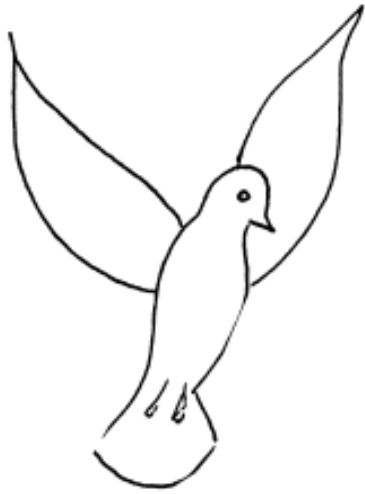


**WALKING  
BY THE  
SPIRIT**



Elie et Denise  
YAPOUDJIAN



# **WALKING BY THE SPIRIT**

DENISE & ELIE YAPOUDJIAN

Translated from the French book

**MARCHONS PAR L'ESPRIT**

By Mrs Judy Johnson, with the precious help of  
Mrs Anne Dupont and Mrs Ann Elmer.

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Scripture quotations are from the New International Version, unless  
otherwise specified.

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Dépot légal 2<sup>o</sup> semestre 1991.

# PREFACE

Gal 5. 25

Hearing God's voice every day, and living with Him as one lives with a friend, is this not the normal Christian life ?

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit !*

Is this not the condition of the spiritual revival to which we look forward ? We shall miss great blessings, if we don't learn to walk by the Spirit. Such is the reason for writing this book.

## ***CONTENTS OF THE BOOK***

Let us use a comparison : *as the bee gathers nectar from flower to flower*, we are going to explore the "garden" of God's Word together.



### **FIRST PART - *Discovering* :**

What it means to walk by the Spirit and what the conditions are for entering into this dimension.

### **SECOND PART - *Conquering* :**

It is not sufficient to say *Lord, Lord !* Actions are necessary.

### **APPENDICES - *Topics of Christian life* :**

New birth - Baptism in the Holy Spirit - Faith that moves mountains.

## ***FOR WHOM IS THIS TEACHING INTENDED ?***

Eph 4. 15            It is intended for every born again Christian. It would be best for new Christians to receive this teaching first of all orally, and preferably in small groups where it is easier to minister in the love of the Lord, so that the truth can do its work in our lives.

2Ti 2. 2             More mature Christians will be able to use this book as a tool, to help and teach others, with their personal experience at root.



## ***BIBLICAL REFERENCES***

Ac 17. 11           We have included many quotations from the Bible, for it is up to each person to check if what is said is accurate.

The translation usually used here is that of the *New International Version*.  
The quotations are given in italics and written as follows :

*Isa 34. 2-6 means : Isaiah chapter 34, verses 2 to 6 included.*

## ***ADVICE TO THE READER***

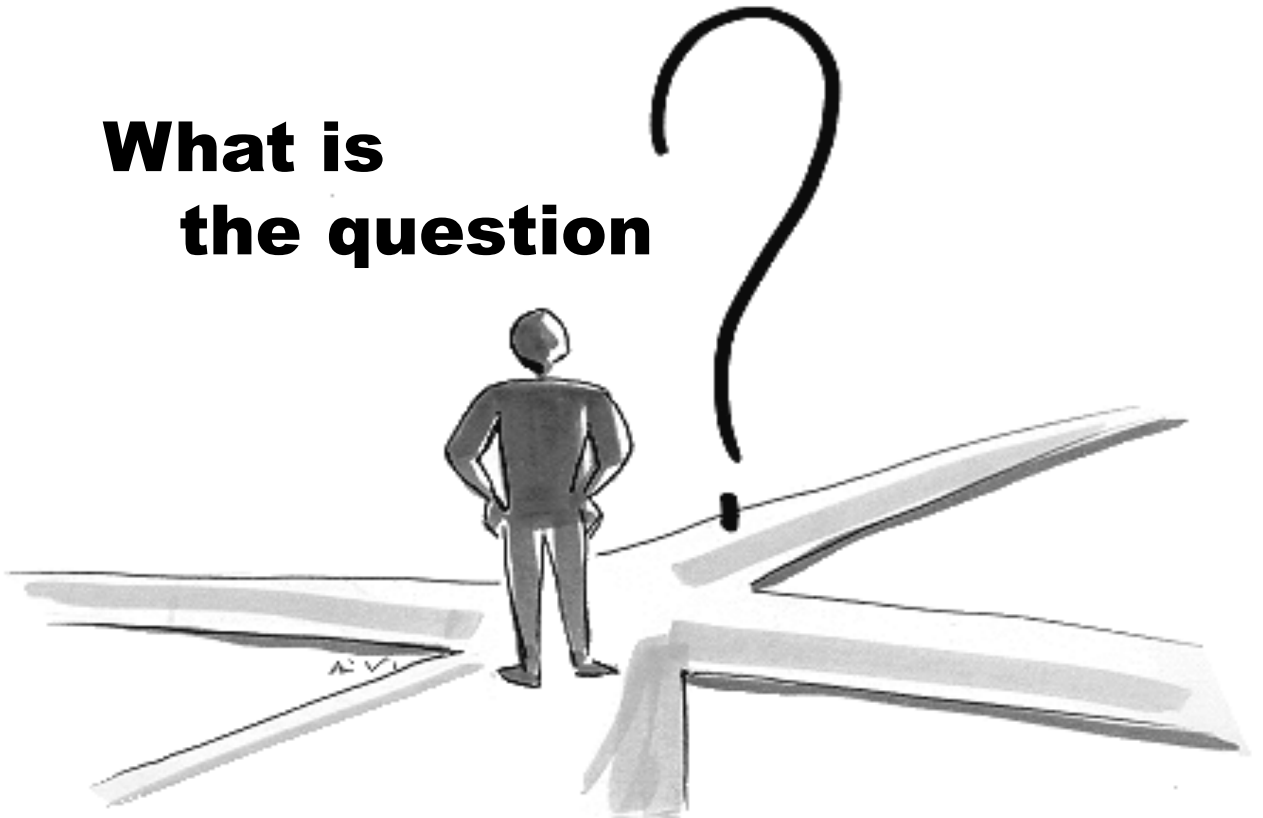
It would be best to begin by reading the text without taking into account the verses indicated in the margin. One can then go back over the subject in more depth, by studying and meditating the verses in their context.

Col 3. 16            *May the Word of Christ dwell in us richly,*  
And makes us more than conquering Christians !

Elie & Denise YAPOUDJIAN  
1990, Mantes la Jolie (France)

# Chapter 1

## What is the question



It is about obeying the Word of God. For the Christian, walking by the Spirit is not an optional extra :

*Since we live by the Spirit,  
Let us keep in step with the Spirit.  
Gal 5. 25*

In order to fully understand what this means, we must be clear about the nature of man. He is created in the image of God and he is spirit, soul and body. We shall then be able to grasp more easily what the different ways of "walking" (that is to say of behaving), are and to compare the results.

For this chapter, we shall adopt the following plan :

1. The nature of man
2. The three ways of walking
3. The results ?

# I - The nature of man

## 1 - GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE

Jn 4. 24

**A - GOD IS SPIRIT** - Man is a spiritual being.

**B - GOD IS TRINITY** - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2Co 13. 14

Three distinct persons but one God.

1Th 5. 23

Man is a being with three dimensions : spirit, soul and body.

Three distinct parts, but one person.

– If he were only a body, he would be a plant.

– If he were only a body and a soul, he would be an animal.

Ge 2. 7

In fact, up to a certain point, an animal thinks, shows feelings and a will, but it has no spirit. The spirit of man was formed out of the breath of God himself.

Ge 1. 1

**C - GOD IS CREATOR**

Jn 14. 12-13

Man is called to become a creator with God, through faith and prayer.

## 2 - THE THREE PARTS OF MAN

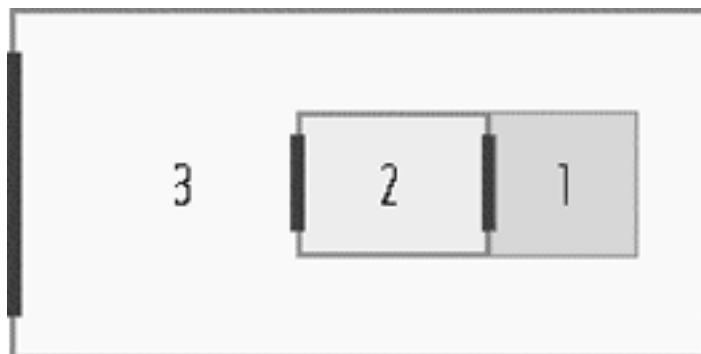
1Co 3. 16

The architecture of the temple gives us an excellent picture of man.

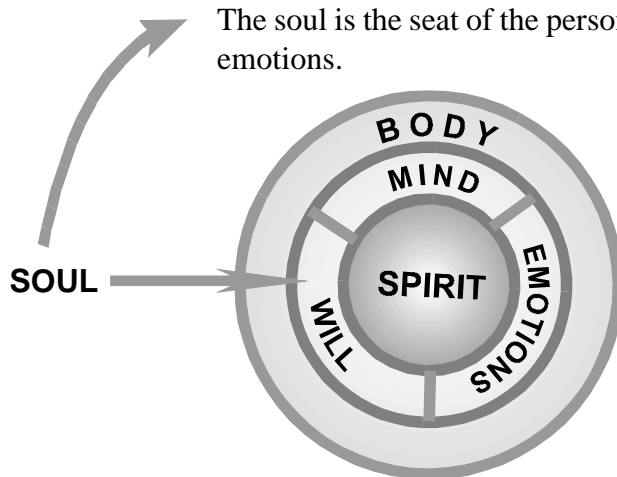
Jn 2. 19-21

Jesus himself used it. We can compare the temple of the Old Testament to the temple of God, which we are :

1. The spirit, to the *Holy of Holies*.
2. The soul, to the *holy place*.
3. The body, to the *outer courtyard*.



Architecture of the temple



The soul is the seat of the personality. It is composed of the mind, the will and the emotions.

In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, it is clear :

- Pneuma means spirit,
- Psuché means soul,
- Soma means body.

From this we get the medical term : psychosomatic illness.

*The same idea can be expressed in different ways* according to the part of the being concerned :

Part concerned	SPIRIT	SOUL	BODY
In Greek LOVE is	Agape	Philia	Eros
In English, KNOWLEDGE is	Revelation	Learning	Sensation
In English, CONVICTION is	Faith	Belief	Evidence

Heb 4. 12

*The word of God enables us to make a distinction* between the soul and the spirit. To walk by the Spirit and to grow spiritually, it is essential to make this distinction. Mary, for example, clearly did so.

Lk 1. 46-47

2Co 5. 1-2

To sum up, man is a spirit who possesses a soul and lives in a body. The spirit is the essential part of man. It is the heart of his being. It is here that God puts his life (the presence of the Holy Spirit). It is from here that he acts. His work is always from the centre (from the heart) outwards.

SPIRIT	SOUL	BODY
Allows <b>COMMUNION</b> with God.	Allows <b>COMMUNICATION</b> with others.	Allows <b>CONTACT</b> with physical world.
Ro 8. 15-16	Ge 44. 30-31	1 Jn 1. 1



### 3 - TWO QUESTIONS

#### ***A - WHAT IS MEANT BY THE "FLESH" IN THE BIBLE ?***

Ro 8. 7-8

Usually, and notably as far as this teaching is concerned, the "flesh" is the body and the soul which are not submitted to the Holy Spirit, but dominated by natural needs and desires.

#### ***B - WHAT IS MEANT BY THE "HEART" IN THE BIBLE ?***

***In general it is the spirit***, especially in the New Testament.

1Pe 3. 4

Peter identifies the *inner self* as  
*the unfading beauty of a meek and gentle spirit.*

2Co 1. 22

*God has put in our hearts the deposit of his Spirit.*

Ro 10. 9

*If you believe in your heart ... (Faith is spiritual in nature).*

Dt 6. 5

*You will love the Lord your God :*

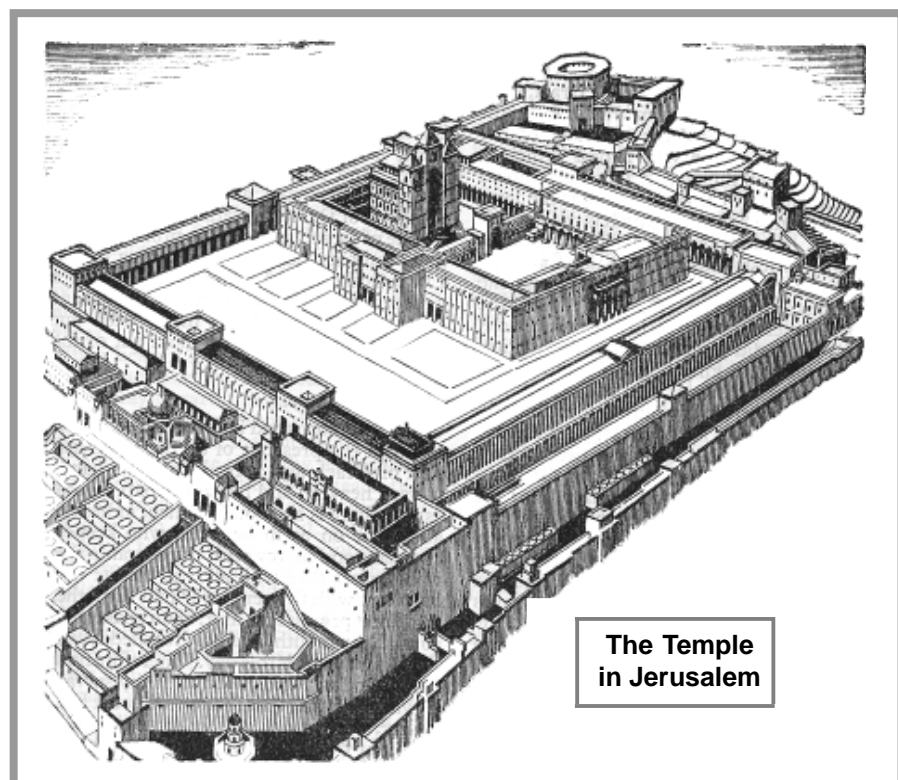
- *With all your heart (spirit)*
- *With all your soul*
- *With all your might. (body)*

***Sometimes it means the soul***, as in the following case :

Php 4. 7

*The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

We must discern the meaning according to the context, with the help of the Holy Spirit.



