

## Powerful Effects Of The Holy Spirit

Pentecost: A Feast of Power and Special Calling

Martin G. Collins

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Pentecost (also known as the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Firstfruits) is given by God to teach us the opposite of what "mainstream Christianity" believes. Generally, they believe that this is the only day of salvation for all mankind. But, in reality, God has a far more just plan in mind. Pentecost teaches us that we are only the first fruits—the first to receive salvation through Christ. It teaches us that all others are not yet called. And it also teaches us that, as Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."

Pentecost helps explain the different times when salvation will be offered to different segments of humanity. Let us begin by looking at the basic doctrinal background for the day of Pentecost (before we get into the actual effects of what the Holy Spirit does in our lives).

God designed His annual holy days to be laid out according to the seasons in the area of Jerusalem. And God uses two harvests of the region to symbolize His two separate harvests of all human lives. The Feast of Weeks celebrated the end of the grain harvest. The earlier, much smaller harvest begins with Pentecost; and the latter, much larger harvest begins with the Feast of Tabernacles and ends with the Last Great Day.

The earlier harvest is of great importance to us because it is being planted right now, and it involves us directly at this time. So God has been in the process of planting good seed for that earlier harvest that we are a part of. Since He began His church in A.D. 31, He has called tens of thousands of people—but not all have worked to make their calling and election sure.

In about A.D. 68, just before his death, Peter had seen this condition in the church for 37 years, and so he felt compelled to encourage the church to fruitfully grow in the faith and to be even more diligent than they had been before that time. In II Peter 1:5-11, we will read some very familiar scriptures, but they are very important as well.

**II Peter 1:5-7** But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love.

We see there that *love* is the last one mentioned, because it is the capstone of all the above.

**II Peter 1:8-11** For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

So, in one sense, we have our marching orders there—that, being in God's church, we have to make our call and election sure—lest we fall by the wayside. We observe this condition (of how not all have worked to make their call and election sure) in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares. We will not go through that parable, because you are very familiar with it. But tares look like wheat—just as some in the church look like true Christians.

A tare is shaped like a wheat stock and head; but its content is dwarfed at best, or nonexistent. When tares sprout with wheat, they look similar. Even after they are both grown, from a short distance it is difficult to distinguish between them. But to the discerning eye, the difference is obvious. So what is helpful in that **discerning eye**? God always knows the difference between His "wheat" and the "tares" of Satan's world. His people are known by their good fruits. So, once again, we will read some very familiar scriptures to make sure these things are embedded in our minds as background for the rest of the sermon.

**Matthew 7:16** You will know them by their fruits.

That is a principle that goes throughout all conditions of human existence. You will know exactly what a person is by what they do. You will know exactly what a person thinks by what they do.

**Matthew 7:16-20** Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

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Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

There we have an essential key for being able to discern the wheat from the tares.

Now, sadly, Adam did not bear good fruit. He cut human beings off from God because of his disobedience. Human beings must have contact with God the Father to receive the Holy Spirit. The *Tree of Life* in the Garden of Eden meant God freely offered Adam (and his children, who formed humanity) the Holy Spirit. The other tree, the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, represented Satan's self-centered way of life. Adam chose—for the human race—the selfish way of life. Then God drove humanity from the Garden of Eden.

**Genesis 3:22-24** Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

All humanity was barred from access to God or receiving eternal life—all but the comparative few God would specially call for some performance leading to the Kingdom of God. In effect, God determined that humanity (through Adam and Eve) had made its own decision. God gives every human being the **free will** to make that decision. But Adam and Eve set the trend—or the tendency, so to speak—for the rest of humanity.

They rejected God as God and Omnipotent Ruler, Revealer of knowledge, and Savior. Therefore God cut off Adam and Eve—and the whole world that would spring from them—from all contact with Him. This is one of the reasons that the Day of Pentecost is so important to us. It brings that contact with God the Father and Jesus Christ back to us. They (Adam and Eve, or mankind) were to go and form their own governments, their own religions, their own production and dissemination of knowledge.

