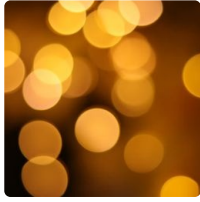


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Introduction



Charisma and Character - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg shares his thoughts on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, highlighting the importance of recognizing the relative value and normativeness of spiritual gifts. He explains that when speaking of the Holy Spirit, it is important to acknowledge Him as a person rather than an “it.” Gregg also shares personal anecdotes about his own journey of faith, including his conversion experience and his baptism in the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, he emphasizes the dynamic ministry and transformative power that comes with a normative relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

This series that we are beginning, I am calling Charisma and Character, subtitled The Normative Work of the Holy Spirit. Now, the reason I call it Charisma and Character is, of course, because of the alliteration. And series should always have a title that uses alliteration.

It's a lot easier, a lot catchier, and so forth. But actually, in the providence of God, in the formation of the English language, Charisma and Character happen to be just the two aspects that are the two parts of the normative work of the Holy Spirit. Charisma comes from the Greek word charisma.

So maybe it wasn't so much the providence of God informing the English language, maybe it was the Greek language. But the Greek word charisma literally means gifts of grace. The word charis, which is the larger part of that word, c-h-a-r-i-s, charis means grace.

And when you add the letters m-a to that in the Greek, it means a gift of grace. Now, this is the word that the Apostle Paul uses, generally speaking, when we read of the gifts, gifts of the Spirit. Sometimes he doesn't use the expression gifts of the Spirit, sometimes simply the word gifts.

But in the Greek New Testament, the word is charisma. And when people talk about the gifts of the Spirit, they are talking about the same thing that Paul was talking about when he used that word, charisma. Character, on the other hand, focuses on what Paul

calls the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

No, character is not a Greek word. But what the fruit of the Spirit is, according to Paul in Galatians 5, verses 22 and 23, is love and joy and peace and gentleness and goodness and faith and self-control and kindness and meekness and a whole bunch of things like that. It's only a coincidence, I think, that Paul lists nine gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and nine fruit of the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5, verses 22 and 23.

I don't think they're intended to correspond in any way. There's a temptation for a Bible teacher to find something tricky there. But what I'm concerned about is that we recognize the relative value and normativeness of these things in the Christian life because they are both functions and manifestations of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.

Gifts and fruit. You will find some people, of course, who get all dazzled by gifts. It's all they can think about, all they can talk about when they talk about the Holy Spirit.

In fact, I've actually met some Christians who equate the expression, the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues, which is listed by Paul as one gift of the Spirit. But this is, to my mind, really strange when people have such a narrow view of the Holy Spirit as to equate him with a gift, a particular gift, or even all the gifts combined because the gifts of the Spirit, in my opinion, are, believe it or not, the smaller part of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer normatively. On the other hand, there are people who deny that the gifts should have any relevance today.

They say the gifts of the Spirit, and by these they're thinking of things like prophecy and tongues and healing and miracles and things like that. They say those things don't really belong to this present age. Those were necessary in the early portion of the Church because there were so few disciples in such a big world to win and so forth and they were up against big odds and they weren't well educated and they didn't speak a lot of languages yet.

And so it was necessary for them, we were told, to have special powers given to them by the Holy Spirit to kind of help them against great odds in converting their world. It's never been quite clear to me why it is that people who hold this view don't think that we're facing great odds in the task of winning our world. It seems to me like most Christians still face all the same handicaps that were just listed that the apostles had to overcome in reaching their world and more besides because we haven't seen Jesus.

And they did. And in many cases they were evangelizing people who had seen Jesus or knew someone who had. So in one sense they had advantages we don't have and I don't see how we would need the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit less in this age than they needed it in there.

But those who believe that the gifts of the Spirit were primarily for the birthing age of the church usually believe that at least what they would call the sign gifts tongues interpretation tongues prophecy miracles healing those things they call those sign gifts because they're remarkable because they're sensational because they they serve as a sign of power. And some people make a distinction between the sign gifts and the other gifts. Now there are other gifts.

I mean Paul in another place Romans 12 lists exhortation and giving and helps and ruling and teaching also as gifts of the Holy Spirit. Those ones you don't hear so much about perhaps in among those people who emphasize the gifts because they're not as sensational but there are gifts that are more and gifts that are less sensational. And it seems to me that there are some people who are quite taken with the sensational gifts and want to emphasize them as a principle thing needed in the Christian life.

There are others who are a little nervous about sensational gifts and they just as soon say well I haven't seen those in my church so probably they don't belong to the church today. It's always a temptation to judge what's normative Christianity by whatever the norm is in our group. That way we don't have to feel like we're missing anything or that we're deficient in any way we don't have.

Well you know probably the apostles were about like us. Now I want to say that I am not sympathetic any longer in this time in my Christian life with those who would eliminate the gifts of the Spirit any of them from the church since the Bible does not do so. In fact the Bible I think with emphasis suggests that the gifts of the Spirit are for the body of Christ until Jesus returns.

On the other hand I'm not much of a I'm not much into gifts as a subject in themselves. As far as I'm concerned gifts both the more and the less sensational gifts are simply things empowerments that God gives to fulfill a task. And if God has given you a task he will give you the appropriate gift for it.

We will talk in the course of these this series about all the things in the Bible that are called the gifts of the Spirit. Some of them are not very sensational at all but we'll talk about we'll try to get a thorough understanding of what the Bible says about the gifts in the course of this series. But I'm much more interested myself in the fruit of the Spirit because that affects me every day.

The fruit of the Spirit in my life the fruit of the Spirit in my wife's life my children's lives my co-workers lives. These things really operate down where I live day by day. They affect the quality of my relationships.

They affect my happiness. They affect my contentment. They affect my clearness of conscience toward God and therefore my confidence toward God and my faith.

The fruit of the Spirit are character traits and anyone can see if they're just dwelling on it briefly as they read the list. That they are the character traits of Christ himself. So that the fruit of the Spirit is not really anything else but the character of Christ.

Which is to be reproduced in the believer. Did you know that the life of Jesus is supposed to be reproduced in you? And this is most evidently so when you show forth the evidence of having the character of Christ. Which is what the fruit of the Spirit is.

Now of these two things there have sometimes been as I say people emphasize the one some emphasize the other. And sometimes these people are not very friendly toward each other. There are the people who think that those who don't have the gifts operating in their church are simply in dead formalism.

And they don't know anything of the Holy Spirit. And on the other hand there are those who have an emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit and don't believe in the gifts of the Spirit. To say well those people are just a bunch of experiential fanatics.

At least we're stable over here. And I think you know why does it have to be either or? I mean when I first became aware of the gifts of the Spirit I would talk to people who didn't believe in them. And they'd say well you can have the gifts I'll take the fruit.

And I'd say thanks. But I'll take the fruit too. How about gifts and fruit? Actually if I'm to take a selection of gifts and a selection of fruit I'd rather have more of the fruit.

I'd rather have a greater selection of the fruit. Since if I'm lacking any of the fruit of the Spirit I'm lacking some essential element of the character of Christ. Whereas I can lack any of the gifts or all the gifts for that matter and still well I mean I gotta have some kind of a gift.

It might not be a sensational one but I gotta be equipped for whatever it is God wants me to do. And that equipping comes from the Holy Spirit and His gifting. But I don't need to have all the gifts.

