

The Seal of the Spirit

Introduction

The greatest gift which God has given to his people is the presence of his own Spirit in their hearts. We have become those in whom God himself has come to dwell. Jesus made a very clear statement of that fact when he said to his disciples at the Last Supper, *“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching and My Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him**”* (Jn. 14:17).

When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts the Father and the Son also come to dwell. God in us is the true glory of the Christian. It is something that can happen to anyone, the only stipulation being that we fully commit ourselves to following Jesus and making him the centre of our lives. This is an utterly life changing thing; living with God in us. It is very important for our Christian life that we have a deep awareness of that indwelling and can recognise it. It is fundamental to our assurance and our joy. Unfortunately the fact is that many Christians seem scarcely aware of that presence and talk of the Spirit is somewhat mystifying. It is the purpose of this booklet to show how we can recognise the presence of the Spirit in our lives so that our joy may be full.

1. The Spirit as a Seal

“Having believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession”. *Ephesians 1: 13-14*

“He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” *2 Corinthians. 1: 21-22*

“Now it is God who has made us for this purpose (to have a new body eternally) and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” *2 Corinthians 5:5*

In these verses Paul makes it clear that it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that is the true source of our assurance that we belong to God and that we will inherit eternal life. The Spirit, now living in our hearts, is the confirming “seal” and “guarantee” of everything God has planned for us in Christ.

In Ephesians 1:13 Paul points us to the moment when this sealing took place; it was *“when we believed”*, that is at the time when we believed in Jesus and committed ourselves to following him; when faith was born in our hearts and we gave a heart response. In whatever way we may have made such a personal commitment it was that act of faith that caused us to be *“sealed”* with the gift of the Spirit. Paul, moreover, implies that all who make such a genuine confession of faith are marked in this same manner.

Thus we are saved by faith, and that salvation is sealed by the Spirit of God. The seal of the Spirit is a mark of the fact that we are now “owned” by God, that we belong to him, we are his possession – *“he has set his seal of ownership on us”*.

Not only is the presence of the Spirit the mark of God’s ownership, but it is at the same time a *“deposit”*, (a *“first instalment”*, a *down payment”*, *“an earnest”*) of what is to come. Three times Paul uses this expression “deposit” (Gk. arrabon). A *“deposit”* is indicative of the fact that, though an impartation of the Spirit has been made, a great deal more of the same is yet to come.

His presence in us now by his Spirit is an immensely rich gift (nothing less than God living in us!) but it is yet to be followed by an infilling of the Spirit and an open revelation of the glory of God that will transcend even this precious seal. That will be when we finally stand before God, and our redemption is completed. Thus the nature of this *“first instalment”* speaks loudly of the nature the great glory which is to follow. The

word for “deposit” is the Gk. “*arrabon*”. In Modern Greek the same word still exists and means “an engagement ring”. A bride’s engagement ring is a seal (a deposit) of great beauty and value, but it remains but a token of what is yet to come to her when her marriage is finally completed. So it is with the seal of the Spirit.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 Paul gives some definition of this greater glory that is to come. He states “*We know that if the earthly tent in which we live is destroyed we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven not built by human hands*”. He is speaking here of the new resurrection body and the totally new life and existence that is part of our inheritance in Jesus. He is contrasting our present existence as a life lived in a temporary “tent” with an eternal life lived in a permanent “building”. This is God’s purpose for us. He continues, “*Now it is God who has made us for this purpose (to have a new body and a new life eternally) and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come*”.

2. The Spirit as a Recognisable Seal

“You know him for he lives with you and will be in you”. John 14:15

“We (I and my Father) will make our home with him”. John 14:17

It is not in the nature of a seal to be unrecognisable or invisible or obscure. On the contrary a seal is intended to be something that is clear, evident and unmistakable. But the Holy Spirit is “Spirit”; he is not tangible or visible or audible in the way that the seals of this physical world are. An engagement ring can be seen and fingered and displayed, but this is not the case with the heavenly “*arrabon*”. Here we are dealing with “Spirit”, not the flesh or the physical. How, then, do we recognise that which is “spirit”? Jesus answers this question when, speaking about the Spirit to his disciples at the Last Supper, he said “*The world neither sees him nor knows him But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*” *Jn. 14:15.*

