from the Greek word *parakletos*, which literally means one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate, and intercessor. In a broader sense, it means a helper, succorer, aid, and assistant. *Parakletos* is used only five times: four of which are within this teaching in John referring to the holy spirit, and one is in the epistle of 1 John and refers to Jesus.

In calling it "another helper," he implies that the holy spirit would replace him who was serving as their helper.

The holy spirit is the replacement for Christ himself on earth.

Since some have been tempted to conclude more than is intended by the word "forever," it is valuable to understand that "forever" is translated from the Greek word *aion*, which could and mostly should be translated "age," meaning a period of time.

John 14:17 In the Church Epistles, the holy spirit is called many things; however, in this introductory teaching by our Lord, it is most often called **THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH**. As his teaching progresses, he explains why. The unbelievers in Jesus' day, as well as today, are clueless regarding the spirit or spiritual matters. His disciples had knowledge about the spirit even before they received it, because the spirit dwelled within Jesus and they were with him. On the day of Pentecost (which was imminent), they too would have the spirit of truth. With this comment, Jesus is beginning to explain his early statement that his followers would do also the things he did. Here he implies that they would be equipped to be just like him because the spirit of truth was going to be in them.

John 14:18-20 The spirit of truth enables Jesus to be within his disciples and therefore to continue to parent them as he did while walking with them. The new arrangement (the spirit of truth replacing Jesus in the flesh) was a better situation, because now Christ could be closer to every disciple and always present with each one. The spirit of truth enables Jesus to nurture each disciple by providing teaching, guidance, reproof, correction, and so on.

John 14:21 The oneness relationship with God, Christ, and the believer is available because of the spirit and is also understood because of the spirit.

The subject of love began in chapter 13 when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and continued throughout the entire teaching. With regards to the specific subject of the holy spirit, Jesus sandwiched his comments between the truth that to love him is to be obedient to his commandments. John 14: 15 says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments;" and John 14:21 says, "He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me...." We are compelled to acknowledge that the holy spirit has much to do with loving obedience.

**JOHN 14:15  
LOVING OBEDIENCE**

**JOHN 14:16-20  
HOLY SPIRIT**

**JOHN 14:21  
LOVING OBEDIENCE**

Obedience to the commands of Christ requires one to first receive the holy spirit and then to walk by it thereafter. Therefore, it is a mandatory requirement to understand and live according to his teaching, which is written within the Scriptures. The lordship of Christ has everything to do with his followers' obeying his commands and not just confessing his name. The precursor to walking by the spirit is the acceptance of the lordship of Christ.

Lordship implies a subordination relationship of suppressing our will to be obedient to his will, which is clearly stated in the Scriptures.

John 14:22 and 23 Judas did not understand what Jesus was talking about. This is not surprising since he had just said "in that day" when the spirit came, then they would know what the indwelling of God and Christ through the spirit meant. None of them understood at the time of this teaching what he was talking about. After they experienced these truths, then they understood.

Again, we see that love and obedience are connected and necessary in order to have a relationship with the Father and Christ.

John 14:25 and 26 Jesus was sensitive to the struggle the disciples had in understanding what he was teaching and assured them that the spirit would help them to understand. In essence, the spirit was going to be more effective than he was able to be at that time.

John 14:27-31

- Prayer is the first great principle.
- Genuine love for Christ has everything to do with obedience to his commandments.
- Jesus made an inseparable connection between obedience to his commands and the holy spirit. The holy spirit is our helper.
- The holy spirit is the replacement for Christ himself on earth.
- The holy spirit helps the disciple in a very similar way that Jesus did before his ascension.
- The holy spirit will be with the disciples until the end of the age.
- The holy spirit is the spirit of truth.
- The spirit equips the believer to be just like Jesus.
- The spirit of truth enables Jesus to nurture each disciple.

- The oneness relationship with God, Christ, and the believer is available and understood by means of the holy spirit.
- Holy spirit has much to do with loving obedience.
- We have a mandatory requirement to understand and live according to his teaching, which is written within the Scriptures.
- The holy spirit is a teacher of all things and a reminder of the things Jesus taught.

## ABIDE IN ME (15:1-16:4)

John 15:1-8 He abides in us by the holy spirit, and we abide in him by obeying his commands. A simple and easy to understand agricultural analogy is provided to demonstrate this great truth.

John 15:9 and 10 The Father wants us to bear much fruit both today and when Christ returns.

Fruit is contingent upon abiding in him; and abiding in him has everything to do with obeying his commandments.

He adds additional perspective to prayer by saying that if we abide in him and his words abide in us, our prayers will be answered.

John 15:11 People try many, many ways to attain joy, and all fall short because true joy is only received one way. The joy that Jesus had was not reliant on circumstances, situations, or people. His joy came from his relationship with his Father and was completely uninfluenced by the world around him. We can have the same joy as we maintain the same oneness relationship.

John 15:12-17 The love that Jesus manifested to God was entirely based upon obeying God's words and doing God's deeds. In like manner, we are to love God and Christ by obeying our Lord's words and doing his deeds. To love one another is the second great command that Jesus taught. Love for others is not optional if we want to love God. The standard for loving others was set when Jesus laid down his life on the cross. This completely unselfish act was motivated out of loving obedience for God and not a response to the actions of others. Our love for others, likewise, is to spring forth from the same loving motivation of obedience to God. The worldly standard for love is do unto others as others do to us. In a previous teaching, Jesus said to love others the way we want to be loved. Then, here he elevated the standard much higher by commanding that we love others as he loved us. In the context of this teaching during the last supper and with his subsequent suffering and death, we are provided a vivid example of his love.

Our love for others is to spring forth from the loving motivation of obedience to God.

Friendship with our Lord is founded upon lordship, since the stated requirement is obedience to his commands. A friend is a close acquaintance attached to another by affection or esteem. Our Lord lives within those who have the spirit and who abide in him by their obedience. Could there be a closer friend? He wants his friends to bear much fruit and once again encourages prayer. To have a friendship relationship with the Lord of glory is an unspeakable blessing and honor. We have been called to such a high and holy calling; however, there is a cost. If we are friends with the Lord, we will be enemies of the world.

John 15:18-25 The substance of these important verses has occurred more than once previously. When Jesus sent out the 12 apostles, he provided detailed instruction, which not only related to that short missionary event, but more importantly to their entire lives as his witnesses. The negative response of the world was a large part of that instruction. Satan is the god of this age and influences those in his control to hate the true God and His light (John 3:20).

John 15:26 and 27 The spirit of truth will testify about Christ and enable his apostles to do the same also.