In fact I think the Bible inclines me to believe I can't have all the gifts. They're not all for me. Now we'll talk these are the things this is the direction we're going to be going on in the course of this series.

Talking about charisma which is the gifts of the Spirit. And character which is the fruit of the Spirit. Now as I said there's a subtitle to this series and that is the normative work of the Holy Spirit.

I wanted to choose a subtitle that would be somehow descriptive of the distinctive thing I'm trying to get across about the Holy Spirit. If I were just to give a series of studies about the Holy Spirit where I just kind of took in every Bible verse on the subject and somehow crammed them into some outline. I'd have this huge monstrous multifaceted

many tentacled octopus of a series.

Because the Holy Spirit is involved in everything in the Bible. I mean He's hovering there over the face of the waters before anything is created except waters. And He's at the very end of the Book of Revelation.

The Spirit and the Bride are saying come and let Him that thirst come. And take of the water of life which Jesus Himself identified the water of life is the Holy Spirit. When He said in John chapter 7 and verse 37 He said if anyone thirst let him come unto me and drink.

And He that believes on me as the scriptures have said out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. And having quoted Him John then makes this comment in verse 39 of John 7 39. He says and this He spoke of the Holy Spirit.

The living waters is the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit is all over the place in the Bible. And of course He inspired the writers of the Bible.

He empowered the prophets and the mighty works that were done in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. And there's simply almost no limit to the directions we could go. So I wanted to pick some kind of subtitle to limit myself to a certain set of thoughts.

And I hoped the most important thoughts. I could have gotten into a theological treatise on the Holy Spirit. But I really felt that what many Christians seem to have a either a deficiency in their knowledge or they're kind of unbalanced in their understanding.

Is what is the function of the Holy Spirit in my life today in your life today. What is He supposed to be doing there? What can I expect of Him? Now when I say what can I expect of Him? Some of you may know that the Holy Spirit is not altogether predictable. And I can't always know exactly what I'm going to expect Him.

I don't intend to put Him in a box and require that He do only certain things. But there are certain things He does normatively and other things that are more unusual. That is to say I don't think He'll ever act out of character.

I was talking to somebody in Honduras a few months ago who was talking about the renewal coming out of Toronto. And it seemed to me that this man was a bit nervous about some of the stuff that was coming out of there. As I myself am more than a bit nervous about.

But he was less nervous than I was about it. But he was a little nervous. But he was trying to be balanced.

He said, well, I don't want to put God in a box. I don't want to tell the Holy Spirit what He can and what He can't do. And I said, well, I agree.

I would never wish to tell the Holy Spirit what He can or what He cannot do. But I would certainly expect the Holy Spirit, if He does anything, to do something along the lines of what interests Him, what is important to Him, and what is normative for Him. Now, I need to be careful about this.

I've always tried to be neither too wooden and strict about this, nor too wild and unrestrained in the thing. I've been in both groups in my past. I'm going to tell you a little bit about my past tonight about that, too.

But, I mean, the Holy Spirit is, we definitely need the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to let Him reign freely in our lives and in our meetings and in the church. We need that.

Unfortunately, however, there's been an awful lot of strange things blamed on the Holy Spirit in churches and in Christian lives. I mean, I've been aware of and teaching in the ministry and talking about the Holy Spirit and studying the subject and watching things in the body of Christ for many, many years. I've been in the ministry for 25 years now, 26.

And in that time, I've seen a whole range of things attributed to the Holy Spirit. I would say He was blamed for them. He's been blamed for people running down aisles screaming in tongues.

I've been in a church. I never joined it. I visited it once and made a point of not visiting it again.

But I've seen people who believe that the Holy Spirit was inspiring them as they ran down aisles screaming at the top of their lungs in tongues. I have heard people attribute to the Holy Spirit prophecies which were as lame as if they'd said, you know, humpty-dumpty sat on a wall. I mean, there was nothing of spiritual edification in it.

There was nothing of truth in it. There was nothing revealed or inspired about it. Yet people say, thus saith the Lord.

And they act as if they're prophesying by the Holy Spirit. Now, I don't want you to think I don't believe there's such a thing as prophecy. But I've heard some pretty hokey prophecies in my days.

I have seen the Holy Spirit blamed for making people fall down and shake uncontrollably, although the Bible says the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. I have heard the Holy Spirit blamed for weird messages and visions. I think I've told some of you who've been around.

My wife was in a prayer meeting once with a bunch of people who were hoping to hear from God something so they'd know what to pray about. And they were listening, hoping to get something from the Lord. And there must have been a fair degree of desperation

there on the part of some people.

Because one guy in the group said, you know, I got a picture in my mind. It was of Mickey Mouse. He said, you know, I think maybe God's telling us that there's some emergency, some crisis going to happen related to Disneyland.

We ought to pray for Disneyland. Well, I mean, if that doesn't sound goofy to you, then you and I just don't have the same opinion of what matters to the Holy Spirit. Yes, I caught the pun.

I noticed it. But pictures of Mickey Mouse are arising in people's imaginations. Oh, I got something from God.

The Holy Spirit revealed the face of Mickey Mouse. Maybe that's where Walt Disney got it, too. I've seen the Holy Spirit blamed for people barking like dogs, laughing when nothing was funny, kissing like a snake.

And, of course, growling like lions. I've seen a lot of things that the Holy Spirit blamed for that didn't have any fingerprints of the Holy Spirit on them. But it's not my purpose so much in these lectures to critique things, but to present positively what does the Holy Spirit do? Biblically, what is normal for the Holy Spirit to do? I will admit the Holy Spirit will do some things abnormal once in a while.

But even in the Bible, we find this, but even there, they're presented as abnormal. For example, in Judges chapter 14 and verse 6, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson because a lion was after him, and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands. Now, I have, I believe, had the Holy Spirit come upon me, but that is not what has been the manifestation.

I have not torn any animals apart with my bare hands, nor do I think I could, although that was in fact, the strength of Samson is represented in the Bible as a manifestation of the anointing of the Holy Spirit on him. He was not, the Bible does not say he was a big muscular guy. When he did supernatural things, that's exactly what they were, supernatural.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him. But that's not the normative work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. He can do that, but he doesn't do that very often.

Another example of an unusual thing the Holy Spirit did in the Bible, in 1 Samuel chapter 19 and verses 23 and 24, we read that Saul was pursuing David, and David happened to be visiting Samuel the prophet, and there was a company of prophets around. And when Saul came after David, he kind of, I guess he ran through this group of prophets, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit was so great among these prophets that the Holy Spirit, we're told, came upon Saul, and he began to prophesy. Now, by the way, prophesying is not that unusual.

I mean, that's kind of a normative work of the Holy Spirit, judging from what the New Testament says, and the Old. But what is unusual, it says, Then Saul stripped off his clothes and laid on the ground all that day and all night naked, prophesying. Now, that, I would hope, will not happen to most of you here tonight, if the Holy Spirit falls.

Another example of something rather unusual, I would say unique, that the Holy Spirit did in the Bible, and that's found, of course, in Luke chapter 1 and verse 35, where Mary said, How can this be? I've not known a man. And the angel said, Well, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore, that thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.

Now, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and that was the explanation of how she was going to get pregnant. This was an unusual work of the Holy Spirit. That is not normative.

Okay? So, when we talk about what's normative for the Holy Spirit, we're not trying to delimit the things that are possible for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can do a lot of things that are not the normal things He does. He can do anything.

