

Exercise God's Spirit!

Mankind constantly searches for new sources of power. God has an unlimited source of POWER that would solve all problems. But society is unaware of it. Do you know how to access this power—and what it can do for you?

God's Holy Spirit is the most powerful force in the universe—and this enormous power is available to you. Yes, YOU can have it!

Also, those led of God's Spirit already possess great power. But this power must be used—exercised!

All those begotten of God—who have received the Holy Spirit—must know *how* to use it and then they must actively exercise it.

Since creation, man has attempted to discover and harness new sources of energy. One of mankind's greatest fears is that of running out of the power supplies he has become dependant on—oil, electricity, hydro, fossil fuels. He is constantly searching for an “un-tapped,” unused resource that would solve his problems.

Yet, no matter how much power man discovers, he will never be satisfied. Although men might discover a way to provide never-ending *physical* power for televisions, blow dryers and blenders, they will never have *true* power in their lives!

Scientists have studied and researched millions of books for an answer to the world's energy problems. But they have not discovered the SOURCE of all power! They have failed to look into the only Book that can solve this world's problems—the Bible!

But what if I told you that there is an UNLIMITED source of power, undiscovered by most, which *you* can tap?

What would you do? Would you be interested?

What is REAL Power?

Jesus Christ possessed *real power*. The Bible is filled with examples of Him healing the sick, casting out demons, feeding thousands of people (with only a small amount of food) and walking on water. Jesus demonstrated this POWER! How many people can do what He did?

Where did Christ get this power? What allowed Him to do such marvelous wonders? We must examine the Bible to find the SOURCE of this incredible power.

Notice the account of Christ's birth: “And the angel answered and said unto her [Mary], the Holy [Spirit] shall come upon you, and the POWER [*dunamis*] of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that the holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Matthew 1:18 adds that Mary “was found with Child of the Holy Spirit.” (The word “ghost” is improperly used to describe God's Spirit. His Spirit is not a phantom, or “boogiemán.” The Greek word used is *pneuma*, which literally means “air, breath and *spirit*.”)

Even Christ's birth involved great power. The Bible records that the POWER of God—the Holy Spirit—came upon Mary, allowing Christ to be conceived inside her. This mighty miracle was done through God's Spirit!

As Christ grew, His power also grew: “And Jesus returned in the POWER [*dunamis*] of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about” (Luke 4:14). News about Christ's power quickly spread.

Notice what Christ did with this gift: “...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with POWER: Who went about *doing good*, and *healing all that were oppressed of the devil*; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

Rumors and stories of Christ's miracles spread. Soon, throngs of people searched Him out for healing and to cast out demons.

The following scripture records one such occasion: “And Jesus went with him; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood, twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that VIRTUE [*dunamis*] had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes?” (Mark 5:24-30).

Notice what happened! Jesus was so filled with God's Spirit, He knew someone had touched His clothes because He *felt* virtue—power—go from Him.

The Greek word for "virtue," *dunamis*, means "strength, dynamic, power, force or ability."

In Luke 1:35 and 4:14, *dunamis* is also used for the word "power." The words "dynamo," "dynamic" and "dynamite" come from the same Greek root word.

Consider the following analogy: Electricity flows into your house through wires, conductors and cables. This provides power for appliances that are plugged into this source, allowing them to operate. Likewise, Christ was "tapped" into an incredible source of power—the Holy Spirit. And like other power sources, He felt it *flow out* of Him when used.

But what is the SOURCE of this power? Where does it come from?

Notice what the apostle Paul recorded: "Now *the God of hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit...that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge..." (Rom. 15:13-14). God gives the Holy Spirit!

Further notice: "For He [Christ] whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (Jn. 3:34). This verse simply means that God did not measure or limit the amount of Spirit He gave Christ! He was filled with *dunamis*—power, virtue and might!

Christ recognized this, and declared that by His own strength He could do nothing (Jn. 5:30). He understood that only through God dwelling in Him, through the Holy Spirit, were all things done (14:10).

Through God's POWER Christ was miraculously born. Through His POWER Christ was filled with this Spirit. Through God's POWER Christ was able to do miracles. God offers this same power to men!

The Comforter

Shortly before Christ was brutally crucified, then resurrected, He declared to His disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless...But the *Comforter*, which is *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will

send in My Name, [it] shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jn. 14:18, 26).

What does this mean? What is the "Comforter"?

The Greek word for "comforter" is *paracletos*, meaning "one called in to help or support," or "an intercessor, consoler."