John 16:1-4 Jesus spoke these things to his followers to prepare them for the future when he would not be with him. He wanted them to know before it happened, so that they would not be tempted to stumble. As daunting as these matters may be, we are very encouraged because the spirit of truth equips us for the struggle and places us in a better situation than even Jesus Christ provided while with his disciples in the flesh.

- For life to have any meaningful fruit now and in the day of judgment, we must abide in Christ, lest we be cut off and thrown in the fire.
- Fruit is contingent upon abiding in him; and abiding in him has everything to do with obeying his commandments.
- Love is not good feelings, thoughts, or intentions; rather, it is keeping his commandments.
- The joy Jesus had came from his relationship with his Father and was completely uninfluenced by the world around him. We, too, can have the same joy as we maintain the same oneness relationship.
- Love for others is not optional if we want to love God. The standard for loving others was set when Jesus laid down his life on the cross.
- Friendship with our Lord is founded upon lordship, since the stated requirement is obedience to his commands.
- Those who bear the light are hated by those who embrace darkness.

## THE HELPER (John 16:4-33)

John 16:4-6 According to John 20:31, the express purpose for the writing of the gospel of John is "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Therefore, John often quotes Jesus' foretelling the future and saying, "I am telling you this before it happens, so when it does happen, you will have faith."

John 16:7 Of all he said that night, perhaps the most shocking was that it was better for them that Jesus left so that the spirit could come (which implies that the spirit of truth was more advantageous than the present Christ).

John 16:8-11 That which Jesus foretold about the helper became a reality the very first day it was given, the day of Pentecost. After the original outpouring, a multitude gathered, to which Peter delivered a powerful teaching explaining the significance of what had happened. His manner of presentation and words were obviously inspired by the newly received holy spirit. The teaching was confrontational and convicting to those who heard. At the conclusion of the presentation, the people "were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" Less than two months earlier, these same people clamored for the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ. What made the difference? The holy spirit convicted them of their sin, righteousness, and judgment. Important to note is that the spirit, not Peter, convicted them. This same pattern continued throughout the book of Acts and ever since, thereby fulfilling what Jesus prophesied as is recorded in John 16.

Disciples have the responsibility to witness the gospel to others, but the holy spirit has the responsibility to convict the hearer.

John 16:12-15 The spirit of truth is not a person, but rather a thing. The translators should have used the word "it" rather than the pronoun "he." The spirit has no separate will or personality; rather, it serves as a means for Jesus to communicate with and empower his disciples.

The spirit of truth guides the believer into the **all truth**; therefore, without it, all the truth is just not available to know. The greatest educated men in the world can study the Bible a lifetime and still never understand the truth, because it is revealed by the spirit and not just by education. Believers have the responsibility to study the Scriptures and should do so on a daily basis; however, understanding is provided by the spirit.

John 16:16-22 The upcoming events before Jesus the night he spoke all these wonderful truths were going to be extremely difficult for him and his disciples. The disciples would experience hurtful emotions never felt by them before, so Jesus prepared them by telling them that after it was all over, they would see him again.

John 16:23-27 After the resurrection and before the ascension, the disciples often were with Jesus, which brought great joy. However, Jesus' comments had a much further view in mind: when the holy spirit would come and he would dwell within them. Staying faithful to the theme of his teaching, preparation for his ascension, he initiated a new way to pray. Throughout his ministry and this teaching, he taught and encouraged his followers to pray. Now, in view of his departure, he stated they were to pray to the Father in his name.

John 16:28-33 Due to the accomplished work of our Lord and his current position as our high priest seated at the right hand of God, we have access to God the Father through his name. His

promise regarding their new and exceedingly improved relationship with God gave great reason to rejoice; however, the looming events of the evening overshadowed the promises to come.

- The spirit of truth was more advantageous than the present Christ.
- Christ is now in each person who has spirit and is thus able to teach his disciples more effectively than when he was here on earth.
- Disciples have the responsibility to witness the gospel to others, but the holy spirit has the responsibility to convict the hearer.
- The spirit has no separate will or personality; rather, it serves as a means for Jesus to communicate with and empower his disciples.
- The spirit of truth guides the believer into the all truth; therefore, without it, all the truth is just not available to know.
- The misuse of the spirit in the church most often brings attention or glory to the individual, whereas the genuine use of the spirit always brings glory to Christ and God.

## POWER IN THE CHURCH

1Peter 3:18 Jesus died, as all mortals eventually do; but unlike all others, God raised him from the dead. Therefore, he now has *spiritual resurrection life*. With his new immortal spiritual life, he made the announcement of his finished work and accomplishments to those locked in prison.

1Peter 3:19 and 20 Genesis chapter 6 contains the record referred to here in Peter. God saw "that the wickedness of man was so great that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Things were so bad that God determined that the best course of action was to flood the earth and destroy everything, save those on the ark. Apparently, evil spirits played a big part in the evil of that time. Some of these spirits were locked in a spiritual prison where they remain until judgment day. Jesus had the power and authority to visit these spirits to proclaim God's victory and their defeat. Jesus' *spiritual resurrected life* enables him to have power and authority greater than anyone else in the entire universe with the exception of Almighty God.

1Peter 3:22 He is seated at the right hand of God, which signifies he was exalted to the position of the most honor and power in the heavens and earth. God was pleased to place Jesus in this position.

Colossians 1:18-20 Jesus was able to set straight everything that was ruined in the beginning with the fall. Both heaven and earth suffer greatly due to the sinful acts of the devil and Adam. Jesus put it all right again.

Ephesians 1:19-23 God wants the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened regarding the exalted position of Christ and its relevance to our spiritual well-being and supernatural power.

Again, we see Christ's exalted position, which extends over all now and in the age to come. God put ALL things under his feet! The book of Ephesians continues into chapter 2 with the same context. First, we are reminded that we were once under the powerful influence of the devil; therefore, we lived sinful lives. But due to the rich mercy and great love of God, we were saved. We are now connected to Christ in his death, resurrection, and exalted position in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4-6

Christ is seated at the right hand of God, so then we too must be in this same place, which indicates access to the same kind of power and authority

Colossians 1:13 and 14

Throughout the gospels, we see Jesus and his followers operating power over darkness and evil spirits. In preparation for his departure with the ascension, he taught the disciples about the holy spirit, which would enable his followers to function as he had on earth and to be led by him while he was in heaven. They were clearly taught that the power they operated with him was not a temporary happenstance, but rather a type for what they could continue to do, even after he was gone. Their ministry was to be a continuation of his, in which they would preach the Kingdom of God and operate the same delivering power so that the captives could be set free.

Matthew 4:23

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

Matthew 9:35

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Right before Jesus' ascension, he stated clearly the power and authority the Church has (Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5&8).