But God reserved the prerogative to specially call into His service such as He would choose, for a part in preparing for the Kingdom of God. And the key phrase there is **whom He would choose**. Otherwise, the world that would develop from them was cut off from all contact with God for almost 6,000 years, after which the Kingdom of God would be established and rule all nations. Far from trying to get every human saved

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spiritually during the 6,000 years, God cut off all humanity—saving the comparatively few He would specially call.

So we are a special people—a chosen people. God Himself gave Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David, and His prophets His Spirit for special purposes and to enable them to do the work He assigned to them—of His own choosing. That is why in John 6:44 Jesus said, "No one can come to Me [especially during this 6,000 year period] unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." He has called this very few, not just 'for salvation', but for a 'special service'—preparing for the coming Kingdom of God, as well.

So we have that *commission* as individuals—to prepare that way. And part of the preparing of that way is to set the best Christian example possible, because that is the best possible **witness** for God's way of life as far as our efforts are concerned.

Jesus said, in Matthew 22:14, that many are called, but few are chosen. God's earlier, smaller harvest of the first resurrection will be made up of the relatively few people who have genuinely submitted to God. And the key word there is **submitted**, as Richard mentioned in his sermonette having to do with giving an offering. We are submitting to God by giving an offering.

The majority of people who have ever lived will have their opportunity for salvation during the one thousand year Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment—symbolized by the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. This will be the great fall harvest, as I mentioned earlier.

To most of the world, the Day of Pentecost is totally misunderstood, or ignored altogether. But we are being given the opportunity to understand God's plan now. This Day of Pentecost represents **our turn** in God's master plan of harvesting all human beings—and there are very few of us who are having our turn now. Revelation 20 expresses the wonderful meaning of the Day of Pentecost for those who are called, and it is a very exciting time for us.

**Revelation 20:4-6** And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their forehead, or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who

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has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

So we have an exciting future ahead of us—something that we cannot appreciate enough, because God's abundant blessings are so great and so overwhelming that we do not even see all of them that are around us and that God is giving to us.

After the 6,000 years of human beings ruling themselves expires, Jesus Christ will come to earth again—this time in supreme power and glory—to set up God's government on earth; and, Satan will be banished. That will be a wonderful time for everyone. Then during the 7<sup>th</sup> thousand-year period, God will call everybody who is alive at that time. After the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium, God will resurrect to mortal life all the billions of people who had not been called for spiritual salvation.

We know there is no partiality with God, and that He does not discriminate. Yet, God is calling only a comparatively few now. Those who are being called today have to overcome Satan. Those called later will not. The difference here is the greater amount of diligence, fortitude, and perseverance it takes to resist and overcome Satan compared to the time when Satan is put away and restrained for 1,000 years, where he is unable to influence anyone's mind.

And just getting rid of that influence alone would be a substantial step towards **oneness with God** because sin does separate us from God, and Satan is the epitome of sin. Therefore, he is an instrument in separating us from God as well. But—for those who *do* overcome Satan, human nature, and the world—Jesus promises positions of leadership in His Kingdom.

**Revelation 2:26-27** And he who overcomes [that is, overcomes Satan and human nature and the world], and keeps My works until the end, to him will I give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron.'

**Revelation 3:21** To him who overcomes [Remember that is Satan, human nature, and the world] I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Those promises pertain only to those called *before* Christ's return. Someone lacking in

understanding of God's mercy might ask: "Isn't this unfair to those not called now?" And that is a good question, I think. They have no opportunity to know now the joys of God's Holy Spirit. And they have no promise of exalted position or power when they are saved later.

There is no injustice with God. Certainly, for the most part, those not called do not feel they are discriminated against. Probably all, or in most cases, they do not want to be called. There is a saying in the world: *What they don't know won't hurt them*. Or, *ignorance is bliss*. And, in some sense, that is a true statement—that is, with worldly reasoning. They do not know what they are missing; and they do not want to know what they are missing, because of their rebelliousness against God. So, in a sense, they are choosing; and God can see that they have chosen the way of this world.