Read what Christ promised His disciples as they gathered in Jerusalem, just prior to the Day of Pentecost: "But *you shall receive power*, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Further notice what Christ said: "...when [it], the Spirit of truth, is come, [it] will guide you into all truth...and [it] will show you things to come" (Jn. 16:13).

In Acts 2, Christ's promise was fulfilled. And on Pentecost A.D. 31, the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit which enabled Jesus to perform miracles—was given to the New Testament Church. (To learn more about the process of receiving God's Spirit, read our free booklets *What do you mean WATER BAPTISM?* and *What is true CONVERSION?*)

After receiving God's Spirit, the apostles, and even some deacons, performed great miracles: "...with great POWER gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord..." (4:33).

Notice the example of Stephen, who being "full of faith and POWER, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (6:8). Acts 7:55 records the source of his miracles: "But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God..."

With the gift of the Holy Spirit, God's servants were able to face peers, scholars, intellectuals and critics as they preached the gospel "with boldness" (Acts 4:13, 31).

Christ said to His disciples, "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what you shall speak, neither do you premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak you: for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11). This is a very comforting statement.

Christ knew that, after being killed, He would not be able to teach His disciples in the flesh. So He provided a way for them to continue in their learning process. Once received, the Comforter (*paracletos*) HELPED provide the POWER (*dunamis*), strength and understanding the disciples needed to preach the gospel.

The Greatest Source of Power

The Holy Spirit is God's power—but what *kind* of power is it? Is it only for doing good deeds? Is it a feeling or an emotion? Or is it much more?

The Bible explains, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

Also notice what Jeremiah wrote: "Ah Lord GOD! behold, You have made the heaven and the earth by Your great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for You" (Jer. 32:17).

Not only did God create all things through His Spirit, He also preserves them by this same power!

The Prophet Nehemiah explains: "You, even You, are LORD alone; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and You preserve them all..." (9:6).

While praising God, King David wrote, "...power belongs unto God" (Psa. 62:11). This is an amazing statement!

By His Holy Spirit, God spoke "and it was done...commanded, and it stood fast" (33:9).

Think about it. You might not have realized the full extent of God's power.

But the most amazing thing is that God promises a portion of this Spirit to those He calls into repentance and baptism (Jn. 6:44, 65; Acts 2:38-39). Upon conversion, each baptized member of God's Church receives the same Spirit the Creator God uses to sustain and maintain the universe!

What the Holy Spirit is Not

Most professing Christians have their own differing ideas about the Holy Spirit. Some people believe it is a

“phantom-like” being. Others believe that it is a part of a “trinity,” along with God and Jesus Christ. Some even believe that the Holy Spirit is some type of spiritual dove, flying around, “spreading love.”

However, we have seen that the Bible teaches otherwise! Recall the phrase “...the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the POWER of the Highest shall overshadow you...” (Luke 1:35).

If the Holy Spirit is part of a trinity—as so many claim—then wouldn’t Christ be called the Son of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible explains that God *sent* the Holy Spirit—His power—to beget Christ. (Read our free booklet *The TRINITY—Is God three-in-one?* to learn more about the falsehood of the trinity doctrine.)

Another common misconception is being able to tap into an “inner power,” or accessing “energy inside.” In fact, most motivational speakers talk about “breaking through” and using “dormant powers” that lie inside, just waiting to be used. Many religions teach about “reaching deep inside” and accessing your “inner self.”

But these are the false ideas of men. The Holy Spirit does not reside in us from birth—it is a gift from God, given after repentance and baptism.

But is this all there is to it? What do you *do* with God’s Spirit after you receive it? Are there ways you can increase—or lose—this Spirit?

How the Spirit Works

Notice the following scriptures: “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of His*. And if Christ be in you...” (Rom. 8:9-10).

A Christian is one who has God’s Spirit residing within him. He belongs to Christ, who lives in him through this Spirit.

Understand this! A Christian is only a Christian *by this Spirit!* Without it residing in you, you are *not* a true servant of God. Millions believe they are Christians, when in reality they are “none of His.”

Paul warns that certain actions can extinguish, suppress, squelch or put out God’s Spirit: “*QUENCH* not the Spirit” (I Thes. 5:19). Paul also writes, “And

GRIEVE not the Holy Spirit of God...” (Eph. 4:30).

This is a sobering warning!

But how can someone *grieve* or *quench* the Spirit? How can you be sure that YOU are not doing this?

