



PART 3 - B
WALKING IN THE SPIRIT WITH HIS POWER

“It is exciting to realize that the same Spirit that radically changed Paul, Peter and John now lives inside you to transform you by freeing you from yourself!”

God's Call to Obedience

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT WITH HIS POWER

B

“ But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”
JOHN 16:7 NASB

- I. The Holy Spirit is God. (2 Cor. 3:17,18)
 - A. He is a person.
 - B. He is the Spirit of Christ, indwelling you, if you are a true believer. (1 John 4:13; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:10; Eph. 3:17)
 - C. He is “the Paraclete,” the Greek word for one who comes alongside to help or to strengthen. (John 16:7)

“ HE IS ‘THE PARACLETE’...A RICH WORD FOR WHICH THERE IS NO ADEQUATE ENGLISH TRANSLATION, SINCE IT MEANS BY TURNS COMFORTER (IN THE SENSE OF STRENGTHENER), COUNSELOR, HELPER, SUPPORTER, ADVISER, ADVOCATE, ALLY, SENIOR FRIEND --AND ONLY A PERSON COULD FULFILL SUCH ROLES.”¹
J. I. PACKER

- D. He is a **gift** given to all true believers. (Acts 2:38b; 10:45)
- II. He has many wonderful characteristics.
 - A. He is a spirit.
 1. He has no form and is not made up of matter.
 2. He is able to penetrate wherever and whomever He chooses.
 - a. He has a freedom of movement that is not limited by material or spatial considerations, as human beings are. (John 3:8; Ps. 139:7-12)
 - b. He can penetrate the body, the mind, the personality and the soul.

“MATTER IS ONE MODE OF BEING; SPIRIT IS ANOTHER MODE OF BEING AS AUTHENTIC AS MATTER...THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A BEING DWELLING IN ANOTHER MODE OF EXISTENCE. HE HAS NOT WEIGHT, NOR MEASURE, NOR SIZE, NOR ANY COLOR, NOR EXTENSION IN SPACE, BUT NEVERTHELESS EXISTS AS SURELY AS YOU EXIST.”²

A. W. TOZER

- B. He is holy; that is why He bears the name “Holy” Spirit. He is exactly like Jesus in His character and attributes, but at times He performs a different role than Jesus does.
- C. He is eternal, having no beginning and no end. (Heb. 9:14)
- D. He **is** truth. (John 16:13; 1 John 5:6b)
- E. He manifests the characteristics of a person.
 - 1. He possesses will, knowledge, feeling and intellect.
 - 2. He is able to love, to comfort, to grieve, to teach, to help, to guide and to lead.
 - 3. He sees, hears, speaks, counsels, warns, commands and convicts of sin.
 - 4. He initiates and responds in relationship to the Father’s chosen people.
- III. He is the *agent* of conversion.
 - A. He gave you a “new life” by regenerating your soul. (Titus 3:5)

“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.”

JOHN 6:63A

- B. God, working through Him, grants you repentance. (2 Cor. 7:9,10; Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25)
- C. You were baptized with the Holy Spirit at the time of your conversion, which means you are baptized
 - 1. into Christ, into His very being, so you live *in* Him. (Acts 17:28; Gal. 2:20; 3:27)
 - 2. into His Body, the Church. (1 Cor. 12:13)

“ John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”
ACTS 11:16B

- D. The Spirit comes to *permanently* reside inside you at the point of your conversion. (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:14)
1. Your body is the “temple” or sanctuary of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He goes wherever you go. (Ps. 139:7-12)
 2. You are assured of God’s continual presence *with* you and *within* you.
 3. You belong totally and completely to Jesus, who purchased you out of the slave market of sin with the price of His blood and sealed you with His Spirit. Therefore, you no longer exist for yourself and for your own purposes.

“ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”
1 COR. 6:19,20A

- E. God gave you a completely new nature and put to death the old nature.
1. You now possess the nature of Christ Himself!
 2. Christ residing in you gives you the power and ability to overcome sin.
- F. The Holy Spirit indwelling you is your “seal” or God’s pledge or guarantee of your salvation and redemption. (2 Cor. 1:21,22; 5:5b; Eph. 1:13,14; 4:30b)
1. Because you possess the Spirit, you are assured of eternal life. (Rom. 8:16)
 2. Because you cannot lose your salvation, the Holy Spirit will always be *with* you and *in* you. (John 10:28,29; Heb. 13:5b)

“ We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”
1 JOHN 4:13

- IV. His purpose is to glorify Christ, rather than bringing glory to Himself. (John 16:14a)
- A. To bring continual revelation of Christ to believers (John 16:13-15)

B. To establish and sustain believers in a life-long communion with Christ and with the Father

1. through worship (Phil. 3:3; Rom. 12:1)
2. through prayer (Eph. 6:18)
3. through experiencing His life within you (Gal. 2:20)

“...THE SPIRIT MAKES KNOWN THE PERSONAL PRESENCE IN AND WITH THE CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH OF THE RISEN, REIGNING SAVIOUR, THE JESUS OF HISTORY, WHO IS THE CHRIST OF FAITH. SCRIPTURE SHOWS...THAT SINCE THE PENTECOST OF ACTS 2 THIS, ESSENTIALLY, IS WHAT THE SPIRIT IS DOING ALL THE TIME AS HE EMPOWERS, ENABLES, PURGES, AND LEADS GENERATION AFTER GENERATION OF SINNERS TO FACE THE REALITY OF GOD. AND HE DOES IT IN ORDER THAT CHRIST MAY BE KNOWN, LOVED, TRUSTED, HONORED AND PRAISED, WHICH IS THE SPIRIT’S AIM AND PURPOSE THROUGHOUT AS IT IS THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF GOD THE FATHER, TOO.”³

J. I. PACKER

V. The Holy Spirit is your teacher and your personal counselor.

“**But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**”

JOHN 14:26

- A. The Spirit has the God-given title, “the Counselor” or “the Helper.”
- B. His role is to teach you all things.

“**But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.**”

JOHN 16:13-15

VI. His power sanctifies you and makes you holy. (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 15:16b)
Read Romans, chapter 8.

- A. He convicts you of sin and of truth. (John 16:8; 1 Thess. 1:5)

- B. He uses the Scriptures as His “sword,” with which He penetrates your heart with conviction and with truth. (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12)
- C. He works *in* you to will and to do what pleases Him. He promises to continue His good work in you. (Phil. 2:13; 1:6)
- D. His indwelling power gives you the *ability* and *strength* to put off sinful attitudes and actions and to replace them with godly ones. (Rom. 8:2-4)

“**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you...**”

ACTS 1:8

Oswald Chambers explains this verse in *My Utmost for His Highest* by saying that the power is not a gift of the Holy Spirit but, “*the power is the Holy Spirit, not something that He gives us.*”⁴

1. The true believer possesses the indwelling power of the Spirit, who produces growth in holiness. (Rom. 8:9-14; Phil. 2:13)
2. The English word “dynamite” is derived from the Greek word most often used for “power” in the Bible, which is *dunamis*.
 - a. The *same power* which raised Jesus from the dead now lives within you, so you can truly say, “Christ’s resurrection power indwells me!” (Rom. 8:11)
 - b. The Spirit **is** the power that brings life from death and **is** the same power that will change you, just as He changed so many lives in Scripture.
3. This power enables you to
 - a. be set free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17)
 - b. put to death the deeds of the body. (Rom. 8:13)
 - c. be strengthened in your weakness. (2 Cor. 12:9,10)
 - d. do whatever Christ commands. (Phil. 4:13)
 - e. abound in hope. (Rom. 15:13)
 - f. be equipped to serve Him and advance His Kingdom in ways that go far beyond your natural talents and abilities. (Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:18,19; 2 Cor. 3:5,6)

“ Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”
EPH. 3:20,21 NASB

The Holy Spirit is the *agent* that radically transformed the saints whose lives are recorded in the Holy Bible. Paul was transformed from a persecutor of Christians into the first missionary to reach the Gentiles. His change was so radical that he *welcomed* suffering in order to see the gospel spread into new regions. Peter was transformed from a coward who denied Christ into a mighty preacher who faced imprisonment and death in furthering the kingdom. John, who was known as the “son of thunder,” a rough fisherman, was transformed by the Spirit into the gentle-spirited apostle of love.

The life-changing power of the Holy Spirit has penetrated the souls of men and women through countless generations into our present day. It is exciting to realize that the same Spirit that radically changed Paul, Peter and John now lives inside you to transform you by freeing you from yourself!!

“ ...THE EMPOWERING WORK IS ALWAYS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, EVEN WHEN CHRIST ONLY IS NAMED AS ITS SOURCE, FOR CHRIST IS THE SPIRIT GIVER (JOHN 1:33; 20:22; ACTS 2:33). SO POWER FROM CHRIST THROUGH THE SPIRIT IS A THEME THAT SHOULD ALWAYS BE GIVEN PROMINENCE WHENEVER AND WHEREVER CHRISTIANITY IS TAUGHT.”⁵
 J. I. PACKER

Do not confuse your ability to “perform” in the flesh with being empowered by the Holy Spirit to obey, lest you be found guilty of “**...having a form of godliness but denying its power.**” (2 Tim. 3:5a) There are commandments you can obey in the flesh, but if you possess the Spirit, you will be willing to submit to the difficult truths that require denying yourself, stepping into the unknown, taking risks of obedience, giving up your controlling strategies, and going against your feelings and logic. Your decision to obey, followed by the first steps of obedience, unleashes the power of the Spirit to carry you through the acts of obedience. You *experience* God at work in and through you. Your faith in Him builds!! God makes it very clear that He has provided the Spirit to lead you in the way of righteousness and to guide you into all truth. Will you choose to follow His guidance or will you rebel and do as you please, placing trust in yourself and in Satan’s lies? (Rom. 8:14; John 16:13)

“ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”
EPH. 5:18

VII. You are *commanded* to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

A. There is no commandment to be *regenerated* by or *baptized* in the Spirit since this

is totally the work of God, who determines when this one-time event will take place.

- B. The responsibility to be *filled* by the Spirit, however, is placed primarily in the believer's hands.
1. There may be *many* fillings throughout the lifetime of a believer.
 2. The filling of the Spirit is usually dependent upon your choices to believe truth and to act on it in obedience.
 3. The filling of the Spirit is not dependent upon your circumstances. How wonderful that you can be filled with the Spirit in the midst of grave danger and great trials!
 - a. You may be filled with the Spirit in happy situations.
 - b. You may be filled with the Spirit in difficult, painful circumstances.

Stephen, the first Christian to be martyred is described as, "full of the Holy Spirit" while a vicious mob spewed out their anger and stoned him. He was not fearful nor was he angry at his God, his murderers or his circumstances. Instead, his last words were, "**Lord, do not hold this sin against them.**" (Acts 7:60b) In appalling circumstances leading to his death, Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit which gave him the grace to experience the glory of God and to manifest love for his enemies. (Acts 7:54-60)

VIII. *You* are the major determining factor as to whether you are filled or not.

- A. You will *not* be filled with the Holy Spirit if you are filled with self, which includes:
1. self-will, self-trust, self-protection, selfish goals and motives, self-pity, self-sufficiency, self-centeredness, self-righteousness, selfish demands to control. (Luke 9:23)
 2. self-idolatry or self-worship, which fosters the demand for other idols and the creation of false identities to feed and to satisfy yourself. (1 Cor. 10:14)