As for high and glorified positions, that is **a responsibility**. And I doubt if anyone uncalled has any sense whatever of 'dissatisfaction' because he may not have such exalted position in the world tomorrow (ruled by the kingdom of heaven) because of their rejection already of God's way of life and their rebellious state. We who are called now do have (1) Satan, (2) our own human nature, and (3) Satan's world to overcome. That requires effort, self-denial, and will power—which most humans would not want to pay. They do not want to pay that price.

God is fair, and He will provide an opportunity for all human beings to submit to Him at the best possible time. But it must be according to His will, and within His timeframe and plan of salvation for humanity. God is fair above all others. He will choose the time that is best for each of us, because He wants *all* to inherit the Kingdom of God.

Those who will be called for the first time and converted *after* Christ returns will not have access to the highest positions because the highest positions in both church and state in "the world tomorrow" will have already been allotted. We know that each of the original 12 apostles will be ruler over one of the 12 tribes of Israel. We know that David will be king over them. And very probably Abraham will have an even higher position in God's Kingdom. Those are not only the highest **honors**, but they are also the highest and most demanding **responsibilities**. And they will be filled by people who have had some of the most demanding trials and had to resist Satan along the way.

Probably the most important seats of authority in "the world tomorrow" ruled by the Kingdom of God will be already filled at Christ's coming. But, during the thousand years, human population will increase and new positions in government and in spiritual administration will increase as well. Also in the Great White Throne Judgment later, positions will open up.

For us now, it is imperative that we understand that those called and inducted by God into His church now have been called for more than just spiritual salvation and the gift of eternal life. Every one of us is called for a responsibility in preparing for the Kingdom of God.

**I Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

So ***proclaiming praises*** is one of the major responsibilities that we have today.

**I Peter 2:10** Who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

When Jesus comes to rule, His wife (the church) will have made herself ready—being holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. We in the church as a whole have not yet attained fully to that holy stature. God is still working to complete us. And our work, our responsibility, is not finished until we allow God to bring us united to that state. We have to be ready to leave this world of flesh and blood, and to enter an entirely new world. And that new world is the church made immortal—composed of spirit. So, our responsibility to which God has called us is not finished by a long shot.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and entered into those first 120 people attending God's church. It was the first time there was any spiritual group salvation. It was the day the church of God was born—and 3,000 more were added. These were those God had called. He had predestined them to be called then, at that time. Acts 2:1-4 describes that the Spirit of God descended upon them in abundance and power.

The gift of the Spirit was accompanied by supernatural and extraordinary manifestations on that day. The disciples heard a "sound from heaven," which rushed with mighty force into the house and filled it (as a storm rushes). But there was no wind—no feeling of the wind against them. It was the sound that filled the house (not a wind). It was an invisible cause, producing audible effects.

**Acts 2:1-4** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were

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sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In verse 2, *the wind* at Pentecost was "rushing" and "mighty"—a powerful wind that nevertheless did not extinguish the tongues of fire. It was not a wind as we know it today, blowing against us. It was a sound. Scriptural references to the power of wind are numerous and are always understood to be under God's control. (We find examples of that in Exodus 10:13; Psalm 18:42; and Isaiah 11:15 in the Old Testament; and Matthew 14:23-32 in the New Testament. These are just a few examples of how "wind" is used.)

More significant than wind as *power* is wind as *life*. In the Old Testament, for example, the same Hebrew word used—translated "breath" in Job 12:10—is translated "wind" elsewhere. And, in the New Testament, "spirit" is compared with "wind"—as in John 3:8, where it says "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Just as the first Adam received the breath of *physical life*, so the second Adam (Jesus Christ) brings the breath of *spiritual life*. The idea of spiritual life as generated by the Holy Spirit is understood in **the wind** at Pentecost.

