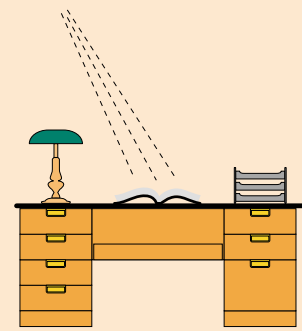


# A Derek Prince

## Teaching Letter

No. 11: Spiritual or Soulsh?



Dear Friend

In my previous letter I analysed the three elements that make up total human personality: spirit, soul and body. In this letter I will continue with the same theme, but I will focus on one particular issue: the relationship between man's spirit and his soul.

The spirit of man comes directly from God and relates directly to God. In the original pattern of creation, there was a descending relationship. God moved upon man's spirit; his spirit moved upon his soul; and his soul directed his body. Through man's rebellion, however, his spirit was set aside and his soul took over control. As a result, unregenerate man is controlled by the three functions of his soul: the will, the intellect and the emotions.

When God reconciles man to Himself, His purpose is to restore the original order, by which He once again relates directly to man's spirit, man's spirit in turn moves upon his soul and man's soul moves upon his body. This explains the words of David in Psalm 103:1: *Bless the LORD, O my soul*. Through faith David's spirit had been reunited with God and was eager to worship Him. So his spirit stirred up his soul to move upon his vocal organs to utter the appropriate words of worship.

So long as man remains in submission to God and his soul remains in submission to his spirit, man functions in harmony with God and with himself. But if at any time man reasserts his rebellion against God, his soul is no longer in submission to his spirit and the inner harmony is broken. This means that there is constant tension between the spirit and the soul.

The Greek of the New Testament has a special adjective, formed directly from the word for soul, *psuche*, which describes action initiated by the soul. The adjective is *psuchikos*. The natural way to render this in English would be *soulsh*, but unfortunately English has not produced such a word.

Consequently, English translations of the New Testament have used a variety of different words: natural<sup>1</sup>, sensual<sup>1</sup>, worldly<sup>2</sup>, unspiritual<sup>3</sup>, worldly-minded<sup>3</sup>, without the spirit<sup>4</sup>, and a phrase, to follow their natural instinct<sup>4</sup>. English readers, who cannot get behind the translations, therefore have no way of knowing that these seven different words or phrases all translate one and the same Greek word.

Throughout the rest of this letter, I will use the word *soulsh*. This will emphasise the tension in the New Testament between that which is *spiritual* and that which is *soulsh*.

In 1 Corinthians 15:44-46 Paul uses this word three times to point out the difference

between our present body, which is *natural (soulish)* and our resurrection body, which will be *spiritual*. A *soulish* body is one upon which the spirit has to move through the soul. A *spiritual* body would be one in which the spirit moves directly upon the body, without having to work through the soul.

The cherubs, which are described in Ezekiel chapter 1, apparently have *spiritual* bodies. *Each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go* (verse 12). *Again, where the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went* (verse 20).

Apparently that is the type of body that believers will have after resurrection. No longer will our spirit have to urge our soul to direct our body to make the appropriate response. Our body will directly respond to the decision of our spirit. We will be like Ezekiel's cherubs: we will go directly, without turning, wherever our spirit wills to go. What glorious liberty!

There are three other passages in the New Testament where the opposition between the spiritual and the soulish is more clearly expressed. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 – 15 Paul says:

*But the natural [soulish] man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*

For the understanding of spiritual things, the soul is dependent upon the spirit. If it is out of harmony with the spirit, the realm of spiritual truth is closed to it. How important it is, therefore, that we approach truth with the right attitude - our soul submitted to our spirit and our spirit in union with God.

In his epistle Jude speaks about people in the church who *are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts . . . sensual [soulish] persons, who cause divisions, not having the [Holy] Spirit* (Jude 16, 19).

When the soul of a Christian is not submitted through his spirit to God, he becomes a channel through which every kind of carnality and divisiveness can infiltrate the church. This is the true, underlying cause of divisions in the Body of Christ.

In James 3:15 the apostle speaks about a form of wisdom which *does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual [soulish], demonic*. James depicts a downward slide in three successive stages: from the earthly to the soulish to the demonic.

When Christians become *earthly* they lose the vision of eternity. They cannot see beyond the things of this life: success, pleasure, wealth, physical health. They are only interested in what their faith will do for them in this life!

Concerning such people Paul says: *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable* (1 Corinthians 15:19). Christians like that often consider themselves prosperous and successful. God considers them pitiable.

After the *earthly*, the next stage is *soulish*. To be soulish is to be egocentric, self-centred. For such people, the Christian faith is a way to get what they want out of life. They suppose that *godliness is a means of gain* (1 Timothy 6:5).

The *soulish* opens the way for the *demonic*. This is one main way in which demons infiltrate the church. The question is often asked: Do Christians ever need deliverance from demons? The words of James provide a clear answer. This downward slide from the earthly to the soulish to the demonic exposes both individual believers and whole congregations to the activities of demons.

In many places today the church is an ungodly mixture. No clear line is drawn between the spiritual and the soulish, and therefore there is no barrier to the demonic. Genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit are interspersed with manifestations that are clearly demonic. As a result, many sincere believers are confused and bewildered.

To protect ourselves we must cultivate scriptural discernment. We must learn to distinguish between what is truly spiritual and what is soulish. There is only one instrument that is sharp enough to do this: the Word of God.

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.  
(Hebrews 4:12)*

Further on, in Hebrews 5:14, the writer states two conditions which we must fulfil in order to exercise this kind of discernment:

*But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use [practice] have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

The first condition is that we must regularly feed on *solid spiritual food* through the study of the whole Bible. The second condition is that we must regularly *practice* discernment. We must be continually alert, recognising the spiritual forces that we encounter in every situation. Discernment should be as much a part of our Christian life as prayer.

Finally, let us obey the exhortation of Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14:

*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*

Let all that you do be done with love.

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

P.S. On the reverse side is a copy of a letter I received from a German psychiatrist who had a revelation of the “spiritual” and “soulish” areas of his personality.

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<sup>1</sup> KJV, NKJ

<sup>2</sup> NKJ

<sup>3</sup> NAS

<sup>4</sup> NIV

## German Psychiatrist's Discovery

Dear Mr. Prince

Never in my life has this happened to me before: Stunned by the “news” of your broadcast tape “What Is Man?” While listening to your lecture, I saw for the first time in my Christian life the “spiritual Hans” of me somehow elevated as if on a chair and looking down onto the “soulish Hans” whose monument-like appearance seemed to crumble away.

Regenerated, this spiritual part of me, the “Spiritual Hans,” has survived ever since I listened to your lecture – fuelled by the Holy Spirit – about 5 weeks ago. The “Soulish Hans” of me – in particular its intellectual and emotional areas – *must be dragged to the cross*.

Throughout my life I have been on the outlook for some **clear** and **whole** presentation of God's Word.

You will understand that this change in my life – this being again a “triune” human being – is about to revolutionise even my profession. And for the first time in my life – now 45 years old – I see some good reason in having become a psychiatrist.

H.P., Germany

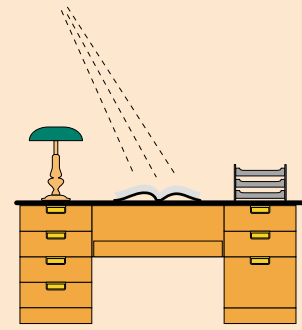
For further study, we recommend audio cassette 4270, “Are You Spiritual Or Soulish?”.

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 12: Do you Bury your Face in the Water?



Dear Friend

Recently, I have been strongly impressed by the words of the Lord in Isaiah 55:8-9:

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

As I was pondering on the vast gap that separates God’s ways and thoughts from ours, I was forcefully reminded of the account of Gideon and his army in Judges 6, 7 and 8.

At this time, Israel had fallen into sin and idolatry and – as a judgement – God permitted vast hordes of Midianites to invade their land each year and rob them of their harvest.

One day, while Gideon was furtively threshing wheat in a winepress – to hide it from the Midianites – the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, *“The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valour!”* (Judges 6:11-12). Obviously the Lord saw Gideon quite differently from the way that he saw himself. Gideon saw himself as young, weak and ineffective. The Lord hailed him as a *“mighty man of valour.”*

We each need to be less concerned with how we see ourselves and more concerned with how God sees us. In Christ, each one of us is a *new man . . . created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness* (Ephesians 4:24). Viewing ourselves like this will inevitably affect the way we live.

The Lord then commissioned Gideon to lead Israel in battle against the Midianites. In response, Gideon assembled an army by the well of Harod, with the Midianites encamped to the north.

What were the numbers on both sides?

Gideon’s army	32,000 <sup>1</sup>
Midianites	135,000 <sup>2</sup>

Thus, Gideon with 32,000 men faced 135,000 Midianites. He was outnumbered more than four to one.

Imagine Gideon’s reaction when the Lord told him, *“The people who are with you are too many!”* (Judges 7:2).

The Lord instructed Gideon to send away all those in his army who were fearful and afraid. As a result, 22,000 men departed and Gideon was left with 10,000. At this point he was outnumbered more than thirteen to one.

But God was not finished! To Gideon’s astonishment, He said, *“The people are still too many.”*

Then He instructed Gideon to bring his men down to the water, so that He might test them there by the way they drank from the water. All those who went down on both knees to drink were eliminated. Only those who lapped like a dog passed the test (Judges 7:4-7).

### **One Essential Character Requirement**

The test focused on one single character requirement: **vigilance**.

Picture first those who drank in the normal way. Laying aside their shield from the left arm and their spear – or sword – from the right arm, they went down on both knees and buried their faces in the water. In this posture, they were totally vulnerable to a surprise attack. They could not see any approaching enemy, nor did they have their weapons ready to use. In the time they took to get themselves ready, the enemy would have overcome them.

What about those who lapped like dogs? When a dog drinks, it does not bury its nose in the water, it stretches out its tongue and laps the water up into its mouth, usually splashing some water around.

How, then, should we picture the men who lapped? They went down on one knee only. Retaining their shield on their left arm, with the right arm they set down their spear or sword beside them. Then, with a cupped hand, they scooped up the water to their mouths.