**The Temple  
in Jerusalem**

## II - Three ways of walking

We can walk according to the flesh,  
We can walk in satanic bondage,  
We can walk by the Spirit.

### 1 - WALKING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

This is to behave "like everybody else" :

- By human reasoning,
- By personal effort,
- Motivated by self-centredness.

Gal 6. 7-8

This leads to dead works, to sin and to corruption.

#### *A - BIBLICAL EXAMPLES*

Ge 11. 3-9

- The tower of Babel,

Ge 16. 2

- The birth of Ishmael,

Nu 20. 7-12

- The disobedience of Moses when he struck the rock, the second time (tradition).

1Ch 13. 7-10

- The fate of Uzzah : introducing a human reasoning into a work of God (oxen in place of the levites who, alone, were allowed to carry the Ark) can lead to death.

Mt 17. 24-27

- The impulsiveness of Peter who replies in place of Jesus, and without consulting him, on the subject of the payment of taxes.



#### *B - MODERN DAY EXAMPLES*

We can walk according to the flesh by doing something good for the Lord. According to the Bible, "good" can be an obstacle to "best", contrary to the French popular saying : "best is the enemy of good". It's better to let well alone !

- For example, giving money to a good cause, without asking the Lord, can be carnal. It is often the trap of purely humanistic actions.

- Evangelizing in the street or elsewhere, can sometimes be carnal. Of course, the Lord does tell us to evangelize, but let us take the time to receive his instructions before setting out. Is it right to ask the Holy Spirit to bless a work which we have undertaken without consulting him ?

- To work for God, as if it only depended on our own efforts, is carnal.

When he began the "Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International", Demos Shakarian spent much time and energy running about in all directions, instead of depending upon the Lord. The result ? Total stagnation for one year.

Ps 127. 1-2

*Unless the Lord builds the house,  
Its builders labour in vain ....*

God can bless a carnal work up to a point, but it requires a lot of effort for little result, and ultimately, it ends up in a judgment.

1Co 3. 13

*Fire will test the quality of each man's work.*

Water did flow from the rock when Moses struck it instead of speaking to it, but despite his begging the Lord, he did not enter the promised land.

Dt 3. 23-28

*That is enough, said the Lord,  
Do not speak to me anymore about this matter !*

## 2 - SATANIC BONDAGE

Dt 18. 9-14

**All occult practices** : spiritism, magic, witchcraft, astrology, horoscopes, occult healing,<sup>1</sup> transcendental meditation, yoga etc ... **are an abomination to God !**

1Ch 10. 13-14

They lead to bondage, curse and death.



All these practices call upon satanic forces. They create bondage which generally disappears at conversion. But the enemy, who lies in wait, comes back when given an opportunity. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a guarantee against this kind of attack. We shall come back to this subject in chapter 4.

We note this kind of bondage in people who have taken drugs, belonged to a sect, been abused as children, or have had voluntary abortions ...

<sup>1</sup> The following practices are occult healing : radiesthesia, dowsing, hypnotising and many other parallel medicine practices. We must say that these practices could help people at first. But, this is similar to a blood transfusion which helps, at first, even when the giver is aids sick !

### 3 - WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

#### A - DEFINITION

Walking by the Spirit is thinking, praying, speaking (or keeping silent), deciding, acting, while depending upon the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

That is to say :

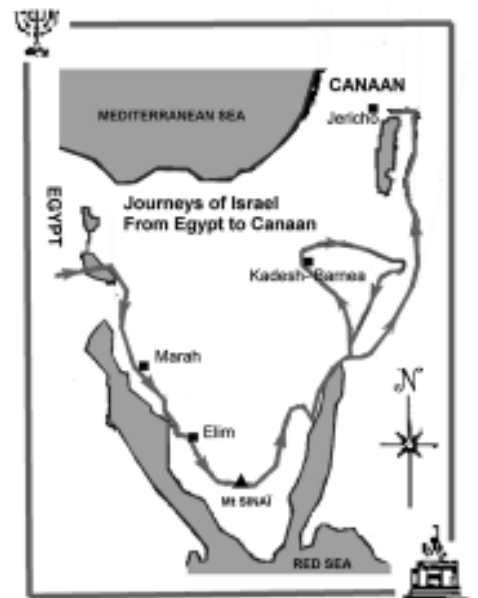
Col 1. 9-10                      According to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit,  
 Col 1. 11, 29                    With the power of the Holy Spirit,  
     With the motivations of the Holy Spirit :

2Co 5. 14                        *The love of Christ compels us !*  
 1Co 16. 14                        *Do everything in love.*

#### B - BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Ex 13. 21-22                      The journey of the Israelites in the desert is a picture of walking by the Spirit :

Nu 9. 17-23                        The Israelites' itinerary was not dependent upon human wisdom, but upon direction given by God, through *the pillar of cloud*.



#### C - JESUS, THE PERFECT MODEL

Jn 4. 34                              *My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.*

Lk 2. 49                                *Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house ?*

#### 1 - Jesus did and said nothing by himself

Jn 5. 19, 30                        *The Son can do nothing by himself.*  
 Jn 8. 26-28                        *Whatever I say is just what ... the Father has told me to say.*

Jn 15. 15                              Let us meditate on all these verses ...

<sup>1</sup> It is here a matter of inter-dependence, because the Holy Spirit doesn't do anything without our cooperation. Let's illustrate it by a very simple comparison : The fuel (the strength of the Holy Spirit) won't ever make the motor start, as long as the battery (our will) isn't switched on.

Jn 5. 36  
Heb 9. 14

**2 - Jesus accomplished his works  
through the power of the Holy Spirit**

**3 - Jesus was motivated by love**

Ps 40. 8-9

*I desire to do your will, o my God. Your law is written within my heart.*

Jn 14. 31

*The world must learn that I love the Father, and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.*

Jn 15. 13

*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*



**IN SHORT :**

*The nature of our walk depends upon  
**THE SOURCE** from which we draw :*

**LIGHT**

**ENERGY**

**MOTIVATION.**

<b>THREE SORTS OF WALK</b>	<b>THREE SOURCES</b>
Walking in the flesh	Myself
Occultism	The demons
Walking by the Spirit	The Holy Spirit.

## III - What results ?

### 1 - THE GLORY OF GOD

#### **WALKING BY THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES GOD**

Jn 17. 4 *I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do, said Jesus to his Father.*

#### **WALKING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH GLORIFIES MAN**

Jud 7. 2 *The Lord said to Gideon : "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people : anyone who trembles with fear may turn back ..."*

#### **OCCULTISM GLORIFIES SATAN**

Isa 14. 12-14 *You said in your heart : "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God ... I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.*

### 2 - A NEW DIMENSION

- a - Dimension of rest
- b - Dimension of freedom
- c - Dimension of power !

What a contrast between the works of the Spirit and the works of the flesh which drain our energy for poor results !

#### **A - REST**

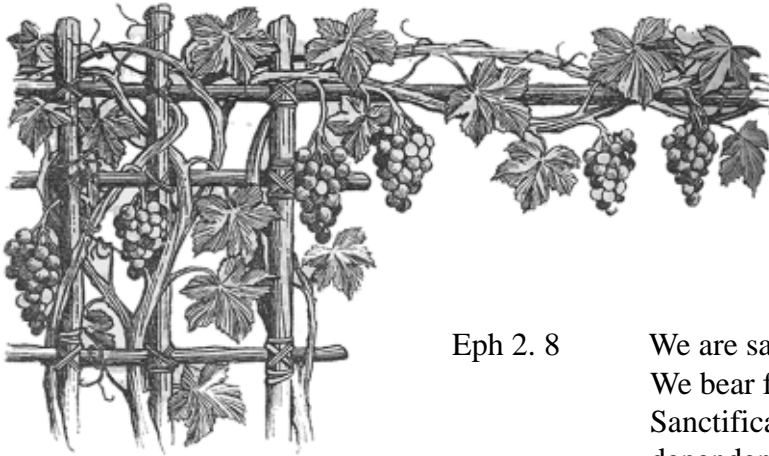
Heb 4. 3 *Now we who have believed enter that rest.*

Mt 11. 28-30 *Jesus said first : **Come to me**, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Jn 15. 4 *Then : **Remain in me**, that is to say *receive my instructions* and depend upon the Father as I do.*

1Jn 2. 6 *In other words **walk by the Spirit** ! In fact, *whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.**

*So, says Jesus, you will find rest for your souls. You will not be seesaw Christians, with ups and downs, but you will enjoy my rest all the time, because *my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**



Jn 15. 5 The branch does not make any effort to bear fruit. It simply remains joined to the vine and the sap flows into it.

Eph 2. 8 We are saved *by grace*.  
We bear fruit by grace !  
Sanctification and the power of ministry are dependent upon our communion with God.

### ***B - FREEDOM***

2Co 3. 17 *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*  
Gal 5. 18 *If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

#### ***Freedom with God***

Eph 2. 18 *For through Jesus, we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*  
Eph 3. 11-12 *Through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*  
1Jn 4. 18 *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.*  
Lk 15. 29-31 The elder brother of the prodigal son did not know how to receive the love of his father, the perfect love which casts out fear, which delivers from legalism, bitterness and guilt.

#### ***Freedom with others***

If we walk by the Spirit, we are not afraid of being real :

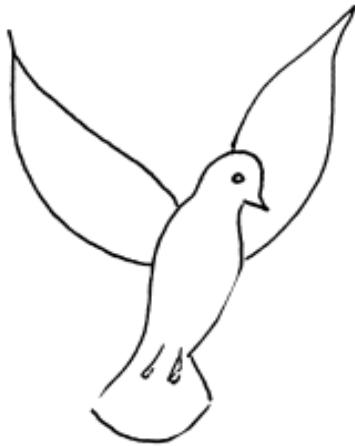
Gal 5. 22 - We are *in control of ourselves*, in control of our tongue.  
1Co 3. 1-5 - We are sheltered from *jealousy and quarrelling*.  
Gal 1. 10 - We are delivered from the need *to please men*.

1Co 4. 3-4 Paul did not worry about the judgment of the Corinthians.

Mt 26. 6-13 Mary, when she poured out her perfume, was totally preoccupied with Jesus. He himself took her defence against Judas and the disciples. (Is it not true that the reactions of our brothers in Christ affect us more than those of non-believers ?)

In the course of writing these pages, we have sometimes found ourselves wondering : what will such and such a person think of this ? How will such and such a church react ? But the Lord reassured us : "it is not your problem."

1Co 10. 31 How true ! The only problem is to listen carefully to what he asks and to do it for his glory. ***How simple !***



Moreover, if we walk by the Spirit, we are not bound by men. We depend upon the Holy Spirit to find our place and our ministry in the Body of Christ. That does not mean that we should not become part of a Christian organisation, but it is the Holy Spirit who will decide.

In the same way, we cannot impose on others what the Lord is asking us to do or what he is saying to us personally. We must be content to express it gently.

Php 3. 15-16

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring revelation to each person.

Jude 3

When it is a question of fundamental doctrine of *the faith that was, once for all, entrusted to the saints*, our responsibility is to warn, when the Holy Spirit asks us to do so, and to intercede. False doctrines will vanish in the light of God's Word, as dead leaves fall with the rising of the sap in spring.

2Ti 3. 16

***Freedom in all circumstances***

1Ti 6. 17

*God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*

1Ti 4. 4

*For ... nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer.*

Php 4. 11-13

*For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

Ac 16. 23-25

Paul and Silas were free, even in prison !

**C - POWER**

Gal 3. 3-5

The power of prayer and of ministry is dependent upon our obedience to the Holy Spirit and to the Word of God. In fact,

Mk 16. 20

**God always works with both hands :  
His Word and his Spirit.**

**This is true  
throughout  
the Bible**



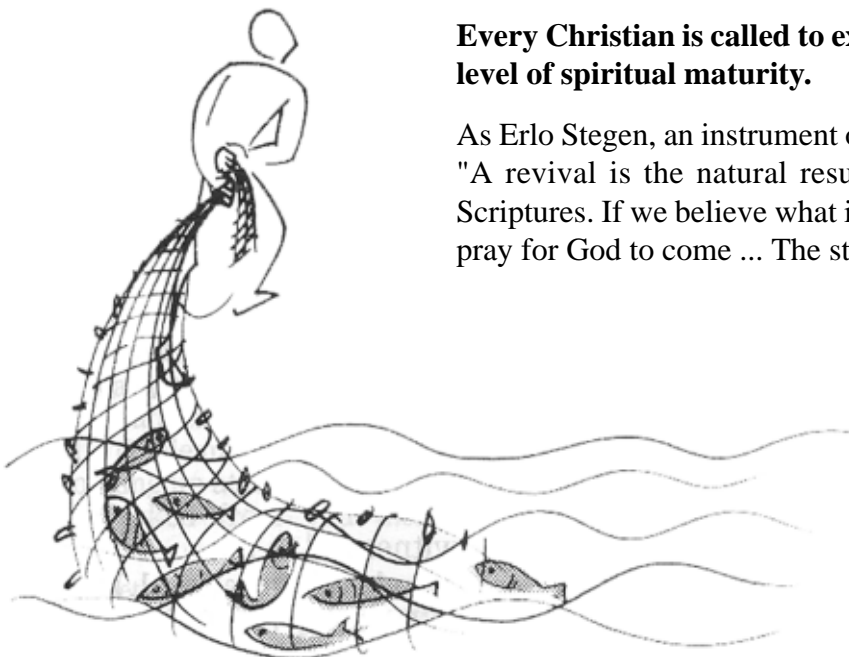


***Yes, it is true throughout the Bible.***

- Ge 1. 1-3                    *In the beginning ... the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters ... Then God said ...*
- Lk 1. 35, 38                *Before Jesus was conceived, the angel Gabriel said to Mary : The Holy Spirit will come upon you ... And Mary replied : Be it to me as you have said.*
- Mt 8. 8-10                  *The centurion begged Jesus : Just say one word and my servant will be healed!*
- Just one word ! Just **the** Word which corresponds to this situation, and the power of the Holy Spirit will take action. What faith ! Jesus did not conceal his admiration : *I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith !*

***It is the same in our lives***

- Nu 23. 19                    *When we walk by the Spirit, when we talk, or act, or pray according to the Word of God, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, the power of God is manifested.*
- 2Co 13. 8                    *For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*
- Lk 5. 4-11                    *Compare the futile efforts of the disciples for a whole night and the miraculous catch of fish which followed immediately, as they obeyed the Word of Jesus.*
- We are all called to take part in the miraculous catch of fish of the end times. This does not mean that we are going to say to the first paralytic we come across : "In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk !", if the Holy Spirit has not clearly told us to do so.
- But we must learn to be sensitive to his voice and to obey him, in order to be an instrument of his power, when he wants us to be.
- Let us not say : "that is for other people, not for me !"



