

BRING ON THE POWER

The inner war is a bit draining, isn't it: checking our thoughts, being on guard against the enemy's subtle attacks, binding demons! Have you been tempted to forget the whole thing and go back to your old ways? Don't feel alone; that too is one of Satan's common tricks. The hassle, after all, is only what we've given in to all our life! Now that we're fighting, it just seems like more of a big deal. Keep up the diligent fight and it will soon be worth it all!

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. Galatians 6:9

Have you come to the place where you can see the value in taking every thought captive and binding harassing spirits, but you realize that you still need more power? Maybe you are at that point in your spiritual pilgrimage where you really care about pleasing the Lord, but you keep falling back into old patterns. Maybe you just need more power – the power of the Holy Spirit!

One of the false hopes we humans have is that we will mature to the point that we will not be hassled anymore. We are tempted to think that one of these days we should be able to stand on our own two feet and not have to be crying out to God every time we turn around. Read John 15:5. It sounds like God made us to be co-dependent – on Him!

The Apostle Paul waded through this confusion about maturity and the reality of the inner war in Romans 7:18-24. “Won't I ever get to the point where this war stops?” Probably not this side of heaven! It's not just a matter of our “growing up,” because we have a nasty, persistent, subtle enemy!

The battle should be getting easier, but this alone will not necessarily make life more enjoyable. Getting the enemy off our back is only part of our pilgrimage; finding the abundance Jesus promised is the more exciting portion! Joy, expectancy, looking forward to each new day, having fun, laughing, feeling close to friends, enjoying our God. These things come from something other than winning the inner war. They are fruit that results from a vital, powerful relationship with the Holy Spirit.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you . . . John 14:26,27a nkj

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. John 15:11 nkj

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:24 nkj

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us . . . Ephesians 3:16-21a nkj

One day as Jesus preached in the temple, He said something very unusual:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being

shall flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke of the Spirit...Jhn 7:37-39

Have you had this experience? I don't know if water bubbling up inside you has much appeal, but what the Lord is saying is that the Fountain of Life, the Holy Spirit, wants to manifest His power inside of us!

The picture of flowing water was an Old Testament symbol for the refreshing power of God. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the latter days when the glory of God, pictured by water, would begin to flow (Ezekiel 47). The desert would be watered and begin to produce abundant fruit. The bitter salt waters of the ocean would turn sweet. The trees that drink up this water (a picture of believers) would have leaves and fruit that produce healing.

This flow is called the “River of Life” (also seen in Revelation 22:1). I believe this is the same river Jesus was telling the people about in John 7:38—the flow of the Holy Spirit! As water to a parched desert, so the Holy Spirit is to our soul! Jesus said of the Spirit (John 6:63a):

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing;

Need more life? You only need more of His flow of Living Water! Need more power? Reflect on the next verse:

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7

Who couldn't use some more power, love, and discipline (sound mind, kjv)? When the Holy Spirit moves, things happen. In the Old Testament, when the Spirit came on a little boy named David, he stood up to a sassy giant, Goliath, and experienced victory! Samson was the strongest man that ever lived because the Holy Spirit would come upon him. In the New Testament, when the Holy Spirit came upon folks, people were healed, demons shrieked and fled! Great miracles abound when the Spirit is moving. Awesome love flows from the Spirit! Tremendous peace surrounds, secures and satisfies via the Holy Spirit!

The third person of the Trinity works with us depending upon what's going on inside our mind! We can quench Him or increase His flow of living water:

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:29-32

Can you see how many things in this passage quench the Holy Spirit? God's power is designed to eliminate these things from our life, but we mortals have a tendency to use these fleshly responses to try to "get things done" instead of relying on Him! We must reach for His power first!

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

Happiness, rejoicing and thankfulness are associated with the flow of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to experience an abundant life, to enjoy every day (except for the brief episodes of beating up the enemy), and to sweeten the lives and situations around us. He wants us to enjoy the Christian life so much that He sent His Spirit to provide the power!

HOW DO WE RECEIVE HOLY SPIRIT POWER?