And we want to restrict our concern to what is normative, what the normal spiritual Christian life should be like, and what should be the normal evidence that the Holy Spirit is operational in the life. Now, again, I talk about the normative working or work of the Holy Spirit. When we talk about work, I want you to understand this.

We're not talking about the Holy Spirit as, like, He doesn't work like a machine works, or He doesn't work like a medicine works, or like electricity works. See, a lot of people, when they think of the Holy Spirit, they don't have a very personal image that comes to mind. I mean, what image can come to mind of the Holy Spirit? You might have an image, and you might have what the Father looks like, or Jesus, but in all likelihood, you probably don't have a mental picture of the Holy Spirit.

If you do, I think you're unusual. And if you do, it's probably something like a mist or a vapor or something, you know. The Holy Spirit is so vague in terms of His personal nature that it's very difficult for some Christians even to remember that He's not an it.

He's a person. It's very common for me to hear Christians as well as others, when speaking of the Holy Spirit, call Him it. You don't call persons it once you know they are persons, once you're really thinking of them in personal terms.

When I meet Christians who speak of the Holy Spirit as it, you know, I don't think that they're, you know, blaspheming the Spirit. I don't think that's a great, terrible thing, but I do think it communicates to me that they maybe are not very acquainted with the Holy Spirit yet. I doubt if you call any of your friends it when you're talking about them.

You see, Jesus always spoke of the Holy Spirit as He. Jesus said in the Upper Room to His disciples, I will send you another comforter, and when He has come, He will lead you into

all truth. He will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

If I don't go, He will not come to you. He, He, He, He. He speaks of the Holy Spirit just as personally as He spoke of the Father.

Now, none of us would call the Father an it, and yet it's more natural for some reason for us to think of the Spirit, isn't it? Because we don't have, we have this vague, you know, this vague picture of some misty, invisible essence, you know, as the Spirit. And that's something we need to get over right away. I mean, He is invisible, it's true, but so is the Father.

What we need to remember is when we talk about the Spirit, we're talking about a person. And when we talk about the working of the Holy Spirit and whether this, whether something or another is of the Holy Spirit, we need to remember that the person that we're calling the Holy Spirit, and that the Bible calls the Holy Spirit, is a person like other persons. He has character.

He has personal traits. He has a personality. And as such, we should remember that whatever He does should be consistent with His personality, just like you expect other people to do things consistent with their personality.

He is not just some kind of electric charge out there, or as the Jehovah's Witnesses say, God's active force. If that is the way He is, then maybe He's just some kind of a power that can be tapped if you just learn the techniques. And believe me, there are many people in Spirit-filled movements that certainly talk and think about the Holy Spirit as if that is the case, as if He's just some kind of electrical power, and all you have to do is know how to plug in, or all you have to do is know how to tune the dial, or all you have to do is know how to throw the right switches, and you get the power you want to do whatever you want.

And they forget, or maybe never knew, that the Holy Spirit is not there to get what you want. He has an agenda of His own. You're here to let Him do what He wants.

And there are some things that are consistent with what He wants, and there are some things that are not consistent with what He wants, just like every other person you know. Now, I want to give you a little bit of my own personal testimony in this respect. Our staff members this week have been giving their testimony in devotions.

I probably won't get a chance to do that, so I'll do it here, besides it's relevant to what we're talking about. Now, be careful, because I just said a moment ago, we're going to talk about what's the normative work of the Holy Spirit. Then I said, I'm going to give my testimony.

I want you to realize that nobody's testimony is necessarily authoritative of what is normative. Okay? I'm going to tell you my own testimony in this respect, but I don't want

to imply, and therefore, that's what's normative, and everyone should have the same experience. That's the problem in many cases with people's opinions about the Holy Spirit.

They've heard someone's great testimony about when they got filled with Spirit, and it was like someone poured warm honey over their whole head, and ran down all over them, and they got goosebumps all over them, and they shook and they fell, and they spoke in tongues, did all kinds of these things, and you hear about that, and you say, well, maybe I've never received the Spirit, because I never felt the honey. And you can't judge your experience with the Holy Spirit by what somebody else's experience is. And that's more important than you might think to realize, because you'll hear testimonies that are much more dramatic than your own, in all likelihood, and they will inevitably be about what the Holy Spirit did in the life of a certain believer, or in a missionary, or in a preacher, or some person that just had, you know, the Holy Spirit led them, or spoke to them, or did something miraculous in them, and so forth.

And I believe those testimonies, but I don't believe that they become the standard for determining what I can expect the Holy Spirit to do in my life. And the reason is this. It's because, as I said, of the personal nature of the Holy Spirit.

You are a person. The Holy Spirit is a person. The normative Christian life is for you, as a person, to have a relationship with the other person, the Holy Spirit.

And just like you have a circle of relationships in your life, and no two relationships are exactly alike. And do you know why that is? You're the same person, but the other parties are not the same person. A relationship has the dynamics of two distinct personalities, and therefore no two relationships are going to be exactly alike, because although my personality is always the same, the personalities of other people I'm in relationship with differ from one another, so my relationships with them differ, the dynamics of the relations differ.

Now, the Holy Spirit is one person. He's one person of the Trinity. But you are a different person than the person you're sitting next to, and then all the other people whose testimonies you hear, you're not the same person.

Therefore, the dynamics of your relationship with the Holy Spirit will not, and should not be thought to be modeled after the dynamics of somebody else's relationship with the Holy Spirit. It's important that you not just know about the Holy Spirit and hear about what the Holy Spirit does, you need to have a real relationship with God through the Spirit. Some people might feel a little bit awkward even about talking directly so much about the Holy Spirit, because it says in, Jesus said in the Upper Room, when the Holy Spirit comes, it says, He will not speak of Himself.

Okay? And in another place it said, He will glorify me. Now, based on that statement,

some people think, well, if you're talking about the Holy Spirit, it's not pleasing to the Holy Spirit, because Jesus said the Holy Spirit won't speak of Himself, and if you're speaking of Him, you're not even speaking in harmony with His wishes, because He just wants to glorify Jesus, He doesn't want to be talked about. He doesn't even want to talk about Himself.

Now, this notion springs from a misunderstanding of the meaning of Jesus' words. When Jesus said the Holy Spirit will not speak of Himself, He meant that in the same way as when Jesus said, I do not speak of Myself, I speak from the Father. What the Father tells me to do, I speak.

It's not of Myself that I'm speaking, meaning from His own resources and on His own volition. Likewise, when He said the Holy Spirit, when He comes, He will not speak of Himself. The next thing He says, but He will, whatever He hears, He will speak.

Okay? Same thing as Jesus. Jesus didn't speak of Himself, but He certainly spoke about Himself a great deal. And the Holy Spirit doesn't speak of Himself, that is, from Himself.

He speaks from what He hears from the Father, the same as Jesus did. But He certainly can be expected to speak about Himself from time to time, because after all, who do you think inspired the Scriptures, and where in the world do we hear about the Holy Spirit but there? You see, the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures. If we could say, well, the Holy Spirit never speaks about Himself, well, that would make it very easy to decide which Scriptures aren't inspired by the Holy Spirit, any of them that mention Him.

Just tear them out, because He doesn't talk about Himself. No, He does. I do think, however, that the focus of the Holy Spirit's concern is to make us closer to Jesus.