**Every Christian is called to exercise a ministry according to his level of spiritual maturity.**

As Erlo Stegen, an instrument of revival among the Zoulous, says : "A revival is the natural result of a life lived according to the Scriptures. If we believe what it says in the Bible, we don't need to pray for God to come ... The streams of living water will flow !"

***END OF CHAPTER***

## ***GO TO BED !***

I really needed it. I had to find this piece of paper at all cost. I was going to be asked for it the next day !

I had been looking for it, for hours. I had searched everywhere. Nothing ! It had disappeared. Vanished into the air ! I was racking my brains to think of places I had not already rummaged in. I had turned everything upside down ! Suddenly, my wife said to me :

*Really ! Why don't you ask the Lord to help you ?*

Well, that's right. I hadn't even thought of doing that ! Sorry Lord ! You know that I need this piece of paper. Help me to find it.

To my great surprise, I received an answer and I received it immediately ! I heard inwardly :

*Go to bed !*

I was amazed. I was also a little ashamed of not having asked the Lord earlier. After all, I deserved to be sent to bed like a naughty boy. So I went to bed. Besides, it was very late ...

As usual, I wanted to read my bible. I stretched out my hand towards the bedside table. There was a book on it. I was trying to push it aside to get hold of my bible, when a paper, ***MY PAPER*** fell out of it !

What a lesson ! It was the first time that I heard the Lord speak to me. Since that moment, I try to listen to him in the smallest details of my life.



# IT IS POSSIBLE !

Heb 8. 6

*Christ is mediator of a better covenant !*

### *TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT ?*

- 1 - Impossible *in this fallen world.*
- 2 - Reserved for some privileged people, *in the Old Covenant.*
- 3 - Available to every Christian *in the New Covenant.*

### **I - IN THIS FALLEN WORLD : IMPOSSIBLE !**

Ge 8. 9



The dove of Noah's ark (symbol of the Holy Spirit) could find no place to alight in the old creation covered by the waters of the flood. (Literally : could find no resting place to set its feet.)

1Co 2. 14

Natural unredeemed man, who is not born again, *cannot accept the things which come from the Spirit of God.* To walk by the Spirit, we must first live by the Spirit.

Gal 5. 25

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

We cannot make spiritual that which is carnal, hence the failure of all the religions which try to improve man in order to reach God. Indeed :

Jn 3. 6

*Flesh gives birth to flesh, but  
the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*

Isa 64. 1

*Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down !*

## II - UNDER THE OLD COVENANT : THE PRIVILEGE OF A CHOSEN FEW

1Ki 22. 7

The "anointing" was reserved for kings, priests and prophets, and it was necessary to turn to the prophets to consult God.

Ex 25. 22

From time to time, Moses heard God speaking to him, in the Holy of Holies.

Dt 5. 5

Moses stood between God and the people, *to declare the Word of the Lord God to them.*

Heb 7. 22

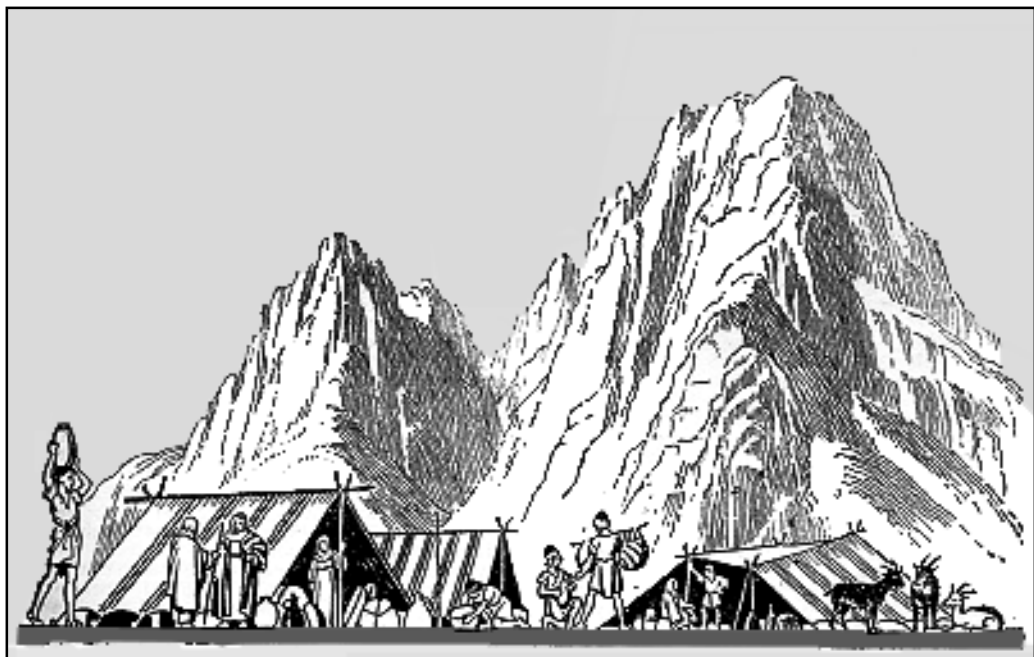
Heb 8. 6

Heb 11. 40

*Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*



## MOUNT SINAI



### III - IN THE NEW COVENANT : AVAILABLE TO EVERY ONE !

We are all called to walk by the Spirit.  
It is the normal Christian life.

Gal 5. 25

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

After his resurrection, Jesus made it possible for his disciples to walk by the Spirit :

Jn 20. 22

1 - *He breathed on them and said : receive the Holy Spirit.*  
Then, they were born again.

Ac 2. 1-4

2 - He baptised them in the Holy Spirit.

Lk 24. 45

3 - In between these two events, *he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.*

Let us go over these three stages, which concern each one of us, personally.

#### ***1 - NEW BIRTH***

In the appendices of this book, we give a detailed teaching on this subject which many people know, but which often needs to be stated precisely.<sup>1</sup>

2Co 5. 17

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.*

Eze 36. 26-27

Our born again spirit is completely purified and the Holy Spirit dwells in it. As a result, our spirit becomes :

Pr 20. 27

*The lamp of the Lord.*

It corresponds to *the Most Holy Place* of the Old Covenant, where God gave his directions to Israël.

Ro 8. 14

**Every born again Christian is capable  
of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit directly.**

But we must grow out of spiritual infancy and not remain at the stage of the Old Covenant. We must take possession of our inheritance in the New Covenant in which, besides Jesus, there is no mediator between God and man.

Gal 4. 1

*As long as the heir is a child, he is no different  
from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.*

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 : *The new birth.*

## 2 - BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT <sup>1</sup>

- Gal 5. 22                   - At the new birth, we receive the *life of God* which manifests itself by the *fruit* of the Spirit : love.
- 1Co 12. 7-11               - At the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are clothed with the *power of God* which manifests itself by the *spiritual gifts*.
- 1Co 14. 1                   Fruits and gifts are indispensable to walk by the Spirit, like the two wings of the dove to fly harmoniously.

## 3 - OPENING OF THE MIND TO THE SCRIPTURES

- 1Co 1. 7                    However, new birth and baptism in the Holy Spirit are not sufficient in themselves, to walk by the Spirit. In fact, the Corinthians were born again and baptised in the Holy Spirit since *they did not lack any spiritual gift*. However, the apostle Paul said to them :
- 1Co 3. 1-5                    *You are mere infants in Christ ... You are still wordly ...  
Are you not acting like mere men ?*
- In order to walk by the Spirit, we must grow spiritually. For this to happen, truth in a loving atmosphere is essential :
- Eph 4. 15                    *Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up ...*
- Jn 8. 32                      In other words, walking by the Spirit requires :  
1Jn 4. 18                      *Truth* : the renewing of the mind,  
  And *love* : inner healing.
- Lk 24. 45                    Between the resurrection and the ascension, Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to understand the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit wants to undertake this work in us today.
- Jn 14. 26                    *The Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things.*
- This will not happen overnight. It is a walk requiring steadfast study and meditation on the Word of God and ... self denial.

We are going to develop this subject  
in the following chapters.

**END OF CHAPTER**

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2 : *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

# THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

## WHY



Ro 12. 2

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

In order to understand what follows, let us first sum up the answer to this big question, which we are going to develop with reference to the Bible : the renewing of the mind, why ? Well :

**Our thoughts condition our behaviour,  
with a view to satisfying our needs.**

## THOUGHTS CONDITION BEHAVIOUR

### *1 - BIBLICAL REFERENCES*

Pr 23. 7 (K.J.V.)

*For as he thinks in his soul, so is he.*

Isa 65. 2

*Israel walks ... in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations.*

Eph 4. 17-19

*The gentiles walk in the futility of their thinking.*

In short, we always end up, sooner or later, bringing our behaviour into line with our ideas.

Ps 119. 59

*I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.*

### *2 - SOME EVERYDAY EXAMPLES*

If we think it is going to be cold, we put on warm clothes. If we have a humanistic conception of the love of God, (God is good, therefore hell does not exist and everyone will be saved, anyway), we are not motivated to share the Gospel.

Ac 10. 38

If we are not sure that it is always the will of God to heal, we might well become resigned or rebellious. If we believe the opposite, we will seek to touch Jesus in order to be healed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 3 : *The faith that moves mountains.*



### 3 - RENEWING THE MIND IS NECESSARY

Many Christians are held back or even blocked in their walk with the Lord because their minds are not renewed. We have seen that the restoration of the soul only begins at the new birth. The mind is still impregnated with the influence of the world, with education and with the more or less false teaching received. We often need to unlearn some religious, non-biblical notions.

Ro 12. 2

This is why Paul says that the mind must be *renewed*.

Jas 1. 21

This does not consist in replacing a thought by its opposite, but by the thoughts of God as expressed in his Word. If not, we would fall into error, as for example:

A new convert, previously ambitious, who now refuses all professional promotion because he has misunderstood genuine humility.

## NEEDS DETERMINE BEHAVIOUR

Man's true needs mobilise his energy and resources, both mental and physical. In other words,

*We are motivated TO DO what,  
in our opinion, will fulfill our needs.*

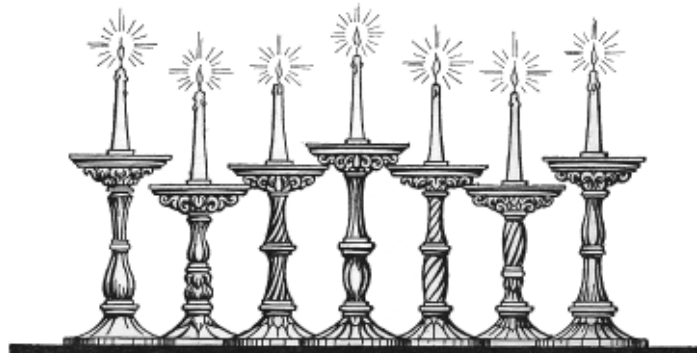
It is clear, therefore, that man's needs determine his behaviour, that is to say his way of "walking".

This is why, in order to set off on the right foot in our "walk" by the Spirit, we shall first try to establish the authentic needs of the human being. We shall then analyse the walk of the carnal man, who seeks to satisfy them while his mind is not renewed by the Word of God. This will enable us, in the following chapter, to more easily consider the biblical solutions to the questions which arise.

*To begin with, let us follow this plan :*

- I - Real needs*
- II - Carnal attempts*
- III - Consequences*
- IV - Motivation.*

***HE WHO HAS EARS,  
LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT  
IS SAYING TO THE CHURCHES !***



# I - Real needs

## 1 - WHAT ARE THE REAL NEEDS ?

Man has spiritual, psychic and physical needs. We shall not dwell here on physical needs.

Jn 6. 27

*Do not work for food that spoils,  
but for food that endures to eternal life.*

Ge 3. 7, 10

Man's essential need is indeed *eternal life* lost at the time of the original sin. From that time onwards, insignificance and insecurity characterise Adam, who *sees that he is naked, becomes afraid and ... hides*. He is ashamed of his new identity as a sinner. He has lost significance and security. From now on, nothing can satisfy his real needs.

