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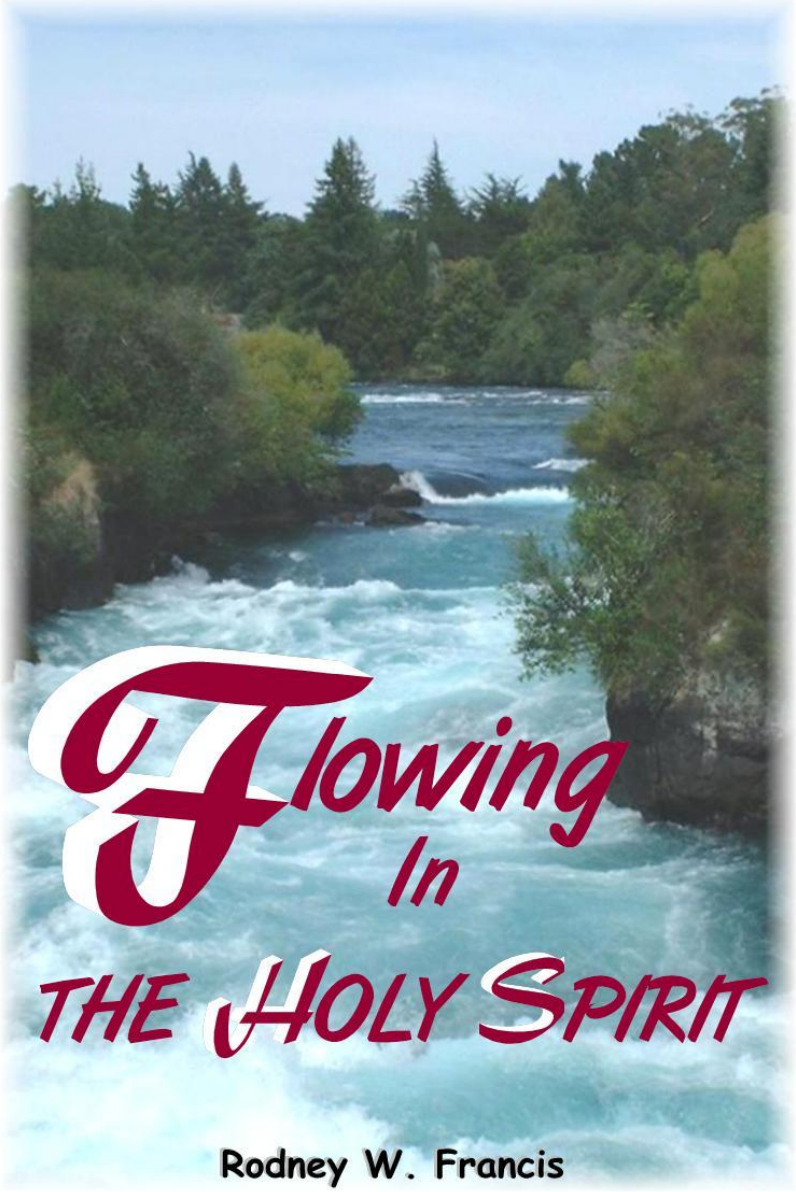


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Flowing
In
THE HOLY SPIRIT

Rodney W. Francis

Flowing In The Holy Spirit

By Rodney W. Francis

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This book is dedicated to all who sincerely desire to learn more from the Word of God in order to live a God-glorifying life-style, and to those who will use it to teach others the positives of God's Word in the here and now.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is a compilation of several articles that have appeared in our magazine, “The Gospel Faith Messenger.” Even though they are all separate articles they nevertheless present a combined message of the importance of our letting the Holy Spirit flow in and through our lives today. He holds the keys to unlocking this generation to the Christian Church, as well as unlocking every individual life on planet earth. He reveals things to us when we train our **“ears to hear what the Spirit is saying”** today.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will use this presentation to stir within each of us a greater desire to know God more, and to rise to all that He has for us in this 21st century. It is time for the Christians to arise in their God-given abilities to take this Gospel message to the ends of the earth. Will you be a part of the fulfilling of His Great Commission? Then you will also need to know the presence, power and anointing of the Holy Spirit of God living inside of you – that same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead! He’s available to you today – NOW – to enable you to work out your divine destiny in Jesus Christ right here where you are. He’s got all the Answers for everything you will ever need to fulfil His purposes in this your day and generation. **“Be filled with the Holy Spirit!”** (Ephesians 5:18-20).

God bless you super-abundantly!

- Rodney W. Francis

Chapter One

What The Holy Spirit Anointing Is For

THE FOURTH CHAPTER of St. Luke's Gospel sets before us some wonderful, yet challenging truth concerning the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus – the same Holy Spirit Who now lives in all those who *“have been endued with power from on high”* (Luke 24:49).

Right from the first verse we see Jesus being led of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit before He was led into a head-on encounter with His (and mankind's) archrival. How interesting that it was the Holy Spirit Who led Jesus into a confrontation with Satan! But that confrontation was vital to what was to follow. That encounter with the devil was all about the power of God's written Word versus the present, personal, kingdom-building power and desire of the enemy. The winner of that combat would determine the future of Jesus, His power and authority, His ministry and the destiny of humanity.

How grateful we should be that Jesus did not succumb to the temptations of Satan. Instead He defeated him by declaring the written Word of God. Luke 4:14 tells us Jesus returned *“in the power* (“*dunamis*” meaning “power capable of anything”) *of the Spirit.*” Something very definite happened in Jesus as a result of the wilderness experience.

- **He went in full; He returned power-full!**

- **He went in having His authority questioned; He came out having His authority proven.**

Jesus came back from the wilderness victorious! Have we come out of our wilderness yet, or are we still *“being tempted of the devil”*?

Jesus now taught with an authority that was not evident before.

After the wilderness, Jesus returned to His home town of Nazareth and on the Sabbath day He went to the synagogue. There He was handed the book of the Prophet Isaiah. He stood up to read. He spoke some very profound words. He spoke of the fulfilling of the words of Isaiah 61:1-4. He gave the people the essence of what the Gospel, the Word of God, the will of God, the heart of God, the commission of God is all about!

He declared:

“The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed One, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to send forth delivered those who are oppressed – who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed and broken down by calamity; To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord – the day when salvation and the free favours of God profusely abound. Then He rolled up the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were gazing (attentively) at Him. And He began to speak to them: Today this Scripture has been fulfilled while you are present and hearing” (Luke 4:18-21, AMP.).

Jesus made it very clear that the Holy Spirit had anointed His life for a specific purpose. That specific purpose can be divided into seven areas of outworking:

1. **Anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor.**
2. **Anointed to heal the broken-hearted.**
3. **Anointed to preach deliverance to the captives.**
4. **Anointed to bring recovery of sight to the blind.**
5. **Anointed to give freedom to those who are bruised.**
6. **Anointed to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**
7. **Anointed to fulfil the Scriptures.**

Take a good look at these seven points. The Spirit of the Lord anointed Jesus to effectively minister healing to people: spiritually, emotionally and physically.

1. To ***“preach the Gospel to the poor”*** is a proclamation that the Gospel carries privileges, advantages and answers to those who are poor. “Poor” in this verse means “crouching, cringing in the manner of beggars; hence, begging, beggarly, poor . . . living on the alms (“charitable donations” – Collins) of others, having nothing at all” (Bullinger’s). The Holy Spirit anointing provides answers to those who are needy. Those answers come as the Gospel (God’s Good News) is proclaimed to the people by Spirit-filled believers. Outside of the benefits of the Gospel and the born-again experience in Jesus Christ, all humanity is ***“poor”***! The Gospel preached gives hope and answers for the healing of humanity: spirit, soul and body. It is the message of wholeness.

2. To ***“heal the broken-hearted”*** means to minister

effectively to those whose lives have been “shattered; rubbed together as to the heart” (Bullinger’s). To be “shattered” means to be “1. broken into many small pieces. 2. impaired or destroyed, i.e. his nerves were shattered by the torture. 3. to be dumbfounded or thoroughly upset” (Collins). We tend to use the word “shattered” when referring to broken windscreens on motor vehicles. It speaks of a major splintering and breaking. The anointing of the Holy Spirit enables people to be tenderly and marvellously put back together again; sufficiently healed so as to be able to put the brokenness behind us and get on to fulfil the purposes of God for our lives. Nothing else can do that.

3. To “*preach deliverance to the captives*” is all about taking authority over powers, circumstances, habits; situations that prevent people from being free. The word “deliverance” means “a letting go, a sending forth; dismissal, a setting free as from captivity, or as from sins, hence, remission, pardon” (Bullinger’s). “Captives” is a word that is linked with war: “being taken captive by the spear and being held as a prisoner of war” (Bullinger’s & Strong’s). Clearly the ministry of the preaching of the Gospel (through the anointing of the Holy Spirit) is to capture the captives and set them free from the enemy, bondage, habits, whatever has made them a prisoner. They need to be recovered, set free and healed to get on with life to the glory of God!

4. To bring “*recovery of sight to the blind*” is self-explanatory. Whether you apply it physically or spiritually, it is still a great healing. Jesus demonstrated that the Gospel is very much for the healing of the physically blind just as it is for the spiritually blind. “Recovery” is “restoration” (Strong’s); it is “1. the act or process of recovering, especially from sickness, a shock, or a setback; recuperation. 2. restoration to a former or better condition. 3. the regaining of

something lost” (Collins). In the context of the usage of the word it is clearly speaking of the restoration of one’s eyesight back to its original condition (or even better)!

5. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is also **“to set at liberty them that are bruised.”** It is speaking of freedom for those who have been “crushed, broken down or into pieces” (Bullinger’s). One translation quotes it: **“that the downtrodden shall be freed from their oppressors”** (TLB). It represents the bringing forth of new freedoms, no longer being bound by oppressors of any kind. Jesus came to set us free! Sin, sickness, disease and evil spirits are all oppressors of the human race! We are failing the anointing if we are not giving freedom to others.