In that statement he acknowledged that the “*world would neither see him nor know him (the Spirit)*” with ordinary human faculties, but the disciples would know him because he would come to live in them. Jesus repeated the substance of this statement shortly afterwards with the words, “*If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching and My Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him***” *John. 14:17.*

The “seal”, therefore, is not something to be recognised by our physical being but by the recognition of something that happens in and to our hearts – the seal is that of a new and living Presence at the very depth of our being. In other words, the seal will be recognised in the fact that as he comes into our hearts there will be something of a radical change at the core of our being. To take a simple analogy, if one person were somehow to come into the heart of another person and be at the spiritual centre of their life, there would be a recognisable change in that second person: the second person’s outlook would start to reflect the first person’s aspirations and personality. They would begin to think the thoughts and feel the impulses of the first person. They would be aware of this new presence.

Essentially, therefore, when we are looking for the seal of the Spirit we are looking for a spiritual seal, an unmistakable influence on our own spirit, a mind-set, an outlook that is not native to us, but is seeking to direct us or re-direct our lives. Indeed we are looking for something that is essentially of the mind-set of God and heart of God. Even though it may be humanly intangible, if God’s Spirit came into our own heart it would be so impacting that it would be actually very difficult not to be aware of it.

So we need to ask the question, “What impact would the Spirit be likely to make on our own hearts?” What changes is He likely to make, and how can we recognise them? The answer to that question is to be found in what we know of the nature and heart of God himself, for it is God’s desires and God’s purposes that would begin to press into our hearts. We would begin to want what he wants and we would begin to seek to

be as he is for he would be seeking to transform us into his likeness. It is critically important that we know what we looking for and how to recognise such an impact in our own lives if we are to walk in the full assurance that the presence of the Spirit is intended to bring to us. That is the intention of what follows.

3. Recognising the Spirit of Holiness

*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh..... And I will put my Spirit in you and **move you to follow my decrees**".*

Ezekiel. 36:26, 27

*"This is the covenant I will make with the people I will put my Law in their minds and **write it on their hearts**".*

Jeremiah 31:33

*"If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious (Moses and the Law), how much more glorious is the **ministry that brings righteousness** (the ministry of the Spirit) and we are all being transformed into his image with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."*

2 Corinthians 3:9 & 18

Above all other impulses that the Holy Spirit would seek to bring into our hearts and lives is the impulse to holiness and righteousness. His first intent is to make us people without sin. Recognising that impulse in our lives is a first step in grasping that we are indeed "sealed" by the Spirit.

In the texts written above Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak prophetically of a new covenant in which God would fundamentally change the hearts of people. This change would be so profound that it is described as people receiving a "new spirit". It would be brought about by God putting his own Spirit in them. The hard, unresponsive heart ("a heart of stone") natural to our human nature would become sensitive and responsive ("a heart of flesh") as it was touched by the presence of the divine Spirit. The particular nature of the change would be that the desires of the hearts of those so touched would be fully focussed on walking in the way of the righteous commandments of the Lord; people would love and seek godly behaviour in a way that had not been possible before. In the language of Jeremiah he would "*write the Law on their hearts*", meaning that the Law of God would become central in their thinking and desires. It is in this way that the Spirit would "*move*" people (energise, motivate, inspire, enable) them to the godly life which is enshrined in "*his decrees*".

This promised covenant is precisely, of course, the new covenant which Jesus brought into being through his death, resurrection, ascension and the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit to all who believe. In the quotation from 2 Corinthians 3 Paul starkly reminds his readers that the old Mosaic covenant whereby people were given the "commandments" and told to obey them was actually something that could only bring "*condemnation*" because the hardness of the human heart would not allow them to be obedient to those decrees. This "*ministry of condemnation*" he vividly contrasts with what he calls "*the ministry which brings righteousness*", namely the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This new work of the Holy Spirit is a ministry which is bit by bit "*transforming*" us into the image of Christ with "*ever increasing glory*". The Holy Spirit is at work in believing people in order to enable them to be righteous in a way that was impossible before.