Next, there was the appearance of **tongues as of fire** that rested on each of the apostles. The King James Version says "cloven tongues." And that is somewhat of a misleading translation because it seems to suggest that each fire-like tongue was cloven, or forked. But this is *not* what Luke meant. Rather, he described tongues distributed among them—each disciple sharing in the gift equally with the others.

"As of fire" (or, more exactly, "as if of fire") indicates the appearance of the tongues—not that they were actually aflame, but that they prefigured the marvelous gift with which the disciples were now endowed. **Fire** is often associated in the Old Testament with the presence of God and with His holiness. It is similar in the New Testament—where fire is associated with the presence of God (as in Hebrews 12:29), and it is also associated with the purification He can cause in human life (as mentioned in Revelation 3:18).

God's presence and holiness are both implied in the "tongues, as of fire" in Acts 2:3. And fire is actually identified with Christ Himself in Revelation 1:14; 19:12. This association naturally underlies the gift of the Holy Spirit, which opens to understanding the things of Christ.

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The "tongues" in Acts 2:3 symbolize God's truth proclaimed by preaching. This is the antithesis to Babel's confusion of tongues and gathering of peoples under one ambitious will. The New Jerusalem is the center of God's spiritual Kingdom of peace and righteousness. In contrast, Babel is the center of Satan's kingdom and of human rebellion. It ignores God, the true bond of union. Therefore, it is the city of confusion. As Babel's sin *disunified* people, in contrast the Spirit of God given on Pentecost *unites* God's church in peace.

**Ephesians 4:3-6** Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

So after the Holy Spirit had come upon the church, Peter confirmed that it is God who calls people to receive His Spirit—thereby becoming members of His church, and thereby becoming unified. So the disunity that we see in the organizations that God uses as His churches is not because the church is dis-unified but because the Holy Spirit is not contained in all of those people, or those people are not using what little bit of the Holy Spirit that has been given to them. It gets down to **submission** to God the Father and Jesus Christ. Without that submission the person dissolves, or thwarts, the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2:39** For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.

The apostles did not go out soliciting the converts. *God called them*. It was God, and not the apostles, who added to the church. The apostles built upon what God had done in His calling. A few days later—after the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D.—2,000 more were added to the church. Then, for a very short while, the church membership multiplied and expanded rapidly. But soon the persecution scattered the converts, and the growth apparently diminished. Soon the true Gospel was suppressed. And the church continued in a state similar to what we have today—with scattered brethren in small groups, meeting in their homes.

Pentecost is to remind us every year that we (the church) are only the first small harvest of God's calling people for salvation out of a world that is completely—except for us—cut off from God; and that has been since Adam. *We* are those who have been predestined to be called now! *We* have been called to receive the Holy Spirit, and to

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prepare for the coming Kingdom of God. And there is emphasis there on *prepare*. We must prepare for its coming.

Now we are going to take a turn in a slightly different direction for the rest of this sermon. What I want to give to you are seven effects of God's Holy Spirit on us. These are just some of them, but they are the seven that I have chosen to give to you today. There are many effects that the Holy Spirit has on us, but these are some of the more obvious.

**1. The Holy Spirit is that second "spirit"** human beings need to go with the human spirit in every human. It bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

**Job 32:8** But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

**I Corinthians 2:9-10** But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

This proves three main things in a general sense: (1) That people by nature are not able to discover the deep things of God—that is, the truths that are needed for salvation. (2) That the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit; and if so, then the Scriptures are inspired. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. (3) That all members of God's church are taught, by God, through the Holy Spirit; that these truths are made known to us by God's revelation; and that except for this, we would remain in the same darkness as people in the world.

**I Corinthians 2:11-14** For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely give to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

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So you can see there that we do need God's Holy Spirit combined with our human spirit in order for us to have any understanding of God's truth at all. As human beings, we can understand surface items. For example, the commandment *You shall not kill*. We can understand that, whether we have God's Holy Spirit or not. But we do not understand the spirit of that law without God's Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:16** The Spirit [it]self bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

**2. The Holy Spirit is *the regeneration into God life***, which makes us His children now—even though we are only **heirs** (not yet inheritors).