The Church has the power and authority to partner with Christ in carrying out his work.

The Church has been given incredible power and authority to partner with Christ to accomplish the will of God on earth. The night Jesus was taken into custody, he gave detailed instruction regarding the coming of the holy spirit. After he was resurrected and reunited with his disciples, he returned to the same subject matter.

John 20:21-23

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

"If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

On the day of Pentecost, immediately following the ascension of Christ, the holy spirit was indeed poured out for the first time. The apostles breathed in as they had been instructed and received into manifestation the holy spirit. They all spoke with tongues and started operating the same power they watched their Lord operate as he carried out his ministry. The book of Acts records their actions.

When Jesus said that if they forgave or retained the sins of others that it would be so, he confirmed their partnership with him. In essence, he was saying, "I will stand with you and support your endeavors."

Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18

John 14:12

Truly, truly, 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 the Father.

Why is the church so powerless? Although Jesus completely defeated the devil and his cohorts and their eternal destiny is hellfire, the sentence has not yet been carried out. According to Revelation 20, when Jesus returns, the devil will be locked in chains for 1,000 years (after which he will be loosed for a short while). Then he will be cast into the lake of fire along with all the evil spirits. Until that time, the devil still has influence upon the earth. However, believers have the authority over him and can utilize this authority whenever they choose to do so. The problem

is twofold: we are ignorant of the power and authority that is ours, or we fail to use our God-given authority.

Knowledge without authority is useless, as is authority without knowledge. We need both to walk as our Lord instructed.

### **WE HAVE THE POWER!**

- Jesus' *spiritual resurrected life* enables him to have power and authority greater than anyone else in the entire universe with the exception of Almighty God.
- God wants the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened regarding the exalted position of Christ and its relevance to our spiritual well-being and supernatural power.
- Christ is seated at the right hand of God, so then we too must be in this same place, which indicates access to the same kind of power and authority.
- The Church has been given incredible power and authority to partner with Christ to accomplish the will of God on earth.
- The problem is twofold: we are ignorant of the power and authority that is ours, or we fail to use our God-given authority. Knowledge without authority is useless, as is authority without knowledge. We need both to walk as our Lord instructed.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MANIFESTATION

The book of Acts declares the early Christians' transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. A considerable amount of time was needed for the Jewish believers to accept the reality that they no longer had to live under the Mosaic Law. Jesus also provides additional revelation that is not recorded in the Old Testament or the four gospels. The changeover from living with Jesus Christ on earth to Christ living within each believer by means of the spirit is also recorded. The power of the holy spirit in the lives of the believers is chronicled as they spread the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world.

1Corinthians 12:7-11 The manifestations of the spirit are evident throughout the book of Acts.

### SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Three of the most significant events in the development of the early Church are marked with the manifestation of speaking in tongues. The first is the commencement of the Church on the day of Pentecost. The day Jesus ascended into heaven, he told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was to be endued with power from on high. This promise of empowerment was the baptism of holy spirit, which would equip them to be witnesses for him throughout the world. Acts chapter 1 and Luke 24 document this information. Ten days after the ascension, Jesus in fact did send forth the promised holy spirit.

Acts 2:4 Many supernatural things happened on that day, such as a noise like a violent rushing wind filling the temple area and tongues of fire distributing themselves on each one of the apostles; but the thing that God used to mark the importance of this great event was speaking in tongues.

The second occurrence of this manifestation, recorded in Acts 10 and 11, is regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles as God's chosen.

Acts 10:44-46 The apostles and brethren in Judea heard that Peter had been with the Gentiles, so they called him in question. All doubts regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles were eliminated when Peter and the Jews who were with him explained that the Gentiles spoke in tongues. The tongues proved to be the undeniable evidence that the Gentiles were saved.

The third incident in Acts took place at Ephesus. Apollos brought the message that John the Baptist taught to this area. He did not teach the complete gospel of the Kingdom because he was ignorant of it.

Acts 19:6 and 7 Starting with this event and these original 12 men at Ephesus, within two years and three months, all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks, according to Acts 19:10. A complete transformation of the society at Ephesus took place (Acts 19:19 and 20).

Each of these three events was vital to the rise and expansion of the Christian Church, and God marked each with the manifestation of speaking in tongues. Apparently, this evidence of the spirit was very commonplace among the believers in the first century. When Paul wrote the Corinthians, he gave instruction on how to operate this manifestation properly in the Church. It seems everyone in Corinth spoke tongues, but did not understand the correct utilization of this

manifestation in the church. 1 Corinthians 12-14 provides much information about this manifestation. The essence of this is that speaking in tongues is speaking an unknown language inspired by God. It is a message from God, directed to God, containing a prayer of thanksgiving and/or praise.

## **THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES**

Acts has no records of anyone interpreting tongues; but according to 1 Corinthians 14, instruction is provided that if someone desires to speak in tongues in a church meeting, he should do so only when followed by interpretation. Again, the implication is given that any believer who desires to manifest interpretation of tongues has the ability to do so. The purpose for this manifestation is that the church may receive edifying, as stated in 1 Corinthians 14:5. Tongues are an unknown language, so the interpretation is making known the essence of the tongues in an understood language. Since tongues are speaking praise or thanksgiving prayer to God, the interpretation will also be the same. The person who speaks in tongues in the church is commanded to interpret or to speak quietly within him- or herself. 1 Corinthians 14:5 and 13 clearly states that the person who speaks in tongues is the same one who is to interpret; so if you do not know how to interpret, learn or be silent in the church.

## **PROPHECY**

Immediately after receiving the holy spirit, the twelve at Ephesus were able to speak in tongues and prophesy. When Paul visited with Philip the evangelist, all four of his daughters prophesied according to Acts 21:9. On the day of Pentecost, Peter explained to the multitude gathered at the temple that what they heard regarding the outpouring of the spirit was the beginning of what Joel foretold would come.

Acts 2:17 and 18 The time between the ascension and return of our Lord Jesus is called in Joel the last days. During this age, the followers of Christ were endued with the power of the holy spirit which enabled them to prophesy, among other things. Twice in Joel, we are told prophecy is available now. The Bible is filled with prophecy, in that all the words therein are inspired by God and written on His behalf. The Scriptures are complete; therefore, no prophecy will be given to add thereunto. The prophecy that is now common to all believers is inspired by God for the edification, exhortation, and consolation of the Church, according to 1 Corinthians 14:3.

## **WORD OF KNOWLEDGE**

An important and somewhat dominant function of the holy spirit is providing knowledge of the truth. Jesus told his disciples before the spirit was given that it would teach and guide them into the all truth (John 14:26 and 16:13).