This change of heart, this profound desire and love for righteousness, is eminently recognisable when it happens in the heart of a person. It is this that makes us realise we have been given a "new spirit". A true reception of the Holy Spirit is a life-changing experience, felt in the heart but as real as anything in the physical realm. The New Testament elsewhere refers to people being "*born again of the Spirit*" and "*becoming a new creation*". These are both graphic and vivid alternative ways of expressing this same essential experience. They speak of a very deep and unmistakable re-direction of life.

The people who most obviously recognise this “seal” on their lives are people whom God has rescued from the depths of depravity, and there have been many such people. For them the “*new birth*” comes as a startling, total transformation and as a huge new beginning. For them the memory of the change remains very deep and energising, leading in many cases to powerful and enduring ministry. But radical change is not just for those whose lives have touched such a low point of depravity. Sin in its many forms is the universal experience of all humanity. Greed, lust, pride and the like beset us all in varying degrees. Waking up from what might be described as the pleasures of a “normal” life to find that it is actually much more polluted than we had thought, and then tasting the delights of “rebirth” and a truly godly life should be normal experience for a Christian.

The Holy Spirit rested on many people in the Old Testament even though they were not living under the all-embracing new covenant, and his influence in their lives can be seen clearly. David was one such example, whose heart feelings, along with many others, are portrayed in the book of Psalms. Psalm 119, for example, is remarkable for the expressions of the author’s sheer “*delight*” in the Law of the Lord and the righteous commandments of God. The expressions which betoken the influence of the Spirit are clearly in such words as: “*your commands give me delight*” (v.143), “*See how I love your precepts*” (v.159), “*I hate and detest falsehood, but I love your law. Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws*” (v.164), “*I obey your statutes for I love them greatly*” (v.167). Where these sentiments of love of God’s word genuinely exist in our hearts and when we voice such love of godliness sincerely we may be sure that we have the seal of the Spirit.

Paul expresses the same thing in a more doctrinal manner. He writes : “*Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death*” (Romans 8:2) He had experienced in his life the fact that even though he wanted to do good he could never achieve it fully in the strength of his own natural self (Romans 7:14ff). This was because of the “*law of sin and death.*” But he also knew what it was to be free from sin by living in the power of a life under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit. This was “*the law of the Spirit who gives life*”. Finally he knew that the Holy Spirit was the inner life flow that brought for the fruit of the Spirit in “*love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness etc.*” Galatians 5:22

Jesus expresses it in picturesque style: “*If any man believes in me out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water*” (John.7:38) to which John the Apostle added, “*By this he was speaking of the Holy Spirit which those who believed in were to receive*” (John 7:39). The river of the Spirit is always a gushing forth of holiness and righteousness. When the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us there pours out of our own spirit the same holiness and righteousness.

4. Recognising the Spirit of Revelation

“I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that you might know him better” *Ephesians 1:17*

“... having the eyes of your heart enlightened that you may know the hope to which you were called ” *Ephesians 1:18*

“The Holy Spirit will teach you all things”. John 14:26

“The Spirit will take what is mine and make it known to you”. John 14:15

“God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying “Abba, Father”. Galatians 4:6

Alongside a new inner compulsion to righteousness we need to recognise also that it is only the Holy Spirit who can reveal to us the truth of God and Christ and give us certainty in our belief. We need to have an awareness of the Spirit of revelation working in us and giving us an assured faith.

In the first of the quotations above Paul prays for the Ephesians that they may continue to receive the *“Spirit of revelation in order that they may know God (and Jesus) better or more fully”*. The word *“revelation”* means an *“unveiling”*, a removal of a cover to see something which is hidden.

Paul earnestly wants his readers to go on grasping more of the hidden reality of God and his purposes. In the second quotation he illustrates further what he means by *“revelation”* by using the expression, *“having the eyes of your hearts enlightened that you might know ...”* Here the idea is of light shining on the eyes in order that something not seen can be seen – in other words a removal of blindness. Paul recognises that God is in a very real sense *“hidden”* from wayward humanity, and that humanity is *“blind”* to God in its waywardness. This is the case even though there is sufficient evidence in the created world of his existence, and even of his character (Romans 1). This hiddenness and blindness is removed only by the Holy Spirit himself working in the human heart. There is no other way that it can happen. Hence the revelation of God is a spiritual thing that can only come from God himself. It cannot come from purely human thinking, no matter how intellectual it may be. This is made clear in 1 Corinthians 1:21 where Paul makes the comment *“In the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him”*.