We are born of the Holy Spirit when we're saved:

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" John 3:5-7

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. Romans 8:9

We have the Holy Spirit at salvation, but we do not receive His power ministry until we are baptized or immersed with Him. Yes, He's present in every Christian, but there's much more to His ministry. Jesus breathed on His disciples the evening of His resurrection and said "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). This, I think, is when they were saved. He then told them to wait in the city until the Holy Spirit was poured out on them with power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8). Did they have the Holy Spirit? Sure, Jesus breathed the Spirit into them. But there was something more that they needed . . . P O W E R !

In Acts 8:14-17, a bunch of Samaritans were saved through the preaching of Philip. He baptized them in water, and then Peter and John came up from Jerusalem to check things out. What happened then was the endowment with power! Saved, then the outpouring of power.

What about you? Are you sure you're born again? Have you experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit as folks did in the book of Acts? If you have, then you know what I've been describing: love, peace, joy, power. You've tasted these things! But, there is the matter of stinkin' thinkin' that the enemy wants to use to quench the Holy Spirit and thus reduce the flow of His divine life in us.

Have you noticed a reduction in the flow of the Holy Spirit in your life? If yes, why? Is there a particular "sin" that keeps tripping you up? If after you receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit you still fight a pet sin, please read my pamphlet, "New Ruts for Old." Sometimes the only way out of habitual responses is to renew our mind, but that's another study.

Let's shift gears right now. If you have never received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then this is the next very crucial step in your spiritual life. You can put it off, but you will be like a car being pulled by a team of mules. The church has crippled along through the ages, letting the devil beat their brains in, fighting fellow believers instead of demons, and for the most part totally ignoring the power of the Holy Spirit. At the turn of the century some "hungry" believers found out that the Bible still means what it says! They

asked—they received! The Baptism of the Holy Spirit hasn't passed away; people just stopped seeking!

THE PRINCIPLE OF FLOW

God works with a very simple principle:

Power flows into an area of need when it's drawn by faith.

In 1 Peter 5:5, we read that God resists the proud and yet gives grace to the humble. The proud person says, "I don't need you, God." The humble person calls out to God with all their heart—"Please help me Lord, or I'll never make it!" One He lifts up, the other He has to push away! Why? God's power flows into an area of need when faith begins drawing! Here's what the Lord says:

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." Isaiah 57:15

"For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being," declares the Lord. "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." Isa 66:2

Jesus said that He only came for the weak, the sick and the lost. Why? Because they were the ones who knew they needed Him! His power flows into the place where needy faith is pulling! God's miracle power does not, however, flow into needy people that are not operating by faith, otherwise, there would be no needs on earth! We'd be in heaven. No, His power flows where it is wanted, where it is requested, where the dry, thirsty heart pulls and draws, and operates within the biblical guidelines for faith.

In the story of the woman at the well (John 4), Jesus said to her that if she would ask, He would give her living water. Asking is how we start the flow of power into our weakness. But, the flow only enters weak places.

Do you see your need of the Holy Spirit or are you still trying to fix your own life? Are you able to “get your act together” by yourself? If so, then you're not empty enough. When you cry out in the words of John 15:5, “*Without you, I can do nothing,*” then you're getting mighty close. Paul cried, “*No good thing dwells in my flesh,*” and thereby began making a vacuum for the Spirit to flow into!

Are you afraid of becoming a fanatic? Total abandonment to the Holy Spirit means that He gets His way, His will. Are you so dry that you'll pay any price for the Living Water? Do you want His peace and joy to the extent that you'll surrender any habit, any activity, any opinion or “right” that He puts His finger on? We may not have to give up anything, but we must be willing to give up everything to trigger His divine flow!

Some folks feel that God is a crutch for weak people. They, sad to say, will never know the power and life that we're talking about, unless they see the error of their stinkin' thinkin'. A grown man told me recently, with tears in his eyes, of the awesome experiences he's had since the Holy Spirit filled him. He did drugs for many years, but, he said, “the Holy Spirit is the greatest high I've ever had, and I haven't come down yet!” The Holy Spirit isn't a crutch, He is our Life!

Stay needy! Cry out in faith to the One promising to pour out living water on the dry, thirsty land. Are you thirsty? Are you dry? He knows your need, but He's waiting for your prayer of faith! Listen to the Words of Life:

Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he . . . If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Luke 11:11-13

Ask and you shall receive! He's saying our asking starts the flow because it's a declaration that we're needy! What was the sin of the folks at Laodicea (Revelations 3:17,18)? They said they didn't need anything!