**Romans 8:12-14** 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.

There is an interesting phrase here. "As many as are led" also means "as many as submit" to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is represented as influencing, suggesting, and controlling. One evidence of *devoutness* is a willingness to **yield** to that influence and submit to it. One evidence of the *lack of devoutness* is an unwillingness to **submit** to that influence, and where the Holy Spirit is grieved and resisted. All true Christians submit to its influence. All sinners reject it and oppose it.

**Romans 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The "Spirit of adoption" is the indwelling affection, love, and confidence that (in a similar, but emotional way) are found in children. It is not the servile, trembling spirit of slaves; but the affectionate regard of a son. Adoption is the taking and treating of a stranger as one's own child. It is applied to us because God treats us as His children. He receives us into His Family, though we were by nature strangers and enemies.

**Romans 8:5-11** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not

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subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 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 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 which dwells in you.

And the Holy Spirit is the impregnation of God-life.

**Romans 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The Spirit of adoption implies: (1) that we *by nature* had no claim on God; (2) that, therefore, the act of adoption is one of mere kindness—of pure, sovereign love; (3) that we are now under His protection and care; and (4) that we are compelled to manifest toward God the spirit of children, and yield to His obedience.

**Romans 8:16** The Spirit [it]self bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

The phrase "with our spirit" refers to *our human minds*. This relates to the adoption, and it means that the Holy Spirit furnishes evidence to our minds that we are adopted into the Family of God. This effect is attributed to the Holy Spirit in several places in the New Testament (for example I Corinthians 2:12; II Corinthians 1:22; I John 5:10-11).

This is accomplished by producing in us the appropriate effects of God's influence. It is His to renew our minds; to sanctify us; to produce the fruit of the Spirit in us. We know those to be love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we have these, we have evidence of the **witnessing of God's Spirit** with our spirit.

If the fruit of the Spirit is not produced in our lives, we have no evidence of the Holy Spirit—the mind of Christ—in us. And the way to truthfully determine if we have this "witnessing of the Spirit" is by an honest and prayerful examination to see if these fruits of the Spirit actually exist in our minds and actions. If they do, the evidence is very clear

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that we have God's Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:17** And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

The expression "heirs of God" means that we will share in the inheritance that God bestows on us. That inheritance is (1) His impregnation of God-life now and (2) His gift of eternal life hereafter.

**3. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of understanding**—imparting to the physical brain spiritual intellect, and the ability to comprehend spiritual knowledge.

**Ephesians 1:15-19** Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do no cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

In verse 17, the spirit of wisdom makes us wise to understand the great teachings of Jesus Christ. The spirit of revelation reveals to us more and more of the character of Jesus, and of the nature and results of His work. Paul's prayer is that God would grant to them the Holy Spirit—to make them wise, and to reveal God's will to them.

The phrase "in the knowledge of Him" may also be understood as "for the acknowledgment of Him." That is, in order that we may more fully acknowledge Him—or know Him more intimately and thoroughly.

No matter how high we may think we have reached spiritually, we cannot reach God's standard of righteousness without the Holy Spirit. But we can always reach higher! And the idea here is that, however far we may have advanced in knowledge and in love, there is an unfathomable depth of knowledge yet to discover—and that we should attempt to understand. After all, eye has not seen nor ear heard the things that God has prepared for us.

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**Colossians 1:9-11** For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

*Increasing in the knowledge of God* is another way in which we can walk worthily, thereby pleasing Him. We should make an effort to become better acquainted with God's true character. God is pleased with those who desire to understand what He is; what He does; what He purposes; and what He commands.

He not only commands us to study His works, but He has made a world so beautiful that it encourages us to contemplate His perfections as reflected in the natural world. God delights in those who sincerely desire to know what He is, and who inquire with humility and reverence into His counsels and His will. We also need to take the time to smell the roses, because God created those roses and His flowers; and we see a lot of God revealed in His creation.