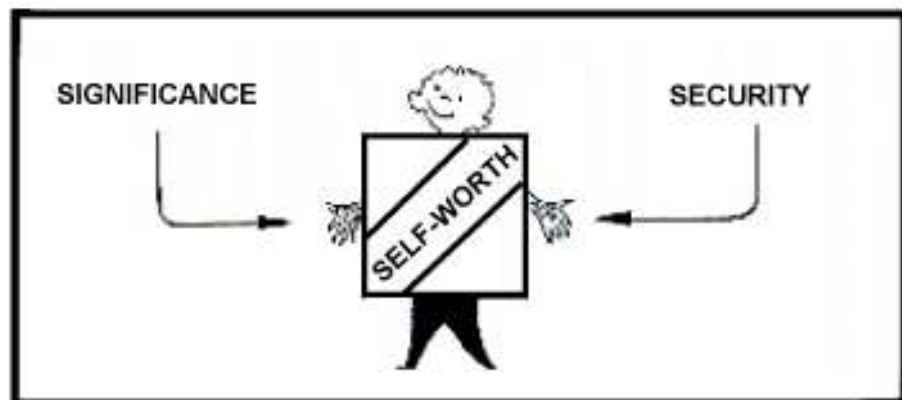
Ecc 1. 14

*All things are meaningless ... a chasing after the wind !*

***Man needs to rediscover his true identity in Christ.*** This affects the two components of his self-worth :

***Significance*** : priority element for a man.

***Security*** : priority element for a woman.



***A - NEED FOR SIGNIFICANCE***, that is to say :

***My life has a meaning, a purpose***

How could this young girl not be disillusioned after having heard it said :  
"Anyway, you will end up in prison, like your mother" ?

***I am good for something***

A child who brings us a drawing, feels valued or devalued according to our reaction.

**B - NEED FOR SECURITY**, that is to say :

**- I am accepted just as I am**

We knew a little handicapped boy who was so rejected that, one day, we had to carry him upstairs, instead of his parents. They could not bear the "shame" of recognising him as their son in front of the neighbours.

A child can be rejected even from his mother's womb. We sometimes hear this comment : "What a pity it is a boy !" or "If only it were a girl !"

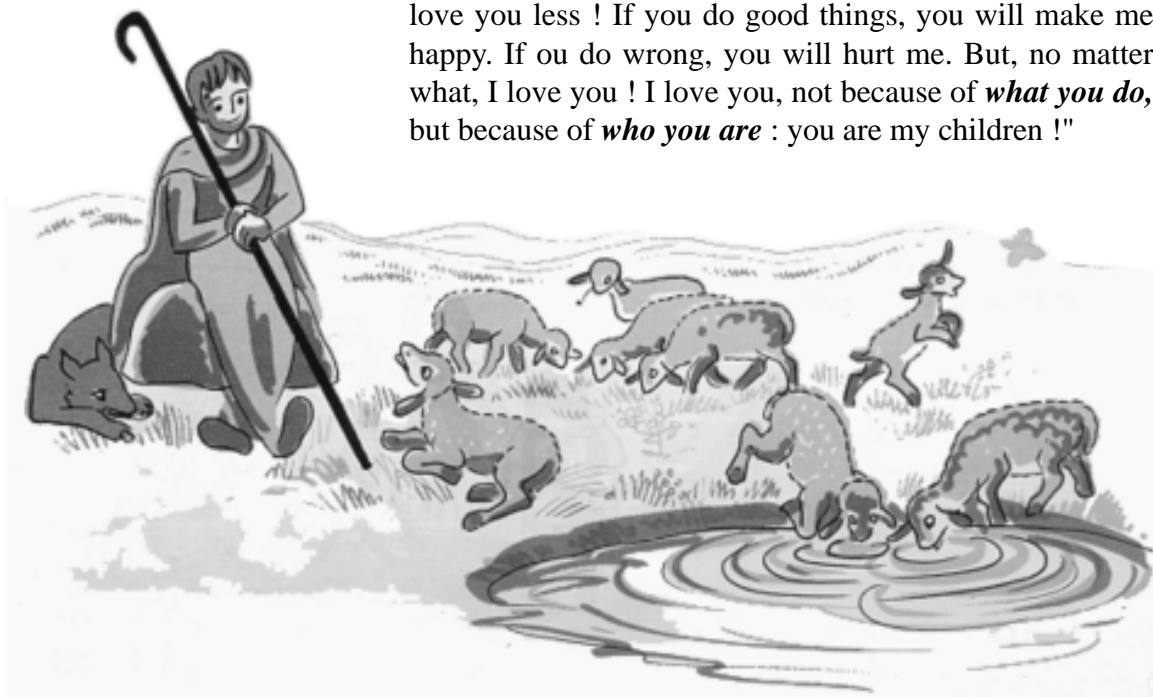
We met a woman who was quite disturbed emotionally, because her mother had never forgiven her for being a girl. She was born six years after her elder brother died, and she was supposed to be a substitute to him ... We also met a young man who became homosexual as a result of having adopted female attitudes to please his mother. She did not want a boy ...

**- I am loved unconditionally**

**FREELY** : when the love of parents is conditioned by good conduct or good marks at school, the child lives under the threat of losing that love. He becomes insecure.

A father suggested a competition to his children : "Invent anything you like to make me love you more." Each of them began to use his imagination to find something that would please him. Then the game was turned around the other way : "Now invent things to make me to hate you !" Finally, the father announced the results :

"Here we are then, I cannot love you more and I cannot love you less ! If you do good things, you will make me happy. If you do wrong, you will hurt me. But, no matter what, I love you ! I love you, not because of **what you do**, but because of **who you are** : you are my children !"



DEFINITELY : "We're lucky when we have such lovely parents !" exclaimed a seven year old boy lost in admiration at the exchange of smile between his parents. (It is solid. It will last.) One can imagine the anguish of children "placed" in a family, then in another ... We have known some who cried out at night : "Mummy, don't leave me !"



PERSONALLY : "My mummy, *she chose me !*" proclaimed, at school, the little Korean boy who had recently been adopted by a French couple.

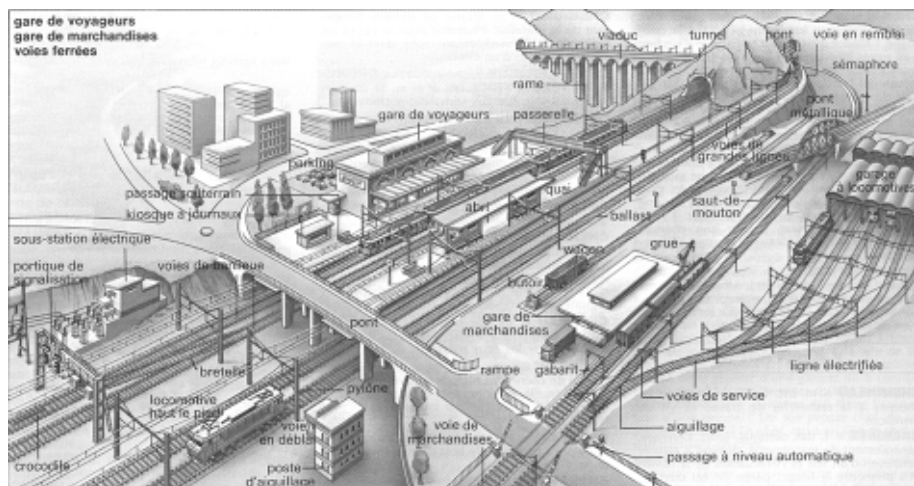
"Mummy hasn't said good night to *her* daughter" hummed Christel in her bed until she came ... to kiss her !

I remember a teenager boy who kept, like a treasure, the pull-over knitted for him by *his* social worker.

*- The person who loves me is competent*

I can rely on her ! I can see myself in a train, aged six or seven, sitting opposite my mother who was wearing a brown herringbone coat. I was looking out of the window at the rails and points, saying to myself : "How on earth can she manage never to get on the wrong platform or train ? It is great ! She knows where we are going (significance) and we are sure to get there !" (security.)

**MUMMY IS  
GREAT !  
SHE KNOWS !**



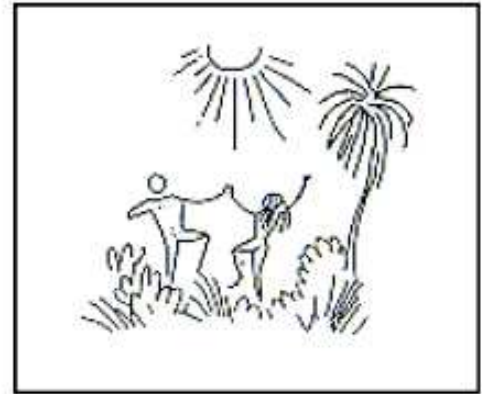
This is only a picture ... Even the best parents cannot fully satisfy the needs of their children. Their role is to point them towards the One who, alone, can fill them to overflowing.

## 2 - TRUE NEEDS CAN ONLY BE MET IN GOD

### A - IN THE BEGINNING

Ge 2. 25

Man found significance and security in God. He had a child-like attitude, spontaneous and confident.



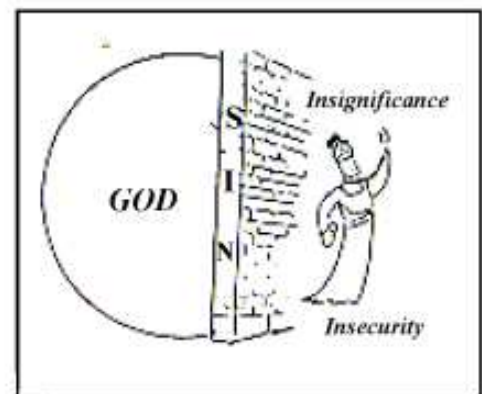
### B - AT THE FALL

Ge 3. 9-10

Man broke his relationship with God :

*I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. So I hid.*

Significance and security, which were attributes of his personality, become deficiencies.



### C - ON SALVATION

Ro 5. 10

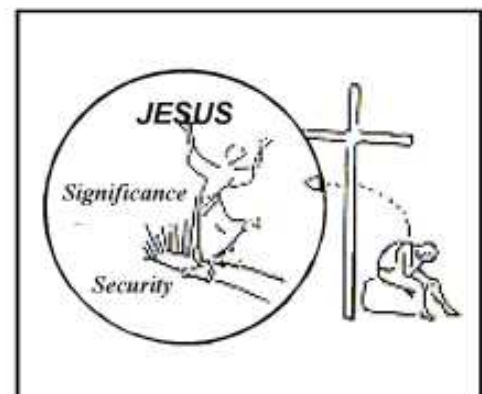
The cross replaces the wall of separation.

Col 2. 9-10

A Christian finds significance and security in Jesus Christ.

Lk 18. 17

This is the only means of becoming like a little child, again.



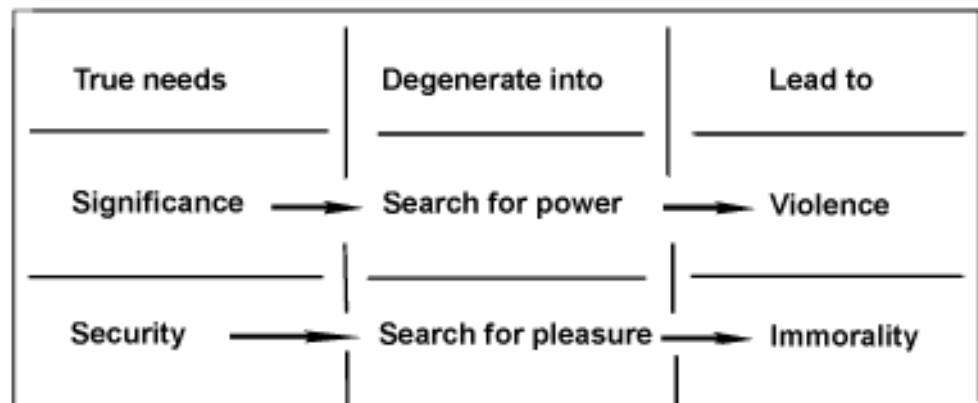
### 3 - WITHOUT GOD, TRUE NEEDS DEGENERATE

Gal 5. 19-21            They become the desire for power and the search for pleasure. (Freud).

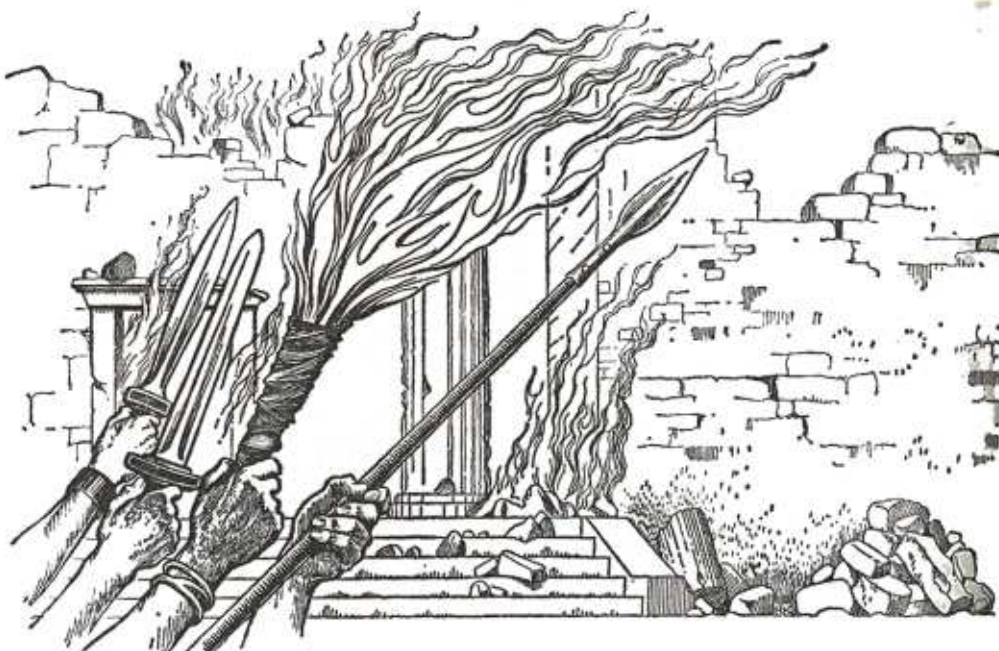
Ge 6. 11-12            And this leads to violence and immorality :

Jdg 9. 1-6              Abimelech, for example, massacres his seventy half-brothers to seize power !