It is important to understand *how* this Spirit works. Christ received an unmeasured portion of it (recall John 3:34). But Christians are given a *certain* amount: “Now He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given unto us the *earnest* of the Spirit” (II Cor. 5:5).

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines *earnest* as “a token of what is to come.” In other words, it is a portion, or down payment, of the complete amount that Christians will later receive.

A Christian’s goal—the end of his spiritual growth process—is to become completely *composed* of Spirit at Christ’s Second Coming: “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

The Holy Spirit is like a muscle: If a muscle is not exercised, it will shrink and eventually atrophy—diminish and wither away.

Although not a living person or being, the Spirit of God is active. In John 7, Christ compares the Holy Spirit to “rivers of living waters.” Notice what He said, starting in verse 37: “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall *flow* rivers of living water. (But this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” The Holy Spirit flows like a powerful river current.

Imagine the current of a river as it flows down the riverbed. The raw force behind it is so powerful that over years, it will cause the formation of additional channels. Engineers have discovered this great power, and hydropower plants now provide about 24% of the world’s electricity. Christ understood the great power that drives rivers when He made this comparison.

Try to bottle up a river current. It cannot be done! This powerful force cannot be saved or preserved.

In this same manner, God’s Spirit cannot be saved for future use, lying dormant inside you. It must flow. Through Christ, it flows *into* us. And by following God’s Law, and producing “good fruits,” it flows *from* us. Like a mighty current, it flows continuously!

Recall the account about the woman healed after touching Jesus’ garments (Mark 5:28-30). Notice that Jesus was aware that virtue—power—had gone out *from* Him. Christ, who performed great miracles, could not “bottle up” or store God’s Spirit—neither can we.

Paul wrote, “...be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). That message is for *you!* God wants to fill *you* with this dynamic power!

After receiving a small amount or down payment of God’s power, we are commanded to “...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18), and “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (I Pet. 2:2). It is our job to grow and “...stir up the gift of God” (II Tim. 1:6).

We must stir up—rekindle, exercise, utilize—the Spirit. When you put it to use, you develop godly character (Matt. 5:48).

But how can one exercise God’s Spirit? What are the vital tools that will help God’s Spirit to increase in, and flow from, you?

The apostle Peter wrote, “For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that *you should follow His steps*” (I Pet. 2:21). We must pattern our lives after Christ (Eph. 4:13, 15). By the presence of God’s Spirit, we can become more like Him. Paul instructs us to “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). We must strive to think and act like Christ.

Notice Christ’s example. When He declared, “I can of Mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30), Christ understood that without God’s Spirit He was powerless. This is why He strived to stay fully “charged.”

But how did He do this?

As the only blueprint for Christian living, the Bible gives key examples of ways to swell this mighty power inside you. By regularly practicing them, you can also be fully charged with the Spirit!

How to Exercise God's Spirit

First, you must constantly *pray*.

Notice what Christ did after expending power in performing an incredible miracle: "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone" (Matt. 14:23). In order to remain fully charged with God's Spirit, Christ prayed!

Christ prayed three times before facing brutal torture and death (Matt. 26:36-45). He drew closer to God through fervent prayer. Then, fully charged with God's Spirit, He was able to face His scourging, saying to the disciples, "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that does betray Me" (vs. 46). Likewise, we must pray and draw closer to God everyday.

Second, you must *study the Bible*.

Notice: "...when the Sabbath day was come, He [Christ] began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence has this Man these things? And what *wisdom* is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands?" (Mark 6:2). It was Christ's custom to teach from the Bible (Luke 4:16-17). To do this, He had to continually study and bring God's Word to memory.

How can one teach about anything without first studying it?

When Christ taught, people were amazed at how much He knew! He studied the Bible—and so must we, if we wish to grow and become like Him.

The Bible exhorts us to "...desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may *grow* thereby" (I Pet. 2:2). We are commanded to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). God *demand*s that we prove—test and try—His Word. How can we, unless we study the Bible?

Third, you must *fast*.

Matthew 4 records a climactic battle between Christ and Satan. Knowing that He had to overcome the devil, notice what Christ did: "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered..." (vs. 2).

A fast of one or two days was not enough to go face-to-face with Satan—so Christ fasted *forty days* and *forty*

nights! He knew that when situations became more difficult, His prayer, Bible study and fasting needed to increase. In order to draw close to God to overcome His scourging and crucifixion, Christ prayed for hours. In order to overcome the temptations of Satan, He fasted many days.