#### **4. The Holy Spirit is the love of God** placed within us—divine love.

**Romans 5:5** Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that was given to us.

The phrase "poured out" in the NKJV (translated "shed abroad" in the KJV) in the original Greek means the love of God is diffused; is poured out; is abundantly produced. This word is applied to water, or to any other liquid that is poured out or diffused. It is used also to indicate imparting, or communicating freely or abundantly. In this way, it is expressive of the influence of the Holy Spirit poured down or abundantly imparted to us.

Love toward God is abundantly given to us; our minds are conscious of joyful love of God, and by this we are strengthened in our afflictions—in our trials. The love of God is produced through the influence of the Holy Spirit. All Christ-like characteristics are traced to its influence, as we read in Galatians 5:22, where it says "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy," and so on.

**I John 4:12-13** No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know

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that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

John says God's love has been perfected in us—meaning His love is carried out to completion. That is, our love for each other is the manifestation of the love of God reigning in our hearts. The idea in verse 12 is not that we are perfect, or even that our love is perfect, but that this love to others is the proper accomplishment of our love toward Him. Without our love for each other, our love to Him would not have accomplished what it was designed to do. If it did not produce this effect, it would be defective or incomplete.

The general sense is this: We may claim to have the love of God in our hearts, or that we are influenced and controlled by His love. This claim would be defective unless it led us to love our brethren. So we cannot love God and hate our brethren. This incomplete love would be like the love that we might claim to have for our human parents, if it did not lead us to love our brothers and sisters. True love will diffuse itself over all who come within its range, and will thereby become complete. Love to God is not complete or fully developed *unless* it leads us to love one another.

**5. The Holy Spirit is the faith of Christ**, the same faith with which Jesus performed His miracles—now given to us, placed within us.

**Galatians 5:5-6** For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

As we wait for salvation, it is a **waiting** similar to an expectant father or mother waiting for their child to be born. They know it is coming and look enthusiastically toward it. This is the way we should expect salvation. We need to have an expectation like that—an excitement—for the salvation that is coming.

The main idea in verse 5 is not that of waiting as if salvation were delayed. It is that of **expecting**. We have no other hope of salvation than by faith in Jesus Christ through the Spirit. It's not by our works and our efforts, although that is still needed—because faith without works is a *dead faith*.

This faith demonstrates its existence by love to God and love to people. It is not a mere intellectual belief, but it is deeply seated in our hearts and produced through the Holy Spirit. It is not a dead faith, but a *functioning faith*. It is seen in kindness and compassion

towards others.

It is not mere belief of the truth. A mere intellectual agreement with the truth may leave us loveless and unchanged. A mere acceptance of principle, no matter how self-confident one may seem, may leave us faithless. But **true faith** is seen in benevolence, in love to God, in love to all the brethren, and in a readiness to do good to all of humanity. This shows that our hearts are affected by the faith that we hold.

**II Timothy 1:13-14** Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul instructed Timothy to follow the example of his life. Paul wanted him to turn to the pattern, or example, of his teaching as he followed Christ. Timothy was to view what he had heard from Paul as the essential outline, or sketch, of sound words or sound teaching. The phrase in the original is literally, "healthy doctrine." He was to keep, or maintain, healthy doctrine.

Timothy was to hold the truth with faith and love in Christ Jesus. To be balanced, a commitment to the truth always requires faith and love—virtues that ultimately come only from being "in Christ." We are to hold these truths with sincere faith in Jesus Christ, and with the **love** that is the best evidence of commitment to Him.

In verse 14, "That good thing" is the everlasting Gospel—God's truth, healthy doctrine—that is kept continually energized in us by the Holy Spirit. Without this energizing Spirit we cannot internalize and apply God's truth.

