

*How to Avoid the
Pitfalls of Immaturity*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Perilous times are here. Men are lovers of themselves. People display a form of godliness but in reality deny the power of God. In these days, Satan is trying to establish a lukewarm, ineffective church that will cooperate with his cosmic plan to hinder the spread of the Gospel. More than ever, we must understand how to keep the fire in our hearts burning. Each Christian is called to share the message of true freedom that comes from receiving Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Freedom isn't works or striving or programming myself to be like God. Freedom is liberty to be changed from glory to glory by the mirror of the Word and the Holy Spirit. Freedom is something we stand in, in such a way that we have power and dominion over Satan's cosmic world system.

As this message develops, focus completely on the Lord Jesus Christ. Practice letting the

Holy Spirit manifest the meaning of God's presence to your capacity for life. Let Him work supernaturally. As Christians, we must pray that the Word will come forth with clarity and power. Then, as the Father works in us to glorify His Son, we will avoid the pitfalls of immaturity.

Chapter One

EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CALL

You may hear this said often, but I truly mean it. I am so thankful for every missionary, every pastor, every family, and every believer-priest who has been touched by our ministry and grateful to each of you for being a part of this ministry.

I am trusting God that these words will do more than reward you with stimulation through facts or information. I am trusting Him to operate in us through *ischus*—the supernatural transference of truth by the Holy Spirit into the frame of reference and the memory center (John 14:26; Colossians 2:12). *Ischus* takes place through *energeia*—the power that comes from being taught the whole counsel of God.

Through *ischus* and *energeia*, we then enter into *dunamis*—divine ability in human capacity—and *kratos*, which is the manifestation of truth with the details of precise light.*

What Makes the Difference?

Throughout the churches in the world, there are vast differences in the degree of effectiveness of pastors, staff members, deacons in the table of organization, and Christians in the congregations. Where one makes a great impact, another does not. (I'm not dealing with numbers, I'm talking about fruit). God put a difference between Israel and Egypt (Exodus 11:7). Also there is a difference between Christians.

With all the things going on today, there will be some who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6) and some who are Laodicean (Revelation 3:15-16), even though they seem to be good people who faithfully attend church. The difference is in their ability to discern truth, to participate in God's vision, to fellowship with God's resurrection power, and to enjoy communion because of a union with God's Person.

Job 32:8 says "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration [breath] of the Almighty giveth them understanding." "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). When God breathed into man the breath of life—the human spirit—man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). That's

what makes the difference.

Novice Traits: Pitfalls of Immaturity

Picture a Christian who gets up in the morning, goes to work, and comes home at night. He may be a good person, but if his human spirit is not functioning in maximum awareness, then he will function with novice traits (1 Timothy 3:6). This is especially true with pastors. The pastor with novice traits is not sensitive to the capacities of his flock. He may be rude to them, and often crude and unkind.

Immaturity in a marriage can be devastating. If a husband has novice traits, he will be verbally abusive toward his wife. A wife with novice traits tends to be independent, reactionary, and frigid. Why? Because the Spirit of God isn't giving inspiration. The Word, the breath of life, isn't coming in. Psalm 43:3 says that we are led by "truth" and "light." Psalm 36:9 tell us, "For with thee [God] is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." What does this mean? It means that in God there is a fountain of objective light, and as we continue in that light, we receive subjective (inward) conversion. Our subjective conversion leads to a supernatural objective revelation of what that conversion

is about.

“For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?” (Job 31:2). Think about that for a moment. Proverbs 15:14a says, “The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge”—experiential knowledge operating in the human spirit.

Consider these things carefully. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Don’t think on words that have no experiential life. Job 38:2 says, “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” “Desire without knowledge [doctrine] is not good” (Proverbs 19:2, Amplified Translation).

** For more about the progressive impartation of God’s power, read Having a Heavenly Vision, Grace Publications, 1997.*

Chapter Two

INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SPIRIT

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy [Spirit] teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, be-

cause they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? *But we have the mind of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

Think of it: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." The Holy Spirit is speaking here of the eye of perception in the soul. The eye of the soul has not seen, nor has the ear of the soul heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him.

No man knows the things of God but by the *Spirit* of God (capital "S"). And no man knows the things of a man but by the *spirit* of man (small "s"). The natural man—*psuchikos* in the Greek text—cannot receive that which is spiritual. These things are foolishness to the *psuchikos* man. He cannot discern or understand them because he doesn't have the capacity for spiritual discernment.

But, 1 Corinthians 2:15-16 says, "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man....But we have the mind of Christ." Through the Word of God, we have the mind of Christ.