In this posture, they remained alert, constantly watching for any surprise attack. Their shields were already in position and they could instantly pick up their spear or sword and have it ready to use. There was no possibility of the enemy taking them by surprise.

Only 300 of Gideon's men passed this second test. They were facing 135,000 Midianites. They were outnumbered 450 to one!

I can picture some of those who were dismissed saying to themselves, "Well, thank God we're out of that! That man, Gideon, must be crazy. What difference does it make how a man drinks water? Let's see what will become of him and the idiots who stayed with him."

In the outcome, of course, Gideon and his 300 broke through the Midianites and threw them into total confusion. After that, other Israelites rallied behind them and inflicted a total defeat on the Midianites.

The proportions are illuminating. Only 300 men fulfilled the qualifications for making the initial breakthrough. But once the breakthrough was made, there were thousands of Israelites who were eager to pursue the fleeing Midianites.

This whole account vividly illustrates how different God's ways are from ours. Left to himself, Gideon would surely have concluded, "The people with me are too few. I need to get reinforcements."

But God's perspective was exactly the opposite. "*The people with you are too many.*" In the end, Gideon was left with less than one out of a hundred of those who originally joined him. For God, the question is not "How many people?" but "What kind of people?"

## A Personal Assessment

In the light of this account, we each need to make a personal assessment. If God should gather an army today like that of Gideon, would I be one of the few who qualify?

Or would I be like the first 22,000 who gave way to fear? Or like the second 10,000 who laid down their weapons and buried their faces in the water to drink?

It is easy – and often normal – to *bury our faces* in the business of daily living; to be absorbed in all the practical needs that confront us every day; to forget that we are in a spiritual conflict with unseen forces of darkness who are continually watching for an opportunity to catch us unprepared.

To maintain unceasing vigilance in every situation demands conscious, personal discipline. It goes beyond all our normal concepts of Christian conduct and morality. Yet the New Testament clearly warns us: *Be sober, **be vigilant**; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter 5:8). If we ignore this warning, we become vulnerable to subtle, unpredictable assaults of Satan.

Take, for example, the question of holidays (vacations). Ruth and I have found that we cannot effectively continue our ministry unless we pause from time to time to take a holiday and to wait upon God. (Our holidays really are *holy days*.)

But I have learned one thing: *Satan never takes a holiday*. Just when we feel our greatest need to relax, Satan releases some totally unanticipated pressure against us and we may easily be caught without our weapons ready for immediate use.

Does that mean, then, that we no longer take holidays? No! But it means that we do not *bury our faces* in our holidays; we do not lay down our weapons. We have learned that holidays are often times when we need to exercise the greatest vigilance.

But holidays are just one example that would apply in many different areas: family relationships, business activities, special celebrations, educational opportunities. We can participate in all of these, but we must not *bury our faces* in any.

Remember, in Gideon's army, less than one out of a hundred qualified! Would the proportions be different today?

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

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<sup>1</sup> Judges 7:3 records that after 22,000 left him, Gideon still had 10,000.

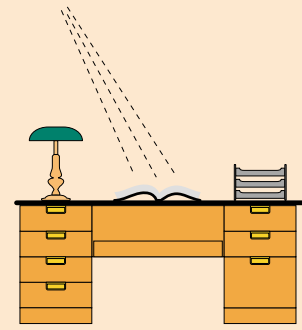
<sup>2</sup> Judges 8:10 records that after 120,000 Midianites had been killed, 15,000 still survived.

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 13: Follow Me!



Dear Friend

If you were asked to describe the Christian life in two words, how would you respond? For my part, I would have no hesitation, I would simply say: *Following Jesus*. That is the essence of the Christian life.

This is vividly illustrated by the conversion of Matthew the tax collector.<sup>1</sup> As he sat in his tax office, Jesus passed by and simply spoke two words: *“Follow Me.”* Matthew’s eternal destiny depended on his response. He arose and followed Jesus.

## **Two Essential Preconditions**

If we decide, however, to respond as Matthew did, we discover that there are two essential preconditions before we can begin to follow: *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*<sup>2</sup> First, we must deny ourselves; second, we must take up our cross.

To deny is to say “No!” We must say “No” to our insistent, demanding, self-assertive ego. We must echo the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane: *“Not My will, but Yours, be done.”*<sup>3</sup>

Only after we have denied ourselves can we go on to take up our cross. Someone has defined our cross as the place where God’s will and our will cross. It is, in fact, the place of execution.

In Romans 6:6 Paul tells us that *our old man was crucified with Him* (Jesus). The old man is the rebellious, self-pleasing nature which each of us has inherited by descent from our common ancestor, Adam.

God has only one solution for our old man. He does not send him to church or Sunday school, He does not teach him the golden rule, or direct him to a class on self-improvement. God’s solution is simple and final. It is execution.

The good news of the gospel is that the execution took place when Jesus died on the cross. Our old man was crucified at that time in Him. This is a simple historical fact. It is true whether or not we know it or believe it. But to benefit from it we must both know it and believe it.

## **Challenged by God in a Dream**

Nearly fifty years ago I used to conduct regular evangelistic meetings in London at



Speaker's Corner, Marble Arch. One night during that period I had a vivid dream in which I saw a man preaching at Speaker's Corner. The man's message was good, but there was something about his appearance I did not like. His body was somehow crooked and he seemed to have a clubfoot.

However, I did not attach any particular importance to my dream.

About a week later I had precisely the same dream. I concluded that God was saying something to me. "Lord," I asked, "who is that man? His preaching was good but there was something I didn't like about his appearance. Who is he?"

The Lord's answer was immediate and direct: "You are the man!" God was clearly requiring some important changes from me, but I did not know exactly what.

The Easter season was at hand and I found myself meditating on the crucifixion. I had a mental picture of three crosses on a hill. The central cross was higher than the other two.

"For whom was that central cross made?" the Holy Spirit asked me. But then He cautioned, "Be careful how you answer."

I thought it over for a while, then I said, "The central cross was made for Barabbas – but at the last moment Jesus took his place."

"So Jesus took the place of Barabbas," the Holy Spirit continued. "But you have said that Jesus took your place."

"Yes, He did," I responded.

"Then you must be Barabbas!"

At that moment I saw it with absolute clarity: I was exactly the criminal for whom the cross was prepared. It was made to my measure. That was where I should have been.

I was compelled to identify with Paul's assessment of himself in Romans 7:18: *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells. . . .* Every area of my personality was permeated, I saw, by the corruption of sin. There was nothing in me that was pure, that was good, that could merit God's favour.

But how was I to respond?

In Romans 6:6-13 I saw that Paul sets out four successive steps.

Verse 6: First of all, I must *know* that my sinful nature had been put to death when Jesus died on the cross. This was the essential first step from which all the rest followed.

Verse 11: I must *reckon* – consider – myself dead, just as Jesus was dead.

Verse 12: On that basis I must resolutely refuse to let sin continue to dominate me.

Verse 13: I must present myself to God like someone raised from the dead and I must yield my physical members as instruments – literally, weapons – of righteousness. The use of the word *weapons* alerted me that I would face opposition from Satan.

## **God's Threefold Provision**

To provide complete deliverance from the tyranny of sin required a threefold provision of God. First of all, He had to deal with our *sins* – the sinful acts we have all committed. Because Jesus on the cross has paid the full penalty for our sins, God can forgive us without compromising His own justice. His first provision, therefore, is *forgiveness*

But then God had also to deal with the corrupt nature within us that caused us to go on committing those sinful acts. His provision was *execution* – to put that sinful nature to death. But the good news is that the execution took place more than nineteen centuries ago when Jesus died on the cross.

However, that is not the end. God's purpose is to replace the sinful old man with a new man of His own creating. This provision is explained in Ephesians 4:22-24:

*that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man . . .  
and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,  
and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in  
righteousness and true holiness.*

We should not assume, however, that the old man will passively accept his sentence of execution. On the contrary, he will at times struggle fiercely to regain his control over us. This explains Paul's words of warning in Colossians chapter 3.

In verse 3 he says, *For you died. . .* But then in verse 5 he says, *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth. . .* We must stand in faith that the death of our old man is an accomplished fact and we must actively resist his attempts to regain control over us.

## **A Personal Spiritual Inventory**

Unfortunately many sincere Christians have never understood or availed themselves of this complete provision of God. They claim – and continue to claim – the forgiveness of their sins, but they do not know that God has also made provision for the old man to be put to death and for a new man to take his place. Consequently their Christian life is a wearisome repetitive cycle: sinning – repenting – being forgiven – and then sinning again. . . . They never experience release from the domination of the old sinful nature.

This analysis of God's total provision for sin should lead us to make a personal spiritual inventory, in which we ask ourselves the following questions:

***Am I completely sure that all my sins have been forgiven?***

***Have I been freed from the domination of my old carnal nature?***

***Have I put on the new man who is created in righteousness and true holiness?***

***Am I following Jesus?***

## A Glimpse of the Future

Let me close with a brief glimpse of the future, taken from Revelation chapters 7 and 14. At the close of this age God is going to provide for Himself 144,000 Israelite followers of Messiah. He will send them forth into a world that is reeling under the impact of *the great tribulation* and they will reap a harvest of souls so vast *that no one could number it*.

Revelation 14:1-5 depicts these 144,000 after they have triumphantly completed their task and – in all probability – sealed their testimony with their lifeblood. With the names of the Father and of the Son written on their foreheads, they are worshipping God with a song that sounds *like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder*<sup>4</sup> – a song that no one else could learn.

What kind of people are they?

Their character is clearly delineated: they are sexually pure; in their mouth is no guile; they are without fault. How have they attained to such a faultless character? There is one simple answer: they *follow the Lamb wherever He goes*.

Does that inspire you – as it inspires me – with a longing to follow Jesus more closely?

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

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1 Matthew 9:9

2 Matthew 16:24

3 Luke 22:42

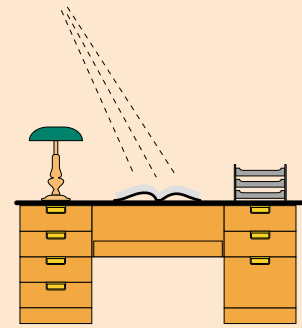
4 Rev. 14:2 (niv)

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

## No. 14: The Purpose of Testing



Dear Friend

*“What is man . . . that You should visit him every morning, and test him every moment?”<sup>1</sup>*

Isn't that an amazing revelation – that God visits us every morning and tests us every moment?