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 - Paul also explains the aid the spirit provides to the believers.

The book of Acts has many incidents when the believers received word of knowledge from the spirit. The first record on the day of Pentecost stands out because Peter's understanding had so drastically changed for the better immediately after receiving the holy spirit. Before Jesus was taken into captivity, he warned his disciples of what was to come.

Luke 18:31-34 - At the time Jesus spoke, they did not get the meaning of what he said; however, after they received the spirit, the light bulbs went off. In Acts chapter two, Peter stood up and spoke with great boldness and clarity regarding the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. He understood because he received the word of knowledge from the spirit.

## **WORD OF WISDOM**

To have knowledge about something or someone is one thing; what to do with the knowledge can be a whole other matter. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge. It knows the right thing to do at the right time. One of the functions of the holy spirit is to provide wisdom. The book of Acts is packed with examples of this manifestation in operation.

The fifth chapter provides a clear example. In the early days of the Church, a very odd thing transpired. One of the married couples (named Ananias and Sapphira) sold a piece of property and kept back some of the price for themselves. Ananias went to Peter and offered a portion of the money with the pretense of presenting all the money gained in the sale of their property. The money was his to do with as he liked; however, for some reason not explained in the record, he decided to lie and pretend to do or be something he was not. God revealed to Peter the deception and gave him the wisdom of what to do with Ananias. The wisdom of God was very different from what Peter would have determined with his own human wisdom. Look what happened.

Acts 5:3-5 Shortly thereafter, Sapphira showed up, not knowing what happened to her husband, and portrayed the same deception. The same thing happened to her, so that she too immediately died. The direct result of this incident was supernatural.

Acts 5:11, 14 and 15

In Acts 15, there was a big meeting with the elders at Jerusalem to discuss the requirements for the new Gentile believers. Some from a legalist Jewish background were insisting that they needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. Paul knew this was not true for two very powerful reasons. He had received the information that is now contained in the epistles which explains we are no longer under the Law in Christ Jesus, and he had seen firsthand the conversion of many Gentiles without the circumcision involved. God had accepted them, so the elders should also. The conclusion of the meeting was that Paul and others would carry a letter from the elders in Jerusalem to the new Gentile converts. The letter would explain there was no need for them to be circumcised. In the next chapter, Paul meets Timothy, and the following happens.

Acts 16:3 Why would Paul do this? The wisdom of God directed him, so Timothy could effectively minister to the Jews.

## **DISCERNING OF SPIRITS**

Very little was understood regarding the subject of the devil and evil spirits until the time of Jesus. He lifted the veil. Today, because of the holy spirit, we can discern the presence of demons and,

with the authority in the name of Jesus Christ, command them to depart from those they occupy. Acts again provides an example.

Acts 16:16-18 The slave girl was freed from an evil spirit, as many today can be and are, because we can operate the manifestation of discerning of spirits. Jesus gave us the power and authority over them.

Mark 16:17 and 18

These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

## **FAITH**

Jesus taught his disciples about faith outstandingly often and occasionally in extraordinary ways. Such was the case when he cursed the fig tree. He was hungry. Seeing a fig tree, he went to take some of the fruit (of which there was none), so he cursed the tree. The tree died from the roots up. His disciples saw this and commented to the Master, after which he responded with the following.

Matthew 21:21 and 22

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

Romans 12:3 One of the evidences of the holy spirit is to have the same faith that Jesus himself had.

## **GIFTS OF HEALINGS AND MIRACLES**

Jesus clearly stated that his followers would heal and perform miracles in his name. The book of Acts gives testimony that indeed these things did happen. For example, Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" The lame man got up. Leaping and jumping, he praised God. When the disciples prayed for more boldness, the very room they were in was shaking, and they began to speak with boldness. After the incident with Ananias and Sapphira, things got so on fire that the following is recorded.

Acts 5:14-16

And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

Acts 8:5-7 Philip went to the city of Samaria and had a tremendous impact with many healings and miracles.

In Acts chapter 9, Peter raised Dorcas from the dead. So, on it goes in the book of Acts. Page after page records incident after incident of healings and miracles because the followers of Christ manifested the holy spirit with great confidence and boldness, always glorifying God.

## **SELF SAME SPIRIT**

Today, the followers of Christ have the exact same spirit; therefore, we too are equipped to have the same manifestations. To the Corinthians, Paul was inspired to write regarding some of the manifestations of the spirit. The chapter focuses on the unity of the Body of Christ, even with the vast diversity the many members bring.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

The point of this section is not to tell us we have or do not have the ability to do these things; rather, it tells us that all these things are manifestations of the same spirit which is given to each and every believer. We have equality in this regard. Not everyone is proficient in all these things; therefore, it is wonderful that we are a part of a Body where we help each other.

Mark 16:15-18

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Acts 1:8

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

- Speaking in tongues is speaking an unknown language inspired by God. It is a message from God, directed to God, containing a prayer of thanksgiving and/or praise.

- The interpretation of tongues is making known the essence of the tongues, which is an unknown language, in an understandable language. Since the manifestation of tongues is speaking praise or thanksgiving prayer to God, the interpretation will also be the same.
- Prophecy, which is now common to all believers, is inspired by God for the edification, exhortation, and consolation of the Church.
- Word of knowledge is how the believer understands the truth. The natural man cannot understand the truth of the Scriptures, because he lacks the assistance of the spirit (which provides word of knowledge).
- Word of wisdom is perceiving the right application of knowledge in any given situation. It knows the right thing to do at the right time.
- Discerning of spirits is the ability to discern the presence of demons and, with the authority in the name of Jesus Christ, to command them to depart from those they occupy.
- Faith is extraordinary faith, the faith of Jesus Christ. It enables believers to fulfill what is stated in John 14:12: "Truly, truly, 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 the Father."
- Gifts of healing and miracles should be commonplace in the Church today, just as they were in the first century.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT

Jesus communicated much more on this subject and other matters through the spirit and by the mouth of his apostles. On Jesus' behalf, the Apostle Paul gave a fuller perspective concerning the spirit. Paul was given the awesome privilege to receive the information first and then to teach the great mystery, which revealed what was accomplished with the crucifixion of Christ.

Paul, by revelation of Jesus Christ, explained the difference between the old covenant and the new. The old (often referred to as the Law) ended at Calvary, and the new began shortly thereafter on the day of Pentecost when the spirit was first given. Christianity is not a new religion, but a continuation and extension of that which God began with Israel.

Romans 7:6 The old covenant (that is the Law) is compared to the new covenant.

Today, due to the grace of God and the works of Jesus Christ, his disciples serve in the newness of the spirit.