The words of 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 are precious because they teach us the only way to be

Spirit taught, Spirit led, and spiritually right. I will never understand my call unless my human spirit communes with the Holy Spirit, unless the Holy Spirit teaches me, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, with constant capacity and continual flow. Unless my human spirit gives entrance to the Holy Spirit, I will never understand submission to God's Cross, the cross of His Son; I will never understand how to function, to work out what God works within; and I'll never be subjectively converted. My wounds will not be healed, and I will not make clear decisions to leave cosmic relationships and the cosmic call of the world.

Battling Soulish Tendencies

"There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). We are led by Truth in life and light. That's the difference between the Spirit-led Christian and the soulish Christian.

The soulish Christian never receives a call. He just goes on in his profession. If it is of God, it's beautiful; God uses men and women everywhere, in every facet of life. But the Christian

who lives in his soul is never liberated—by facts, by knowledge, or by inspiration. He never gets healed because he lives in the soulish realm. He doesn't hear what the Spirit is giving as instruction.

Quench Not the Spirit

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, *even as also ye do*. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake” (1 Thessalonians 5:11-13a).

When Paul referred to “them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord,” he was speaking of the office of pastor-teacher. In 1 Timothy 5:17, the pastor labors in the Word and doctrine. He labors until he is weary. Paul concludes 1 Thessalonians 5:13 with something very important regarding honor and the office of a pastor: “And be at peace among yourselves.”

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded [those who vacillate because they have small souls], support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man;

but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men" (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15)

"Rejoice forevermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19). "Quench not the Spirit" means do not extinguish the fire. Do not say or do something that would quench the operation of the divine illumination of the Holy Spirit in the corporate cells of God's organism—the Body of Christ. The principle is *don't quench the Spirit*. Whether it's in your car or when you meet with someone—don't quench the Spirit.

"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:20-22).

The following verse correlates with the principle of the Holy Spirit working in the human spirit with the Word of God: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

God will sanctify your human spirit. How does He do this? By the Word of God (John

17:17). He will sanctify your soul through the Colossians 3:16 process of letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom (*ischus*), teaching and admonishing one another with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Chapter Three

THE PORTION FROM ABOVE

Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then he said in verse 24, “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” I read that often when I’m alone in my study in the morning and I say, “Yes. *He* does it.” This is more than just knowledge. These words were written by a man who knew what it was to have God sanctify his spirit, soul, and body.

The Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, sanctifies the human spirit. And through the Holy Spirit, the human spirit gets this inspiration, this motivation, this energization. The human spirit becomes overwhelmed with what God is like—His character, His essence. The Word goes down into the five parts of the soul, filling the soul and the members of the body. Those members are yielded as instruments of

righteousness, as those that are alive from the dead (Romans 6:13).

Wisdom from Below: Demonic Influences

Job 32:8-9 says that “there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.” The Bible speaks of “great” men who are “not always wise.” In fact, the Hebrew says they “aren’t right.” Great and aged men are not right unless they have the spiritual insight of God.

In James 3:15, we read of wisdom that is from below. There’s so much of it today in Christian vocabularies and Christian marriages, and there is so much of it in pulpits. For example, if on a very hot day I were to stand up and preach a long-winded sermon, disregarding the capacity of the congregation, then I would be in the flesh, practicing wisdom from below. Rather, if I were preaching to a new congregation that I’m trying to disciple, I would speak twenty minutes and use godly wisdom. My prayers would be brief and to the point. I always want to be sensitive to the congregation.

Wisdom from below is earthly (*epigeios*), which speaks of cosmic demons or the cosmic

locusts of Joel 2:25. They are called *hopping demons* in the original Hebrew. The hopping demons come in from all directions, followed by the *crawling demons*. As they crawl into your life, you become self-conscious. You do everything you can do to be approved by God and by people. Experientially, your human spirit is dead.

After the crawling demons come the *gnawing demons*, whose purpose is to gnaw away relationships and gnaw away at your capacity, to make you weak and weary. These demons try to offend you, to make you react and get you into a negative cycle. They gnaw away at your spiritual self-image when you should be crucified, buried, resurrected, and ascended with Christ! But, for that to become your experience, it takes the Holy Spirit to quicken your human spirit. And it takes the Word of God to separate the soul from the spirit. Then the Word, coming in sharper than a two-edged sword, discerns the motives of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Next, come the *stripping demons* of Joel 2:25, demons that strip away your capacity, strip away your call, strip away your potential. They get you involved in wrong relationships. They get you to listen to the opinions of your peers instead of going directly to the Cross.