When it first became real to me, I had to ask myself: *Am I prepared to receive a visit from God every morning? Do I wake up with that expectation?*

Then I went on to ask myself: *Why does God test us? What is His purpose?*

Collins English Dictionary gives an interesting definition of the verb **test**: *to ascertain the worth of a person . . . by subjection to certain examinations*. God does not test us because He is angry with us or wants to put us down. On the contrary, testing is a mark of God's favour. He tests us because He wants to establish our value.

A jeweller will subject gold or silver to certain tests. He does this because they are valuable. He does not bother to test base metals such as iron or tin.

In the world of the patriarchs there was one man of outstanding righteousness. His name was Job. God was proud of Job. He actually boasted about him to Satan: *“Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”<sup>2</sup>*

Characteristically, Satan's response was to attribute selfish motives to Job: *“He only serves You because of what He gets from You.”*

In response, God permitted Satan to put Job to the test. First, He allowed Satan to destroy everything that belonged to Job: his possessions, his servants and his children. Then God even permitted Satan to touch Job's body – to afflict him with boils from head to toe. But He did not permit Satan to take Job's life.

Job recognised that God was testing him. *“When He has tested me,”* he said, *“I shall come forth as gold”<sup>3</sup>* – that is, gold that had been tested by fire. This gave him the strength to endure. He cried out in agony of soul, but he never gave up.

Typically, Eliphaz and Job's other two religious friends concluded that Job's sufferings were due to sins he had committed and they brought all sorts of terrible accusations against him. In the end, however, God vindicated Job and rebuked his friends. He told Eliphaz, *“You have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.”<sup>4</sup>*

Abraham was another righteous man who was subjected to severe tests – even to the point of being required to offer his son to God as a burnt offering. Abraham was subjected to special tests because he had a special destiny – to become the father of God's chosen people, both Jewish and Christian. God applies special tests to those for whom He has special purposes.

The New Testament clearly warns us that, as Christians, we must expect to undergo testing. Peter compares our faith to gold, the genuineness of which must be tested by fire.<sup>5</sup>

James tells us that we should respond to testing with joy:

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your*

*faith produces patience [endurance]. But let patience [endurance] have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* <sup>6</sup>

On different occasions Ruth and I have each had to repent and ask God's forgiveness because we did not respond rightly to some of our tests. We did not count them all joy!

Further on, James takes Job as an example of how to respond to testing: *You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and merciful.* <sup>7</sup>

### **Testing or Chastening?**

It is vitally important that we learn to distinguish between God's testing and His chastening. Many people seem to assume that once they become Christians they are exempt from God's chastening – especially if they have been believers for any length of time. This attitude, however, has no basis in Scripture.

To such believers Hebrews gives a powerful warning:

*And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:*

*“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,  
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;  
For whom the LORD loves He chastens,  
And scourges every son whom He receives.”*

*If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.* <sup>8</sup>

In this connection God impressed upon me the example of His dealings with Moses. Moses was 80 years old when the Lord commissioned him to return to Egypt and deliver Israel from their slavery. Yet when Moses was actually on his way back to Egypt, the Lord met him and sought to kill him. <sup>9</sup>

Why? Because of his disobedience. Moses had not fulfilled the covenant of circumcision which the Lord had made with Abraham and his descendants. <sup>10</sup> Only when Moses repented and had his son circumcised, did the Lord spare Moses' life and release him to go on his way. God would rather have killed Moses than have permitted him to go through with his mission in disobedience. His position as a leader did not exempt him from God's discipline. It made him all the more accountable.

For me, now in my 82nd year, there is a personal application. I cannot expect to complete my God-given assignment if I make room for disobedience in my life.

When we come under the dealings of God, we need to humble ourselves before Him and pray the prayer of David in Psalm 139:23 - 24 (NIV):

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

If we sincerely allow the Lord to search our hearts and He does not put His finger on anything that is offensive to Him, then we may conclude that we are under God's testing, not His chastening.

What God reveals will determine how we respond. Our response to chastening should be to **repent**; our response to testing should be to **endure**. But if we persist in trying to endure when we should repent, we are guilty of stubbornness and insensitivity.

### **What Is God Looking For?**

The basic issues of sin or righteousness are defined in Satan's original temptation of Adam and Eve. His Greek title *diabolos* (English *devil*) means *slanderer*. To slander someone means to *defame their*

*character*. This is Satan's primary activity.

First and foremost, Satan defames the character of God Himself. Hence his original question to Eve: "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"<sup>11</sup> Satan implied that God was a despot – arbitrary, unfair and unloving. God was shutting Adam and Eve out from a "higher level" of knowledge which would open up to them if they tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Satan's goal was to undermine their trust in God's goodness when, in actual fact, God had already provided them with everything that was good, beautiful and delightful.

From mistrust of God's goodness, Adam and Eve moved to disbelief in God's word and then to the act of disobedience. There were three stages in their fall: **mistrust**, **disbelief** and **disobedience**.

Through faith in Christ, God has provided a redemption that reverses the downward process of the fall. It replaces disbelief with faith, disobedience with obedience, and mistrust with trust. Faith leading to obedience is the first stage. But the process is not complete until faith has developed into trust.

What is the difference between faith and trust? A non-theological answer would be: faith is an **act**; trust is an **attitude**. (It was Smith Wigglesworth who continually emphasised that faith is an act.)

A clear illustration of the difference between faith, as an act, and trust, as an attitude, is provided in Psalm 37:5 (NAS):

*Commit your way to the LORD,  
Trust also in Him, and He will do it.*

*Commit* describes a single act of faith; *trust* describes a continuing attitude that follows the initial act of committing. After that, God takes over: *He will do it*.

A simple illustration would be making a deposit in a savings bank. You hand your money to the teller and receive a receipt. That is *committing*.

After that, you do not lie awake at night wondering: *Is the bank really taking care of my money? Am I receiving the interest due to me?* You just put the receipt in a safe place and sleep soundly. That is *trust*.

Many Christians take the first step, an act of faith, but do not maintain an attitude of trust. Strangely, many of us find it easier to trust an earthly bank than to trust God in heaven!

A primary purpose behind God's tests is to produce trust in us. This was true of Job. In the midst of all his trials he affirmed: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, trust momentarily enabled Job to lift his eyes above the realm of time and to catch a glimpse of eternity and the resurrection:

*"For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,  
Whom I shall see for myself,  
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me!"<sup>13</sup>*

Why is trust so important? Because it reveals our **estimate of God's character**. When Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's temptation, their actions spoke louder than any words they might have uttered. They were saying: "God is not just and loving. He is not dealing fairly with us. He is not to be trusted."

Our salvation from sin is not complete until it has undone the effects of the fall and produced in us this quality of **trust**. This may require us to go through many tests. It is important that we never lose sight of God's end purpose: to produce in us an unshakeable confidence in His absolute trustworthiness.

Jesus Himself has provided us with the supreme example of trust. In fulfilment of His Father's plan, He was handed over to wicked, cruel and godless men. They mocked Him, spat on Him, flogged Him, stripped Him naked and nailed Him to a cross. Eventually He cried out, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"<sup>14</sup>

Yet in all this His trust in His Father's faithfulness never failed. With His last breath He yielded His spirit back to the Father.

How do we respond if we cry out to God and He does not seem to answer us? Can we still trust His faithfulness?

Remember, God is more concerned with our character than with our achievements. Achievements have importance only in the realm of time. Character is eternal. It determines what we will be through eternity.

God will not permit us to be tested beyond what we can bear. He will not expect of us what He required of Jesus – perhaps not even what He required of Job. Every test we go through is designed to mould our character, until we have become in Christ all that God created us to be.

*Blessed is the man who endures temptation [testing];  
for when he has been proved [approved], he will receive the crown of life.*<sup>15</sup>

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

P.S. While working on this letter, I felt it would be important to consider more fully **how to respond to testing**. Probably this will be the theme of my next teaching letter.

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<sup>1</sup> Job 7:17 - 18

<sup>2</sup> Job 1:8

<sup>3</sup> Job 23:10

<sup>4</sup> Job 42:7

<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter 1:7

<sup>6</sup> James 1:2 - 4

<sup>7</sup> James 5:11 (NAS)

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 12:5 - 8

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 4:24 - 26

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 17:9 - 14

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 3:1

<sup>12</sup> Job 13:15

<sup>13</sup> Job 19:25 - 27

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 27:46

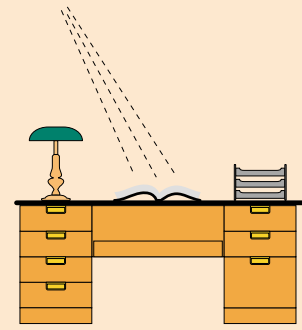
<sup>15</sup> James 1:12

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 15: How to Respond to Testing



Dear Friend

As Christians we will all undergo tests. They may come in many different forms: a crisis in our health or finance; a breakdown in a personal relationship; rejection or persecution because of our faith; some long dark tunnel with no light at the other end. In any time of testing it is important to bear in mind that God is more concerned with our character than our achievements.

How, then, shall we respond to testing?

First of all, we must distinguish between testing and chastening. All too often, as Christians, we fail to recognise God's chastening. As a result, we adopt a posture of resisting the devil when we should in fact be submitting to God. The root character problem that this exposes is PRIDE.

There is a prayer at the end of Psalm 19 that Ruth and I often repeat:

*Who can understand his errors?  
Cleanser me from secret faults.  
Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;  
Let them not have dominion over me.  
Then I shall be blameless,  
And I shall be innocent of great transgression. <sup>1</sup>*

I have come to see that *secret faults* are not secrets that we keep from other people – much less from God. They are secret to ourselves, faults in our own character that we do not recognise. David describes them as *presumptuous sins* – sins that we commit when we *presume* that our conduct is acceptable to God, when in fact it offends Him. Very often God will not reveal such sins to us until we deliberately choose to humble ourselves and invite God to search our character and to lay bare our inmost motives.

