

Led by God's Holy Spirit

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

—Romans 8:14

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

had left businesses, families, and friends to follow the Master. During the three and one-half years of Jesus' ministry on earth, these specially chosen disciples of the Lord heard the many wonderful lessons which he taught, and witnessed his perfect behavior at all times. They also saw Jesus perform many miracles, such as healing the sick, the lame, the blind, and even raising the dead back to life.

Yet, when it was due time for Jesus to allow himself to be crucified, and to give his life as a ransom for all, the apostles became afraid. Nearly all of them ran away when Jesus refused to use his miraculous powers to save himself from death. One of the reasons the apostles reacted in this way when Jesus was about to be crucified was that they had not yet received the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus knew this ahead of time, and in one of the final lessons he gave to the apostles he spoke regarding the Holy Spirit. While with them on the night

in which he was later betrayed, Jesus said, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, . . . the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”—John 14:16,17

In the above passage, the word translated “Spirit” comes from the Greek word *pneuma*, which means “a current of air,” and denotes any invisible power or influence. For example, in the English language one may refer to a “pneumatic” tire, which means it is filled with invisible, pressurized air. The pressurized air inside the tire provides an effect, or power, which is not visible to human eyes. However, its influence is noticed, because the air diminishes the vibrations which enter through the tread of the tire, as it rotates over rough or uneven surfaces. This provides a much smoother and safer ride than if the tire was to turn with little or no internal air pressure.

The pronouns which have been translated as “him” and “he” in the *King James Version* of verse 17 quoted above, should more accurately be translated “it.” This is because the word Spirit, to which the pronouns refer, does not signify a personality, just as we know there is no personality to the pressurized air in the tires of our vehicle. *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott* translation of verse 17 renders these pronouns correctly: “The spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, because it beholds it not, nor knows it; but you know it; because it abides with you, and will be in you.”

Thus, we understand that the Holy Spirit is any holy influence or power emanating from God. It is a holy influence or power which comes to us through

the Scriptures, including the lives and examples of God's people throughout the ages. The Holy Spirit is the influence or power of God's perfect will and purpose, exercised always according to his harmonious attributes of wisdom, justice, love and power.

KNOWING GOD'S THOUGHTS

The Apostle Peter tells us that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1:21) Indeed, many centuries earlier, the Lord told Moses that he would put his words into the mouth of a prophet. God said, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."—Deut. 18:18

This "Prophet" of which God foretold was none other than his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus. Throughout his earthly ministry, he emphasized that his words and teachings were not his own, but rather were those of his Heavenly Father. Jesus said, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. . . . Even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 12:49,50; 14:24) Later, we are told by the Apostle Paul that God has "in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1,2) Hence, when we read and study the Bible, we are really listening to God's thoughts and words.

HOLY SPIRIT AS A "COMFORTER"

In the words quoted earlier from John 14:16, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as "another Comforter."

The word “comforter” is translated from the Greek word *parakletos*, which means: a consoler, intercessor, succorer, assistant, or helper. The *Diaglott* translation of this verse renders this Greek word as “helper.” Just as Jesus had been a personal helper to the disciples during his time on earth with them, he now promised that after his departure, he would send “another helper,” which would be the Holy Spirit.

In verse 26 of this same chapter, Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit, which the Father would send in his name, would “remind you of all things which I said to you.” (*Diaglott*) On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, it immediately helped them to recall, and to understand, things that Jesus had previously said. By this, they were given the ability to speak and write concerning the Gospel message in a manner which would benefit others. The Holy Spirit also strengthened the apostles’ zeal and determination to endure whatever God’s providence permitted during their ministry. Most assuredly, then, we see that the Holy Spirit was a comforter, helper, and assistant to our Lord’s specially chosen apostles.

The help provided by the Holy Spirit was not just for the benefit of the apostles, but for all consecrated followers of Christ throughout the Gospel Age, and is often found through the Scriptures. Paul tells us, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”—Rom. 15:4

In his second letter to the Corinthian brethren, Paul further wrote, “Blessed be God, even the Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” (II Cor. 1:3,4) We note in these verses that the promised comfort does not imply removal of our tribulations. Rather, the meaning of the word in the original Greek is “to strengthen together.”

As we gain more of the Holy Spirit and increase our knowledge of the Word of truth, we become comforters—representatives of the power and influence of God. One of the main purposes for this is that we might be helpers to one another, strengthening and encouraging fellow members of the body of Christ. It is not easy to develop as a Christian because the world, our fallen flesh, and the great Adversary are all working to discourage us. Thus, our mutual help and comfort one toward another is vitally important.