Romans 8:2 Every person is born in sin and condemned to everlasting death, separation from God. This scenario Paul calls the law of sin and death. The antidote to man's dilemma is found only in the perfect sacrifice of Christ. In Christ, is the law of the spirit of life.

Romans 8:5-11 The law of sin and death is associated with our flesh; whereas the law of life in Christ Jesus is connected to the spirit. Our great hope is that when Christ returns, we will be given new bodies; and therefore, the flesh problem will be eliminated. Until that time, believers have the constant struggle between the flesh and the spirit.

The Apostle Paul was the first one to bring the Gospel of the Kingdom to Corinth. He lived there for 18 months, during which time they experienced many challenges together. He said: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." He was their apostle, teacher, and considered himself their father in the Word. "For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1Corinthians 4:14). After Paul left Corinthians, others began teaching things contrary to Paul's teaching, and divisions developed in the Church. In the first epistle to them, he strongly confronts these grave errors. In the second epistle, he again confronts a disrespectful attitude towards him that was still lingering.

2 Corinthians 3:1 Paul's questions are rhetorical and should receive an absolute NO! He should not need to commend himself. To commend is to express a favorable opinion of praise.

2 Corinthians 3:2 and 3 The Corinthian believers were Paul's letter of recommendation. When someone applies for a job, he or she is often asked for letters of recommendation. Based on the content of the letter and the author, an employer can make a decision whether or not to hire the person. Paul's letter of recommendation was the believers written by Jesus Christ. The letter was written on their hearts by the spirit of the living God. Paul was the minister or inscriber who wrote as inspired by the holy spirit what Christ wanted written on their hearts.

Tablets of stone and tablets of human hearts begin a comparison and contrast with the old and new covenants. Tablets of stone refer to Moses' covenant; whereas tablets of human hearts refer to the covenant Christ began on the cross. That which Paul declares happened to the believers at Corinth was prophesied in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36 add the understanding that the Word written on their hearts would take place by God's spirit within them.

The covenants are solemn promises made with God and man. The Mosaic Covenant began at Mount Sinai and ended on the cross of Calvary. The Messianic covenant began at Calvary and will be fulfilled when Christ returns. Today, believers have the word of Christ written in their hearts by the holy spirit, but only in part. In the day our Lord returns, the complete prophecy spoken by Jeremiah and Ezekiel will be fulfilled.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

Romans 7:10-13 In the book of Romans, great clarity is provided regarding the purpose of the Law (letter, old covenant, and law all refer to the same thing—the covenant that God made with Israel through the mediator Moses). The Law was never intended to provide life, salvation, or righteousness. Its purpose was to reveal sin and hold the people of Israel in until Christ would come. Due to sin, the Law brought death.

2 Corinthians 3:7-9 The new covenant is connected with the spirit, and it gives life. The new covenant, because of the work of Christ and the grace of God, indeed does provide life, salvation, and righteousness to those who have faith.

The glory of God was so intense that when Moses came down from the mount, as is recorded in Exodus 34:29-35, his face glowed. The glory that Moses looked at was reflected in his own face and was too much for the hardhearted Israelites to bear. Yet, the glory of the new covenant far surpasses that of the old! How glorious is the glory of the new? The following chart will help to illustrate the comparisons and contrasts of these two covenants.

<b>Old Covenant</b>	<b>New Covenant</b>
Letter	Spirit
Kills	Gives life
Ministry of death	Ministry of the spirit
Engraved on stones	Engraved on hearts
Fading glory	Exceeds in glory
Condemnation	Righteousness

2 Corinthians 3:10-12 The illumination of a handheld flashlight disappears when a halogen light is turned on. In like manner, the old glory is washed away with the glory of Christ. When we consider the things set forth here in Corinthians, we too should have boldness and use great plainness of speech to communicate to others these truths.

2 Corinthians 3:13-16 The old covenant recorded in the Old Testament is only clearly understood when a person turns his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. Until such time, a veil remains on the heart, so that no one can understand. Much of what is written in the old is pointing to Christ and the new, which is why Jesus must be accepted as the Christ for the unveiled understanding to flow.

2 Corinthians 3:17 and 18

## THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT!

Every time the word "spirit" is used in the Scriptures, we must interpret its meaning within the context. In Paul's epistles, the word "spirit" can involve all that is included with the new covenant and the lordship of Christ. With the added perspective of Romans and 2 Corinthians, we can better understand that which is written in Galatians.

Galatians 5:16 and 17 The phrase "walk by the spirit" is spoken very often in many Christian circles. Those who speak this way are convinced that walking by the spirit primarily means that God or Jesus talks to them through the spirit and provides wisdom and instruction. Such an interpretation is shortsighted and contradictory to the writing of Paul. Although walking by the spirit may at times include communications, much more is involved. Walking by the spirit is also walking by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the new covenant, the ministry of the spirit, the ministry of righteousness, and the Lord himself.

- On Jesus' behalf, the Apostle Paul gave a fuller perspective concerning the spirit.
- Christianity is not a new religion, but a continuation and extension of that which God began with Israel.
- The Mosaic covenant began at Mount Sinai and ended on the cross of Calvary. The Messianic covenant began at Calvary and will be fulfilled when Christ returns.
- The new covenant is connected with the spirit, and it gives life.
- The new covenant, because of the work of Christ and the grace of God, indeed does provide life, salvation, and righteousness to those who have faith.
- The new covenant is called the ministry of the spirit and the ministry of righteousness.
- Those who have the spirit have Christ in them; and as we look upon this glory, we will change from glory to glory.
- The spirit as a vehicle for Christ is so aligned with him that the spirit is even called by Paul "the Lord."
- The word "spirit" when used in Paul's writing can include the new covenant and the Lord.

## LOVE CONNECTION

Jesus emphatically drove home the connection between love and the spirit. Since the spirit is a means for God to implement His will with man and the nature of God is love, the correlation between love and the spirit is unavoidable. The connection is threefold. First, through the spirit we experience God's love for us. Second, the spirit enables us to love God. Third, the spirit gives us the capacity to love others just as Christ loves us.

### GOD'S LOVE FOR US

Romans 5:5 God's love is poured out within each believer by way of the spirit.

Romans 5:6-10 Anticipation or expectation toward something or someone is often met with disappointment. Yet, the believer's Hope, which is the future return of our Lord Jesus Christ, will not bring disappointment. The assurance of this is the love of God that is poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit. In that we currently realize God's love for us, we can be absolutely assured that His promises regarding our Hope will indeed be fulfilled

Could there be any greater manifestation of love than Jesus dying for us? The astounding answer is yes, "much more!" **Much more**, we are saved from the wrath to come. Not only are saved from the coming wrath **much more**, but God has selected the believers to be with Him in the age to come, which is an everlasting age.

