

# A Study of the Holy Spirit

## Introduction

By: Pastor Michael Gilmore

Pastors, teachers, and Christians as a whole should all desire a more comprehensive knowledge of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. By better understanding all that the third person of the Trinity has for us, the promises of GOD will become within us the power of GOD!

We are living in the Age of the Spirit. The Old Testament period may be called the Age of the Father; the period covered by the Gospels, the Age of the Son; from Pentecost until the second coming of Christ, the Age of the Spirit.

All matters pertaining to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit should, therefore, be of special interest to we who live in this age of special privilege. Yet, how misinformed is the average Christian, concerning matters pertaining to the work of the Holy Spirit in His age. The Christian church today needs to heed Paul's exhortation: "Now concerning spiritual gifts (or, perhaps better, "matters pertaining to the Spirit"), I would not have you ignorant." It may be that the reason why the sin against the Holy Spirit is so grievous, is because it is a sin committed in the light and with the knowledge of the clearest and fullest revelation of the God head. We cannot, therefore, afford to remain insensible of this all-important doctrine.

In many cases, we have developed misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit, and the role He administers in the Church (His work). These misconceptions have lead to weakness and ineffectiveness in the Christians' life and that of the Church. All of us are able to know with absolute certainty the Biblical facts of His indwelling presence, life-giving and sanctifying power.

It is a revealed fact of Holy Scripture that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one and only one GOD. It is spiritually disastrous to neglect what the Bible reveals about the Holy Spirit and even sadder, not use the power given to us as His earthen vessels. This age of grace, which is in actuality a dispensation of "the ministration of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:8) must be given preeminence in understanding and work of the Holy Spirit. GOD forbid that we should live and serve as the Ephesians who had acted ignorantly of the Spirit, and who when brought to the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, declared that they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2).

Many within the Church today are spiritually setting in the upper room waiting, praying longing for the Holy Spirit to move in their lives, speak to their minds, or fulfill the desires of "their" hearts, while He is in their hearts waiting for them to respond to His instructions.

I hope and pray that as you study with me, the Holy Spirit, that we all devotionally, dependently and doctrinally come to a more concise biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit as He works within our lives and Churches.

In our next study we will discuss The Deity of the Holy Spirit.

God's Blessing and Mercy!



Reverend Michael Gilmore has been the Pastor of New Providence Baptist Church in San Francisco since 1999. He and his lovely wife of over twenty years, LaTonya lives in the East Bay with their two sons, Zachary and Isaiah. Pastor Gilmore summarizes his ministry with his favorite passages of scripture 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2: 1-2, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

To learn more about Pastor Gilmore’s life and accomplishments, please visit [www.newprovidencesf.org](http://www.newprovidencesf.org)

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God's Blessing and Mercy!

# **“A Thankful Heart”**

(Hannah’s story)

1 Samuel 1 - 2:11

The story of Hannah is one of pain, perseverance and praise. Chapter one opens by giving details of her family situation. Hannah, one of Elkanah’s two wives, was his favorite. Hannah was barren, but Peninnah, his other spouse, had children. The situation in this story is similar to the one in the story of Leah and Rachel, sisters who were married to Jacob. Rachel, the favorite wife, was barren, but the Lord blessed Leah to be fruitful (Genesis 29:31). In both cases, when God saw that one was treated better or loved more than the other, He created a way to make the situation more equitable.

To a Jewish woman, being unable to conceive was seen as a curse from God. Even though Elkanah loved Hannah deeply and gave her double of what he gave Peninnah, it could not fill her empty womb or mend her broken heart. Peninnah was envious of the love Elkanah had for Hannah and would provoke and ridicule her regularly, probably reminding her of her inability to conceive. The enemy has a way of taunting us whenever God has us on hold. If we are not careful, we will become discouraged and begin to believe his lies. Can you imagine how hard it must have been for Hannah to live under the same roof with this woman who desired only to cause her pain?

While in the tabernacle at Shiloh, Hannah decided to stop feeling sorry for herself and take her situation to the only One who was able to turn things around. She began to pray and weep with her whole heart. The Word of God says she was praying within her heart, but her lips were moving. The High Priest Eli mistook her for a drunken woman. She explained that she was not drunk, but was a woman with a sorrowful spirit. After realizing his mistake, Eli told her to go in peace, and he asked God to grant her request.

We should always be careful how we treat others, especially those who may be at a disadvantage, because God has a way of turning things around. Those who are up today may be down tomorrow. Those who are on top may find themselves at the bottom. What others may not see, God sees. In His own time, He can turn things upside down. God remembered Hannah, and she conceived, gave birth to a son and named him Samuel. Samuel’s name means asked of God. The pain that Hannah suffered at the hands of her enemy was soon forgotten. Her ability to persevere in the midst of adversity paid off, and her pain was turned into praise.

In chapter two Hannah begins to thank and praise God for her many blessings. She delights in the Lord and worships Him for who He is and for delivering her from the hand of her enemy. She thanked Him for reversing the curse, turning things around and executing judgment on the wicked.

Hannah’s story should be an encouragement to anyone who feels empty or barren in a certain area of life and anyone whom God has placed in a holding pattern. The enemy may be using this time to bring doubt, discouragement and fear. Remember, God’s timing is always perfect. He has a time set for your breakthrough. He has not forgotten you. Follow Hannah’s example by praying past your pain and having a thankful heart. Then God will turn your pain into praise!

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

"Are you in it to Win it?"

(Keeping your Eyes on the Prize)

1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Hebrews 12:1-2

"I'm in it to win it" was the slogan used by Hillary Clinton during her 2008 quest for the White House. Mrs. Clinton was announcing to everyone that she wasn't just in the race to run, she was in the race to win.

This slogan came to mind while I was watching the 2012 Olympic Games. Every athlete I saw interviewed had one goal in mind, which was to take home the GOLD.

Although I enjoyed most of the Olympic competition, my favorite has always been Track and Field. There is something about the sprinters and marathoners that intrigues me. I look at the muscular physiques of the sprinters and the long lean build of the marathoners and understand that their bodies have been conditioned for their particular race. A muscular physique will not work for a marathoner, but will cause them to be weighed down; a long lean physique will not give the sprinter the power he or she needs to run a short distance at maximum speed. Each of these athletes has to prepare and condition their bodies for their own race.

The life of a Christian is often compared to running a race. We are more like marathoners than sprinters because we are in it for the long haul. Speed is not as important to a marathoner as endurance. We run with patience and endurance as we keep our eyes focused on the prize. We must discipline ourselves both physically and mentally so we will be able to endure hardships, setbacks, and injuries which are sure to come. Staying focused is of paramount importance while running a race.

As Christians, we've been given our own race to run. We must run the race that has been set before us, not someone else's race. Trying to run someone else's race can cause collision and serious injury to both runners. This requires focus. Great runners always look far ahead, keeping their gaze on the finish line.

I don't know about you, but I'm in this Christian race to win! All of the years of preparation, injuries, setbacks and hardships will pay off one day. I'm grateful to God for the race He's given me to run. I'm content to run my own race and I've learned to stay in my own lane. My eyes are focused on my prize.

Are you in it to win it? Keep your eyes focused on Jesus, who is our Prize.

Elder Shirley Freeman

Founder/President

## “A Fresh Start”

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Many of us have had experiences in our lives, if given an opportunity, we would change. Unfortunately, we cannot undo that which has been done, nor change our past. We can only go forward with intentions of doing things better.

