

Hindrance to Holiness

by Ray Brubaker

The Holy Spirit's power can be hindered by various factors, including lack of surrender, confession, obedience, honesty, unity, hunger, liberty, knowledge of the Word, and prayer.

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Description

In this sermon transcript, J. Hudson Taylor emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God, rather than those who simply long for Him or pray for Him. General Booth adds that in order to receive the Holy Spirit, one must let go of any idols or hindrances that they are holding onto. A.B. Simpson highlights the need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which will bring unity among believers. The lack of hunger for righteousness and the Word of God will deprive individuals of the Spirit's power. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience, letting go of hindrances, and seeking the Holy Spirit's power through hunger for righteousness and knowledge of the Word.

Transcript

Ray Brubaker's Classic Radio. This is Ray Brubaker's Classic Radio, news-related subjects in light of the Bible. And now, here's your commentator, Ray Brubaker.

Up late we've been reporting on the worldwide moving of the Spirit of God in our day. There has been something noticeably lacking among evangelical Christians. The scriptures themselves bear witness to this, to declare in the last days there would be those who have a form of godliness denying the power thereof.

This lack of power was predicted by General William Booth, who a half century ago declared the greatest evil threatening us in the 20th century would be religion without the Holy Ghost. When upon earth our Lord bid his disciples to tarry until they be endued with power from on high. Again note his promise, he shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

Billy Graham observes, we have learned much about the power of the Holy Spirit. Observes Graham, I believe the time has come to give the Holy Spirit his rightful place in our preaching, in our teaching, and in our churches. We need to go back and study again what Paul meant when he said, be filled with the Spirit.

We need to learn once again what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Says Graham, give it any terminology you want. But we do not have the same dynamic and the same power the early church had.

Now today we should like to discuss some of the hindrances which keep the Holy Spirit from coming in mighty power into our midst. The first hindrance we might suggest is lack of surrender. Dwight L. Moody the great evangelist who shook two continents for God has noted, the secret of the Holy Spirit's coming in power to the believer is the individual's complete surrender to the Savior.

We do not have to wait upon God to do something for us, says Moody. He is waiting for us to yield ourselves to him. Similarly, R. A. Torrey says, the surrendered will and life is the great secret of receiving the Holy Ghost.

All turns upon this. We may deal with individual sins, and we may cry to God for the filling of the Holy Ghost, but unless there is total surrender to God at the center of our being, unless we yield ourselves to God, nothing is likely to come of it. Oh, how many have longed and prayed and agonized that the Holy Spirit might come upon them, but he came not.

There was no yielding of self to God, and then they have yielded themselves to God. They've bowed their faces and said, Oh God, I yield. I give myself up utterly to Thee.

I place myself unreservedly at Thy disposal. I hold back nothing, and I hold back from nothing that Thou biddest. And as they have bowed, the Holy Ghost has fallen upon them.

The second hindrance to receiving God's power is the lack of confession. Charles Finney received such an overwhelming baptism of power that his words dropped here and there seem to fasten themselves like barbed arrows in the souls of men. Emphasizing the importance of confession, Finney says, when by the Spirit's power there is an ingenious breaking down and a pouring out of the heart in confession of sin, the floodgates of revival will soon burst open and salvation will flow over that place.

A revival of religion may be expected, observes Finney, when Christians confess their sins one to another. A lack of death to self will prevent the infilling of spiritual power. As Moody observes, many are praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit when they are full already.

Full of self, that is. They are full of sin, worldliness, and inconsistencies that are separating them from the power of God. They should first pray to be emptied of self and sin, that there might be room for the infilling and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Alexander McLaren points out, there is no such farce for the spreading of Christ's kingdom and the witness-bearing work of His Church as the possession of this Divine Spirit. Plunged into that fiery baptism, the selfishness and the sloth which stands in the way of many of us are all consumed and annihilated, and we are set free for service because the bonds that bound us are burnt up in His merciful furnace of His fiery power. Well the fourth hindrance to the infilling of the Spirit is lack of obedience.