But when we talk about the Trinity, there's a great deal of mystery there that I must confess I do not understand, and I will further confess I don't expect to ever understand it in this life. I'll keep working on it. But I don't expect that before I see God, after the resurrection or whatever, when I die and go to heaven, I don't expect until then that I'll ever understand the Trinity, because it's nowhere explained in the Scripture what the Trinity is and how the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit exactly merge and don't merge, in what sense they're distinct from each other, in what sense they're one.

But I will say this, the Bible makes it clear that when I say Jesus is in my heart, what is really meant is the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, is in my heart. Jesus, in fact, is at the right hand of God the Father, and the Bible says He's staying there until He returns. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father in His resurrection body, and He is going to remain there until His second coming.

So who's this in my heart, then, that I talk about Jesus being in my heart? In Romans 8, I want to read verses 9 and 10. Now, what I want you to be alert to as I read this, and as

you read it along, is that Paul speaks of the same phenomenon several times, but uses different terms for that. Here we go.

But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Now, did you notice a subtle transition there in terminology? He starts out by saying you are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God is in you. Okay, so two things are interchangeable. I am in the Spirit, the Spirit of God is in me.

These are interchangeable ideas. Furthermore, he says, and if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, so now he speaks of the same phenomenon, the Holy Spirit is in me, that's having the Spirit of Christ. Okay, then he goes further in verse 10, and if Christ is in you, now this is how his talk has evolved here in the sentence.

The Holy Spirit dwells in you, you have the Spirit of Christ, thus Christ is in you. It is the Holy Spirit that is in you. He is the Spirit of Christ, and through the Spirit Christ is in you.

The walk you have with Christ is really a walk in the Spirit, a walk through the Spirit of Christ who dwells in you. But Jesus, the man, the one who had the nails in his hands and has holes there still, is at the right hand of God the Father, and we won't be seeing him again until he returns. But his Spirit, who in some mysterious sense, in the sense that the Trinity is one and three, that Spirit who is in us is also Christ, and therefore my relationship with Jesus is a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

You can't really differentiate the two. I was born into a family of Baptists. I guess that means I was born a Baptist, though as Baptists we didn't talk that way.

If I'd been born a Catholic or a Methodist or a Presbyterian or an Episcopalian, I would have been baptized as a baby, and then I would have been born a Presbyterian or Catholic or Lutheran or whatever. But in Baptist churches we're not born Baptists, we're just born sinners. And later on when we receive the Lord, then we can be a Christian and then we can be a Baptist if we want to.

Well, I was raised by Baptists, and I made my decision for Christ when I was four years old. I was raised, however, in the Baptist church, and there I really had a hunger for God, though it didn't show as much as I wish it did. The church I was raised in, and I don't mean this to be said about all Baptist churches.

I was raised in Southern California in a church down there. The particular church I was raised in did not ever talk much about a relationship with God through the Spirit. Of course, I think the expression, know the Lord, was used, and I think that was in our vocabulary.

But to speak about God, to speak about the Lord, to speak about the Holy Spirit, as if to communicate that I'm supposed to be in a vital everyday relationship with God that I'm aware of. That concept was never introduced. We were told that we had to believe in the Lord and be saved.

I was baptized there. I was, I think, converted in that church. In fact, not only was I converted, but I quickly became the most active youth member, first in the junior high group and then in high school group.

In fact, in junior high, that's when I knew I was called to ministry. When I was in junior high, I just knew that nothing else would satisfy me than to be in God's work. But I didn't quite know what kind of work it would be.

I knew it would be somehow ministry that I was called to. And in junior high, I began to dispute with teachers and fellow students about evolution and things like that and kind of burned my gloves there. Actually, my first dispute with a teacher about evolution was in second grade.

But I really got sophisticated in my defense of creation when I was in junior high school, and that even got more developed in high school. I gave my presentation against evolution any time I could in high school. I took speech classes in high school just so I could do that.

And my hero was Billy Graham from earliest childhood. There may be some prenatal influence there. I don't know, because my parents were actually at a Billy Graham movie the night I was born.

I wasn't born in the theater, but they left the theater to go to the hospital. I was born that night. So maybe that has something to do with my longstanding love for Billy Graham, and he's still one of my great heroes.

I've often told people the day Billy Graham dies will be one of the greatest crises in my life, although I've never met the man, partly because it just seems like it will be the end of an era. I was into Billy Graham, and so when I got into high school and got into speech classes and started giving speeches, I gave sermons, and boy, I tell you, I never won a single soul. And I couldn't figure it out, because Billy Graham, every time he said those things, people came forward, and some of them got really saved.

I was perplexed. I was very busy about soul winning. The only problem is no soul has ever got one.

I actually went door to door. Occasionally a traveling evangelist would come to our church, and he'd do a week of meetings at our church in the evenings, and in the mornings he'd have like a prayer breakfast and a devotional. I was 14 years old, 15 years old, but I'd get up at 6 in the morning and run down to the church for the prayer

breakfast to hear the evangelist, and then I'd go out in the afternoons after school and go door to door and canvass and invite people to the evangelistic meetings and hope to get an opportunity at one of the door steps to witness to people, and that frequently happened.

And I just loved to witness. I loved to see people get saved, but they never got saved by my witnessing. Now, I'll tell you something.

Looking back, I don't think there was any defect in what I was saying. I don't think the contents of what I was telling people was very different than what I would say now. Well, at some point I'd make, I would emphasize different things now in some respects, but, I mean, it's not so much that I wasn't, like I didn't know the gospel or how to present the gospel.

Because I was zealous, I was always elected to be the president of the youth group in the Baptist church and so forth, and partly that was because I would do it and no one else wanted to. It always gave me an opportunity to preach to the kids. And also I got to preach to the adults in the Baptist church when I was a teenager.

They'd have occasionally a youth night where the high school group would take over the Sunday night service, and they'd have to pick a preacher, and there was never any mystery about who was going to be picked to preach. So I was picked to preach, and I'd preach. And, boy, all the adults in this church thought, isn't that a fine young man.

I was clean cut, wingtip shoes, starched slacks, looked like a Baptist preacher. Except my voice hadn't changed yet. Maybe that's why no one got saved.

I don't know. But I could have been very frustrated putting as much labor as I did into evangelistic effort and seeing no results. I guess I wasn't very frustrated because our pastor didn't get much better results than I did.

And I guess I didn't have much of a model to compare negatively against, because our pastor gave altar calls every week, and most weeks no one came forward. And I remember on those occasions when someone did come forward, man, my heart would drop fast. Ah, someone's getting saved.

And then the pastor announced, so-and-so has come forward to announce that they have moved from such-and-such a town. They want to transfer their letter from the Baptist church there to our Baptist church. I think, oh, okay.

But seeing people saved just wasn't what was happening in the church I happened to be in, or in my own experience. Well, that's what I was like until I was 16. And when I was 16, I had lived all my life in one town until then.

It was Covina, California. It's in L.A. County. And my dad got transferred in his job to

Orange, California, which is in Orange County.

That's about 40 miles from Covina. And he didn't want to commute that far, so he decided we'd move there. We'd lived in the same house since I was in kindergarten.

But I was now a junior in high school, and we had to move. All the people I knew in school, I'd gone to kindergarten and grammar school up through almost through high school. And I didn't want to leave then.