LED BY GOD’S SPIRIT

In Romans 8:14, our opening text, we are told that those who are led—or “guided,” as the *Diaglott* translation states—by the Holy Spirit are considered to be God’s sons. This guidance is provided by the instructions given to us in the Scriptures. Concerning God’s leading, the psalmist wrote, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.”—Ps. 143:10

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, “For God is he who is working effectually among you, both to will and to perform, on account of his benevolence.” (Phil. 2:13, *Diaglott*) In this verse, the expression “to will” means to choose, prefer or delight in. The

Holy Spirit guides us, by the instructions given in the Bible, to ignore our fallen fleshly will, and instead choose, and delight in, God's will, which is that we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. In this regard, we quote the following: "To the extent that the consecrated believers resign themselves to the Lord, and, ignoring their own wills and preferences, seek to walk in his way, they are 'led of the Spirit,' 'taught of the Spirit.'"—*Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 5, page 185

A WITNESS THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

In Romans 8:16, we are told: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." One of the evidences of this "witness" is given in the next verse: "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (vs. 17) Here the word "suffer" is translated from a Greek word which means "to experience jointly or of the same kind." Throughout the New Testament we are told about the many types of experiences we should expect to have if we are truly following in our Master's footsteps.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he wrote, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12) Similarly, Peter stated: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."—I Pet. 4:12-14, *Revised Standard Version*

Jesus said to his followers, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:18,19) Trials, suffering, and even persecution which come upon us because we are striving to follow in the footsteps of our Master, and to apply God’s principles in our lives, are indeed important components of the witness of the Holy Spirit in our Christian sojourn. Because the witness of God’s Holy Spirit is so closely related to following our great pattern, Paul refers to this power and influence as “the spirit of Christ.”—Rom. 8:9

CHARACTER QUALITIES

Another evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the development of various holy qualities, or fruitage, in our character. We read, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” To this Paul adds, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:22,23,25) Herein is the indication that these qualities, or fruits, are not developed instantaneously, but rather come about through gradual development, as a result of labor and effort, as we daily “walk in the Spirit.”

It has been appropriately suggested that each of the fruits of the Spirit given in the above text represent various aspects of Love, the crowning quality of character found in God and in his Son, Christ Jesus. Joy is love which is exultant and cheerful. Peace is love in repose, or at rest. Long-suffering is love which is enduring. Gentleness is love in society.

Goodness is love in action. Faith is love on the battlefield of life. Meekness is love in resignation and humility. Temperance, or moderation, is love in training.—*Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 6, page 186

Jesus gave us instructions as to how we can bring forth these fruits of the Spirit. He said, “Abide in me. . . . As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:4,5) To develop each of these fruits of the Spirit, we must abide in Jesus—to think as Jesus thought, and do as he did.

As we desire to more fully have Christ dwell in our hearts, we will become filled with a greater measure of God’s holy influence and power. We quote: “That [God] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints . . . the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Eph. 3:16-19) To be filled with the “fulness of God” implies that we gain an increased desire to have our Heavenly Father, through his Son, Christ Jesus, sit as king, ruler and director of our every thought, word, and deed. Thus, the Holy Spirit helps us see matters from God’s viewpoint, as brought to our attention in these words: “For I consider that the sufferings of the present time, as unworthy of comparison with the future glory to be revealed in us.”—Rom. 8:18, *Diaglott*

One trait which is not a fruit of the Spirit, and hence not from God, is fear. The Apostle Paul clearly tells us, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Tim. 1:7) The root cause of many fears which may develop at one point or another in our lives can often be traced to some form of selfishness. There may be a fear of losing things such as temporal goods, status, or reputation among men, which, perhaps without realizing, we might selfishly desire to keep. If this be the case, we should endeavor to renew our efforts to imbibe more of God's Holy Spirit.

"HAPPY FEELINGS"

Happy feelings are not to be thought of as a basis for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our life. Because we are still in the flesh, our feelings may change from moment to moment. Faith, however, one of the prime evidences of the Spirit's presence in our life, is something which is permanent. Our faith can be just as strong whether we are passing through a difficult experience, or if our day is filled only with joy. As an analogy, the sun shines as clearly on the gloomiest day as it does on the brightest one. The difference is not in the sun, but in some clouds that form, blocking our vision of it. Hence, in our consecrated walk, we can benefit from the influence of the Holy Spirit at all times, regardless of outward happiness or sorrow.