“ A MAN IN EVERY SIN AIMS TO SET UP HIS OWN WILL AS HIS RULE,
AND HIS OWN GLORY AT THE END OF HIS ACTIONS.”⁶
STEPHEN CHARNOCK, A PURITAN

3. self-love that seeks to live free of God's rule and authority; living for yourself by seeking satisfaction apart from God, His will and His way. (2 Cor. 5:15)

Inordinate self-love is the first inlet to all iniquity. As grace is a rising from self to center on God, so is sin a shrinking from God into the mire of a carnal selfishness...⁷-- Stephen Charnock

B. You must die to self: your rebellious attitudes, lusts, sinful strategies of control and the demand to build yourself up, so the indwelling Spirit is given room to grow within you.

1. The more you are filled with self, the less you will be filled with the Spirit. The more you crucify self, the greater the Spirit's control and dominion will be over you. (Gal. 2:20)

“ He must increase, but I must decrease.”

JOHN 3:30 NASB

2. The Spirit is quenched or His fire put out by the demands of self. You are commanded not to thwart the Spirit's power and His work in your life.

“ Do not put out the Spirit's fire;”

1 THESS. 5:19

If you have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, then your broken life should be *characterized* by being controlled by Him. Expect many opportunities to be and to remain broken so that you will walk in the Spirit. (Ps. 51:17)

IX. You must be willing to deal with sin biblically in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

A. Realize that the conviction of sin is a primary evidence of the Holy Spirit and the Word working within you. (John 16:8; Heb. 4:12)

B. Be willing

1. to be broken of self-will so you are ready to acknowledge your sins. (Ps. 32:1-5)
2. to confess and renounce the hidden things that are shameful to you. (2 Cor. 4:2)
 - a. Remember that through confession God not only bestows forgiveness, He also cleanses and purifies you from *all* unrighteousness, so sin no longer hinders your fellowship with God. You start again with a clean slate. (1 John 1:9; Is. 59:2)
 - b. You may need a witness to your confession in order to be broken and

humbled, to be relieved of guilt, to establish accountability, to break bondages and to allow the Spirit to heal you. (Jas. 5:16)

- C. Realize that you will fail daily to obey God's commands, but
1. you are not to "beat yourself up" or to be angry at yourself over your sin but rather to praise Christ for His redeeming work on the cross on your behalf.
 2. you are to call on the name of the Lord for help because you have come to terms with your inability to obey God in the flesh. (Phil. 4:13; John 15:5)
- D. Examine your motives. Your primary motive should always be *love*. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)
1. Ask yourself, "Is my motive in this situation to love God and to love the person(s) involved?" or "Is my motive selfish?" (Matt. 22:37-39)

“ Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.”

Ps. 119:36

2. Remember, love for God and for others is manifested through obedience to His commands. Jesus concisely stated this fact, "***If you love me, you will obey what I command.***" (John 14:15)
- E. Pray consistently for a hatred for your habitual sins. (Prov. 8:13; Rom. 12:9)
1. Realize that your sin grieves the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:30)
 2. Realize that your stubborn willfulness is evidence that you are ignoring or rejecting the work of the Cross and the power of the Spirit to deal effectively with your sin. Read and meditate on Romans, chapter 8.
 3. Realize that you may be taking the great cost involved to purchase your salvation lightly or for granted. (1 Cor. 6:19,20)

If you are a Christian, sin will not affect your positional relationship with God, which is secure for eternity, but it will separate you from fellowship with Him. The filling of the Spirit creates a close fellowship with the Lord because you are no longer filled with self. If you possess a rebellious and hardened heart toward God and His ways, you will not be filled with the Spirit.