First of all, even though I was, like Paul, bold in my letters, I was weak and contemptible in appearance. And, I mean, when it came to preaching from the pulpit, I could wax bold. But when it came to personal relationships, I was a little shy.

I was a nerd. And I still am. I'm just in disguise now.

Well, the idea of meeting new people did not, it struck me as a challenge, you know, a challenge I didn't want. I already knew everybody in Covina, because I grew up there, but I didn't know anyone in Orange. And I tried to talk my parents out of moving to Orange, and that wouldn't happen.

And so I tried to talk them out of taking me with them. I mean, I was 16, so I thought maybe I could, I only have a, I could graduate at the end of my junior year. I was in the middle of my junior year.

I could, one semester only, I could stay with a friend in Covina and finish school. They wouldn't hear that either, so I had to go, very reluctantly, to Orange County. In the providence of God, I landed at Orange High School the first day.

The same day, another man, in the providence of God, my age, landed there. And we discovered each other because, well, for two reasons. One is, neither of us were suited up for P.E. It was our first day.

And it was at P.E. class that we saw everyone else had orange trunks on, and we had our regular clothes on. Secondly, I had become attracted somewhat to the hippie movement. Not so much that I wanted to join it, but I was fascinated by it, and it became the focus of who I wanted to reach.

And so I had endeavored at Covina High School, when I was there, to take on as much of a hippie appearance as I could. Well, you've got to realize, these were the days of dress codes. You couldn't have your hair touch your collar.

You couldn't have facial hair, and that wouldn't have mattered to me anyway. I couldn't grow it. You could do very few things to tip people off that you were sympathetic toward the hippie culture.

And I did those few things. I got wire rim glasses. The only guy in my school.

Thanks. I got a buckskin jacket with fringe on it. Apart from that, there wasn't much else I could change.

And I must confess, I didn't look very much like a hippie, but I did about as much as anyone else on the campus. And when I moved to Orange, there was one other guy in the gym class, not suit up, and he had wire rim glasses too. I thought, a soul mate.

I thought, maybe I'll witness to this guy, and he can get saved, and then I'll have someone I can relate to here. So, you know, I was, although I really, I loved the Lord and wanted to serve God, I was kind of a nonconformist in some respects, and kind of rebellious against authorities that I didn't have much respect for, and so forth. And one of the authorities I didn't have much respect for was high school, school government.

I was actually sophomore class president in Covina, but by the time I got to my junior year, went to Orange High School, I thought school politics were just a bunch of bunk, and school spirit was a bunch of bunk, and so forth. So the reason I say all this is because once we were at a mandatory assembly, and it was time to sing the school's alma mater, which I never learned, but everyone was supposed to stand up and sing it, and I refused to stand. But the reason this is significant is because the same guy with the wire-in glasses was sitting next to me, and he didn't stand up either.

I thought, wow, now I know I have something in common with this man. I hardly knew his name. I knew his last name because it was on his PE shirt.

Eventually, when he got suited up, I finally found out what his last name was. I didn't actually go and introduce myself until that time. But I had overheard him talking to another guy I didn't know very well about guitars in PE class.

So he was sitting next to me, and we were both sitting down where everyone else was standing up for the alma mater. We were sitting down in protest. I don't know to this day what we were protesting, but since we were not standing up or singing, we noticed each other.

We were right next to each other, and so I thought I'd make conversation. It seemed like an associable thing to do. I said, oh, Moore.

That was his last name. I didn't know his first name. M. Moore.

It turned out it was Michael Moore. But I said, oh, Moore. You know, high school guys in gym class, they always call each other by their last name.

It's, you know, cool. And I said, so, Moore, I think I heard you the other day talking to Mosby about guitars. Do you play the guitar? He says, yeah, I play some guitar.

I said, really? Oh, I play guitar, too. And then, of course, I don't know if this is still

predictable, but anyone could have predicted what the next line would be back in 1970. The next line is, why don't we get together and jam? Right.

I know people still say that now, but I mean, two guys get in the conversation. They find out they both play guitar. The next thing, I mean, it's 100 percent of the time.

It's always going to happen. Let's jam sometime. OK, so I said, well, maybe we can get together and jam.

I hate to be so predictable. I'm supposed to be a nonconformist. I thought, well, you know, I'll get in with this guy with music, you know, get the gospel into him.

And so he said, well, you can come over to my house. Actually, he said, he says, my brother has a house nearby. And there's a little like a cottage in the back and he lets me use it for practice and stuff.

And why don't you come over there? I'll come pick you up at your house. So he came over one day to pick me up, to take me over to his brother's place so we could jam. He pulled up in this yellow VW bus, which later became my first car.

And funny thing, how stereotype that was, I didn't know how stereotype that was. I remember when I first went to the insurance guy to insure my first car, which was this yellow bus I bought from Michael Moore. The insurance agent was in there talking to some straight redneck kind of guy.

And I had long hair by this time. And I was sitting in the insurance office, not knowing anything about how to insure a car. And these guys were here talking to each other when I came in and they were talking about those scummy hippies or whatever.

And here comes one walking in, as far as they knew. And the guy who was not the insurance agent trying to sell me something, the guy who was his friend, made no attempt to be polite. And so he was railing on us long hair hippie types.

I said, well, how do you know I'm a hippie? Because I wasn't really. I never was a hippie. I just looked like one at one point.

And I said, well, you're making a lot of judgment calls here. How do you even know I'm a hippie? He says, well, tell me, what color is your VW van? I said, yellow. He said, I didn't even know you had a VW van.

I just knew you had to have a VW van. So so I guess I fit all the stereotypes. He pulled up, Michael Moore pulled up to my parents house where I lived and he had a VW van.

But more important than the fact that a VW van was, it had a little silver fish on the back of the van. Now, in the in nineteen before 1970, there weren't little fishes all over the place. But I was just savvy enough.

In the Baptist church, one of the few kids who knew that that fish had been an ancient symbol for Christianity, especially in those funny little letters in it. And it was one of those fishes. And I didn't say anything.

I just thought, I'll check this out. I'll keep my eyes and ears open. I just maybe it's someone else's van.

So he drove me over to his brother's place. There's his car in the back. We had his guitar and stuff and walk in.

There's this little funny looking thing over the wall, sort of a cushion. And I don't know what else I can't remember to describe it, but it looked to me like an altar. And I said, what's that? Is that an altar? And he said, yeah, that's that's an altar.

That's the prayer place, a place, a place to pray. Are you religious? Back then, I didn't have any qualms about the word religious. It's another cultural change that happened since the 70s.

But are you religious? That was a little easier than saying, are you a Christian? Because he might not be as offended and being asked straight out if he has religious convictions. He says, yeah, I'm religious. I guess you can say I'm religious.

I said, oh, are you by any chance a Christian? He says, yes. Hey, well, so am I. Bold, wasn't I? Make sure it's safe. You see, I was very bold to witness in Covina because everyone knew I was a Christian, but moved me to a new place where no one knows me.

And I wasn't real eager to just come out with it. Anyway, now that it was out, we could talk freely. And I said, oh, where are you going to church? He said, oh, man, I'm going to this really cool church.

You wouldn't believe it. He says, there's thousands of young people there. And they have guitar players up there all the time.

And I thought, wow, that's pretty cool. I was the only guy who played the guitar in my youth group. And, oh, man, they got bands there.

They got everything happening there. And it's crowded as heck. It's great.