Let us consider the experience of Paul and Silas when they preached in the city of Philippi. The narrative states: "It came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters

much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. . . . Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, . . . saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. . . . And the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into . . . the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.”—Acts 16:16-25

Paul and Silas were passing through a most difficult experience, yet they still had the Holy Spirit’s faith-strengthening influence. Their humble submission to the Lord’s guiding hand in this experience produced a most joyful outcome. By a miracle of God, Paul and Silas were released from their bonds. Then, the keeper of the prison was converted, along with his entire household, and they were baptized. They invited Paul and Silas to their home, where their wounds were washed, and they had a meal together. After this, the magistrates, who had put Paul and Silas into prison, allowed them to go free, saying “depart, and go in peace.”—vss. 26-36

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Paul said, “Be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph. 5:18) One way to do this is to store up heavenly treasure. Jesus instructed his followers, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”—Matt. 6:19-21

Along these lines, a helpful illustration has been suggested. Imagine there is a room, with a door to enter therein. Our mind can be likened to such a room. The door to enter the room may be thought of as our will. Just as the door to a room must first be opened in order to place treasures inside, our will must first give consent to whatever enters and dwells in our mind and heart. A room which is already full of various objects has little or no room left to place more valuable things. Thus, our heart and mind must be emptied of earthly hopes, aims, and ambitions, to have room for God’s precious promises. The Apostle Paul testified, “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”—Phil. 3:8, *New American Standard Bible*

Another means by which we will surely be filled with more of the Holy Spirit is through prayer. Jesus said to his disciples, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13) If we “hunger

and thirst after righteousness,” Jesus said in his sermon on the mount, we “shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) When one is hungry or thirsty, it is hard to concentrate on anything else. Therefore, if we hunger and thirst to be filled with the righteous influence of the Holy Spirit, we will be less likely to concentrate on other thoughts and endeavors.

Paul’s zeal is manifested to us in the following words: “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13,14) This was the secret of the apostle’s power. He left behind the aims and ambitions of this life, and reached to grasp those heavenly treasures which lay before him in the promises of God’s Word. This is the reason why God, through his Holy Spirit, used Paul so greatly and efficiently, both for the blessing of the church at that time, and throughout the Gospel Age, even to our day.

SOWING TO THE SPIRIT

In Galatians 6:7,8, we read, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” A farmer who desires to have a high quality and plentiful harvest must first carefully choose and “sow” good seeds. Our thoughts, words, and actions are like seeds. They must be sown carefully and with tenacity. An abundant supply of these good seeds is provided to us in the Word of God.—Luke 8:11

The Holy Spirit helps us to increase our understanding, appreciation, and love for God's precious promises. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—I Cor. 2:9,10

THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST

Paul, speaking to the brethren at Corinth, said, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." (II Cor. 3:3) A wise commentary has been written regarding the way the Holy Spirit writes the epistle of Christ in our hearts, which we quote in part:

"What is the message, what is the epistle, that is being written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through various agencies? Is it the knowledge of chronology? Is it the unraveling of types and shadows? Is it the cracking of hard theological nuts in respect to differently understood passages of Scripture? Is it the knowledge of the history of the Jews, the history of the world, the history of the church? Is it the understanding and appreciation of the different covenants, past, present, and to come? No, it is none of these.

"All of these subjects have more or less value, and are more or less used of the Lord in connection with this writing that is to be done in the hearts of his people. But writing the Epistle of Christ is different—it is the writing . . . of the character-likeness

of the Master in the hearts of his people—his meekness, his gentleness, his patience, his long-suffering, his brotherly-kindness, his love, his joy, his peace.

“We might have all knowledge respecting chronology and history, might be able to quote every text in the Bible, and to cite it, too; and yet not have the Epistle of Christ written in our hearts.”—Reprints, page 5967

It is concerning this epistle of the character likeness of Christ that the Apostle Peter says, “If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” With these characteristics of the Master deeply engraved upon our hearts, and fruitage abounding in our words and actions, we shall be granted “an entrance . . . abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:8,11

Thus, a true Christian is not merely Spirit begotten, but developed into the character image of the Savior by the development of the Spirit’s fruits and graces. This is the evidence of the power of God at work in us, and in cooperation with our will. Let us hear and meditate upon the words of Paul: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”—Rom. 15:13, RSV ■

*“When he putteth forth his own sheep,
he goeth before them and the sheep follow him:
for they know his voice. And a stranger
will they not follow.”*

—John 10:4,5