I’m reminded of a story of a man named Zacchaeus recorded in Luke 19: 1-10. Zacchaeus, a Chief Tax Collector, whose name means *“righteous one, pure or justified”* did not live up to his name. He was a Jew who collected taxes for the Romans, and like many in his business, tacked on extra charges in order to make a profit. Therefore, Tax Collectors were despised, and considered traitors to their own people.

One day Zacchaeus heard that Jesus would be passing through Jericho and he wanted to see Him. Crowds of people were also waiting to take a glimpse of Jesus. However, there were two obstacles that Zacchaeus had to overcome in order to see the Lord. One of the obstacles he had to overcome was the crowd. It’s ironic that those who were there to see Jesus were also those who blocked Zacchaeus’ view of Him. The other obstacle was Zacchaeus’ height, for he was short in stature. He could have felt defeated and given up, but he was not one who gave up easily. To the contrary, he did something radical. He climbed up a tree so he could see Jesus as He passed by. After all, this was a chance of a life time. He didn’t know if he would ever get that opportunity again.

Zacchaeus didn’t realize it at the time, but he was about to receive an unexpected blessing. Soon as Jesus reached the tree Zacchaeus had climbed, he looked up and said to him *“Come down, for today, I must stay at your house.”* Zacchaeus came down without hesitation and joyfully received Jesus. Don’t expect everyone to be happy that Jesus has visited you. Sometimes the complainers will be those who say they are seeking Him too. The crowd began to murmur and say about Jesus, *“He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”* I’m amazed at the number of people who are eager to point their crooked finger at your past after you’ve made positive changes. Isn’t that the beauty of salvation, that God can transform even the most wretched of sinners? (1 Corinthians 6: 9-11)

It is impossible to have a true encounter with Jesus and remain the same. Zacchaeus was so convicted of his sin that he offered to pay back four times what he had extorted and give to the poor. Jesus said to him, *“Today salvation has come to your house.”*

Is anyone or anything blocking your view of Jesus? Determine in your hearts and minds that you will do whatever is necessary to see the Savior. Like Zacchaeus, you can have a fresh start, and your life will never be the same.

Elder Shirley Freeman -  
Founder/President

Happy Mother's Day to all Mothers!

I would like to share the poem below with all of you by an unknown author which conveys many of our feelings about those we call "Mother."

## **"A Mother's Love "**

### **Author Unknown**

There are times when only a Mother's love  
Can understand our tears,  
Can soothe our disappoints  
And calm all of our fears.  
There are times when only a Mother's love  
Can share the joy we feel  
When something we've dreamed about  
Quite suddenly is real.  
There are times when only a Mother's faith  
Can help us on life's way  
And inspire in us the confidence  
We need from day to day.  
For a Mother's heart and a Mother's faith  
And a Mother's steadfast love  
Were fashioned by the Angels  
And sent from God above.

## EXALT THE LORD IN ALL THAT YOU DO

The Bible tells us to praise the Lord, bless the Lord, glorify Him, honor and adore Him, and exalt His holy name. In Psalms 29, David says we should praise the Lord because of His mighty power and His great beauty. In other words, praise is not just for what He has done for us or what He will do for us. Praise can simply flow from who He is in His power.

We should continually exalt the Lord with our entire mind, body, and soul in the way we live, talk and walk. Psalms 29 encourages us to give glory to the Lord which is due unto His name and to worship Him in the beauty of His holiness (vs. 2). There is beauty in all the Lord does, says, and gives. Our intellect cannot completely understand His majesty, but we can offer praise for what is too wonderful for us to fully appreciate.

The Lord accepts our praise even with our faults, defective service and sinfulness. He knows us better than we know ourselves. So, the Lord knows we are going to mess up, but He still wants and accepts our praise. Not many people will accept our praise when we have done them wrong, ignored them, or betrayed them. But, the Lord created us to glorify Himself.

The Lord is king overall and will be forever. As His children we should not be afraid of His voice. We know His voice (John 10:27). When our Father speaks, even in anger, we should not tremble as those that do not know Him. Instead, we can be grateful and proud that the Lord is there protecting us from those who want to do us harm. Even when the Lord chastises us, we should not feel fear, but rather we should feel loved.

Because we are His children, the Lord will give us strength daily and our portion of blessings (Matthew 6:11). We need His power to get us through each day. We are strong in Him (2 Corinthians 12:9). His blessings are eternal. The Lord is not influenced by anything or anyone to bless us, and no one can change His mind about what He has in store for us. The Lord wants to give us peace, harmony and balance. He wants us to be free of the world's trouble (1 Peter 5:7). These are wonderful reasons to praise Him, but there is so much more.

Take some time to look at the world and see the Lord through His work. Like David in Psalm 29, reflect on the Lord's awesome power in nature. I love the wilderness and love to take road trips, long walks, and bike rides, so I can see and hear the Lord in all of His glory. This is when I feel closest to the Lord, and I feel Him close to me. Considering His power and beauty makes it easy to exalt Him in all that we do.



Helen Gill-Smith



Helen Gill-Smith has been a devoted Daughter of Zion for many years. She is the mother of two adult sons (Troy and Joey), grandmother of three and the wife of Shaun Smith, who is a Bay Area Musician. Although she is affiliated with several Bay Area churches, she is currently a member of New Birth Church in Pittsburg, Ca, under the leadership of Bishop C. Carl Smith. Helen has been blessed with the gift to sing and uses her gift by serving in the Choir and Praise Team. Helen also serves in the ministry called SHE, a ministry which assists single mothers. Her desire is to bring glory to God in whatever she does.

## Shout! But, First We March

*And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! Joshua 6:16*

The story of Joshua and the victory at Jericho is a well-known Bible story. While much is said of the victory shout and the walls falling, few discuss the systematic marching. Examining the faith, order and obedience required for the strange march that resulting in taking Jericho reveals key steps to leading a victorious life.

First, God told Joshua to have courage. (Joshua 1:6-7, 9.) All brave men have a healthy reserve of fear, but no brave man would allow fear to stop him from pursuing victory. It takes faith to build courage to move out of our comfort zone and to conquer our fears, but not blind faith that creates uncertainty about possible consequences. God wants us have faith that He is always with us to protect and lead us to success. (Jeremiah 29:11.) When we have courage to follow God's direction in spite of our fear, then God counts us among His faithful servants.

Second, God had specific instructions for the Israelites to follow in order to take Jericho. Things get a little weird here. They had to penetrate the wall to win the battle. Yet, God's plan for tearing down the wall did not include brute force. Instead, God instructed Joshua to have the soldiers march around the wall seven days, followed by seven priest blowing ram's horn trumpets, and other priest carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

God has an order and specific instructions for every mission. Keeping this in mind helps us plan for success. The Ark of the Covenant, or God's presence, was at the center of the Jericho march. God's presence should also be at the center of everything we attempt to do. Priest trumpeted God's praise before the Ark. We too should praise God continually for sending His Holy Spirit comfort and guide us. (John 14:16) Also, things may seem a bit weird when God is directing our path, but God knows what is best. He sees the bigger picture, while we only see our current circumstances. (Isaiah 55:8-9.) So, praise God anyhow. (Psalm 34:1.)