You ought to go out there. It's called Calvary Chapel, which was in Costa Mesa. Now, I'd never heard of Calvary Chapel, but that's not too surprising.

It was just the very beginning of the Jesus movement. I'd never heard of the Jesus movement. But, I mean, anyone who knows anything about the Jesus movement knows that Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, was the hub.

It was where it started and from which it spread. And it became a worldwide revival

movement. Well, by the providence of God, although I had not wished to move to Orange County and would have done anything I could have to prevent it, God put me smack dab in the middle of the greatest thing that's ever happened in this century as far as I'm concerned.

And I was, I mean, looking back, I'm embarrassed at how carnal all my thinking was about it. You know, I thought, well, that's cool. We can go play guitars and that's neat.

You know, I'm not in many places where I can go play my guitar and have people listen to me and stuff. So I thought it was maybe a place to kind of maybe like an amateur hour or something like that. You know, I didn't know what it was.

I was 16. It was 1970. And so I said, I'll take you there sometime.

We'll go Wednesday night. Now, at my church, there was a Wednesday night meeting. It had about four old ladies.

And they called it a prayer meeting, although they didn't really get around to praying to the last five minutes of the meeting. But that was called the midweek prayer meeting. So I had grown up in a church where I knew about midweek meetings.

Bunch of old ladies. But you know what? I had gone to those. Because even though I wasn't an old lady, I was an unusual youth in the church.

And I wanted to get close to God and thought, well, you know, there are not many opportunities in this church to have meetings with people. And so I'll go to prayer meetings, too. So I knew what midweek meetings were like.

And I thought and that's what I thought I was going to get into. I thought, well, this guy said there's guitars there, but there probably won't be any guitars there on Wednesday night. Wednesday night, it was raining terribly hard.

And he drove me to this place. It was kind of out in the sticks. You know, we went we got off the interstate, drove on this farm road, you know, a couple of miles.

I guess it was nothing around but bean fields. And there's there's one building. You can see the lights in the distance through the pouring down rain.

And there was no paved area even on the property. The parking lot was not a parking lot. It was just a lot.

And because it was raining, it was covered with mud and puddles and stuff. I thought, well, no one's going to be out in church midweek meeting in this kind of weather out here in the sticks. We're nothing but mud.

But when we got there, the parking lot was packed with cars. I mean, when I mean pack,

they didn't have parking spaces, Mark, because it was just a bunch of mud. So they were jammed in every which way in a totally nonsensical arrangement.

I remember thinking distinctly, I'm surprised to see so many people out here. But these people are going to have a heck of a time getting out. So we got out of the van and ran into the shelter of the the narthex.

I just want to throw some church lingo at you there. The narthex is also known as the foyer. And that is and that's a foyer.

And that's that was an area about the size of the room I'm standing in right now at the back of the church. And there were some glass windows like that. And then the sanctuary, you know, with the pews and stuff was up there.

Now, we hadn't gotten there very early. We only got there on time. And so we were lucky to get in.

I later learned you normally to get inside. You have to get there at least an hour early because otherwise you can sit outside and look through the windows and listen through the speakers outside. But but because it was raining, people were very kind and crammed tighter in there and so forth.

And so we had a pretty tight pack. But I found out that it was pretty tightly packed even when it wasn't raining. And even when the outside actually grew much bigger after, you know, after I discovered it, it got bigger all the time.

And now, of course, Calvary Chapel is the third largest church in the United States. The one Calvary Chapel is the third largest church in the United States. Now there's 600 Calvary Chapel, something like that.

And some of them have multiple thousands of members in them. And, of course, there's even one in this town. When I got there, I'll tell you, I was impressed by a number of things.

First of all, almost everyone there looked like a hippie, but not everyone. There's one bald guy in particular who I later learned was Chuck Smith, but he wasn't preaching that night. He wasn't preaching that night.

And I didn't know he was the pastor. But but he was back in the Northex where I was. And when the people were singing, they'd have their arms around him.

And they're swaying back and forth and singing these really cool songs like we sing at camp, you know, kind of camp songs. And I mean, all the meetings I ever went to at the church I was raised in, we sing hymns. But when you go to camp, you'd sing inspirational songs.

Well, they sing more of these inspirational type songs at this meeting. And and there's this bald guy back there and he had his arms around all these hippies. I thought, well, man, this guy looks older than my dad.

My dad wouldn't put his arm around a hippie. When the people stopped singing, I tried to find a place to sit down. I finally sat down by this guy who looked like a hippie.

And some of you heard this part of the story before he he struck up a conversation because there was someone up in front giving a testimony. We couldn't hear him. So we made our own conversation.

He said, hey, you know, do you know the Lord? I said, oh, yeah, I know the Lord. And he said, really, how long you know the Lord? And he said, oh, I said, about 12 years. He said, wow, I've only known about two weeks.

And I looked at him, I said, but he looks like he knows the Lord in a better way than I do. You know, I mean, he knew the Lord for two weeks. I've known the Lord for 12 years.

And I mean, he he just was he was radiant. That's the only thing I could say. He was radiant.

He wasn't alone. Almost everyone there was radiant. He said, well, what's the Lord been doing in your life? And I did not answer because I didn't know that the Lord did things in people's lives.

I didn't know it. Never heard of it. I was stunned.

I thought, I don't know what I said. Maybe another song started and got me out of it. I have no idea what I said, but I remember what I thought.

I thought. What what is the Lord doing in my life now, even in even in lots of churches that aren't like Calvary Chapel, people still I mean, do talk about the Lord doing things, but that wasn't talked that way in the church I was raised in. Never heard of it.

All I knew is you believe in Jesus and then you stay a believer until you die and then you go to heaven. That's what I knew about Christianity. You believe in Jesus and you keep believing until you die and then you go to heaven.

Of course, back then I thought that even if you stop believing, you still go to heaven. But anyway, the point was, I didn't have any concept of a day by day interaction between me and God. Sure, I prayed, but I mean, it's kind of stale, I must admit.

I read my Bible with great interest before this time, but I was kind of an intellectual type guy and I just kind of learned what it said. I can't say I knew much about what it meant or what it didn't have. I wasn't getting much spiritual life out of it.

I have to confess. But anyway, I could tell this guy was different than me. And I could tell when he said, what's the Lord doing in your life? If I asked him, he could tell me.

I figured he could tell me what the Lord was doing in his life. I don't think I had time to ask him. But anyway, I was impressed.

I thought, well, I'm going to come back to this church next Wednesday. Then I found out you don't have to wait till Wednesday. You can come back the next night.

No matter what night of the week, you could go any night because they had meetings every night. And you literally had to get there about an hour early or more to get inside the building if you wanted to. And I went there a lot more times when it didn't rain than when it did.

And I had to be outside the building sometimes because I sometimes didn't get there any more than an hour early and still didn't get in. But, you know, the place was just electric. I mean, it was just alive with what I would now call a spirit of revival.

There's a revival happening. Never seen it anywhere else since. I mean, I've seen churches that grow.

I've seen churches that imitate the same kind of music. I've seen preachers who are pretty dynamic. I've never seen a revival since then.

And I'm telling you, that was a real revival of, I think, of New Testament Christianity happening there. I knew that I had, I was aware of the gospel. I knew my Bible.

I'd been evangelistic. I'd been faithful in church. I had been a clean living person.

