

The Holy Spirit: His Gifts & Fruit *By Richard Willetts*

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Introduction

A relationship with the Holy Spirit is a wonderful and essential part of every believer's experience. Paul urges us to be filled with the Spirit¹ to walk in the Spirit² and to enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.³ The Bible outlines a number of characteristics of the Holy Spirit which makes Him an essential contributor to our salvation.

Yahshua referred to Him as another **comforter** (Greek: *allos parakletos*) whom He would send once He had ascended to His Father. The Greek implies that this comforter was going to be similar to Yahshua, suggesting that the Spirit too was divine and of a value equal to that of Yahshua. Thus believers not having had the benefit of knowing the Master in person, would instead be able to benefit from the companionship of the Holy Spirit at all time.

Yahshua also promised that when the Spirit came He would lead the disciples into all truth.⁴ All that Yahshua had been unable to instruct them in during their three and a half year training period, the Holy Spirit Himself would **teach** them. Furthermore He would bring back to their remembrance everything that Yahshua Himself had said.⁵

As believers today we need the **guidance** and the **illumination** of the Holy Spirit in order to know the truth about Yahweh, ourselves and about other people. The Spirit of Yahweh has the ability to search the **deepest parts of a person's heart**⁶ and to reveal their realities to whomsoever He chooses. He is also able to grant us revelation in our attempts to understand the Scriptures. For many the Bible is an incomprehensible book, but the Spirit makes that book become powerful, and living, and speaking to the deepest needs of our lives.

This brings us to a very important aspect of the Spirit's work - He gives us **power** "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you"⁷: power to be effective witnesses in an unbelieving world; power to work miracles and heal the sick; power to

¹ Eph. 5:18

² Gal. 5:16 (AV)

³ 2 Cor. 13:14

⁴ John 16:12-13

⁵ John 14:26

⁶ 1 Cor. 2:10; Jer. 17:10

⁷ Acts 1:8

speaking in tongues and casting out demons; and power to live a holy life. Yahshua promised His disciples that because He was going to the Father, they would be able to perform the same works He was empowered to perform and indeed greater works even than those.⁸ If this is not your experience, then it is Yahweh's will that it should be. We have a high and holy calling to live triumphantly in this present evil age as disciples of Yahshua, and to assist others to do the same.

Prayer is an important key to effectiveness in a believer's life and here too the Holy Spirit **helps** us in our weaknesses. Often we do not know how to pray for any given situation. In these times the Holy Spirit uses our tongues to pray through us and for us with groans that words cannot express.⁹

⁸ John 14:12

⁹ Rom. 8:26

The gifts of the Spirit

The apostle Paul was very concerned that the Church should not be ignorant about what he termed spiritual gifts.¹ He stressed that although there is only one Spirit, there are many kinds of gifts, services and workings inspired by that one Spirit. Paul then itemised nine particular manifestations of the Spirit that are given for the spiritual benefit of the Church.²

These nine can be split into three general sub-categories:

1. Gifts of Revelation

- A) The word of wisdom.
- B) The word of knowledge.
- C) The ability to distinguish between spirits.

2. Gifts of Utterance

- A) Prophecy.
- B) Speaking in different kinds of tongues.
- C) Interpretation of tongues.

3. Gifts of Power

- A) Gifts of healing.
- B) Miraculous powers.
- C) Faith.

The gifts of revelation deal with supernatural knowledge or understanding revealed through the Holy Spirit to the heart of the one who has received the gift. The knowledge of other people's experience and situations revealed through these gifts is not made known publicly until those able to manifest any or all of these gifts choose to speak.

The vocal gifts, or gifts of utterance, deal with the supernatural communication that the Holy Spirit reveals by directly using the human voice. These can entail messages either from Yahweh to humankind or prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit from humankind to Yahweh.

The gifts of power are mighty gifts in which the power of Yahweh appears in order to manifest a miraculous answer through a supernatural creative intervention. Through these gifts people and their environment are changed.

We should note that these gifts do not belong to people; they are gifts of the Spirit and they belong to Him. They are distributed to the people by the Holy Spirit in accordance with His own will for the benefit and growth of the Church and as evidence to the world of the reality and power of the gospel.

Let us look at these manifestations of the Spirit in greater detail, giving close attention to specific scriptural examples.

The Word of Wisdom

It is interesting that Paul mentions the word of wisdom before any other gift of the Holy Spirit. This is because in order to exercise the other eight gifts to the benefit of all a measure of wisdom is always required. The word of wisdom is not acquired through study or by experience, rather it is an instant insight on how a given truth from Yahweh may

¹ 1 Cor. 12:1

² 1 Cor. 12:7-10

best be applied to a specific situation or need in the Body of Messiah. Alternatively it may be a prompting from the Holy Spirit as to how a particular situation or need is to be resolved, helped or healed.

Yahshua promised His disciples that if ever they were brought before rulers or authorities because of their faith, they were not to worry about what they should say in their own defense because He would give them words of wisdom that none of their adversaries would be able to resist or contradict.¹ We see an outworking of this in Acts 6:8-10, when Stephen, the first martyr, was brought before the Jewish ruling council. They were unable to stand up against the wisdom with which he spoke. This is the word of wisdom in action.

Yahshua Himself manifested this revelation wisdom in the way He answered His accusers over the matter of authority,² in the question of paying taxes³ and in the way He answered trick questions about the commandments.⁴ On each of these occasions, Yahshua's supernatural wisdom both confounded His opponents and got Him out of potentially difficult situations. In a modern setting the word of wisdom can prove invaluable when trying to help and pray with an individual in need of spiritual, emotional or physical healing. We may discern the root of their problem but require tact and diplomacy in confronting them with it. We should open our hearts to Yahweh for a word of wisdom, a way of putting the truth across, that will open their heart to Yahweh, rather than cause them to reject His help. We should never confuse the spiritual gift of the word of wisdom with other types of wisdom mentioned in the Bible. Apart from this gift, there are basically three other types: normal human wisdom or intelligence;⁵ supernatural wisdom via the occult, that is, spiritual forces outside of and opposed to the Holy Spirit⁶ (such wisdom is forbidden by Yahweh); and spiritual wisdom as is exemplified by the book of proverbs etc., and which **we are told to seek or to acquire.**⁷ Paul prayed that the Colossian believers would be filled "... *with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*"⁸ The word of wisdom is not like any of these because it is miraculously given in an instant and is relevant **only** for the particular situation it is intended to resolve. Look at Solomon's answer to the grieving mothers in 1 Kings 3:16-28. Such wisdom from Yahweh could not have been learned or reused.

The Word of Knowledge

This is a supernatural revelation of **facts** about a person, persons, or situation that is not learned through the efforts of the natural mind, but is a fragment of knowledge freely given by Yahweh. It discloses the truth that the Spirit wishes to be made known concerning a particular person, persons or situation.

