

The Holy Spirit: The Power Of God

Power of God, Not A Trinity

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What motivates you to go to church each week? Why do you come here? The rest of the world is not doing what we are doing. They are out boating, playing with their hot-rod cars, having barbeques, working on their yards, and yet we are here. What motivates you to come here?

Do you come here because of your mate? Do you go to the group that you go to because you have friends there? Is it your parents or some other relative? Do you like the activities? Is it your children or the camps? Maybe it is the great Feast sites. Why do you go where you go? Why are you here today?

Luke 14:26-27 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

What God is saying here is: If we do not put God above all others and all pursuits in our lives, we cannot be His. Christ is saying that we must love Him, His way, His laws, and His doctrines more than anything else in our lives. We must follow Him, His laws, His doctrines, and His example, or we cannot be His disciples. If we are not His disciples, we will not qualify for His government and our place in it, or the Kingdom of God.

These two verses are very plain; there is no mystery there. We have to put God and His doctrines, representing His way of life and His laws, first. If our goal is the Kingdom of God, the motivation for everything we do in life, from our choice of which of God's churches we will attend to our personal conduct and everything we do in our personal lives, marriages, child-rearing, etc., will reflect our desire to be part of God's government and the Kingdom of God.

If we have that motivation and that desire, we should want to know and understand every doctrine of God and we should want to know why we do what we do when it comes to God's laws. We should have a full understanding of Pentecost, Trumpets, why we use the Preparation Day and keep the Sabbath, why there are seven Days of Unleavened Bread even though there is only one day for Pentecost, Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement, why we keep Passover and why we wash one another's feet.

There is a reason we dress up for Sabbath services and do not celebrate birthdays, which are every bit as pagan as Easter, Christmas, and Halloween. We need to know why we celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, why we believe in corporal punishment for our children, why we keep first, second, and third tithes, why we keep the clean and unclean food laws, why we have a divorce and remarriage doctrine, and why we do all the things we do in both the church and our personal lives.

I feel, at this time in the greater churches of God, that there is a lot of confusion about God's laws and doctrines. Some of it has to do with poor leadership and a lack of teaching the laws and doctrines of God and the Bible regularly, each week. However, you and I do not have that excuse; we get Bible 101 each week.

Some of this confusion has to do with our own rebellious nature and wanting to be as close to the world as possible. Some of this confusion has to do with what we will allow within the church and in our own lives. I am going to show you what happens when we do not understand the doctrines of God and His church.

It is critical to our spiritual well-being to understand *all* of the doctrines and laws of God.

Ephesians 6:11-12 (Amplified) Put on God's whole armor [the armor of a heavy-armed soldier which God supplies], that you may be able successfully to stand up against [all] the strategies and the deceits of the devil. For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere.

In verse 11, God says that He supplies the armor. Do we realize that part of our armor of God is our knowledge and complete understanding of the doctrines and laws of God? When we understand the doctrines and laws of God and when we humble ourselves and keep them, we are strengthening ourselves spiritually and we are enhancing that armor. We cannot afford to have the rebellious attitude that the Israelites had when they left Egypt. They wanted to return to sin—Egypt. They could not see the prize that God had for them; the Promised Land. They were spiritually blind to the physical blessing God was giving them.

You and I are not being given a physical blessing but a spiritual blessing. We are being given a place in God's government which is a government made of spiritual beings. It is

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an awesome gift! We need to have that vision every minute of every day. If we understand all of God's doctrines and laws it is so much easier to yield to and humble ourselves to God and His way of life.

If we *all* completely understood *all* of the laws and doctrines of God, there would be much less confusion in the greater churches of God and we would *all* know why we do what we do. There would also be far fewer churches of God within the greater churches of God if we *all* believed the same thing. There is confusion among God's people on a lot of different issues.

There is confusion on tithing; especially third tithe. There is confusion on divorce and remarriage, the Preparation Day, how to delevaten our homes, acceptable church attire, dating outside the church of God, and even on how to keep the Sabbath and the Feast of Tabernacles. On and on the confusion goes!

I will give you an example that is pretty ridiculous; I was talking to one of the brethren who attends another of the churches of the greater churches of God this year, during the Days of Unleavened Bread. This person told me that the group she attends was discussing the acceptability of keeping popcorn in the home and eating it during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The reason for this discussion was caused by the expansion of the popcorn kernel during heating. Since it expands, it must not be acceptable to have in your home or eat during the Days of Unleavened Bread. That is ridiculous! There is no leavening in popcorn.

Brethren, you and I must understand sin, which leavening represents. Leavening works like sin; it permeates everything with which it comes into contact and it will spread throughout the whole church if we do not eradicate it immediately.

There should not be any question about what is acceptable to have in our homes, what is acceptable to eat during the Days of Unleavened Bread, or how sin, which leavening represents, works in our lives or in the church. In the last year, Ronny Graham gave an excellent sermonette about leavening and how it works during the Days of Unleavened Bread. I think the title was "Are You Hot or Are You Cold?" If you have any questions about how leavening works or what is acceptable to eat during the Days of Unleavened Bread, you need to listen to Ronny's sermonette again.

