

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."
(Matthew 18:19,20)*



SECTION 4 - LESSON 29

THE FATHER AND JESUS

Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation—The Holy Spirit

- *Prophecy, Words Of Knowledge, Wisdom:
Gifts To Support Your Trust And Confront Your Reason*
- *Suffering, The Spirit's Agency For Change*
- *Grumbling Grieves The Spirit And Impedes Spiritual Growth*
 - *Prayer: Trusting God To Respond*
- *Remember, Our Father's Children Are Free!*



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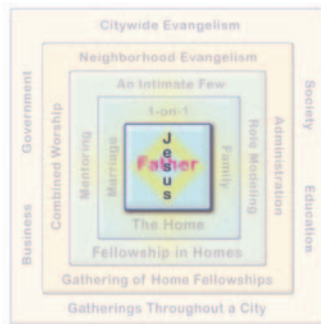
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THE FATHER AND JESUS

Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation—The Holy Spirit

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THE FATHER AND JESUS

Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation— The Holy Spirit:

**Prophecy, Words of Knowledge, Wisdom:
Gifts To Support Your Trust and
Confront Your Reason**

***“Since you eagerly seek the things of
the Spirit, seek especially what will
help in edifying the congregation”***

(1 Corinthians 14:12,CJB).

A life of following Jesus is an *obedience-based trust* that's grounded in a love relationship much like that of Abraham. **Obedience-based** trust means that you've purposed to discover our Father's will *and* to do it no matter what the cost. Yearning to *bring Him glory* underlies your motivation, as it did the Patriarch: ***“By trust he was given power as he gave glory to God”*** (Romans 4:20b, CJB).

In contrast, to be **outcome-based** is the hallmark of religion. An over-riding concern with what God's will might cost

you or how it might change your life relies on *human rationalization* rather than trust-based obedience.

Perhaps you're a person who focuses on *specific planned outcomes* rather than on God's will as your first priority. You probably use “If I do *this*, then *that* will happen” reasoning. You may also rely on weighing the cost vs. benefit factors of a proposed decision. Finally, once you finish reasoning out a choice, then you ask God to bless it!

Other distinctives reveal if you rely on analytical reason rather than obedient trust: You *conjecture about the future* regarding a step God has called you to take (“Is the timing right? Will this decision interfere with other plans I might have by then?”). Or, you make decisions by *weighing the ‘pros-and-cons’* according to the world's methods. If the step you take will bring about an outcome you desire, you'll do it!

Little concern is given to whether your means or outcome is our Father's will for you. Listen, however, to the heart-cry of the psalmist David, whose declaration mirrors that of Jesus: ***“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart”*** (Psalms 40:8; see John 6:38).

Our Father wants to bless you by *guiding you to His will* through His Spirit's prompting—making level and straight

your path. Each decision of your life as a Spirit-empowered follower of Jesus should reflect this one goal: to bring glory to our Father and to His Son.

As you walk in *trust-based obedience* in union with the Spirit on your pilgrimage to salvation, you'll rely less and less on your rationalization. You'll find the world's ways of coming to decisions and making choices to be limiting and unsatisfying because they offer you *no testimony* to our Lord's intervention through your prayers!

Your love for our Father produces trust-filled obedience that finds strength to fulfill His will through His indwelling Spirit. As the Father sent Him, so Jesus sends His own with the same assignment: "**to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work**" for our lives and His purposes (John 4:34).

Our Lord has *not* called you to be mindless! As you may recall, the sanctification of your *mind* produces the ever-increasing character of Jesus in you. Our Lord responded only in obedience to His Father to do His will. If you want to walk in His steps, you need to replace the rationale on which you've always relied before with *trusting obedience*.

Our Father reserves the right to reveal His will for your decisions. He receives glory when you look for and count on His intervention and revelation.

One of the purposes of *prophecy* and words of *knowledge* and *wisdom* is to help you have our *Father's mind* on your circumstances and encounters. These giftings *cut through* the rationalization of your sin nature and your soulish tendency to rely on your own reasoning as you weigh the positives and negatives of your choices.

Despite the misgiving that many church people have that words from God may be misinterpreted, those very

words are His means to speak forth His messages. And, because man's sin nature as well as Satan's schemes can counterfeit truth, each prophetic word needs to be *tested* for genuineness.