I've talked to many people who've experienced serious problems. Some have gone through years of therapy and counseling. Some have been suicidal. Every time the Holy Spirit falls, things are changed, dramatically, and immediately! One lady tried to kill herself when she was a teenager. Subsequent attempts were also unsuccessful, but each had landed her in the hospital. As an adult, she was constantly plagued with suicidal thoughts. She asked for prayer and when the Holy Spirit fell, she let out the most uncanny shriek. Within seconds, she was a new woman. She told me, years later, even after having gone through very serious marital problems, that she was never bothered with suicidal thoughts again. The Holy Spirit did in a few seconds, what no one else had been able to do!

AN INVITATION TO THE SPIRIT

If you're seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit (or if you need a “refilling”) get alone with the Lord and run through these simple steps. This is merely a checklist, not a legalistic formula:

- 1. Are you saved?** If you're not sure, please reach out to the Lord Jesus right now. Ask a Christian to pray with you, or contact us. This is so important – it's our foundation. Don't stop seeking Jesus as your Savior until you're certain you are saved!
- 2. Come before the Lord** in the name of Jesus. Read James 4:7 and 8. Submit everything to God as best you can. Say a simple prayer like: “Father God I give You my life right now. Devil, I resist you in Jesus' name – be gone! Holy Spirit I draw near to You with thankfulness and praise.”
- 3. Ask the Lord** to search your heart for any sin, stubbornness, bad attitudes or habits that need to go.
- 4. Wait as quietly as possible.** When God puts His finger on something, don't argue with Him—yield it up!

5. **Go through this “waiting & surrendering”** until you feel clean and totally yielded. I know this is subjective, but you should feel clean after you take a bath, right?
6. **Ask the Lord to fill you** with the Holy Spirit (or to refill you). Ask Him to take over every cell in your body, every portion of your mind, and to totally saturate your spirit!
7. **Begin to praise Father**, Son and Holy Spirit. Thank Him for everything you can think of: old, new, good, bad, people, places, things, etc.

Praise until you sense the Holy Spirit joining in with your praise. Keep the flow going; let it increase. See the Lord Jesus, seated on His throne next to Abba, pouring out His Spirit on you. Draw in the Living Water as dry, thirsty land.

The angels that surround God's throne sing continually “Holy, Holy, Holy”—join them! Yield up every fear, every concern, every goal, everything you hold dear. Worship Him as your All-in-all! Soon the Spirit will be flowing! You'll know by the gusher that it's His Living Water! If syllables or sounds that don't make sense come to you, offer them up in this stream of praise. Praying in tongues is simply worship that bypasses our mind; tune out the mind, tune in the Spirit! Because you're in His presence and you're yielded up to Him, He'll keep you from error!

TO STAY IN THE LIVING WATER, STAY YIELDED!

WARNING:

Remember, the thief will come to steal the good seed immediately after it is sown. He will say you faked it, your's was not a language, it was stupid. He will try to make you feel embarrassed, ridiculous, etc. Don't let the enemy steal your blessing. Run him off!

CHECK THE FRUIT

Did praise and yieldedness bring you closer to the Lord?
Did you sense His presence?

Was there peace and settledness?
Did you sense joy and love?
Did you feel like Jesus was your everything?

Praying in the Spirit is like everything else in the Kingdom of God; there are two parts: God's and ours! If He inhabits our praise (Psalm 22:3), then praise is required for Him to inhabit! He provides salvation, yet our tongue is needed to receive salvation (John 1:12 and Romans 10:9,10). The Holy Spirit provides the language (of men or angels, 1 Corinthians 13:1), but we provide the voice, the breath, the saying of the language. What He puts in, we speak out. Don't wait for Him to "force" you to speak; He's looking for your cooperation.

When in doubt if a syllable or sound is from Him, speak it out! Remember, you have yielded yourself up to the Living God and are therefore vulnerable to Him, not the deceiver! If you were doing this to show off in front of a bunch of people, then you would be open to a deceiving spirit of pride. But, when you're all alone, and when your desire is the New Testament experience outlined in the Book of Acts, you need to count on the protective ministry of the angels of God. Reread Luke 11:11-13, and know that Father God will not mock your sincere request!