Revelation, therefore, for Paul is not just the mind coming to know something; it is **the heart** (the essential spiritual being of a person) perceiving the ultimate truth that God is real and is seeking relationship with people. It is a *“seeing”* of something at the deepest level. It is a self-authenticating knowledge. It is much deeper than mental knowledge about the **concept** of God. Genuine revelation is in a real sense a meeting with God, even, indeed, a personal meeting with God. People can know about God conceptually, even believe there is a God, and yet not know him with that degree of certainty and warmth which comes when the eyes of our hearts have been opened to His reality and person. Revelation is thus much more than simply to know about something; it is a personal encounter. It is something which enables our *“hearts”* to cry out **“Abba, Father”**. Reading a biography will teach us much about a person, but actually meeting that person takes us into another dimension and enables us to say we really *“know”* them.

The **“eyes of the heart”** is a phrase which points us to something more than the function of the mind, beyond normal mental knowledge. For the eyes of our heart to be enlightened does not necessarily require a high intelligence or intellect. The process is fundamentally a *“spiritual”* perception, an acknowledgment and recognition of truth through a profound depth of conviction in our own spirit. That is the work of the Holy Spirit exactly as Jesus depicted it: *“When he (the Spirit) comes he will convict the world of sin righteousness and judgement”* (John).

Luke, a close travelling companion of Paul, provides us with an example of this happening to a person when he recorded the conversion of Lydia at Philippi (Acts). He relates, in typical Pauline phraseology, that as she listened to Paul speaking *“the Lord **opened her heart** to respond to Paul’s message”*. That message would certainly have centred in some way on the need of forgiveness of sin and the righteousness that comes through Jesus, and her heart was opened to such truth by the Spirit. Such was the depth of her revelation or conviction that she immediately submitted to baptism and offered her home as a base for Paul and his companions. Her heart is touched here, not just her mind.

The Spirit of Revelation and the Scriptures

Lydia’s conversion also points to another very important aspect of the work of the Spirit of Revelation: the Spirit opens the eyes and hearts of people to the reality of God particularly through illuminating the Scriptures. The women who met by the riverside in Philippi were either Jews or proselyte believers in the God of the Jews, Lydia being among the latter category. When talking to such a Jewish audience it was Paul’s normal procedure to speak about Jesus from the Old Testament prophetic scriptures, and it was as Lydia was listening to his exposition of those scriptures that her heart was opened. This is indicative of the

common experience of Christians throughout the ages that on believing on Jesus and receiving the Spirit the bible becomes a “live” book, a genuine tool of understanding and for strengthening faith and following Jesus. What at one time was a dull, lifeless and meaningless book becomes alive and relevant in an astonishing manner to those whose hearts are touched. This is not surprising given the fact that the Scriptures claim divine origin through the inspiration of the Spirit himself. Not only does the bible give a full overview of God’s nature and purposes, but it has the ability to speak again and again directly and personally to the needs of individual Christians in all situations in life. This is a fact known only too well to genuine believers, but remains baffling to the disinterested and unbelieving. It is for this reason that the believer who has the Spirit is drawn irresistibly to reading the bible. By this appetite we recognise the presence of the seal of the Spirit. Whereas many might read the bible as an interesting literary document, the Holy Spirit working in revelation makes it essential spiritual food for the person who walks with Jesus.

5. Recognising the Spirit of Power

“In a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit”. Acts 1:5

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth” Acts 1:8

“He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire”. Luke 3:16

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor to set the oppressed free”. Luke 4:18

These verses make clear that the Holy Spirit imparts power to the followers of Jesus. That power is meant to be felt and experienced. When it is experienced it is another indication to us that we have the seal of the Spirit on us; it also marks us out as belonging to God. Luke in Acts has a great deal to say of importance about this “power (*dunamis* = enabling) of the Spirit”.