6. Jesus preached these truths as **“the acceptable year of the Lord.”** This is the day of God’s favour! It is the time of God’s release to those who are sick (spiritually and physically). The same Holy Spirit anointing is available today for the believers in the Word of God to take hold of and minister to others who are desperately in need of being set free. The Gospel according to Luke 4 did not pass away after Jesus left this earth. He sent the Holy Spirit anointing to those who would wait until they were **“endued with power from on high”** (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8). We either accept the truth of God’s **“acceptable year”** Word, or we deny it (through unbelief of it and hardness of our own heart). May the Holy Spirit grant us more revelation of the truth that is in Jesus the Living Word!

7. **“This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.”**

Jesus was anointed to fulfil the Scriptures. How did He fulfil the Scriptures? How could Jesus make such a statement? Who was this Man Who could publicly read Scriptures over 700 years old and say, **“This day (today!) this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears”**? Jesus could say that because He had won the right in the

wilderness when He defeated Satan with the Word. The power of the Holy Spirit in a person was greater than the temptations of the devil!

- **Jesus had power and authority – and He knew it!**
- **Jesus had power and authority – and He exercised it!**

We, too, in the Holy Spirit anointing, have power and authority – but we don't always know it! Nor do we act upon it like we should. The promises and power of the Word of God are not mere theories. They are the authority in Heaven and on Earth! Herein lies the challenge we Christians have. This is what the anointing is for! The Church of this 21st century will not survive without the “dunamis” power of God alive and working through the believers of the Word of God. There is no substitute. We do God's Word – and the people – a disservice when we fail to proclaim the Gospel according to Luke Four.

- **How can we claim to be filled and empowered with the Holy Spirit anointing if we do not believe and do what He comes to us for?**
- **How can we say we are anointed of God the Holy Spirit if there is little or no evidence of His power?**
- **The Old Testament prophets saw miraculous healings and evidence of God's power.**
- **Jesus came healing the sick with signs, wonders and miracles.**
- **The Early Church believers healed the sick and set the**

captives free!

So, what's our problem? Are we still battling it out with the devil in the wilderness? Has he got us bluffed? Blinded? Are his temptations still tempting? Until we settle that issue of who we are, and what we have through the Holy Spirit anointing, we'll not rise to use the authority of that anointing in the seven areas He has been sent to us for.

This is the day for the believers to arise . . . to declare the Gospel . . . the only Gospel that works . . . and demonstrate to an unbelieving, humanistic generation that the God of the Bible is alive and well in 2000 and beyond!

The choice is ours! Through the Word of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit we can exercise a power and authority that no other can demonstrate nor compete with. God has called us and anointed us for that purpose. What will it be?

Chapter Two

Opening Up To The Holy Spirit

“But the fact of the matter is that it is best for you that I go away, for if I don’t, the Comforter won’t come. If I do, He will – for I will send Him to you . . . Oh, there is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t understand it now. When the Holy Spirit, Who is truth, comes, He shall guide you into all truth, for He will not be presenting His own ideas, but will be passing on to you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. He shall praise Me and bring Me great honour by showing you My glory. All the Father’s glory is Mine; this is what I mean when I say that He will show you My glory”
(John 16:7 & 12-15, TLB).

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is very important in the earth today. It is so important that Jesus found it necessary to return to the Father in heaven (when He did), so He (the Holy Spirit) could come.

He came!

He came powerfully on the day of Pentecost as “a mighty rushing wind” (Acts 2:1-4).

He came to continue the ministry of Jesus through every life He could inhabit and influence!

He is the Beautiful Spirit of Truth Who only tells the truth and reveals the truth.

The Truth is JESUS CHRIST!

The Holy Spirit's ministry within the Christian believer is to guide us into all truth, to pass on to us what He has heard from Jesus. The Holy Spirit is not only involved in preparing us for the future, He reveals and forewarns about the future. **But we must open up to Him!**

The truly Spirit-filled Christians are the only ones who know and understand what is really ahead. The world has no idea of what it is plunging headlong into. It does not understand the things that belong to the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

The Holy Spirit within us has been sent to show us the glory of Jesus Christ: "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Colossians 1:27).

WHAT DOES THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO US MEAN?

- **It means that Jesus has invested Himself and His interests in you and me!**
- **It means He has chosen to reveal Himself through you and me!**
- **It means He has trusted you and me to carry His heartbeat and message to our generation.**
- **It means He has commissioned the Holy Spirit to reveal to – and manifest through – our lives the reality and power of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ!**
- **It means Jesus has delegated His power and authority to the Holy Spirit and us to fulfil His commandments.**

- **It means in reality that NOW our bodies are the dwelling place of the Almighty Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (John 14:17,23).**

THE TEST OF LOVE IS OBEDIENCE

Look at what John 14:15-17 says:

“If you love Me, obey Me; and I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter, and He will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit Who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive Him, for it isn’t looking for Him and doesn’t recognize Him. But you do, for He lives with you now and some day shall be in you” (TLB).

The Holy Spirit never leaves us!

That ***“some day shall be in you”*** (v.17,20) was the day of Pentecost. Since that time the Holy Spirit has come inside of all those who believe and receive Him.

The question is: **“Where is the Holy Spirit right now?”**

The answer is: **“Inside of every Holy Spirit-filled believer!”**

Let’s read on (Jesus speaking):

“When I come back to life again, you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. The one who obeys Me is the one who loves Me; and because he loves Me, My Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal Myself to him.” Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but His other disciple with that name) said to Him, ***“Sir, why are You going to reveal Yourself only to us disciples and not to the world at large?”*** Jesus replied, ***“Because I will only reveal Myself to those who love Me and obey Me. The Father will love them too, and we will come to them and live with them . . . But when the Father sends the Comforter instead of Me – and by the Comforter I mean the Holy Spirit – He will teach you much, as well as remind you of everything I Myself have told you”*** (John 14:20-23, TLB).

Very clearly these verses reveal that the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) have taken up residency within us – right inside of every Christian believer. They are there – the Three in One - right NOW!

In you!

In me!

The challenge to us is that we discover how to co-operate and work with the Godhead within us in such a way that we demonstrate His purposes in the earth today!

If there is one thing the world, the flesh and the devil are united in, it is their strategy to stop the Christian believers from discovering who they really are as born-again, blood-washed, totally-forgiven, Holy Spirit-filled temples of God!

When the Christian knows who he is, Who he contains and what he can do with all that, he will impact the nations of the earth supernaturally! The Holy Spirit has been sent to reveal this to us.

Our responsibility is to open up to the Holy Spirit, allow Him to be Who He really is inside of us, and then release Him out to a desperately needy world. The Christians hold and carry all the keys, all the answers to our generation's needs.

But do we know that?

If we do, what are we doing about it?

What can we do about it?

The answer is for us to know the Holy Spirit Who lives inside of us. Know Who He is! Know what He can do! Then discover how

He wants to do it through us. He doesn't "just do it." **He has to have loving, obedient, willing and available people** (like you and me!) **who will decide to do what He wants done.**

We Christians have to realize that the world's problems are not solved by preachers preaching "more sermons." The problems are not solved by "more meetings" or "another programme." **"Entertaining the saints" is a poor substitute for straight out obedience to God.** Often those things work directly against what the Holy Spirit wants. Religion and religiosity kills obedience!

The Bible is clear. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are available to those who LOVE AND OBEY! To those who **LOVE AND OBEY JESUS!** (There are plenty of Christians who are obedient to men, creeds, churches and systems, but are we obedient to Jesus through the Holy Spirit?) **To LOVE AND OBEY JESUS means we're committed to what JESUS wants!** Therefore we must be keen to listen, learn and obey. Love for JESUS is the motivation! He said, *"The one who obeys Me is the one who loves Me!"*

This raises a very interesting question: **"How do we really know if we love Jesus?"**

The Bible's answer is **"OBEYING JESUS!"** (John 14:21,23-24; John 15:9-17; 1 John 2:5)
Obedience brings life, joy and – answers!

HOW DO WE OBEY?

Obedience has everything to do with a willingness to listen to Jesus. If we are going to live in obedience to Him, we must listen to Him. That means learning to recognize His voice and the many different ways He speaks to us.

That is why the baptism (infilling) of the Holy Spirit is so important for us. Jesus sent Him (to those who believe on His Word) to help us to know the voice of Jesus more clearly.

The Holy Spirit speaks what He hears from Jesus and passes it on to us. He brings the things of Jesus to our remembrance.

Are you listening?

Are you listening with the attitude of whatever He tells you, you are committed to obeying?

It is a sad fact that many of us Christians want to hear from Jesus, but we're not committed to the obeying part.

HIDING BEHIND THE BIBLE

There have been two specific occasions in my life when the Lord has convicted me of being disobedient to Him while I was actually preaching and teaching directly from His Word. He showed me I could actually "hide behind my Bible" instead of being obedient. On both occasions it had to do with sharing words of knowledge to people – words I did not want to share, because my logical brain was telling me they would react in a way that would not go well for me. So, rather than "take the risk," I tried to ignore the words and carry on preaching. The Holy Spirit told me the second time to share the words (on separate occasions). Again I ignored and carried on preaching. Then the Holy Spirit protested to me with these words: "I asked you to deliver a message to that person, and you are refusing. You are hiding behind the Bible and, at the same time, you are in direct disobedience to Me! . . . Now, do what I ask you!" Three times He had to speak! When I got the message about hiding behind the Bible preaching, yet at the same time being in direct disobedience to God, I quickly

realized Who I was dealing with!

To me the words to share were “crazy.” But when I obeyed, the Holy Spirit spoke through me to bring powerful and direct revelation right into the lives of those two people; revelation that was exactly right for them at that time.

It pays to obey – out of a heart of LOVE!

It does not pay to disobey. **Disobedience is what closes the door for the Godhead** within to be released out of us to impact the needs of those around us. **Our disobedience is also a statement to God that we do not love Him like we should!**

LOVE OBEYS!

Now my motivation in life and ministry is, “Lord, What do You want of me? What do You want me to do?”