Both the Old and New Testaments offer us numerous examples of this spiritual gift in operation. Time and again the prophet Elisha warned the king of Israel of the exact location of the enemy troops and their plans of attack.⁹ Yahshua received a revelation about a wayward woman in order to inform her that her secret sins were known by

¹ Luke 21:15

² Matt 21:23-27

³ Matt 22:15-22

⁴ Luke 10:25-37

⁵ 1 Cor. 1:19

⁶ Gen. 3:4-6

⁷ Prov. 2:1-6

⁸ Col. 1:9

⁹ 2 Kings 6:9-12

Yahweh. "...you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband."¹

Once again we should be careful not to confuse the word of knowledge which is a gift of the Spirit with any other kind of knowledge both natural and supernatural. The incredible scientific advances of the last century have been naturally acquired not spiritually discerned. This fallen world's supernatural knowledge is the natural person's attempt to gain knowledge by supernatural means other than through the Holy Spirit. It includes the occult, the psychic and the metaphysical investigations, which Satan uses to ensnare. Such activities are forbidden by Yahweh. True spiritual knowledge starts by knowing Yahweh personally through Yahshua.² This is increased through prayer, worship and study of the Scriptures. The word of knowledge is different again. It is a gift that comes from and through the Holy Spirit to our spirit and reveals something of the mind of Yahweh to profit and benefit one another. It may concern the past, the present, or the future. The word of knowledge is a truly wonderful gift of the Spirit as it has a tremendous capacity to build faith in the hearts both of those operating in it and those to whom it is addressed. Where there is great faith, great miracles can ensue. When Yahshua revealed the secret sins of the woman at the well, her immediate response was "*Sir,.../I can see that you are a prophet.*" Ultimately her life was completely transformed and a whole town came out to hear what Yahshua had to say.³

The manifestation of the word of knowledge is not confined only to the Scriptures; the Holy Spirit can grant such supernatural insight to His saints today in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. Some years ago, a member of our church was assigned to the task of mending an old piece of printing equipment belonging to the church. This proved impossible as the plans of the machinery had been mislaid. As he was sitting under the machine wondering what to do he suddenly had a vision or mental picture of a box in the cellar. He twice went to the box and found nothing. When he went a third time, however, he looked most carefully and found that the box was lined with paper. When he got the paper out, he was amazed to find the lost plans. This was a miraculous intervention by the Holy Spirit into our everyday world to meet a given need. When a Spirit of worship is on a church meeting or after a message or sermon has been preached, it is not uncommon for a member of the church to receive some insight, either a vision, sensation or impression of some problem that is being experienced by a person present. When this insight is shared, the person concerned is able to respond and come for prayer, if appropriate, to have his/her needs met by Yahweh. Such manifestation is an encouragement both to the individual and the church as a whole that Yahweh is truly alive and speaking to His Church.

The word of knowledge can sometimes save hours of counselling an individual, since Yahweh can supernaturally reveal the true cause of a person's physical, spiritual or emotional problem and they can be healed.

Distinguishing between spirits

Human behaviour can be motivated by one of three influences: The human, the demonic and the divine. The ability to distinguish between spirits is a supernatural gift of perception given sovereignly by Yahweh to enable individuals in the Church to distinguish the motivating spirit behind certain words or deeds. It is important in the testing of prophetic utterances in a church gathering⁴ - specifically we need to ascertain whether the

¹ John 4:18

² John 17

³ John 4:28-30

⁴ 1 Thess. 5:21, 1 Cor. 14:29

utterance is under the unction of the Holy Spirit, whether the speaker is merely speaking his own mind, or even worse, whether he is demonically inspired. This gift serves to expose any source of error in believers, as in the case of Peter when he rebuked Yahshua for predicting His death and resurrection; “*Never, Lord!... This shall never happen to you!*” to which Yahshua replied “*Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me.*”¹ Yahshua here identified Peter’s words as being of Satan!

Casting out demons and the binding of demonic powers is an important aspect of a believer’s work.² To do this effectively the presence and activity of demons has to be discerned; often we need to discern the name of the specific demon or demons concerned.³ This is when the gift of distinguishing between spirits is required. Once identified, the demonic power affecting a person, a group, or even an entire geographical area can be dealt with.

In 1978 the evangelistic organization ‘Youth with a Mission’ sent a 200 strong team comprised of Christian from more than 20 different countries to the city of Cordoba in Argentina. Despite spending a whole day on the streets they were entirely unsuccessful in bringing anyone to Yahshua. They decided therefore to devote a whole day to prayer and fasting in order to find out why. As they prayed the Holy Spirit began to reveal to them that there were satanic forces at work against them, which were being manifested in the culture of the people. Cordoba is a proud city full of very fashion-conscious people where great emphasis is placed on position, possessions and appearance. A spirit of pride was at work against them. Yahweh revealed to them that in order to break through this demonic opposition they would need to humble themselves. This they did by splitting into small groups and kneeling on the streets and praying. The results were dramatic as large crowds of curious people gathered around each group. As they began to preach to the crowds around them, a harvest of souls began and large numbers came forward publicly to indicate that they had turn to Yahshua.

This is a wonderful example of the effectiveness of the ability to distinguish between spirits, coupled, I believe, with a word of wisdom as to how to overcome this particular force of the Evil One.

Prophecy

The gift of prophecy⁴ is the special ability that Yahweh gives to members of the Body of Yahshua to receive and communicate an immediate message from Himself to His scattered people, a group among them or any one of His people individually, through a divinely anointed utterance. It is a gift freely available to any member of Yahshua’s Body in fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. “...*I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy...*”⁵

A message of prophecy brings glory to Yahshua⁶ and serves to build up, encourage (this could include warnings) and console.⁷ It is a message straight from the heart of Yahweh to His people, though it can also serve as a sign for unbelievers to convince them of their need for salvation.⁸ Just because a person brings a word of prophecy, this

¹ Matt. 16:21-23

² Mark 16:17; Luke 11:14-26

³ Mark 5:8,9

⁴ 1 Cor. 12:10, 14:1

⁵ Joel 2:28

⁶ Rev. 19:10

⁷ 1 Cor. 14:3

⁸ 1 Cor. 14:24-25

does not make him a prophet - that is a ministerial office in its own right,¹ - but we are all encouraged to desire spiritual gifts especially the gift of prophecy.² The reason that Paul encourages us particularly to seek the gift of prophecy is that, whether the message is short or long, it has such great potential in the positive building up of the Church. Prophecy is **not** the equivalent of scripture in that it cannot and should not add to the general revelation of scripture. What it does do is bring a present tense message as to what Yahweh is saying to the Church today. It is a particular message for a particular time to a particular Church gathering or situation and through a particular person. Scripture is for all believers in all places and at all times. A word of prophecy can be spoken, sung or written down. This gift may also be used to foretell, such as when Agabus stood up and predicted that there would be a famine throughout the whole Roman world.³

Tongues

The gift of tongues is a spontaneous inspired utterance by the Holy Spirit where the normal vocal organs are used but conscious mind plays no part. The languages spoken or sung are entirely unlearned by the speaker.