Luke was a close colleague of Paul the Apostle and worked alongside him in some of Paul’s later missionary activities. He had first-hand experience, therefore, of the spread of the early church, and became its historian when he wrote the book of Acts. He was particularly interested in the spiritual dynamics underlying the growth of the church. Thus in his writing he majored on the twin roles of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit as the church rapidly grew.

In the first chapter of Acts Luke makes clear that Jesus had warned his disciples to “**wait for the gift promised by the Father** (the Holy Spirit)” before starting on their work of witness in Jerusalem. Jesus said to them that they would receive “**power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you**”, indicating that the Spirit’s power would be necessary for effective witness.

In the second chapter of Acts Luke gives a full description of the nature and characteristics of that “power” at work as the Spirit came upon disciples on the Day of Pentecost. These are important to take note of. First there were **two “miraculous” signs**. We need to note that when the Holy Spirit is working in power the miraculous is always likely to happen.

One sign was a violent wind, indicative of the sheer “strength and power” of the Spirit, and the other sign was a vision of a “ball of tongues” each of which was on fire and each of which separated so that a tongue came to rest on each of the disciples. These fiery tongues were indicative of speech that burned with great impact. They are a fulfilment of John the Baptist’s word that “*He (Jesus) would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire*”. Furthermore, the fiery tongues emerged from the apostles’ mouths on the Day of Pentecost as languages foreign to the apostles but known to the many foreigners present in Jerusalem who were listening to them. Luke also relates what the subject of those “tongues” was: it was praise for “*the wonders of God*”. There could scarcely be anything more appropriate than this miraculous and prophetic

manifestation of tongues to indicate the “fire” that the Holy Spirit would breathe into the church’s witness, and to indicate that such powerful witness was intended to be heard in all the languages of the world. “Tongues” as a phenomenon was, therefore, both an empowering of the Spirit and at the same time a supreme prophetic statement that the gospel would be preached to the whole world and in all its languages.

The Holy Spirit was to be the supreme witness to Jesus in the world and the church would need to work with him in this witnessing. The tongue of fire would not necessarily express itself in speaking in tongues, but it would certainly express itself with equal “fire” in a person’s native language.

Peter’s Preaching at Pentecost

There was much confusion and consternation at these happenings, and also mockery. So Peter, with the full backing of all the other disciples, stood up and in a loud voice addressed the crowd in order to explain what was happening. He dismissed the mockery, and then proceeded to preach Jesus to them. It is in this preaching that we can see with great clarity how the “fire” of the Spirit is expressed as his people witness to Jesus.

The first thing that stands out is the sheer boldness that energised his words. This “boldness” is a fundamental “enabling”, much needed among the people of God. Without the slightest hesitation and fearlessly Peter proclaimed Jesus; his death and resurrection, his glorification by God and the fact that what the people were witnessing was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit from the ascended Jesus. This was in the face of what could have been a large hostile crowd, and with the full knowledge that a very definite hostile ecclesiastical leadership would certainly get to hear of what he was saying and respond. Not only did he proclaim Jesus, but he emphasised the fact boldly that the Jewish leadership was responsible for the crucifixion of the Messiah.

This gift of boldness was a very critical aspect of the empowering of the Spirit in the early church. The intense antagonism and persecution which it quickly came to experience from the Jewish hierarchy was a very powerful force against the growth of the church, and boldness became essential. The fact is that the Holy Spirit, though always full of wisdom, knows no fear. His fearlessness is our empowering, though always we equally need his consort of wisdom.

Luke actually relates an incident when the authorities forbade the preaching of the gospel and the apostles, feeling their need, made special prayer over the matter, praying specifically for boldness to preach the word. He relates that the place in which they were praying was visibly shaken (the miraculous again) and a fresh “*baptism*” of boldness through the Spirit fell on them (Acts 4:23ff).