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophecies. Test everything. Hold on to the good, abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22).

Our Lord has no desire to keep His children in the dark about either His will or His purpose for their lives. That's why prophets and prophetic words ring out throughout both Testaments.

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

God's manner of transmitting specific messages accords with this assurance from the prophet Amos: "*Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets*" (3:7).

Fear of the prophetic voice of God indicates that you want to be in charge of your own life. If you find yourself *habitually distrusting* our Father to show you the path He desires for you, you may find yourself sliding toward the ledge of willful rebellion. Don't quench the Spirit!

[Mike]: Our awakening to our role in the Hebraic Restoration was a series of prophetic stepping stones for us. Thirteen years ago my mother declared, "When you get back from Israel, the Lord wants you to move in with me and write." I remember my first inclination was, "Write *what?*"

Next, we received a fax from a man in upstate New York whom we'd never met. When he heard from mutual friends that we'd left our retreat ministry and were going to live in Jerusalem for a while, he wrote, "The Lord is sending you on a *prophetic mission*."

This man ended his letter with a passage from Isaiah: "*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand*" (Isaiah 41:10). Our spirits were boosted! We didn't even have money for the air fare until the last hour to pay for the tickets!

In Israel, both friends and strangers approached us to confirm our *prophetic mission*. Now, we're fulfilling the prophetic call that has changed our lives, sharing what our Father revealed to us during that time: His restoration of the spiritual power and relational priorities of the earliest Church.

What is your view of the three gifts we mentioned: prophecy, knowledge and wisdom? Has the Holy Spirit used you to speak forth His truth in any of these ways?

What specific prophecies or words of knowledge or wisdom have been shared with you that impacted your life in a particular way? How did you test them for genuineness?

What is your response to the idea of the Spirit speaking to and through His people today? Do you share close fellowship with others who are walking in their gifting to bring praise to our Father? Yes or no? If not, why?

THE FATHER AND JESUS

Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation— The Holy Spirit:

Suffering, The Spirit's Agency for Change

"For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to bring you back again into fear; on the contrary, you received the Spirit, who makes us sons and by whose power we cry out 'Abba!' (that is, 'Dear Father!').

The Spirit himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of God; and if we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Messiah—provided we are suffering with him in order also to be glorified with him"

(Romans 8:15-17, JNT).

No one enjoys suffering. But along with your acceptance of our Father's Covenant comes the promise that you will indeed suffer. It's part of our Father's refining plan. Jesus suffered. Should our Father treat His children any differently by withholding that which helps to conform us to His Son's image?

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering (Hebrews 2:10).

Those who purpose to follow in their Master's steps should be well aware that those steps tread a path of suffering: *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21). Suffering for anyone who would be true to Jesus on their pilgrimage to salvation is not optional.

Why should His people undergo affliction? Wasn't the agony of Jesus enough? The many types of wounding we endure work to develop and mature us in ways that ease and complacency would never accomplish. Our Father explains through his servant Paul, himself no stranger to suffering, why that process is essential in our pilgrimage:

We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us (Romans 5:3-5).

Hope is the lifeline that keeps us focused on the narrow gate and a heavenly welcome. Satan offers us pleasure, then despair. Our Father offers us suffering, then hope—the confidence of His love for us *and* our welcome into heaven.

It would be so simple if we could just bask in our Father's care here on earth and then be zapped up into heaven before any trials come our way. However, that notion just doesn't fly scripturally. Nor does it bring honor to the Father Who sustains our brothers and sisters in persecuted lands during harsh torture and the loss of all things for the sake of Christ.

Peter never directed anguishing followers of Jesus to pray that their trials be snatched away from them. On the contrary, he exhorted them to undergo their trials with tenacious trust because of the goal set before them:

Rejoice in this [assurance of deliverance on the Last Day], even though for a little while you may have to experience grief in various trials. Even gold is tested for genuineness by fire. The purpose of these trials is so that your trust's genuineness which is far more valuable than perishable gold, is judged worthy of praise, glory and honor at the revealing of Jesus the Messiah (1 Peter 1:6,7, JNT).

All along your pilgrimage to salvation you'll find yourself crying out to God in your pain. Are there times when you've persevered in prayer and trust, only to feel as though the heavens are brass? This is part of the mystery of God for you: Can you by faith cling to His promise to never forsake you even when it *seems* He's not responding to your grief?