For that to become a reality in my life:

- **I have to consciously open up to the Holy Spirit.**
- **I have to consciously and increasingly love my brothers and sisters in Christ.**
- **I must consciously desire the fruit of the Holy Spirit to develop in my life.**
- **I must consciously desire to exercise the Spiritual Gifts** (demonstrating love to the people and a desire to build up the body of Christ).
- **I must consciously decide that whatever Jesus tells me to do, I am committed to obey** (John 2:5).

That is demonstrating my love to and for Him!

If this is not happening in my life, then I must make some adjustments until God's purpose for me is actively being outworked.

When we open up to the Holy Spirit with love, and a willingness to obey, we will discover there are a host of hindrances that will try and pull us back to "playing it safe." We discover whether or not we are bound by the fear of man (or woman!), doubt, unbelief, self-consciousness, shyness, worried by what others might say or think if we do this or that, inferiority, pride, negative self-confession, etc. So many excuses will rise up to try and discourage us, to make us want to give up and not try. **Friend, OUR LOVE FOR JESUS HAS TO BECOME GREATER AND STRONGER THAN ANY AND EVERY EXCUSE WE CAN FIND NOT TO DO WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT ASKS OF US!** Let's be finished with negative excuses and be more committed than ever **to open up to the Holy Spirit**. Let's be committed to being available to what He wants and then be committed to doing it!

We don't need more sermons, meetings or programmes. We need more people opening up more to the Holy Spirit of Truth and doing what He says. That way we will see the needs met, the Kingdom of God growing and the joy of obeying God breaking forth in our midst. He holds the answers to this generation's needs. All He needs are willing and available Christians who are committed to doing what He says, who are willing to demonstrate their love by their active obedience.

Open up to the Holy Spirit today!

Chapter Three

Love Is What Makes Us Different

ALL AROUND THE WORLD today the Christian message is being challenged by false religions, Satanic cults, modernists within our churches and a secular, humanistic, God-rejecting society. This surely must cause us to rethink our priorities on what is expected of us Christians in our day-to-day living. But before we go any further, it is very important that we know God's order of priority for us. He has made that very clear in His Word. **We are nothing without love!** This love is much more than our love for God – it must also include a great love for one another and for all people!

This is what the Bible says:

“And now I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, NIV).

“Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others – never finish paying that! For if you love them, you will be obeying all of God's laws, fulfilling all His requirements. If you love your neighbour as much as you love yourself you will not want to harm or cheat him, or kill him or steal from him. And you won't sin with his wife or want what is

his, or do anything else the Ten Commandments say is wrong. All ten are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbour as you love yourself. Love does no wrong to anyone. That's why it fully satisfies all of God's requirements. It is the only law you need" (Romans 13:8-10, TLB).

"Whoever loves his brother [believer] abides (lives) in the Light, and in It or in him there is no occasion for stumbling or cause for error or sin" (1 John 2:10, AMP.).

No matter which way we try and interpret the Bible, when we look at the clear teachings of Jesus on how we serve Him, **it always comes back to how we love and serve one another.** We are told that it is possible for us to rise to great spiritual heights in being able to:

- Speak with the tongues of men and angels;
- Have the gift of prophecy;
- Understand all mysteries;
- Have all knowledge;
- Have all faith to remove mountains;
- Give to feed the poor;
- Even give our body to be a burnt sacrifice – BUT!

But if we do not love one another it is all a waste of time! As far as God is concerned we are NOTHING WITHOUT LOVE! Love is the key to every Christian answer! Jesus said the world would know we are His disciples by our love for one another:

"And so I am giving a new commandment to you now – love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are My disciples" (John 13:34-35, TLB).

It is not by our church attendance, good works, sound doctrine (teaching), our preaching, or our ability to speak fluently in tongues or to prophesy, but by **our LOVE! Love fulfils all of God's requirements for us!**

The question has got to be asked:

- **Why do Christians spend so much time giving attention to the lesser things, and so little time to the more important things?**
- **Is it because we struggle to build close personal relationships with other people?**
- **Why don't we believe what Jesus teaches us?** If it is true that we are **nothing without love**, then it must also be true that we are **everything with love!** The Bible directly apportioned our love for Him as being only as great as our love for one another. We cannot say we love God Who we haven't seen, if we don't genuinely love our brother and sister who we have seen. That's the clear command of Scripture:

“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:20-21, NIV).

There is no other way than this. **Relationship with God is only as strong as our relationship with people.** (It is also true that our trusting of God is only as great as we can trust people.) **The reality of the spiritual realm is worked out in this natural realm we live in.** We cannot say we love God and, at the same time, hate people:

“We know that we have passed over out of the death into the Life by the fact that we love the brethren, [our fellow

Christians]. He who does not love abides – remains, is held and kept continually – in [spiritual] death. Any one who (abominates, detests) hates his brother [in Christ] is [at heart] a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding (persevering) within him. By this we come to know – progressively to recognize, to perceive, to understand the [essential] love: that He laid down His [own] life for us; and we ought to lay [our] lives down for [those who are our] brothers [in Him]” (1 John 3:14-16, AMP.).

We are called to lay down our life for one another – every bit as much as we are commanded to lay down our life for Jesus!

Those who know my testimony know that God had to teach me how to love people. Even though I had been a Pentecostal Preacher for 16 years, I still did not know how to genuinely love and relate to people. Yet in that time I spent hours seeking the face of God, pouring over the pages of my Bible, never missed a church meeting, etc. But it wasn't what God was essentially looking for. He wanted me to learn how to love **people!** That is His No. 1 requirement of us.

God used different kinds of people to change my heart and attitudes, so I could express love to the unlovely, so I could relate to people I could not relate to previously (and didn't know how to!). After several years of being tested and changed (which included three death contracts on my life from the Satanists!), God taught me a whole new way of ministry. It has caused me to see life and the Christian ministry in a whole new light. The result has been marvellous. I have the joy of travelling the world and releasing this wonderful love of God into scores of people. They get transformed by an impartation of God's love through me.

Christian – I believe we are absolutely nothing without love. It makes no difference who we are, or what position in the church we may hold, whether we be a priest or a pauper, **without the love of Jesus flowing out of our heart and life WE ARE NOTHING!** And nothing is nothing, no matter how many times we try to multiply it!

- **So, why do we struggle to love our neighbour?**
- **What is it that keeps us “locked up inside of ourselves,” hiding behind a religious facade, not able to freely express our love for one another?**

We have to face this issue. We cannot keep suppressing the truth.

- **What is it that stops us from freely expressing love one to the other?**
- **Is it fear?** (If it is, then *“perfect love casts out fear”* – 1 John 4:18). Face your fears and deal with them through loving others more).
- **Is it a cultural thing?** (If it is, the truth of the Gospel has to become greater than our culture).
- **Is it past hurts and abuses?** (If it is, then we have to practice forgiveness, then be released from the power of them, and then to get healed of the affects of them).
- **Is it inferiority?** (If it is, then we have to know we are totally accepted by God, rise in the truth of that knowledge, and live to the glory of God – **in love**). You are not a second-rate citizen!
- **Is it pride?** (If it is, then we need to face it and deal with it. We are fools to let pride stand in the way of our ministering God’s love to others). *“Humble yourself in the sight of God . . . ”* and *“Be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble”* (James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:5, KJV).

There could be a whole host of things and reasons as to why we struggle to show unreserved and genuine love to others. Whatever they are, we need to face them, deal with them, and then learn to **love others as Jesus loves us!** That’s His commandment to us: *“That you love one another as I have loved you.”* Now that is a very powerful love, but Jesus said that’s the priority. No

excuses – no “ifs and buts”!

The power and effectiveness of Holy Spirit ministry, the operation of the nine Spiritual Gifts, the prophetic realm – in fact everything – is only as great as our ability to love other people. All ministry gifts functioning without love have dangerous tendencies. They get misused and abused – and people get hurt and damaged. In “The GFM” Ministry we place a very high priority in ministering in LOVE. It is what makes our prophetic input so powerful. That is why we include this LOVE message in our Schools and Conferences. It is the No.1 priority as far as Jesus is concerned. Therefore it has to be our No.1 priority as well. We make no apologies for this.

We are taught to *“love one another with a pure heart fervently* (“in an outstretched manner”):

“Now that you have, by obeying the truth, made your souls clean enough for a genuine love of your fellows, see that you do love each other, fervently and from the heart. For you are sons of God now; the live, permanent Word of the living God has given you His own indestructible hereditary” (1 Peter 1:22-23, J.B. Phillips).

It has to be genuine love – nothing hypocritical – not make believe or a “play act.” **Our love for one another has to be real! It has to be so real that we are willing to “lay down our lives for one another”** (1 John 3:14-16)!

- **Is your love for others that strong?**
- **Is mine?**

Each of us has to answer for his/her self.

The message is clear. **If we Christians are going to impact our generation for Jesus, then it will be because of our love for one another!** The world’s answer to everything is “more education”; but God’s answer is “MORE LOVE”! Let us not be guilty of hiding behind Bible knowledge (and more Bible education) at the expense of LOVE.

- **Our generation is love starved!**

You and I – the Spirit-filled Christians - have God’s answer to that problem, and the answer comes when we demonstrate LOVE in a real way amongst ourselves, and wherever we go. Yes, we can rise to great spiritual heights without love, but we are still nothing. How much better to rise to great spiritual heights immersed in the love of Jesus for others, so that even if they don’t understand what we say or believe, they will know our LOVE in a very powerful way.

Why don’t you reach out to someone else right now and tell him/her you love them? Show them you do by giving them a genuine hug to go with it. God bless you!

“We know how much God loves us because we have felt His love and because we believe Him when He tells us that He loves us dearly. God is love, and anyone who lives in love is living with God and God is living in him. And as we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete; so we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the day of judgment, but can face Him with confidence and joy, because He loves us and we love Him too. We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us, and shows that we are not fully convinced that He really loves us. So you see, our love for Him comes as a result of His loving us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but keeps on hating his brother, he is a liar; for if he doesn’t love his brother who is right there in front of him, how can he love God Whom he has never seen? And God Himself has said that one must love not only God, but his brother too” (1 John 4:16-21, TLB).