When *epigeios*, or wisdom from below, is transferred to the soul, it becomes *psuchikos*, or “soulish” (James 3:15). A cosmic structure is then established, bringing in cosmic thinking, cosmic rationale, and cosmic fashions (established by a crowd that has many lesbians and homosexuals). In *psuchikos*, a cosmic way of life develops, represented by cosmic programs in the entertainment industry. Then this “wisdom” becomes devilish, *daimoniodes*. The hopping, crawling, gnawing, and stripping demons will take over a precious, redeemed soul—oppressing, not possessing—even that one who has been equipped to serve God full time.*

The Privilege of Submitting to Calvary

When you submit to Calvary, you submit to the highest call in life. You submit to the greatest privilege known to man and become a servant of the Most High God. You are only on earth for a short period of time and you realize that you must redeem that time. You realize you must be filled with all the fullness of God and filled with the Spirit in order to please God by faith, serve God by grace, and obey God in love. As soon as you hear something from the Word of God (Psalm 18:44), you enter into faith obedience to

the entire counsel of God (Romans 1:5).

Every morning you can gladly say to the Lord, "Here I am, send me! More than anything in this world, I want to live for you, love you, breathe for you, and represent you. I want to be your voice. I want to be your eyes, ears, tongue, feet, and hands. Oh God, if you can use me and keep on forgiving me, just grant me the power to live in the Spirit, and I will be so thankful!"

Our souls need to be equipped to represent God in 220 countries and right here in our Jerusalem. I would be shocked if God didn't call you to be a disciple and call you to go to Bible college! Don't be surprised if God puts a call upon your heart to be a missionary—a real, living epistle for Jesus Christ. It is very possible that you will hear the Holy Spirit say, "The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few." I'll be surprised if you are not soon convicted to pray the prayer of the Holy Spirit: "Send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:36-38).

**These four categories of demons are discussed in Uncontrolled Knowledge, Grace Publications, 1997. The cosmic soul structure is discussed in Atmospheric Cycles, Grace Publications, 1997.*

Chapter Four

THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Pastors, are your feelings hurt because you live in your soul? According to some of you, it's always somebody else's fault. Twenty-five people come against you, but it's always their fault, not yours. Your soul can't take it. You've got the knowledge, but you don't have the power. You don't have the unconditional wisdom from above.

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

The fruit of righteousness is to be a peacemaker. The fruit of righteousness is not wearing problems on your sleeve. The fruit of righteousness is to cast all your cares upon Jesus Christ because He cares for you. The fruit of righteous-

ness is to understand and be sensitive to different capacities. The fruit of righteousness doesn't include manipulation and control.

There are pastors who will not face bona fide problems in the church. Even when they are lovingly confronted and the problem is described in detail, often the pastor just doesn't get it! He reveals his immaturity because he lives in his soul without experiencing the Holy Spirit in control of that area of weakness.

If my preaching and teaching can't keep people coming to my church and they want to go elsewhere, then God bless them, they should go! If I don't have the power and the fire of God in this pulpit to love you beyond yourself and beyond your capacity, then you should go and get to know God somewhere else. If I don't have the power and the fire of God to love you beyond your works and beyond your decisions, then you should leave and find a pastor that does have that power and that love.

The Responsibility of the Flock

Galatians 6:6 says, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

The Greek word used in the phrase "Let him

that is taught” is the present passive participle of *katecho*, which refers to the act of giving instruction, usually orally. Therefore, the person referred to is one who has received instruction in the Word from his pastor-teacher. He is to *communicate* (a present active participle of *koinoneo*), with the one who teaches him, *in all good things*.

According to the word studies of Kenneth Wuest, a prominent Greek scholar, the same verb, (*katecho*), is used for both the one who *teaches* and the ones *being taught*—the difference being the active voice for the pastor-teacher and the passive voice for the congregation. Wuest notes that at the time Paul wrote this letter, many believers had been led away from their teachers by Judaizers. Paul exhorted them to go back to their true teachers in the word of grace. He knew that going back to the law would hinder their personal growth as well as the growth of the church.

And what are the “good things” the Body is to communicate? It certainly was not material or financial support being alluded to here. (The Judaizers would have jumped on that one!) Although the Body is responsible to support their pastor-teacher (Philippians 4:15), Galatians 6:1-5 reveals that the Church is also responsible

to restore in meekness others who have fallen, bear another's burdens, not think highly of self, prove each man his own work, and each bear his own burden.

Pastors, get rid of every novice trait (1 Timothy 3:6). Don't be lifted up with pride. Ask God to show you your novice traits—we all have had them. But tell the Lord you will gladly turn to Him. Be willing to receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and let Him transform you by the renewing of your mind. Don't be stiff-necked with categorical understanding in a mind that hasn't been transformed by the Holy Spirit; don't use knowledge to push people according to the way you think they should go.