Tongues can be placed in two categories: tongues as a **sign** and tongues as a **gift**. When an individual is filled with the Holy Spirit, he is often enabled to speak in a language inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is the 'tongue of signs' being an external proof (though by no means the only proof) of the inward fullness of the Holy Spirit.⁴

"...these signs will accompany those who believe:... they will speak in new tongues."⁵

Tongues can be used as a private prayer language with great efficacy. Paul stated that he spoke in tongues (privately) more than any person.⁶ In this context tongues can express a personal intimacy with Yahweh,⁷ providing a whole new dimension in a person's prayer life.⁸ Praying in the Spirit in this way means that the Holy Spirit Himself is able to intercede for the saints in accordance with Yahweh's will.⁹ Many times when I am unsure how to pray for others I have reverted to my Holy Spirit prayer language. Time and again I have seen Yahweh bring an answer to this kind of prayer, sometimes instantaneously.

Tongues can also be a sign to unbelievers. When the apostles were filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and began to speak in other languages unknown to them,¹⁰ they spoke in the tongues of those present in Jerusalem. Pilgrims had come from all over the known world. They were amazed because they heard unlearned Galileans declaring the praises of Yahweh in their own native languages.¹¹ Tongues do not have to be a language known to humankind; it can also be a language of a heavenly origin known only to angels.¹²

The gift of tongues as used in public worship is different from everything so far mentioned, for unlike a prayer language, it is not a permanent ability, but is manifested

¹ 1 Cor. 12:28

² 1 Cor. 14:1

³ Acts 11:28

⁴ Acts 10:46

⁵ Mark 16:17

⁶ 1 Cor. 14:18

⁷ 1 Cor. 14:2

⁸ 1 Cor. 14:14

⁹ Rom. 8:27

¹⁰ Acts 2:4

¹¹ Acts 2:5-11

¹² 1 Cor. 13:1

only as the Spirit anoints. It is spoken or sung aloud so that another (or perhaps the same speaker) might receive an interpretation of the utterance. The tongue may be a prayer to Yahweh or a message from Yahweh to a person or to the Church as a whole. Tongues bring us a consciousness that Yahweh is present and is speaking to or through His Church.

The use of tongues at a public meeting will call into operation not only the gift of 'interpretation' but also the gift of 'distinguishing between spirits'. There can be false tongues as there are false prophets, where the utterance does not originate from the Spirit of Yahweh. Paul claimed the speaking of tongues to be of great importance in the life of every believer. "*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues.*"¹

Interpretation

This gift is a supernatural revelation through the Holy Spirit which enables the believer to communicate, in the language of the listeners, the dynamic equivalent of that which was spoken 'in tongues'.

The interpretation is not necessarily a word-for-word translation of the message, but it conveys rather the burden or general sense of what the Holy Spirit is saying.

If someone brings a message in tongues in a congregation and there is no interpretation, the Church will remain unedified. Paul says that **in public** he would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.² Interpretation is important to the Church as it enables us to benefit from the understanding of the message in tongues. Without this gift we are only aware that the Spirit of Yahweh is speaking, but we do not understand what is being said and so we are not edified by it,³ and Paul is keen for us to excel in gifts like interpretation that build up the Church.⁴

Greater faith is needed in interpretation than for speaking in 'tongues', for whereas the tongue is usually unintelligible, the interpretation is given publicly for the edification of the whole Church and must be understood and tested.

Healing

These gifts are channelled through human agents for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities (both physical and emotional) to the glory of Yahweh.

Healing proceeds from Yahweh⁵ and is available through the atoning work of Yahshua.⁶ There is, of course, a vast ministry of healing through the medical services. All scientific knowledge comes from Yahweh and we thank Yahweh and pray for those who minister to us in this way. There are also some compassionate warm-hearted believers who are sensitive and understanding and who have natural healing abilities that accompany their prayers for the sick and so communicate a degree of healing. We thank Yahweh for such people, too.

The gifts of healing are manifestations that can be attributed solely to the Holy Spirit. It is from Him that the power to heal flows and He is the One who reveals how to minister. It is up to us as channels for His love and power to co-operate with Him. Even Yahshua

¹ 1 Cor. 14:5

² 1 Cor. 14:19

³ 1 Cor. 14:5

⁴ 1 Cor. 14:12

⁵ Exod. 15:26

⁶ Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 8:16,17; 1 Pet. 2:24

declared "... *The son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing.*"¹

In the beginning Yahweh made everything "very good."² Sickness and pain came in as a result of Adam's failure and humanity's subsequent fall into sin.³ All too often sickness has mistakenly been presented as a blessing in disguise because of the good that may come to the sick person's soul through suffering. Although a blessing may be seen, Yahshua did not divide man into two - a soul to be saved and a body to be left sick and unhealed. He ministered to those whose spirits were sick and those who needed deliverance or forgiveness. He also healed those whose bodies were lame, blind or leprous.

We see from this that Yahweh is interested in the whole person - his physical, emotional and spiritual life. Gifts of healing are intended to contribute towards the process of wholeness in an individual. The gospels provide us with numerous incidences of Yahshua's power to heal. Yahshua healed specific cases using a variety of different means: anointing with oil, laying on hands, touching with finger, spitting, making clay and applying to the affected part, through casting out a demon and forgiving sin. He commissioned, sent out and empowered His disciples to do the same,⁴ and they returned having experienced considerable success.⁵ The healing of the sick through the laying on of hands is one of the signs that follow any believer when sharing the good news of salvation.⁶

After Yahshua's resurrection, we read of a number of believers having significant success in this area. There was a time in Peter's ministry when the anointing of the Spirit on his life was such that his very shadow falling upon the sick caused them to be healed;⁷ handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.⁸

The normal and natural processes of physical healing are frequently impeded by deep inner hurts from the past. Sometimes deliverance from an unclean spirit may only result when the associated inner hurt has been dealt with first. Inner healing or healing of memories is an important aspect of the gifts of healing. Past experiences and any associated negative feeling influence not only the present, but also the future – shaping, guiding and often limiting. Through gifts of healing our inner being can be set free, enabling us to forgive ourselves as well as other people. Yahshua came to bind up the broken-hearted and set the captives free in every area of their lives.⁹

Those seeking to bring gifts of healing must be able to hear from the Holy Spirit what the underlying cause of any ailment might be. As I have prayed for the sick, at first unsuccessfully, I frequently ask Yahweh if there is any blockage to their receiving healing from Yahweh. Sometimes Yahweh may reveal a hidden sin such as unforgiveness. As the individual confesses this sin to Yahweh the gift of healing begins to work straight away.

When the early 20th century evangelist Smith Wigglesworth was confronted with two deaf people he prayed for one by commanding the deaf ears to be opened, whilst out of

¹ John 5:19

² Gen. 1:31

³ Gen. 3:16,17

⁴ Luke 9:1,2

⁵ Luke 9:6,10

⁶ Mark 16:15-18

⁷ Acts 5:15,16

⁸ Acts 19:11,12

⁹ Isa. 61:1

the second he cast a spirit of infirmity. Both were healed, but the underlying cause of the illness was different in each case, prompting him to pray differently for each.