J. Hudson Taylor commenting on Acts 5.32, which reminds us that God gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him. J. Hudson Taylor writes, God gives the Holy Spirit not necessarily to those who long for Him, not to those who pray for Him, nor to those who desire to be filled always, but He gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him. General Booth cautioned, if there is something you are holding back or refusing to do, some idol, something about which you feel condemned, but which you refuse to give up, out with it, give it no rest, give it up, destroy your idols and hindrances with an everlasting destruction.

Let all go, and you will be flooded before you rise from your knees. The world will feel the power of it, and God shall have all the glory, praise His name. Well the Holy Spirit's incoming is hindered by lack of honesty.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Certainly a dishonest or deceitful person cannot receive of God's power. The scripture reminds us the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it.

Before the incoming tide of the Spirit's power, the heart must be cleansed and honest preparation made, so that the Spirit may be received. A sixth hindrance to spiritual power is lack of unity. Read the account of Pentecost, and you will soon discover the disciples were in one accord in one place.

Throughout the book of Acts, the unity of the Spirit is a prominent factor, as the multitude was of one heart and of one soul. What power was manifested by these early Christians? A. B. Simpson once said, Today the church of Christ has broken to pieces. Here and there we find a sound member, but the whole body is mutilated and severed, so that it is not possible for the Spirit to flow with undivided and unhindered fullness through the whole.

Consequently, we do not have the gifts of the Spirit in the same measure as in the day of Pentecost. Oh, Simpson then goes on to point out, What we need today is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and then the union will come because of the unity. We shall not need our platforms and our convocations to bring the body together, but bone to his bone, member to member, and heart to heart, we shall stand in unity of Spirit, and the church of Jesus will be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

The lack of hunger will deprive us of the Spirit's power. The scriptures would remind us that to hunger and thirst after righteousness is to be filled. A prominent minister writes, More and more every day my heart hungers to be endued with power from on high.

In my room alone many nights I say to God, Lord, I'd rather die in this room tonight than to preach without the Holy Spirit's power. J. Wilbur Chapman relates how he summoned 30 of his men to assist him in the work in Philadelphia, asking them to pray for the fullness of the Spirit. One of the men was quite illiterate.

He literally murdered the King's English. When he got up to speak, you would have thought he had better sit down. But this man hungered for the Spirit's baptism.

Going alone to one of the rooms, he cried out, Oh Lord, take all sin from me. Teach me what it is that hinders thy coming. I will give up everything.

Come, O Holy Spirit, come and take possession of me. Help me to win men. Well, this man came forth from that secret place beaming with joy, for his hunger had been met.

And according to Chapman, during a three-year period, this man had led more than a hundred souls to Jesus Christ. The eighth hindrance to spiritual power is a lack of liberty. Vance Habner says many Christians are afraid of getting out on a limb on the subject of the Holy Spirit when they've never been up the tree.

It should be quite natural to enjoy the presence of God in fellowship with his Spirit, which should find its expression in joyous liberty. Then again, lack of spiritual power shows a lack of knowledge of the Word.

The Word of God is quick and powerful.

Dr. Hyman Appleman, commenting on the Spirit-filled life, says, First, foremost, beyond the possibility of argument, there must be a full dependence upon the Holy Spirit's instrument, which is always the Word of God. We ourselves must be utterly, unalterably, completely saturated with the Word, satisfied of the authority and complete sufficiency of the Bible. Finally, lack of prayer will stifle the Spirit's incoming in power to our lives.

Billy Graham would remind us, Pentecost was preceded by earnest prayer. The Bible says these all continued in prayer and supplication. Pentecost came in an atmosphere that was saturated by sincere prayer.

They not only prayed, but they made supplication, which is to say that they implored. They begged God to send his Spirit to their waiting, hungry, empty hearts. Dr. J. Stuart Holden would remind us, Christ was God's unspeakable gift to the world.

The Holy Spirit was Christ's gift to his church, but the Holy Spirit must be received by faith on the ground of grace. Well, today as we have discussed ten hindrances to holiness, may we search our own hearts and see what it is that might prevent the Holy Spirit from coming in fullness into our lives. Thank you for listening to Ray Brubaker's Classic Radio.

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