

(The New Covenant Servant) 5. Dependence Upon the Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

A servant of the new-covenant must live and serve God in total and utter dependence on Him for grace and power for every task.

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:5

Topics: "Dependence on the Holy Spirit", "Faith and Humility"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of total dependence on the Holy Spirit for a new covenant servant, contrasting the barren life of self-sufficiency with the fruitful life of reliance on God. He illustrates that prayer is essential for expressing this dependence, and that true faith is demonstrated through facing challenges and trusting God to overcome them. Poonen warns against the dangers of pride and self-confidence, which hinder spiritual growth and effectiveness in ministry. He encourages believers to seek the anointing of the Holy Spirit, as it is through this empowerment that they can serve others and fulfill God's purposes. Ultimately, he calls for a humble, faith-filled approach to ministry that prioritizes God's power over human ability.

Transcript

"Cursed is the man who puts his trust in mortal man, and makes flesh his strength. He will be like a stunted shrub in the desert. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and has made the Lord his hope and confidence. He will be like a tree planted along a riverbank that will go right on producing luscious fruit." (Jeremiah 17:5-8 - TLB)

A servant of the new-covenant must live and serve God in total and utter dependence on Him for grace and power for every task. That is why prayer should be a vital part of his life - for prayer is the expression of our helpless, but confident dependence on his God.

A self-confident man will not pray except as a ritual. Christian leaders who do not pray are not dependent on God, because they are self-sufficient. And invariably they will be like barren trees, and their assemblies will be like deserts. The river spoken of in the above verse is the Holy Spirit. One who depends on the Lord alone for help will earnestly seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit constantly.

The prophet Zechariah was once given a vision of a golden lampstand - a symbol of the church (Zechariah 4:2; see Revelation 1:20).

To keep the lamp burning continuously, the greatest need is a continuous supply of oil (verse 3). And for this, there were two olive trees planted on either side of the lampstand - symbolising the FRUIT and the GIFTS of the Holy Spirit, through which the church is built.

The angel then told Zechariah that God's work would be done, not by human power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that every mountain that stood in the way would be flattened (Zechariah 4:6, 7).

Every Mountain will be Flattened

In God's work, we will face hindrances and obstacles of many types. We may wonder why God allows us to face such mountains, when we are wholeheartedly seeking to do His will alone. But God's purpose is to exercise our faith, so that we can experience His mighty power reducing all those mountains to a plain.

We read of an occasion in the gospels, where Jesus urged His disciples to go across the lake of Galilee. They did not want to go, but he urged them to go (Matthew 14:22). When they obeyed Him, they ran into a fierce storm. If they had disobeyed Him, and not crossed the lake, they would not have faced that storm at all. But they would not have experienced the power of the Lord stilling the storm either. It is only when we face the storms that we can also know the power of God.

It is the disobedient and compromising Christian who has an easy way through life. But he never experiences the power of God either. The disciple of Jesus may go through "many afflictions". But he also experiences the Lord "delivering him out of all of them" (Psalm 34:19).

God delights to see His people trust Him in the midst of gigantic problems that no man can solve. It is in such situations that we prove that we believe in an almighty God. Far too many of God's people believe in a god of their own imagination who is unable to help them when they face man-made or demon-made storms or mountains. That is not the God of the Bible, but a god of their own making - an impotent idol of their imagination, no better than any heathen idol.

Is there any problem too big for our God? No. Then why do we fear when men or demons raise up mountains in our way?

When the Israelites heard of the size of the giants of Canaan, they began to think, "These giants are too big for OUR god to handle". Who was their god? Not the God Who had delivered them from Egypt, but a powerless figment of their own imagination. No wonder God sentenced them to 38 years of wandering in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 2:14).

They were unbelieving - and their unbelief insulted God and tied His hands, so that He could do nothing for them. There are Christian leaders today also who tie God's hands through their unbelief.

But God is looking for men like Joshua and Caleb, who will believe and proclaim that there is nothing impossible for God.