The power of your testimony intensifies its impact on others when they see that the Holy Spirit has not only *sustained* you in the midst of the fire but has actually brought you to the point of *thanksgiving* for the suffering because of the glory God receives through you.

For example, for years a friend had struggled with a debilitating illness. Then her husband became seriously ill and was unable to work. Hospital bills accumulated.

She'd been asked to address a large group of women about her testimony of God's sustaining power. She found,

though, that she couldn't quite bridge the gap between seeing herself as either a *victim* of adverse circumstances or a *participant* in a process of refinement that could strengthen and encourage others who might face similar trials.

Depending on how she presented her pilgrimage, her audience might empathize with her pain and thank God that they themselves hadn't faced such trials. Or, they would give glory to God if grateful joy of His faithfulness characterized her account.

She made a decision. He had indeed healed the sting of what she'd endured and had granted her the privilege of joining Him in the cup of suffering. That's why her subsequent testimony brought glory to God and comforting hope to fellow sufferers!

What is your view of suffering as an instrument of refinement in our Lord's hands?

What character transformation have you undergone as a result of a personal season of trial or suffering?

How often do you pray for our suffering family in Jesus who are being persecuted around the world? When did you last share of your own means with organizations that help to meet their needs and bring them comfort and encouragement?

THE FATHER AND JESUS

Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation— The Holy Spirit:

Grumbling Grieves The Spirit and Impedes Spiritual Growth

“And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!”
(1 Corinthians 10:10-11, JNT).

If you're unable to accept the sometimes disquieting methods of character development that our Father uses, your growth in spiritual maturity will be hindered.

Sharing the *cup of suffering* is one of His most effective means of drawing us to trust Him more. Yet, in a culture of false, man-pleasing gospels, suffering is a nemesis: “If you're suffering, there must be *something wrong* with you.” (Remember the finger-pointing of Job's buddies?) Our Father, however, uses the fires of affliction to *burn away the dross* of worldliness and self-reliance.

And how do we so often respond to these opportunities to learn greater dependence on our Father? We grumble. We complain that we don't deserve such irritations or assaults. But when we protest to God, all other spiritual development stops.

Paul was serious when he reminded the followers of Jesus in Corinth (and us as well) that those who discard their trust in their faithful Lord and choose to grumble will face consequences. Think of how we in whom the Holy Spirit dwells grieve Him by ignoring His loving sovereignty! To Him is the absolute right as the Potter to trim away from us anything He needs to, in any way He sees fit.

[Mike]: I remember a time our Lord dealt with me about my grumbling. We'd been working hard at our retreat ministry/farm. Most weeks required 80 hours of work, and we had little time off. Our teenage son, Mike, had been accepted to go to Irian Jaya for the summer with Teen Mission. We intended to drive him from Connecticut to the training camp in Florida with a stop at Disney World first.

The night before we were to depart, Mike and I were wrestling. Somehow I twisted my back. All throughout the trip, including our time at Disney World, I fought off agonizing pain. After we dropped Mike off, Sue and I headed north for several stops to visit friends.

I was getting more weary by the day as I struggled with the pain. I began grumbling to our Father, "We've been working hard for months. Surely you want to bless us with a great vacation!" I received no healing and heard no reply.

When we arrived at our next stop near Philadelphia, our friend was tossing a frisbee to his son on the front lawn. The moment I got out of the car he threw the frisbee to me. As I returned it I felt a little click in my lower back—and I was healed! Later, the Lord convicted me about my false expectations and showed me how I had grieved the Holy Spirit with my grumbling and distrust.

Our Lord wants *convinced* and *convicted* people to represent Him to the world. If your personal theology expects that God exists to do your bidding and make your road to heaven smooth, you've swallowed a lie. Jesus most certainly promises His unfailing Presence in the lives of His followers—in His vast love, He knows how much we need Him as we undergo the *spiritually rigorous* pattern of life He modeled for us.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it (Matthew 16:24,25).

Our Master uses *convicted* people—those who are so persuaded about Who He is that they've chosen to set aside their own desires in order to daily be willing to put Him first. Then they follow through with obedient trust. The Holy Spirit instills *increasing conviction* in those who keep in step with Him as they run life's course trusting in His loving faithfulness to undergird them.