Such love as this is beyond human comprehension, yet the spirit gives witness that it is so. When Christ is accepted as Lord, a supernatural change takes place, in that the love of God is poured out into our hearts. Many people harbor ill feeling about themselves. We are tormented with thoughts like being unlovable, unworthy, undesirable, less than everyone else, and so on. When we realize God's love for us, these ugly beliefs fade away because the most important One of all loves us and wants us to be with Him forever. The realization of God's love comes with the holy spirit.

### OUR LOVE FOR GOD

Romans 8:14-17 The spirit causes a supernatural change to occur in the heart of the believer. Hard-heartedness and indifference toward God are replaced with tenderheartedness and passion for our Father God.

The word "abba" is found only three times in the New Testament and in each case is followed by its Greek equivalent, which is translated "Father." It is a term that has no perfect correspondent in our language and expresses warm affection and filial confidence. In some European languages, it has become the ecclesiastical term of "abbot." Abba Father is our utterance because of the tender love placed in our hearts by the holy spirit. Our relationship with God begins when we turn our hearts to Him and are willing to repent and accept the Lordship of Christ. To a limited extent, we have love for God at this point. In response to our faith, God lovingly and graciously gives us the holy spirit, which vastly enlarges our love for Him to an *Abba Father* relationship.

## LOVE FOR OTHERS

Throughout the New Testament, we are commanded to love others. The ability to fulfill this commandment comes with the holy spirit. According to Galatians 5:22, love is a fruit of the spirit. Therefore, as we walk by the spirit, we walk in love to others.

Galatians 5:13-16 With the accomplished work of Christ, we gained great freedom (which should be used for loving others).

The walk of the flesh is self-centered, without concern for God or others. People attack each other as dogs bite and devour. Contention, strife, injurious words and actions are not the way of one who is influenced by the spirit. The spirit enables us to be Christ-like, which is to be centered in love for others. If we walk by the spirit, we will not be overcome with the unloving deeds of the flesh. Before a person receives the spirit, his behavior can only be centered in the flesh. The works of the flesh are hideous: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and so on. All of these things are incongruous to loving God and others. In Christ, we have been freed from these things so that we can walk in love.

The Apostle Paul is a great example of someone who was free to serve others with the love of God. Before he accepted the lordship of Christ, he was a very devout, religious man, dedicated to the God he knew according to his Israelite education. He was accomplished in the education and service of his religion like few others in his day. He was so committed that he led the persecution against the Christian Church, because he believed it to be a threat to the God he served. His beliefs led him to consent to the murder of God's man Stephen, which is recorded in Acts 7. He believed lies that led him to much ungodliness, yet he was convinced the whole time he was doing service for the true God. When he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, everything changed! From that point on, Christ became his Lord and taught him the truth about God, Jesus the Christ, and himself. Paul maintained his tenacious drive, determination, and commitment; but switched his loyalty to his Lord Jesus the Christ. Paul grew to be one of the greatest men who ever lived. His transformation and subsequent life are held up in Scripture as an example for every believer to follow. For Paul to become a great apostle, he needed to have the lies he believed to be replaced with the truth. As Jesus had promised, the spirit of truth led this faithful follower into the all truth. The man who wrote the letter to the Philippians was freed from the lies that hinder most of us from genuine loving service.

Philippians 1:12-20 Paul was in jail, not because he committed any crimes, rather because he endeavored to help people to be saved! Yet, in these circumstances, he did not complain and cry "poor me;" rather, he maintained a loving Christ-like heart of love. Rather than submitting to the temptations of anger, unthankfulness, grumbling about injustice, blaming God or others, or doubting himself, he was thankful that his incarceration had turned out for the greater furtherance of the gospel.

HE DID NOT TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY BECAUSE HE DID NOT BELIEVE LIES ABOUT HIMSELF.

1 Timothy 1:13-16 He knew everything that he had become was due to the grace and mercy of God. He believed he was called and chosen by God to bring great truth to the world on behalf of his God and Lord. Yet, he also understood who he was without Christ.

Love, joy, and peace are the fruit of someone who believes truth influenced by the spirit of truth. Anger, jealousy, revenge, self-doubt, condemnation, "poor me," etc. are the result of someone who believes lies about himself, others, or God. Neither the positive nor the negative feelings are the result of the circumstances we are in; rather, our feelings result from our interpretation of the circumstances and are based upon our beliefs. When we consider all the suffering Paul endured from both the persecution and the un-renewed believers who attacked him, it is obvious that Paul was motivated by God's love. He was free from self-concern to serve without hindrance, because of the love of God poured out in his heart by the spirit of God.

Matthew 6:1-3 The motive for service to others is vital. Jesus time and again expressed his concern that his followers have godly purpose in all they do.

If when we serve others, we feel important, valuable, significant, indispensable, or rejected, unimportant, unappreciated, insignificant, our motives may not be aligned with the love of God. Again, Paul did not experience any feeling good or bad about himself; rather, he expressed praise and gratitude for God.

The great chapter that so often is referred to regarding the subject of love is 1 Corinthians 13. To gain the full significance of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the context of chapters 12 and 14. The subject is spiritual matters that God does not want the Church to be ignorant regarding. Again, we see that the correct attitude related to the holy spirit is the love of God. We must have the right loving motive if we desire the influence of the spirit in our lives. Our love for others is due to God's love for us.

1John 4:9-11; 19

1John 3:16-18 Love for others has two important aspects, the first of which we have just reviewed, which is the right heart behind our deeds of service. The second is that works or deeds must also accompany the right motives. It is not enough to just think about loving others or to have good intentions.