Finally, Joshua obeyed God's instructions to the letter. Effective soldiers are always obedient. My father is a retired Marine. I remember him going to Japan several times after receiving orders from his commanding officers. Even though it meant leaving his family behind, he went.

But, believers struggle with obedience to God's will. Why? Because the kingdom of God is established on obedience to the will of God, and Satan resist God's kingdom on earth. Still, Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10.) If we pray the same, then God will tell us how to march. And, marching by God's orders will break down walls and win battles.

Let's march.

Janie White loves studying God's Word. She mentors young women and is active in both her church and the Daughters of Zion. Janie thanks God for her 14 year marriage to John White. She has one biological son and several spiritual sons, daughters and grandchildren who keep her energized. Her personal joy comes from seeing others grow in faith and in knowledge of God's Word.

## **Jesus, the Gift that keeps on Giving**

I love this time of the year! It's the time of year that seems to bring out the best in everyone. Many look for ways to serve others or give back to their communities during this holiday season. This is true for those who may never consider giving or volunteering during other times of the year.

There is one person I know who gives to the human race every day of the year. His name is Jesus. John 3:16 tells us that God loved the world so much that He gave us the gift of His only Son. Can you imagine sacrificing one of your children so someone else could live? The thought of doing this is unimaginable for most of us, but this is exactly what God did for the world through Jesus.

Jesus gave up His glory and riches in His heavenly kingdom and became poor that we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). The world, and all of us who live in it, are His according to the scripture (Psalm 24:1). Yet He gave it all up, wrapped Himself in human flesh and dwelled among us. This kind of love and sacrifice is hard for most of us to comprehend. I join the Psalmist in asking the question, "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:4 NIV)

During His three year ministry, Jesus spoke to crowds, taught in the synagogues, trained His disciples, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, fed the hungry, caused the lame to walk, resurrected the dead and performed other miracles. Yet, He was despised and hated for doing good deeds.

If that were not enough, Jesus gave up His life that we might live. He continues to heal the sick, give sight to the blind (spiritually and physically) and resurrect those who are dead in trespasses and sins. He is now sitting at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf. Jesus (the Gift) is available to all who call on His name (Romans 10:13). What a loving and compassionate Savior! No wonder He is called the Wonderful Counselor!

Unlike most gifts we will ever receive, Jesus is the gift that keeps on giving!

Elder Shirley Freeman

Founder

## **Check Your Baggage**

By Latrice Goss

If you have traveled by air post 9/11, especially within the last few years, you know what a hassle it is to go through the security checkpoint and how expensive it can be just to check your bags. While some airlines may give you a pass for the first bag, the average fee can be anywhere from \$25 to \$75. It can go even higher if your bag is over a certain weight. Not to mention, because of said fees there is a tremendous amount of overcrowding of carry-on items. So much so, flight attendants often offer to check your bag for free because there is just not enough space.

Well, let's look at our lives in that aspect. How much baggage are we carrying around and what has it cost us to do so?

For most people, a relationship is the heaviest load of baggage that we carry around with us. We sacrifice our own wants, needs and happiness for relationships. We stress over our relationships. Sometimes we cause others to stress over our relationships. And what do all these things lead to? High blood pressure, weight gain or loss, depression or anxiety, mood swings, hair loss...you get the picture? And what do these things lead to? Loss of friends, loss of jobs, loss of sanity and in the most extremes of cases...loss of life.

Some of us also allow our jobs to weigh us down so much so we start questioning our worth and relevance. Especially working CEO hours but getting paid minimal salaries. Or how about our own insecurities within ourselves that hold us back? You can very well be your own weight by doubting and not having faith in who you are and Who you believe in. You can allow others who may have wronged you in life to dictate how you start feeling about yourself and/or how you treat others. Whatever the case may be, too much baggage comes with a price and you have to decide within yourself how much you are willing to pay to carry it around.

The scripture says to be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Our thoughts and what we entertain can either break us or make us. And carrying around a heavy load, especially one that most likely does not even belong to us, can break you down...physically, mentally and spiritually.

So do yourself a favor, instead of carrying around extra baggage and excessive weight, check your bags at the gate. And, instead of going back to claim them later on, keep on moving forward and enjoy your new freedom and peace of mind.

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Latrice C. Goss was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York.

Latrice has written for school publications, plays and community functions. Achievements include various accolades for her work throughout her scholastic career.

Later intrigued by the journalism field during her college years, she became the Managing Editor of SCEPTER, Kingsborough Community College's student newspaper, Treasurer of the National Society of Collegiate Journalists, and from 2000-2010, was the Hip-Hop Entertainment columnist for The New York Beacon.

Latrice currently holds a B.S. in Communications from New York University and an A.A.S. in Journalism from Kingsborough Community College.

Latrice currently resides in the sunny state of California as she continues to work on her first novel.

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# **Your Smile Can Light Up the World!**

**By: Linda Mahley**

There is a lovely sign on the wall at the entrance to an elementary school in southern China that says, “Your smile fills our campus with sunshine.” I passed this every morning last July when I arrived at 7:45 to teach ESL (English as a Second Language) to 40 eager teachers. What a welcome this was and what a reminder of the power of a smile! Imagine.... this simple facial expression could bring warm light, brightness, and cheerfulness to anyone who saw it. How could I read that and not smile even when it was 90 degrees with equal humidity that early in the day!

Dressing modestly and professionally each day in the heat was a challenge, but one morning (when any clothes seemed like too many clothes) I started grinning at the frown in my mirror and realized I wasn't dressed appropriately without my smile. Putting on that smile was an inexpensive way to change my “look” and disposition, and I deeply wanted to share the caring language of a smile.

Did I really believe the axioms, “Service with a smile” and “Smile, you're on Candid Camera?” In fact, many people each day were watching me, so how could I reflect my deep faith in God and thankfulness for His many blessings if my countenance looked otherwise. The person in my mirror and I had a good talk about that! We decided that there would be no gloom, discouragement, or anxiety emanating from us today through a frown! We knew we had to give away smiles instead so that someone else's day could be brightened. Think about it---doesn't a friendly smile that we receive make us happy? How can we not give someone else that same happiness?

A good reminder is found in the Contemporary English Bible in Proverbs 15:30 which implies that a smile carries the good news that someone cares about you, and this gives strength for the day: “A friendly smile makes you happy (the light of the eyes rejoices the heart, KJV) and good news makes you feel strong (a good report makes the bones fat.” KJV)

In my ESL classrooms, I give the students a mirror so they can see their faces speak English. Our language is very facial, and some sounds can simply not be made accurately unless we smile. When speakers of other languages realize the importance of facial expressions in English, they fatigue easily when forming the sounds that are unfamiliar. Likewise, our smiles need exercise so that we easily make them part of our everyday countenances.

I often tell my students that there is a mile in our sMILEs—a mile of joy, happiness, good will, and yes, even sunshine in each smile. There are many languages in this world, but a smile speaks them all!

Someone has written these words in a lovely poem:

“Among the world’s expensive things  
A smile is very cheap  
And when you give a smile away  
You get one back to keep.”



Linda L. Mahley is an ordained Elder in the Presbyterian Church and loves to teach neighborhood Bible studies to women. She is also a world traveler to over 40 countries, a Medical Technologist, and a Certified ESL Instructor. She combines her passion for these two careers by teaching English to Post-Doctoral Fellows who represent 20 different countries at the Gladstone Institutes in San Francisco, which focuses research on Heart Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, and HIV/AIDS.