The gifts of healing do not always work instantaneously. An elderly woman in a wheelchair suffering from progressive gout in the legs for several months came for prayer at the end of one of our Sunday evening services but there appeared to be no instant change to her condition. That night however she telephoned explaining that during the prayer she had been conscious of a power moving through her body. Throughout the night the swelling in her legs disappeared, enabling her to walk unaided into the bible study on the following Tuesday evening. A doctor later examined her and confirmed that all traces of the gout had gone from her body.

Miraculous Powers

The gift of miraculous powers operates through individuals by the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit in the natural order. Yahshua's own miracles were performed primarily out of compassion for people and for practical purposes. He walked on water to comfort His disciples; He fed the multitude with a few loaves and fish because food was otherwise not available; to save potential embarrassment to the host at a wedding, He turned water into wine.

Throughout scripture we see Yahweh moving through individuals in miraculous ways which defy any natural explanation. The gift was used for the miraculous deliverance of Yahweh's people out of Egypt;¹ to provide for those in want;² to carry out divine judgements and disciplines, for example, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira;³ to confirm the word preached;⁴ to deliver from unavoidable danger;⁵ to raise the dead,⁶ and also purely as a display of Yahweh's power and magnificence.⁷

The nature of this gift is that it has to be worked (the authorised version calls it 'the working of miracles'). The vessel used by the Holy Spirit either says the word or performs the act (or does both) which effects the miracle.⁸

It is difficult to draw any clear line between the ability to work miracles and the gifts of healing.

Faith

There are four kinds of faith in the New Testament. First there is faith as a **creed** – the doctrine we profess to believe;⁹ there is faith which is the basic trust which one has in Yahweh for salvation¹⁰ and thereafter goes on applying to the various areas of our lives;¹¹ there is faith as a fruit – a loyalty which is produced by the Holy Spirit and cultivated by the believer;¹² and then there is faith as a gift of the Spirit. This brand of faith is in essence a temporary imparting of Yahweh's own faith for a given situation. With this impartation comes the authority to effect His intervention as a result of a word or action. It manifests itself in the form of a supernatural surge of confidence that Yahweh will

¹ Ps. 136:10-22

² Mark 6:13,30-44

³ Acts 5:1-10

⁴ Acts 13:11,12

⁵ Matt. 8:24-26

⁶ John 11:38-44

⁷ Ps. 145:3-7

⁸ Mark 7:33-35

⁹ Eph. 4:13; Jude :3

¹⁰ John 3:16; Eph. 2:8

¹¹ Rom. 1:17

¹² Gal. 5:22^(AV)

undoubtedly act on our behalf. This is the type of faith Yahshua is speaking about when He says, "...if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."¹ Yahshua emphasises not the quantity of faith, but the quality.

Yahshua once cursed a fig tree because it bore no fruit.² The next day as He and His disciples passed the same tree, they were astonished to see that, within twenty four hours, it had withered from the roots up. "*Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!*"³ Yahshua's reply to Peter's comment was: "*Have faith in [Elohim].*" This is the normal English translation. However what Yahshua said in its most literal form is "Have Yahweh's faith". This brings out the special kind of faith we are speaking of – faith as a gift.

The gift of faith has operated in the past to bring about some astonishing promises of Yahweh. Sarah, Abraham's wife was old and past the age of child bearing yet she became pregnant and bore a son at the very time Yahweh promised.⁴ Paul drew attention to Abraham's part in this "*Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of [Elohim], but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to [Elohim], being fully persuaded that [Elohim] had power to do what he had promised.*"⁵ The supernatural strengthening of Abraham's faith was an imparting of the gift of faith.

Sometimes a word spoken in prayer becomes a channel for the gift of faith. In James 5:15 we are told that "*the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.*" There is no room for doubt as to the effect of such a prayer as is described here. Its results are guaranteed. Prayer prayed in this kind of Yah-given faith is irresistible. Neither sickness nor any other condition that is contrary to Yahweh's will can stand against it. James uses the example of Elijah, "*a man just like us*" who first withheld all rain for three and a half years, and then caused rain to fall again.⁶ The gift of faith operating in him caused the words he uttered in prayer to be as effective as Yahweh's own decrees.

George Muller operated his Bristol orphanage with the gift of faith. With hundreds of hungry children, he prayed Yahweh's blessing on their empty cups and plates, and as he prayed a delivery of churns of milk came in at one door and baskets of bread at another.

As can be seen the gift of faith is closely associated with the other two gifts of power, miracles and healing, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them. In fact the gift of faith often serves as a catalyst to bring the other two gifts into operation. There is a subtle difference between them however. The operation of faith is often less spectacular than other power gifts because it frequently achieves the objective secretly or silently over a long period (in the case of the tree Yahshua cursed, twenty-four hours). It is usually a process, whereas the gift of miracles is a response to a crisis.

¹ Matt. 17:20

² Mark 11:14

³ Mark 11:21

⁴ Gen. 21:2

⁵ Rom. 4:20,21

⁶ Jas. 5:17,18

Receiving spiritual gifts

Paul encourages us to **eagerly desire** spiritual gifts.¹ The primary purpose for this is the building up or edifying of the whole Body.² The whole Body is edified when each member contributes what Yahweh has given him/her. To begin to move in any gift of the Spirit requires great tenacity in faith. We are launching ourselves out into the unknown, attempting to hear directly from the Holy Spirit and to act on the instructions we receive. We are like Peter seeking to walk on the water: *“Lord, if it’s you... tell me to come to you on the water”* to which Yahshua replied *“Come.”*³

With regard to receiving spiritual gifts a pertinent question to ask which gifts should we seek for. Paul encourages us to **“follow the way of love”**. This must surely be the best motivation for seeking any spiritual gift. Love will prompt us to seek for what is needed in our Church. If there are those who are sick, we should seek for healing, if the Church is in need of edification, then let us seek prophecy. Love for Yahweh will prompt us to seek Him. Since Yahweh is more aware than we of the needs of any individual, we would do well to seek Yahweh for that which He wishes to give us.