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Our enemy watched as God Almighty formed the planets by His Words. Spellbound, Lucifer marveled as the sea teemed with life, vegetation appeared on the desolate surface of the earth, and animals “popped” into being as God spoke. If anyone knows the power of words, it's the fallen cherub, Satan (Ezekiel 28:12-19). In fact, it was his feeble attempt to imitate God by using speech, that got him thrown out of heaven (Isaiah 14:12-14)!

There's power in words:

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Proverbs 18:21

Our words can save us:

*If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.
Romans 10:9*

Our words can condemn us:

For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned. Matthew 12:37

This being so, it's more than obvious why our enemy is so concerned with controlling our tongue:

And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. James 3:6

The Scriptures warn us frequently to watch what we say:

*Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.
James 1:19b*

From the fruit of a man's mouth he enjoys good...the one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. Proverbs 13:2,3

The words that come out of our mouth are very important; however, I think there are other words that are even more critical—the words that are spoken in our mind! The words that run around in our mind will sink down into our heart (our subconscious mind). There they will begin the faith process that requires meditating on words until we truly believe them. The words that linger in our mind and heart will produce great faith or foul pollution!

If we carry on a conversation with the enemy, stinkin' thinkin' will soon result. If we talk freely with the Holy Spirit, life will spring forth. The words that fill our inner person will emerge with life or death consequences! Notice what different people in the Bible talked about in their mind:

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old?" Genesis 17:17a

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." Psalm 15:2

...that evil slave says in his heart, "My master is not coming for a long time..." Matthew 24:48

I believe that the Christian life is made immensely harder because of “self-talk” that goes unchecked, as well as valuable “self-talk” that goes unsaid! It's easy to pick out faulty inner speech in the verses above. Abraham took up the taunt that Satan stuck in his mind, and thus shrank in faith. The fool is merely pondering the polluter's filthy blasphemy. Even laziness is a result of inner talk: “too much to do,” “I'm too tired,” “later,” etc.

Contrast what Psalm 15:2 says about the righteous person:

He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.

When we're engulfed in conflict with the enemy, our words take on vital importance—everyone knows that; but, what is being said in our minds before conflict arises, when we're experiencing one of those brief seasons of calm, can determine who wins the next conflict, and many times, if there will even be a conflict!

There are some vital ways we can use the power of the tongue to insure simple, quick victory and remain in the midst of the River of Living Water:

- ☞ Praise and give thanks
- ☞ Talk the Word over with the Lord
- ☞ Pray in the Spirit
- ☞ Give yourself faith “pep talks”

Which is the easiest for you? The hardest?

FRUIT INSPECTION

How can we tell if we're being controlled by the Holy Spirit? Jesus said that whatever fills the heart will come out the mouth (Luke 6:45), and “by their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:16).

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Acts 10:44-46

In the book of Acts, when people were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues, a language they didn't know. To some, it sounded like gibberish, and they mocked saying the disciples were drunk (Acts 2:13). But, speaking in tongues was given by the Holy Spirit as the sign that He's in control! Our mind doesn't understand the language, but it makes sense to the Spirit.

After you pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you may feel something bubbling up from your innermost being, as Jesus said in John 7:38, or you may find strange syllables forming in your mind. Let it out. The Spirit's part is to give us the words (or the syllables), our part is to say them. Speak it,

release it! Step back from having to be in control and give yourself totally over to the Holy Spirit!

I don't want you to “fake” saying weird sounds, but I do want you to let go and allow the Holy Spirit to rise up and take over control of your tongue and your life! I believe that when you're lost in high praise, the Holy Spirit will supernaturally take over your control center, and you'll find yourself praising in a language you never learned. It's beautiful! Let it flow!

Some say this is too mystical or emotional. No, it's not mystical, it's spiritual, and, yes, it's emotional! Hallelujah! God-given emotions!

The flesh is at war with the spirit, and therefore listens to demonic wisdom that tries to deny the Holy Spirit access to the tongue. Why do you think the enemy hates speaking in tongues? Because you are yielded to the Holy Spirit and he's out of luck!