God is always on our side against Satan. And nothing can prevent Him from working for us, except our unbelief. Even if all the 5500 million people in the world and all the millions of Satan's demons opposed us, they would not be able to hinder God's purposes for us - if we trust in God. So we never get discouraged

or give up - no matter what happens. Even if we die, we will die trusting in our Almighty God, believing that His Name will be glorified through our death!

When God allows us to face mountains - whether in the form of demons that wrestle with us, or hundreds of people who oppose us and accuse us - His purpose is that we might thereby become strong and wealthy. "If God be for us who can be against us" (Romans 8:31).

It is only when we face mountains and the opposition of demons and men, that Zechariah 4:6, 7 becomes more than just a wall-text hanging in our sitting-room. It gets written into our bloodstream!

But we have to be wholehearted and say, "Lord I really want to stand for You here, whatever the cost. Give me grace to stand for You, even if all my fellow-believers become lukewarm, and even if my wife opposes me. I am totally Yours. All I have is Yours. I am willing to spend all my life's earnings also for Your work" Then we will find God continually flattening mountains in front of us, everywhere we go.

Let there be any number of giants in the land. Our God can handle all of them. He will "be an enemy to our enemies", and "fight against those who fight with us" (Exodus 23:22; Isaiah 49:25). God has promised that "no weapon formed against us will prosper", and that "He Himself will vindicate us" (Isaiah 54:17). So we never need to defend ourselves when falsely accused. We can remain silent, "entrusting our cause to Him Who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). That is the dignity with which servants of the new covenant conduct themselves.

We depend on God utterly, knowing that He will never let us down. What He did for Jesus, Our Forerunner, He will do for us too.

Our own testimony, as we have laboured to build the Body of Christ in India, is that we have encountered many mountains during these past years - the opposition of men and demons, false accusations, malicious gossip, betrayal by "false brethren" (2 Corinthians 11:26), etc. We have never defended ourselves. We have always fallen down before God and said, "Lord, this is Your work, not ours. We are only Your servants. We believe that no man or demon can hinder what You are seeking to accomplish in our land. We command this mountain to be removed out of our way, in Jesus' Name."

Today, after 20 years, we can testify that God has removed EVERY SINGLE mountain that has stood in our way. He has been an enemy to our enemies and He has vindicated and attested us Himself. All glory be to His Name. We know He will do the same in the future too.

Casting Believers on the Lord

As servants of God, we must also lead believers to be dependent on the Holy Spirit and not on us. When they are babes, they may need our help in many matters. But once they have known the Lord for even a few months, we must cast them on the Lord alone for help.

God has ordained that children should be able to stand on their own legs just one year after they are born. It must be the same in our churches. Within one year after they are born again, believers should be learning to walk with the Lord, overcoming sin. By the time they are two years old, they should be steady on their feet.

God brought the Israelites also to Kadesh-Barnea just two years after they left Egypt, and told them to enter the promised land. But they disobeyed the Lord. Their failure is repeatedly held out in the New

Testament as a warning for us (See 1 Corinthians 10 & Hebrews 2).

We should not allow believers to be dependent on us for finding God's will for them. We must cast them on the Lord. Only thus will they grow. Under the new covenant, the promise of God is that, "they shall not teach everyone his brother saying, 'Know the Lord', for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest." (Hebrews 8:11).

Jesus said that His sheep would hear His voice. They should not have to hear it always through us. Here is where most Christian leaders have failed God. They have led believers into an Old Testament type of life, where they are dependent on their leader to tell them what to do when they have to take a decision.

A new covenant servant of God leads believers to have a direct connection with Christ their Head. That is the only way we can build the church as Christ's Body.

Concern for Building Christ's Body

In Zechariah 4:9, we read that Zerubbabel (a type of the Lord Jesus) who laid the foundation for the temple, will also finish it. The Lord will not leave His work unfinished.