I am going to tell you a story about major confusion concerning one of the doctrines of God's church that proves that church is not God's true church. This particular doctrine is one of the signs of God's true church. The five signs of God's true church are: the Sabbath day and to keep it holy; the name of God and the name of the church; the plan

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of God, which are the holy days; water baptism by submersion and hands being laid on you accompanied by the right words said over you; and not believing in the trinity.

This sermon is about the sign of God's church listed last; not believing in the trinity. To this day, I hate myself for something that happened over 15 years ago; Joe Tkach, his son-in-law, Mike Feazell, and others came up with the "God Is" doctrine. It was one of the first major doctrinal changes that they made before the destruction of the Worldwide Church of God. In the Portland area at that time, the minister required all deacons, elders, deaconesses, and their spouses to view a video on the subject. The video was about one and a half or two hours long, was prepared by Mike Feazell, and was called the "God Is" doctrine. Simply, it was the trinity.

About 30 people were present at the viewing of this video; all of the deacons, elders, deaconesses, and their spouses. As we watched this video, I looked around the room; a number of people had a puzzled look on their faces, some were rolling their eyes, others were shaking their heads in disapproval. We were all confused just like a lot of people are now. I was confused and did not realize that what Mike Feazell was teaching us was the trinity doctrine. At one point during the video, Mike Feazell said he really did not understand what he was trying to teach us either.

Do you know why I hate myself for what happened at that meeting? When the video was over, I was completely lost. I asked one of the elders, who was a good friend of mine, to explain it to me. He said he was confused just like I was and like everyone in the whole room. Thirty people there in that room were all lost. Not one person in that room had enough of the armor of God on or enough understanding of the Holy Spirit to stand up and say, "This is wrong; this is nothing more than the trinity." All of the people in that room, including me, were supposed to be the leaders of the home and church and we had just failed to stand up for the Word of God and His doctrines. We were confused. I see this same confusion right now within the greater churches of God.

Let us take a look at the doctrine on the Holy Spirit so we will not be confused with the trinity ever again. We will probably be attacked again on that doctrine because, in all of theology, understanding what God's Holy Spirit is may be the most crucial element. If few outside of the church really know and understand the truth, it is the Spirit of God within us that enables us to understand God's way of life, His laws, His doctrines, and what it means to be a true Christian or Firstfruit; being transformed to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature

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of the fullness of Christ.

In fact, it is the Holy Spirit in us that makes us children of God and imparts to us eternal life.

Romans 8:10-14 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Brethren, when the Holy Spirit works within us, what happens? What happens when it is really working in us? Our lives produce what the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

There is no law, in the whole world, against those things, brethren. With all the laws we have, even in this country, there is no law against love, joy, peace, and long suffering. As the greater churches of God continue to split, fracture, and disintegrate, how much of the fruit of the Spirit do you see? I see confusion within the church of God. That is why the church of God is splitting apart. If love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, and self-control are elements of the very character of God, we need to understand that the Holy Spirit is in us; it is what motivates us to produce these characteristics.

What is the Holy Spirit? Is it a trinity? Is it another person? What is it? It is the power of God.

Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

This verse is talking about the great power that moved upon the face of the waters. The Holy Spirit is the very power of God!

Psalm 104:30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.

Again, we are talking about this great power.

Isaiah 32:15 Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

How do you pour out a person? You can pour out one's blood but you cannot pour out a person. We are talking about the power of God; it is not a third being.

John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Again, we are talking about the power or mind of God, not a trinity.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Brethren, how can a *person* be in you? What is in us is the power of God and a little bit of His mind!

Romans 8:9-14 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised

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Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

II Peter 1:2-4 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God; it is not another person. It is not another part of God's head or a third being; it is not a trinity. The Bible plainly shows us that the Holy Spirit is the power or mind of God. It is the power of love and a sound mind. It comes from God, so we can say God poured it out. You cannot pour out a person but God can pour out his Holy Spirit to us.

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

God called on them through baptism and gave them the Holy Spirit which gave them the ability to understand God's laws and God's doctrines and God's way of life. We should not be confused, brethren. As you and I grow spiritually through keeping all of God's laws and living by His way of life, God lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

I John 3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Christ says God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask and the Bible qualifies this with conditions: First, we must be called by God. Second, we must be willing to repent, change our lives, and live our lives by every Word of God. Third, we must be baptized.

No one who lives a life or lifestyle apart from God's law has received the Spirit of God or had the power of God working in him. No one can come to God or understand God's laws, or the Bible, without God's calling or without the Holy Spirit.

John 6:44-45 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

No man, no matter how smart or educated he is, can come to God or understand the whole truth of God without the Holy Spirit. Remember this: They cannot remember the *whole* truth of God but they can get some of it. Only by the intervention of the Holy Spirit are we able to understand the whole Word of God. The Holy Spirit—the very mind of God, the power of God—opens our minds to the mysteries of the truth allowing us to understand what is vital for salvation.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Have you ever thought about all of what God's Holy Spirit does for us? It not only opens our minds to God's laws and doctrines, but also intercedes for us. It helps us pray for things that we do not even know we should be including in our prayer.

Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit [itself] makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

You and I have been given an awesome gift; the greatest gift in the world. God's Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding; it teaches us God's way of life and His doctrines if we will only use them. It comforts and helps us even as we struggle to express ourselves in prayer; the Holy Spirit helps us make even our requests to God.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such

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there is no law.

Brethren, we have not completely arrived at this yet; you can see it within the churches of God. But the Holy Spirit is working in us to create and shape traits in us that will produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We can only understand how to live under God's laws, His way of life, and His rule by the Holy Spirit which He must give to us.

God has not offered salvation to most of mankind yet. When Christ established His church, then and only then, did God begin offering His Holy Spirit and then only to those He called to be first fruits. You and me.

John 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

All of us who are baptized have the gift of the Holy Spirit. Do you know what else the Holy Spirit does for us? It gives us eternal life.

Many have thrown away this gift of eternal life. They have become confused about God, His doctrines, His laws, and His way of life. They have gone back to what they can understand—the ways of the world.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You and I have all sinned; we are all worthy of death but, through the Holy Spirit, God will give us eternal life.

Romans 8:11 (NLT) But if the Holy Spirit of God who raised up Christ from the dead lives in you, He will make your dying bodies live again after you have died by means of the same Holy Spirit that is living within you.

The Holy Spirit saves us from eternal death because all men were given to die once. The Holy Spirit leads us to the gift of eternal life. You and I are mortal but God gives us His Holy Spirit so He can give us eternal life if we are faithful and obedient to His laws, His doctrines, and His way of life.

The Holy Spirit is a gift from God; we cannot earn it. Think back to when you were first called. What happened to us? After baptism, after we received the Holy Spirit, we started to understand God's laws, doctrines, and way of life. We started to change; we were not born with the Holy Spirit, it was given to us. It is not a third being; it is the power and mind of God. *The Holy Spirit is what gives us the power to change.*

Once God gives us the Holy Spirit, we must yield to it and let it lead us. We must also bear spiritual fruit showing that we have a sound mind. The Holy Spirit is the vine of God's divine nature and through it God carries out His will. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to understand spiritual things and the faith we need to overcome sin.

I would like to leave you with the story of two men. One of these two men, I know personally. He worked for Michelle as her office manager; I used to be Michelle's janitor. I had lunch and dinner with this man on a number of occasions; this man is what the world calls a Christian and he is a good guy; he has some character and he has morals.

This man goes to church every Sunday but he also keeps all the pagan holidays and birthdays. He does not have the Holy Spirit. He does not understand God's holy days, first, second, or third tithes, clean and unclean foods, and a lot of God's laws and doctrines and you cannot teach him but he is very faithful to what he does understand. This man is not confused about the doctrines of the church he attends, he tries to live by them, and he is dedicated to going to church. On the other hand, when I look around the greater churches of God and talk to some of the people, all I see is confusion.

If we were not confused and we all believed the same thing, we would all go to the same church! We do not all go to the same group because we do not all believe the same things. Let me tell you how convicted this man is and the other man in this story, whom I do not know; I have never met him. The story is about a doctrine that both men understand completely. It is a doctrine of fornication and adultery.

This man's daughter is 26 years old and she is shackled up with her boyfriend, which we all know is a very common thing today. After living with her boyfriend for quite some time, she came to her dad and told him she was getting married and she asked her dad if he would walk her down the aisle and give her away. Her dad told her, "No. You've already given it away." He also told her that he and her mother would not pay for the wedding and would not invite any of their friends to the wedding because she was an embarrassment to the whole family.

I do not want you to think that this man does not love his daughter; he does! He even

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told his daughter that he and his wife would go to the wedding but they would not do those other things. He also told her that the reason he said those things was because her lifestyle was wrong. He told her she was committing fornication and they would not support that. There was no confusion there; he completely understood fornication and how God feels about it. He also knows what the doctrine of his church is concerning fornication.

Why is there so much confusion among God's people over doctrines in our church that are very plain in the Bible?

The other man in my story is her minister. This man has known her all her life. She asked him if he would marry her. He told her, "No. I won't marry you. The church and God do not approve of your lifestyle. Go to the justice of peace, get married, and go on with life, but the church won't marry you." Again, no confusion with this minister. No confusion over the doctrine of that particular church.

Brethren, you and I need to put on the armor of God and a big part of putting on the armor is knowing the doctrines of God's church. I have already been caught with my pants down because I did not understand the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

I want you to know this: Out of the group of 30 people who viewed the "God Is" doctrine, 3 elders and 2 of their wives and 4 deacons as well as all of their wives and possibly more people have left the church. They have become casualties of war; they are spiritually dead. They are going to live out their physical lives, they are going to meet their Maker, and they are going to have to answer for why they gave up the gift of eternal life. Every time we are attacked by Satan, if we do not have on the whole armor of God, some of us are spiritually killed. Satan will exploit all the weaknesses we have when it comes to the laws and doctrines of God and he will kill us if he can.

Brethren, we cannot allow ourselves to be confused with God's doctrines. We cannot allow ourselves to be caught with our pants down.