I can't say my thoughts had been what I now wish they had been during those years, but externally I lived a clean life. But these people had something that I didn't have, and I didn't know what it was. And so, being the inquisitive type, I asked.

And I asked a lot of people, I said, what is it about you people? And I kept hearing them talk about the same thing. Now, the term they used, and I have no problem with the term, but it's not the only term that I feel comfortable with. The term they used was something, I kept hearing this thing about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And I didn't know what that was. Never heard of it. Fortunately, I never heard anything against it or for it.

Now, if it had been ten years later, I might have heard something against it in the church I was raised in. But no one was talking about that. I remember the only thing I'd ever heard about Pentecostals, well, there was an Assembly of God church next door to our Baptist church, or at least down the street.

And we'd pass it every week going to church. And I asked my dad, what's the difference between, when I was a kid, I said, what's the difference between our church and these churches? He said, I don't know, I think they're mostly pretty much the same, just a little different. I said, well, for instance, what's this church here do different than us? He says, ah, I think they're about like us, the only difference is they speak in tongues.

I said, well, what's that? He said, I don't know. And that was the end of the discussion. He didn't know what it was, didn't have any curiosity about it.

And I never thought about it again. That was when I was a kid. But now that I was at Calvary Chapel, people kept talking about this thing called the baptism of the Spirit.

And I went home and I read my Bible. I talked to my parents about it. I read my Bible some more about it, got out of concordance, tried to find out whatever I could on the subject and talked to my parents about some more.

Got a couple of books that some people recommended, pointed out some more scriptural things that I hadn't noticed. And after a few weeks, I decided that they were right. The Bible does say there is such a thing as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I went back to Calvary Chapel, determined I would not rest until I had the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was brand new stuff to me. I realized at that point that there have been people who know about the baptism of the Holy Spirit since the beginning of the century.

The so-called Pentecostal movement in Azusa Street started at the beginning of the century. And that's where these kind of things started manifesting. And there's denominations, there were denominations in my town that knew about this since before my grandfather was born.

But I assumed once I learned about it, that everyone who knew about it must be great Christians. Because everyone I met who was talking about it was a great Christian. Furthermore, the best Bible teaching I ever heard was at this place.

I mean, it was not just a place, I mean, it wasn't a place where a lot of people were hopping around, screaming and hooting. None of that went on there. It was dynamic, but it was orderly, and it was mainly, the meetings were dominated by Bible teaching.

I mean, sure, we'd sing for two hours. That was after the meeting started. People would get there an hour or two early, and they'd be singing before anyone showed up to lead the meeting.

And then after about an hour and a half of singing to that, then the meeting would start, and they'd sing for two hours. And then there'd be an hour and a half or two hours Bible study. And no one noticed it was getting late.

There was real revival. And these people were good Christians. I mean, they were out, they wanted nothing more than to please the Lord.

I mean, they were about ready to renounce all their possessions, go out and witness, they'd hitchhike all over the place. I did those things, too. And for years I was part of this Jesus moment thing.

And anyway, let me just say this. Once I discovered or was convinced biblically that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was of God and biblical, I went back and I asked one of the ministers at Calvary Chapel to pray for me to receive the baptism of the Spirit, and he did. Now, I had kind of thought I might speak in tongues, because I'd heard some things about that.

I'd heard that you get baptized in the Spirit, you speak in tongues. So I kind of thought maybe that's going to happen. And so this guy took me in the back room, just after church service, and he said, Okay, put your hands up.

Okay. And he said, Now we're going to pray for the baptism of the Spirit. Since I was a good Baptist, I closed my eyes when I prayed.

And so I closed my eyes and my hands up. And he put his hands on me. And he began to pray in tongues.

He said, Okay, now you do it. Now, this guy, this guy was not Chuck Smith. He was another lesser pastor there who happened to be preaching that night.

And so I had to confess I was uncomfortable. I was determined I was going to get this baptism in the Holy Spirit. So he said, You do it.

I figured he's the expert. I guess I'm supposed to be able to do it. I mean, I just really mumbled because I, frankly, while I was mumbling, This isn't right.

I don't have that gift. But I thought, Well, this guy's, you know, he'd taken his hands off me. He was still praying in tongues.

And I was doing this thing and trying to please him. And I remember the thoughts in my mind. I thought, Okay, this didn't work.

I didn't speak in tongues. Whatever I'm doing isn't tongues. I don't believe this is tongues.

And I don't feel any warm honey rolling all over my body. And I didn't fall down and nothing supernatural or sensational happened. And I just think it didn't work.

I didn't get it. And then I said, And this is where being a good Baptist helped me. Because we Baptists were conditioned to be satisfied with little in terms of experience

with God.

And that's where my conditioning helped me out a great deal. Because I thought, Okay, wait a minute. As a good Baptist, I was taught you don't go by feelings.

You go by the Word of God. And you know what? I'm not a Baptist. I haven't attended a Baptist church for a long time.

But I'm still a Baptist in that respect. And I hope I don't stop being a Baptist in that respect. Because I still go by the Word of God, not by feelings.

But I said, Okay, I don't feel a thing. But God, you said in your Word, If earthly fathers know how to give good things to their children when they ask them, then how much more will your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? That's a promise. And I asked.

Therefore, you who never break a promise, have given me your Holy Spirit. By faith, I accept that fact. I didn't say that out loud.

This was going to my head. Because outwardly I was speaking some mumbo-jumbo. Anyway, you know what? Doesn't sound like anything supernatural happened.

But something did. Not later, but then. I didn't feel the things that people told me they felt.

I didn't do some of the things that I had read that people commonly do. But I had evidence, indisputable evidence, of another sort. You know, I got home that night.

And my parents, you know, I've been discussing this issue with my parents. And they were curious about this. They'd never heard of this stuff.

Even though they'd been in church all their life. I got home. Walked in the door.

And my parents looked at me and said, What happened to you? I said, oh, I didn't know that they'd noticed. I wasn't making a funny face or anything like that. I just walked in the door.

As far as I knew, I was just being natural. But they said, what happened to you? And I said, well, I got baptized in the Spirit tonight. And they said, thought so.

And since then, they have too. And my sister and my brother did also. And my parents are still members at Calvary Chapel.

They go there every week. I did not really and truly speak in tongues, as near as I can tell, for maybe, I'd say maybe three months after that. I'm still not a tongue fanatic.

I mean, I don't speak in tongues all the time. And when I do, it's in private. But I just

never became a major part of my devotional life.

It's a part, but not a major part. But I'll tell you something. I didn't just get good vibes at night and then wake up and it was gone.

The next morning and every morning after that, there was something radically different in my whole perception of my world. First of all, God was in it. And it's an amazing thing.

I always knew, as a tenant of faith, because the Bible said so, that God lives inside of Christians. And since I was a Christian, I knew God was inside of me. If you'd ask me, does God live in your heart, I'd say, yes, of course, I'm a Christian.

Is God present with you? Of course, He's present everywhere. But this is different. I didn't feel Him.

I didn't have goosebumps. I can't even describe in any way to you what it was. But I had an awareness of the presence of God with me.

After that, which has never fully gone away. It's had its waxings and its wanings, but it's never really gone away. My life has been different from that day.

And some of the differences that were tremendous is that when I prayed, it was like I was talking to someone who was really there. I didn't have to convince myself. I didn't have to think of a picture in my mind of God or something.

