

Life In The



Spirit

to know the Person, Power & Passion of Jesus Christ



Discipleship
Course

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

A New Creation

Called & Commissioned

The Gifts of the Spirit:

Knowing gifts

Speaking gifts

Doing gifts

The Fruit of the Spirit:

Love in Nine Flavours

Building up the Body:

Love builds up

Healthy Relationships

Reaching Out:

Evangelism & Mission

Session 1: A New Creation



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"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"
2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

When we have been born *anōthen* from above supernaturally by the Holy Spirit as Jesus said, we are like a baby who has just been born. The only difference is that it is our spirit that has come alive and is now able to experience God as our heavenly Father. That is why Paul also says:

"All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit, when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.'" For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children."

Romans 8:14-16 NLT

Some Evidence of Being Born *anōthen*



Questions

Can you identify with any of the signs above that a person has been born *anōthen*?
How else have you experienced God as your heavenly Father?

Following Jesus Day by Day



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Surrendering Control to Jesus

Jesus said we need to stay rooted and grounded in him every day because *apart from him we can do nothing.* **John 15:5 NIV**

So the first thing we need to do each day is to surrender ourselves to him and let him lead us where he wants to go. One way of doing this is to pray a prayer like the one below.

A Prayer Surrendering My Will to Jesus

"Dear LORD Jesus, I surrender my will to you today for you to work your will in me and through me. I ask you to cleanse me of secret sins - the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, pride and the tendency to want to go my way - and to fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit to be able to do what you want me to do today because I ask it in your name and for your glory. Amen."

Practising the Spiritual Disciplines Jesus Practised

Jesus maintained his intimate relationship with God as his Father by practising four spiritual disciplines each day.

- He **spent time alone with God in a quiet place**
- He **listened to God in prayer, Bible reading, meditation and fasting**
- He **talked to God in prayer**
- He **praised and worshipped God** with his life and with his lips.

If we want to follow Jesus, we need to do what he did by


- **listening for his voice**, and
- **following where he leads in obedient faith** [For more look at the booklet on *Listening to God*].

Questions

Why should we pray a prayer of surrender each day to Jesus?
How can we maintain our relationship with God the way Jesus did?
How does God speak to you most regularly?
eg in prayer times; while reading Scripture and meditating on a verse or passage?

Session 2: Called & Commissioned



Called and commissioned to serve Jesus  Adobe Stock

Jesus' Calling & Commission to His Disciples

In Mark's Gospel we read that Jesus went up a mountain and selected twelve of the many people following him to serve as his closest followers, or disciples (Latin: *discipulus* = a learner).

"Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve to be with him and to send them out to preach and have authority to drive out demons."

Mark 3:13-15 NIV

In Luke's Gospel we read that Jesus gave them the commission to **proclaim the arrival of the kingdom-rule of God wherever they went, to heal the sick and to set the captives free from demonic bondage.**

Luke 9:1-5 NIV

Later he sent out seventy-two others in pairs with his authority and power and the same commission:

(a) to **PROCLAIM the Good News** that God is in control, not Satan

Isaiah 52:7

(b) to **DEMONSTRATE the reality by healing the sick and setting the captives free** **Luke 10:1-20 NIV**

Before he left Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit to be in them and enable them to do what he had done.

Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And assuredly, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

An Example of the Disciples Doing What Jesus Did

Read **Acts 3:1-26**

- Q1 What was the beggar looking for?
- Q2 What did Peter get the man to do? Why?
- Q3 By whose authority was the man healed?
- Q4 What else did Peter do?

Questions

What was the most important thing Jesus wanted from his disciples when he chose the twelve?

What authority and power did Jesus give his disciples?

What did Jesus tell his disciples to do in 'The Great Commission' in Matthew's Gospel?

In what two ways did Peter and John obey Jesus' commission?

Life in the Spirit

Session 3: The Supernatural Gifts of the Holy Spirit



KNOWING GIFTS

- WORD OF WISDOM
- WORD OF KNOWLEDGE
- DISCERNING OF SPIRITS



SPEAKING GIFTS

- TONGUES
- INTERPRETATION
- PROPHECY



DOING GIFTS

- FAITH FOR MIRACLES
- GIFTS OF HEALINGS
- MIRACLES

In **1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11** Paul describes the supernatural gifts which are distributed by the Holy Spirit to individuals for **building up the Body of Christ** and **empowering** Jesus' disciples to do what he taught them to do, namely:

- PROCLAMATION of the Good News** of the kingdom-rule of God, not Satan
- DEMONSTRATION of the kingdom-rule of God** through healing and deliverance

These gifts are grouped under three headings as shown above.