Once we are clear that what we are passing through really is a test from God, we need to make sure that “all our bases are covered” (to borrow a phrase from baseball).

## **Base No. 1: Repentance**

Repentance is perhaps the basic Christian doctrine which is least emphasised by contemporary preachers. “Only believe” is a sweet sounding message, but it is not scriptural. From the beginning to the end of the New Testament, the message is: *first repent, then believe*. When there is any sin in our lives, any kind of faith that does not proceed out of repentance is a humanistic counterfeit. It does not produce the results that proceed from genuine faith.

A simple illustration of true repentance is making a U-turn in a vehicle. You recognise that you have not been living the right way. You stop and make a U-turn. After that you proceed



in the opposite direction. If you do not end up travelling in the opposite direction, you have not truly repented.

### **Base No. 2: Commitment**

According to Romans 10:9 there are two essential conditions for salvation: to believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead; to confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord.

When you confess Jesus as Lord, you give Him unreserved control over your whole life – your time, your money, your talents, your priorities, your relationships. You cannot hold anything back. “If Jesus is not Lord of all” – someone has said – “then He is not Lord at all.”

### **Base No. 3: Attitude to Scripture**

Satan brought about the downfall of our first parents when he enticed them into questioning the truth of God’s word: “*Has God indeed said . . . ?*”<sup>2</sup>

Jesus Himself set the seal of His divine authority upon the Scripture when He called it *the word of God* and added, “*the Scripture cannot be broken.*”<sup>3</sup>

Paul states categorically, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*<sup>4</sup>

To question the authority of Scripture is a luxury that none of us can afford. It is the path to disaster today just as surely as it was in the garden of Eden.

### **Base No. 4: Right Relationships**

Right doctrine is the basis of the Christian faith. But right doctrine rightly applied will produce right relationships. Our personal relationships should reflect the doctrine that we profess.

Jesus Himself laid great emphasis on maintaining right relationships. He gave clear guidelines for dealing with a brother who sins against us.<sup>5</sup> In the Sermon on the Mount He warns, “*Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him.*”<sup>6</sup>

He closed His model prayer with a solemn warning: “*But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*”<sup>7</sup>

In any time of testing we should be careful to check our attitudes and our relationships, to make sure that we are not harbouring any bitterness or resentment or unforgiveness in our hearts.

We also need to bear in mind that we cannot have right relationships with the wrong people. *Do not be deceived*, Paul warns us, “*Evil company corrupts good manners.*”<sup>8</sup> We cannot lead holy lives if we deliberately consort with unholy people. All such relationships must be cut off with the sharp sword of God’s word.

### **The Example of Jesus**

The supreme example of right responses to testing is provided by Jesus Himself, who was *in all points tempted [tested] as we are, yet without sin.*<sup>9</sup>

To follow His example requires that we *lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher [perfecter] of our faith . . .*<sup>10</sup>

It is not sufficient that we deal with things in our lives that are actually sinful. We must also

eliminate *weights* – things that are not sinful in themselves, but yet would hinder us from concentrating every effort on our service for Christ.

A runner in a race strips down to the bare minimum. He does not carry one ounce of unnecessary weight. We must do the same. Here are some of the things that we may need to eliminate:

Social obligations that have no spiritual significance – sentimental attachments to people, places or pets – excessive concern with the stock market, sports or women’s fashions – window shopping – worries about money, health, family or politics.

Concerning each thing to which we devote time and attention, we need to ask two questions. Does it glorify Jesus? Does it build me up spiritually?

### **The Need for Endurance**

One essential character requirement throughout Scripture is *endurance*. With many Christians, however, this is not a popular subject. If in my preaching I announce that my theme is to be *endurance*, I hear very few “Hallelujahs” in response. Sometimes I go on to say, “Let me tell you how to cultivate endurance.” People listen eagerly, anxious to learn the secret. “There is only one way to cultivate endurance,” I continue, “it is by enduring.” This is greeted by an almost audible collective sigh. Expressed in words, that sigh says, “You mean there isn’t any other easier way?”

No, there is no easier way! Endurance is an essential element of victorious Christian living, and it can only be cultivated by enduring. Once we accept this fact, we can begin to respond rightly to each test that comes our way. We can *count it all joy, knowing that the testing of our faith produces patience [endurance]*.<sup>11</sup>

But we are warned that we must *let patience [endurance] have its perfect work*.<sup>12</sup> In other words, we must continue to endure until God’s purpose has been fully worked out and He brings the test to an end.

Very seldom does God tell us in advance, “This test will last six months.” So it may happen that after 51/2 months a person will say, “I can’t take any more of this; I give up!”

How sad! Another 15 days of enduring, and God’s purpose would have been accomplished. Yet now such a person will have to undergo another test, designed to deal with the same character defect. In fact, God will not withdraw His tests until His purpose has been accomplished. The sooner we learn to endure, the more rapid will be our spiritual progress.

In 1 Corinthians 9:25 Paul – like the writer of Hebrews – uses the example of an athlete: *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [exercises self-control] in all things*. Only if we cultivate self-control, will we have the strength to endure.

In 2 Peter 1:5 - 7 Peter lists seven successive “steps” that lead upward from the foundation of *faith* to the supreme completion of Christian character: *agape love*. These steps are:

*virtue (moral excellence);  
knowledge;  
self-control;  
perseverance (endurance);  
godliness;  
brotherly kindness;  
love.*

This makes it clear that self-control is an essential prerequisite for endurance. Every test of endurance is also a test of self-control. It will expose any weakness in any one of the various areas of our personality.

In the area of the emotions, the weakness may be fear or discouragement or depression. In our fleshly nature it may be unbridled lusts or appetites. In our personal relationships it may be anger or jealousy. In our spiritual development it may be pride or self-confidence.

Whatever the area of weakness may be, it will be exposed when we are confronted with the challenge to endure. It is a tragic fact that many Christians never overcome these two stages of self-control and endurance. Consequently, they never progress to the higher Christian virtues in the remaining three steps: *godliness, brotherly kindness, love*.

It seems appropriate to close this letter with the same Scripture that I closed my previous teaching letter with: *Blessed is the man who endures temptation [testing]; for when he has been proved [approved], he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*<sup>13</sup>

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 19:12 - 13

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3:1

<sup>3</sup> John 10:35

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 18:15 - 17

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 5:25

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 6:15

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:33

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 4:15

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 12:1 - 2

<sup>11</sup> James 1:2 - 3

<sup>12</sup> James 1:4

<sup>13</sup> James 1:12

For further study, we recommend the audio cassette 4359, "Job and His Accusing Friends."

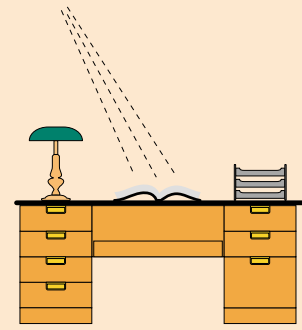
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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 16: The Hardest Test of All



Dear Friend

In my two previous letters my focus has been: TESTING. First, *the purpose of testing*; then, *how to respond to testing*. In this final letter on testing, my theme is: *the hardest test of all*.

If I were to ask each one of you individually, *What would you consider the hardest test that Christians face?*, I would probably receive a variety of different answers. My own answer may surprise many of you, but it is based on more than fifty years in full time Christian ministry. I believe that the hardest test we are likely to face – and the one we are least likely to pass – is SUCCESS.

Solomon warns us: *The end of a thing is better than its beginning, and the patient in spirit better than the proud in spirit.*<sup>1</sup> To put it another way: it is not how you start a race that makes you a winner, but how you finish it.

A veteran Chinese pastor, who spent more than 20 years in prison for his faith and recently went to be with the LORD, made this personal comment: “I have seen many people have good beginnings, but few have good endings.” I can say the same.

As examples of men who have achieved success, we will consider some of the kings of Israel.

## **The First Three Kings**

The first king, Saul, was a strong, outstanding young man, who early in his career gained various military victories. But when sent by God on a mission against the Amalekites, he allowed fear of the people to keep him from full obedience to God’s command. As a result, the prophet Samuel came to him with a message that God had rejected him as king.

Saul’s root problem was summed up in Samuel’s message: “When you were *little in your own eyes*, were you not head of the tribes of Israel?”<sup>2</sup> As long as Saul remained humble, God could bless him. But when he became proud, God had to set him aside.

This applies to all of us. When we are little in our own eyes, we have room for the greatness of God. But when we become great in our own eyes, we leave no room for God to manifest His greatness through us.

Saul’s pride drove him to a tragic end. The last night of his life he consulted a witch, and the next day he committed suicide on the battlefield.

The next king, David, was a man after God’s heart. For years he had to live as a fugitive, persecuted and hounded by King Saul. Yet, he came through it all victoriously and eventually he had a wonderful testimony:

*The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;  
According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.  
For I have kept the ways of the LORD,  
And have not wickedly departed from my God.*<sup>3</sup>

But later David changed, and so did his language:

*Have mercy upon me, O God,  
According to Your lovingkindness;  
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,  
Blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.<sup>4</sup>*

What had happened? Why the change? David had experienced total *success*. Established as king over all Israel, victorious over all his enemies, he was enjoying the fruits of success. He no longer went out to battle. He remained at home in Jerusalem, free to indulge in all that took his fancy.

So he did not hesitate to seduce Bathsheba, the wife of his neighbour, Uriah. Nor to procure the murder of Uriah to cover up his sin. In David's time of success, he forgot the principles he lived by before he became king.

Thank God that David eventually repented and God forgave his sin. Nevertheless, David's sin cast a dark shadow over his descendants from generation to generation. God warned him: "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house. . . ."<sup>5</sup> It is important for all of us to remember that God's *forgiveness* does not necessarily cancel all the *consequences* of our sins.

David's son, Solomon, who succeeded him as king, was beloved and chosen by God. Because he humbly acknowledged his need of wisdom, God also gave him riches and honour. He became the wisest, richest and most famous of all Israel's kings.

Yet in spite of all his wisdom, Solomon did not pass the test of *success*.

*For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods. . . .  
For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the  
abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD . . .<sup>6</sup>*

In spite of his glorious beginning, Solomon died an idolater.