Remember, this isn't a pathway of self-effort and begrudging self-denial to prove that you're suffering for Him. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit enables you to be changed into the likeness of Jesus through grace.

Are you likely to grumble when faced with situations that are irritating or frustrating? How do you plan to cooperate with the Spirit and be changed?

How *convinced* and *convicted* are you as a follower of Jesus? What might He be telling you to leave behind so you can more willingly take up your cross daily and follow Him?

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

Paul isn't being brash when he asserts, “We have the *mind of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 2:16). Picture the sanctification process of your life in union with the Holy Spirit as running a gauntlet. Demonic attacks in the form of mental lies purpose to hinder you from pressing on any further. When you refuse to trust the Holy Spirit's power and instead give way to those lies, you bring sorrow to the Spirit of Jesus.

This is a reality about which Paul warned our predecessors in the faith: “And do **not** grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

Your *thought life* is the battle ground. Within your thought life you confront temptation. If those tantalizing thoughts linger, you develop emotions about them. Then you take action based on those emotions. If those actions become habitual, they captivate you, becoming sinful strongholds that influence that particular realm of your life:

Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and

enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers (James 1:14-16).

The vast majority of people who have sought help from us over the years shared a common thread. They entertain demons — unclean spirits — in their thought life. There comes a time when they want to escape the bondage that listening to these deceiving servants of Satan produces. For good reason our Lord warns His followers,

Demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up [in your mind] against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:6).

[See our book *Demolishing Strong-holds* for more on demonic hindrances.]

NO one can take your thoughts captive for you. To take your thoughts captive and bring them into obedience to the way Jesus thinks calls for personal spiritual discipline.

You *are* able to bring your thoughts into obedience to Jesus over time as you exercise that discipline. You begin to recognize that your *motivations* are being changed—you want intimacy with our Father and the joy of fulfilling His purposes more than you crave sinful satisfaction.

As you bring your thoughts into alignment with Jesus,

- First, your motivations change;
- Then, your behaviors and attitudes are altered by your motivations.

We often find ourselves rebuking the demonic spirits which are trying to use

the thoughts of our mind against us. Demonic voices can sound just like the voice of your own mind.

But you don't have to waver in uncertainty about whether you're hearing something from the demonic realm. If you reflect frequently on what you've read in the Bible, you develop discernment about the kind of thoughts that unclean spirits whisper. Aren't we told that "*Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light*" (2 Corinthians 11:14)?

Through the Spirit of Christ in you you can recognize when a demonic voice is imparting nothing that Jesus would think, say or do. Submit to the authority of our Father and rebuke that Adversary's servant in the Name of Jesus (see James 4:7). Then ask the Lord Jesus for *His* mind on the matter and take action based on that truth!

Unclean spirits insidiously labor to hinder you from walking in the Spirit. When you choose to entertain their lies, you play into the goal of Satan: you grieve the Spirit and become a grumbler. Paul warns against trying to mingle satanic internal agitation with the cleansing, edifying blood of our Savior's atonement:

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons (1 Corinthians 10:21).

We'd like to add:

**You cannot entertain
the voice of demons in your mind
and hear the Spirit's voice
or experience His power.
You become like
whomever you listen to.**

The indwelling Holy Spirit produces a way of life that becomes increasingly

Christ-like on your pilgrimage. He uses those in your extended spiritual family to help fill in the ruts of your old sinful actions and attitudes with ways that please our Father.

But listening to demons and believing their lies quenches the Holy Spirit's power and produces darkness of soul.

What demonic lies most often assail your thoughts? How do you respond to them? How should you respond in order to hear only the Holy Spirit in your thoughts?

To whom can you turn who you know will help you fill in your old sinful ruts? Are you willing to do this?

THE FATHER AND JESUS

Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation— The Holy Spirit:

Prayer: Trusting God to Respond

"After leaving them, [Jesus] went up on a mountainside to pray" (Mark 6:46).

Jesus' disciples knew from observation that even the Son of God relied on prayer time with His Father. Jesus found rest of spirit in that time of private intimacy, and was strengthened to act only according to His Father's will as they communed without distractions.

Earnest in their zeal to learn from

Him, they pleaded, “*Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples*” (Luke 11:1). Jesus replied to them and to all of us, “*When you pray, say: ‘Father, May Your name be kept holy. May Your Kingdom come...’*” (v. 2,CJB).