Some worry that a demon may enter in if they open themselves up too much. What I'm suggesting is opening yourself only to the Lord God Almighty! I think He's big enough to stand guard, lest unclean spirits slip in when you're vulnerable! Most of us regularly open up to the enemy and close to the Spirit. Our mouths have been used far too much for griping, accusing, mocking and unbelief. Isn't it time we give the Spirit equal time?

If you're motivated by fear of being too vulnerable, you may not be ready for this yet. I understand. For too many years I resisted this experience. I wish now that someone had encouraged me more to go for all the power the Lord has, instead of being satisfied with book knowledge! A Scripture that I see as so vital is:

*For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in **power**.
1 Corinthians 4:20*

We have a reason to exercise caution in seeking new experiences, and that is why I encourage you to follow the steps in James 4:7,8. Surrender your mind, your speech control-center, your tongue—everything—to the Holy Spirit – then make sure you run the devil off!

A SIDE TRIP

I don't mean to digress and slip into justifying my position on tongues, but I feel strongly that there has been too much non-biblical, bad press about this

link-up with the Holy Spirit. Most people are totally ignorant about tongues, including Christians. I know a little bit, but I've studied tongues extensively and paid a big price to find out what I do know. I only ask that you read what I have written with an open mind. Ask the Lord if this is true. Examine the Scriptures to see if this matches up with our only rule for faith—the Bible!

More is written in the New Testament about speaking in other tongues than there is about the Lord's Supper, water baptism, the Trinity, and many other “important” doctrines. Yet some people say tongues are of the devil or that they've passed away. Why? Could it be that there is power in speaking in tongues, so the enemy has to do something to stop it? He'll try to get us either fighting tongues or into pride that we speak in tongues!

We are told that tongues can build us up (just what every warrior needs!):

One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 1 Corinthians 14:4

“Edify” means to build up. Some have missed what Paul was saying because of denominational prejudice. How can saying something you don't understand “build you up?” It's not because there is something intrinsically powerful about tongues, but rather that we're allowing the Holy Spirit to control our tongue! As we give our mind, our heart, our spirit over to the Lord, He fills us up, lifts us up, and builds us up! He, the Vine, pours His life-giving sap into us, the willing, drawing branch! The result is fruitfulness! Remember, need draws power.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul is basically asking the believers to not speak in tongues in a public meeting because it freaks some people out. He is seeking to limit speaking in tongues to times when someone will interpret the language so all can benefit (1 Corinthians 14:28). But, he quickly commands that no one forbid the speaking in tongues (verse 39), a point that many overlook.

Notice what he says in verse 18:

I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all.

He speaks in tongues more than all of them. Why? Because he needed to be built up! After all, he spent most of his time ministering to others. Pre-

achers, teachers and counselors can get into trouble if they are always pouring themselves out to others. Imagine how long a mother can nurse her infant if she's not eating anything. Praying in the Spirit fills us up, so that when others draw on us, we have something to give them! This is a spiritual exercise, and, therefore, of little direct value to our mind. Praise is a tool of the Holy Spirit for our mind, while tongues works mainly with our spirit.

When our mind gets into the habit of praising God for all things and in all things, and our spirit draws on the Holy Spirit through tongues, miraculous things happen!

Paul calls praying in tongues (verse 14), "*praying in the spirit.*" The author of Jude uses this same phrase (verse 20) and tells us, as Paul does, that it builds us up! Ephesians 6:18 links praying in tongues (praying in the Spirit) to spiritual warfare! When you get tired of beating on demons, quickly turn on the power by praying in the Spirit and praising God freely! I believe this is what Paul had in mind in 2 Corinthians 6:7b

...by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left hand!

In one hand we have the sword of our authority by which we bind the enemy forces; the other hand is raised in abandoned praise of our Awesome God who has all power!

Please be careful to immediately put your focus back on the Lord after you have been resisting the devil. The reason is that fighting drains us! Also, spirits are rebels, and they will pitch a fit until they absolutely have to go. As long as you stay focused on them and the problem they caused, they will loiter! Don't play their game; jump into the stream of God's Spirit and the splashing noise of the living water will drive them into the dark place! Your joyful praise will do almost as much as releasing your authority by binding and loosing!