### **Two Other Kings**

Following Solomon, the kingdom was divided. *All* the kings of Israel, the northern kingdom, became idolaters and were rejected by the LORD. Many of the kings of the southern kingdom, Judah, also turned away from the LORD into idolatry. There were, however, some truly righteous kings in Judah. Yet none of them fully passed the test of *success*.

Hezekiah, for example, introduced sweeping reforms and re-established the true worship of Jehovah. When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, laid siege to Jerusalem, the LORD intervened and granted a miraculous deliverance to Hezekiah and his people.

Later, when Hezekiah was sick to the point of death, God not merely healed him, but granted him a miraculous sign by reversing the course of the sun. He also promised Hezekiah fifteen extra years of life.

The miraculous sign in the sun extended Hezekiah's fame to other nations. As a result, ambassadors came from Babylon. Flattered by their attention, Hezekiah showed them everything of value in his whole kingdom. But he did not give God the glory!

Scripture provides two illuminating comments on Hezekiah's conduct:

*But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favour shown him, for his heart was lifted up [he became proud] . . .<sup>7</sup>*

*However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.<sup>8</sup>*

From Hezekiah we can learn two things:

First, if God grants you some special miracle, that does not make you a special person; it only means that you have a special God.

Second, if God withdraws His presence and does not seem to be actively at work in your life, it can mean that He is testing you to see how you will behave when left to yourself.

Later in Judah's history there arose another righteous king – Josiah. Like Hezekiah, Josiah also introduced radical reforms and restored the true worship of Jehovah. He also destroyed the idolatrous altar at Bethel in the northern kingdom.

But, Josiah's successes made him self-confident, and he became rash. Without consulting the LORD and in the face of solemn warning, he opposed Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, and was killed in battle. With him the last flicker of hope for Judah died also.

### **Successful Men in the New Testament**

What about the New Testament? Does it provide different standards? Let us look at the foremost personalities: Jesus Himself, and three of His leading disciples, Peter, John and Paul. What about their endings?

Jesus, of course, is unique – the perfect, sinless Son of God. He never experienced failure. Yet He ended His life hanging naked on a cross, exposed to mocking sinners. That was the last the world saw of Jesus. His subsequent resurrection, and the glory that followed, were revealed only to “witnesses chosen before by God.”<sup>9</sup> As far as the world is concerned, however, God has never sought to set the record straight.

What about Peter, the leader of the twelve apostles? According to reliable tradition, Peter, too, ended his life on a cross – crucified head downward, at his own request, because he did not feel worthy to suffer in the same way as his LORD.

We have no reliable record of the death of John. But we do know that in his old age he was banished to the barren, rocky island of Patmos, where he received the visions recorded in the book of Revelation.

What about Paul? We have his own record of how he and his fellow apostles lived:

*To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.<sup>10</sup>*

Finally, after a powerful and miraculous ministry that opened up the Gentile world to the gospel, Paul ended in chains in a cold Roman dungeon, forsaken by some of his closest co-workers. From there he was taken out for public execution by beheading.

Do these records of Jesus, Peter, John and Paul mean that all committed Christians must necessarily die the death of martyrs? Or that no committed Christian could ever be wealthy? No! But they do enforce one extremely important point: *we must never let the world entice us into accepting its standards of success.* We must never seek the world's approval. The desire for popularity is always dangerous.

Jesus gave some strong warnings against this. To the Pharisees He said: “For what is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”<sup>11</sup> To His own disciples He said: “Woe to you when all men speak well of you. For so did their fathers to the false prophets.”<sup>12</sup>

### **The Key to True Success**

Mentally I contrasted the endings of those five kings in the Old Testament with those of Jesus and His disciples. What is the key – I asked – to achieving enduring success?

The LORD directed me to two scriptures. First, the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:25: *I give my judgement, as one that hath obtained mercy of the LORD to be faithful* (KJV).

I saw that to be faithful *I must be totally dependent on the LORD's mercy*. I cannot rely on anything else: my academic background, my spiritual gifts, my past achievements, my years in Christian service. There is only one thing that can keep me faithful: *the mercy of God*.

I must make it the central purpose of my life to be consciously and continually dependent on God's mercy. I must be on my guard against anything that would blur or dull my sense of dependence. Particularly, I must be watchful for any form of pride, which is, in essence, self-dependence.

Second, the words of Jesus in John 4:34: *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."* Jesus' food – the source of His life and strength – was His single-minded determination to do God's will right through to the end of His life. That is the *true success* you and I must aim for.

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

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<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:8

<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 15:17

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 18:20 – 21

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 51:1 – 2

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 12:10

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings 11:4 – 6

<sup>7</sup> 2 Chronicles 32:25

<sup>8</sup> 2 Chronicles 32:31

<sup>9</sup> Acts 10:41

<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:11-13 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> Luke 16:15

<sup>12</sup> Luke 6:26

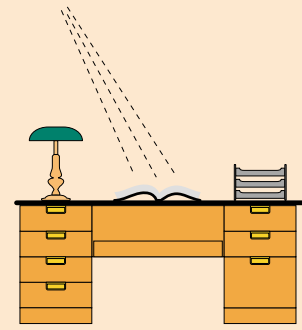
For further study, we recommend the audio cassette 4373, "Self-humbling".

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 17: To Please My Father



Dear Friend

Charismatic and evangelical Christians love to quote the words of Jesus in John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Yet I believe that many of us have only apprehended the first half of that verse. A way only has meaning if it leads to a destination. Jesus is the *way*, but the Father is the *destination*.

## The Revelation of the Father

In His high priestly prayer in John chapter 17, Jesus said to the Father, “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world.”<sup>1</sup> The Jewish people had known the name Jehovah (or Yahweh) for fourteen centuries. The name which Jesus now manifested to them occurred six times in His prayer. It was “*Father*”.

What does it mean that Jesus *manifested* that name to His disciples? As they watched Him living out His life before them as a Son of God, they could begin to understand what it means to have a personal relationship with God as Father. This was something that had never been openly revealed to the Jewish people under the old covenant.

Jesus emphasised that He alone can reveal the Father. “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”<sup>2</sup> John likewise said: “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”<sup>3</sup> For the revelation of the Father each of us is dependent on the grace that comes to us only through Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews makes a distinction between the message of the Old Testament prophets and that of Jesus: “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son . . .”<sup>4</sup>

Literally, the Greek says not in *His* Son, but in *a* Son. God’s message in the New Testament differed from His message in the Old Testament not only in content but also in the channel through which it came. In the Old Testament God spoke in *prophets*; in the New He spoke in *a Son*. Only Jesus as *a Son* could reveal God as Father.

## A Personal Revelation

My understanding of God as Father was revolutionised by a personal experience early in 1996. Ruth and I had been sitting up in bed one morning, praying together as we normally do. Suddenly I became aware of a powerful force at work in my feet and lower legs. It moved upward, until my whole body was forcefully shaken by it. (Ruth told me later that the skin of



my face changed to deep red.)

At the same time I was aware of an arm stretched out toward my head, seeking to press down on me something like a black skull cap. For a few moments there was a conflict between these two forces. Then the power at work in my body prevailed and the arm with the skull cap was forcibly dispelled – and vanished.

Immediately, without any mental process of reasoning, I knew that I could call God *my* Father. I had used the phrase “our Father” for more than fifty years. Doctrinally, I was clear about this truth. I had even preached a series of three messages on “Knowing God as Father.” But what I received at that moment was a direct, personal revelation.

Let me share with you my interpretation of this experience. I was born in India and spent the first five years of my life there. Twenty years later, after I was saved and baptised in the Holy Spirit, I became aware of some dark shadow from India that always hung over me. I understood that it was one of India’s “gods” (estimates range from 4 million to 300 million) that had followed me through life, seeking to possess me.

There was one particular way that this “god” oppressed me. Every morning I would awake with a dark foreboding of something evil awaiting me. It was never anything precise, just some amorphous darkness. This unknown evil never actually happened, but every day the foreboding was there.

After I was baptised in the Spirit, the foreboding diminished in intensity, but it never disappeared. I did, however, discover that if I set my mind to praise and worship the Lord, the foreboding would lift from me. Yet, it always came back next morning!

The day that black skull cap was pulled away, the foreboding vanished – never to return! And from that morning, it became completely natural for me to address God as “Father” or “my Father.” I have a personal relationship, not just a theological position!

I have now been enjoying this new relationship for about two years. It has given me new understanding of four scriptural truths concerning fatherhood.

### **1. Fatherhood is the source of our personal identity**

Throughout the Bible a person is always identified as the son – or daughter – of a certain man. This is expressed also in many English family names, such as Williamson, Jackson, Thompson. In each case, a person’s identity is derived from a father.

The breakdown of the family in many nations today has produced what has become known as “generation X”. X represents the *unknown quantity*. Many young people in this sad generation have no significant relationship with a father. Consequently they have an identity crisis. They do not really know who they are. The unspoken cry of their hearts is for a father.

I believe that if the Christian Church of today can effectively communicate the reality of God as a Father, multitudes of young people will run into their Father’s arms. We can do this in the same way that Jesus “manifested” the Father’s name to His disciples: by demonstrating in our daily lives the reality of our own personal relationship with the Father.

### **2. Fatherhood assures us that we have a home in heaven**

Ever since I was saved, I have believed that if I continue faithful to the Lord, I will go to heaven when I die, but I have never really thought of heaven as my home. After that arm with

the black skull cap was taken away, however, it has become natural to view heaven as my home. Shortly afterwards I said to Ruth, “When I die, if you want to give me a tombstone, you can just write on it two words: *“Gone Home”*”.

I began to think about the poor beggar who lay outside the rich man’s door. When he died, he “was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.”<sup>5</sup> Surely one angel would have been sufficient to carry that emaciated form, but God sent an escort of angels! The beggar was given a royal welcome into Abraham’s bosom. I believe that it should be like that for every child of God. He has an escort of angels ready to carry each of us to our eternal home.

At one time Ruth and I came to know a precious Hawaiian sister (we will call her Mary) who served the Lord faithfully for many years. She used to say to her friends, “I’ve never seen an angel. I would love to see one!”

As Mary lay dying of cancer, her church saw to it that there was always a Christian sister by her bed. One day Mary’s face became radiant with the glory of God. She stretched out her arms and said, “I see them – I see the angels!” Then she was gone! Her angelic escort had carried her home.