It was like He was there. I talked very naturally to Him. There were times I felt like I even heard Him talking back to me.

Not in my ear, but in my heart. Sometimes I think it was, sometimes it probably wasn't, but Him. But He was real to me.

When I read the Bible, it was real to me. I mean, suddenly it was a living book to me. I had vast portions of it memorized before that, but it had never been alive before.

And most importantly, when I talked to people about the Lord for the first time, people were getting saved. Now, I can't attribute very much of that to me because it was a revival. People fall over into the kingdom of God in revivals.

And I was fortunate to be there at the time because I saw so many people saved. In fact, the funny thing is I went back to my Baptist church once I got my VW van and could drive. I went back to Covina on Sunday nights to see some of my old friends who are now college-age people.

And my sister and I and Michael Moore and some others were in a band now, a Christian band. And my sister and I would bring our guitar. She was our bass player, actually, in our band, but she played guitar.

Before I did, she taught me how to play. And we would go and we'd sing some songs at the Baptist college group that we'd learned at the Calvary Chapel. And so some worship songs and stuff, and I thought they were really neat.

And some gospel songs and some new stuff. And people wanted to know what happened to us because they'd know us all our lives there in that Baptist church. But there was something different about us that everyone noticed.

And so we'd talk to them about some of these things and how the Holy Spirit had changed the nature of our Christian life. A youth Sunday night was coming up there at the Baptist church. I wasn't at the church anymore.

I was gone, but everyone knew me still. The college group said, you know, we've been asked to conduct the Sunday night service. How would it be if we had your band come and play at the Sunday night service and, Steve, you could preach? I said, well, that'd be a lot of fun.

I'd like to do that. So we accepted and the appointment was made. And so our band, which was really not a very impressive band, to tell you the truth, but we were sincere.

And I think anointed. We got up some material that we're going to do. And I kept thinking, wow, this is my big chance since I've been Baptist to go back and preach these Baptists and bring them in and so forth.

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. I'm not going to be thinking that way. I would I even refuse to prepare a message.

I was going to preach, but I refuse to prepare anything. Now, I was not a real experienced, you know, preacher off the top of my head or anything. But I I was in fact, that's why I didn't want to prepare.

I was so inexperienced in the things that I thought it's unspiritual to prepare. I thought, well, Jesus said, you know, when you stand before the Sanhedrin, I didn't realize that when you're on trial, not when you're preaching. But so when you stand before the Sanhedrin.

Don't premeditate what you're going to say, but the Holy Spirit who is in you will give you words in that moment. I thought, hey, I'm new to all this Holy Spirit stuff, but but hey, I preached a bunch of times and got no fruit. So I'll just trust God.

I'm not. And because he said, don't premeditate what you're going to say. I discipline my mind to resist thinking in advance of anything I was going to say that night.

I was so tempted because I wanted to do so well, but I refused to prepare anything in advance. Now, I don't do that now. Our band played.

The place was packed. I mean, it was not a huge church, but they're probably regularly a couple hundred people there. But I think that's maybe 250, 300 people.

The place was packed because a lot of my friends, I'd moved away and they'd heard I was coming back to my band. We're going to play and so forth. And a lot of my friends from high school that I had witnessed to and never got saved came.

And our band played a few songs. We played a lot of songs. We played the whole service.

And then the time came, I was supposed to preach and. I hadn't prepared anything, so I got up to the pulpit after the band put away their insurance. I got a pulpit I opened at random to a place about that I'll preach from wherever the Holy Spirit leads.

And and my eyes fell on a certain verse. I read the verse. I began to speak about it.

I began to speak more. I began to speak more and more. And I noticed people's eyes started filling with water, sniffing and stuff.

And and I said now and I was starting to get that way myself. I have to confess. I had never seen that happen at that church before, you know.

And I said, now we're going to play one more song. I would just like if you want to accept Jesus. Come on.

We'd like to come forward. I mean, that's what we always did at the end of the service there. I went there and we started playing.

And I remember the number because it was the first time anything like this happened in my ministry. Forty something. Forty two.

Forty seven. I forget the number in the 40s. Somewhere people came forward.

Many of them were weeping to give their lives for it. And some of them were people I had witnessed to in high school for years who had never budged. Remember this guy, Bob.

I don't remember his name, but Bob, somebody who was in my speech class who used to needle me a lot, who I used to witness, he never got saved. He got saved that night. And so did some other people.

I knew that it had been pretty hard. And I was really impressed, you know, because not with myself, because I hadn't done anything. I hadn't even prepared anything.

I was impressed with the fact that the work of God is done more powerfully when God does it. Instead of when the flesh does it. And I had studied speech in school and won

trophies in speech competitions.

But God never gave me those speeches. They were good speeches. Billy Graham is anointed by the Holy Spirit.

If he gave the speeches, people would have come forward. I gave the same speeches. No one came forward.

I got a trophy, but no one came forward. And now I realized that the Christian life, there's only one person who can live it. And that's the Holy Spirit.

You might have thought I meant Jesus, but you know, even Jesus, when he was on earth, couldn't live it without the Holy Spirit. The Bible says it. Jesus said that.

Jesus said that he did the things he did through the Spirit. It says in Acts 1 that Jesus taught his disciples through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said he cast out demons by the Holy Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit that lived the Christian life in Jesus is the only person in the universe who can live the Christian life. And the only way that we can live a normal Christian life is if the Holy Spirit is living the Christian life in us. Now, every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

But it cannot be said that in every Christian's case the Holy Spirit is living the Christian life through them. I know I was a Christian before I ever went to those meetings and had these experiences. But there was a difference in my relationship with the Holy Spirit.

For one thing, I expected him to do something after that. I expected God to be involved in my life. I had some faith toward that end from that point on.

It made a big difference. And while I cannot say that my teaching and preaching since that time has always had seamlessly the same degree of anointing, and I do not believe it has, yet I saw it many, many times. And it wasn't just back then.

You know, I see it from time to time now, too. I see God moving in ways that he never moved in my ministry, in my life, when I was just doing it in the flesh. And what is normative in the life of the believer is for the Holy Spirit to live the life of Jesus in the believer.

Holiness of life is impossible for a person, but it's not impossible for the Spirit who is the Holy Spirit. And sanctification is therefore a work of the Spirit in the life. The creation of Christ-like character is a work of the Holy Spirit.

That is the normative work of the Holy Spirit. I never did get a whole bunch of dazzling gifts. I never did, I mean, I prayed for some sick people, some got well, some stayed sick, and sometimes I got sick.

But never had a dynamic ministry in healing or anything like that. But I have a dynamic relationship with God that is so exciting to me that I don't know how I ever attempted to be a Christian before without it. Now, I know I did, but I didn't, I don't know how.

And I'm glad I'm not trying to do it that way anymore. Now, next time, because we've run out of time tonight, next time, before we start talking about the gifts of the Spirit and what the Bible says about them and what it does not say about them, I want to talk about what the Bible does say about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because if we're going to talk about the normative work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, it is normative, biblically, for every Christian to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

It doesn't mean it's automatically the case, but it is the norm. In the New Testament times, in the book of Acts, it was normative. When a person was saved, the next thing that would happen was they were ministered to in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It didn't happen with me when I got saved, but it happened to me later. The Bible is quite explicit about this. And I'm not sure why there's so many different opinions about it.

But we'll search the Scriptures next time and see about that.