Gifts of Knowing: Word of Wisdom & Word of Knowledge

The purpose of these gifts is to reveal what is happening supernaturally so as to demonstrate that God really is in control, even if it does not appear that way.

A classic example of the gifts of **Word of Wisdom** and **Word of Knowledge** is to be found in **John Chapter 4 verses 1-42**

Read John 4:1-42 Jesus Meets a Samaritan Woman at a Well

- Q1 Who takes the initiative? Jesus or the woman?
- Q2 Why is the woman surprised at Jesus asking her for a drink?
- Q3 How does Jesus tap into the woman's real need? What is she really looking for deep down?
- Q4 What is her reaction to Jesus' statement? Why do you think she reacts in that way?
- Q5 Jesus receives a *Word of Wisdom* from God in verse 16. What is it? What does it do?
- Q6 He then receives a *Word of Knowledge* about the woman in verses 17-18. What is it?
- Q7 What is the effect of these two supernatural gifts of the Spirit on the woman?
- Q8 What is the result of the interaction (verses 28-30 and 39-42)?

Notice that **(a) A Word of Wisdom exposes a problem** in order to solve it.

(b) A Word of Knowledge is the supernatural revelation about a person or situation the person ministering could not have known otherwise.

Questions

- What was the Word of Wisdom Jesus received?
What Word of Knowledge did the Holy Spirit reveal to him?
What were the results for (a) the woman and (b) others?

Life in the Spirit

Spiritual Gifts: Discerning of Spirits

Natural Discernment

Observation, Diagnostic Methods

Divine Discernment

General spiritual discernment

Discerning of demonic spirits
Identification of specific spirits

Demonic Discernment

Mediumship Clairvoyance
Spiritualism Clairaudience

Discernment is telling the difference between two or more things - for example, good and evil, right and wrong, truth and lies.

- **Natural Discernment** involves human intuition, diagnostic methods and reasoning
- **Supernatural Discernment** involves a spiritual anointing, *either* divine *or* demonic (occult) which may be general or specific.

Three Kinds Of Discernment

In this chapter we see three different sources of what we might call 'discernment' in response to Jesus asking: *"Who do people say that I am?"*

A. Natural Wisdom of the World (vv13-14)

The general opinion is that he's John the Baptist or Elijah come back to life, or one of the prophets.

B. Divine Spiritual Discernment (vv15-18)

Peter under the unction of the Holy Spirit blurts out:

"You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

Jesus confirms the divine origin of this outburst by saying the Father had given Peter this knowledge.

C. A Demonic Utterance (vv21-23)

Peter, who only moments earlier had been under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, finds himself earning the sternest rebuke Jesus gave to any of his disciples when Peter says he will not allow Jesus to be executed.

This brings the rejoinder from Jesus:

"Get behind me, satan! You're a stumbling block to me; you're not thinking God's (supernatural) thoughts but only of human (natural) concerns."

Two Types of Divine Discernment

General spiritual discernment is given to all those who have been born *anōthen* by the Holy Spirit. It is a sort of 'spiritual radar' that warns you of spiritual danger or the presence of demonic activity.

Specific spiritual discernment is a gift of the Holy Spirit for a specific situation; for example, when ministering to a person who is demonised. It gives information about the specific spirit(s) involved.

Questions

What is meant by 'discernment'?


What three kinds of discernment do we see in Matthew 16:13-23?

What is the difference between general and specific divine discernment?

The Importance of Spiritual Discernment



Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing

 SarahRichterArt, Pixabay.com

Jesus' Warnings about Fakes

In **Matthew Chapter 24** Jesus warned his disciples not to be deceived by people claiming to perform signs & wonders as proof of their spiritual authority. Paul also warned the Corinthian Christians that satan can counterfeit the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so it is no surprise his ministers can transform themselves into angels of light **2 Corinthians 11:14-15**.