When the Lord lays hold of two disciples to build a pure testimony for His Name in a town, then He has already laid the foundation for His work there, in them. They must then ensure that there are no cracks in the foundation - no gaps between the two of them.

If they are faithful to build and preserve their fellowship with each other, the Lord will complete His work. He will build His church there.

If your heart is set on the Body of Christ being built in your town, you can be certain that God's heart is set on it much more. Your concern for building the church is only a drop in the ocean compared to His. It is He Who put that burden like a seed into your heart. It is conceit to imagine that such a burden is your own. You can only water the seed that God Himself has planted. He will cause it to grow.

If you don't consider the building of the church as God's work first of all, you will wonder when you get into a tight spot, whether God will help you or not. You will then ask the Lord, like His disciples, "Do You not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38).

It is pride - the pride that makes us think that WE are the ones who are building the Body of Christ - that makes us unbelieving. There is a close connection between pride and unbelief.

In Habakkuk 2:4, we read that the opposite of the man of faith, is not the man of unbelief, but the man of pride!! And in John 5:44, Jesus said that it was pride (seeking man's honour) that prevented people from having faith. So we see that unbelief comes from pride. Proud people don't need to depend on God. So they don't have faith.

In exactly the same way there is a close connection between humility and faith. A humble man is one who has no dependence on himself. He depends on God alone.

No Confidence in Ourselves

Under the old covenant, the primary mark of an Israelite was circumcision. Anyone who was not circumcised was to be cut off from God's people, for he had broken the Divine covenant (Genesis 17:14).

In the new covenant, the spiritual meaning of circumcision is explained as "having no confidence in ourselves" (Philippians 3:3).

It is the one who has no confidence in himself whom God upholds and whom God anoints continuously with His Spirit. There is a prophecy concerning Jesus that states, "Behold My Servant Whom I upholdI have put My Spirit upon Him" (Isaiah 42:1; see Matthew 12:18).

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is the prime essential for being a new covenant servant of God. And we see in this verse that God gives that anointing to those who are upheld by Him - that is, to those who are helplessly dependent on Him.

Faith in God cannot be exercised until we have become weak in ourselves. Otherwise our faith will be in the arm of flesh - which could be either our own cleverness, ability and money, or the resources of other people whom we know and whom we can depend on.

Let me illustrate: If a rich brother and a poor brother are both faced with a sudden financial need, who would have to trust in God more? Obviously the poor brother. The rich man has enough money. So he does not need to pray. But the poor brother, if he has faith, will cry out to God, and He will not be disappointed. It is when we don't have human resources to fall back on that we learn to live by faith.

Even many so-called "full-time workers", who claim to be "living by faith", have fairly reliable human resources that they can depend on. They have brothers who can be depended on to send them money every month - just in case God lets them down!!

"Faith comes by hearing" (Romans 10:17). It is when we hear what God says that faith is born in our hearts. God speaks to us through the Scriptures and also through His Spirit. So, if we don't listen to God, we won't have faith. Our spiritual antennas must be attuned to listen to God the whole day, no matter what we are doing.

To listen to God ALWAYS is one of the most important requirements for a servant of God. Jesus lived every day listening to, and obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit (See Isaiah 50:4). That proved that He had no confidence in Himself and knew that only the Father could show Him what things had eternal value and what things didn't. We waste a lot of time doing things that have no eternal value, because we are in too much of a hurry to have time to listen to God.

God wants to teach us how to live by faith in Him. Four times the Bible says that "the righteous shall live by faith". That does not refer to full-time workers, but to all believers. And so God arranges our circumstances such that we are compelled to turn to Him again and again for guidance. And if we are seeking for God's best, He will gradually take away the human props that we have depended on for so long, and bring us to the place where we trust Him alone for all our needs - whether those needs be financial or physical or whatever.

In 2 Chronicles 16:12, we read that King Asa of Judah was sick. When a king is sick, he can afford to get the best physicians to treat him. Yet Asa died. Why? Because "even when his disease was severe, he did not seek the Lord, but depended on the doctors" (verse 12).