Today, more than ever, the craving for power is a satanic bait to draw and hold people in the occult.



#### *TRUE NEEDS WHICH DEGENERATE*



## II - Carnal attempts

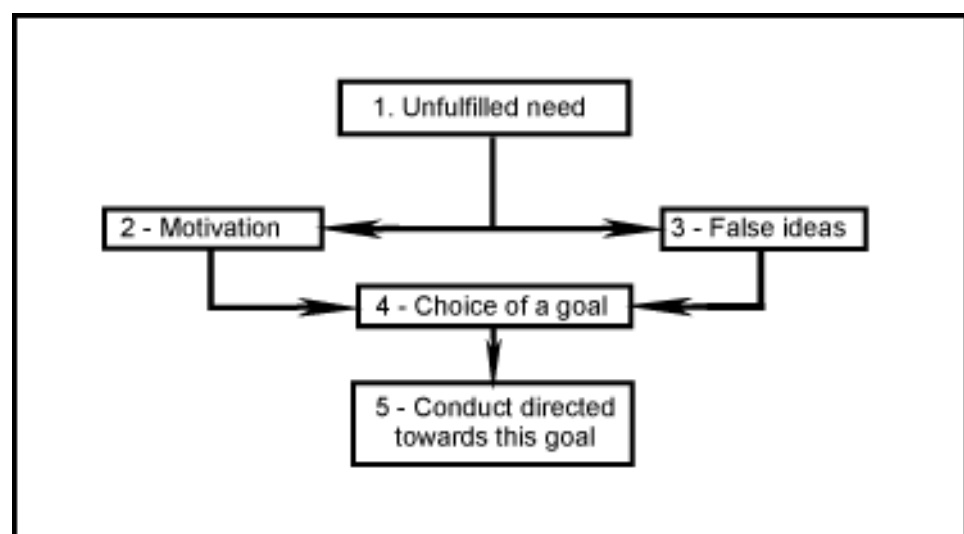
Jer 10. 23

To fulfil his unsatisfied needs, the unbeliever and the carnal Christian use the same strategy which produces negative results, because of the carnal and false ideas on which it is based.

### 1 - EXAMPLE

- ♥ I need security (*unfulfilled need*).
- ♥ I seek to meet this need. In other words, I am *motivated* to seek security. (Motivation is the trigger to action.)
- ♥ I reason as I have seen my parents reason, or according to the world's reasoning : "money brings security." As long as it has not been renewed, my mind tends to function from *false ideas*,<sup>1</sup> as it did before my conversion.
- ♥ I set a *goal* for myself according to my motives and my ideas : earn as much money as possible. In fact, my real need is not to earn money, but to find security. The goal might well become an idol, since I expect it to provide what only God can give.
- ♥ I focus my *behaviour* on this goal. I try to earn money by all means.

**LET US DRAW A DIAGRAM  
TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT WE HAVE JUST SAID :**



<sup>1</sup> Ideas implanted in us as a result of our experience of life, which may sometimes have been traumatising, notably during our childhood.

## 2 - DILEMMA OF THE CHRISTIAN

Mt 6. 24  
1Ti 6. 10

I am told, and I know, that *one cannot serve God and Mammon*.  
I am also told that *the love of money is the root of all evil*. I make an effort to obey the Word of God and to renounce my objective. I pray, I repent ... but I do not obtain lasting results. I go as far as giving up my job to give myself "full-time" to the Lord. My desire for money is still there !

My dilemma is the following :

- \* If I earn money, I feel guilty.
- \* If I do not earn money, I lack security and I feel undervalued ...

My real problem is not the love of money, but *the false idea : money = security*. For as long as I do not reject this thought, I will be at a dead end. It implies changing my way of thinking, first and foremost :

1Pe 1. 13-14

*Prepare your minds for action ...  
Do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.*

When my thoughts are changed (When my mind is renewed by the Holy Spirit), my objective will change and my conduct will change.

## 3 - FALSE IDEAS AT THE ROOT OF REASONING

The most frequent false ideas are for example :

### ***A - I WILL BE SIGNIFICANT IF ...***

- \* If I have money.
- \* If I have irreproachable behaviour.
- \* If I never make mistakes.
- \* If I work extremely hard.
- \* If my children succeed.
- \* If I have the approval and esteem of others.
- \* If I do a good work for the Lord ...

### ***B - I WILL BE SECURE IF ...***

- \* If I have a husband who loves me.
- \* If I am never criticized.
- \* If everybody understands me.
- \* If nobody rejects me.
- \* If I do not risk having a child ...

Jer 20. 17

In this case, some women sometimes resort to an I.U.D. (coil), unaware that it is a form of abortion.



## III - Consequences

A strategy based on carnal and false ideas, like those we have just listed, always leads to negative results, whether the goal be attained or not.

Jn 6. 63

*The flesh counts for nothing.*

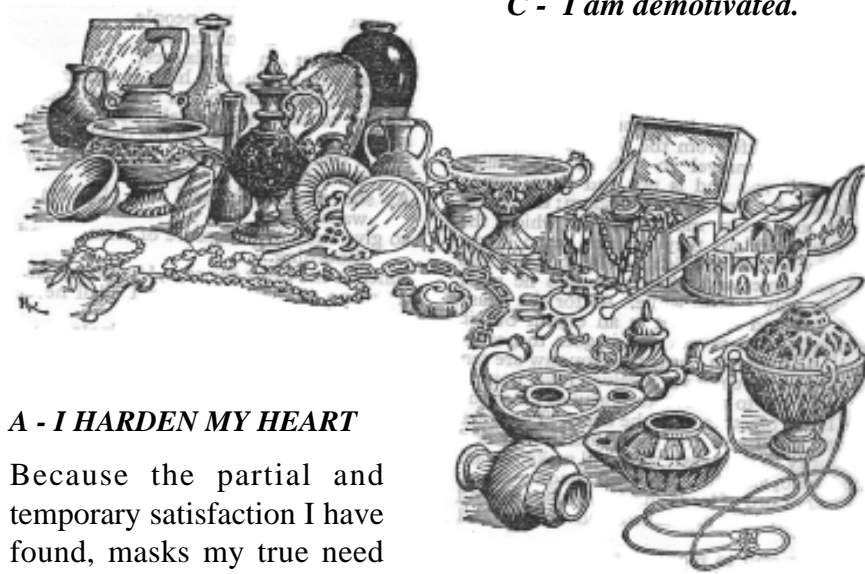
### 1 - IF I ATTAIN MY GOAL :

There are three possibilities :

**A - I harden my heart**

**B - I go round in circles**

**C - I am demotivated.**



#### **A - I HARDEN MY HEART**

Because the partial and temporary satisfaction I have found, masks my true need and makes me impervious to the Gospel.

Dt 8. 11-14

The Lord warned Israel : *Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery ... Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, when your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God ...*

Isa 26. 9-10

I need a trial.

Lk 15. 16-20

It was necessary for the prodigal son not to even have *pods*, so that he would decide to return to his father's house.



**B - I GO ROUND IN CIRCLES**

My goal was to be rich, for example, and I have attained it. However this does not bring me the satisfaction that I was looking for (the security that I was looking for). I experience a feeling of emptiness, so I set myself another goal and the process starts again ...

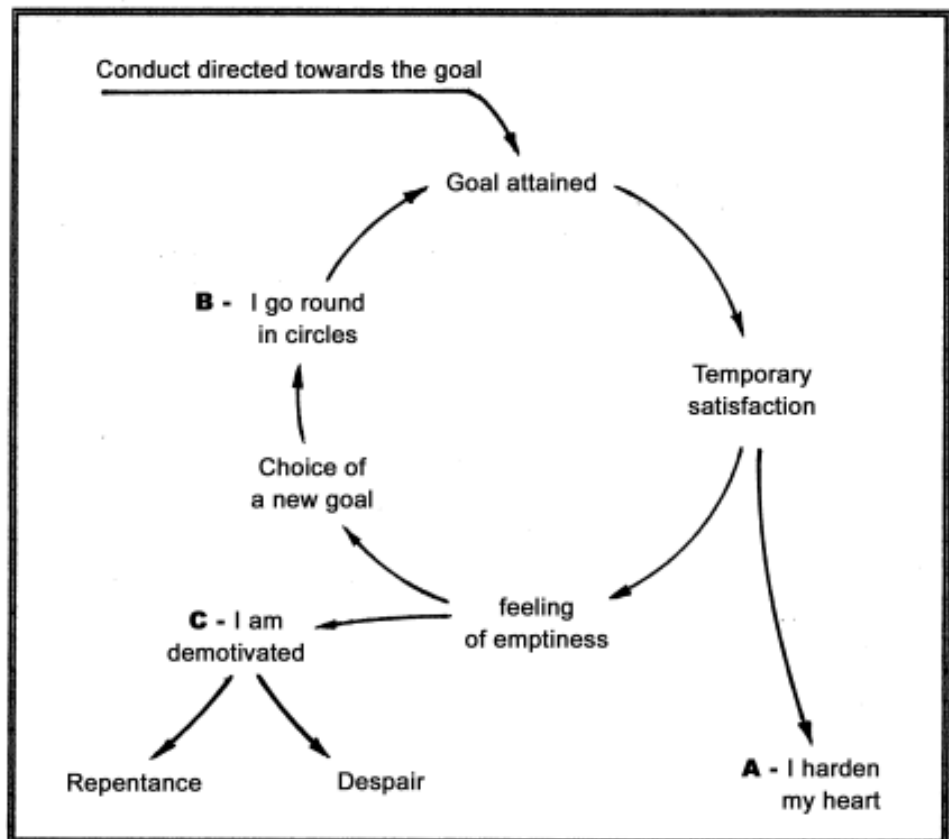
The goal could be : the scholastic success of my children, reputation, sexual pleasure, holidays, professional, sporting or political success, the construction of a splendid house, social, philanthropic or even Christian works, and who knows what else ...

Jer 2. 13

It is as though I were trying to draw water from *a broken cistern* to quench my thirst. It is as though I lengthened the cord a little more each time I changed goal, to throw the bucket further and further into the empty and bottomless well.

1Jn 5. 21

Even if the goal is good in itself, *it becomes an idol*, insofar as I depend on it, instead of depending on God, to find significance and security.



**RESULTS IF I ATTAIN THE GOAL<sup>1</sup> ...**

<sup>1</sup> This diagram follows on from the diagram on page 24.

### ***C - I AM DEMOTIVATED***

I finally realize that the goal, even when I attain it, will **never** bring me what I am seeking : the significance and security which are indispensable to my feeling of self-worth. I am no longer motivated to set a new goal.

Ecc 1. 3

*What does man gain from all his labour  
at which he toils under the sun ?*

The feelings of emptiness and failure become intolerable and lead me to despair or to repentance.

#### ***Despair***

Jas 1. 15

My life no longer has meaning or value. As I cannot tolerate the idea of being worthless, I try to escape from reality by taking refuge in :

- Psychosomatic illnesses,
- Alcohol or drugs,
- "Workaholism" : work becomes a drug.
- Anorexia or bulimia,
- Nervous breakdown,
- Suicide.

#### ***Repentance***

Repentance is not a superficial feeling of regret, but a radical change of **thought** (*metanoïa* in Greek).

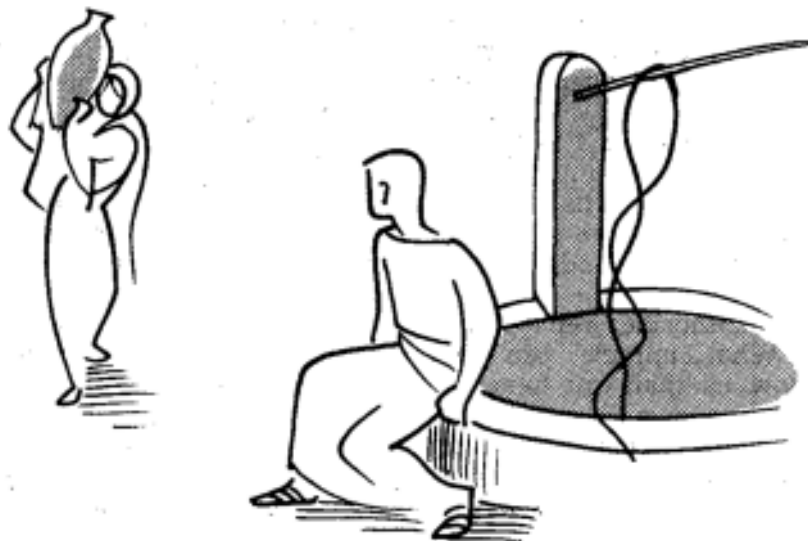
I cry out to God.

Jn 4. 13

I renounce my cracked cistern. I have nothing left to lose ...