The Dangers Of Seeking Signs & Wonders

- They appeal to our **fleshly desire for thrills and the spectacular**
- They open us up to **the danger of being deceived by false prophets & false teachers**
- They reveal **our unbelief/lack of trust in God's Word & Christ's Finished Work on the Cross**

Genuine signs and wonders (such as divine healing or deliverance from demonic spirits) sometimes accompany, or follow, the preaching of God's Word (**Acts 14:1-3; Romans 15:17-19**), but they are the *product* of the Holy Spirit's presence, not the *purpose* for preaching the gospel (**Hebrews 2:1-4**)

How to Avoid being Deceived

The way to avoid being fooled by the fakes is to maintain a close relationship with Jesus day by day by practising the spiritual disciplines Jesus practised:

- **Spending time alone with God**
- **Listening to God through *prayer, Bible reading, meditating on what you have read, and fasting***
- **Talking to God in *prayer* and listening to his reply**
- **Praising and worshipping God** in song and obedient service

Putting on the whole armour of God each day and surrendering your will to God, asking him to guard you from being deceived by being filled with the Holy Spirit, who Jesus said will guide us into all truth.

The Ultimate Test


The ultimate way to test whether a person is real or fake, Jesus said, is to look at the kind of fruit s/he is producing (**Matthew 7:15-20**). Does what they do draw people closer to God or away from him? Does their behaviour reflect the character and behaviour we see of Jesus in the New Testament?

Questions

What did Jesus warn his followers against? Why?
How can we guard against being deceived?

Session 4: Spiritual Gifts – Gifts of Speaking



 Priscilla du Pleeze, Unsplash

Paul on Gifts of Speaking

In **1 Corinthians 14** Paul describes three gifts of speaking:

- **Tongues as a private prayer language**
- **Tongues with Interpretation**
- **Prophecy**

The Problem of Tongues Down The Centuries

The subject of tongues in the New Testament has been used by the enemy as a powerful weapon against Christians down the centuries, by those who believe the gifts of the Spirit died out with the death of the apostles, by those who claimed you are not a Christian unless you speak in tongues, and by others who have failed to distinguish between tongues as a private prayer language and tongues with interpretation.

In **1 Corinthians 14** Paul mentions both **tongues as a private prayer language** and **tongues with interpretation** as a gift of the Spirit for particular situations.

Tongues as a Private Prayer Language

Paul says that he prayed in tongues more than any of the Corinthians.

"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church, I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue." (vv18-19)

"For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit." (v2)

"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise, when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified." (vv14-17)

Paul draws a distinction between **tongues as a private prayer language** which edifies, or builds up, the individual but is not helpful for others, **tongues with interpretation** (v17), and **prophecy** (vv4-5)

"Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified."

Questions

Why have has the topic of tongues been a problem?
What is the difference between tongues as a private prayer language and tongues with interpretation?

Gifts of the Spirit - Tongues, Interpretation & Prophecy



Speaking gifts

📷 Kane Reinholdtsen, Unsplash

In **1 Corinthians 14:1-19** Paul distinguishes between **Tongues as a Private Prayer Language**, the gift of **Tongues with Interpretation** and the gift of **Prophecy**. It is a bit confusing, but careful examination of the passage reveals the points he is making.

***1** Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. **2** For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. **3** But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. **4** Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. **5** I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified (emphasis added).*

Notes: Each person should eagerly desire to receive gifts of the Spirit, especially **prophecy**, because it builds up the Body of Christ (vv 3 and 5). **Tongues as a private prayer language is a person speaking to God and building himself/herself up** (vv2 and 4) whereas **prophecy edifies, or builds up, the Church**.

***6** Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?**10** Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. **11** If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. **12** So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.*

Notes: **Speaking in tongues is unintelligible to others "unless there is an interpretation, bringing revelation, knowledge, prophecy or word of instruction"** (vv 6 and 9). So **concentrate on those gifts like prophecy and tongues with interpretation that build up the Church** (v12)


***13** For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. **14** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. **15** So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. **16** Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? **17** You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. **18** I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. **19** But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

Notes: If someone prays in tongues in a church meeting, s/he should pray that they or someone else interprets it (v13). **If I pray in tongues in a church meeting without interpretation, an inquirer or visitor will not know what I am saying and so will not be able to say 'Amen!' to my prayer. I may be praying and praising and giving thanks to God (using my private prayer language), but no one else is edified**

Tongues with Interpretation: A Written Example



Belshazzar's Feast: Painting by Rembrandt van Rijn

 Creative Commons

Paul says that **Tongues with Interpretation** is for **unbelievers** in a church meeting. We don't have an example of this speaking gift in the New Testament. But there is an example of a **tongue with interpretation** in the Old Testament account of Belshazzar's Feast in **Daniel 5:1-31**.