From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

Psalm 8:2 NIV

Praise is so powerful that children can use it to run the avenger off. Praise is our super weapon. Praise made the enemy run away from King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:17-23), and it can blow your problems to smithereens! Philippians 4:6,7 tells us that prayer offered in thanksgiving releases the peace of God for our heart and our mind. It actually forms a fortress, a wall of the Holy Spirit around our mind and emotions. If fighting wears you out, praise will build you up!

David praised God as he ran out to meet the huge giant (1 Samuel 17:45-47). Elijah praised God on Mount Carmel and brought down the fire of God to consume his sacrifice (1 Kings 18:36-38).

The opposite of praise, grumbling and complaining, leads to demonic bondage and death as seen in 1 Corinthians 10:10:

Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Complaining is nothing other than agreeing with the enemy. The more we focus on his negative insight, the deeper we go into bondage (Romans 6:16 and 8:6). Instead, fight back with the devil-silencer—praise! Our goal needs to be to eradicate all complaining, negative insights, etc. and fill our minds with that which gives life.

Praise is faith in action. It is so powerful because it agrees with what the Word of God says. When we are instructed to praise God for all things and in all things, it is because God has promised to work all things together for our good! If there is anything that you don't want God to turn into good for you, then don't thank Him for it!

When we seek God for answers to serious problems because they are heavy on our heart, we might have a tendency to pray with a bit of a whine. Sad prayers are doomed to stick to the ceiling! Faith prayers, the kind that are full of the Holy Spirit, reach heaven and change things!

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2

We must learn to dwell in the Living Water, walk in the Spirit and flow in Love (Ephesians 3:14-21). When anything troubles the waters, we turn on the

demonic intruder, send it packing, then refocus on our loving Father. If your day seems like it's starting out to be “one of those days,” quickly pause for the refreshment of praise. Pray in tongues for a while, then switch over and praise with your mind! This is faith that works!

If you say you love the Lord and trust Him to meet your every need, then prove it by praising Him in advance! If you agree with Jesus' words, “*for apart from Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5), then don't get frustrated when things are out of your control; rather, praise Him for being in total control! Praise God when others let you down, not because they let you down, but because He's all you need, and He will never let you down! When others talk bad about you, praise God and don't try to set the record straight. As you throw yourself into the Living Water of the Holy Spirit through praise, He will do some “setting straight”! He will fight for you; He will still the troublemaker!

People who have a hard time with teachings on praising God and with tongues may have been turned off by overzealous, unloving and insensitive people. So, who hasn't? But, people who resist these areas may have a faith problem. Some act like the Pentecostals are trying to come up with weird doctrines, when in fact, the doubters are denying portions of the Scriptures. I say to them, quit fighting the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Agree with His revealed will. Reach out for all the Lord has for you! Don't allow your faith to be built on the wisdom of man. What, in 1 Corinthians 2:4,5, is our faith to be built on?

A great value with speaking in tongues is when pressure rises, and binding and loosing seems to fall on deaf ears (some demons play deaf). When I can't seem to pray with my mind, I can always pray in tongues! I turn my tongue over to the Holy Spirit and He takes it from there! Almost every time that binding doesn't work, praying in tongues breaks through the barrier. Why? Because it humbles the mind under the Holy Spirit. We are actually flowing with the Holy Spirit. We are agreeing with the Holy Spirit, and the agreement of two in prayer is promised to be effectual (Matthew 18:19).

Have an unsolvable mystery? Facing a dilemma? The enemy loves to drain our brain with trying to solve problems. The Word says that when we speak in tongues we speak mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2)! If we do as Paul suggests, and ask the Lord for the interpretation after we speak in tongues (verse 13), some of these mysteries will be revealed to us! Humble yourself

under the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues until you sense a release. Ask in faith for the interpretation. Then, relax, knowing that the answer of the Spirit will soon arise in your understanding.

Look up Romans 8:6 in the New American Standard Bible. How can I purposely put my mind on the Spirit and take it off the flesh, after all, we know how powerful the flesh is! Why not begin praising the Lord. In your mind see the Lord high and lifted up, sitting on His glorious throne. See yourself, bowing humbly, respectfully, at His feet. Softly, begin praying in the Spirit. Let your voice rise. Your prayer will be as incense to Him. Soon you will be praying in English, and you will feel the flow of the Holy Spirit. Give way to Him! Love Him. Praise this glorious God. Give over everything you can think of to Him. This is how the river begins to flow. Stay in the river!