Jn 4. 14

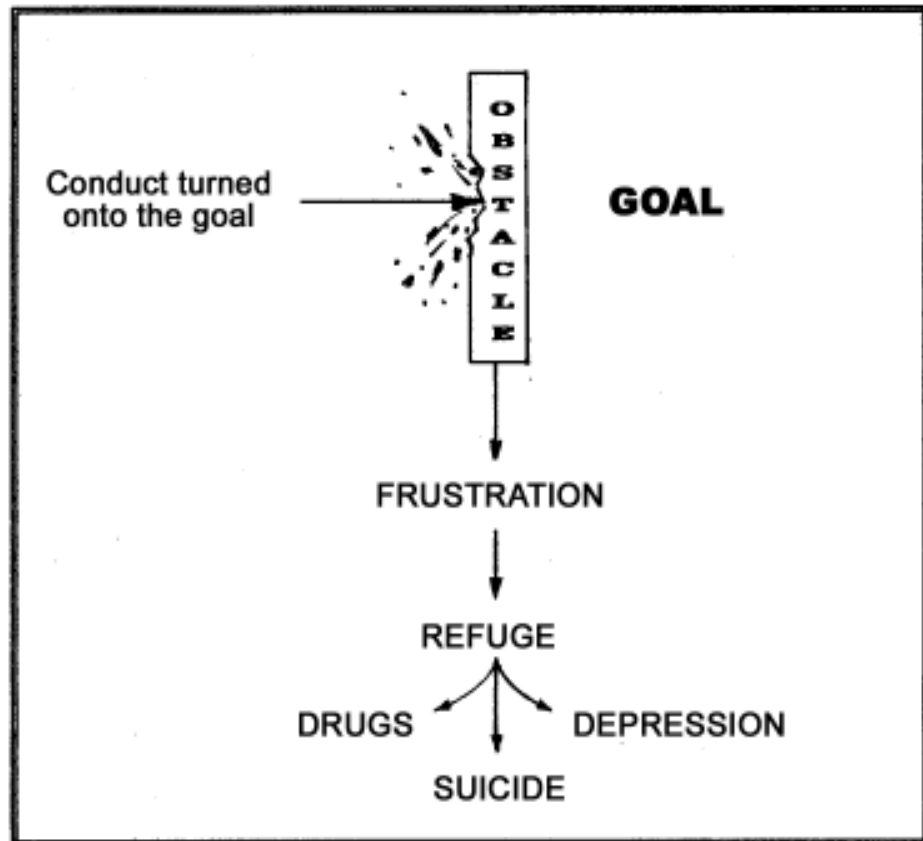
I come to Jesus, the source of living water, and I escape from the vicious circle, at last ...



**IF YOU KNEW THE GIFT OF GOD ...**

## 2 - IF I COME AGAINST AN OBSTACLE

As I cannot attain my goal, I have a feeling of frustration, whose form depends on the nature of the obstacle.



*AN OBSTACLE GETS IN THE WAY ...*

TYPE OF OBSTACLE	FORM OF FRUSTRATION
Goal impossible to attain	Guilt
External circumstances	Resentment
Fear of failure	Anxiety

*THE FRUSTRATION DEPENDS ON THE NATURE OF THE OBSTACLE*

It is by identifying the nature of the frustration ( guilt, resentment or anxiety), that we will be able to get to the root of the problem. Let us not forget that psychological analysis is not sufficient. We need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

*With the help of examples, we shall review the different kinds of obstacles and the frustrations arising from them :*

**A – GOAL IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTAIN ———→ GUILT**

Let us imagine a woman who was constantly criticized by her parents as a child. She was always being unfavourably compared to her sister. She then felt rejected and came to the conclusion that, in order to find security, she must avoid all criticism, in other words be perfect. Perfection thus became her "impossible to attain goal".

Once married, the slightest remark from her husband about a mistake or an oversight, represents a threat to her security, and when the remarks are justified, she can only blame herself and feel *guilty*. The kinder he is to her, the more guilty and devalued she feels. Perfectionism can thus lead her to depression. Why ? Because her goal is based upon *a false idea* :

*Perfection = security.*

**B – EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES ———→ RESENTMENT <sup>1</sup>**

This is the most frequent case. Something gets between us and the goal and we tend to lay the blame on someone onto whom we can transfer our aggressivity and *resentment*. We can even bear a grudge against God.

Ex 17. 3-4

The Israelites, hard pressed by thirst in the desert, were ready to stone Moses.

We met a woman from a social background where intellectual success was the criterion for self-worth, and where the fact of not having done brilliantly in one's studies seemed to be a dishonour in the eyes of one's family.

She had therefore set the scholastic achievement of her children as a goal. One of them, who was not very gifted at maths, became "the obstacle" which prevented her from attaining her goal. She tried to motivate him, without success, and finally came to resent him and reject him. This was the best way to worsen the school failure and increase her resentment. It is clear that the goal being pursued was, once again, linked to *a false idea* :

*Brilliant studies = significance.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Bitterness is also a form of resentment.

**C – FEAR OF FAILURE → ANXIETY**

Job 3. 25

*What I feared has come upon me.*

In this case, the obstacle is to be found within myself. The goal is within my reach, but I am afraid I will not attain it.



As a social worker, I have known children deprived of their parents, and moved several times from foster homes or institutions. They felt so abandoned at each separation, that they eventually refused to become attached to anyone. "Don't become attached to them ! You' ll only lose them !" Even if they did not actually say so, it was their dreadful reasoning.

Fear of failure, fear of yet another disappointment, produced in them such an anxiety that they became impervious to love, even if they were eventually found a true family.

Likewise, if someone was beaten as a child, by those from whom he expected affection, he will remain on the defensive. That person is hurt, and becomes unable to give and receive love for fear of failure.

A child can be hurt without being beaten, simply by a lack of tokens of love, displays of affection, on the part of parents who are either unavailable or absent. He may equate this with indifference or rejection.

When these frustrations (guilt, resentment, anxiety) become too intense and last too long, we eventually give up the fight. In this case also, we seek refuge in all sorts of confused and irrational behaviour :

- \* Psychosomatic illness,
- \* Mental illness,
- \* Anorexia,
- \* Bulimia,
- \* Drugs,
- \* Compulsive spending,
- \* Nervous breakdown,
- \* Suicide ...

These types of behaviour stand for a sort of anaesthetic meant to alleviate the intolerable suffering of feeling worthless.

## IV - Motivation

Why all these wrong moves ?

Well, to make it sharp, it is simply because false ideas distort motivation.

### 1 - MOTIVATION RESULTING FROM A WANT

As long as we have not found significance and security in Jesus, we are motivated by a sense of lack. We are egocentric. We are motivated to do that which, we think, will satisfy these fundamental needs. This is the case of the unbeliever as well as that of the carnal Christian.

Mt 6. 27

1Co 13. 3



*Who of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to his life ?*

The goal may be very noble, but even if we sacrifice ourselves heroically for a humanitarian cause, the motivation cannot be pure.

Love will always be mixed, more or less, with a desire to gain security or significance, as long as we have not found the answer to these real needs, in Jesus.

The little handicapped boy we mentioned earlier, was eventually adopted. His adoptive mother devoted an exemplary amount of time and energy on him and obtained remarkable results. However, she remained deeply dissatisfied. We met her again some years later in hospital, with terminal cancer. It was only on the eve of her death that she found the true meaning of her life, by accepting Jesus ...

Nobody, better than a blind man, can sense the motivations of the person who comes to give him a hand. He knows whether it is inspired by pure and simple love, or by a desire, be it conscious or unconscious, to boast ones own image, free oneself from guilt, or reassure oneself :

"What if that were to happen to me !"

## 2 - MOTIVATION RESULTING FROM FULLNESS

Jn 10. 28                    This fullness is the eternal life which Christ gives us. It is his resurrection life which manifests itself in us !

This is the only answer to the essential needs of man, which we spoke of earlier :

Jn 10. 10                    *I have come so that the sheep may*  
Jn 1. 16                        *have life and have it to the full.*

1Jn 4. 9                    Indeed, everything changes when we receive the revelation of the love of the Father *who sent his only Son into the world so that we could have life through Him.*

We then come to experience this fact : all our true needs are met in Him ! We are no longer self-centred, but Christ-centred ! We are free ! We can live by the Spirit.

Eph 3. 17-19                ***WE ARE MOTIVATED BY LOVE !***



In the following chapter, we shall see how to receive this revelation.

***END OF CHAPTER***





# THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

# HOW



Gal 2. 20

*I have been crucified with Christ  
and I no longer live,  
but Christ lives in me.*

Ge 3.5

The problems we have just mentioned are related to a false idea on how we can meet our own needs. From the beginning, sin is, basically, an attitude of independence from God. We seek to find significance and security without him, by pursuing our own goals which become idols.

1Sa 8. 5-7

Thus, Israel demanded a king :

1Sa 8. 19-20

In order to be like other nations, out of a need for significance,  
In order to conduct wars, out of a need for security.

***The solution is not to increase our efforts to :***

- change our feelings,
- change our behaviour,
- change our circumstances.

We cannot do anything about these, at least not very much. The solution is not even to change our way of thinking, since we are incapable of doing so.

Eph 4. 20

*The solution is to know Jesus, so that he may live his life in us.<sup>1</sup>*

***This will change everything :***

- Thoughts,
- Behaviour,
- Feelings,
- Motives !

---

<sup>1</sup> We are aware of touching on a subject which sometimes causes division, because of the false doctrines of the "New Age", movement concerning positive thinking. Like *David Wilkerson*, we believe that "those who preach positive thinking, according to biblical concepts, will be able to offer men truths which will sustain them. But those who have substituted mental attitudes for the reality of changed hearts, will prove to be false prophets." (*The Vision*, page 25.)

*To know Jesus* means, in concrete terms :

Eph 4. 20-24

**1. To put off the old self :**

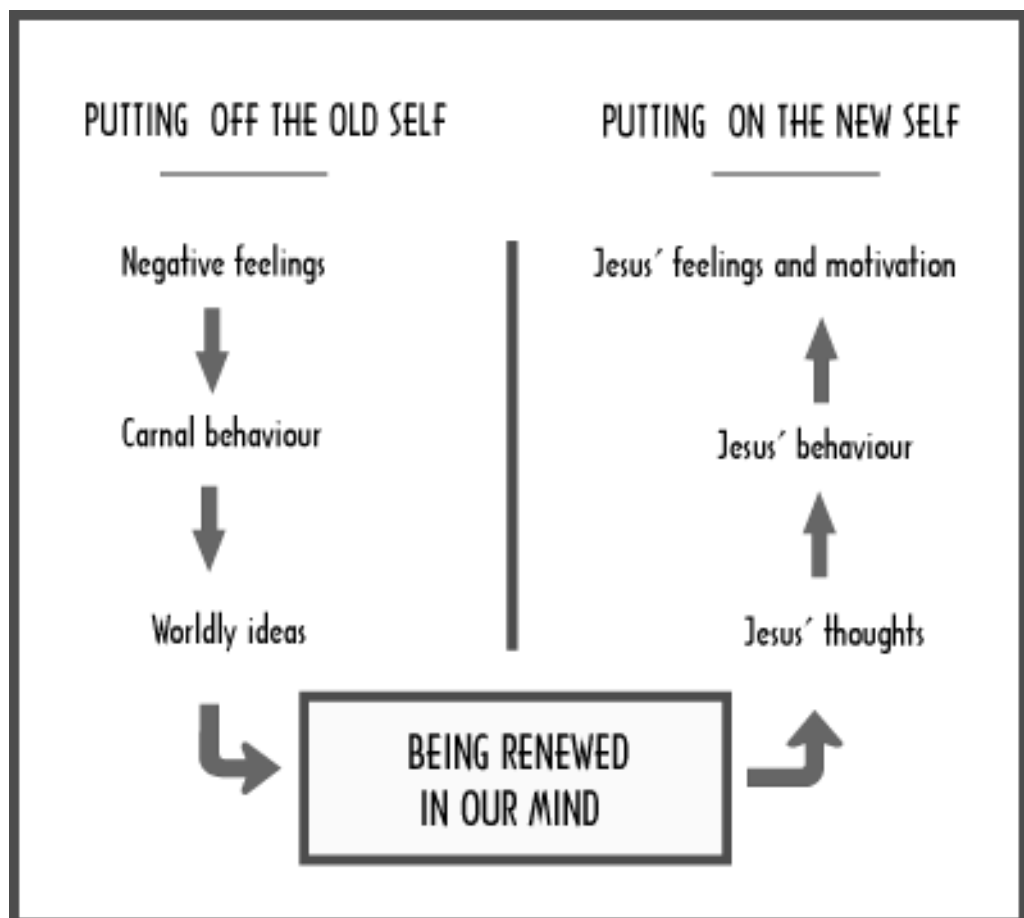
Negative feelings,  
Carnal behaviour,  
Wordly ideas.

**2. To be renewed in our minds by the Holy Spirit**

**3. To put on the new self :**

Jesus' thoughts,  
Jesus' behaviour,  
Jesus' feelings and motivation.

Let us now pass on to how the Holy Spirit achieves this work in us, and with us, by following the stages shown in the table below. Notice that feelings, which come first, are the last to change, at the end of the process.



**HOW TO ESCAPE ?**

# I - Putting off the old self

The renewing of the mind is at the core of a process which began by putting off the old self, that is the old nature. This old self was crucified with Jesus. *To put it off* is to acknowledge the fact *achieved for me* two thousands years ago, so that the Holy Spirit may make it *manifest in me* today. But how ?

## 1 - NEGATIVE FEELINGS

Let us begin by the most obvious. Destructive feelings resemble the symptoms of an illness :

- Feeling of emptiness, despair,
- Resentment, anger,
- Guilt,
- Fear, anxiety ...

Saul was gripped by fear :

- 1Sa 13. 12
  - 1Sa 15. 24
  - 1Sa 17. 11
  - 1Sa 18. 12
- Fear of the Philistines,
  - Fear of the people,
  - Fear of Goliath,
  - Fear of David !

- 1Sa 18. 8-9
  - 1Sa 15. 30
- Saul was filled with anger,  
And with guilt.

Ps 139. 23

We cannot change our feelings, but we can acknowledge them. This is all that is required of us at the outset. *Honesty* with oneself and with God, is the prerequisite for change. Our part is to want it. The power to bring it about belongs to God. In other words, on our part there is a will, on God's there is a way.

Jas 3. 14

For example, if a woman is filled with bitterness and negative feelings towards her alcoholic husband, she won't help him out. If she wants to see the Holy Spirit move, she must first of all *acknowledge* her wrong attitude.



## 2 - CARNAL BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour and feelings are linked. We can find the roots of behaviour by thinking about the circumstances which give rise to these feelings : fear, bitterness, guilt, etc.

- What are we *doing* when we experience such feelings ?
- What were we *doing* the first time we experienced them ?