King Belshazzar of Babylon had thrown a lavish banquet to which he had invited his nobles, his wives and his concubines. In the middle of the feast, he ordered the gold and silver goblets that had been plundered from the Temple in Jerusalem by his father Nebuchadnezzar to be brought in for them to drink from - an act of utter sacrilege. They proceeded to drink from the goblets and praise the Babylonian idols of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood.

In the midst of the drinking, a ghostly hand appeared and began writing on the plaster wall of the banquet hall. The words in Aramaic read (from right to left):

מִנָּה מִנָּה טֶקֶל וּפְרִסִין
[MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN]

Belshazzar summoned his wise men, soothsayers, and seers, but none of them could read the words. Finally, the Queen remembered Daniel has extraordinary wisdom and ability to interpret dreams. When he has been summoned, Belshazzar asks Daniel to interpret the dream.

*"And this is the inscription that was written: **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.***

This is the interpretation of each word.

MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;

TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;

UPHARSIN: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." **Daniel 5:24-28**

The words were confirmed, we are told in verses 30-31, after Daniel was promoted and that same night Belshazzar was assassinated.

Questions

- Why could the Babylonian wise men not interpret the writing on the wall?
- How was Daniel was able to read and translate the words?
- How do we know the interpretation was correct?

Session 5: Spiritual Gifts - Prophecy

Prophecy is the most important of the speaking gifts, Paul says, because it is God speaking to his children to build up the Body of Christ. It consists of God speaking in two ways:

- **Forth-telling** involving rebuking, encouraging, instructing, and comforting God's people
- **Fore-telling** warning about things to come

Prophecy as Speaking for God

A prophet is someone who speaks out what God has told him/her to speak as his spokesperson. The Bible includes both male and female prophets. The primary role of the prophet is to call people to repent of their waywardness and turn to God, who has loved them with an everlasting love (**Jeremiah 31:3**)

Prophecy as Forth-telling

Prophecy in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament we see God saying there are both *true* spokesmen and women and *false* prophets, who prophesied for money and told people what they wanted to hear. In **Jeremiah 23:16-23** we read:

'This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes.

They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.

They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The LORD says: You will have peace.'

And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.'

But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word?

Who has listened and heard his word?

See, the storm of the LORD will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the heads of the wicked.

The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart.

In days to come you will understand it clearly.

I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message;

I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied.

But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.

God sent his prophets like Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah to warn ungodly kings to repent or expect his punishment. But God also used his prophets to comfort his children and encourage them to trust in the God, who had delivered them from bondage in Egypt and promised to bless them and their descendants, if they observed the conditions of his covenant with his Chosen People, Israel.

Prophecy in the New Testament

We see the same role of prophets in the New Testament being to call people to repent of their sin and turn to God. This was the key message of both John the Baptist and Jesus himself, who began his ministry by saying:

*' "The time has come," [Jesus] said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" ' **Mark 1:4,15** NIV*

This proclamation of the good news that God was in control, not Satan, was confirmed by a demonstration of it by miracles of healings and deliverance of individuals from bondage to demons. This was the message Jesus relayed to John the Baptist, when he was languishing in Herod Antipas' dungeon awaiting execution for calling Herod to repent of his adultery with his brother Philip's wife :

*"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor." **Luke 7:22** NIV*

Questions

What are the two roles of the prophet in the Bible?
What was Jesus' primary message? How was it confirmed?

Prophecy as Fore-telling the Future



The Siege & Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD Painting by David Roberts 1848

 Wikimedia Commons

In the Old Testament

The other role of the prophet was to warn people about God's anger at their sins and his punishment for breaking their side of the Covenant. This was especially true of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, each of whom warned of God's wrath and the punishment that was to come in the exile to Babylon and oppression by foreign powers.

The key test of the prophet was that his prophecies about the coming disaster actually were confirmed by subsequent events. Ironically, another test was that his prophecies would be rejected before being confirmed.

In the New Testament

In the New Testament we also see prophecy as fore-telling in **Acts 11:27-29** where Agabus prophesied a famine, that happened in the reign of the Emperor Claudius.

Perhaps more famous was Jesus' prophecy of the Fall of Jerusalem in **Mark 13:1-2**:

"As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

Some writers have claimed Jesus' prophecy was not fulfilled because the Wailing Wall is still standing. But recent archaeological findings have shown this to be false.