John Wesley once received word that a Methodist sister he knew had died. He responded, “Did she go in glory – or only in peace?” I believe every child of God should go home in glory – with an escort of angels.

### **3. Fatherhood provides total security**

Picture a little child held securely by his father’s arm, with his face pressed against the father’s shoulder. There may be great confusion and distress all around. The world may seem to be falling apart. But the little child is totally at peace, unconcerned by what is taking place all around him. He is secure in his father’s arms.

We, too, are securely held by our Father. Jesus has assured us that our Father is greater than all that may surround us and no one is able to snatch us out of His hand.<sup>6</sup>

To His disciples Jesus also gave this assurance: “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”.<sup>7</sup> We may be just a little flock, surrounded by wild beasts of all kinds. But if our Father has committed Himself to give us the kingdom, there is no power in the universe that can withhold it from us.

### **4. Fatherhood provides motivation for service**

In Philippians 2:3 Paul warns us as servants of the Lord: “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit . . .” Over the years I have observed that one persistent, pervasive problem in the Church is personal ambition and competition with other ministers. Let me add that I observed this first and foremost in my own life.

We often make the mistake of equating *security* with *success*. If I build the biggest church, or hold the largest meeting, or get the most names on my mailing list, I will be secure. But this is a delusion. In actual fact, the more we aim at personal success, the less secure we become. We are continually threatened by the possibility that someone else may build a bigger church, or hold a larger meeting, or get more names on his mailing list.

As for myself, I have found my perfect pattern in Jesus, who said, “The Father has not left Me alone, *for I always do those things that please Him*”.<sup>8</sup> I am no longer motivated by personal ambition. I have discovered a sweeter, purer motive: *simply to please my Father*.

I am training myself to approach every situation or every decision with a single, simple question: How can I please my Father? In times of frustration or seeming failure, I seek to turn my focus from trying to solve the problem to maintaining an attitude that is pleasing to my Father. As servants of Christ, there is no competition among us if we are motivated by this simple desire to please our Father. Harmony and mutual concern take the place of striving and self-seeking.

\* \* \*

As you have been reading this letter, you may have recognised that you, too, are longing for a closer, more intimate relationship with God as your Father. But perhaps there is a satanic barrier – like the black skull cap in my case – that has come between you and the Father.

Remember that Jesus is the only One who can reveal the Father to you. Ask Him to remove any barrier there may be in your life and then to grant you a direct personal revelation of the Father. After that, just trust Him and wait for Him to grant you the revelation that you need in His own way and time.

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

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<sup>1</sup> John 17:6

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 11:27

<sup>3</sup> John 1:18

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 1:1-2 (NAS)

<sup>5</sup> Luke 16:22

<sup>6</sup> John 10:29

<sup>7</sup> Luke 12:32

<sup>8</sup> John 8:29

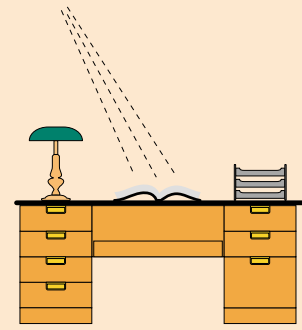
For further study, we recommend audio cassette  
4367 "That I Might Know Him".

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

## No. 18: The Delusion Of Independence



Dear Friend

“You will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>1</sup> Surely that is a lofty and commendable ideal – to be like God. How could there be anything wrong with that? Yet in the mouth of Satan – manifesting himself in the form of a serpent – it enticed Adam and Eve into a disaster, the evil consequences of which have affected all their descendants.

What was the undetected snare to which Adam and Eve fell prey? It was the *motive* – unstated, but implied – the promise of *independence*. Once you know good and evil, you will be free to make your own decisions. You will no longer be dependent on God.

This self-asserting desire for independence has been transmitted by inheritance to the whole human race that is descended from Adam and Eve. It is the distinctive mark of the “old Adam” – the fallen sinful nature that lurks in each of us.

### **Different Routes to Independence**

Historically, there have been various routes that humanity has followed in seeking independence from God. The first is *knowledge*. In the garden of Eden there were two special trees – the tree of *life* and the tree of *knowledge*. It was a critical moment in history, when Adam and Eve turned away from the tree of life and chose the tree of knowledge.

Ever since, the attainment of knowledge has been one main goal of humanity. Over the last two or three centuries this has expressed itself in an ever-increasing emphasis on *science*. (Our English word “science” is directly derived from *scientia*, the Latin word for “knowledge.”)

This explosion of science has not, however, solved humanity’s most basic problems: injustice, cruelty, war, poverty, disease. In fact, in some ways it has increased them. Science has provided man with weapons of mass destruction that could obliterate the entire human race and turn the whole earth into a desolate waste. Furthermore, some of these weapons are in the hands of cruel and wicked men, who would not be deterred from using them by any considerations of mercy or morality.

A second route which humanity has followed in seeking to achieve independence of God is at first surprising. It is *religion*. In various different forms men have established religious rules and systems of worship so complete and all-sufficient that there is no further need of God. All they have to do is to keep their rules.

This is true of some forms in which various of the world’s major religions are practised – Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and even some versions of Christianity. In all these religions people can become so satisfied with their rules and procedures that they become independent of God Himself. This explains why earnest, religious people are sometimes the slowest to respond to the gospel’s offer of grace that cannot be earned.

Yet another way that man seeks to achieve independence from God is by amassing large amounts of money and material possessions. Jesus told a parable of a rich landowner who became so successful that he had no more room to store his crops. He decided to build even larger storage facilities and

then he would say to his soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"<sup>2</sup>

Countless people throughout history have been lured by the same desire for independence into making the same tragic error. Countless people are still making it today.

This desire to be independent of God is the distinctive mark of all who belong to the kingdom of Satan – rebellious angels, demons, fallen humanity. It is also the distinctive mark of the "world," concerning which Jesus said of His disciples, "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."<sup>3</sup>

In this sense, the "world" consists of all the people who have never submitted themselves to the authority of God's appointed King – the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of these are moral, religious people, but when they are challenged with God's requirement of unreserved submission to the Lordship of Jesus, the rebellious, independent "old man" rises to the surface and they reject God's offer of salvation through grace alone.

### **Lonely, Alienated Humanity**

This desire to be independent of God separates men from God's other creatures, who exhibit a uniform, unquestioning dependence on their Creator.

None of the heavenly bodies display any desire for independence. "The moon marks off the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down."<sup>4</sup> The stars answer to their names when God calls them. "He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name."<sup>5</sup>

No matter how turbulent the elements may at times appear to be, they always obey their Creator – "fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word."<sup>6</sup>

The same is true of the animal creation. "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God."<sup>7</sup> "This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great. . . . These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season."<sup>8</sup> Concerning the birds, Jesus tells us, "Your heavenly Father feeds them."<sup>9</sup>

No wonder that rebellious man at times feels lonely and alienated from the universe around him, in which the other creatures all function together in unquestioning dependence on their Creator.

### **The Way Back to Dependence**

On the cross Jesus provided a double remedy for our fallen condition. First, He paid on our behalf the full penalty for all our sins and thus made it possible for God to forgive our sins without compromising His own justice. Second, Jesus also identified Himself with the independent, self-seeking ego that dominates our fallen nature. In Jesus that rebel was put to death. "Our old man [the rebel] was crucified with Him."<sup>10</sup>

To become disciples of Jesus, we must each avail ourselves of this double remedy. First, we must make sure that – through repentance and faith – all our sins have been forgiven. Second, we must agree to the sentence of death pronounced upon our rebellious, independent ego.

Hence the conditions for discipleship that Jesus laid down: "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."<sup>11</sup>

The word translated "forsake" could be rendered "say farewell to." Becoming a disciple of Jesus means saying farewell to everything on which we would normally depend – family, friends, money, career, worldly honour or prestige. Once we have truly renounced all these things, God may return to us any of them that fit in with His purpose for our lives. But we are no longer possessors; we are

merely stewards, required to give an account of the use we make of them. Our dependence, however, is solely upon God.

Sometimes it may take a crisis – or even a seeming disaster – to bring us to the place where we fully acknowledge our dependence on God. I think of Paul’s journey to Rome, described in Acts 27. God had a special plan for Paul to go to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. As the “apostle of the Gentiles,” he had a unique contribution to make to the Church there.

Yet Paul travelled as a prisoner in chains. The ship he travelled on encountered a storm so terrific that for two weeks they never saw the sun by day or the stars by night. Finally they were all shipwrecked on the rugged coast of Malta. There – to cap it all – Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake!<sup>12</sup> If it was God’s will for Paul to go to Rome, why did he experience such extraordinary trials on his journey there?

As I pondered this, I recalled a phrase in Acts 27:20: “all hope was finally given up.” That was the purpose of Paul’s trials: to bring him to the place where *all hope was given up*. Now Paul had nothing left to hope in but God Himself. That was when he proved in experience that God is all-sufficient. He brings us to the place of total dependence upon Himself, to demonstrate that He is totally dependable.

Having come to this place of total dependence, Paul was ready for his ministry to the Christians in Rome. His journey there had prepared him. Emptied of all self-sufficiency, he was a yielded channel through which God’s blessings could flow to the Christians of Rome. We tend to forget that although Paul was an apostle, he was also still a disciple – under the Lord’s discipline.

Gradually – through the years – I have been learning this lesson of total dependence. I have to confess that I have been a slow learner. God has used different circumstances at different times to enforce the lesson. But I have discovered that the more completely I depend on God, the more He surprises me by the results that follow – results that I could never have achieved as long as I depended on my own efforts.

### **Jacob’s Surrender**

Jacob is one character in the Bible who had a literal, physical struggle to give up his independence. As a young man, he was astute, ambitious, self-seeking. He exploited a moment of physical weakness in his brother Esau to buy from him his birthright – as the elder son – for a bowl of soup. Then to obtain the paternal blessing (which normally went together with the birthright) he deceived his father Isaac – who was blind – and passed himself off as Esau.

Yet neither the birthright nor the blessing did Jacob much good. To escape Esau’s vengeance he fled to Mesopotamia and became a refugee with his uncle Laban. Here again he demonstrated his astuteness. He married Laban’s two daughters and acquired most of Laban’s wealth.