The beauty of speaking in tongues is that you can do it any time, and not just out loud! Paul said that when no one was present who could interpret, “pray to yourself and to God” (1 Corinthians 14:28)! Standing in line at a grocery store, pray in the spirit in your mind. When you are counseling someone, pray in the spirit. When you're being attacked verbally by someone, pray in the spirit. When pressures get too tough, get alone and pray in the spirit out loud — loudly!

This is powerful stuff! It breaks depression, anger, lust, sickness, etc., the whole time God gets the glory! No wonder the enemy tries so hard to steal this from believers!

If you've sought the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues and have not received, don't give up. There are many possible blockages. As you patiently keep seeking, the Lord will show them to you. As you destroy each blockage by faith, you'll soon be free as a bird! Stinkin' thinkin' from the past can limit our faith, but you know what to do with Stinkin' Thinkin'!

If you've made fun of speaking in tongues, then an apology to the author of tongues is in order! If you're afraid of being embarrassed, or making a mistake, then you need to resist the spirit of fear and promptly submit to the Lord. If you've been taught against tongues by someone who refuses to accept the whole Bible, then you must choose who you're going to run with—this person, or the God of the Bible! Jesus said we're to “keep seeking, keep asking,” so don't stop until you receive! If there's a blockage, it isn't on God's part, and your persistent faith will remove it!

Some say that tongues are not for every believer, and I agree that the public gift of tongues is only for a few; however, the book of Acts evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). This is what Paul had and desired for all believers:

I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all. 1 Corinthians 14:18

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

1 Corinthians 14:5

Some folks misuse this verse to put down tongues, but it is clearly not a put-down, but a caution for public ministry. Paul was not impressed with the public gift of tongues, but he obviously used his private prayer language (verse 18, above) given by the Holy Spirit, very frequently!

THREE KEYS

I can't overemphasize three aspects of dealing with the Holy Spirit:

Stay needy: in need of Him! Declare Him to be your sufficiency! "Without you, I can do nothing."

Yield yourself totally to Him: your tongue, your hands, your past, your future, your job, your family, your whatever!

Develop a **trusting friendship** with the Holy Spirit through continual praise. Take His presence more serious than all the messy problems the enemy can throw at you!

Talk everything over with this One who was sent to keep us from feeling like orphans (John 14:18). He's called our Helper (John 14:16, 26), and will guide us into all truth (John 16:13). I like to sing the song, "Come Holy Spirit," as a fresh reminder that I need Him.

Often I ask Him, “Spirit of God, show me how to pray about...” Develop a deep friendship with this One who was given to “walk alongside” (the meaning in the Greek). Get to know Him. Open up more and more to Him! Be filled and refilled! Not just for your own enjoyment, but as a paramedic, traveling the streets of life, always ready to dispense the healing balm to hurting people!

The early church was visited mightily on the Day of Pentecost. They were endowed with great power. But soon the devil had the religious people so whipped up with jealous stinkin' thinkin' that they arrested the new believers. After the muckety-mucks threatened the “spiritually high” saints, the believers returned to their meeting place, rather drained. They went into some serious prayer, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on them again, and they were filled afresh! New power! That's why the Word says:

...be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 (from the Greek)

SNARE WATCH

Watch for these snares:

When we fuss with each other, the Spirit pulls back!

Pride that we do or don't speak in tongues.

Feeling that a situation justifies you taking control without asking the Lord.

Saying, “Oh well, I couldn't help it; I'm just a weak human,” instead of seeking God's power!

Failure is not so much a matter of me not being able to live the Christian life; it's a matter of my pride! Will I admit I can't do it without the Holy Spirit and surrender totally to Him for His powerful infilling, or will I quit because I can't be perfect, and refuse to do anything—which is ultimate pride!

It's as simple as staying needy; as easy as yielding everything to Him; declaring His way is best even when we can't understand how or why, by praising Him in advance!

Please send me your comments and insights:

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