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## LOVE

I may speak in different languages, whether human or even of angels. But if I don't have love, I am only a noisy bell or a ringing cymbal. I may have the gift of prophecy, I may understand all secrets and know everything there is to know, and I may have faith so great that I can move mountains. But even with all this, if I don't have love, I am nothing. I may give away everything I have to help others, and I may even give my body as an offering to be burned. But I gain nothing by doing all this if I don't have love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (Easy-to-Read Version)

The English dictionary defines love as: tender affection, desire for somebody, passionate attraction and desire, very strong affection and a romantic affair. But the most important definition of love is GOD's definition.

The Daughters recently studied the Book of 1 Corinthians. In chapter 13, Paul talks about our gifts and gives his description of the greatest gift, "LOVE." One of the lessons in the study was titled, "LOVE OF CHRIST -- The Most Excellent Way." The writer of this lesson states that LOVE is perhaps the most abused word in the English language. Instead of communicating unselfish caring, it often expresses enlightened self-interest, manipulative affection or sheer lust.

LOVE is an action word. God loves us so much that He sacrificed His only SON's life, so that we might have everlasting life. (John 3:16.) The love we have for one another, or say we have, will never equal the LOVE God had for us. Jesus' life was a perfect example of how we should love. In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus teaches that the greatest commandments are focused on love for God and love for others. When we love God and others we are fulfilling God's two greatest commandments. Jesus even told us to Love our enemies and do good to them. We all know this is not an easy task, but there are benefits in doing so. (Luke 6:35.)

The Bible is filled with examples of love. We can truly show God how much we love Him by obeying His teachings. (John 14:23.) In 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, His Words instructs us on love.

- Love never gives up.
- Love cares more for others than for self.
- Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
- Love doesn't have a swelled head,
- Love doesn't force itself on others,
- Love isn't always "me first,"
- Love doesn't fly off the handle,
- Love doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
- Love trusts God always,
- Love always looks for the best,
- Love never looks back, but keeps going to the end.
- Love never fails.
- JESUS IS LOVE.

Let's ask ourselves, as Christians, the question Jesus asked Peter three times in John 21:15-17: DO WE REALLY LOVE JESUS?

Sister Frankie

## **JESUS PAID IT ALL** **(Zechariah 11:12-13)**

*“Then I said to them, “If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.” So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.”*

You cannot put a price on what Jesus did for us.

### **HE PAID FOR YOUR PEACEFUL JOURNEY THROUGH THIS LIFE.**

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5

### **HE PAID FOR YOUR SOUL, SO YOU ARE FREE FROM THE TORMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF SIN.**

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Isaiah 53:10-11

### **HE PAID FOR YOUR FREEDOM FROM PAINS, SORROWS, SADNESS, DIFFICULTIES AND ALL KIND OF TRIALS.**

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Isaiah 53:3-4

To Jesus our lives are priceless. But, our lives demonstrate how much we value His sacrifice for us. The shepherd in Zechariah asked for his wages in order to discover what value the people placed on his services. Unfortunately the shepherd discovered they did not think much of his shepherding. Jesus was the good shepherd who lay down His life for his sheep. Surely our lives should show appreciation for the good shepherd’s sacrifice.

Instead of living a life of obedience and praise are we still offering a mere thirty pieces of silver for the Christ who *paid it all* for us? The evidence that we genuinely appreciate the value of Jesus’s sacrifice is in how we live. Submitting to His authority and to His Word shows we treasure the “pearl of great price.” (Matthew 13:45-46.) Knowing He promised to be with us always gives us every reason to place our confidence in His guidance. He is the same Jesus that called His disciples to cross over to the other side in a boat on a stormy sea. (Mark 4:35-41.) He calmed the sea then, and He calms the sea now.

What do you think about Jesus’s sacrifice for us?

Remember this, “JESUS PAID IT ALL.”

Luz M. Sandoval



Luz M. Sandoval is a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ in different's ministries as: Ministry of Worship, Ministry of Evangelism, Ministry of Discipleship, Ministry of Young Adults group, Ministry of Laborers group, Ministry of Intercession, Teacher, Preacher and Lecturer of the Word of God.



## LOVE

“I love you Mommy!”

“I love you Daddy!”

“I love you, I love you!” These phrases are tossed about without regard for the real meaning of LOVE. God’s profound love for His children is endless. Because of love God gave His only begotten son to suffer and die for our sins. This sacrificial act demonstrates the true meaning of love. Love is consistently giving yourself to God and others.

I recall working at a daycare center shortly after I arrived in the United States from Jamaica. Mothers would drop off their kids, and before leaving they would shower the children with kisses while gushing, “I love you,” and “Gimme sugar.” The “sugar” reference puzzled me, because I had never heard the word used that way. Where I came from affection was not so freely lavished on children. Instead, children had to earn affection. Can you imagine how difficult life would be if we had to earn God’s love? The awesome fact is that God first loved us before we even knew Him.

Godly love is ever ready to believe the best about every person. Human love is ever ready to believe the worst about every person. Godly love is self-giving without asking anything in return. It does not consider a person’s worth. Love’s hope does not fade under any circumstances and it endures everything (without weakening). Love never fails, never fades out, become obsolete or comes to an end. 1 Corinthians 13:7-8 (Amplified).

1 Corinthians 13:4 says, “Love endures long *and* is patient and kind; love never is envious *nor* boils over with jealousy, is not boastful *or* vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.” Many people endure long hardships – but they aren’t very kind while doing it! They just tolerate people and situations because they have to. A wife may put up with her husband, and have a vile personality (or vice versa). This happens because human love is prone to attacks of jealousy, unforgiveness, backbiting, cheating and lying.

We can overcome the weaknesses in human love, if we learn to love as God commanded. Love:

**God** (Deuteronomy 5:10-12; Matthew 22:37)

**Neighbors** (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39)

**Strangers** (Deuteronomy 10:19)

**Salvation** (Psalm 40:16; 70:4)

**God’s name** (Psalm 69:36; 119:132)

**God’s word** (Psalm 119:113; Psalm 119:127)

**Wisdom** (Proverbs 4:6)

God wants us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; to love others as we love ourselves; and to love exceedingly as Christ loved us and laid down His life for us. Through the Holy Ghost, we should love in sincerity and without hypocrisy.

Godly love will cause positive spiritual changes in our homes, churches, schools and communities. Let's have prophecy. Let's have tongues. Let's have knowledge. With all of these, let's have love. We should want to learn about and grow in God's love until we are made perfect in love. I am not perfect yet -- are you? I'm going to keep working toward perfection in love.

I thank God for His everlasting love for us all!

By Malvia Bailey

# Everyday Benefits

*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.* Psalms 68:19

Blessings we take for granted are often forgotten. Yet everyday God “loads us with benefits.” This morning think of some common things you may have taken for granted, and thank God for them!