- **It is God’s first requirement of us!**

Recommended reading: “You Can Measure Your Love For God” (By Rodney W. Francis). Price within New Zealand (\$15.00), within Malaysia (RM15.00), UK (6 Pounds) and USA (\$10.00).

Chapter Four

Are You Living Under An Open Or Closed Heaven?

IN 1 SAMUAL 3 we have an interesting scenario. The chapter commences with this statement:

“And the Word of the Lord was precious (“rare”) in those days; there was no open vision (“a means of divine revelation. It refers to a prophetic vision by which divine messages are communicated”).”

Unger’s Bible Dictionary says, “There was no public and recognized revelation of the divine will.”

Let us go now to the last verse of this same chapter, where we read:

*“And the Lord appeared (“a looking, seeing; appearance form; vision as granted to the prophets” – Wilson’s) **again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord.**”*

What we have here is a situation where the chapter starts with a spiritually closed heaven over the priesthood, and the nation of Israel, and finishes with a spiritually opened heaven over the same nation.

- **What happened between those two statements to change the spiritual climate of the nation?**

- Was there any specific “happening” that turned the destiny of the nation around? I believe there was.

ELI THE PRIEST

Eli was the reigning priest of the Lord at the time of Samuel’s birth. Samuel had been born as a result of the cry of his barren mother’s heart. She had promised God that if He gave her a son, she would give him back to the Lord for His service.

The burden to conceive became so strong on Hannah, that one day when she was praying in the temple, Eli saw her and thought she was drunk! He rebuked her! Eli did not come across as a godly, spiritual leader. He could not discern the difference between a godly desire/burden and a drunkard! He was not a good family man, as he had allowed his own sons to prostitute the women of the church (1 Samuel 1 & 2). The only record we have of God speaking to Eli is in 1 Samuel 2:27-36. It is a message of judgment upon him and his household for their failures to obey the commands of the Lord! It came via a prophet. There is no record of God speaking personally – One on one – to Eli. And it was Eli who had the responsibility of mentoring Samuel into the work of the ministry!

THE VOICE OF GOD

Between the first and last verses of 1 Samuel 3 we have the amazing record of Samuel **discovering the voice of God for his own life**. He was asleep, and was woken by a voice. Samuel did not at that point know the voice of God for himself. He thought the voice was Eli’s, so his servant heart caused him to rise, and walk through the temple to where Eli was! He woke Eli up and asked him what he wanted. Eli sent him back to bed. That happened three times before Eli finally perceived that God was trying to talk to the young man. **Eli should have perceived what was happening the first time, but he was not**

sensitive to the voice of God (he could not hear it for himself). Samuel was instructed that if the voice came again the fourth time, he was to respond in a certain way. The voice did come again and Samuel discovered the voice he was hearing was not the voice of a man, but the voice of God! **At that moment something happened in the spirit realm that unlocked the closed heaven over Israel and released an open heaven!**

- **What opens heaven to us?**

It is hearing the voice of God into our own spirit and life – and knowing it is GOD!

Heaven opened over Israel because God found someone He could talk to! God found someone who would listen to Him – and obey.

That night God spoke things into Samuel’s spirit that set him up for the rest of his life and ministry. He told Samuel of the reaction that would reverberate throughout the nation as He judged the spiritual leaders. That was quite a shock for the young Samuel to hear God speak such things of the man and family he was submitted to. Eli and his sons’ life-styles were such that they couldn’t (or wouldn’t) listen to God and His prophets. **That disobedience had closed heaven over their lives and, because of their positions, over the whole nation! It never opened again until that night when Samuel heard the voice of God!** That which happened in the spirit realm through Samuel hearing the voice of God had such an impact, that out of it *“all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord”* (v. 20).

When we Christians listen to the voice of God to our own lives, it opens the way for God to reveal Himself to us more fully and freely. That is what an open heaven is. It is living with nothing between! Nothing to hinder God from doing what He wants to do in and through us.

Everything we receive from God comes by revelation – by hearing His voice! That is called *“hearing the Word of the Lord.”*

The same principle applies today. If a nation is not listening to God, it lives under a closed heaven. It applies also to churches and to individual Christians.

UZZIAH AND ISAIAH

In 2 Chronicles 26 we read of a very successful king by the name of Uzziah. He came to power at a young age (16) and allowed a spiritual man (Zechariah) to impart into his life. Zechariah was a man who lived under an open heaven, because *“he had understanding in the visions of God”* (v. 5). That word “understanding” is a spiritual word meaning “to separate, distinguish, to discern, to mark, to understand, all which depend on the power of separating, distinguishing, discriminating; specially to discern, perceive” (Wilson’s). The word “visions” here is “to see in vision, i.e. to be taught of God in vision as the prophets” (Wilson’s). Zechariah received spiritual revelation from God and passed it on to Uzziah.

Zechariah and Uzziah were a great combination. As a result, Uzziah was “always ahead of” the other kings and nations around him. It was not until he allowed pride to enter his heart that things went horribly wrong for him. He stepped outside his realm of authority and offered incense in the temple – not his job to do. He ignored the warnings – the judgment of God fell. Uzziah came out of the temple a leper, and remained a leper until he died. Pride closed heaven over Uzziah, then the nation of Israel. Spiritually, things went into decline. The revelation of God could no longer be obeyed.

It wasn’t until Uzziah died that we see heaven opened again over Israel. We read about that in Isaiah 6:

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne . . .”

The voice, revelation, vision of God came again through the Prophet Isaiah. He brought a new season of the voice and revelation of God calling the people to commit themselves to the service of God:

“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

- Have you heard that call yet?
- It is a prophetic call.
- It comes by the voice of the Spirit.
- It comes right from the heart of God.
- It is the Word that opens heaven to us, as well as others.
- Will you respond and be an “open heaven” person?

THE OPEN WINDOWS OF MALACHI 3:10

Perhaps the most well-known Scripture on this subject is in Malachi 3:10. This verse is often used to generate Christians more in the area of their tithing and giving. The message here is a rebuke to the people for not heeding the voice of the messenger – the one who walks under an open heaven. Because of the people’s disobedience to the Word, they had fallen into the trap of serving God outside the realm of that which God required. They had robbed God – but didn’t know it. The house of God had fallen into disrespect. They were doing their “religious thing” rather than what God was saying.

The challenge went out, ***“Prove Me now, says the Lord!”*** He was saying “You do what I ask you and the windows of heaven will be opened in abundance unto you!” It included their financial giving, for our money represents us (we spend so much time working to get it!) God wants our obedience more than He wants our money. The result of an open heaven is ***“And all nations shall call you blessed . . . says***

the Lord” (v. 12).

JESUS BROUGHT AN OPEN HEAVEN (Matthew 3:16-17)

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased’” (NIV)

Jesus was born at a time when heaven was closed over the earth. But at His water baptism, the heavens were opened, the voice of God came, and the public ministry of Jesus was about to be launched. The whole world has felt the impact of Jesus!

HEAVEN OPENED TO SAUL (PAUL)

In Acts 9, 22 and 26, we read of Saul of Tarsus getting wonderfully changed by the power of God. Even though he had been brought up as a very religious man, he had never known an open heaven! It was “head knowledge” more than “heart knowledge”! On his way to Damascus to persecute, maim, and even kill Christians, Jesus intervened and sovereignly called Saul to serve Him. The moment Saul knew the voice of Jesus, something dramatically changed inside him. Immediately he yielded himself to the will of God. His life changed for the better. Heaven had opened over his life, and, as long as he listened to the voice of Jesus, he would never know a closed heaven again.

Saul went on to become the great Apostle Paul. He lived his life by the revelation of God, listening to His voice, and doing His will (Galatians 1:12, 15-16; Galatians 2:1-2).

SUMMARY

The difference between our walking under a closed heaven or an open heaven is our ability to recognize (discern) the voice of God to our own heart. It is the voice of God – and knowing that voice to be the voice of God – that opens us to the spirit realm. It is called revelation, vision, the Word of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit speaking. To effectively walk under an open heaven we must have that revelation of God.

- **Have you got it?**

Don't allow the enemy (or your own doubts) to rob you any longer.

Listen to what the Lord says, and . . . ***“Whatever He tells you to do, DO IT!”*** (John 2:5).

Chapter Five

Established To Be A Prophet

“And all Israel . . . knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord” (1 Samuel 3:20-21, KJV).

ALL AROUND THE WORLD today there is the need for the raising up – and recognizing – of the five-fold ministry gifts: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11-13). These gifts are a necessity if we are ever going to see the Christian Church come to maturity and fulfil her divine purpose in God. In many churches today there is little or no understanding of especially the apostle and prophet ministries. These two gifts carry **"the key of knowledge"** (Luke 11:49-52). **The true knowledge of God is revelation knowledge, that which is revealed and made known by the Holy Spirit.** The Apostle Paul lived by that knowledge and taught according to that knowledge (see Acts 22:14-15; Galatians 1:11-12, 16; Galatians 2:2; Ephesians 3:1-21).

When we consider the life of the Prophet Samuel (which we looked at in the previous chapter) we see that he came into existence because of a mother's prayer. Hannah had been barren and longed for a son. She promised God that if He gave her a son she would give him back to God for His service (1 Samuel 1). God answered Hannah's cry and Samuel was born.

We, too, have been born-again by a miracle. It took God touching

us to enable us to see and enter into His Kingdom (John 1:12-14; John 3:3-8). **God is our Father, and He is for us, and wants us for His service!**

True to her promise, Hannah gave Samuel to God and His service. So, from a very young age, Samuel was brought up in the temple of the Lord! Even as a very young child he learned to "**worship the Lord**" (1 Samuel 1:28).

HE MINISTERED TO GOD

We see in 1 Samuel 3:1 that as a child Samuel "**ministered unto the Lord before Eli.**" He learned at an early age to worship and minister. Unfortunately his tutor (Eli) was a priest who had lost his way. He was no longer on the "cutting edge" of his ministry, but functioned in what we call "maintenance mode." It is a dangerous place for church leaders to be in. **When we function in maintenance mode we are not receiving the revelation of God into our spirit. We minister out of habit. We get bound into an ongoing programme that eventually kills us spiritually. When leaders live like that, it is easy for sin to increase in the personal life, the family life, as well as in the church.**

Leaders hold the key!