The second thing that stands out in this Spirit-filled preaching of Peter was its impact on those who were listening. It is epitomised in the expression, “*They were cut to the heart*”. Here was the Holy Spirit bringing, as Jesus had forewarned, conviction of “*sin, righteousness and judgement*”. The crowd was convicted of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and was the “righteous one”, they were convicted of their sin against him, and they were convicted of being under the judgement of God for it. They demanded to know what they had to do to be saved. Whatever the impact of the earlier miracles might have been on the crowd it was the conviction brought about by the Holy Spirit on the message of Peter that achieved God’s purpose – three thousand were converted. It was not the consequence of oratory or clever speaking, but of the “convicting power” of the Spirit.

The third feature of Peter’s preaching was the extraordinary fluency and directness with which it was delivered. This should not be overlooked. This was no prepared “sermon”. This was the Holy Spirit giving words and shaping the direction and application of trenchant thoughts with incredible facility, all on the spur of the moment. It was an example of “preaching” in the power (enabling) of the Holy Spirit that many Spirit-

filled preachers were to experience in the centuries which followed – and became commonly known as “*speaking with the liberty of the Spirit*”. Though Peter had no script but what he did have, however, was a mind stored with the teaching that he had acquired from Jesus himself (especially after the resurrection) and a wealth of experience of being with Jesus. This was spontaneous speaking, therefore, not from an empty mind, but from a well-stocked mind and heart. Important for a Jewish audience, it was laced also with appropriate Scripture, (Joel on the coming of the Spirit and The Psalms on the resurrection of Jesus).

Power for all God’s people

What Peter, the apostle, exhibited of the power of the Spirit in his witness and speaking on that occasion was by no means confined to the apostles. The ordinary Christian believer also had the same crucial empowering of eagerness, boldness, fluency and fiery conviction in their witnessing, and they also knew the experience of speaking in tongues. As Peter made plain to his converts on the Day of Pentecost the same gift of the Holy Spirit was “*for them and their children*”. Being “*filled with the Holy Spirit*” or “*being baptised in the Holy Spirit*” was a gift to the whole church. It was indeed the intention of Jesus that all Christians should experience the power of the Spirit and be witnesses wherever they were or went. This was certainly the case in the early church and especially so as persecution quickly broke over them.

This experience of what Luke (and more important, Jesus) called a “*baptism in the Spirit*” has been very much a recognisable “*seal of the Spirit*” on countless Christian lives over the centuries, and has been especially evident in periods when the church has made great strides in its growth. It has been more in evidence in the twentieth century than at any other time of the church’s history. It is highly visible and real in the lives of those who have experienced what Peter experienced at Pentecost. Even more so have been the signs and wonders of “*tongues*”, healings and miracles which have been apparent wherever and whenever the Spirit has moved in “*power*”.

6. Recognising the Spirit of Prayer and Praise

When the Spirit fell on the believers at Pentecost they burst out in a great paean of praise. The fact that it was manifest in speaking in tongues should not blind us to the fact the essential thing was this spirit of praise. Many on that day, no doubt, would have praised God in their own language.

It is this surge of praise, in whatever language, that is the real mark on the believers who have been filled with the Spirit. Many people have been filled with the Spirit and have not spoken in tongues but have experienced a release of praise and worship of a kind that has hugely energised them and become a backbone of their spiritual lives. It is a remarkable seal of the Spirit, and it is accompanied by a new depth of faith and is greatly up building of faith.

All Christians, of course, who have believed and received the Spirit, will experience a stirring to prayer, prompted by the Spirit. Spontaneous talking to God will grow and gradually become the norm in their relationship with God. It is a process much akin to a child learning to communicate; the urge to relate in words with God will grow and mature, both in private and in public. A new life will inform “*set*” prayers. A “*prayer life*” spontaneous, free and intentional is very much an indication that we have been sealed with the Spirit.

7. Keeping in Step with the Spirit

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

Ephesians 4: 30ff

It needs to be said, however, that even when we have received the Spirit there always remains the fact that we have to let Him have full sway and with his help crucify the flesh that still embodies us and seeks to influence us away from his working. We need also to be in personal fellowship with the Spirit so that He may give us an increasing fullness of his presence. Praise, thanksgiving, and quiet meditation on the Scriptures are the essence of that fellowship with the Spirit. It grieves the Spirit when we neglect such fellowship. The world is too ready to wean us away from it