*"In his book, The Archaeology of the Jerusalem Area (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), Harold Mare, former president of the Near East Archaeological Society, notes: "We do not have **any** remains of the Herodian temple itself because of the devastating Roman destruction in A.D. 70."*


Question

What is the test of true prophecy claiming to predict the future?

Session 6: Spiritual Gifts: Doing Gifts



Deliverance breaks demonic bondages

 Peter Denovo Adobe Stock

Doing Gifts: Faith, Healings & Miracles

In **1 Corinthians 12:9-10a** Paul lists three gifts of the Spirit involving doing something, beginning with the gift of faith.

Two Kinds of Faith

There are two kinds of faith - both of them a gift from God.

- **Saving Faith** is what we receive when we have repented of going our own way, asked God to forgive our sins and are born *anthen* by the Holy Spirit at conversion
- **Faith as a Gift of the Spirit** is given to an individual for a specific occasion in order to perform some kind of action that will draw people to Jesus

It is this latter kind of faith Paul is talking about here.

What is Faith?

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as

"being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see." NET

In **Mark 11:22-24** Jesus tells the disciples that faith can move mountains.

*"Jesus said to them, **'Have faith in God.** I tell you the truth, if someone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. For this reason, I tell you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."* NIV

What Jesus Actually Said

What Jesus actually said in the Greek text is: ***Echete pistin Theou*** which can mean either **Have** (Imperative Order) **(the) faith of God** (Genitive) or **You have** (Indicative Present Tense) **(the) faith of God** (Genitive).

What Jesus is stressing is the importance of having God-given faith as opposed to man-initiated hope-so faith.


Questions

- The Bible describes two kinds of faith: what are they?
What kind of faith is Paul describing in 1 Corinthians 12:9-10?
What kind of faith does Jesus say can move mountains?

How Do I Get God-given Faith That Moves Mountains?



Norwegian fjord scene

 Vidar Nordli-Mathisen on [Unsplash](#)

How Faith Comes

In **Romans 10:17** Paul says that ***“faith comes through hearing and hearing through a rhema of Christ.”***

Note: Again, translators mistranslate the Greek text by translating it as “the word of God” or “the message about God.”

Hebrews 6:13-15 describes the features of Abraham’s faith in terms of four things:

- Abraham **heard** God’s **rhema** or **voice**
- He **believed** God’s **word and obeyed**
- He **waited patiently** on God’s **timing**
- He **received** what God **promised**

When Jesus told the disciples they needed “*God-given faith*” he was saying:

“You need to hear me speak a rhema word to you and believe what you hear and obey. Then you need to wait on my timing and you will receive what I have promised. That way, if I tell you to order a mountain to fall into the sea, it will be done for you because I have promised it will happen.”

Doing What Jesus Did

Jesus is only telling us to do what he did. In **John 5:19-20** Jesus said:

“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.”

Later in **John 15:5** Jesus tells the disciples:

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

In other words, we need to listen to what God says and do what he tells us. Then we will see him doing what he has promised.


Questions

- How do we get ‘God-given’ faith according to Paul?
- What gave Abraham the faith to believe God would do what he said?
- How did Jesus know what God wanted him to do?
- What do we need if we want to have the faith that moves mountains? Why?

Spiritual Gifts: Gifts of Healings



Jesus heals a man born blind

 Lumo: The Gospel for a Visual World Lightstock

Jesus' Holistic Ministry of Healing Body, Soul & Spirit

In **1 Corinthians 12:9** Paul talks about supernatural **Gifts of Healings** plural. That is because **Jesus' healing ministry was to the whole person - body, soul and spirit**. It included **physical healing of sickness and disease, healing of mental and emotional traumas**, as well as **deliverance from spiritual bondage to demonic spirits**.

Jesus healed all kinds of **physical diseases** including:

- blindness
- deafness
- fever
- haemorrhagic bleeding
- lameness
- leprosy
- paralysis

He healed **emotional anguish** born from guilt or shame or **bereavement**

- forgiveness of the woman caught in adultery and threatened with being stoned to death
- comforting the bereaved

He also **delivered individuals who were afflicted with demonic spirits**

- a severely demonised man
- a woman delivered from a number of demonic spirits
- a young boy suffering from deaf-mutism from a demonic spirit

Jesus' Commission to Heal the Sick, Bind up the Broken-hearted & Set Captives Free

Before his return to heaven Jesus gave his disciples his power and authority to heal the sick and set the captives free in his name [**Luke 9:1-5; 10:1-20**]


Questions

- How would you describe Jesus' ministry of healing?
- What was Jesus' command to his disciples before he return to heaven?
- How are his disciples today able to do what Jesus did?