They either release or restrict the people of God in their ministries! Because of Eli's lack of spiritual alertness, awareness and perception, he could not quickly recognize the voice of God. In fact "**open vision**" had dried up (1 Samuel 3:1). That word "vision" is "a means of divine revelation. It refers to a prophetic vision by which divine messages are communicated." **Church leaders are called to lead their people prophetically. They are called to wait before God to receive the wisdom and knowledge of God by revelation of the Holy Spirit. When that is happening the people come alive and are able to live "in the Spirit."** When the people are only getting "Bible

knowledge" and "topical subjects" through naturally learned processes, it actually works "death" – spiritual death – into the people (2 Corinthians 3).

A DIRECT LINK?

I believe there was a direct link between Eli's spiritual condition and the fact the word of the Lord was not freely coming forth, the fact there was no *"open vision."* We see that it happened also in the days of King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26). For many years he was a successful, God-fearing king and leader. But the day came when pride entered his heart, he refused to listen and stepped outside his realm of anointing. God struck him with leprosy and he remained unhealed to the day of his death. During that latter part of his life things spiritually went into decline. Instead of being a leader with the blessing of God he was a leader being a hindrance to the purposes of God. Somehow Uzziah caused the *"open vision"* to be closed. **And nothing happened until he died!** God did not intervene until Uzziah departed this earth. Once that happened God brought a new revelation – a prophetic call – to Isaiah. It is interesting how the Scripture puts it:

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple" (Isaiah 6:1).

A new call, a new vision of Jesus, a new commitment, a new emphasis, a new raising up, a new sending forth, a new day! Both Samuel and Isaiah were prophets! The prophet gift brings the new emphasis, the new challenge, the new direction, the open vision from heaven back to the Church! The prophet restores the life of God back into the Church – life that has been drained out of it by leaders who have lost their way.

GOD WANTS DIVINE REVELATION IN THE CHURCH!

God's heart has always been to communicate His "present truth" revelation to us. Israel would never experience that under the leadership that Eli became. Revelation dried up under his leadership! It did likewise with King Saul.

God is always looking for people who will see past the religious structures and traditions. **He is looking to raise up apostles and prophets to bring the Church back into the knowledge of God. If He cannot find a mature man or woman, He will raise up a child as in the case of Samuel.**

Samuel lived in the temple. One night while asleep, God spoke to him. Samuel (at that time) did not know the Lord, nor had he learned to recognize His voice. However, he responded to the voice he heard. Not once, not twice, but three times. Each time he got out of bed, went and woke up Eli the priest, sincerely believing Eli was calling him. Eli's spiritual condition was such that it took three visits from Samuel waking him up before he recognized God was speaking to him! (How many times does it take us?)

Samuel was instructed how to answer if God spoke again. He did, and Samuel replied as Eli had said: "*Speak Lord, for Your servant is listening*" (1 Samuel 3:1-10).

Even though Samuel had not recognized it was God calling him, he still responded! He was a man whose servant heart caused him to respond quickly. **There is a learning process in knowing the voice of the Lord.** Samuel thought it was Eli calling, when in truth it was God. God did not scorn him for that. **Samuel learned quickly the difference between the voice of man and the voice of God. And so must we!**

I believe this is a key area today for Christians. If we do not know the difference between the voice of man and God, we are never going to fulfil the purposes of God! Once Samuel knew God's voice, his life was never to be the same again. As long as we doubt God's voice, we will never rise out of mediocrity. We will always be limited by natural inabilities, opinions of others, personal doubt and fears, and will never exercise true Biblical faith that obeys God. Why? **Because obedience is a direct result of our responding to God's voice.**

Once Samuel recognized God's voice, God began to pour out His heart to him. Samuel was given revelation:

- 1. Of what was going to happen in Israel (his nation), something so significant that it would cause the ears of the people to tingle!** (1 Samuel 3:11).
- 2. That Eli and his house would be judged** (because of Eli the leader turning a "blind eye" to the sins of his sons) (1 Samuel 3:12-14).

From that night Samuel discovered the power of the prophetic realm. Something was etched into his spirit that made him a listener to God from that point on. The word of the Lord had come to him – and would continue to come! He treated that revelation knowledge with utmost respect and guarded it carefully. (Do we?).

Even though Samuel was still a young man God had used him to bring into being a new day of "*open vision.*" **He heard from God! Amazingly, even at that early stage of his call to be a prophet, all**

Israel knew it! They knew he was called of God to be a prophet! Not a pastor, not a teacher, not a youth leader, but a prophet! The people recognized the prophet mantle upon him. God had found a man who would listen, recognize, respond to, and obey Him! Therefore God continued to "*appear*" or "*reveal*" Himself to Samuel.

Samuel matured to be an exceptionally accurate prophet. The public testimony of him was: "*All that he says surely comes to pass*" (1 Samuel 9:6). That's quite a statement! If you read all of 1 Samuel 9 and 10: you will discover how accurate Samuel was when he spoke approximately 40 different "prophetic words/words of knowledge" over Saul's life – and all came to pass the same day! (1 Samuel 10:9).

Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. He knew it and the people knew it.

The whole New Testament Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone:

"You are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus Himself is the foundation-stone. In Him the whole building is bonded together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you too are being built with all the rest into a spiritual dwelling for God" (Ephesians 2:20-22, NEB).

The Church is built upon the apostles and prophets, with Jesus being the Chief Corner Stone. If they were necessary in the beginning, then their ministry, impact and effects are needed now! **The foundation should be permeating every part of the Body of Christ in such a way that the revelation knowledge of God is allowed to flow freely through every part of it.**

Today, parts of the Christian Church are trying to grapple with the apostolic and prophetic anointings. Sadly, numbers do not understand

these giftings and therefore either ignore or reject them. Our Christian leaders need to be honestly searching out the "young Samuel's" so they can encourage, instruct, recognize, release and listen to what the revelation of God is for us in this 21st century. If we do this we will save the Church from "dying" and see "open vision" restored more fully. That, in turn, releases people to function in their God-given, supernatural giftings and the Kingdom grows as a result. If we don't, then we will see lethargy and apathy cripple the Church to the point of uselessness. Then God will have to raise up a new generation of Samuel's and Isaiah's to bring things back into divine order.

- **Where is it at for you?**
- **Are you in touch with God?**
- **Do you know His voice?**
- **Do you know it well enough to rise above your doubts and fears – and OBEY Him?**
- **Are you living in the divine revelation of His purposes for you?**

"Where there is no prophetic vision ("the ability to perceive future developments"), *the people perish . . .* " (Proverbs 29:18).

Chapter Six

The Ongoing Impact of The Prophetic

THERE IS A GREAT NEED today for us to understand the ongoing purpose and impact of the prophetic ministry. Far too often we tend to “live for the moment, the current meeting, or for just today” instead of understanding the important place the prophetic ministry is to occupy in our lives. Whenever we are walking in obedience to the voice of the Lord (that is what makes us prophetic), then we are partnering with God to bring about eternal purposes in the lives of others. This wonderful prophetic ministry is not for a short season, but should be developed and imparted to carry on from generation to generation, with each succeeding generation becoming more “sharp and accurate” than the ones that have gone before. As we trace the ministry of the prophetic through the Scriptures we discover that its role in our lives is to have a wide area of influence and impact. It holds the keys to our past, present and future. It lifts us to a realm where we can know the purposes of God for us right here in the now. It is a major key to unlocking the knowledge and authority of God to us. Throughout the Bible, wherever there was place given to the prophetic, the people profited enormously. It was their protection, for it brought the revelation of God right into the now and confirmed God’s presence among them in the victories obtained (2 Chronicles 20:20).

The prophetic ministry is so important that it should be right at the forefront of every Holy Spirit filled church and believer. It is New Testament Christianity. It is also 21st century Christianity. Right now there is a huge challenge for the prophetic to be restored more fully

into the way we live and conduct our affairs.

I do not believe it is God's will that the prophetic ministry is only a "seasonal" thing and then we leave it. The prophetic should have been developed down through the generations much more than it has. It can be imparted and developed to a place of great accuracy. Every Christian should be able to trust the time-tested, balanced, proven-to-be-accurate prophetic ministries.

In the Old Testament, one of the tribes of Israel was Issachar. It appears that down through the ages they had an ability to pursue, develop, influence and administer the prophetic in a powerful way. The Scriptures quoted in this article cover an approximate 400 year period, so their prophetic giftings were carried on from generation to generation. Let us look a bit closer at their prophetic ministry.

THE DESCENDANTS OF ISSACHAR

In the First Book of Chronicles, Chapter 12 and Verse 32, we read an amazing account of the sons of Issachar:

“Of the sons of Issachar (meaning “he will be hired: there is reward: he will bring reward”) ***who had understanding of the times*** (“seasons,” “the temper of the times” – (NLT & TLB) ***to know what Israel*** (“ruling with God” and “he shall be prince of God”) ***ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command”*** (NKJV).

For many years I have been challenged by this verse. It has filled me with the desire to be able to function like that. What a difference it makes when we have understanding of the things we're experiencing and can see and know it from God's viewpoint. This enables us to use that understanding to know what we should do in the right place and at the right time. Timing is so important. We can prove the will of

God by this method. It is prophetic ministry. True understanding and knowledge are prophetic words, for they bring us into “the now” of God’s purpose for us.

The sons of Issachar were so “accurate” in an ongoing way that their prophetic insight, understanding, knowledge and giftings promoted them to a decision-making responsibility for David and his men. They knew what they had to do, and what had to be done:

In **Deuteronomy 27:12-13** we see they were of the six tribes (Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin) whose call was to “**ble**ss (Hebrew is “barak” meaning “to declare blessed” – Young’s) **the people.**”

- Their ministry was to bless.
- Prophetic ministry brings the blessing of God. It breaks the curse and curses off people’s lives.