Here, Paul commits a trust to Timothy. Generally, he used the concept of a "trust" in two ways in all of his pastoral epistles. First, he had been given a trust, or stewardship, from God. That is how Paul looked at it. Second, he had in turn entrusted himself and his destiny to God. Here in verse 14, Paul spoke of the first of these two. The stewardship of the truth he had received he now passed along into the hands of Timothy, who was to pass it on yet again to other faithful Christians, who were to pass it on to still others.

While the truth of God was in Timothy's possession, he was to guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit that was in him (and that is in all faithful followers of Christ). It was Timothy's responsibility to preserve sound teaching from becoming corrupted through distortion, dilution, deletion, and addition. Heretical teaching was a constant threat to be guarded against. But Timothy could count on the assistance of the indwelling Spirit of

God.

**6. The Holy Spirit is spiritual power to overcome.** It is the spiritual power to help us turn from and resist a self-centered way of life and turn to the God-centered way of life.

**I John 4:1-2** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God.

I find it interesting that one of the things the Worldwide Church of God changed was this very fact—that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. They tried to justify it other ways—to say that He was God on earth, but He was not God in the flesh. So there is a direct and obvious indication when it is not the Spirit of God working through them.

**I John 4:3-6** And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

We have to **test the spirits** to discern which are actuated by the Spirit of God. We are not to believe everyone professing to be under the influence of the Spirit of God. If the Spirit of God influenced them, they would confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh; but if some other spirit (the spirit of error and deceit), they would deny this. We also have to have discernment in other areas. And, if you remember, I mentioned earlier that their fruit is one way you can see if they have the Spirit of God.

When we are "of God," we are of His Family. We have embraced His truth, and absorbed His Spirit. With this intimate relationship we overcome the temptations of the world by the power of the Spirit of God. We triumph over its entertainment and its endeavors to draw us into error and sin. The word "them," in verse 4, seems to refer to the false prophets or teachers who collectively constituted **the antichrist**—representing the world system guided by Satan.

God in us (by whose strength and grace we are enabled to overcome) is more powerful than Satan—who rules in the hearts of the people of this world, and whose seductions are seen in the efforts of false teachers and ministers. The apostle John is explaining that it is 'by no power of our own' that we overcome Satan; but it is because God dwells in us, and preserves us by His grace through the power of His Spirit. Jesus Christ, who dwells in us by His Spirit, is infinitely more powerful than Satan. So it is essentially important to have God's Holy Spirit.

**I John 5:4-6** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. [Faithfulness is produced as a fruit of God's Holy Spirit. Remember?] Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Now, I John 5:7-8 we have to be very careful with—because in most translations it is incorrect. I know in the ESV (the English Standard Version) they have it correct. But in the King James and the New King James they have added parts to those scriptures later on. So verse 7 should read: "For there are three that bear witness." You stop there, and the rest of verse 7 should not be in there. These words are not part of the inspired canon, but are used more than any other scriptures to prove the false Trinity doctrine. These words were placed here about the fourth century A.D. and appeared in no translation prior to the fourth century.

And then in verse 8 we have to eliminate the first phrase and begin with the colon—"the Spirit, the water, and the blood." The Spirit is the power of God. The water represents baptism—and the blood, Christ's sacrifice. So it is *the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one*. That should be all there is in verse 8.

Our faith in Jesus Christ is strengthened because He overcame the world. It is by that faith (that makes us one with Him, and that imbues us with His Spirit) that we are able to overcome Satan, our own human nature, and the world.

**7. The Holy Spirit is the power by which we may develop the holy, righteous, perfect character**, which is God's purpose for having put humanity on the earth—that God may thus reproduce Himself.

**II Timothy 1:6-8** Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of

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fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

Paul admonishes Timothy to **stir up** the gift of God. The original Greek word used here means "kindle up"—as a fire. He tells Timothy to kindle up the gift of God. It is not uncommon to compare devotion to a flame or a fire, and the image is more obvious when we speak of causing passion to burn more brightly within us. The idea is that Timothy was to use all his efforts to keep the flame of pure doctrine burning in his mind—and, more specifically, his zeal in preaching God's way of life.