Now if a poor man in Israel had been sick, he would have had to seek the Lord, and the Lord could have healed him. It is when we are weak and our human resources are limited that we seek the Lord.

Faith is such an important factor in the Christian life that we are told that "without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). That means even if we live in purity and goodness, and never backbite or gossip or cheat or tell lies, and even if we give all our money for God's work, if we don't live by faith (in helpless dependence on God and with no confidence in ourselves), we still won't please Him.

As servants of the new covenant, it is faith that we are impart to others in the church - not just Bible-knowledge. We have to teach them from our own experience how to trust the Lord in all situations.

Soul-Power, Electronic-Power and Money-Power

Another thing that we must understand, as God's servants, is the difference between our soul-power and the Holy Spirit's power.

Peter once told the Lord, "You are the Christ the Son of the living God." Jesus immediately replied saying, "Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you". In other words, Peter did not discover that spiritual truth by his soul-power - his human cleverness or shrewdness.

Our soul (mind) cannot give us Divine revelation. If we are intelligent, we can get clever thoughts from the Bible. And we can share those thoughts with others in the church and impress the undiscerning. But clever human thoughts and Divine revelation are as different and as far apart from each other, as earth and heaven.

Paul preached with fear and trembling, because he was afraid of using his own cleverness in preaching God's Word - lest the faith of others rest on his wisdom rather than on God's power (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

Humanly speaking, Paul was ideally suited to work among the Jews (since he knew their Scriptures), and Peter among the Gentiles. Yet God gave them exactly the opposite ministries (Galatians 2:8), so that they would depend on the Holy Spirit and not on their own abilities.

Clever thoughts are usually what we think of to preach to others to get their honour. Revelation, on the other hand, makes us fall on our faces before God. With our cleverness, we can impress people. But with Divine revelation we can help them.

When Isaiah got a revelation of God's glory, he didn't think of his vision as a point for his next sermon!! He fell down and worshipped God. The same thing happened to John on Patmos. It is only after both of them fell down before the Lord, that He told them to take His message to others. We must worship God before we can serve Him.

Soul-power is also seen in the ministry of those preachers, who, through hypnotic power, make people fall down, laugh hysterically and give their money to the preachers. People with psychosomatic illnesses (illnesses caused by wrong mental attitudes) are also "healed" at such meetings. All this is done by human soul-power, but using the Name of Jesus - and so even many believers are deceived. As servants of God we must be bold to expose these counterfeits.

Soul-power can also be seen in the way many Christian leaders dominate their followers and overwhelm them by their personalities. People stand in awe of such leaders and respect them as "holy men of God". And these leaders love such admiration from their followers.

Music also has tremendous soul-power. It can stir our emotions. But we must not be deceived into thinking that that is the Holy Spirit's power. We can draw many people to our churches with good music. But whom will we draw? Not the poor in spirit who are seeking for help to live a godly life, but the cultured and the sophisticated ones who are proud of their understanding and their musical tastes.

I remember, one Sunday, when a musically-gifted couple came to our meeting in Bangalore. They found the music to be below par, and so never came again. We were thankful for being preserved from people who were looking for a musical church and not a godly one!!

What we need in the church is not a good orchestra but the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter did not draw the crowds on the day of Pentecost with a keyboard and a drum-set, but with the anointing of God. It is when this anointing is gone, that believers seek to replace it with fine music, humorous sermons and grand buildings etc.

Electronic gadgets can also be a snare. Bible-teaching tapes by anointed servants of God can certainly help us in our spiritual growth. But we have to be careful that we don't begin to depend on such tapes more than on the Holy Spirit, when we want to hear God speak to us. Even if we had tapes of the apostle Paul with us, we would not be able to build the Body of Christ with them!

Money is another thing that has tremendous power in the world. And we can easily lean on it. Almost every Christian organization today speaks of the need for money, and sends out newsletters and magazines to rake in the "almighty dollar" from simple and sincere (but gullible) believers in Western countries.