The exercising of spiritual gifts can be a **learning process** that requires practice. Yahshua disciplined His closest followers in signs and wonders using a show, tell, deploy and supervise method of training. After calling the disciples He took them along with Him, teaching and healing the sick as He went. Then, after He thought the disciples had seen and learnt enough to try for themselves, He commissioned, empowered, instructed and sent them out to do the same things.⁴ We see the disciples experiencing both great success and total failure in their attempts to be more like their Master. Yahshua upbraided them on one occasion for their failure to cast out a demon from a little epileptic boy *“O unbelieving generation... how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?”*⁵ On healing the boy Himself, Yahshua took the disciples aside and emphasised the essential role of **prayer and fasting** in the lives of the disciples in order to ensure effectiveness in this area of ministry.⁶

Gifts of the Spirit are developed in a climate of **risk-taking** and a willingness to fail. Spiritual progress is frequently two steps forward and one step back. Gifts are best developed in an atmosphere where others may be observed successfully exercising the gifts and a covering or supervising ministry is present. The Church service is the ideal and most logical place to start. **Worship** provides the setting for the pouring out of the Spirit. The disciples were together in one place in an attitude of worship when the Holy Spirit was first poured out in Jerusalem at Pentecost. A worship service is therefore the ideal climate for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul affirms this principle when writing to the Corinthian Church. *“When you [the Church] come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.”*⁷ At these times every member of the Congregation should be **reaching out to Yahweh** to see what He may want him/her to say or do. At these times we need to be conscious of the **anointing** of the Spirit. When Yahweh’s Spirit comes upon us He may be just seeking to bless us but He may also be empowering us for some act of service.

¹ 1 Cor. 14:1

² 1 Cor. 12:7

³ Matt. 14:28-29

⁴ Matt. 10:1,5-8

⁵ Mark 9:19

⁶ Mark 9:29^(AV)

⁷ 1 Cor. 14:26

It is misleading to consider that an individual has certain spiritual gifts since this might imply that he is at liberty to use them whenever he pleases. In fact the gifts of the Spirit are under the sovereign control of the Holy Spirit and He decides who is to operate them and when. It is more accurate to consider them as 'gracelets'; passing touches of the Spirit at different times and in different settings. They are expressions of Yahweh's grace that come and go, like fragrant flowers that open and close. One time a certain gift goes to one person, at another time it goes to another person. At any given time a person could minister in prophecy, in tongues, in healing, or in some other form of blessing for the good of others.

If we have the Holy Spirit resident inside us we have the capacity to manifest any one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are delicate nuances in our relationship with Yahweh, and we have to be sensitive enough to respond to them. If we do not we will never learn to move in the power of the Holy Spirit. From time to time when the Spirit is on the meeting, we may receive a **thought, impression, vision or physical sensation**. We should not dispel this but consider prayerfully whether or not Yahweh is speaking to us. We should not be surprised that Yahweh chooses to speak to us in this way, for the prophet Joel told us that part of the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would be the seeing of visions and the dreaming of dreams. (Joel 2:28) (On very rare occasions we may actually **hear the audible voice of Yahweh**.) He may be giving us the first few words of a prophecy, or perhaps a revelation about someone in the gathering. We may be prompted to go and pray with someone. There will always be a degree of uncertainty in what we feel Yahweh may be saying to us. This is the time to **exercise faith** and speak out or act at an appropriate time in the meeting. It might also be appropriate to confer with a minister who is covering the meeting as to what you feel Yahweh wants you to do. As time goes by we learn to interpret the voice of the Holy Spirit accurately.

In the Scriptures we can find instances of the ability to exercise certain spiritual gifts being imparted from one believer to another. Paul urged Timothy to fan into flame the gift that lay within him that was given through the **laying on of hands**.¹ Elisha received a double portion of the anointing of the Holy Spirit that was on his master Elijah when his mantle fell upon him as Elijah was taken up into heaven.² This enabled him to do twice the number of mighty acts that Elijah had performed. Yahshua **gave** His disciples authority over evil spirits and every disease and sickness.³ Just working, fellowshiping and especially **ministering with men of faith** helps us to 'pick up' something of the gifts that are working through them.

Please note that Yahweh is not restricted to speaking to us and through us in a church gathering. If we are in tune with Him He is able to speak to us at any time of the day or night. Developing a continual attitude of prayer in our daily lives enables us to be sensitive to His prompting.

***Laying on of hands**

Putting your hands on or touching an individual in some way in order for them to receive from the Holy Spirit – a practice both taught and followed in the Early Church.
(Mark 16:18, Luke 4:40, Acts 19:6)

¹ 2 Tim. 1:6

² 2 Kings 2:9-14

³ Matt. 10:1

Moving in the gifts

Having overcome the initial hurdle of launching out in the gifts we then need to grow in our understanding of when and how to minister. Initially this is likely to be in a pastoral context, that is, within the Church, but later we may find that opportunities arise to minister in the gifts outside the Church in an evangelistic context.

In a pastoral context

Paul offers us sound guidelines for the operation of spiritual gifts in a church service “when you come together...”¹ There should not be more than two or at the most three messages in tongues or prophecies in any one point in the meeting.² There should be silence for an interpretation following each ‘tongue’ offered in this way. If there is no interpretation, the covering minister should not allow tongues to continue, as it does not edify the rest of the assembly.³

When a message in tongues is forthcoming the Congregation should all pray for the interpretation, including the person who had the tongue.⁴ It is obvious that when there is a general ‘speaking in tongues’⁵ or ‘singing in tongues’ in the spirit of praise or prayer, no interpretation is necessary because all are addressing Yahweh.⁶ Some may feel that they have been given a more adequate unfolding of the message ‘in tongues’ than the one who actually interprets, which could often be the case, but they must ‘hold their peace’. On the other hand, if someone has a further revelation along the same lines as that already given, this may be a call to ‘complete’ the interpretation through an additional word of prophecy.⁷ A person receiving an anointing to operate in any gift is not bound to act instantaneously. It may be appropriate for use on a later occasion “*The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.*”⁸ We should also be aware of ‘continuing in the flesh’ when the anointing has lifted - a sure indication from the Holy Spirit that we should stop. Paul defines the attributes that a word of prophecy should display - a prophetic utterance should strengthen, encourage and comfort the people (this can include words of warning). Any message not fulfilling these three criteria is spurious. The leaders in the Church should always aim to ensure that everything is “*done in a fitting and orderly way*”.⁹ It is possible that either a tongue or interpretation or prophecy in a meeting is ill conceived, that is, not of the Holy Spirit. The covering minister should be aware of this through the gift of distinguishing of spirits and should set the meeting back on the right track and counsel the person concerned later. (NOTE: If we are walking in humility with Yahshua it is unlikely that we are going to make mistakes like these – it is usually only those who are over-religious and spiritual in their own eyes, or who have been involved in the occult who will err in this way. Such people require help and counselling.)