Spiritual Gifts - Miracles as Signs & Wonders



Performing miracles that catch people's attention

 Manipulateur, Adobe Stock

Healings and performing miracles are some of the ways God uses **signs and wonders** to point people to himself through faith in Christ. They are not to be an end in themselves, and Jesus was scathing about "a wicked and adulterous generation that looks for signs and wonders." **Matthew 12:39-40 NIV** He said that the only sign they would get would be the Sign of Jonah.

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." **Matthew 12:40 NIV**

Jesus' Warning Against Seeking Signs & Wonders Matthew 24:24

Signs and wonders, in the form of healings, deliverances and miracles, sometimes accompany the proclamation of the Good News that God is in control, not Satan. But Jesus also warned that there are false teachers, prophets and workers of miracles, who will try to deceive "even the elect if that were possible."

Signs and wonders should always point to God, not to the person ministering. A classic example is in **Acts 3:1-23**, where the healing of the lame man is followed by Peter and John calling people to repent of their sins and turn to God. **Demonstration of God's Works** is followed by **Proclamation of God's Word**. Peter says in verses 16-20:

"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus."

Questions

What is the point of signs and wonders?

Why does Jesus warn us against seeking them for their own sake?

What did Jesus mean by saying the only sign he would give people was the Sign of Jonah?


In Acts Chapter 3 the *demonstration* of God's Works was followed by the *proclamation* of God's Word. How?

Have you witnessed God's supernatural healing or deliverance of a person?

What was the effect?

Session 7: The Fruit of the Spirit - Love in Nine Flavours



 d_s30 on Pixabay

God's Agape-Love is Supernatural

When Jesus talks about love, the word in Greek is **agape**. It is a love that is out of this world and emanates from the heart of God, who the Bible says *is* love. The only Person who is able to give us this love is the Holy Spirit as we surrender our lives to Jesus. In **1 Corinthians Chapter 13** God's supernatural *agape*-love is the glue that holds the Body of Christ together, without which the gifts of the Spirit are like the crashing of cymbals or the banging of a gong.

One Fruit in Nine Flavours

In **Galatians 5:21-22** Paul says the fruit of the Spirit is a single fruit - *agape*-love - in nine flavours or expressions of God's character he wants to form in each of his children. These have been described as

- **Joy** is.....love singing
- **Peace** islove resting
- **Patience** is.....love enduring
- **Kindness** is.....love caring
- **Goodness** is.....love in action
- **Faithfulness** is.....love persevering
- **Gentleness** is.....love touching
- **Self-Control** is.....love denying self

The Process of Fruit Production

In **John 15:1-5** Jesus says that our heavenly Father is the Gardener, who tends his vineyard - us. And Jesus says that we are like grape-vines that are rooted in Him.

"I am the True Vine, and My Father is the gardener...Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the tree, so you cannot be fruitful apart from me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

We do not produce the fruit of the Spirit - the Holy Spirit does, as we are surrendered to Jesus every day. And Jesus says that God will prune us in order to produce more fruit if we remain in Jesus. To do that we need to be rooted and grounded in Jesus, reading the Word and being filled with the Holy Spirit every day, Paul says in **Ephesians 3:14-21** and **5:18**.

Questions

- What is the difference between what the world calls 'love' and God's love?
How does Paul describe this love in 1 Corinthians 13?
Who produces the fruit of the Spirit in us?
How does God grow this love in us?

Session 8: Building Healthy Relationships in the Body of Christ



Building healthy relationships

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Paul on Building Healthy Relationships

In **Colossians Chapter 3** Paul describes the way those who have been born *anthen* by the Holy Spirit should live. Below is a summary of what he says.