- X. You must establish the *habit* of renewing your mind in order to be filled with the Spirit.
- A. Anchor your thoughts on God's truths: "fill" your mind with thoughts that are founded on biblical truth and are pleasing to the Lord. (Phil. 4:8,9)

1. Choose at all times and in *every* situation to believe God who is completely worthy of your trust. (Ps. 28:7; Is. 26:3,4)
 2. The Puritans correctly taught that every sin could be traced to unbelief. They referred to unbelief as, "...*the great sin, the fountain of sin, the head sin of all your sins...*"
- B. Claim the Holy Spirit's power to force your mind to think God-pleasing thoughts. If your mind is set on the Spirit, you will choose to believe God's perspective on life rather than viewing life from your perspective. (Rom. 8:5-7)
- C. Purpose to "***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...***" (Col. 3:16a)
1. Meditate on it.
 2. Believe it.
 3. Trust it and obey it.
 4. Memorize it.
- “If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”**
COL. 3:1,2 NASB
- D. Quit repeatedly questioning God's way of working in your life; quit demanding to know "why?"
1. Your demands are actually quarreling with God. (Is. 45:9; 29:16)
 2. Your quarreling fosters unrest, arrogance, unbelief, distrust, impatience, self-pity. (Jer. 18:6)
 3. Your repetitive questioning will prevent the filling of His Spirit because you are not submitted to God's will for the situations He has ordained for you.
 - a. You are always assured of general reasons for suffering in Scripture.
 - b. God is not obligated to give you the specifics for your suffering. (Job 40:1-5)
- E. Commit your mind to frequent praising, thanksgiving and rejoicing which may be a precursor to, as well as an outflow of, being filled with the Spirit. (Phil. 4:4)

1. Develop the *habit* of praising and thanking God for things that you consider blessings. Train yourself to *look for* God's blessings daily and to thank Him. (Ps. 92:1,2)
2. Develop the *habit* of sacrificial praise and thanksgiving *for* the trials, difficulties and hardships of life. (Eph. 5:20; Heb. 13:15; Ps. 50:14,23)
3. Realize that thanksgiving and praise are effective disciplines
 - a. to bring you from railing against God's will to an acceptance of it.
 - b. to fight the temptations from Satan to feel sorry for yourself.
4. Forsake self-pitying attitudes, grumbling and complaining. These sinful attitudes are definite signs of being filled with *self*. (Phil. 2:14; Jude 10)
5. Learn to be content in all circumstances. (Phil. 4:11-13)

XI. You must live at peace with others as far as it is possible on your part. (Rom. 12:18)

- A. Forgive those who sin against you or hurt you to clear the barrier that bitterness or suppression places between God and you. (Matt. 6:14)
- B. Seek forgiveness of those you sin against. (Matt. 5:23,24)

XII. The discipline of spending regular and frequent time alone with God (studying, meditating upon His Word and praying) is a key element to being filled. (Ps. 1:1-3)

- A. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you as you pray and read the Bible. (John 14:26; Prov. 2:1-12)
 1. Pray for the revelation and illumination of the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 2:12,13; Ps. 25:8-10,12)
 2. Respond quickly in obedience to God's commands; rely on His promises.
 3. Listen to His overtures and responses.
- B. Talk to God, sharing your thoughts and petitions. (Phil. 4:6,7; 1 Tim. 2:1)
- C. Ask for and obey His direction, instruction, guidance and wisdom; He is the source of all wisdom. (Jas. 1:5-8; 3:17)

D. Learn to “be still” before the Lord; listening, waiting and resting in Him.

There are times when you are to sit quietly at the Lord’s feet and be silent rather than rushing into hasty decisions and impetuous actions. The New American Standard Bible translates Psalms 46:10, “***Cease striving and know that I am God.***” The New International Version translates the same passage, “***Be still, and know that I am God.***” (Ps. 37:7a)

E. Pray frequently, that your mind and heart remain open to receive *His ways* of loving, comforting, strengthening, blessing and sustaining you.

F. Combine prayer with fasting from food, marital sex by mutual agreement or an activity that consumes your time in order

1. to spend extra, concentrated time in prayer. (Matt. 6:16-18; 1 Cor. 7:5)

2. to eliminate distractions so God’s voice can be heard more clearly.