The power and revelatory gifts of the Spirit are manifested in a gathering to meet the needs of individuals in the Congregation, be they physical, emotional or spiritual. Opportunity should be given for people to come forward and for those exercising spiritual gifts to lay their hands on the recipients for prayer. The gifts of healing lie firstly in the

¹ 1 Cor. 14:26

² 1 Cor. 14:27,29

³ 1 Cor. 14:19,28

⁴ 1 Cor. 14:13

⁵ 1 Cor. 14:23

⁶ 1 Cor. 14:2

⁷ 1 Cor. 14:30

⁸ 1 Cor. 14:32

⁹ 1 Cor. 14:40

hands of the elders, but other members of the Congregation can be involved to help them develop in the practice of these gifts. James instructs those who are sick to come forward and be anointed with oil by the elders. The prayer of faith will heal them and if they have committed any sin it will be forgiven them.¹ When ministering to an individual through the laying on of hands, those who are praying should be open to the direction of the Holy Spirit; that is, words of knowledge and wisdom and the distinguishing of spirits; for though a person's ailment may be physical, the root of the problem may be emotional or spiritual. This needs to be determined so those ministering can pray appropriately. Praying in teams of two or three can serve to increase effectiveness since Yahshua promised that if two or three should agree about anything they ask for, it will be done by the Father.² It also helps in the training of people who are inexperienced counsellors and prevents any one individual who may be getting very good results from becoming proud. Prayer for the sick and oppressed does not have to be on a one-to-one basis. It can also be very effective for the whole Church to stand together and pray for those who are not physically present, but who have requested ministry.

Particularly in ministering to the sick, there are instances when people do not receive healing. This causes us to ask the question: WHY ISN'T EVERYONE HEALED? Yahshua in His public ministry had complete success when ministering to the sick; they were all healed almost instantly yet He did not heal everyone. At the pool of Bethesda, for example, many lay sick, but Yahshua went to only one lame man and healed him. The lesson here is that in healing the sick we can only minister as the Father reveals. The epistles contain four specific instances where the sick were not healed immediately and at least two cases where they were possibly never healed: Paul had an eye affliction for some reason not cited;³ Trophimus was left sick at Miletus; Epaphroditus was sick and almost died, but Yahweh had mercy,⁴ Timothy had a persistent stomach complaint for which Paul prescribed some wine.⁵ What is strange is that these were all experienced, mature church leaders and yet at the same time in an evangelistic context, many others were still being healed.⁶ In the Old Testament the prophet Elisha who saw a number of miraculous healings under his ministry suffered in the closing stages of his life from a sickness from which he eventually died.⁷

Where someone is not healed it could be worthwhile checking on such areas as unforgiveness, deeper emotional hurts, unbelief or faithfulness in the individual. Yahshua Himself was hindered from performing many miracles in His hometown because of the unbelief of the people.⁸ We sometimes fail to heal the sick because we incompletely or incorrectly diagnose the cause of their problem. One of the main reasons why people are sometimes not healed through our prayers is because we ourselves do not enquire of Yahweh and spend time in His presence as whole-heartedly as we should. Yahweh is able to do greater miracles than we have yet seen if we persist in seeking Him.⁹

Finally we should realise that the kingdom has not yet come in all its fullness. In this age we 'know in part', but there is a time coming when Yahshua will return and we 'shall

¹ Jas. 5:14,15

² Matt. 18:19

³ Gal. 4:13-16

⁴ Phil. 2:26,27

⁵ 1 Tim. 5:23

⁶ Acts 28:8,9

⁷ 2 Kings 13:14

⁸ Mark 6:5

⁹ Luke 11:1-13

know fully'.¹ Therefore, whilst healing is a part of what Yahshua purchased for us at the cross we have no right to presume that unless Yahweh heals in every instance there must always be something wrong with either our faith or His faithfulness. In the event of apparent failure, we should not give up – the more we pray for others the more results we **will** see.

In an evangelistic context

Yahshua's ministry can be analysed into two aspects: First **proclamation**: He preached repentance and the good news of the kingdom of Yahweh. Second came **demonstration**: He cast out demons, healed the sick, and raised the dead. These signs demonstrated that Yahshua was Messiah and that the kingdom of Yahweh was at hand. They were like 'free samples' from the 'heavenly head office' – a foretaste in the present of what will ultimately be in the future when the kingdom comes in all its fullness. After His death He entrusted this same ministry to His disciples.² He promised them power from on high to enable them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth.³ The book of the Acts of the Apostles bears testimony to the successful outworking of this.

Signs and wonders are an important aspect of the preaching of the gospel. Yahshua promised that certain signs would follow those who believe: *"In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."*⁴ Wherever the disciples preached the gospel, Yahweh confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it.⁵

We should note that this ministry did not end with the apostolic era, but continued through the ages to this present day – our proclamation of the gospel needs to be confirmed with signs following. This will require a greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and a willingness to take steps of faith in our daily lives as we come into contact with unbelievers. We can put into an evangelistic context that which we have learned in a pastoral context; thus the meeting place becomes the training place for the market place. The more we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit in our daily lives, the greater the effectiveness of our witness will be. Never be afraid to give Yahweh the opportunity to demonstrate **His** power to the lost souls you meet.

¹ 1 Cor. 13:12

² Matt. 28:18-20

³ Acts 1:8

⁴ Mark 16:17-18

⁵ Mark 16:20

The fruit of the Spirit

Gifts of the Spirit are not character traits or rewards for long service. Neither do they necessarily affirm that all the doctrine of one's church is one hundred percent correct. The only given criteria is that we believe in Yahshua the Messiah as the Scripture teaches us.¹ If our theology regarding Yahshua is correct and if what we do serves to glorify Him and advance the gospel, we will continue to get results. Very new believers may often see very significant answers to their prayers. This is because they possess simple faith, and Yahweh is keen to demonstrate to them His love and acceptance. We should not mistake great success in signs and wonders as evidence of spiritual maturity. Whereas gifts of the Spirit can appear immediately on conversion, the development of a sound character is an aspect of the Spirit's work that takes place over a period of time. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, there will come a time when gifts will no longer be needed. But character is permanent. The character we allow Yahweh to develop in us in this life will determine what we will be throughout eternity.

A spiritual gift is both imparted and received by a single brief transaction, whereas spiritual fruit expresses the nature of the life from which it proceeds; it comes only as a result of a process of growth. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul outlines the nature of the fruit of the Spirit: "...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."²

We would do well to consider these precious virtues in greater detail, analysing them as we did the gifts of the Spirit and paying particular attention to the meaning of the original Greek.

Love (Gk. = *agape*)

We should make a distinction between the form of love inferred with this Greek word as opposed to other Greek words that are all translated into the English word love and yet have vastly different meanings.

- *Agape* is not 'eros'. This is characteristically the word for the love between a man and a woman. It always has a predominantly physical side, and it always involves sexual love.
- *Agape* is not 'storge'. This is a word for family love, that is, love between parent and child, or brother and sister.
- *Agape* is not 'philia'. This is the highest word in secular Greek for love. It describes a warm, intimate, tender relationship of body, mind and spirit.
- *Agape* as a fruit of the Spirit is the very highest form of love. It describes an attitude of heart which will never seek anything but the highest good of its fellow men, regardless of who they are and how they treat it. It is the type of love that Yahweh Himself possesses for all mankind. It is the ability and power and determination to love those whom we may not even like. Thus it enables us to love our enemies, as Yahshua taught us.