- Lungs that work well and steadily – ten to fifteen times each minute
- Bones that protect vital organs and muscles to hold bones in their place
- Immune system to fight disease and keep you healthy
- Heart beating tirelessly to pump nine pints of blood through a 60,000 mile network of vessels
- Body temperature that remains constant
- Five senses: eyes to see the dawn, ears to hear a loved one’s voice, nose to smell the early dew, touch to enjoy a hug, taste to savor a hearty breakfast
- Nerve cells with a network of synapses that send messages to other parts of the body
- Digestive system to transport nourishment to cells throughout the body
- Strength and will to get out of bed in the morning
- Shelter for rest and living
- Work to occupy the mind
- Family for love and support
- Friends and colleagues to share words of encouragement and concern
- God through His son, Jesus Christ, for a comforting intimate relationship
- Seasons that change to remind us of the different times in our lives
- Days filled with unique beauty – radiant sunrises, white clouds stretched across blue sky, gold and pink sunsets
- Earth that rotates creating day and night
- Time for quiet reflection and grateful remembrances
- Laughter and the gift of finding humor in mistakes

You could go on with this list indefinitely because God’s benefits are endless. But, for us the difficulty with never ending benefits is we tend to forget about them. Just as we rarely stop to contemplate the convenient abundance of air surrounding us, we forget the daily life-sustaining and life-enhancing benefits God supplies. In Psalm 103:2, David reminds himself to “[b]less the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” This important “note to self” encourages us when we face life’s daily challenges.

Remembering God’s many blessings is the cure for despair. When we reflect on God’s attention to the smallest details in our lives, it gives us comfort and consolation that He can handle life’s crises. He carries our burdens. He sent His son to die for our sins. He promises to be with us always. Indeed, God’s daily benefits are reason to live a life of perpetual praise.

By Mamie Burgess

## It's All Good

I keep praying and talking to God about it. Sometime the feelings of despair are so deep, but even in the silence I know God is working on a master plan. When darkness seems to surround me like an angry mob I remember God is still the mighty warrior who drowned Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. I also remember this same God will never leave me alone – especially in distressing times.

As a child I experienced many troubling situations that I wish could have been resolved in other ways. Just as Joseph in the Bible probably wished at some point his brothers had not hated him enough to plot his death and sell him into slavery. After God's plan to save Israel from a famine unfolded, Joseph acknowledged to his brother that the evil they intended was meant to accomplish God's good works. Knowing this Bible history, I accept the trials my limited mind cannot understand as part of God's good works. Now I believe in my heart that everything that happened to me will ultimately serve God's purpose. After all, God knows all and controls all at all times.

God can use trials and tribulations to strengthen our faith. Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth. When the disciples questioned whose sin was responsible for the blind man's misfortune, Jesus responded that the man's hardship was solely to allow God's work to be seen through him. (John 9:1-3.) The many Bible stories of healing and deliverance are evidence of God's power to turn a bad situation into a blessing. Personal testimonies also remind us that nothing happened by chance. The very tribulations I think may destroy me are the ones that generally put me in a position to bless others.

Through studying and meditating on the Word, I see myself as a vessel, or container, for God's use. He decided what to pour into me and when and where to pour out my content. He knows the hard time and the good times that make me who I am. I rely on Him to turn my trials into triumphs.

I keep talking to the God about my troubles, and He keeps reminding me that I am blessed. God reminds me of how Moses told Aaron to bless the Israelites:

*“The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*  
Numbers 6:24-26.

I claim this blessing for Israel as my own. When going through trials or reflecting on past hurts, I stand on the Word. I remember that because I am God's vessel, he will work all things for my good. You can claim the blessings of Israel too. Through faith in Jesus, you and I are the spiritual Israel, and no matter what happens God's grace will turn things in our favor.

May God bless and keep you in His tender mercies.

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*Stephanie Rhodes Nance has been a member of the Daughters of Zion Women's Ministry for over two years, and she attends New Providence Baptist Church. She was born in the south and currently lives in San Francisco with her husband. She accepted Jesus as her savior at age seven during an abusive childhood where children were to be seen and not heard. She is grateful for her faith in God, which keeps her strong. She is on a mission for Christ.*

## Moving Forward

*“And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle.” 1 Samuel 3:11*

Face it we all experience times when our life feels like we are on a one track train going in a small circle. The scenery outside the window does not change. We routinely see the same trees, billboards, buildings and the same people behaving in the same manner. Familiarity may be comforting, but sameness may lead us to question whether we are moving ahead. Thankfully, those in Christ can be sure that God has many exciting ways to keep us moving forward.

Sometimes God moves us ahead with a jolt. I recall a very difficult time in my relationship with my husband. I spent a lot of time at work, at school, at church and out-and-about. I took my relationship for granted. At the same time, I wanted a strong and satisfying marriage. The tension in my relationship reached the breaking point. My husband left. While dealing with a painful separation my husband became critically ill. At one point he was close to death and so were chances that we would ever be together again. Just when everything seemed to be falling apart, God put us back together the way He wanted. Through the adversity we moved ahead several giant leaps toward a strong marriage.

Building the momentum in my relationship made me look at how my actions jeopardized my relationship. In the book of 1 Samuel, Israel had lost its momentum under poor spiritual leaders. God spoke to an altar named Samuel in the middle of the night. He issued a warning that He would do something shocking to move Israel’s spiritual leadership forward. (1 Samuel 3:11.) Eli had allowed his greedy, corrupt and immoral sons to abuse the office of the priesthood. They dishonored the sacrifices and offerings given to God. Instead of correcting their behavior, Eli did nothing. God told Samuel that He would do something unexpected to Eli’s household. To his credit, Eli acknowledged God’s sovereign power to do what is right. (1 Samuel 3:17.) Ultimately, Eli and his sons suffered horrible deaths, which created a vacancy in the priesthood. Samuel filled that vacancy and ushered in the age of the great Israel dynasties.

So, we may feel stuck, but giving our life to Christ means God takes charge of our journey. (Jeremiah 29:11.) He has plans for us that may be shocking but will lead us just where He intends for us to be. We must believe that God will keep His promise to give us an abundant life. (John 10:10.) We can feel secure that our personal growth and development comes with every trial. (1 Peter 1:7.) Most importantly, we can trust God to use every situation to move us ahead. (Romans 8:28.)

Happy New Year and Have A Blessed Journey!

Janie White

# A Study of the Holy Spirit

## "THE DIETY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"

A close study of scripture reveals three ages or dispensations, in which one Person of the Godhead is prominent. In the Old Testament it is God the Father, working **for us**. In the gospels it is God the Son, working **with us**. In the Acts and the Epistles it is God the Holy Spirit working **in us**. There is a progression in the reconciliation of man back to God, which only God himself could accomplish. The Holy Spirit is the last step in the process of reconciliation. Why, because he was active in/at the first step ([Gen. 1:1-2; 2:7](#)).

It is difficult to define *personality* when used of the Divine Being. God cannot be measured by human standards. God was not made in the image of man, but man in the image of God. In other words God is not a deified man. Only God has a perfect personality. Yet, when one possesses the attributes, properties and qualities of God (Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence), then divine personality may be unquestionably predicated to such a being. Does the Holy Spirit possess such properties? Let us see.

First Omnipotence, only God can do all things and is all powerful ([Rev.19:6](#)). Christ himself cast out demons by the power of the Spirit of God ([Matt. 12:28](#)). The creative power of God (Man can make, only God can create) is attributed to the Holy Spirit ([Ps. 33:6; 104:30](#)) – created man ([Job. 33:4](#)). Joseph was informed that Mary’s child would be conceived by the Holy Spirit ([Matt. 1:18-20](#)).

Second Omniscience, all that pertains to God and is revealed to us is done so by the Holy Spirit ([1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:6-12](#)). Only God can know the end from the beginning or possess the knowledge of something before it happens. That the Holy Spirit has this foreknowledge is seen in Peter’s statement concerning Judas in [Acts 1:16](#) and Paul’s statement in [1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1](#).