The answer to this question will often help us to discover :

- The obstacle which gave rise to those feelings,
- The purpose thwarted by this obstacle,
- The false idea which caused us to choose such a goal.

### **MODERN EXAMPLES**

\* A man was poisoning his family life with his anxiety. When asked why he was anxious, he couldn't say. But when someone said to him :

- What were you *doing*, when you experienced this feeling for the first time ?
- What are you usually *doing*, when you experience this feeling now ?

He remembered that the first time was when he filled in an application form for a higher position at work, and that now the anxiety came back each time there might be a professional promotion.

In this case it is easy to understand that :

- The obstacle giving rise to the anxiety is the fear of failure,
- The thwarted purpose is professional success,
- The false idea which caused him to choose this goal is :

To become somebody,

To find significance :

It is a must to be successful at work.

\* A young girl was afraid of her mother. Why ? She did not know. But everything became clear when she was asked :

"What were you *doing*, when you were afraid of her for the first time ?"

Immediately she replied :

"One day, when I was very young, my mother told me to look after a baby, while she was away to pick up my brothers from school. When she came back, she asked me if the baby was still in the bedroom. For a joke, I replied : No ! She then slapped me in the face, which I did not understand. I have been afraid of my mother ever since."



**BIBLICAL EXAMPLE**

What was Saul *doing* when he felt anger ?

1Sa 18. 6-7

He heard the women of Israel singing :

*Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his tens of thousands !*

**The obstacle** which he came up against, and caused his fear and anger, was David's success in an area in which he himself had failed. He had the feeling that David was of more worth than he ... And the people were aware of it ! This was too much !

**The goal** which seems to be blocked by this obstacle is **to remain the king**. And Saul wants to keep the throne at all costs. Averting danger, that is, getting rid of the obstacle, comes down to getting rid of David ... He gets deeply obsessed with it.<sup>1</sup> Kingship has become an idol to him, for it is vital to his feeling of self-worth.

***Kingship = significance***

This is the false idea at the root of his behaviour.

**3 - WORDLY IDEAS**

Thus we come to false, carnal ideas and wordly principles we have been imbued with.<sup>2</sup> They are often linked to an emotional context which closely affects us. Usually, they have their roots in childhood. We are profoundly marked by the attitude and scale of values of our parents.

A very anxious man was living beyond his means and constantly lying. He let his wife believe that he did good business and took her out to dinner, whereas he was on the verge of bankruptcy. He would borrow money to go out with friends, while pretending he had earned it ...

Lying is a sin, it is true, but for all that, we must get to know **the root**.

<sup>1</sup> See 1Samuel chapter 18. 11, 17, 20-21, 25 - chapter 19. 1-2, 10-11, 15 - chapter 20. 1, 30-33 ...

<sup>2</sup> Many Christians have a false concept of their identity in Christ, and it impedes their spiritual growth. We shall develop this subject in chapter 5.



This man related how, as a teenager, he wanted to go to the village fête with his friends, but he needed some money for that, and he didn't have any ... So he tried *anxiously* to obtain it, but without success. It was the first time he had experienced such a feeling. Finally, the need to save face in front of his friends won out over the voice of his conscience, and he stole the money from a grocery store.

From then on, he could not help lording it and putting on airs, to impress everybody. Lying had become his only means to conceal his poverty.

It is easy to imagine the false reasoning lurking behind such behaviour : "What shall I look like if people find out that I have no money ?" In other words :

*Money = significance.*

It is clear that this *idea* originated from a difficult incident during adolescence, which still held very painful memories. It was difficult to shake it off.

For this reason, inner healing is often necessary for us to leave behind wordly ideas. Without the touch of the Holy Spirit, without love, the truth can hurt instead of heal ... But :

Eph 4. 15

*Speaking the truth in love,  
We will, in all things,  
grow up in Christ.*

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD**



## II - Being renewed in our mind by the Spirit

The renewal of the mind is not a mere intellectual change in our thoughts. It is a spiritual renewal focused on Jesus.

### 1 - I NEED TO KNOW JESUS

\* What he is for me (security)

\* What I am for him and in him (significance).

Jn 17. 3  
2Pe 1. 2

*Now this is eternal life : that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Jn 14. 6-9

To know Jesus is the only way to know the Father.

#### **A - KNOWING JESUS THROUGH HIS WORD**

Isa 9. 5

The Word of God enables us to know the thoughts of God. We must know the real Jesus : the Jesus of the Bible and not the Jesus we fancy.

#### **B - KNOWING HIM THROUGH A REVELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Eph 1. 17

Seen from the outside, a stained-glass window is dull and grey, but what a difference, on the inside, as the sunshine brings its shapes and colours to life ! So it is with the Word of God when the Holy Spirit *reveals* it to us.

1Sa 3. 7

*Samuel did not yet know the Lord : the Word of the Lord had not yet been **revealed** to him.*

The written Word is of no use if it does not lead us to the revelation of the Living Word.

Jesus told the Pharisees :

Jn 5. 39-40

*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*

Mt 22. 29

*You are wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.*





Let us not work out a "technique" to solve our problems by using the Word of God ! In a way, the Pharisees sought significance and security in the Scriptures, but would have nothing to do with Jesus !

The renewal of the mind does not only mean replacing wrong ideas by right ideas *about Jesus*. We need to know *Jesus himself* from experience and a personal revelation of his love. This is the best way to know the Father's heart.

Jos 5. 13-15      The secret of Joshua's conquest of Canaan is not his abstract knowledge of the Law, but his personal encounter with *the Commander of the army of the Lord : Jesus !*

Jn 1. 38                      *What do you want ?* Jesus asked John and Andrew.  
These are his first words to the future disciples.

Jn 20. 15                      *Who is it you are looking for ?* he said to Mary standing by the tomb.  
Such were the first words of the resurrected Lord.

### *What are we looking for ?*

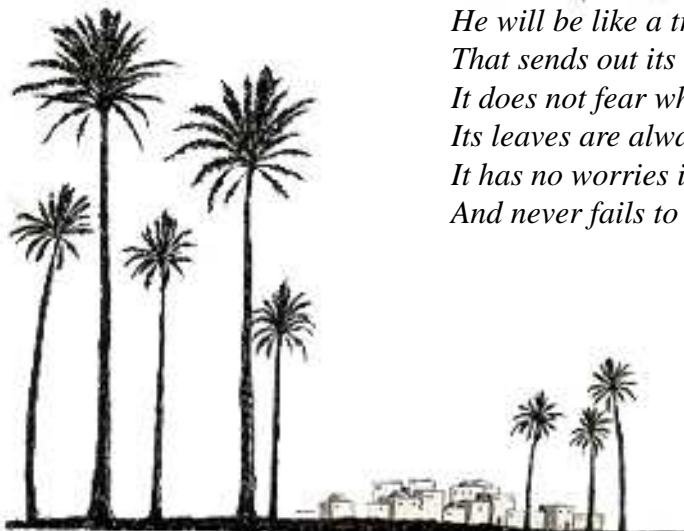
If we are looking for significance and security, we shall not find them. In the same way, if we are looking for happiness, we shall not find it.

Mt 7. 7-8                      But if we are looking for *Jesus*, we shall surely find him. What is more, we shall find in him significance, security and happiness !

He is our significance !  
He is our security !

Mt 6.33                      *Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness,*  
1Co 1. 30                      - That is to say Jesus -  
*And all these things will be given to you as well.*

Jer 17. 7-8                      *Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,  
Whose confidence is in him.  
He will be like a tree planted by the water  
That sends out its roots by the stream.  
It does not fear when heat comes;  
Its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought  
And never fails to bear fruit.*



**C - WE CAN RECEIVE THIS REVELATION**

***God has given us his Spirit***

1Co 2. 12

*We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*

***God has given us his Word***

Jn 8. 31-32

*If you hold to my teaching, You are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

***Revelation is given to children***

Mt 11. 25-27

*I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.*



**2- I AM DEPENDENT ON JESUS**

***I AM NOT DEPENDENT ON MAN***

Jer 17. 5

*Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.*

Ps 118. 6

*I am not afraid of men : The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me ?*

Ps 27. 1

*The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear ?*

***I AM NOT DEPENDENT ON CIRCUMSTANCES***

Hab 3. 17-19

*Even if everything goes wong, I will be joyful in God my Saviour !*

Ps 20. 7-8

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.*

1Jn 4. 9

***I AM DEPENDENT ON JESUS !***

### 3 - SIGNIFICANCE IN JESUS

#### *MY LIFE HAS A PURPOSE AND A MEANING*

1Co 1. 9  
2Co 13. 14

I am called to live in fellowship with Jesus,  
with the Father, and with the Holy Spirit.

1Jn 1. 3-4  
Rev 22. 4

*Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*  
This truth is so real that I am called after him.

The words spoken by a servant of God, almost half a century ago, are still ringing  
in me :

Lk 10. 42

***Only one thing is important, and  
that is a personal fellowship  
with Jesus Christ !***

I have also been created to celebrate, reflect and share the glory of God. I have  
been created to become like Jesus and to do great works ! It is true, but all of this  
depends on my fellowship with him.

Above all else, the Lord wants me to spend time freely in his presence and share  
with him. It is then that he pours down the greatest blessings :

Ac 13. 2  
Ac 16. 25-26  
2Ch 20. 21-24

- He sends Saul and Barnabas to the nations,
- He shakes the foundations of the prison in Philippi,
- He sows confusion in the enemy's camp.

We were once told this wonderful story of Pastor Beuttler :



He had decided to spend time with the Lord every morning,  
with no intent other than to give him time. One day, as he  
was praying, alone in his room, he sensed the door open  
and a presence fill the room. He knew it was Jesus ! Then  
he felt something like a gentle rain falling on him. He  
wondered : "it isn't raining today ..." And then, he suddenly  
understood and cried out :

- ***Why are you weeping, Lord ?***
- ***I am weeping for joy was the answer.***

*The Lord your God is with you,  
He is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight in you,  
He will quiet you with his love,  
He will rejoice over you with singing.*

*Zep 3. 17*

### ***I AM GOOD AT SOMETHING***

1Pe 4. 10                    We have each received a gift.  
Ro 12. 6                    *We have different gifts.*  
Eph 2. 10                    God has *prepared* in advance *good works for us to do.*



He equips us according to what he is asking us to do. If we are doing a work for which he has not prepared us, we run the risk of doing it badly and, what is more, of standing in the way of the person who should be doing it.

## **4 - SECURITY IN JESUS**

Lk 12. 32                    *Do not be afraid, little flock,  
For your Father has been pleased  
To give you the kingdom.*

Isa 41. 10                    *So do not fear, for I am with you.  
Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you.  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

### **A - THE FATHER ACCEPTS ME JUST AS I AM**

Heb 8. 12                    God does not remember my sins ...  
Ro 8. 1                        *There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Dt 6. 25                      What a difference from the righteousness of the Old Covenant based on works !

1 Jn 1. 7                      It is sufficient *to walk in the light*, to obey one step at a time, in order to be permanently cleansed by the blood of Jesus. How securing !

Ps 139. 14                    I am a wonderful creature !

### **B - THE FATHER LOVES ME UNCONDITIONALLY**

#### ***- He loves me freely***

Jn 16. 27                      *The Father himself loves you.*

Jn 17. 22-23                    He loves me *as he loves Jesus !*  
Ro 8. 15-16                    He is my Father, my daddy.  
Jn 20. 17                        I am his child, like Jesus.  
1Jn 3. 1-2                        I am his child, *now.*

**- He loves me eternally**

Jer 31. 3 *I have loved you with an everlasting love !*  
 Jn 10. 28 *No one can snatch them out of my hand !<sup>1</sup>*

*God will never abandon me.*

Mutemi, a Kenyan Christian, was dying in a hut, abandoned by his family and friends. They had tried everything in vain : prayers, medicines, and even a witch doctor ! Nothing had worked. Once a day people would simply come to see if he was dead. However Mutemi remembered one verse from Psalm 27 which he kept on confessing, begging God to give him help :

Ps 27. 10 *Though my father and mother forsake me,  
 the Lord will receive me.*



One day, unable to bear it any longer, he dragged himself a few yards out of the hut and asked God to heal him or to let him die. He promised to serve the Lord if he healed him.

Suddenly, his body began to shake, he fainted and woke up ... healed ! He returned home. There he was found, sitting and eating a meal ! The following Sunday, he gave his testimony to a packed church. It was the start of a revival in this congregation.

**- And personally**

Jn 15. 15-16 *Jesus has chosen me ... He calls me his friend.*

Isa 43. 1 *You are mine, he says.*  
 Jn 10. 3 *He calls his own sheep by name.*

*He desires to have an intimate relationship with me.*

Rev 3. 20 *I will come in and eat with him,  
 and he with me.*

<sup>1</sup> People sometimes ask : *Could I lose my salvation ?*

The Bible clearly replies : no, not if you wish to remain with the Lord. He will never let you down (Jn 10. 28). However, if we deliberately reject Jesus, having been clearly enlightened and spiritually blessed, repentance is no longer possible (He 6. 4-8 and 10. 26-29). This is the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit (Mt 12. 31-32), the sin leading to death, and about which it is no longer even worth praying (1Jn 5. 16). Clearly, only a spiritual adult can commit this sin.

Isa 41. 13

*I am the Lord, your God,  
Who takes hold of your right hand  
And says to you : do not fear !*



A woman, who was opposed to the Gospel, came to church several times, drawn there by two Christian friends. She had not the least desire to come, and was bored ... However, one day she was unexpectedly converted during the service !

Her friends said to her : "There was nothing particularly special about the service today, was there? So, what happened ?"

She answered : "While you were singing worship songs, I had a vision. I saw a picture ... I knew it was Jesus. He was holding my hand and we were running through fields together. We were both beaming with joy and laughing !

- Then what ?