Then the Lord told him that it was time to return to the land of his inheritance. On his way back, however, he encountered a mysterious stranger who wrestled with him all night. Eventually the stranger dislocated Jacob’s thigh (the strongest muscle in his body) and Jacob clung to him in helpless dependence.

Only after that encounter could Jacob actually return to his inheritance. But for the rest of his life he walked with a limp – the outward mark of independence surrendered.

Who was the stranger that wrestled with Jacob? First, he is called a *Man*. But next day Jacob said, “I have seen *God* face to face.”<sup>13</sup> Later the prophet Hosea said of this encounter: “Yes, he [Jacob] struggled with the *Angel*. . .”<sup>14</sup>

So this same Person was a Man, yet God, and also an Angel – that is, a messenger from God. There is only one Person in the universe who answers to this description: a Man, yet God, and also a messenger from God. It is the Person who was manifested in human history as Jesus of Nazareth – a Man, yet also

God and a messenger from God to man.

Jacob's destiny was finally settled by this encounter. After this, he was restored to his inheritance and was also reconciled with his brother Esau.

\* \* \* \* \*

Perhaps you have seen something of yourself in this experience of Jacob. You, too, have been struggling in your own strength to gain a spiritual inheritance which you feel God has for you but somehow still eludes you. You need to do just what Jacob did: surrender yourself without reservation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, then, is a prayer you may pray:

*Lord Jesus, I believe that you truly are my Saviour and that you have an inheritance for me. But I recognise that I have been relying on my own strength to enter into it.*

*I repent! I lay down my independence and I submit myself without reservation to your Lordship. From now on I will depend on your all-sufficient grace.*

But remember: from now on you may walk with a limp!

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

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<sup>1</sup>Genesis 3:5

<sup>2</sup>Luke 12:16 – 20

<sup>3</sup>John 17:16

<sup>4</sup>Psalm 104:19, NIV

<sup>5</sup>Psalm 147:4

<sup>6</sup>Psalm 148:8

<sup>7</sup>Psalm 104:21

<sup>8</sup>Psalm 104:25, 27

<sup>9</sup>Matthew 6:26

<sup>10</sup>Romans 6:6

<sup>11</sup>Luke 14:33

<sup>12</sup>Acts 27:13 – 28:6

<sup>13</sup>Genesis 32:24 – 30

<sup>14</sup>Hosea 12:4

For further study, we recommend audio cassette  
4374, "Grace vs. Law".

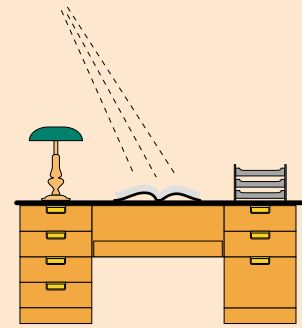
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# A Derek Prince

## Teaching Letter

No. 19: Who Is The Holy Spirit?



Dear Friend

The Bible contains a supernaturally inspired revelation of God. But God is so much “other” than we are that at times it becomes necessary to adjust, or expand, our usual forms of speech in order to communicate the Bible’s revelation of God.

In God both oneness and plurality are eternally combined. This mystery confronts us in the opening verse of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”<sup>1</sup> In the original Hebrew, *elohim* (the word for “God”) is plural in form, but the verb *bara* (created) is singular. In other words, both oneness and plurality are combined.

Further on, in Genesis 1:26, we are again confronted with the combination of singular and plural in reference to God: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .’” The verb “said” is singular in form, but the pronouns “Us” and “Our” are plural.

This combination of singular and plural in reference to God recurs in other passages of Scripture. The prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord on His throne and then heard Him say, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”<sup>2</sup> The pronoun “I” implies that one Person is speaking, but the pronoun “Us” indicates that He is speaking on behalf of more than one Person.

In the ongoing revelation of Scripture three distinct Persons emerge, each of whom is God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. The first of the three divine Persons referred to individually in Scripture is the Spirit: “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”<sup>3</sup>

### The “Parable” of Light

We can never “explain” God, but in the world He has created He has provided us with various “parables” that reveal Himself. One of these is light. Light is a part of everyday life, to which we do not normally give much thought. Yet in this single phenomenon we discern plurality in at least two forms.

Light is regularly refracted into the three primary colours: blue, yellow and red. Again, in the rainbow, light appears in seven colours: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red. Thus within the unity of light, there is the trinity of the primary colours and the sevenfold diversity of the rainbow.

Throughout Scripture seven is the number particularly associated with the Holy Spirit. Revelation 4:5 speaks of “the seven Spirits of God.” In Isaiah 11:1 – 2 the prophet foreshows how the Holy Spirit will set apart Jesus as the Messiah (the Anointed One). He lists seven distinct aspects of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of the Lord (the Spirit that speaks in the first person as God); the Spirit of wisdom; the Spirit of understanding; the Spirit of counsel; the Spirit of might; the Spirit of knowledge; the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

It is significant that – even in Jesus Himself – knowledge needs to be balanced by the fear of the Lord. Otherwise, knowledge on its own can become a source of pride. “Knowledge puffs up [makes arrogant].”<sup>4</sup>

In Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit is plainly presented as being Himself God. Speaking to the leaders of the church in Antioch, “the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” Clearly the Holy Spirit is speaking here in the first person as God.



### **God's Total Involvement in Man's Redemption**

Perhaps the supreme revelation of God's grace is His plan to provide redemption for the fallen human race through the sacrifice of Jesus. As I studied the details of this divine plan, I made an exciting discovery: in every stage of redemption each Person of the Godhead played a unique and distinctive part, as indicated by the following outline:

1. **The conception of Jesus.** God the Father caused Jesus to be conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit. See Luke 1:35.
2. **The beginning of the ministry of Jesus.** When Jesus submitted Himself to the baptism of John, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and the Father acknowledged Him as His Son. See Luke 3:21 – 22.
3. **The ongoing ministry of Jesus.** Peter sums this up in Acts 10:38: "God [the Father] anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil . . ."
4. **The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.** "Christ . . . through the eternal Spirit [i.e. the Holy Spirit] offered Himself without spot to God [the Father] . . ." See Hebrews 9:14.
5. **The resurrection of Jesus.** God the Father resurrected Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. See Romans 1:4; 8:11.
6. **Pentecost.** Exalted to the right hand of God the Father, Jesus received from Him the gift of the Holy Spirit and poured it out on the waiting disciples. See Acts 2:33.

In each stage of redemption, the Holy Spirit played His own vital and distinctive role. He is rightly called both "the Spirit of grace" and "the Spirit of glory" – grace, that is, that leads to glory. See Hebrews 10:29; 1 Peter 4:14.

### **Both Personal and Non-personal**

There is another unique fact about the Holy Spirit that stretches our powers of comprehension. The Spirit is both personal and non-personal – both a "He" and an "it."

The language in which the New Testament has come to us is Greek. Greek has three genders: masculine (he), feminine (she), neuter (it). Grammatically, the Greek word for "spirit," *pneuma*, is neuter. The appropriate pronoun would therefore be neuter, i.e. "it." However, both "He" and "it" are applied to the Holy Spirit (but never "she"). For example, in John 16:13 the rules of Greek grammar are deliberately set aside to emphasise that the Holy Spirit is a "He" as well as an "it": "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come . . ."

Like English, Greek uses the definite article – corresponding to our English "the." (On the other hand, some other languages – e.g. Latin or Russian – do not have any corresponding word.) In the Greek New Testament the phrase "Holy Spirit" is sometimes preceded by the definite article – corresponding to "the" – and sometimes it occurs without it. In English this would correspond to the difference between "the Holy Spirit" and "Holy Spirit."

To English ears, however, the phrase "Holy Spirit" on its own sounds incomplete. Therefore all English translations invariably insert "the" before "Holy Spirit," even when it is not there in the original Greek. Only by consulting the Greek text is it possible to determine whether "the" is actually there.

Through my study of the Greek New Testament, I have come to the conclusion that the presence or absence of "the" in conjunction with the Holy Spirit marks an important distinction. When "Holy Spirit" is not preceded by "the," it denotes something non-personal: life, or a power, a force, a presence, an influence. On the other hand, when "Holy Spirit" is preceded by "the," He is being depicted as a Person.

A very distinctive mark of personality is the ability to speak. At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven, He spoke in other tongues through the disciples. By this He signified that He had come, as

a Person, to take up His dwelling on earth. He is now the permanent, personal representative of the Godhead residing on earth.

From then on, each time the Holy Spirit comes to take up His residence as a Person in the body of a believer, it is appropriate that He should manifest His presence by speaking out of that believer in a new language supernaturally imparted. In effect, He is saying, "Now you know that I am here as a Person to indwell your body."

For this reason, in 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul prefixes the definite article: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" He is emphasising that speaking in tongues is not merely a brief supernatural experience. Beyond that, it is a divinely given sign that the Holy Spirit, as a Person, has taken up His dwelling in the believer's body, thereby making it a sacred temple. This places a solemn obligation upon each believer to keep his body in a condition of holiness that is appropriate for God's temple.

The definite article is also prefixed when the Holy Spirit is depicted as exercising authority in the Church, e.g. by sending out apostles, by appointing elders, or by directing apostolic ministries.

On the other hand, when people are being baptised in, or filled with, the Holy Spirit, the definite article is usually omitted. This would indicate that the Holy Spirit is here seen as something non-personal – as life, or power, or an influence.

I give below two lists: the first of passages in which "the" is prefixed to "Holy Spirit"; the second in which "Holy Spirit" occurs without "the."

#### **With "The" Prefixed**

The following are some of the passages where "the" is prefixed to "Holy Spirit."

- Matt. 12:31 "... but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him." (Compare Mark 3:29.)
- Mark 13:11 "... it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."
- Luke 3:22 "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him [Jesus] . . ."
- Luke 12:12 "For the Holy Spirit will teach you . . . what you ought to say."
- John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit . . . He will teach you all things . . ."
- Acts 2:38 "... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- Acts 5:3 "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit . . .?"
- Acts 13:2 "... the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"
- Acts 13:4 "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went . . ."
- Acts 15:28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us . . ."
- Acts 16:6 "... they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word . . ."
- Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed . . . to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers . . ."
- Acts 21:11 "Thus says the Holy Spirit . . ."
- 1 Cor. 6:19 "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you . . .?"