1Corinthians 13:13

But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- God's love is poured out within each believer by way of the spirit.
- When we realize God's love for us, these ugly beliefs fade away, because the most important One of all loves us and wants us to be with Him forever. The realization of God's love comes with the holy spirit.
- The spirit causes a supernatural change to occur in the heart of the believer. Hard-heartedness and indifference toward God are replaced with tenderheartedness and passion for our Father God.
- The spirit enables us to be Christ-like, which is to be centered in love for others.
- Love, joy, and peace are the fruit of someone who believes truth and is influenced by the spirit of truth. Anger, jealousy, revenge, self-doubt, condemnation, "poor me," etc. are the result of someone who believes lies about himself, others, or God.
- If we serve for the approval or acceptance of others to validate ourselves, then our works are not acceptable to God, nor will He reward our deeds.
- We must have the right loving motive if we desire the influence of the spirit in our lives. Our love for others is due to God's love for us.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Christians with biblical understanding are very conscious that we are in a spiritual warfare which rages on until Christ returns. Secrecy and deception are intrinsic to our adversary's methodology, which is why we are tempted to combat with our own abilities. However, we are constantly reminded throughout the Scriptures that our strength is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

With the analogy of military armor, we are presented with seven essential things we must do in order to stand in this evil day. A battle-ready soldier in the time that Ephesians was written looked a little different from a soldier today; however, their apparel served the same purposes. The metal breastplate has been replaced with a bulletproof vest, the sword with a gun, sandals with combat boots, and so on. That which is exactly the same is that each part has vital importance, and the absence of any makes the soldier vulnerable to his enemies' attack. Thus it is with our spiritual armor---every part is vital if we are to stand strong in the Lord in this evil day. If we receive inner healing by replacing lies with truth but fail to change our behavior so as to live righteously, we will not stand. In like manner, if we strive to live rightly but never deal with the lies we believe about ourselves, we will again have problems. Hence, we are instructed to put on the whole armor of God.

Ephesians 6:11-13

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

### **GIRD YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH**

The first method the devil used to bait man to sin was enticing him to believe a lie about God and a lie about himself. The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Eve believed the lies and encouraged Adam to do the same; hence, the fall of mankind occurred. Jesus also was directly tempted by the devil and again with lies about God and lies about himself. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus did not believe the lies.

Jesus said of the devil: "He does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).  
THE PRIMARY WAY THE DEVIL OPERATES IS WITH LIES.

Sincere Christians are deceived by a common concept. We believe that if we learn to manage our anger, refocus our thinking, and control our behavior, we can be healed. This discipline is indeed a vital part of our walk with God. However, true healing is only realized when the pain which causes the anger or wrong behavior is eliminated. The pain most often is connected to lies we believe. Most people are troubled with dark thoughts about themselves that are never talked

about, because they are too painful. Thoughts such as believing oneself to be no good, a loser, ugly, stupid, unlovable, undesirable, guilty, inferior, and such like are prevalent with Christians and cause them unspeakable pain. Unpleasant feelings such as sadness, loneliness, hopelessness, isolation, fear, apathy, aloofness, and others invade our minds and influence our behavior. We try to ignore them or change our thinking, but they keep popping up. We are afraid to talk about these things because then others will find out what we are "really like" and label or discard us.

Biblically knowledgeable Christians are really torn by this inner turmoil, because we know that Jesus Christ paid the price for our freedom and therefore these things should not still live within us. Scriptures such as the following greatly challenge us, because on one hand we acknowledge their truth, yet on the other hand we still secretly harbor our contrary, dark beliefs.

Ephesians 1:4 and 5

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Someone who is deliberately chosen by Almighty God should feel very, very special; yet, these other thoughts still linger. How can this be so? In Christ, we have been made to be holy and without blame, yet we still feel unholy and guilty. Why do our beliefs about ourselves contradict the truth of the Scriptures? The answer is WHAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED IS WHAT WE BELIEVE. Jesus said, "If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." The *knowing* Jesus referred to was to know experientially, not just intellectually. There are degrees of knowing. We can know something because we heard about it. We know more fully if we are acquainted or familiar with it. Yet, the greatest degree of knowing is in regards to that which we experience. To *continue in his word* means to do his word, then we will know experientially the truth that sets us free. When we do his word, it becomes our experience, and that which we experience is what we believe. The reason we struggle with the thoughts about ourselves that contradict the written Word is we have feelings that are based on our past experience, and what is written has not yet been our experience. The great principle to understand is what we believe is based upon what we experience, not just what we intellectually know.

Most of what a person believes about himself is formulated in childhood and stays with him throughout life. Children think the world revolves around them, so they often misinterpret what they are experiencing; therefore, they end up believing lies about themselves. The unholy beliefs and feelings mentioned earlier are the direct result of what we experienced as children and are based upon lies we believed.

In grade school, the other children laughed at him because he did not know the answer, so he began to believe he was stupid. She was molested by a family member and somehow concluded it was her fault, hence began her lifelong belief that she is dirty and always the one at fault. The parents fight with each other, and the child concludes he is the cause of the conflict; so through life, guilt and condemnation are central to his beliefs about himself. She was born out of wedlock and never really wanted as a child. Therefore, she believes that there is something wrong with her, which is why she is unlovable. All of the above mentioned thoughts live within people because of their experiences, which most often are based upon a misinterpretation or lies. When we learn the Scriptures, which contradict these unholy beliefs, we struggle because of our experiences. Until we experience the truth that overrides the lies, we will not be free.

By applying the Scriptures, we can develop new experiences that will override the lie-based experiences. Honesty regarding our negative feelings and seeking God's help in prayer are also necessary in order to change. God can provide supernatural inner healing if we are willing to confront rather than run from our negative thoughts and feelings.

The first step in putting on the whole armor of God is gaining the truth, but it is only the beginning if we are to stand in this evil day.

## **PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

To gain the truth about God and self is a giant step in our stand against the schemes of the devil, but it is only the first step. In order to maintain the freedom that truth brings, we are required to put on the remainder of the armor. The breastplate of righteousness has everything to do with living rightly according to our new self, which we have because of Christ. This new man is based upon the truth that comes with Christ.

Ephesians 4:21-24

if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth

The lifestyle of a believer is based upon the truth that Jesus has brought and communicated. We are instructed to put off all lies and completely to embrace the truth.

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE** of you **WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another

The lies we believed lead us to all kinds of sinful behavior. Lies cause pain, and people run from pain. The common way to mask pain is with sin, such as drugs, alcohol, overeating, illicit sex, or excessive work, TV viewing, hobbies, etc. When the lies are gone, the temptation to sin may lessen, but will not go away. We must decide daily to live according to the Scriptures. As Ephesians 4 progresses, we are given some of the ABC's regarding right living. We are told what not to do and what to do.

**DO NOT** – lie, let anger lead to sin, give place to the devil, steal, grieve the holy spirit, have bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice.

**DO** – speak truth, deal with anger immediately, work, give, be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, and Christ-like.

In order to stand in this evil day, we must be obedient to what our Lord Jesus Christ commands, as is detailed in the New Testament. Righteous living also determines whether we do or do not enter into the Kingdom of God when Christ returns.

Ephesians 5:3-7

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;

and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Therefore do not be partakers with them;

It is virtually impossible to live for a holy God, while standing against an unholy adversary, without living righteously. However, there is still more to do in order to stand. The next area of concern regarding our armor is peace.