Third Omnipresence, the ability to be everywhere at the same time is an attribute that only God has (Note: Satan does not have any of God’s attributes) and God alone. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit has this attribute. First and foremost to prove this, the Holy Spirit is in all believers everywhere at the same time. But, it is David and Paul that states it so clearly in [Psalm 139:7-10](#); and [Hebrews 9:14](#).

These attributes which are so conspicuous to God alone leaves no doubt in my mind that the Holy Spirit is God. Further evidence of the equality and sameness of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit can be found in the name ‘Holy Spirit’. The description “Holy” signifies the absolute separateness and distinction of the Holy Spirit from all other spirits (and there are others) from all that is creaturely and worldly. “Holy” is thus essentially the equivalent of that which is divine, for only God is Holy, thus identifying the Holy Spirit as God. Finally, God has revealed Himself as Father and Creator, as Son and Savior, and as Holy Spirit and Comforter. As Paul told Timothy in [1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:16](#) “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

God’s Blessing  
Pastor M. Gilmore

# A Study of the Holy Spirit

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**By: Pastor Michael Gilmore**

The Scriptures do not stop to prove the Spirit's reality, but plainly state the fact. Yet, often time we are guilty, either from ignorance or thoughtlessness, of applying the neuter pronoun "It" to the Holy Spirit. We say "It" as if the Holy Spirit is some sort of divine dynamic energy, impregnated with spiritual or supernatural life or power, which passes through the human nervous system animating and controlling it at specific time in worship.

It seems strange that it should be necessary to discuss this subject at all. Indeed, in the light of the last discourse of the Master ([John 14-16](#)), it seems superfluous, if not really insulting. During all the ages of the Christian era, however, it has been necessary to emphasize the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Some may ask why it is necessary to study the personality of the Holy Spirit. Or, can we say accurately that the Holy Spirit has a personality. As Contrasted with the Other Persons of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit Seems Impersonal. The visible creation makes the personality of God the Father somewhat easy to conceive; the incarnation makes it almost, if not altogether, impossible to disbelieve in the personality of Jesus Christ; but the acts and workings of the Holy Spirit are so seemly secret and mystical, that we are prone to think of Him as an energy, a power, a manifestation or influence of the Divine nature, an agent rather than a Person.

Because of the names given to the Holy Spirit; *breath, wind, power*. And the symbols used in speaking of the Spirit; *oil, fire, water*, etc. ([John 3:5-8](#); [Acts 2:1-4](#); [John 20:22](#); [1 John 2:20](#)). It is not strange that in view of all this some students of the Scriptures may have been led to believe, erroneously of course, that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal influence emanating from God the Father.

Yet, the Holy Spirit is an essential part and player of Divine Revelation and Illumination. Seeing that the Bible is divinely inspired (2 Tim 3:16), the Holy Spirit is its author. The Holy Spirit is the direct agent between heaven and earth in this gospel age. The Holy Spirit has been given the sacred task of applying redemption to believing sinners, convicting us of our sin, regenerating, sanctifying, teaching, guiding and inspiring us. We are, or should be, totally dependent upon Him for all that concerns our life in Christ here on earth.

The Holy Spirit is the administrator of the Church's affairs. The book of Acts which deals with the internal operations and external obligations of the Church strongly emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit in the first century Church. If churches today were more controlled by the Holy Spirit as in apostolic days, I believe their life, work, communities which they are in, and the individuals which are in them would be entirely revolutionized. But, imperfect views of the authority and person of the Holy Spirit and our unwillingness to surrender to that authority and person, have lead to spiritual

dryness, low levels of Christian life, formalism in worship, failure to fulfill the mission, and lack of discipline in the Church.

The importance of the personality of the Spirit, and of our being assured of this fact is forcibly set forth by Dr. R. A. Torrey he says: "If the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person and we know it not, we are robbing a Divine Being of the love and adoration which are His due. It is of the highest practical importance whether the Holy Spirit is a power that we, in our ignorance and weakness, are somehow to get hold of and use, or whether the Holy Spirit is a personal Being . . . . who is to get hold of us and use us. It is of the highest experimental importance. . . . Many can testify to the blessing that came into their lives when they came to know the Holy Spirit, not merely as a gracious influence . . . . but as an ever-present, comforter, loving friend and helper."

We will continue our study of **THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** next month. I pray that this feeble attempt is a help to you.

God's Blessings!

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Reverend Michael Gilmore has been the Pastor of New Providence Baptist Church in San Francisco since 1999. He and his lovely wife of over twenty years, LaTonya lives in the East Bay with their two sons, Zachary and Isaiah. Pastor Gilmore summarizes his ministry with his favorite passages of scripture 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2: 1-2, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

To learn more about Pastor Gilmore's life and accomplishments, please visit [www.newprovidencesf.org](http://www.newprovidencesf.org)



## The Need for Unity in the Church

The Holy Scripture is adequately stocked with passages instructing us on how and commanding us to, have unity within “THE CHURCH”. When I speak of “THE CHURCH” I am speaking of the Body of Christ (the organism), when I speak of the church I am talking about the organized body of believers (the local church). Yet, both are commanded to be in unity, because one, the local church is to be a direct reflection of the other, THE CHURCH. However can we, without reservation honestly say that the organization is a physical manifestation and/or gives evidence of the organism? I sadly must say that we cannot.

There is sorrowfully an ever growing distinction and dissimilarity between the two. And, I am suggesting that because of this, the latter (the organization) has lost its influence, potency and credibility in our local communities, and this world as a whole, steaming from our lack of UNITY.

To understand the subject of UNITY clearly one needs to comprehend the biblical meaning of the word UNITY. The Hebrew word for UNITY is *yāḥad* in its verb form and *yaḥad* which is the noun derived from *yāḥad*. The word means "together; alike; all at once; all together." *Yaḥad* appears about 46 times and in all periods of biblical Hebrew. Used as an adverb, the word emphasizes a plurality in unity. In some contexts the connotation is on community in action. Goliath challenged the Israelites, saying: "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together" (1 Sam. 17:10). In other places it, too, is synonymous with the word *kullām*, which means "altogether." The Greek is *henotēs* it is a rare noun signifying the "unity" of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3), and the "unity" of the faith (Eph. 4:13). In both contexts, such a unity, embracing the peace and knowledge of God, is affirmed as a goal to which all believers should aspire within the community of God's people. In its adjectival form the meaning is "harmonious", "being of one mind." It is found in 1 Pet. 3:8 as an exhortation: "Live in unity (i.e., be at peace) with one another.

If we look at these word in the original languages, four concepts jump out at us; 1) together, 2) all at once, 3) being of one mind, faith and spirit and 4) community in harmonious action. In his garden prayer (John 17) Jesus prayed for three things: Himself, His Disciples, and Future Believers. If you examine the 20<sup>th</sup> thru 26<sup>th</sup> verse of that text Jesus' first request is that we be in UNITY just as He and the Father are. To me this statement specifies that the organization needs to reflect the organism in every aspect. Those characteristics' are unity in God's Will as expressed in Ephesians 4:1-6, in God's way as spoken in Philippians 2:2, and in God's word Galatians 3:26-28.