#### **Without "The" Prefixed**

Here are some passages where "the" is omitted.

- Matt. 1:18 "... she [Mary] was found with child of [or pregnant by] Holy Spirit."
- Matt. 3:11 "He will baptise you with Holy Spirit and fire." (Compare Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5.)
- Luke 1:15 "He [John the Baptist] will also be filled with Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." (Compare Luke 1:41, 67; 4:1; Acts 2:4; 6:3, 5; 9:17; 13:9, 52.)

Luke 1:35 “Holy Spirit will come upon you [Mary] . . . therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

John 20:22 “He [Jesus] breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive Holy Spirit [or holy breath].’”

Acts 10:38 “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Spirit and with power . . .”

Rom. 14:17 “. . . for the kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in Holy Spirit.”

Rom. 15:13 “. . . that you may abound in hope by the power of Holy Spirit.”

Rom. 15:16 “. . . the offering of the Gentiles . . . sanctified by Holy Spirit.”

1 Cor. 12:3 “. . . no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by Holy Spirit.”

Titus 3:5 “. . . washing of regeneration and renewing of Holy Spirit . . .”

Heb. 2:4 “. . . various miracles, and gifts [literally, distributions] of Holy Spirit . . .”

Heb. 6:4 “. . . and have become partakers of Holy Spirit . . .”

2 Pet. 1:21 [margin] “. . . holy men . . . spoke as they were moved [borne along] by Holy Spirit.”

Jude 20 “. . . praying in Holy Spirit . . .”

\* \* \* \*

Finally, here are just a few of the many titles given in Scripture to the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of grace; the Spirit of glory; the Spirit of wisdom; the Spirit of truth; the Spirit of self-discipline.

Meditate on the significance of each and search out some others for yourself. Then take time to thank Jesus that He has fulfilled His promise to send us the Holy Spirit.

In my next letter, I will have more to say about the Holy Spirit.

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

<sup>1</sup>Genesis 1:1

<sup>2</sup>Isaiah 6:8

<sup>3</sup>Genesis 1:2

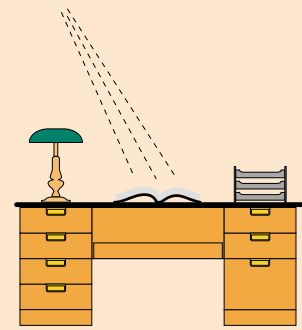
<sup>4</sup>1 Corinthians 8:1

For further study, we recommend audio cassette  
4329, “Ministries of the Holy Spirit”.

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# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter



No. 20: The Holy Spirit: Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipresent

Dear Friend

In this letter we will look further at the third Person of the Godhead – the Holy Spirit. There are three profoundly significant adjectives that apply to the Holy Spirit: eternal, omniscient, omnipresent.

## **Eternal**

At the close of one of the first Pentecostal services I attended, the preacher asked me, “Do you believe that you are a sinner?” At that time I was a professional philosopher and had just completed my dissertation on “definitions” at Cambridge University. I immediately ran over in my mind various possible definitions of a “sinner.” All of them applied to me exactly! So I answered, “Yes, I believe I’m a sinner!”

The preacher then asked, “Do you believe that Christ died for your sins?” I thought this over and then replied, “To tell you the truth, I can’t see what the death of Jesus Christ nineteen centuries ago could have to do with the sins that I’ve committed in my lifetime.”

The preacher was wise enough not to argue with me, but I am sure he prayed for me! A few days later I had a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ, which changed the whole course of my life. In particular, the Bible became a living, meaningful book.

Some time later I was reading in Hebrews 9:14 that “Christ . . . through **the eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to God.” Suddenly I grasped the significance of the word “eternal.” Its meaning is far broader than just something that lasts an extremely long time. It denotes something which is above and beyond the limitations of time – something which comprehends simultaneously the past, the present and the future.

When Jesus offered Himself on the cross, His sacrifice was not limited to the time at which He died. It encompassed the sins of all men of all ages – past, present and future. It included the sins that I was to commit nineteen centuries later.

The Greek adjective “eternal” has a fathomless depth of meaning. It is derived from the noun *aion*, from which we get the English word “aeon.” An *aion* is a measurement of time and occurs in a variety of expressions, as in the following literal translations:

Heb. 7:24: “for the age” (NKJ “forever”) – that is, for the duration of the present age.

Jude 25: “from before every age, and now, and unto all the ages” (NKJ “both now and forever”).

Gal. 1:5: “unto the ages of the ages” (NKJ “forever and ever”).

It is obvious that the English translations do not even begin to convey the depth of the meaning of the Greek phrases. These expressions – and others like them – fill me with a sense of awe. I feel like a little drop of moisture suspended above a bottomless chasm that separates two mountains

too high for me to climb. My mind cannot fully comprehend that there could be even one age made up of ages, much less that there are ages made up of such ages. Yet the eternal Holy Spirit encompasses them all, stretching from the measureless past and on into the measureless future.

I begin to apprehend in a new way the title under which God is endlessly worshiped in heaven: "Lord God Almighty, who [eternally] was and is and is to come!"<sup>1</sup>

### Omniscient

Closely related to the eternal nature of the Holy Spirit is His omniscience. In 1 John 3:20 the apostle confronts us with a profound, yet simple revelation: **God knows all things**. There is nothing that God does not know. From the tiniest insect in the earth to the farthest star in space, there is nothing that God does not completely know.

God knows things about us that we do not know about ourselves. For instance, He knows the number of hairs that each of us has on our head.<sup>2</sup>

God knew the number of inhabitants in the city of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11). He knew – and controlled – the growth of the plant that shaded Jonah. He also knew – and controlled – the action of the worm that caused the plant to wither.<sup>3</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 Paul speaks about the things which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man." Then he continues, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. **For the Spirit searches all things**, yes, the deep things of God."

The Holy Spirit both plumbs the deepest depths and scales the highest heights of all that was, that is and that is to come. His knowledge is infinite.

It is in the light of this infinite knowledge that we must each be prepared to give an account of ourselves to God. "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."<sup>4</sup>

The supernatural knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Spirit was manifested throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus, but never more than in His dealings with Judas Iscariot. When the disciples told Jesus, "We have come to believe and know that You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God,"<sup>5</sup> Jesus gave them an answer which revealed that being the Messiah would entail being betrayed by one of His own followers: "'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."<sup>6</sup> Jesus knew by the Holy Spirit that Judas would betray Him, even before Judas knew it himself.

Even so, Judas could not carry out his plan until Jesus spoke a word that released him to do so. At the Last Supper Jesus warned His disciples, "One of you will betray Me." When questioned who it would be, Jesus replied,

*"It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot.*

*Now after the piece of bread Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."*

Having received the piece of bread, Judas went out quickly – to betray Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

I am awed by the realisation that Judas could not carry out his plan to betray Jesus until Jesus Himself spoke the word that released him to do it. Throughout this whole scene, it was the Betrayed,

not the betrayer, who was in control.

When we comprehend the completeness of God's knowledge – and in particular His foreknowledge – it gives us the assurance that no matter what happens, God is never taken by surprise. There is no such thing as an emergency in the kingdom of heaven. Not merely does God know the end from the beginning, He Himself **is** both the Beginning and the End.<sup>8</sup> And He is always in total control.

In particular, God knows those whom He has chosen to be with Him in eternity. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."<sup>9</sup>

If by the mercy and grace of God we make it through to that glorious, eternal destination, Jesus will never greet anyone with the words, "I never expected to see you here!" Rather, He will say, "My child, I've been waiting for you. We couldn't sit down to the marriage feast until you came."

At that glorious banquet, I believe, every place setting will carry the name of the person for whom it is prepared.

Until the number of the redeemed is complete, God waits with amazing patience, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."<sup>10</sup>

### **Omnipresent**

When we say that God is **omnipresent** we mean that He is present everywhere at the same time. In Jeremiah 23:23-24 God Himself affirms this:

*"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD,  
"And not a God afar off?  
Can anyone hide himself in secret places,  
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;  
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.*

How can this be? We know that God is seated on His throne in heaven, with Jesus at His right hand. How then can He fill heaven and earth with His presence?

In Psalm 139:7-12 David supplies the answer. First, he asks:

*Where can I go **from Your Spirit?**  
Or where can I flee **from Your presence?***

This reveals that it is through His Spirit that God makes Himself present everywhere at the same time. Then David fills in the vivid details:

*If I ascend into heaven, You are there;  
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
Even there Your hand shall lead me,  
And Your right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me."  
Even the night shall be light about me;  
Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,  
But the night shines as the day;  
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*

No matter where we may go, God is there by His Spirit – invisible, often imperceptible, but inescapable. For the unbeliever this may be a terrifying thought, but for the believer it is a comforting, strengthening assurance. No matter where we may find ourselves, “even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.”

In the New Testament Jesus Himself gives us this assurance: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”<sup>11</sup> At times we may not be in any way conscious of His presence, but by His Holy Spirit He is there. Our surroundings may appear totally dark, but “the darkness shall not hide from You . . .”

Each one of us needs to cultivate an inner sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that does not depend on the evidence of our physical senses. When our senses tell us nothing about His presence, or even when they seem to deny it, there should be an area in the inmost depths of our own spirit that maintains an uninterrupted awareness of the Holy Spirit’s presence. Then we shall more fully understand why He is given the title of “the Comforter”<sup>12</sup> or “the Helper.”<sup>13</sup>

There is no more appropriate way to close this letter than by thanking the Father and the Son for sending us the Holy Spirit. Will you join with me?

In my next letter I will speak about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 4:8

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 10:30

<sup>3</sup> Jonah 4:6-7

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 4:13

<sup>5</sup> John 6:69

<sup>6</sup> John 6:70-71

<sup>7</sup> John 13:21-30

<sup>8</sup> Revelation 21:6

<sup>9</sup> Romans 8:29

<sup>10</sup> 2 Peter 3:9

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 13:5

<sup>12</sup> John 14:26, KJV

<sup>13</sup> John 14:26, NKJ

For further study, we recommend the book T60,  
“The Holy Spirit In You”.

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