The Holy Spirit and the Christian

by Ron Dunn

I WANT TO SHARE with you a basic precept of victorious Christian living - my inability to do anything for myself in the spiritual realm.

Repeat it, memorise it, believe it! For until you come to realise and acknowledge this truth, you are going to meet with repeated failure.

For this reason God has given to every believer His Holy Spirit. Before Jesus went to the cross He gave this promise to His followers: ‘I will not leave you helpless orphans...’ (John 14 v 18a Williams Translation). Jesus recognised that His disciples would be able to do nothing for themselves in the spiritual realm, therefore, He promised to do something that would fill the void left by His departure. He would send the Holy Spirit who would be to them everything Jesus would be were He physically present.

‘And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, to remain with you to the end of the age; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see Him or recognise Him, because He is going to remain with you and will be within you.’ (John 14 vs 16, 17 Williams Translation).

This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. But Peter reveals that the promise was not limited to the original believers, for when the convicted people asked what they should do, Peter answered ‘Repent, and let each one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ (Acts 2 v 38).

Let’s briefly examine the Holy Spirit’s relation to the Christian as seen from this important passage of Scripture.

1. The Holy Spirit is the Abiding Possession of the Christian

Have you ever noticed the difference between when you entered a dark room and when you turned on the light? The room changes completely. So do you when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

Ron Dunn preached at revival meetings six years later, and pastored his first church when 17. He has pastored another three since graduating from a Baptist seminary.

Now 47, Ron is minister-at-large of a Baptist church in Texas, and President of Lifestyle Ministries Inc - which, among other things, sends out around 2,000 Bible study cassettes a month to people across the globe.

As well as local church meetings, he has spoken at Campus Crusade seminars, Keswick Conventions, evangelism conferences, and is one of the speakers at Filey-at-Skegness which starts today (1st September).

Ron has written several books. He is married, with two children.

2. The Holy Spirit is the Activating Principle of the Christian

Have you ever noticed the difference in the disciples before and after Pentecost? (Acts 2). They were converted and filled with the Holy Spirit. When they were converted, they became new creatures in Christ. Then when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they became new Disciples who could do mighty works.

Ron asked what I think about this or that minister or ministry. My response is to ask the inquirer what “he thought” when he heard the person in question. If there was no accompanying ‘Amen’ from the listener, the ministry would not be the Holy Spirit’s ministry.

Ron was not the only one to accept the Holy Spirit on their terms. The crowd asked Peter for an explanation, he simply acknowledged that it was all the work of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit is to be Acknowledged Person of the Christian

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Ron acknowledged the presence and power of the Spirit is the key to living victoriously. Writing to a group of Christians who were living defeated lives, Paul says, ‘Do you know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?’ (1 Corinthians 3 v 16).

As a solution to their immorality, Paul, again, reminds them of the Spirit’s indwelling presence: ‘... do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?’ (1 Corinthians 6 vs 19).

The meaning is clear. Failure to constantly acknowledge the Spirit’s presence in your life will lead to sin and defeat.

To acknowledge the Holy Spirit means to yield to His Sovereign rule in every area of your life.

advertising, no ex-movie stars or football heroes! What they had attracted the whole city. Peter reveals in Acts 2 vs 15, 16, 17a, ‘For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day, but this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all mankind’.”’

The Holy Spirit released through the lives of available believers will snap the chains of worldly attractions that bind the lost and, like a magnet, will draw them towards Jesus.

You don’t have to advertise a fire. John Wesley said, ‘Get on fire for God and the world will come to watch you burn.’

The attracting power of the Spirit lies in this fact: He always reveals and glorifies Jesus.

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1. The Holy Spirit is the Abiding Possession of the Christian

Peter said, ‘... Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ (Acts 2 v 38). The gift of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit Himself. The Holy Spirit if God’s birthday gift to every believer! Miracle of miracles when you repented and received Christ as Lord and Saviour, the holy Spirit of God. The Third Person of the Trinity came to make His home within you! He’s there right now and will be there till Jesus comes again.

In the Old Testament times the Spirit came upon men temporarily. Since Pentecost, the Spirit comes within men permanently.

2. The Holy Spirit is the Activating Principle of the Christian

Have you ever noticed the difference in the disciples before and after Pentecost? They’re not the same men. Before Pentecost, they were fearful, unbelieving, suspicious of each other. After Pentecost, they exploded with courage and boldness; a new capacity for believing the unbelievable, descended upon them; they became as one body, they beat as one heart, they thought as one mind.

The Holy Spirit’s indwelling made the difference. Every time you see the Holy Spirit in Scripture you find energy, life, activity. He brooded over the chaos in Genesis 1 and made it cosmos. He brooded over Mary and brought forth the Messiah. He brooded over the grave and resurrected a glorified Jesus. He brooded over a bunch of weaklings in the upper room and turned them into a band of witnesses.

It’s significant that the word for Spirit is ‘wind’ or ‘breath’. God ‘breathed’ into Adam and he became a living soul. Jesus said in John 6 v 63, ‘It is the Spirit who gives life ...’

3. The Holy Spirit is the Authenticating Presence of the Christian

In verses 32 and 33 Peter makes it clear that the outpouring of the Spirit was inadmissible proof that Jesus had been exalted and that their message was true. Jesus promised that when He was raised and ascended the Father would send the Spirit. If the Spirit had not come, Jesus would have been exposed as a fraud and His followers as peddlers of a phoney message. But the Spirit’s presence authenticated their message.

It is the Holy Spirit who authenticates a man’s message and ministry. I am often asked what I think about this or that minister or ministry. My response is to ask the inquirer what he thought when he heard the person in question. If there was no accompanying ‘Amen’ from the Spirit in the heart of the listener, I advise them they have their answer. I may not agree with everything a man preaches but if he is a true minister and if his ministry is of God, I believe that Spirit will verify it to my own heart. In warning believers of those who try to seduce them with false messages and ministries, John says, ‘I write you this with reference to those who are trying to lead you astray. The anointing of the Spirit which you have received still remains in your hearts, and so you have no need that anyone should teach you. But ... that anointing of His teaches you about everything ...’ (Williams Translation).

The Spirit not only authenticates the message of others to our hearts but He also verifies our message to others. It is not our persuasive cleverness or eloquence that convinces men of the truth - it is the Holy Spirit.

4. The Holy Spirit is the Attracting Power of the Christian

See the picture in Acts 2. It’s the Day of Pentecost, a Jewish Religious festival that brought Jews from all over the known world. Estimates of how many people were there that day range from one million to three million. Out of that vast, seething ocean of people, a small band of 120 nobodies get all the attention.

‘Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when the sound occurred, the multitude came together ...’ (Acts 2 v 5, 6a).

I remind you these primitive Christians had no TV, no loudspeakers, no