The apostles on the other hand, never once asked believers for money for themselves, or for their work. They urged believers only "to remember the poor" (Galatians 2:10) and to help those who were in need (2 Corinthians 8 & 9). But alas, what the apostles never spoke of even once, is spoken of all the time nowadays, in Christian work.

God says, "If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine and all that it contains" (Psalm 50:12).

What about us as servants of this God? When we are in need - of food or of money - what do we do? Do we tell our heavenly Father or do we tell men? If we are truly called of God, we will never have any lack of earthly necessities. God has no lack of money. What He lacks is broken, humble, faithful and trusting servants.

God is looking for broken, humble people whom He can empower with His Holy Spirit and use to build the church.

God is a jealous God. He will not give His glory to another. He will not build the church with any power other than His power.

God's work is done even today, as in days of old - not by soul-power or by electronic power or by financial might, but by the power of the Holy Spirit!

The Life and Ministry of Jesus

Whenever we think of the Spirit-filled life, we must look at the life and ministry of Jesus, for He is the clearest Example of a Spirit-filled man.

Which did Jesus have - the fruit or the gifts of the Spirit? The answer is "Both". Let us also seek for both then.

The Holy Spirit will show us the glory of Jesus in the mirror of God's Word, and then transform us into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Spirit will show us the life of Jesus first. For example, He will show us His perfect patience - how He never got irritated when people slapped Him and pulled out the hairs from His beard and accused Him falsely. The Spirit will show us how Jesus reacted to the different situations that he faced in His home and in His carpenter-shop. And if we submit to the Spirit, He will work that nature into us too.

God desires to work in us to will and do His good pleasure. But we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12, 13). And then we will see a transformation taking place in our lives gradually.

To partake of God's nature is one thing. To try and manufacture it is quite another. We cannot manufacture God's nature. When we want to partake of God's nature, we have to come in brokenness, recognising our inability to produce it, and humbly receive it from the Holy Spirit. But alas, it takes a long time for many to realise that they cannot produce the Divine nature themselves.

If we feel that we have become patient today, because we were wholehearted and because we disciplined ourselves, then we are being deceived by Satan. That is how he will seek to puff us up in order to destroy us. If the patience we have is our own product, then it is a worthless human virtue - as worthless as human dung.

If on the other hand, we recognise that we received our patience from God, and that we did not produce it ourselves, it won't be difficult for us to give God all the glory for what He has done in our lives.

So let us allow the Holy Spirit to show us the glory of Jesus and to transform us into the likeness of Christ in every area of our lives.

The Holy Spirit will also show us how Jesus served the Father. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit and equipped with supernatural gifts. He did not dare to serve the Father without being anointed first - as multitudes of believers are seeking to do, today.

It is written about Jesus that "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power". What was the result? "He went about DOING GOOD and HEALING (DELIVERING) ALL WHO WERE OPPRESSED BY THE DEVIL, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38).

The world around us is full of people who are suffering because Satan has oppressed and harassed and bound them in some way or the other. When God is with us, we will do what Jesus did - go around doing good to them and delivering them from Satan's bondage. It is impossible to do that without being anointed with the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus Himself could not fulfil such a ministry without the anointing of the Spirit, how can we?

When we see the baptism and the gifts of the Spirit in the context of Jesus' ministry, we can never go wrong. Jesus not only lived a holy life, He also had a ministry to others. He preached, healed the sick, cast out demons, and made disciples.

We can never serve God effectively as His servants in the church if we are not anointed as Jesus was.

There are many who study the Word carefully and preach it accurately, but they don't have the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon them. Therefore their ministry is dry and dead.

As servants of the new covenant, our preaching must always be in the power of the Spirit. Jesus was never dull or boring or stale at any time when He preached - because He was anointed. When we are anointed as He was, we too will never be dull or boring or stale. Instead, our ministry will be a refreshing blessing to everyone.