1. Get God's Perspective on life

- You have been raised with Christ and seated in heavenly realms. Focus on Him, not earthly stuff

2. Get Rid Of Sin In Your Life through confession and repentance

- Put off the old nature with its lusts, anger, lying, filthy language

3. Clothe Yourself with Christ's Character: The Fruit of the Spirit

- Put on the new nature which is being transformed into the likeness of Christ by the Holy Spirit
- Clothe yourselves with the character of Jesus by being gentle, considerate, humble, patient, bearing with one another, forgiving those who hurt you, and above all be filled with God's *agape*-love and be thankful

4. Do Everything as if You are Doing it for Jesus

- Do everything in the name of the LORD Jesus, submitting to one another out of love for him

The Importance of Learning to Forgive Those Who have Hurt You

In **Colossians 3:13** Paul says we must forgive those who have hurt us because God has forgiven our sins through Jesus' death on the Cross. I need to

- understand my sin cost Jesus his life on the Cross in my place
- forgive everyone who has hurt me, otherwise God will not forgive me **Matthew 6:14-15 NIV**

Questions

Paul says we need to get our perspective right. How?
What do we need to take off? How?
What do we need to put on?
How can we build healthy relationships in the Body of Christ?
Why is forgiveness an order, not an option for Christians?

Session 9: Reaching Out To Others - Evangelism



📷 Nick Fewings on Unsplash

"Evangelism is one beggar telling another where he found a crust of bread." DT Niles, NY Times, 1986

Sharing Our Experience of God's Love

Jesus' commission to his disciples in **Acts 1:8** was to be his **witnesses** (Greek: *martyres*) to the ends of the earth, after they had received the power of the Holy Spirit.

A **witness** is someone who testifies to what s/he personally has seen and heard. So we are called and commissioned by Jesus to share what we have experienced of God's grace and mercy to us with those with whom we come into contact - wherever we may be. In a coffee shop or pub, on a bus or train, at work, in the supermarket, at the sports centre, on holiday. In fact anywhere, any time and often in the most unexpected places!

Key Needs For Evangelism

To share the Good News that God is in control, not Satan, we need:

- to have been born *anathen* and experienced the reality of God's love for ourselves
- to be filled with the Holy Spirit and know that apart from Jesus we can do nothing
- to be willing and able to share my experience of Jesus' love and compassion as the LORD sets up 'divine appointments' to share with others in his way and in his timing

Jesus' Example of How to Share the Good News

A classic example of how to share God's love with someone is to be seen in **John 4:1-42 Jesus' Meeting with the Woman at the Well of Sychar**. *Read the story and look at the questions below.*

Questions

- What was special about God's arrangement of this 'divine appointment'?
- What was the apparent need that provided the starting-point?
- How did Jesus know what the woman's real need was?
- How did the woman react to Jesus' statement to begin with? Why?
- How did the Holy Spirit unlock the real problem?
- What was her response?
- What was the eventual result of the meeting?
- Share your experience of a 'divine appointment' with the group

Session 10: Reaching Out To Others - Mission



MAF flies planes to remote places that are difficult to reach

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Jesus' Great Commission

Before he returned to heaven Jesus gave his disciples his final instructions in **Matthew 28:18-20**:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." NIV

A **missionary** is someone 'sent' out to share the Good News of the Gospel to people who don't know Jesus (The word 'missionary' comes from Latin: *mitto*=I send; the word 'apostle' comes from Greek *apostello*=I send) and to carry out The Great Commission. This consists, Jesus said, in four things:

- Being sent out by a fellowship to share God's love demonstrated in Jesus' death and resurrection
- Making disciples, not converts, who will follow Jesus and obey his commands
- Baptising these new disciples in water in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- Teaching them to do what Jesus taught his disciples and the seventy-two **Luke 9:1-5; 10:1-20** NIV
 - by (a) **proclaiming the Good News that God is in control, not Satan**
 - (b) **demonstrating it by healing the sick and setting the captives free from demonic bondage**

The History of Christian Missions

The first Christian missionaries were from the disciples and the three thousand, who were baptised by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They spread the Gospel across the Roman empire. The most famous of them were the apostles, all of whom except John were martyred for their faith, and Paul, who was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and whose missionary journeys are chronicled in **Acts 9-28**.

The Origin & History of a Christian Mission

The photo above is of **Missionary Aviation Fellowship**, which began with several World War II pilots who had a vision for how aviation could be used to spread the Christian faith. After the War, Jim Truxton of the U.S., Murray Kendon in the United Kingdom, and Edwin Hartwig of Australia, with the support of like-minded Christians, founded missionary aviation agencies in their respective countries.

Choose A Missionary Organisation & Research Its Origins & Development

- How did the organisation begin?
- What were its stated aims?
- How has it developed over the years?
- Do you or your fellowship support missionaries?

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The 3:10 Discipleship Course

Life In The Spirit



Discipleship
Course