In **Deuteronomy 33:18-19** we read: “***About Zebulun he said: Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents. They will summon peoples to the mountain and there offer sacrifices of righteousness; they will feast on the abundance of the seas, on the treasures hidden in the sand***” (NIV).

Regarding the sons of Issachar:

- They were to be a rejoicing people.
- They were to function “*in their tents*” (they operated from a home base).
- Their ministry was to call people to a higher place (up the mountain).
- They were to bring the people to a place of offering sacrifices of righteousness.

- The true prophetic raises the standard of God in the people
- It brings us into a “more acceptable” place with God. The higher we go up His mountain, the clearer the view, the fresher the air, the greater the understanding of what we are about.
- They were to feed the people with the abundance of the seas.
- They were to “dig up” and reveal those treasures previously hidden.
- The prophetic “feeds” and “benefits” people, for it brings new revelation of God’s goodness to us. No one benefits when the “*abundance of the seas*” is not harvested and the “*hidden treasures*” are not dug up. The sons of Issachar knew how to get those things.

In **Judges 5:15** we see the princes of Issachar were there with Deborah the prophetess (Judges 4:4). Their prophetic ministry was right there working alongside the prophetess leader of the people.

- Their task was to “partner with” and work alongside the prophetess Deborah.
- Deborah obviously recognized their ministry to have them working alongside her. What were they there for? They had to come up with the strategies to outwit the enemy and could be relied upon to get it right.

In **1 Chronicles 7:5** the families of Issachar (87,000 of them) were called “*mighty men of valour.*”

- They developed as a strong and valiant people.
- They were not weak or inefficient.
- They commanded respect as a people.

In **1 Chronicles 12:38-40** they were plentiful providers and nourishers

by means of food supplies to the men who were following David. They brought great joy in Israel.

- They were generous and plentiful providers.
- They ministered also to the physical needs of others in the army of David.
- They were givers.
- They helped others celebrate in what the Lord was doing in their midst.
- They worked in team in both the spiritual and physical areas of need.
- They released joy amongst the children of God.

If we summarize the works of the descendants of Issachar we see they carried a mantle to bring prophetic insight, focus, blessing, provision, abundance, sacrifices of righteousness, support to the prophets/prophetesses, and to people on the home front. They were strong people and valiant. All those things represent different aspects of the prophetic ministry – that of providing the right things to the right people in the right place at the right time!

Let's return back to **1 Chronicles 12:32** . . .

They were people who *“had understanding of the times.”*

The word “understanding” comes from the Hebrew word “biyn” meaning:

- “To separate mentally (or distinguish); i.e. understand:- attend, consider, be cunning, diligently, direct, **discern**, eloquent, feel, inform, instruct, have (intelligence), know, look well to, mark, **perceive**, be prudent, regard, skillful.”
- “Biyn” is then developed into “biynah” which is: “understanding: knowledge, meaning, perfectly, understanding, wisdom” (Strong’s).

- “To separate (to distinguish); hence, **to discern, to mark, to understand, all which depend on the power of separating, distinguishing; specially to discern, perceive;** to discern mentally, to understand” (Wilson’s).

The children of Issachar had the spiritual ability to perceive and discern the times or seasons they were living in. That made them prophetic. It gave them an ability to live in the “now” of God’s purposes – **“To know what Israel should do and the best time to do it”** (GNB). Their ministry instilled confidence into the people because of their unique understanding and knowledge, which was beyond the ordinary.

The word “know” is also a prophetic word and comes from the Hebrew “yada” meaning:

“To know (properly to ascertain by seeing) . . . and includes observation, care, recognition . . . cunning, declare, be diligent (can cause to) discern, discover . . . perceive, have understanding” (Strong’s).

“To see – and gives the following order of significations:

1. To perceive, to be sensible of, by sight, by touch, but chiefly in the mind; hence to understand, observe; to consider; to mark and observe with a purpose . . .
2. To come to the knowledge of, by seeing, by hearing, and by experience . . .
3. To know, as that which has not been known before.
4. To know, be acquainted with.
5. To know, to understand, to know how.
6. Absolutely, to know to be wise. In Hebrew words of knowledge imply also the exercise of the affections; to know implies faith” (Wilson’s).

Putting all this together in the context of 1 Chronicles 12, David knew

the giftings of the descendants of Issachar – 200 of them – and he recognized the importance of their perceptive understanding and knowledge. David had such confidence in them that he trusted their discernment in making decisions on what Israel should do.

The Jerusalem Bible puts it this way: *“of the sons of Issachar, sound judges of the times when Israel should take action, and the way to do it: two hundred chiefs and all their kinsmen under their command* (they did whatever the sons of Issachar said).”

David delegated much responsibility and decision-making to the sons of Issachar. He knew the accuracy, truthfulness and reliability of their God-given abilities. The result was David released them to function and fulfil their destiny, and they helped and released David to become the king of Israel.

This is prophetic team ministry in action – not David deciding and acting alone as a “one man band,” but David working with and trusting 200 others in knowing what his men ought to do – and when to do it.

- **Why could he have confidence in them like that?** He had proven the accuracy, reliability and integrity of their giftings and knew their hearts were totally committed to the vision and purpose of the call of God upon him as their leader.
- Their giftings had been developed over a long period of time, even passed on from generation to generation (like Timothy’s *“genuine faith”* being passed on from his mother Eunice, who received it from her mother Lois – 2 Timothy 1:5).

May God help each of us to see the importance of the prophetic ministry being developed from generation to generation, for it is a

vital means of helping God's people "***to understand and know what to do.***" There is so much we can learn from the descendants of Issachar – and from God's Word – as we see how effective true prophetic ministry is in the purposes of God. Be blessed, inspired and challenged as you follow the guiding of the Holy Spirit today.

Chapter Seven

Prophetic Acts

WE LIVE IN EXCITING, challenging times; times when God is bringing about many changes in the Church as we know it. One of the changes that I have observed and participated in is the restoration of prophetic acts. As we keep our eyes on Jesus and passionately seek His face, everything He IS comes with Him. He is Spirit and He is Prophetic. A prophetic act is more than – or differs from – a spoken word of prophecy, or word of knowledge. It's an action, something we **DO** under the anointing and unction of the Holy Spirit as a step of faith, as an act of obedience to release the power, the presence and the victory of God into a situation. Yes, it can include prophecy and words of knowledge, or it can be an act that stands alone without any 'extras'. The Bible records many prophetic acts, but there is no set pattern to go by – the Holy Spirit never gets in a rut, He doesn't grow stale in His prophetic capacity. If you and I are willing to be open to the Holy Spirit, we'll see an explosion of His fullness working through us to bring wholeness to the Body.

- **We need to rise in prophetic proclamations and declarations.**
- **We need to rise in the area of authority, moving in the power of God resident within us; calling into being the will of God for situations and circumstances; speaking into existence that which does not exist.**

The story in Joshua Chapter 10, where Joshua makes a prophetic declaration, is amazing. He was on the battlefield, fighting against five Amorite kings and their armies, but he needed more time, more

daylight to get the job completed successfully. So he looked up at the sun and made an awesome prophetic declaration . . . “Sun, stand still! You will not go down today, but you will continue to shine and give us light until the battle is won. Moon, don’t come this way tonight; we have no need of you, just stay right where you are!” What authority! What faith!

- **We need to be more open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.**
- **We need to forget the patterns that we’ve been “hooked into” for so long; the mindset that says, “It has to be done this way”; the restrictions in our minds that tell us “You can’t do that – it won’t be acceptable in the church!”**

Just recently in a “GFM” meeting, the Holy Spirit told me to wave a flag over a couple who were being ministered to for a wounded spirit. My mind told me that was crazy – what could waving a flag do? But as I was obedient, the Holy Spirit caused me to make a strong declaration over their lives and pronounce victory into their spirits. Next thing, the wife was standing on a chair, waving the flag high in the air with all her might; she was getting involved in a prophetic act to break off the wounding in her spirit. **Holy Spirit ministry is all about bringing life, setting people free, sending them on their way whole and healed.** Later on, the wife shared with me how significant the prophetic act had been. No one else in that meeting (except her husband) knew that many years before, while she had been leading a meeting, the Holy Spirit had prompted her to stand on a chair and wave a flag to bring a spirit of celebration and joy. When I approached them with the flag in that meeting, immediately the wife’s mind went straight back to that occasion and she **knew** the Holy Spirit was setting her free.

- **We need to be more prophetic on our musical**

instruments, allowing the Holy Spirit to create in us His melody, His rhythm, His song. He has so much He wants to express through us, but it won't happen if we're programmed to run on "automatic."

- **We need to be convinced there's more to God's music than what we already experience.**

Again, in a recent meeting, the Holy Spirit showed me He was "waiting" for a prophetic whistle. I found myself having a quick conversation with the Holy Spirit . . . "Whistle? . . . but you can't whistle in church . . . it just wouldn't be acceptable." But the reply came straight back, "Who are you to say what is acceptable? I can use whatever I choose."

Last year I was part of a "GFM" women's team ministering in the South Island of New Zealand when one of our team began to prophesy on a tambourine. It was simply amazing because it was done as a prophetic act. It happened after the Holy Spirit caused me to make a strong declaration over the congregation that we would *Move On In God*; that we would *RUMBLE for God!* Liz began to *RUMBLE* the tambourine, and the sound filled the air. It rose and fell; it stirred my spirit with such an excitement that, when she stopped playing, I felt almost robbed; I felt like the link to heaven had suddenly been cut.

ELISHA

Read the story of Elisha in 2 Kings 13:14-20.

It seems that Joash the king of Israel had great respect for Elisha, even though Joash was an evil king. The words he wept over Elisha as he was dying were the very same words Elisha had cried out to Elijah as he was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire . . . "***O my father, my***

father! The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.”