Joy (Gk.= *chara*)

Joy is the distinguishing atmosphere of the Christian life. No matter what our circumstances may be, the joy of the Holy Spirit is a constant factor. This supernatural joy should not be confused with simple happiness. We can be in the most adverse and unhappy circumstances in life, such as Paul and Silas who were beaten and in jail for the

¹ John 7:38,39; Mark 16:17

² Gal. 5:22,23

gospel, yet still be in possession of the joy of the Holy Spirit, even as they were as they sang the praises of Yahweh.¹

Peace (*Gk. = eirene*)

There were few things that the ancient world longed for so wistfully as peace. This word describes the serenity, tranquillity and perfect contentment of a life that is completely happy and secure. In the Septuagint, the Greek is translated from the Jewish word of greeting, 'shalom'. As well as peace, this Hebrew word implies *soundness* of body,² *welfare*³ and *prosperity*.⁴ It stands for everything that makes for a man's highest well-being. This peace is not man-made, it is the peace of Yahweh,⁵ a unique characteristic of the Spirit.

Patience (*Gk. = makrothumia*)

This Greek word literally denotes someone who is long-tempered, that is, opposite of short-tempered. It expresses a certain attitude both to people and to events. It never loses patience with people no matter how unreasonable they may be and never loses hope for them no matter how unlovely and unteachable they may be. With regard to events, it never admits defeat and never loses its hope or its faith, however dark and incomprehensible situations may be. One Christian writer describes it as 'the forbearance which endures injuries and evil deeds without being provoked to anger or revenge'.

Yahweh exercises this attitude towards the unrighteous of this world. The Scriptures teach us that He is slow to anger. It was because Abraham patiently endured that he received the promise. So it must be for the believer who has a like precious faith.⁶

Kindness (*Gk. = chrestotes*)

This attribute is used more commonly of Yahweh than anyone else in the Scriptures. Yahweh is merciful and kind not only to those who deserve it, but to those who do not. The kindness of Yahweh is universal, for Yahweh is kind even to the unthankful and to the evil.⁷ This is exhibited in Yahweh's sending of the sun and rain on both the evil and the good. Yahweh showed His greatest kindness by sending Yahshua His only Son to die for us while we were yet in our sin with no conscious knowledge of Him. This fruit of kindness is indeed a lovely thing, for it implies that we will treat others in the same way that Yahweh has treated us. Whereas love can be an emotion, kindness is always an act. Because we love, we perform acts of kindness, even for our enemies. When King David allowed the crippled descendent of his enemy Saul to be treated as one of his own household, even allowing him to eat with him at the same table, he was demonstrating the fruit of kindness.⁸

Faithfulness (*Gk. = pistis*).

The best translation of this word is simply loyalty. Yahshua is looking for trustworthiness in His followers. 'Pistos' describes a man whose loyalty would enable him to die for Yahshua. Antipas was a faithful martyr of Yahshua commended to us in the

¹ Acts 16:22-25

² Ps. 38:3

³ Gen. 43:27

⁴ Job 15:21^{AV}

⁵ Phil. 4:7

⁶ Heb. 6:12-15

⁷ Luke 6:35

⁸ 2 Sam 9

book of Revelation; we are called to follow his example by being faithful even to the point of death.¹ This word describes a man on whose faithful service we can rely, on whose loyalty we may depend and whose word we can unreservedly accept.

Faithfulness also denotes someone who has the capacity to trust. A faithful man will live with a constant expectation of good, an attitude that the Bible calls hope. His hope is based on the benevolence and omnipotence of the Almighty. It is this attribute that Paul demonstrates when he pronounces "...I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day"². It was for this reason that Paul continued daily to suffer as he did and was not ashamed.

Gentleness (Meekness A.V.) (Gk. = *prautes*).

This is by no means a perfect translation of the Greek. The word speaks of a gentleness of conduct, but from people who have it in their power to act otherwise. In this respect, meekness is never weakness. In this word strength and gentleness go together. 'Prautes' is the power through which, by the help of the Holy Spirit, the strong and explosive might of the passions is harnessed in the service of men and Yahweh. Moses was just such a man; described as the meekest man in all the earth³, he was in a position as leader and saviour of his people to be arrogant and overbearing, yet he was always humble and sought to serve his people.

Goodness (Gk. = *agathosune*).

This is a virtue of the Spirit that is difficult to define. It is very closely linked to 'chrestotes', but there is a subtle difference in meaning. 'Chrestotes' suggests a quality of gracious and attractive kindness whereas 'agathosune' denotes much more sternness and austerity. It suggests a zeal for goodness and truth that manifests itself in rebuking, correcting and chastening. It was 'agathosune', for example, that Yahshua demonstrated when He drove the buyers and seller out of the Temple.⁴

We can contrast the goodness of Phineas who acted swiftly to wipe out sexual immorality in Israel⁵ with the failure of Eli the priest to lift a hand against his errant sons.⁶

Self-control (Gk. = *egkrateia*).

This is the great quality which comes to a man when the Spirit dwells in his heart enabling him to live and to walk in the world without being tainted or influenced by sin. Peter tells us that a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.⁷ Self-control is the opposite to this; we are in total control of our own appetites, desires and cravings, rather than they controlling and dictating our actions. A man who exhibits this fruit will not be drawn away through compromise with worldly values or vices. Self-control implies that we are in total mastery of our will, mind and emotions, never being diverted from the path of righteousness in thought word or deed. We are in a state of being totally controlled by the new nature that Yahshua has given us.⁸ Self-control should not be confused with suppression of feelings or mind over matter, for Yahweh never intended us to be anything

¹ Rev. 2:10; 2:13

² 2 Tim 1:12

³ Num 12:3

⁴ Matt. 21:12-13

⁵ Num 25:7-8

⁶ 1 Sam 3:12-15

⁷ 2 Pet 2:19

⁸ 2 Pet 1:4-6

other than ourselves. As in all the fruit of the Spirit, this attribute is the result of a Yahweh given ability to be in control.

Growing in the fruit of the spirit

Whilst there can be many acts of the Spirit, there is only one fruit. Notice that it does not say fruits of the Spirit. All these qualities can be wrapped up in one quality – the character of Yahshua. For humankind to manifest the character of Yahshua is a goal that is quite beyond our own ability to reach. It requires a special intervention in our lives by the Holy Spirit.

“Good works are not the means by which we maintain our relationship with [Yahweh]; they are the result of dependence on the Holy Spirit.”

(J.Wimber; The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth)

The great divine initiative that enables us to attain to the character of Yahshua is the rooted in His **death and resurrection**. At the cross Yahshua defeated Satan¹ and secured salvation for all who obey Him.² The power of the blood of Yahshua cleanses us from all sin³ and His subsequent resurrection and ascension into heaven secures for us the baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁴ By acknowledging and turning from our own failure to live according to Yahweh’s righteous standard, and believing in Yahshua and His work on the cross we are in a position to receive the Holy Spirit.⁵ If you have never taken this essential step I urge you to do so now. Baptism in water is another important step in living a holy life. Through being submerged in the waters at baptism we identify ourselves with death and burial of Yahshua; we enter a watery grave much as the body of Yahshua was placed in the grave.⁶ This act spells death for our old life of sin and its power and control over us.⁷ When we come out of the water we are raised up into newness of life with the same power indeed that raised Yahshua from the dead.⁸ *These steps, which are all a combination of human response and divine initiative, are not an end in themselves, but only the beginning of the walk and relationship with the Holy Spirit.