Until we as Christians, not Protestant, Apostolic, or Catholic, black, white...etc, learn that we are sheep in different folds (John10:16), we will always fall short. I pray that we learn not to focus on our differences, but on the common salvation we received through Jesus "The" Christ. Putting aside past and present hurts and pains to do the will of Him that sent us.

Pastor Michael Gilmore

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# A Study of the Holy Spirit

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT-2

The term personality is defined as the quality or fact that defines a particular person having habitual patterns and qualities of behavior as expressed by physical and mental activities and attitudes distinct to that individual. Based upon this definition the Holy Spirit has a personality, there is no one else like Him. The names given to and used to describe the Holy Spirit imply personality. Names such as: *The Comforter*: [John 14:16](#); [16:7](#). "Comforter" means one who is called to your side—as a client calls a lawyer. That this name cannot be used of any abstract, impersonal influence is clear from the fact that in [1 John 2:1](#) the same word is used of Christ. (See [Rom. 8:26](#)). Again in [John 14:16](#) the Holy Spirit, as the Paraclete, is to take the place of a person—Christ Himself, and to personally guide the disciples just as Jesus had been doing. No one but a person can take the place of a person.

Christ, in speaking of the Spirit as the Comforter, uses the masculine definite article, and thus, by His choice of gender, teaches the personality of the Holy Spirit. There can be no parity between a person and an influence or energy. The Holy Spirit is represented as searching the deepest and profoundest truths of God, and possessing knowledge of His counsels sufficiently to understand His purposes ([1 Cor. 2:10, 11](#)). Could a mere influence do this? The Spirit is said to have a *mind*, and that implies thought, purpose, determination: [Rom. 8:27](#), cf. [v. 7](#). Mind is an attribute of personality. Personal Acts are ascribed to the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit *speaks*: [Rev. 2:7](#) (cf. [Matt. 17:5](#)—"Hear ye him.") It is the Spirit who speaks through the apostles ([10:20](#)). Speech is an attribute of personality. The Spirit *maketh intercession*: [Rom. 8:26](#) (R. V.), cf. [Heb. 7:25](#); [1 John 2:1, 2](#), where Christ is said to "make intercession.

In [Acts 13:2](#); [16:6, 7](#); [20:28](#) the Holy Spirit is seen *calling* missionaries, *overseeing* the church, and *commanding* the life and practice of the apostles and the whole church. Such acts indicate personality.

The Holy Spirit is Susceptible to Personal Treatment and emotion. He may be *grieved* ([Eph. 4:30](#)); *insulted* ([Heb. 10:29](#)); *lied to* ([Acts 5:3](#)); blasphemed and sinned against ([Matt. 12:31, 32](#)). Indeed, the sin against the Holy Spirit is a much more grievous matter than the sin against the Son of Man. Can such be said of an influence or energy? Can it be said even of any of the sons of men? He can be *vexed* [Isaiah 63:10](#) ; He can be resisted [Acts 7:51](#).

Spiritual gifts are distributed to believers according to the *will* of the Spirit ([1 Cor. 12](#)). Here we find wisdom, prudence and discretion, all of which are distinguishing marks of personality. The Spirit not only bestows spiritual gifts, but bestows them discreetly, according as He thinks best.

With just this information alone (the Bible has so much more) we must realize and act accordingly to the fact that our fellowship with the Holy Spirit is not with a 'something' but with a 'somebody'; not with a force, a energy, or an influence, although the Holy Spirit can do all of that, but with 'Him'.

Once the truth of the Holy Spirit's personality and work are realized, there opens up to us a life of blessedness and power, it has been said a individual is known by the company he keeps, let us reflex that!

We will next study the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

God's Blessings!

## "The Devil Made Me Do It"

*"The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." Genesis 3:13 (KJV)*

The Flip Wilson Variety Show was popular during the early to mid seventies. Geraldine was one of the characters made famous by Mr. Wilson. Whenever Geraldine did something she knew was wrong, she would say, "The Devil made me do it." Soon everyone began using that line to excuse their bad behavior. Though that saying became famous due to Geraldine, laying the blame on the devil did not originate with Mr. Wilson. It began thousands of years ago in the Garden of Eden. Remember Eve blamed the serpent for her act of disobedience (Genesis 3:13). Thousands of years later, some are still unwilling to take responsibility for their actions, and in essence are saying, "The Devil Made Me do it."

**James 1:13-15 (Amplified) reads as follows,** *"Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God; for God is incapable of being tempted by [what is] evil and He Himself tempts no one. But every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire (lust, passions). Then the evil desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully matured, brings forth death."*

God's Word is clear; we are tempted by our own lustful desires. Yes, Satan can and does plant evil thoughts/suggestions into our minds, but he is powerless to make us act upon them. We must take responsibility for our own actions. Placing the blame on something or someone else does not help us to mature. Though sometimes painful, it is important to be honest with ourselves about ourselves.

In the Garden of Eden both Adam and Eve began finger pointing, but God confronted all of them. He confronted Adam first since he knowingly disobeyed God's command. He was given clear instructions that he chose to ignore. Then God confronted Eve for inviting Adam to join in her disobedience. God also confronted the serpent for enticing them. Though they were enticed, the serpent did not make them eat. Therefore, each of them suffered the consequences of their actions.

Since we were all born with a sinful nature, it is necessary for us to receive the new birth in order to overcome our evil tendencies. Even after conversion, we still have to resist the urge to satisfy our lustful appetites. We always will be faced with some form of temptation in this life, but God has placed within us the power to resist. We can be overcomers with the help of the Holy Spirit residing in us.

When faced with temptation, we have a choice: Either we will obey God or we won't. The choice is ours, and God will hold us accountable for the choices we make. James tells us to submit to God, resist the devil and he (devil) will flee. God is just, and would not ask us to do what we are incapable of doing. Therefore, we will not be able to point the finger or place blame on any one else by saying "The Devil made me do it."

Elder Shirley Freeman

## “The Source of My Strength”

I have been holding on to the book of Philippians, all four chapters, for over a year. The book has been a source of strength and encouragement for me and I would like to share it with you.

As Christians we forget that we are connected to this unlimited power source -- Jesus the Christ. Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (KJV.) That is my proclamation, “I can,” not because I am strong, but because I am holding on to Jesus the source of my strength.

So when my account is in the negative, and when I am afraid or alone, I can. On the days when every thing that can go wrong, goes wrong and I feel as if two concrete blocks are tied to my legs, I can. When all I want to do is cover my head and stay in bed, I can. I turn to Paul’s book Philippians where he is constantly saying “Rejoice in the Lord.” (Philippians 2:16, 3:1, 3:3, 4:4 and 4:10.)

In my weakness I ask, “How can I rejoice when my world is falling apart around me?” You see, that liar, the devil, told me that I need to always be in control. That is the lie. It is the lie we try to live and we fail at because we are leaning on our own strength. Depending on our own strength causes uncertainty and fear. If we allow ourselves to live in a state of constant fear and heightened worry we have already lost the battle as a Christian. But, when we rejoice in the Lord in spite of our situations, we throw the devil a curve ball.

As Christians we have power. Our power comes through our faith. Our faith allows us to believe, “Yes! I can do all things through Christ which is my strength.” I have strength that allows me to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14.) JESUS’ name is above all names and at His name every knee should bow. (Philippians 2:10.) I have learned to say Paul’s words, “For me to live is Christ. . . .” (Philippians 1:21.) I know that I would have lost my mind, or be dead by now, if I was not leaning and depending on the strength of Jesus. I could not have made it this far without Jesus.