G. Cry out to God when you are despairing, as the Psalmists often did. (Ps. 34:15)

1. Let Him know you can’t carry yourself on your own resources any longer.

a. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted even when you don’t sense His presence. Believe what He says! (Ps. 34:18)

b. David wrote Psalm 40 in such a state.

2. Let Him know you desperately need His help. (Ps. 50:14,15)

3. Let Him know that your self-will is broken that you are ready to listen to and follow Him. There is a principle of God expressed in Isaiah:

“Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him....He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher.”

Is. 30:18-20 NASB

XIII. Train your mind to learn to pray and seek the Holy Spirit’s direction throughout the day. God commands you to do so. (1 Thess. 5:17)

- A. Realize that you were created and chosen by God to be in ongoing communion with Him. He sent His Spirit to you to accomplish this amazing feat! (Eph. 6:18)
 - 1. Realize that you can communicate with Him while doing other things.
 - 2. Turn off your TV or radio at times so you create a quiet atmosphere to visit with God while you are driving, relaxing or doing other things.
- B. Learn to seek *immediate* direction or help from the Holy Spirit
 - 1. when you are faced with temptation. Immediately bring God into your situation! (Eph. 4:27; Jas. 4:7,8)
 - 2. when you don't know what to do or say. (Jas. 1:5)
 - 3. when you are in a stressful situation caused by someone's sin against you.
- C. Become "tuned in" to the Holy Spirit's nudges, impressions and promptings, which will never be contrary to His Word. (Is. 30:21; Is. 42:16)
 - 1. Tune in to the Spirit's "stop lights," which come in the form of hesitation when He is saying, "Don't do that, don't watch or listen to that, don't go there or say that."
 - 2. Tune in to the Spirit's "green lights," when He is prompting you to go forward in faith.
 - 3. Tune in to certain people coming frequently to mind. He often is encouraging you to not only pray for them, but also to call, to write a note or to visit them.
- D. Do not quench the Holy Spirit and His power by ignoring or rebelling against His inner direction or by not seeking His continual help. (1 Thess. 5:19)

XIV. You need to get involved with Kingdom work that challenges you to get out of your comfort zone or your private citadel of selfishness.

- A. God has many commands to take risks of discomfort in order to see His cause advanced.
- B. You must not focus on your inadequacy or inability, but instead on God's promise to make you adequate. (2 Cor. 3:5,6)

Some professing Christians do not experience being filled with the Spirit because they only offer their service in ways they can succeed in the flesh, which really isn't the service God desires because it wasn't accomplished through His power. In their selfishness, they live

spiritually crippled lives with a small view of God. But they choose “the rut” so they can maintain control over their lives and, in so doing, miss the excitement and joy of walking by faith. They personally miss seeing a “Big God” doing wondrous things! So get out of your rut, launch out on faith and watch God work!

XV. Your obedience, especially in difficult and risky areas

- A. Thrusts you into the supernatural arena, which is what “walking in the Spirit” is all about
- B. Produces a growing and a greater faith because you *see* God working in your life
- C. Produces an excitement for God and His Word, which will *not* be experienced staying in your comfort zone, “walking by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7)
- D. Gives the opportunity for the Spirit, **“to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think...” (Eph. 3:30 NASB)**
- E. Brings the realization that some of the attributes comprising His fruit can only be manifested in difficult circumstances (Gal. 5:22,23)

XVI. You must persevere in the “dry times” when God seems far away even though as you examine yourself you are not conscious of sin. (Gal. 6:9)

- A. Ask the Lord to examine your heart to see if there is sin that He can bring to your attention. (Ps. 26:2; 139:23,24; Jer. 12:3a)
- B. Persevere in renewing your mind, praying, studying the Word, believing in and obeying His truths, even in the dry times.
- C. Realize God is *within* you and *with* you even when you are not aware of His presence. (Ps.139:7-10)
- D. Do not demand the fruit, blessing and/or reward for your obedience. Spiritual maturity requires developing the disciplines of perseverance and of waiting on the Lord. Sometimes that even means waiting for the filling of His Spirit.