King Joash was saying, “Elisha, my father, you are the strength of Israel. You’ve been our eyes, our ears, our victory . . . but now you’re leaving us!” What was Elisha’s response? He could have had a good cry too; after all, he was a dying man. Did he wallow in self-pity? No! He initiated a prophetic act to bring blessing and victory to his beloved Israel. His body might have been “packing it in” but his spirit was just as alert as ever. **“Take bow and arrows,”** he said to the king. **“Put your hand on the bow.”** Elisha was getting the king involved. Then Elisha laid his hands on top of the king’s hands and imparted victory. So it was not only a prophetic act but it was also an impartation of victory from Elisha to King Joash.

“Now open the window eastward and shoot the arrow.” And as the arrow was shooting through the air, Elisha made a prophetic declaration, **“The arrow of the Lord’s deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: For you shall smite the Syrians in Aphek till you have consumed them.”**

Then Elisha said to the king, **“Take the arrows and strike them on the ground.”** So Joash took the arrows, struck them upon the ground three times then stopped . . . and Elisha was angry with him. **“You should have struck the ground five or six times . . . now you will only defeat Syria three times.”** Verse 25 confirms their three victories over Syria, totally fulfilling the prophetic act and the prophetic declaration. King Joash was unskilled in such matters as prophetic acts **but Elisha understood the POWER that was unleashed as the Holy Spirit prompted him in this manner.**

MOSES

Moses was always carrying out prophetic acts with his rod, he was always prophesying with his rod. God chose Moses, knowing he had a speech impediment (see Exodus 4:10), so He (God) could speak

through him; so He could do signs, wonders and miracles through him; so He could do prophetic acts through him. God chose a man who now knew how to LEAN ON HIM. God said to Moses in Exodus 4:2, ***“What’s that in your hand? . . . USE IT!”*** **His rod became his point of contact for prophetic acts.**

In Exodus 14, after the Israelites fled from Egypt, we read about the Egyptians pursuing them with vengeance; they wanted to retrieve their slaves; the exodus of the Israelites had humiliated them; they were all devastated at the loss of their firstborn. In verses 15, 16 & 21 we see that **Moses had to DO something, not SAY something.** ***“Don’t speak . . . ACT! Stop praying, stop crying out to Me and get the people moving forward. Stretch out your rod over the sea and divide it . . .”***

Prophetic acts are about going forward; forging ahead in the realm of the prophetic.

For example, **Jesus turning the water into wine** – Read John 2:1-10.

Jesus isn’t speaking to His mother as a son to his mother; He’s speaking to her as the Messiah; He’s speaking to her as Jesus the Christ. This is the beginning of a new relationship with His mother. ***“Woman,”*** He said to His mother, ***“My hour has not yet come. Providing the wine is not the purpose of My calling. Don’t bother Me with such trivialities!”***

Why, then, did Mary concern Jesus with the fact that they had run out of wine? Wasn’t she just a guest at the wedding and therefore not responsible for the provision of the wine? Maybe she sensed in her spirit that the time for His public ministry had come? It seems that Mary totally ignored what Jesus said to her, because she made this amazing statement to the servants, ***“Whatever He says to you . . . DO IT!”*** and, bear in mind that up to this point Jesus hadn’t performed any miracles; there was no earthly reason why she should have said it.

But Mary's statement was a prophetic declaration, and it's just as powerful a statement today as it was the day Mary prophetically declared it.

- **Jesus didn't turn the water into wine to please His mother. Jesus didn't turn the water into wine to grant His mother her request.**
- **He did it as the Son of God to glorify His Father. He did it for more reasons than His first miracle. He did it also as a prophetic act.**
- **The wine speaks of the blood and the blood speaks of salvation.**

Jesus was signifying to the religious Jews that humanity would no longer need to be purified by this water; they would no longer have to wash from the ceremonial pots, which was a strict part of the Jewish purification rites. Jesus was signifying that they were to be washed in the blood (His blood) to be made clean; they were to be washed in His blood to receive salvation. He purposely chose to use the ceremonial waterpots, testifying to them that the natural element of water was to become a spiritual element of wine, representing His blood: His blood being poured out for them (and for us.)

Without even realizing it, the servants at the wedding reception became part of a prophetic act. The statement was made, ***"They've run out of wine,"*** so Jesus said, ***"Fill the water pots (washtubs!) with water!"*** Then Jesus said to the servants, ***"Pour out the wine to the governor of the feast!"*** Just as Mary had declared (the servants didn't have to SAY a thing they just had to DO it). ***"Whatever He says to you, DO it!"*** **And they did!**

The comment came from the governor of the feast to the bridegroom . . . ***"How amazing that you should keep the best wine till last. It's the normal practice to serve the best wine first, then, when everyone has had a 'skin full,' they don't notice the decline in quality!"***

- **Jesus, our Bridegroom, kept the best wine till last when HE Poured out Himself on the Cross.**
- **He paid in full for our salvation (and our healing) on the Cross.**
- **What a beautiful miracle and prophetic act it was when He turned the water into wine.**

Yes, it's time to "step outside the box"; it's time to stop dictating to the Vine instead of abiding in the Vine. It's time to let the sap of the Holy Spirit flow freely between the Vine and the branches so that we bear **much fruit**, which, of course, is the very purpose for us abiding in the Vine. If we want to be filled with the fullness of Christ, then we need to be "*pressed down, shaken together and running over*" (Luke 6:38) with the sap of the Holy Spirit Whose very purpose is to flow freely between the Vine and His branches.

*This Chapter on Prophetic Acts was written by Joan Emery,
younger sister of Rodney Francis.*

Chapter Eight

The Power of Biblical Delegation And Impartation

IN ACTS CHAPTER 6 we have an amazing account of how the early Church handled problems and growth. The problems arose because of the numerical growth of people coming to Christ. As things progressed, areas of neglect started to creep in, and out of that, murmurings and complaints developed. The problems were brought to the attention of the leaders, who recognized them and set the standard of requirement for those being appointed to attend to the matter. Those problems were turned into a creative opportunity to release more people to function. We notice that the existing twelve leaders (apostles) did not take on board those extra responsibilities, but knew to delegate to others in order to sustain their continued growth of Christian believers. The twelve could do this because they knew their own sphere of calling. They knew they had to remain focused on ***“prayer and the ministry of the word”*** (v.4). They knew if they did not delegate and release others to pick up responsibility, they themselves would become “the cork in the bottle” and become the hindrance to what God wanted. How important it is for us leaders to know our calling, to know our boundaries and limitations in the purposes of God. Too many churches have become “starved” of growth and the blessings of God the Holy Spirit because leaders have not been able to “let go” and delegate areas of need or neglect to others. Often there is a problem of leaders not trusting their people enough to release them to do things that will help to generate further growth. It is a fact that leaders hold the keys to these things – we release or restrict others according our decisions and actions.

In their delegating, the twelve Apostles set the criterion for those seven people being released into new areas of function. Even though that particular task seemed to be a very natural one, i.e. that of daily looking after the affairs of the widows, the spiritual requirements for that were high:

1. ***“They had to be honest and of good report”*** (v. 3). They had to be recognized as having a consistently good testimony. The people had to be able to see that their lives were good and acceptable, reliable and trustworthy.
2. ***“They had to be full of the Holy Spirit”*** (v. 3). That had to be a current, up-to-date experience in the Holy Spirit. It was not to be, *“Well, they were filled and ‘on fire’ ten years ago, but just normal and ‘faithful’ now.”* They had to be men of the Spirit; that is, filled, in tune with, being led by, and seeking to be obedient to the Holy Spirit in the now!

Notice the apostles did not do the choosing – the people did. The apostles set the acceptable conditions – and the people had to seek them out and decide. That way they had to live with their own choices – they could not murmur and complain that the apostles “forced” those people (or their decisions) on them. The apostles gave spiritual responsibility to the people and the power to choose. They looked through their “members” and found seven men, including Stephen ***“a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit”*** (v. 5).

The criterion of Acts 6 is still a very good one for today. When people are appointed into church and leadership positions without that ***“good report”*** and ***“full of the Holy Spirit”*** and people ***“full of faith”*** being the basic “starting point” for acceptance, we immediately lower the standards God has set, and, over time, will see a decaying away from spiritual standards into a politically-based and politically-motivated church. Leadership and positions of responsibility over other people

must come up to the Biblical standards.

In Acts 6 the people did not simply make the appointments and seven men started serving widows' tables. They were first presented before the apostles, who then laid hands on them and imparted some spiritual power and authority into them that impacted the unseen spirit realm, as well as the Church in Jerusalem. A public impartation ceremony saw the apostles – through the Holy Spirit anointing within them – release into them spiritual things they had never encountered before. Something powerful happened through impartation. Impartation is “sharing with or giving away to others what you have.” We need to understand impartation more than we do. It is a key to releasing people who meet God’s criterion, and the people’s acceptance for public ministry. Look at what the Bible says:

“And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte (“a person newly converted to a religious faith”) from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the Word of God spread and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” (v. 5-7).

What was happening there?

The apostles not only approved of the people’s choices, **they actually empowered them through the laying on of hands in impartation ministry that impacted and broke through in the spirit realm in the whole area of Jerusalem!** As they laid hands on the seven, they released their Holy Ghost giftings, mantles and authority into them.

And something happened that impacted Jerusalem!

I repeat: **Something broke in the realm of the spirit.**

- **Out of that laying on of hands ministry there came a new release and freedom to share the Word of God!**
- **That (in turn) resulted in large numbers of people believing what was spoken and making a definite decision to repent and follow Jesus Christ!**
- **Further to that the religious world was penetrated and impacted in such a way that “*many of the priests became obedient to the faith*” (v. 7).**
- **The Church multiplied!**
- **The city was impacted for God and for good!**
- **The original “problem” became the means of a great breakthrough for the leaders and people respectively, as they worked together in the power of the Holy Spirit.**
- **They knew something of the spiritual domain that we seem to know so little about today. No wonder the criterion that all “office holders” had to be filled with the Holy Spirit.**

When we Christians will do things God’s way, through a good public testimony and “*being filled with the Holy Ghost and faith,*” we will release the power of God within us to see the Kingdom of God grow! That is the power of the prophetic! . . . Functioning in the will of God, through the voice of God to accomplish supernaturally the purposes of God.