By now, the pattern of Christ's behavior is obvious.

Fourth, you must *meditate* on God's Word.

To meditate simply means to "reflect on, contemplate." Bible study and meditation go hand-in-hand. To study something and not think or reflect on what you read is pointless! Paul exhorted Timothy to "Meditate upon these things; give yourself wholly to them; that your profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:15).

Notice Philippians 4: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report*; if there be any *virtue*, and if there be any *praise*, *THINK ON THESE THINGS*" (vs. 8). Certainly, God's Word is true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of a good report!

Christ said, "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). How can we do this, unless we study *and meditate* on God's Word?

While writing the Thessalonians, Paul sets the pattern for Christians to follow: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing [through prayer], because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us [through Bible study], you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe" (I Thes. 2:13).

Prayer, Bible study, fasting and meditation can be done in vain, unless done with a proper attitude. Isaiah 58 records God's severe reproof of His people for simply relying on their outward doings and activities (such as fasting), without producing good works, or demonstrating godly character. Although they believed that they were righteous, God condemned their vain, hypocritical, selfish attitudes!

In Jeremiah 9, God declares, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nei-

ther let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and *knows Me*, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the LORD" (vs. 23-24).

A Christian cannot either pray with a self-righteous attitude, study the Bible simply to be knowledgeable, fast to force his will upon God, or meditate on worldly things.

You must LIVE God's Word each and every day!

Other Ways to Exercise God's Spirit

Christ stated, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). In verse 15, He illustrates how a candle is not hidden, but instead placed on a candlestick—for all to see. Your actions should be the same!

In addition to prayer, study, fasting and meditation, there are other ways to exercise God's Spirit.

Consider Acts 5: "We ought to obey God rather than men...we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to them that OBEY Him" (vs. 29, 32). By obeying God, we receive more of His Spirit, which in turn enables us to obey God *more*. Like the principle of *cause and effect*—where every *action* produces a *reaction*—this pattern is continuous.

Another way to stir up God's Spirit is by overcoming and enduring trials and tests. Most are familiar with the saying, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

While this is usually used in the physical, it can also be applied to the spiritual. I Corinthians 10:13 explains how God does not allow one to be tested more than one can handle. Trials are difficult. Peter calls them "the trials of your faith" (I Pet. 1:7). But diligently following God—and seeking His will during a trial—will help you grow and make you a stronger Christian.

Serving others also helps one grow in God's Spirit. Notice Christ's serving attitude. Not only did He serve others, He served those that others avoided—the poor, sick and maimed. Christ's attitude was not, "I am the Son of God, serve Me!" Instead, He *helped others*.

To grow in Christ's same Spirit, we are to have this same humble, serving attitude.

Another way to increase God's Spirit within you is to support and follow God's government and authority in the Church.

Luke 7:1-10 records the story of the centurion who had a servant that needed to be healed by Christ. Notice the centurion's attitude, starting in verse 7: "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto You: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set *under authority*, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great *faith*, no, not in Israel."

This man demonstrated *great faith*—one of the fruits of the Spirit (we will cover these later). Paul stated, "And He [Christ] is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). By obeying and supporting God's government in His Church, we also demonstrate faith to God and Christ—the Head of the Church!

Through these works, we can be sure that we are stirring up God's Spirit within us. James 2:14-17 states that faith alone is of no profit, if we do not produce good works! Through these, our light cannot be hidden. However, there is more.

The Fruits of the Spirit

Like a great river current, the Holy Spirit flows into us—and springs from us through good works (Eph. 2:10; I Tim. 5:25; II Tim. 3:17; Heb. 10:24). Paul states, "...though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is *renewed day by day*" (II Cor. 4:16). We are to renew—replenish—God's Spirit every-day. If we do not, we risk completely losing this power that *flows* from us!

Many are familiar with the typical courtroom scene: Judge, jury and audience watch as lawyers present evidence in order to state their case. Doing this allows the jury to make a decision based on proof.

In this same manner, we should present evidence of God's Spirit in our lives!

Before receiving God's Spirit, the disciples seemed unaware of, even lost to, what Christ was teaching them. They fell asleep several times while Christ fervently prayed (Matt. 26:36-46). They were dumbfounded that they could not cast out a demon from a child (Mark 9:28). Even Peter, who later became an apostle, denied Christ three times (Matt. 26:69-75).

However, after receiving God's Spirit, the Bible records: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart...And with *great power* gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:31-33).