There are seasons when God may require obedient perseverance without a sense of His presence. David’s prayer in Psalm 13 is an example of his experiencing the silence of God. However, note the concluding verses which record his *choices* to continue to believe the truths of God, to praise Him for His salvation and to remember His goodness. As you read through the Psalms, you will find similar themes. After laying his problems before the Lord, David always turns his focus away from himself and his difficult circumstances to trust and to hope in the Almighty.

E. He will show or reveal Himself in *His time* and in *His way*, as you submit to Him, as you continue to obey. (John 14:21)

XVII. There will be a *continuing* struggle between the flesh and your new nature as long as you are in this earthly body. (Gal. 5:17)

A. The warfare continues because although you now possess the divine nature of Christ, sin will still be manifested in your body.

1. Your old nature is dead, crucified with Christ. (Gal. 2:20)
2. Christ has given you a completely new nature, which is His divine nature that changed the *essence* of who you were.
3. Salvation redeemed your soul, but it did not accomplish the redemption of your flesh, which includes your brain, the home of your mind. Therefore, God requires you to renew your mind. (Rom. 12:2)
4. You will continue to struggle against the flesh throughout your earthly existence. Your flesh will be exterminated at the point of your physical death so you can live free from sin for eternity.
5. You must repeatedly offer your body as a living sacrifice to God, as an instrument of righteousness rather than wickedness. (Rom. 12:1; 8:13,14)
6. Christ's nature in you equips you with power to conquer sin. His dominion has replaced the dominion that Satan and sin formerly had over you. (Eph. 2:1-10)

B. The Apostle Paul, undoubtedly one of the most mature saints who ever lived, struggled with his flesh, as he describes in Romans 7:7-25. Romans 8 describes how the Spirit's presence and power brings him, as well as you, through failures and struggles to victory.

**“ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out
the desire of the flesh.”**
GAL. 5:16 NASB

C. The Adversary, Satan, compounds the struggle with tempting enticements that appeal to the flesh. Put on the full armor of God to ward off the schemes of the devil. (Eph. 6:10-17)

XVIII. God commands you to *remain* in the struggle: to persevere, to fight the good fight, to finish the race. (Heb. 12:1; Jas. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:7)

- A. He has given you the nature of Christ to win the battle against sin.
- B. In 2 Timothy 2:3-5, God calls us “soldiers” and “athletes”, both of whom are trained and disciplined to win the victory. Expect to be trained and to develop discipline in the battle between your will and God’s will.
- C. The victory over sin and death is *already* won for you in Christ Jesus. Believe it and pursue it. (John 16:33)
- D. You are more than a conqueror through the power given you to fight the fleshly desires of self. Keep in the battle and claim the victory. (1 Cor. 15:57,58; Rom. 8:37)
- E. God has not left you alone to fight the battle. Draw on the Holy Spirit, the One who comes alongside to strengthen you. (1 John 4:4)

The victory is gained and the filling of the Spirit experienced, but these events are followed by a repeated or a new challenge of obedience. This is the story of the flesh vs. Spirit. This never-ending earthly cycle keeps driving you back to dependency on Christ and His Word. *Expect* the fiery ordeal that comes upon you. You are not to consider it “strange” but rather the “norm” in this fallen world. (1 Pet. 4:12,13)

Godliness should be your goal, but perfection is unattainable as long as you remain in the body. You need a Savior every day. Accept His forgiveness and cleansing for your repeated failures, get back up on your shaky legs and move forth to serve Him once again. In John 21:15-17, Christ did not condemn Peter for his sin, but rather posed the question, “Do you love me?” If *you* love Christ, resume serving Him and others.

Make these prayers personal:

“ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”
EPH. 1:18,19

“ For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”
EPH. 3:14-19 NASB