The leaders of the early Church delegated responsibility of choice to the believers and they also “delegated” or imparted spiritual authority, power and responsibility through the laying on of hands! The early Church got results! She functioned under spiritual leadership in tune with God – spiritual leadership who could trust the people to find the right people with the right “credentials” to do the right things. As we read on through the Book of Acts (the Acts of the Apostles), we soon

discover that Stephen and Philip had their future ministries imparted into them that day when the apostles laid their hands on them. **They went on to powerful signs, wonders and miracles ministries** (Acts Ch. 6-8). **Something within their lives was liberated in a spiritual way when the Twelve imparted into them.**

It should be the same for us today! I say, let's get back to doing things the Bible way! You see, when we function as Holy Spirit filled people, we can allow and release the Holy Spirit out of **"our innermost being"** to flow like a river to bless, release and impact others (John 7:37-39; Ezekiel 47:1-12)! **The Eternal Spirit of the Eternal God wants to set us up in time for all eternity! The Eternal Spirit of God wants to use us to establish and release in others the eternal purposes of God! That's what the Twelve Early Church Apostles did for the people. They released them to function! They released them in eternal, spiritual things! They were there for the people – not the other way round.**

In recent years, as we have developed and understood the ministry of impartation more, we have imparted by the Holy Spirit into many lives. The ongoing fruit of that has been very encouraging indeed. People have flowed more in spiritual gifts, faith, healings, the prophetic, and their ministries. There has come a more supernatural impact into their lives and ministries. We have seen and heard of wonderful testimonies from numbers who have received impartation through the laying on of hands.

One of the reasons it is vital for us all to be **"full of the Holy Spirit"** is because true Christianity is **in the Holy Spirit** – Who always glorifies JESUS CHRIST in us! We must be **alive in the Holy Spirit, and He must be alive and active in us!** People don't need a programme, or even more Bible knowledge (in a natural sense). **They need to be impacted by the Holy Spirit of Truth giving them revelation of who they are and what they're called of God to do.** Whenever we yield to, and follow the guiding of the Holy Spirit, He will always take

us closer to Jesus, the Word of God, a sanctified life-style and whatever is acceptable and pleasing to God!

In Acts 6 their problems could have become an absolute disaster. But those Holy Spirit filled leaders knew the wisdom of God, they knew their own callings in God and would not allow other responsibilities to be “loaded onto their plates.” They knew how to delegate the responsibility of decision making to the people by providing the spiritual standards of requirement and letting the people choose. They then powerfully supported their decisions by imparting Holy Spirit giftings and abilities into those seven men to fulfil their tasks supernaturally.

THE RESULT?

The Church went forth “in leaps and bounds” numerically and spiritually. It didn’t become “bottle-necked” at the top. The Church and Her message were presented in such a way the whole city and community was influenced. Even the religious temple priests came under conviction of their forms of tradition and deadness, realized the error of their ways and turned to Jesus to follow the Holy Spirit way. The results of what we read in Acts 6 would have actually caused the whole process to be repeated again, and maybe again and again, as they faced the challenge of the thousands of new believers being brought to faith in Jesus Christ. The leaders delegated and imparted to see the whole body of believers functioning in the way they should, and to keep the whole body growing in a wholesome and healthy way.

- **Everyone benefits when we are full of the Holy Spirit and are obedient to Him.**
- **He (the Holy Spirit) glorifies JESUS like no one else can – and He lives inside every believer who is full of Him!**

Let’s ask ourselves afresh today:

- **Am I honest and of good report among the people?** (Am I living so there can only be a positive answer to this question?).
- **Can I be trusted?** (How well do you keep your word?).
- **How full am I with the Holy Spirit?**
- **Is Jesus really “Number One” in my life?**
- **Am I totally available to Him?**
- **Am I willing to do what He wants me to do?**
- **Do I have faith to obey Him?**
- **Am I hearing what He is saying?** (*“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* – Romans 10:17).
- **Do I trust others enough to allow them to function in the Holy Spirit’s call on their lives?**
- **Do I understand the ministry of the laying on of hands and impartation?**

It is time for us Christians to be totally honest about where we stand with Jesus, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, the purpose of God, and where we fit into all these according to His will. May this message provoke us all to give ourselves more to these things. Amen.

Chapter Nine

God Wants To Set Your Future Up!

THERE IS SOMETHING about Holy Spirit Ministry that enables Christianity and the life of faith to be so much more adventurous, exciting, impacting – and yet secure. Far too often we are only caught up in “the moment,” “the now,” rather than seeing that the Holy Spirit is interested in much more than that. He is interested in our future and giving us a security for that which is ahead for those who will obey Him. Last year the Holy Spirit encouraged me to continue ministering to people via the word of knowledge. He said to me, *“If you will continue to minister to people by the word of knowledge, I will set your future up for you. In the past you have not realized the significance of what you were doing when you gave words of knowledge to people. But I have used them to open doors of ministry to you.”* Then I began to remember certain words I had given over people in times past and I saw how God had used them to open up doors and nations to me.

He reminded me that a word I gave to a woman in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in 1994 opened the door for me to go to Bougainville in 1998 (there we saw a wonderful breakthrough in the lives of a number of Pastors when the peace treaty was signed after nine years of war).

Since then I’ve observed how God has been setting up my future for me.

For example:

- A word of knowledge on what to speak at a Conference in Columbus, Georgia, USA in 1995 opened the door for me to be the Conference speaker in Enterprise, Alabama,

USA, in 1997.

- A word given to a man in York, England in 2000 opened the door for me to minister in Italy, 2001, and again in 2002. Two of my publications, “School Of The Holy Spirit” and “You Can Measure Your Love For God” have been printed in the Italian language.
- A word given in Tonga, South Pacific in 2001 opened a new door for me to minister in Nausori, Fiji Islands, in 2002.
- A word given in Seattle, USA in 1995 opened the door for me to minister in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, in 2002.

And so I could go on. To become aware of God’s “bigger picture” for my life is indeed exciting. We have discovered the life of faith to be very secure as we continue to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit and minister His gifts to the people. God certainly knew what He was doing when He gave us the nine beautiful gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is much more to them than we have realized. We miss out on so much of God’s purposes when we ignore or neglect the importance of them.

“Neglect not (“don’t be careless with”) ***the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elders. Meditate upon*** (“to care for, take care for anything, so as to be able to perform it”) ***these things; give yourself wholly*** (“completely, exclusively”) ***to them; that your profiting*** (“forward progress”) ***may be seen by all***” (1 Timothy 4:14-15).

The receivers benefit, and so do the givers of these precious gifts – when they are exercised in a loving and edifying way. Spiritual Gifts are like keys in that they open up and unlock situations for us in the spirit realm.

GOD WANTS TO SET YOUR FUTURE UP!

GOD wants to set your future up for you! I know that one of the powerful ways He does that is in our faithfulness in using that which He has already given us – the Spiritual Gifts. There is now a greater inner knowing, a greater inner joy, a greater inner security, a greater inner understanding that I am an ambassador of Jesus Christ – one who has been given power and authority to speak and act on behalf of the King of the Kingdom of Heaven! **So, let's speak and act on His behalf! Let's do it as people who know who they are, what they've got, and what God has invested in them!** We are not “accidents going somewhere to happen”!

Now, for me, part of the joy of ministering in the Holy Spirit, the spiritual gifts and especially the word of knowledge to others, is to observe what God is going to bring out of it for my future. In the past the emphasis has been on my being able to bless the recipient. That still is my emphasis, but I now know there is a bigger purpose, a bigger picture as far as God is concerned.

It is therefore not surprising that the devil has been quite successful in muzzling the operation of Spiritual Gifts amongst the Christians. He knows that the Church can never come to maturity without them, and the Christians miss out so much on securing their future through the lack of them being exercised.

This is a day when every Spirit-filled Church and Christian believer needs to get serious about exercising Spiritual Gifts. There is no substitute, and every church needs them (see 1 Corinthians 12:1-11). It is time to do away with weak, negative excuses as to why they are not encouraged, and not in evidence in our churches, and to recognize that God never gives us anything that is not important. **Let us be reminded that it was God Himself Who gave Spiritual Gifts to the Church!**

Spiritual Gifts are not in the “take it or leave it” category. They are God’s gifts to the Spirit-filled believer to function to the glory of God. People’s needs will never be fully met by preaching, praying and meetings alone.

There has to be the dimension of the Holy Spirit released to build the body of Christ up. The true operation of Spiritual Gifts really builds people up, because they bring confirmation, wisdom, revelation, understanding, guidance, breakthroughs, healings and miracles into our lives. They reveal God’s heart that He is for us, and wants the very best for us!

Tragically, far too often, these things are missing from the lives of numbers of Christians, including Pentecostal believers. Let us face up to the fact that God has given the Holy Spirit Gifts to build, mature and extend the Kingdom of God here on earth! In recent years I’ve had the joy of giving words of knowledge to non-Christians and within 24 hours they are born-again! The Holy Spirit enables us to get right to the core of people’s being, so that they are left dealing with God rather than some words we’ve tried to convince them with.

EVERY CHRISTIAN DESIRES A SECURE FUTURE

EVERY Christian desires a secure future! Especially in today's world where events are happening at such an alarming rate, and so much uncertainty and vulnerability abounds. What is the answer to this? Our calling is the same as it has always been – to obey Jesus Christ: *"Whatever He tells you to do, do it"* (John 2:5). The Holy Spirit has been sent to us so we can do just that. We need to consciously yield ourselves more and more to Him. He is speaking all the time, but are we listening? Are we hearing? I now know the Holy Spirit is setting

my future up for me as I continue to obey Him in the exercising of Spiritual Gifts and loving people. This has given me a new sense of security that God is vitally interested in me and in my future. But more than that, He is totally committed to me as I am committed to Him. Now that's real security.

Let Him set your future up for you, in a way you are conscious of what He is doing! Step out of “your boat” and out to where Jesus is calling. That's called faith – which is obedience to the word of Jesus – and that pleases God immensely.



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