With the Holy Spirit leading and guiding them, the disciples were now apostles, speaking "the word of God with boldness." God's power made a great difference in their lives.

Notice what Paul wrote to the Galatians: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Bible describes the process of producing "fruits" in one's life. Like a branch on a tree, a Christian is connected to Christ—the Vine and Root—through the Spirit (Jn. 15). And, just as a tree needs rich sap to produce good fruit, a Christian needs God's Spirit to produce "good fruits."

Adding insight to this, James states, "But the wisdom that is from above [through the Holy Spirit] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (3:17-18).

These are the fruits—the products—of God's Spirit.

If you lack any of these, you may be running short of the Holy Spirit. This would then lead to the "works of the flesh"—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witch-

craft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, boastings (Gal. 5:19-21; James 4:16). In John 15, Christ explains that those who produce these will be "cast...into the [lake of] fire" (vs. 6).

In Romans, Paul tells us to "...rejoice in hope of the glory of God...because *the love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (5:2, 5). Love is a fruit of the Spirit. But this verse explains that "the love of God" is given *through* His Spirit.

But what is the love of God?

Romans 13 answers: "...love is the fulfilling of the law" (vs. 10). Through God's Spirit, love is spread in our hearts, empowering us to obey—fulfill—the law, showing true love towards God and fellowman. Without it, this is not possible.

Timothy was exhorted to "...*stir up* the gift of God [the Holy Spirit], which is in you by the putting on of my hands [through baptism]. For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of *power*, and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*" (II Tim. 1:6-7).

The apostle John writes, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...he that fears is not made perfect in love" (I Jn. 4:18). Opposed to the spirit of fear, God's Spirit is one of power, love and of a sound mind. A sound mind is secure, safe, unafraid, complete, undisturbed and based on valid reasoning.

Recall that Christ called the Holy Spirit "the Comforter." The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines *comfort* as "to soothe in times of affliction and distress." In a world of unsettling troubles, fears and worries, we can lean on God's Comforter for support.

God also comforts us through His Word. Christ, the living Word (Jn. 1:1, 14), demonstrated this same trait by comforting people through His actions and words.

With this same Spirit within us, we should do the same.

A sound mind, hope, comfort, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control and freedom from fears—these are missing in most people's lives. Yet, by utilizing the tools of Christian growth,

and stirring up the Spirit, your life and conduct will reflect these fruits.

But, much like you would inspect the tires and engine of a car to ensure that they are in proper working order before taking a long journey, you must inspect and examine your life *daily*. God's words should be reflected in your conduct and personal life. Analyze yourself for evidence of God's Spirit in your life!

Increase God's Spirit Within You

If you use the tools for Christian growth, God's Spirit will grow and swell within you. With it, you will notice its fruits slowly developing in your life (this is also exercising the Spirit). If not, odds are you may be neglecting to pray, study, fast and meditate. If this is the case, do not let it continue! Remember, the Holy Spirit is the empowering force behind a Christian.

Picture a beautiful red sports car. The chrome rims are polished, the tires are shining, the red paint glistens from waxing, the leather interior is soft and smooth. Now imagine lifting the hood, only to discover that there is no engine!

The main component that causes the car to operate is gone! Although it looks appealing and attractive, without an engine to provide power, it is useless.

This world's Christianity operates in the same manner. It looks appealing. It *appears* right and good. It claims to follow God, but is oblivious to His truth and His Spirit. It shines and glistens—but is empty and powerless, missing the key component to true Christian living.

The same applies to those who quench and grieve the Spirit. If you are baptized, and believe that simply receiving God's Spirit is enough—you are gravely mistaken!

Remember, if a muscle is not exercised it will wither and shrink. So also will this incredible power be quenched—grieved—and diminish if not exercised daily.

Remember, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all

things consist." (Col. 1:16-17). A portion of this same power is given to us.

Notice Christ's promise to you and me: "But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

With it, we can do all things through God. After all, what task is too great for Him?

What will you do with the small amount of Himself that God has personally placed inside you? Will you use the tools of Christian growth—prayer, Bible study, fasting and meditation? Will you build upon them and exercise God's Spirit (the fifth tool), producing fruits as Christ did?

Will you stir up the Spirit and allow it to grow within you and lead you into all truth—or will you quench it, grieve it and cause it to diminish?

Although you may not experience earth-shattering miracles like the apostles did, do not underestimate the impact that the Holy Spirit will have on your life! Remember, "For with God *nothing* shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Do not let this precious gift *slip* from your grasp! □

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