Our efforts are necessary to keep God's truth burning within us, but the Holy Spirit is the powerful fuel that ignites and maintains it. No matter how rich the gifts are that God has bestowed upon us, they do not grow by themselves; but they must be cultivated by our own personal care.

God has not given us a spirit of fear. He has not given us a frightened and intimidated spirit. He has given us a spirit of *power*—the power to meet our enemies and trials with confidence, the power to bear up under trials, the power to triumph in persecutions. It is the nature of God's truth imparted through the Holy Spirit to inspire our minds with powerful holy courage so we can develop these characteristics of God.

It is a spirit of *love* that casts out fear, making our minds bold and constant. Nothing will do more to inspire courage, to make us fearless of danger, or ready to endure privation and persecution than **God's love**. And the love of country, and wife, and children, and home, makes the most timid man bold when his family is attacked or assaulted. It is love that gives us strength.

It is a spirit of *a sound mind*. The Greek word signifies one of a sober mind, a serious mind—a man of carefulness and good judgment. The condition that is referred to here is a well balanced mind: a stable mind under right and good influences; a spiritually mature mind in which things are seen in their just proportions and right relations; a calm mind in which there is not confusion, but where everything is in its proper place.

It was this state of mind that Paul exhorted Timothy to cultivate. Paul regarded a sound mind as absolutely necessary to properly perform his duties and responsibilities as a minister of Jesus Christ. It is as necessary now for a minister of God as it was then to develop and continue to have this zeal.

God gives the power of the Holy Spirit to those who are afflicted because of faithfulness to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Those who are subjected to trials on account of the gospel look for divine strength to uphold them, knowing that their own strength is insufficient.

Here's a brief summary of the seven effects of the Holy Spirit on us (in just one short paragraph): The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. It impregnates God life and imparts spiritual understanding, the love of God, the faith of Christ, power to overcome, and power to develop righteous character.

For all humanity, it all gets back to the two trees in the Garden of Eden. One was the "Tree of Life," which symbolized the Holy Spirit. Adam needed this Spirit, combined with the human spirit already created in him. And God offered it freely. But Adam had to make a choice.

Also in the midst of the Garden was the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." To partake of this tree was to reject God and submit to Satan. To take of it was to reject God's Holy Spirit, to reject God-life, to reject God's divine love to fulfill His law, to reject spiritual knowledge of good and evil, to decide for themselves what is right and wrong. But, God's law defines what is right and wrong.

The "Tree of Life" also symbolized God's law and God's government, which Satan had rejected. Without that Holy Spirit, mankind has not been able to understand any of God's way or His plan of salvation for mankind—unless God called individuals and placed His Spirit in them.

God will glorify all of His children at the resurrection by giving us the same great power and glory that Jesus Christ received. To be **glorified** means to be given great power and brightness.

Before He became a human being, Jesus Christ had a glorious, powerful spirit body like His Father's. After His resurrection, He was restored to the same power and glory. Christ's bright face and powerful spirit body now radiate light as the sun in full strength, with eyes blazing like flames of fire.

This is the awe-inspiring future God has in store for us if we are regenerated by His Holy Spirit and draw upon its power to grow in character during this physical life of ours. At the conclusion of the 7,000 years of God's plan of salvation for humanity, the God Family (billions of us)—all of us possessing holy, righteous, perfect character; all of us unable to sin—will then go on and continue for eternity the beautification and creation of

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the entire vast universe.

We will be constantly looking forward in joyous anticipation and ecstasy to still greater and more marvelous and awesome things to do throughout the whole endless universe for eternity—always building on the supreme and glorious accomplishment that only the Almighty God could do! And it is just breathtaking to understand how GREAT this future life (that we have in store for **US**) is—and how few of us there are, who have been given God's Holy Spirit to make it possible for us to understand the great blessings of God.