We must let go of all the stuff in our lives that we think we are controlling -- but really the stuff is controlling us. We have to get out from under the covers and into the light. We must get up, dust ourselves off, and press forward believing that we can do all things through CHRIST our strength. I can. You can. We can. God Bless You.

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Carmen is a License Vocational Nurse who enjoys cooking and baking. She grew up in a large family and considers herself the ultimate hostess. Carmen has been a member of New Providence Baptist Church. for over twenty years and is also an active member of the Daughters of Zion.

Although she has learned much from others, her mother, Mother Carmel Rutherford is her greatest mentor. She has witnessed her mother's great faith, love for God and God's people throughout her life. She thanks God for such a wonderful expression of His love.

## “Staying Focused”

It has been another amazing year for many of us. It's not that we haven't had challenges, obstacles or set-backs; it's that we didn't allow those challenges, obstacles and set-backs to distract or deter us from our purpose. Les Brown, an international motivational speaker, is quoted as saying, *“You are the only real obstacle in your path to a fulfilling life.”*

I'm sure you've heard it said that nothing worthwhile comes easily. Indeed, it takes commitment and a willingness to work hard toward a particular goal or purpose. The temptation to give up prematurely usually occurs right before one approaches the door of success. How committed are you to reaching your goals? That commitment, or lack thereof, will determine your success.

Year after year, many of us have started the New Year with great vigor, determined to make positive changes in our lives. Unfortunately, for many, that passion and commitment is short lived. It's important to remain focused and not allow adverse circumstances to impede our progress. The greatest failure we will ever face is giving up on our dreams.

Take an inventory of your life and see if there have been any goals or dreams that have not been realized, because you gave up too soon and didn't remain focused. It's not too late to attain your dreams. The great author and theologian, C.S. Lewis said, *“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”* Moses was 80 years old when God sent him to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of bondage. Abraham was 100 years old when God fulfilled his promise of a son with Sarah. At 85 years old Caleb felt strong enough to go into battle to inherit the land that was promised to him by God (Joshua 14).

What is hindering you from entering your promise land? If God has given you a dream, vision or goal to attain, don't allow anything or anyone to hinder you. Staying focused and placing your faith and trust in God while you wait is vital. God's timing is always perfect. He is not concerned with our age, ability, education or any other thing we think is necessary to become successful. Yes, we need to be prepared, but always remember that it is God who enables us to reach our goals and attain success.

Let's determine to remain focused as we begin this New Year. Make every effort to reach the goals you've set for yourself and determine that failure is not an option. We can do all things through Christ, who gives us strength. Remember the words of C.S. Lewis, *“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream”* and you will excel in 2012.

Happy New Year from the Daughters of Zion Women's Ministries!

Elder Shirley Freeman  
Founder/President

## When God Speaks

The Bible has countless examples of the ways God speaks to His people. Some messages from God came through angels. Some came through visions or dreams. At times God Himself spoke directly to people. If we know that God is the same yesterday, today and forevermore (*Hebrews 13:8*), then why do we question whether God still speaks?

Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that God never disappoints those who diligently seek Him. Then perhaps the question is not whether God is speaking, but whether we are seeking Him. Why do we feel like God doesn't speak to us concerning our needs? It is a fact that nothing ever surprises God or catches Him off-guard. God knows our needs, and He speaks to us about them. But, there is one important thing that we can do to hear from God. We can increase our sensitivity to the movement and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God is still speaking to His people and He is just as creative with His methods today as He was with our forefathers. Have you ever gone to church on a Sunday morning and discovered the sermon was about what you and a friend were just discussing on Saturday night? Have you ever driven past a billboard that seemed to speak specifically to an issue with which you were dealing? Coincidence? No. God was speaking.

Isaiah 55:6 encourages us to seek the Lord while he may be found. To seek means to pursue aggressively. That means we need to intently look for God to speak in the middle of our circumstances. God has given us five ways in which to seek Him: prayer; meditation; fasting; studying His Word; and worship. God is not limited to speaking through our pastors on Sunday mornings. To the contrary, He speaks through songs, billboards, signs in stores, books, tapes, children, other believers, and sometimes, even unbelievers.

It is not the case that God is not speaking, but that we are not tuned in when He does speak. God wants to walk with us and talk with us daily. He wants to be an intricate part of all that we do. He wants our lives to reflect the trust we place in His daily guidance. God offers us many opportunities to hear from Him and to have our steps ordered according to His will.

What are you seeking God for today? Peace? Joy? Healing? Direction? A financial breakthrough? Remember there is nothing too hard for God. Through prayer, meditation, fasting, study and worship, God gives us opportunities to draw closer to Him. When we get closer to God, we become more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. When we tune into the Holy Spirit we hear God speak. Challenge yourself today to spend more time seeking God. He is faithful and He will speak in awesome and amazing ways to you!



## What Should Come First?

Have you ever made a decision to clean a space in a given time? Maybe you have set out to lose weight by a certain date. Perhaps you have told yourself that this year you will be more active in your church or even start your dream ministry. Maybe you have set your mind on a goal like memorizing scriptures or committing to study the Word of God on a regular basis. We make New Year's resolutions, and some we keep but others will be forgotten before the year end.

When I have a task to do I get ready in many ways. I may make a list, gather all the necessary tools needed, and read all I can about the subject. With all the resources in place, I set a reasonable time schedule for getting the job done. We all approach things differently, yet all the same we want to get the task done.

We who know God, and have accepted His Son Jesus as our Lord and Savior, have an advantage when it comes to getting things done. Our faith in Jesus helps us with every task. As it says in Philippians 4:13, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*". If this is true, then why are we just as likely to give up on our dreams or tasks as anyone else? Why is it we don't stick with the task until completion?

It is not enough to get ready or to just want to do something. It takes more than that. Philippians 4:13 reminds us there is an order in pursuing everything. Sometimes we put the cart before the horse. We concentrate on the "*do all things*" part, and we forget the "*through Christ*" part. To succeed we must ask, "How is my relationship with Christ?" "Do I know what He wants for me?" "Will what I am doing strengthen me as an ambassadors of Christ, strengthen me to do His will, and make me more Christ like?"

To answer these questions we must pursue Christ. We must fall in love with Him. Luke 12:31 says, "*But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all thee things shall be added unto you.*" For success we must first spend time with Christ, learn about Him, cultivate a relationship with God, and do what pleases Him. All of the power we need comes from God through Christ. In John 15:5, we see the importance of being connected to the true vine, our source of power that only flows continuously when we are connected to Him.

The first step is to fall in love with God and His word. Taking this step connects us to the power source and strengthens us to achieve the smallest task and the greatest dream. Take the first step -- get connected!

Yvonne Scott



Yvonne is a retired school teacher and native of San Francisco. She is the widow of Reverend Willie Scott, the mother of two (Lamont and Nicole), and grandmother of three (Brianna, Jasmine and Simone). She enjoys sewing and quilt making since her retirement in 2001.

The Daughters of Zion Women's Ministries has played an important role in shaping Yvonne's Christian life for the past thirteen years. She has served for many years as the Event Coordinator, and more recently, as the Coordinator of The Widow's Mite. Yvonne is also a member of San Francisco Neighborhood Church. She has a gift of helps and is always willing to utilize that gift whenever the need arises.