## **FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE**

In the epistle of Ephesians, the subject of peace is highlighted. It begins with the salutation of peace and concludes with peace. Sandwiched in between is the understanding that Christ brought peace to those at enmity with God and each other. Christ is the peacemaker. We are also encouraged to do whatever is necessary to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Consider the following verses about peace:

Ephesians 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:23

Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-17

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

Ephesians 4:3

Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Peace is fundamental to our well-being and necessary in order to stand in this evil day. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus provided great insight on how to interact with others so as to maintain peace. His instruction about turning the other cheek, praying for our enemies, resolving conflict, etc., all deal with keeping peace within and without. If we allow ourselves to be caught up in strife, contentions, word battles, envy, and such like, we will lose our peace and give place

to the devil to defeat us. Rather than taking the low road common to so many, we are to travel the high road and live as peacemakers not peace breakers. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

The vast majority of conflict we are engaged in is due to lies we believe about ourselves and not what is actually happening. Our interpretation of what is happening based upon our experience is why we allow ourselves to be caught up in conflicts. While Jesus hung on the cross, he maintained love, joy, and peace!

## **TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH**

The shield of faith is very important, since by it we are able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Within the epistle, we learn that faith is how we appropriate salvation. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8 and 9). Salvation is a gift offered to all of humanity but received only by those who accept it by faith. Today, we can have boldness and confident access to God through faith in Jesus Christ according to Ephesians 3:12. Christ can dwell in the heart of our minds by faith. Faith is a very powerful aspect of our armor. According to Hebrews 11, the patriarchs of the Old Testament all accomplished great things according to their faith.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith is the confidence and trust that we have toward that which God promises. We know that God will do everything that He says He will do; therefore, we have faith. The Scriptures give record after record of the mighty works of God, beginning with creation in Genesis 1. God led Israel out of the bondage of Egypt with the smallest of the things in His domain---things like locusts, frogs, darkness, etc. He led Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground, and they were followed by the Egyptians who all drowned. He provided a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night, and manna to eat. By the mighty hand of God, Joshua led them into the promised land, and all those who opposed them were destroyed, starting with Jericho. In the book of Judges, we see Gideon with three hundred Israelites defeating one hundred and twenty thousand Midianites. With the jawbone of an ass, Samson killed a thousand men. David killed the giant Goliath with a slingshot. All these records and so many more build our faith that God will indeed extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Faith is not our having confidence in ourselves; rather, it is a full realization of our own inability and absolute confidence in God's. This struggle against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places is entirely too big for us to handle on our own. However, the devil and his cohorts are nothing to Almighty God, so our shield is faith in Him. Reading the Scriptures daily helps to keep our minds focused on the great God of deliverance and encourages faith in Him.

## **TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION**

There are three aspects to salvation. When we accepted Christ as our Lord, we were saved from our sinful life. As Christians, we are constantly being saved from this wicked generation. When

Christ returns, we will receive the fullness of salvation because it will be the day of salvation. So we have been saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. The helmet of salvation, as interpreted within Ephesians, relates primarily to the day of salvation when we will be given a complete new life with the resurrection.

Ephesians 1:13 and 14

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,  
who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

We can never escape the reality that we live in an evil time. Consequently, the spiritual battle rages on. At times, the fight gets tiring and even discouraging; so we get tempted to be depressed and give up. However, the day of salvation is our Hope, which serves as the anchor of our soul. We know that when Jesus returns, those of faith will be transformed; and this evil world will also be transformed into Paradise. All sin, evil, sickness, and death will be eliminated in that day, because the Kingdom we now pray about will be a reality. "Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." As we focus on our Hope, we gain the strength to continue.

All those who have stood fast in their lifetime (that is their evil day) did so because they embraced their Hope. Earlier, we mentioned the faith of the patriarchs; now, we acknowledge that their faith rested upon their Hope. They all were firm believers in the promises God made regarding the coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God.

Hebrews 11:13-16

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

In the analogy of the whole armor of God, salvation (which is our Hope) is referred to as the helmet, because it implies what we think. A mind that is set continually on the Hope is necessary to stand in this evil day.

## **THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD**

Knowing and speaking the Word of God are vital in order to combat the temptations of the adversary. When Eve was tempted, she failed to hold fast to the words of God. She added a word, deleted other words, and eventually completely changed His words. Therefore, in the face of the serpent's temptation, she faltered. On the other hand, when Jesus was tempted, he responded with "*IT IS WRITTEN.*" He knew the exact truth that was applicable to the temptation with which he was confronted. He did not just quote random verses, but rather the absolute appropriate verse. Thereby, he backed down the devil.

When we have a weakness or receptivity to a particular temptation, it behooves us to learn the Scripture that we can use when we are attacked. If, for example, you have a vulnerability to covetousness, then learn the verses such as Ephesians 5:3-6 which deal with the subject. Like Jesus, we should use the sword of the spirit to confront the temptation. The Word of God is quick and powerful and serves as an offensive weapon in our warfare.

The last matter of concern in order to stand in this evil day is prayer. Although prayer is not included in the armor analogy, it is still important in the context of being "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."

## **PRAYER**

Ephesians 6:18

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints

In the first teaching Jesus presented, which is recorded in Matthew 5-7, he taught his disciples to pray. We are instructed to pray: "And do not lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Most commentaries agree that "*evil*" should have been translated "*evil one*," referring to the devil, the author of all evil.

After the last supper right before his captivity, Jesus prayed to the Father. This prayer could accurately be called the Lord's Prayer, unlike that which is in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15). Jesus apparently believed in the vital importance of praying for God's help in this spiritual warfare. We need to pray!

- The primary way the devil operates is with lies.
- The great principle to understand is that what we believe is based upon what we experience, not just on what we intellectually know.
- Until we experience the truth which overrides the lies, we will not be free.
- In order to stand in this evil day, we must be obedient to what our Lord Jesus Christ commands, as is detailed in the New Testament.
- The vast majority of conflict we are engaged in is due to lies we believe about ourselves and not what is actually happening. Our interpretation of what is happening based upon our experience is why we allow ourselves to be caught up in conflicts.
- Faith is not having confidence in ourselves, rather it is a full realization of our own inability and an absolute confidence in God's.
- All those who have stood fast in their lifetime (that is in their evil day), did so because they embraced their Hope.
- Like Jesus, we should use the sword of the spirit to confront the temptation. The Word of God is quick and powerful and serves as an offensive weapon in our warfare.
- We desperately need prayer to wrestle in the spiritual warfare.

## **HOW TO STAND IN THE EVIL DAY**

Put on the truth  
Live righteously  
Maintain peace  
Have faith in God  
Continually think about the Hope  
Know and speak the Word of God  
Pray with all perseverance

**HAVING DONE ALL, STAND**