

New Testament 32
Live In the Spirit
(Acts 18:23-20:38; Galatians)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(This material provides inspirational background and unity to these scriptures).

I. The Holy Ghost was meant to be a major instrument in spreading the Gospel.

A. Apollos “**being fervent in the spirit**” [and now understanding the witnesses of Christ in the scriptures] “mightily convinced the Jews...that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:23-28).

B. Paul continued to **use his priesthood to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost** on newly baptized Saints (Acts 19:1-7).

C. Just as the Spirit guided the early Saints, so in our day we have received excellent counsel on how to make the Holy Ghost more effective in *our* lives.

1. “What may appear initially to be a daunting task will be much easier to manage over time as you consistently strive to recognize and follow feelings prompted by the Spirit. Your confidence in the direction you receive from the Holy Ghost will also become stronger. I witness that as you gain experience and success in being guided by the Spirit, your confidence in the impressions you feel can become more certain than your dependence on what you see or hear.

“**Spirituality yields two fruits. The first is inspiration to know what to do. The second is power, or the capacity to do it. These two capacities come together.** That’s why Nephi could say, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.”² He knew the spiritual laws upon which inspiration and power are based. Yes, God answers prayer and gives us spiritual direction when we live obediently and exercise the required faith in Him.” (Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *The Ensign*, October 2009.) (emphasis added).

2. Elder Scott has stressed repeatedly that to build our communication with the Spirit, we should consistently write down those things which we receive through it. By faithfully doing so, the gifts of the Spirit will grow more powerful in our lives.

II. We are warned “unkindness, pride or envy” will cause us to lose the delicate influence [of the Spirit] in our lives. [Elder Wilford W. Anderson, April Conference 2015].

A. He explained, “In our lives, we have to align with the correct frequency in order to hear the music of the Spirit,” just as once, to get our favorite radio station, we carefully turned the radio dial until it lined up perfectly with the station’s frequency.

B. In Paul’s time, envy and fear of losing wealth and power not only caused the absence of the Spirit but even persecution of Paul.

A. Demetrius, a silversmith, due to envy and covetousness, stirred up others against Paul (Acts 19:23-41).

B. Paul told how he had suffered because of envy from others, but in contrast, had “coveted no man’s silver or gold” (Acts 20:22-37).

C. Supportive evidence from Early Christian writings show envy was a great cause of the suffering *all* the apostles endured, and eventually helped cause the apostasy.

1. Clement, an early bishop called by the apostles, wrote of what Peter and Paul suffered due to envy.

“**Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted and contended unto death....** Peter, who because of unrighteous jealousy suffered not one or two but many trials, and having thus given his

testimony went to the glorious place which was his due. Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance;" (Kirsop Lake, tr., "First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthian," *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 17) (Emphasis added).

III. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul stressed the difference between living under the old Mosaic Law, and **living a life patterned after Christ with help of the Spirit.**

- A. He **showed the true purpose of the old Mosaic Law.**
1. First, he reminded us Abraham received the promises of the covenants *before* the Mosaic Law was given (Galatians 3:1-23), so the covenants are not tied to it.
 2. Then he taught the Mosaic Law was not an end in itself, but was given to serve just as a schoolmaster.
 3. This does not mean, as many assume, it was given just to teach obedience.
 4. Rather, it was *meant to lead men to Christ and His greater covenant* (Galatians 3:24-25).
 5. This **means that most of the elements of the Mosaic Law in some ways taught of Jesus Christ.**
 - a. Animal and all other sacrifices taught of Jesus' Great and Last Sacrifice.
 - b. Israel's spring Holy Days pointed to Jesus' Crucifixion, His Resurrection and His harvest of souls at the Feast of First fruits. [See my New Testament Lessons 26, 27 and 28 for details].
 6. **Paul indicated it was no longer necessary to observe these "days, and months, and times, and years"** (Gal. 4:9-11). For they were fulfilled by Jesus. This is why Christians no longer observe them.
 7. Circumcision was a token of God's covenant offered to man. But baptism and new temple ordinances had now replaced the old token of circumcision.

IV. Paul indicated the births of Abraham's two sons, Esau, born to the servant Hagar, and Isaac, born to the free wife Sarah, were witnesses of Jehovah's two covenants: the first given through Moses and the last brought through Christ (Galatians 4:22-31).

- A. Esau represented the Mosaic Covenant, **which was a covenant of bondage. That is, it was a very heavy law to live and actually would not free from sin.**
- B. Isaac represented the Covenant under Christ, which freed men from the **bondage of Sin and the Mosaic Law.**
- C. So he stressed repeatedly that now "ye are free" [from the bondage of sin and the Mosaic Law]. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the voice of bondage" (Gal 5:1).
- D. This statement does apply **to being freed from the bondage of sin, [that is, if we accept Christ's atoning sacrifice, repent and are faithful to His covenants].**
- E. Unfortunately today, far too many believe that when Paul spoke of being "free" and leaving behind "The Law," he meant *any laws of God, rather than the Mosaic Law which was done away through Christ's fulfillment.*

V. When we look closely and honestly at Paul's writings, we see he stresses consistently **men are still expected to be obedient to God's New laws of the New Covenant.**

- A. Scriptures show Paul never meant that men are free to live any way they desire, but

are expected to live a righteous life, through the Spirit, in the pattern of Christ.

1. He states that **no one will inherit the kingdom of God** who does not avoid all evil works of the flesh: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings” (Gal 5:19-21).
2. Furthermore, he taught blessings will come to those who seek the fruits of living by the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal 5:22-23).
3. He taught that which man soweth he will reap (Galatians 6:7-9).
4. Above all, he taught God is not mocked [by hypocrisy] (Gal 6:7). That means he *does not accept* those who claim to be religious, but who actually are unrepentant sinners.

VI. Paul again **warns of a future apostasy, of “grievous wolves” who will come into the Church itself, “not sparing the flock”** (Acts 20:28). They would pervert Christ’s true Gospel.

- A. Jude warns that one way this apostasy will occur is when men will turn “the grace of our God into lasciviousness” (Jude 1:4). This is precisely what has happened. Some believe the Grace of the Lord means they can commit all kinds of sin, yet still be saved in their sins, without repentance and final obedience.
- B. Paul called on those who had been made overseers through the Holy Ghost “**to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood**” (v. 28).

VII. President Thomas S. Monson’s life shows how **response to the Spirit blesses others.**

1. When he visited the Saints in East Germany, still behind the Iron Curtain. He was deeply saddened at how few spiritual blessings they had access to. Moved by the Spirit, he promised that if they were faithful they would one day have all the blessings of the gospel, even temple blessings.

The brethren fully supported him. He was called unexpectedly to the temple one day, where President Spencer W. Kimball and counselors met him. President Kimball said, “‘Brother Monson, you have a great love for the people of the German Democratic Republic. I have heard you lament the fact that they have not had their endowments or their sealings. I have heard you state that they are worthy to go to the temple and that with all of your heart you want them to have a temple. The Lord will not deny temple blessings to those worthy members.’ And then with a smile, he said, ‘**you find the way.**’”

Through prayer, continued work by himself and others, the faith of the Saints, and miracles wrought by the hand of the Lord, all the blessings, including a temple, did miraculously come to people living in East Germany before the Iron Curtain fell.

(For more details see Heidi S. Swinton, *To The Rescue*, pp. 290-325).

B. President Monson consistently urges all members to follow this example: **to seek guidance of the Holy Ghost, sense the needs of our associates, feed the flock, and go “To the Rescue.”**