Prayer is *intimate communication* with our Father. As we praise and worship Him, confess and bow before Him, laugh and cry with Him, we draw strength from being attuned to His Presence. We’re reminded how holy and how loving He is, and that we are His servants to fulfill His Kingdom purposes.

Our Father already knows our needs. Our petitions and thanksgiving to Him indicate that we understand our dependence on Him to meet these needs. Our trust is stretched and deepened as we align our will with His so that whatever we ask in Jesus’ name and authority will find response from our Father (see John 15:16).

And just as the disciples asked Jesus to “*teach us to pray,*” the indwelling Spirit helps us, too, to pray so that God’s will might be accomplished:

...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will (Romans 8:26,27).

Answered prayer is one of many ways you can bring glory to our Father as you share testimony with others about His faithfulness. Remember, *your* part of the Covenant is to glorify our Father through the Son’s intervention! (See John 14:13.) Your repentance and our Father’s willingness to answer your prayers are intricate-

ly connected.

Keeping a clean heart-slate is essential if you want your prayers to penetrate our Father’s ear. As we mentioned previously, Peter warns about failing to repent and entertaining sin in our lives:

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil (1 Peter 3:12).

Another word for “evil-doing” is *lawlessness*. A lawless person has no concern for the commands of God and consequently doesn’t repent. Our God is *holy*, and His answers are designed to fulfill His purposes on behalf of those who cherish that holiness. God refuses to answer the prayers of the unrepentant.

How would you describe your prayer life? Intense? Obligatory? Uplifting? Rote? Rare? What do you need to do to draw closer to Him in prayer?

What prayers has our Father answered recently on your behalf or on behalf of those for whom you’ve interceded?

Have you made known to friends, neighbors and co-workers that you come before our Father regularly to pray, and that you’d be glad to bring before Him their concerns? Yes or no? If no, why not?

Please ask yourself, “What evidence of His freedom in *my* life can I testify about to others?”

THE FATHER AND JESUS
Part 4. The Seal Of Consummation—
The Holy Spirit: *Remember, Our*
Father’s Children Are Free!

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

As the Spirit deepens His sanctification process of your mind, will and emotions, your life grows in the freedom Jesus promises. Being transformed into His likeness ensures that the *freedom* in which we walk doesn’t stray into worldly license.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17,18).

We hope that each one who lives in Covenant with our Father can proclaim a phrase that comes to us each year:

“The person I was last year at this time wouldn’t recognize me now because of what the Spirit has changed!”

Since our research 13 years ago in Jerusalem, our Father has given us a dignity in Him that we hadn’t known in the previous 16 years of following Jesus. And along with His dignity comes increasing freedom to walk more fearlessly in union with Him.

Final Exhortation

We hesitate to offer further discussion about the Holy Spirit. If you want to know more, you need to read the Book He inspired and ask Him for wisdom and revelation to apply it to your life.

As in our marriage union, knowledge of each other grew as our relationship together deepened and matured. We believe you’ll find this process true of the Spirit.

If you don’t harden your heart and grieve, quench or blaspheme Him, you’ll yearn to know (and be known by) Him more deeply. Then you’ll understand as the martyred prophet did: *“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty*” (Zechariah 4:6).

We take heart that these lessons on the Holy Spirit have helped you and those with whom you’re in relationship to understand and to *live* the pilgrimage of the true Gospel. First and foremost, your faith journey is a heart issue, one of devotion, trust and desire.

If you like formulas and rules so you can feel good about your obedience checklist, then our Father’s Covenant isn’t for you. But if you want a life of *loving intimacy* and the trust of *childlike dependence* on our Father, live in His Spirit by the stipulations of His Covenant. Remember, *Your Salvation Pilgrimage both Begins and Continues* as you walk in His indwelling power according to His truth.

Be diligent to renew your Covenant with our Father by affirming His stipulations as you partake of the body and blood of Jesus. Make it your goal to live a life that glorifies our Father!

What a wonderful moment when Jesus declares each of us His *called, chosen, and faithful!* His promises are true, and great is our hope to see Him face-to-face:

*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for **those who love him**—but God has revealed it to us **by his Spirit**. The **Spirit searches all things**, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?*

*In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God **except the Spirit of God**... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in **words taught by the Spirit**, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words (1 Corinthians 2:9-11,13).*