I want the people in my church to grow legitimately, to have a bona fide relationship with a vertical that enables them to relate to God and to the Cross. I want people to get to know God's voice so that they can hear Him call. I'm not going to "play God," telling people what to do and what not to do. In my messages, I preach the Word of God. It's up to the Holy Spirit to interpret the message to their souls in the creative design of God's divine providential understanding of His perfect will for their lives.

After a few years in the ministry, pastors should be rid of some of their novice traits. If people leave because of a conspiracy, that's one thing. But it's another thing if they leave because they are not getting properly fed.

Keep the Fire Burning

“The spirit of the man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly” (Proverbs 20:27). Let me say something in relationship to 1 Samuel 4. It is possible that part of the reason the glory of God departed was because Eli, the high priest, couldn't control his appetite. He was obese, he didn't have the discipline to stop eating. He was still eating when his children were not being given the Word of God. One day, he was sitting on a stool when he heard that the Ark of God had been captured in battle. Eli fell over, broke his neck and died. The glory of God had departed, the lamp went out. Eli had a name, but he was spiritually dead—just like the church of Sardis in Revelation 3:1.

In Leviticus 6:12, wood had to be placed on the fire every morning. The fire was to burn continually, and the ashes had to be removed to a clean place. The wood had to be put on the fire

constantly. Every single morning they were to keep the fire burning. This is where every Christian should be.

Perilous times have come. Men are lovers of themselves, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. In a day when Satan is building a Laodicean church within the structure of the Body of Christ, it's time to understand how to keep the fire burning. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). If you study the Latin and the Greek thoroughly, you will discover that "deny" is not the best translation here. It would be better to say, "If any man will come after me, let him be *retroactively crucified with me* and take up his cross and follow me for that day..." Or, it could be translated, "*Whosoever shall take up co-crucifixion and co-burial shall find resurrection.*" This is the proper translation. Verse 25 goes on to say, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

When a Christian reckons on his co-crucifixion and co-burial, then jealousy and envy are gone; insecurity is gone; negative reactions, worldly lusts, worldly ambition, and inordinate drives and desires are all gone. I don't deny my-

self of them. Do you know why? Galatians 6:14 tells me that by the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ “the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” I don’t have to deny something that’s been crucified! The Cross has crucified my “self” life (Galatians 2:20). And it has crucified the world’s system unto me.

The issue now is taking up my cross, not denying myself. Otherwise, I could become a lonely, austere person in a one-room cell, thinking I am glorifying God in a works program of self-denial.

The Essence of True Freedom

Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Freedom isn’t works or striving or programming myself to be like God. Freedom is liberty to be changed from glory to glory by the mirror of the Word and the Holy Spirit. Freedom is something we stand in, in such a way that we have power and dominion toward the world system. We’ve been sent into the world system to reveal God, to reveal godly relationships, to reveal godly marriages, godly obedience, godly visions, godly purity, and godly joy. We are to show the world godly habits and godly gentleness. We have

been sent into the world to reveal absolute, godly convictions.

We're free from immodest dress. We're free from worldly language. We're free from the lust of the flesh. We're free from competition and comparison. We are standing in the grace of God at Calvary, and we have been set free. Knowing that our time is short, we can get up every day as those who have been raised from the dead. Our lives on earth are but a vapor, and we are convinced that the Holy Spirit will teach us the things of God through our human spirit. He who is spiritual "judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1 Corinthians 2:15). This is our conviction if we are Spirit-filled and have the mind of Christ.

I'm not interested in defending any kind of preaching style or denominational language. I am interested in the mind of God. I am not interested in convincing you that a certain style of preaching brings superiority in communication. But I want you to know what it means to be quiet before God. I want you to be so quiet before God that as you spend time in prayer, you will be able to hear Him speak to you by name (John 10:3-4).

Let Jesus Christ bring your relationships,

your decisions, and your future to the Cross. Let Him bring you into the presence of His resurrection power by fellowship with His ascended life. Then you will know the portion that is from above and that your inheritance is from the Almighty on high.

CONCLUSION

We are here today to do business with eternity. We are here to be stabilized, to become mature. We're here to make decisions, and those decisions may hurt some people. Oswald Chambers said that taking up your cross will offend the person closest to you. The alternative is to let Jesus Christ bear it alone.

Each time we assemble as the Body of Christ can be a wonderful, glorious experience with God. May we deal with truth and not rationalize it, honor reality and not separate it from tomorrow. May we be a people who will make decisions with our volition and not in our emotions. Don't be forgetful hearers; put into practice what you have heard, because Satan will make a bid to take these things out of your heart.

“Father, our prayer is that you would bless us today in the precious holy name of Jesus Christ. As

You speak to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, may we enjoy Your power and presence. May we enjoy the purity of Your Word. May we honor and esteem Christ above everything else in the universe. May we be kept by the power and glory of God in Jesus' name. Amen."