*Repentance & faith, baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit are the subjects of further booklets in this series.

Having taken these steps it is not the case that we are supposed to sit around and wait for the Spirit to make us holy. Just the opposite is true. The Scriptures use active verbs to communicate our part in the spiritual growth: “So I say, **live by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”⁹ “As [Yahweh’s]... chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness

¹ Col 2:15

² Heb 5:9

³ 1 John 1:7

⁴ John 16:7

⁵ Acts 2:38

⁶ Rom 6:3

⁷ Rom 6:5-6

⁸ Rom 6:4

⁹ Gal 5:16

and patience.”¹ We are also instructed to “...**put to death the misdeeds of the body (by the Spirit).**”² Such actions require and demand conscious decisions of the will.

Growing in the fruit of the Spirit then is a product of the initiating, empowering work of the Holy Spirit, and of our active co-operation. He engages our minds, wills and emotions and He expects us to respond. If either divine initiative or human response is missing, we will not grow.

What methods then does the Holy Spirit use to assist us in the development of a holy character? The first and primary means of grace is the **word of Yahweh**. Yahshua prayed, “*Sanctify them [make them holy] by the truth; your word is truth.*”³ The word of Yahweh energized by the Holy Spirit is a powerful weapon against sin. It possesses within it the power to transform character as well as situations. When we hear the word and act on what we learn, faithfully trusting in its promise, our mind is renewed and we become conformed to the image of Yahshua. If this sounds over simple, it is because it is! We need to accept His word with childlike faith and allow it like a seed to take root in our hearts. Meditation and study of the word assist in this process. Paul instructed Timothy that the Scriptures are useful for “...*training in righteousness, so that the man of [Yahweh] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*”⁴ The psalmist said that he who meditates on the law day and night is like a tree by the waterside yielding its fruit in season.⁵ Thus the word of Yahweh works in us to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit also orders the **circumstances of our lives** so that we may grow closer to Him. Romans 8:28 says, “*And we know that in all things [Yahweh] works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*” That which other people – even Satan – intend for evil, Yahweh uses for good,⁶ to mould our character in conformity to His Son. He allows suffering for our good when we go astray⁷ but we do not have to be full of sin to be exposed to suffering. If we are identified with Yahshua, we should expect His sufferings to flow over into our lives.⁸ When we suffer we are confronted with a choice. We can believe that Yahweh is unjust and does not care for us, or we can believe that He is good and that whatever comes from His hand is tempered with mercy, with His love for us and with His desire for our growth. The righteousness of Yahweh is a righteousness that comes by faith.⁹ The exercise of faith that produces righteousness includes trusting in Yahweh in dire circumstances. James offers some sound encouragement on this line:

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*¹⁰

Even Yahshua had to learn obedience by what He suffered.¹¹ Trusting, therefore, in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the midst of some of the difficult trials of life serves to develop holy character.

¹ Col 3:12

² Rom 8:13

³ John 17:17

⁴ 2 Tim 3:16

⁵ Ps 1:2-3

⁶ Gen. 50:20

⁷ Ps. 119:67

⁸ 2 Cor. 1:5

⁹ Rom. 1:17

¹⁰ Jas 1:2-4

¹¹ Heb. 5:8

Thirdly we must allow the Holy Spirit to transform us through **fellowship** with the saints. Paul tells us that we are baptised by one Spirit into one body (that is, the Church).¹ Thus it takes a divine operation of the Spirit to make us a part of Yahweh's people. In Yahshua there is no racial, cultural or social distinction. Yahweh has given all His people the Holy Spirit to dwell in them² so that our lives may overflow with the fruit of the Spirit. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.³ This is certainly true when it comes to Yahweh's people. Through our many short-comings we can perfect one another in love, patience and longsuffering. In learning to walk together, to submit and lay down our lives one for another, we grow in the character of Yahshua.

In the fellowship of believers we also gain strength, support and protection from the corroding influences of the world.⁴ As a body of people we are drawn closer to Yahweh through corporate worship, teaching, preaching and encouraging.

The importance of gifts and fruit

Some people lay great emphasis on the need for gifts, but pay little attention to the need for a holy character. Similarly some dispel the need for gifts, arguing that character is far more important. Paul encourages us to pursue both with equal vigour "*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts...*"⁵ Love supersedes the gifts because whereas gifts will ultimately cease, love will continue into eternity. It is the governing principle that controls all that Yahweh and His redeemed people are and do. Even the most spectacular manifestations of any gift of the Spirit mean nothing unless motivated by love. Someone pointed out that you can get a barn door to fly if you give it enough power – so it is with some believers who are mighty in spiritual gifts but weak in love and holy character – they experience success but they are undisciplined and tumultuous. There will always be something about them that you cannot quite handle. Yahshua warned that there would be many at the last day who would come to Him and say "*Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?*" to which He will reply "*I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!*"⁶ Yahshua emphasized obedience to the will of the Father as of paramount importance.

Since gifts are given for the common good, not for our own gratification, love for the people of Yahweh is the vehicle by which gifts of the Spirit will be made truly effective. "If I have not love," Paul says, "I am nothing."⁷

John Wesley described the life of holiness as the way of 'perfect love'. This lifestyle, he claimed, is characterized by "always being joyful, praying continually, and giving thanks in all circumstances."⁸ Yahweh's Spirit is a Spirit of holiness so we should expect Him to be leading us along just such a good path.

As well as being like Yahshua in character, we are also called to continue the work that He began. This involves moving in the gifts of the Spirit. Yahshua sent the Holy Spirit specifically to empower us for service. As disciples of Yahshua we do not really have an

¹ 1 Cor. 12:13

² 1 Cor. 6:19

³ Prov. 27:17

⁴ Col. 3:16

⁵ 1 Cor. 14:1

⁶ Matt. 7:22,23

⁷ 1 Cor. 13:1-3

⁸ 1 Thess. 5:16-18

option in this. We need to use the talents that He gives us or else risk losing everything on the last day.¹

Thus we cannot major on either fruit or gifts, we must pursue both with equal fervor in our service for Yahshua and avoid becoming unbalanced in our emphasis.

Conclusion

Learning to live by the power of the Spirit is a constant daily challenge to the disciple of Yahshua. He who is able to submit his life completely to the Spirit's control will go from strength to strength, from faith to faith and from glory to glory. He will be transformed into the likeness of Yahshua in both word and deed. All we need for our journey in discipleship is made available to us through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*² *"The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it."*³

¹ Matt. 25:14-30

² Gal. 5:25

³ 1 Thess. 5:24