When Jesus preached the Word to the disciples who were walking to Emmaus, they testified that their hearts "burned within them" (Luke 24:32). That is how a truly anointed ministry is - it makes people's hearts burn. And that is how our ministry should be always.

There must never be a time when we're not under the anointing of the Spirit. Then we will always have a word to give to those in need whom we come cross, even as Jesus had (See Isaiah 50:4).

In Acts 1:1, it says that the gospel of Luke describes "all that Jesus BEGAN to do and to teach." So the Acts of the Apostles is a record of what Jesus CONTINUED to do and teach. In the gospels, we have the record of what Jesus did with His physical body. In the Acts we have the record of what He did with His spiritual Body. So the Acts of the Apostles is actually the acts of Jesus through the apostles.

Jesus is not engaged in some other ministry on earth today, than what He did when he came to earth 2000 years ago. He is still "going around doing good and delivering all who are oppressed by the devil" - through the members of His spiritual Body, the church.

And so it is an awesome responsibility that we have to be a servant of the Lord in His Body. Let us never take it lightly. If Jesus Who lived such a perfect life for 30 years needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit before He began to serve the Father, how dare we engage in such a ministry without a similar anointing?

If we have not been anointed by the Spirit as yet, it must be because we have not sought for it sufficiently. And if we have not sought for it, it is probably because we have not valued it sufficiently. And if we have not valued it, it must be because we have been self-sufficient. Let us repent then of our self-sufficiency - and allow God to circumcise our hearts of all self-confidence.

The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

Brothers, let us seek God with all our hearts for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We can never serve God or build the church without it. This is our greatest and our most desperate need. Let us never be satisfied with anything less than that baptism of fire that Jesus gave His apostles on the day of Pentecost. And let us mourn whenever this fire of God departs from our ministry.

The anointing of the Spirit is always given in relation to the needs of others. Jesus said in Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to THE POOR. He has sent Me to proclaim release to THE CAPTIVES, and recovery of sight to THE BLIND, to set free THOSE WHO

ARE DOWNTRODDEN."

Notice here that the anointing of the Spirit is described as only meeting the needs of others - the poor, the captives, the blind and the downtrodden. It is not for meeting our own need. It is only when we have a burden and a concern for the poor and the downtrodden and the captives of Satan in our churches that God will anoint us.

Jesus once told a parable teaching us how we were to ask for the Holy Spirit's power (Luke 11:5-13). A man had a visitor one night and found that he had no food in the house to give him. So he went to his neighbour's house and kept on knocking until his neighbour got up from bed and gave him the food he wanted for his visitor. Jesus then went on to say that that was how we were to ask our heavenly Father for the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 13).

If we don't have a concern for the needy people who come to our house (the church), we will not seek God for help to bless them and to set them free from their bondages.

When we see a brother being oppressed by Satan, what do we do? Do we just pray with him and send him away. Then we are unfit to represent the Lord Who came to set people free from Satan's oppression. We should seek God for that which our brother needs. We should tell the Lord that we don't have what it takes to help him, and ask Him for power to set him free. And we must persist in asking until we receive. Then we will receive. That is the application of the above parable.

None of us can have all the gifts of the Spirit, as Jesus had - for the Spirit distributes the gifts among all the members of the Body as He wills. Jesus Himself was the Body of Christ initially. So naturally He had all the gifts of the Spirit. But today the Body of Christ consists of many members to whom the gifts are given. The Spirit may not have given you the gift of teaching or of healing. That does not matter. He may have given you the gift of encouraging others. If so, exercise that gift faithfully, and allow others to exercise THEIR gifts.

Don't attempt to be everything yourself - for you cannot.

There was only One Person Who could be everything Himself - and that was Jesus. Today we can be only one part of His Body. Therefore we can rejoice when we find that God has given younger brothers certain gifts that we ourselves don't have. So they can do that part of the work of the Body better than we can. Praise the Lord!

Once we SEE the Body of Christ, we will never again be jealous of anyone. Instead, we will rejoice in the ministry God has given them.

God gives us grace to help people in one area, and God gives others grace to help them in other areas. So there will be sincere thankfulness to God in our hearts for every single brother and sister.

The weakest brothers and sisters in the church also have an essential ministry. In fact the weaker they are, the more likely they are to be dependent on the Holy Spirit.

We are effective servants of God only when we can bring forth the ministries of ALL the brothers and sisters in our local church. A Christian leader who does everything himself is a failure as a servant of God. This is unfortunately the condition of many pastors today.

The Right Balance

We have to be careful that our life is not a reaction to the extremes that we have seen in other groups in Christendom.

In the history of Christendom, there have been many groups that majored on holiness and despised the gifts of the Spirit - even to the extent of calling them demonic!! They have all failed to fulfil God's highest purposes, as Jesus did.

At the opposite extreme, are groups that have majored on spiritual gifts alone, to such an extent that they have ignored personal holiness. Such groups have invariably gone astray, being deceived by religious spirits.

In the same way, there are some groups that major on an intellectual study of the Word. And at the opposite extreme are groups that major on emotional exuberance. But both groups seem to be ignorant of their souliness. Intellectualism and emotionalism are both soulish. Neither of them constitutes true spirituality. The Holy Spirit leads God's children to a life of obedience to God's Word.

Whom shall we follow among all these groups? None of them.

We shall follow the perfect Example of our Lord, Who had both the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit, and Who obeyed the Word, instead of just studying it and getting excited over it! Then we won't go wrong.

Let us "pursue love and earnestly desire spiritual gifts", with all our hearts (1 Corinthians 14:1), and we shall then love everyone we meet, and deliver every Satan-oppressed soul who comes across our path.

Becoming a Blessing

The gifts of the Spirit are compared in 1 Corinthians 12 to the organs of the human body - the eye, the ear, the hands and the feet. We need eyes to see, ears to hear, hands to help others and feet to take us to different parts of this world. Even so, God has given us these gifts of the Spirit, so that a needy world around us can be blessed through them. He wants to give us power to free people from Satan's grip over their lives and from their frustrations and their fears.

When God anoints our heads with His oil, our cups WILL overflow with blessing to others. And if we keep pouring our oil into the vessels of others, we will find like the widow found (in Elisha's time - 2 Kings 4:1-7) that there is enough power and blessing in the anointing of God to help every single person who comes across our path. There wasn't a single vessel that remained unfilled with oil that day in that poor widow's house. Her whole neighbourhood was blessed through her. And our neighbourhood can be blessed in the same way too.

But we have to keep pouring out into the lives of others. That is a Divine law. If we selfishly keep God's blessing for ourselves alone, it will begin to stink like the manna did, even if our blessing came from heaven (like the manna did) in the first place.

Proverbs 11:25 says that it is only the one who waters others who will himself also be watered by God.

Jesus became a curse for us on Calvary's cross so that we might receive the blessing of Abraham - the promise of the Spirit (Galatians 3:13). The blessing of Abraham is described in Genesis 12:3 as "being a blessing to all the families of the earth". This is what it means to be a servant of the new covenant : To be

a blessing to EVERY family that we meet on the face of the earth. That is our birthright in Christ.

So, let us not "despise the day of small beginnings" (Zechariah 4:10). Maybe the Spirit will urge us to start by writing a letter of encouragement to just one person whom God lays on our hearts.

God may test our eagerness to serve Him by sending just one needy brother across our path - one hungry visitor. What will we do? Will we seek God for power to help that brother?

If we are unfaithful in such matters, we will miss everything that God has planned for us. To live under the anointing constantly, we must be faithful in the smallest of matters. It is through small actions that all mighty ministries begin. That is how the rivers of living water (that Jesus spoke of) began to flow from the sanctuary. It began as a trickle, but later on became a mighty river (See Ezekiel 47:1, 9).

May God help us all to be faithful in the little things.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-new-covenant-servant-5-dependence-upon-the-holy-spirit/>

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