- Well ! When I was still very young, my father left home and I began to live in an imaginary world. My dream, as a little girl, was to have a dad who would hold my hand and run through fields with me. **I did not know he was like that ...** but it is really the Jesus I have been looking for all my life !"

What an amazing Jesus ! I am not the one holding his hand, he is the one holding mine ...

### ***C - JESUS IS PERFECTLY SUFFICIENT***

Col 2. 10

*You have been given fulness in him ...*

Jn 10. 29

Because of Jesus, each one of us is like a precious diamond in the hand of our Father. Sometimes he closes his hand to protect us (*security*), sometimes he opens it to enable his light to shine before men ... through us ! (*significance*).

Mt 5. 16

1Jn 3. 2

*What we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ...*



**THE NEW JERUSALEM** (Rev 21. 2)

***In short, Jesus is my security !***

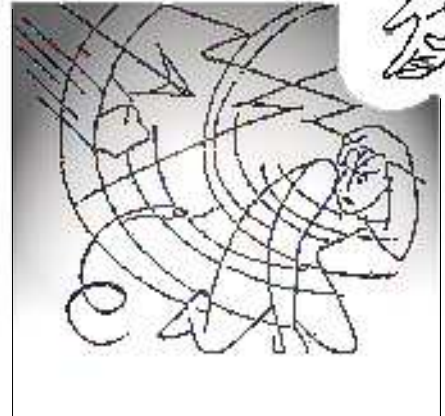
Mt 6. 31-32      My Father knows all my needs.  
 Heb 4. 15            He understands everything.  
 Lk 1. 37             He can do everything !  
 Ro 8. 32             He wishes to meet all my needs.  
 Col 1. 17            He has everything in his hands.

2Co 2. 14           He will always give me victory.

Ro 8. 28            He makes all things work together  
 for my good.

Eph 3. 14-21      ***Let us meditate*** on these verses and on  
 Ps 23, 91, 139    the magnificent passages of the Bible,  
 Isa 40. 27-31     in the letter to the Ephesians, in Psalms  
 and in Isaiah ... until we receive the  
 marvellous revelation : ***the Father's all sufficient love will meet all my needs.***

When we receive this revelation, we acknowledge our true identity as a child of God. Relationships with others, especially between spouses, then become more and more simple and truthful.

**5 - WHAT IF I DO NOT RECEIVE THIS REVELATION ?**

Jn 14. 9            *Don't you know me ... Even after I have been among you such a long time ? says Jesus. Why ?*

Jn 10. 10           The enemy does all he can *to steal* this precious revelation. He attacks especially during childhood when people are the most vulnerable : children abused, humiliated at school, terrorized by an alcoholic father, rejected by parents who themselves have often been the victims of rejection ...

A little boy was made fun of because he couldn't see well enough to read from the blackboard ... For the father of another child, it was fun to see him shake with fear as he picked up the exercise book he had flung under some furniture !

How many people have felt scorned or underrated, in some way or another ? This is how we become psychic "cripples", impervious to love. We need inner healing, or deliverance, in order to receive the revelation of the Father's love, whose image has been dimmed, distorted or shattered. We need to know that we are accepted by him in order to accept ourselves and open ourselves up to love.

Ps 107. 20            *He sent forth his Word and healed them.*

This verse also applies to inner healing. God gave Jesus, *the Living Word*, to heal us, and the Written Word to tell us what the Living Word has done for us.



## ***A HAND ON MY SHOULDER***

One Sunday at church, I invited two young American women and a German man for a cup of coffee at the local café. He was a university principal, a broad-shouldered man, with a closed expression on his face. He was about to round off a long trip to Europe and had not yet found the answer to his question :

***Is it still possible for a university principal  
to be in contact with his professors and students ?***

Disillusioned and desperate, he came along with a sigh. While on our way to the café, with the two American women trotting along behind us, I was gripped by panic : two Americans who can't speak French and a German who can't either ! What on earth am I doing ! I must be crazy !

Then I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned round. Nobody there ! The American women were ten metres behind. Panic gripped me even tighter. I was icy cold and shaking. Once again I felt a hand on my shoulder, very firmly this time and ... still nobody there ! I finally understood and exclaimed :

***"Is that you, Lord ? Thank you !"***

The German man looked at me dumbfounded. I was overwhelmed by a tremendous sense of peace. I knew that everything would be all right. We went into the café. Then ...

Would you believe it ? I didn't have to say a word. One of the Americans said to him in perfect German :

***"Contact with students ? I know all about that !"***

And she began to explain her ideas with much hand-waving and great conviction.

How handsome that university principal was ! I watched him open out, lift up his head, brighten up and ... smile ! He stayed there for an hour and a half, with his coffee and toasted sandwich, finding hope again ...

***Oh ! How wonderful the Lord's comforting hand is !***







He then left his mother at the foot of the cross, with all the burden of his past, asking Jesus to save and bless her. Anyone who has thus forgiven can become a channel of healing for the person who has hurt him. All that remained to do was to break the hold of the enemy over his thoughts, in the name of Jesus.

He was so transformed, that his wife, on a visit to us a little while later, said : "I find it difficult to adjust to this reversal of roles. Now, I have to learn submission !"



Let us not make a rule of such an approach. The Holy Spirit acts in a thousand ways and can very well heal directly. During one meeting, a pregnant woman, who was unable to accept her condition, received healing during the worship, without anyone intervening. There was such an anointing, such a sense of Jesus' presence, that she was directly touched by his love and began to rejoice about the future birth. No technique will ever replace the *Sun of Righteousness* which brings *healing in its wings* ! Nevertheless, this step taken in faith, at the foot of the cross, proves very effective in some cases. It is a way of appropriating the work accomplished for us, two thousand years ago.

Mal 4. 2

### ***B - DELIVERANCE***

Certain hurts, for example rape, can be the gateway to evil spirits. Then it is necessary to be delivered from their grip, notably in our thoughts.

#### ***Let us close the door !***

Mt 12. 43-45

Evil spirits flee at the moment of the new birth, but let us not be passive ! We must firmly close the door to prevent their coming back. A very effective way to do so is to declare that we wholly belong to the Lord : spirit, soul and body.

We have met people running here and there and everywhere, looking for deliverance. Yet they did not find it until they had made the firm and personal statement to the enemy, that they wholly belonged to Jesus.



Rev 12. 11

***For example, we can declare :***

Ro 8. 16

1Co 3. 16

1Co 6. 19

Jn 10. 28

Ro 8. 1

Ro 8. 38-39

Col 1. 13

Col 2. 15

Lk 10. 19

Before my heavenly Father,  
Before the angels of God,  
Before all men,  
Before Satan and his demons,

In the name of Jesus,  
I declare that :

I am a child of God,  
I am the temple of the Holy Spirit.  
I belong totally to Jesus Christ :  
Spirit, soul and body.

No one can snatch me out of his hand.  
There is now no condemnation for me  
As I am in Jesus Christ.

Nothing and no one can ever separate me  
from his love !

Satan, you have no right to enter  
The Lord's property.  
Get out of there !

Fear, anxiety, guilt, resentment,  
Go ! In Jesus' name !

Satan,  
I have authority  
over you,  
I know it ! You know it !  
And God knows it !

***No admittance !<sup>1</sup>***

Dt 7. 25-26

Another way of keeping the enemy out is to clear the house of any object that could serve as a foothold to demons, even if they are valuable : jewellery, records, cassettes, posters, books, statues of Buddha and others ... anything that may be connected with the occult, violence or pornography. The Holy Spirit will enlighten those who are willing to obey.

And so, we find security in Jesus, *the gate* for the sheep.

Jn 10. 7-9

*I am the gate for the sheep ... whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.*

<sup>1</sup> The warfare is the same for physical healing. See ***How to keep your healing*** by Kenneth E Hagin and ***The spiritual man*** by Watchman Nee. In order to remove every foothold from the enemy, we must look for the spiritual causes of the sickness, and then act upon the revelation we have received.

In the middle East, the wall enclosing the sheep pen has only one opening, and no door at all. The shepherd himself acts as the door ! In fact, the entrance to the sheep fold is narrow and only one man at a time can pass through. In the evening, once he has gathered all the flock into the fold, the shepherd lights a fire in front of the entrance. He has his meal and spends the night there, wrapped in a blanket, his sheep dog beside him. Nobody can get through this opening, because he is actually the door.



***From now on  
It is Satan  
Who will fear me !***

1Jn 4. 4

*The One who is in you  
is greater than the one  
who is in the world.*

Ne 6. 2-4

I have no time to waste  
on you, Satan !

### **I AM THE SHEEP GATE**

Php 3. 13-14

*Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal !*

At this point, it may be fit to look back to the diagram on page 36. We have learned how to put off the old self, and how to be renewed in our thinking. We are coming to the last stage :

Eph 4. 24

*Putting on the new self, created to be like God,  
in true righteousness and holiness.*

## III - Putting on the new self

Gal 4. 19                    The new self is Christ living in me ! I clothe myself with Christ by embracing his thoughts, behaviour, feelings and motivations. ***I do it by faith***<sup>1</sup> and not by my own carnal efforts.

### 1 - THE THOUGHTS OF JESUS

Once we have received revelation of the Father's love, once we have understood that significance and security are only found in Jesus, the strongholds of our ideas crumble. Instead, we take on the thoughts of God.

2Co 10. 3-5                *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive **every thought** to make it obedient to Christ.*

Col 3. 1-2                 If we compare the human brain to a computer, we can say that it is necessary to remove the poor programming and false satanic data, and replace them by the Word of God, in order to function correctly.

Php 2. 5 (ASV)            *Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

For example, somebody who always needed to be first for his own self-esteem, will appropriate the thinking of Jesus :

Mt 18. 4                    *Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

### 2 - BEHAVIOUR OF JESUS

Ps 40. 8-9                 Once we have adopted the mentality of Jesus, it is possible to assume his behaviour, that is to say to conform our words and actions to the Word of God.




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<sup>1</sup> The step of faith is always the same, whether it be a question of putting on the character of Jesus, receiving healing or any other blessing based on a biblical promise. See *Appendix 3*.

## A - PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

Proclaiming the Word of God is the first move in using the spiritual "dynamite" of faith :

Ro 10. 8-11  
Mk 11. 23

*If you **confess** with your mouth ... and believe in your heart ...  
If anyone **says** to this mountain ... and does not doubt in his heart ...*

Pr 18. 21

This spiritual law applies to all areas of our lives. By confessing the Word of God that is appropriate to a determined situation, with perseverance and despite appearances, we release the power of God ! The report given by the Israelite spies on their return from Canaan, tells us a lot about that. God had indeed promised victory, but ...

Dt 11. 22-25

### ***Let us compare the negative confession of the Israelites ...***

Nu 13. 28  
to  
Nu 14. 38

*The people who live in this land are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large ... We can't attack those people ... Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt ?*

### ***With Caleb's confession of faith.***

*We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it!  
The Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them !*

### ***Then, compare the results :***

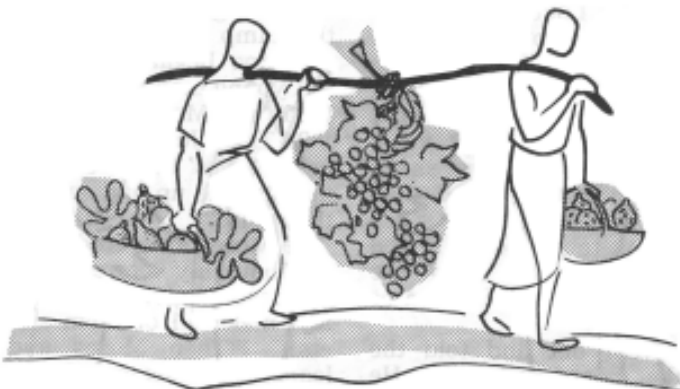
*As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say : In this desert your bodies will fall ... Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home.*

*But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit ... I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.*

Nu 13. 23

### ***Let us be "Calebs" !***

Even if we feel insignificant or insecure, even if we do not feel the love of God, let us proclaim the Word of God ! It is always the Word that is right. Let us not give in to the blackmail of the enemy when he comes to disturb our thoughts and feelings, and when he uses negative experiences to discourage us : "You see, it didn't work! It never will !"



Ro 4. 17                    Let us do as God, our Father, does when *he calls things that are not as though they were*. Jesus encourages us in this :

Mk 11. 22                    ***Have the faith of God !***<sup>1</sup> he tells us.

We cannot walk by the Spirit, unless by faith too. It requires proclaiming the Word of God and putting it into practice. It is possible. All we need is to want it.

1Th 5. 24                    *The one who calls you is faithful  
and he will do it.*

***B - DOWN TO ACTION !***

Gal 2. 20                    *The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God.*

Mt 7. 24                    A woman used to sense that the slightest criticism was a threat to her security, and always reacted violently. Once she had been set free from her need to be approved by others and had found her security in Jesus, she needed to bring her behaviour into line with the Word of God :

Php 4. 5                    *Let your gentleness be evident to all.*

She began to obey, which she thought was artificial at first. The enemy would whisper : "you are a hypocrite if you answer kindly when you feel like biting back !" However, she stood firmly on the Word of God. Soon, she began to feel better and in the end ...

Mt 11. 29                    The gentleness of Jesus was powerfully manifested through her, to the people who were criticizing her : she had *put on* the character and behaviour of Jesus, by acting in faith.

The order is always the same :

- 1 - CHANGE OF THOUGHTS**

**2 - CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR**

**3 - CHANGE OF FEELINGS.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Literal translation from the Greek. Faith is spiritual. Let us say it again : we cannot manufacture it by human efforts. See *Appendix 3*.



2Ti 1. 6-7

Paul urges Timothy to *fan into flame* the gift which he received. When we proclaim the Word of God and act accordingly, we fan the flame of love. This love that is ever present in our spirit, will eventually manifest itself in our soul (in our feelings).

Here is another example :

A converted former homosexual wanted to be delivered : he had never been able to have a sexual relationship with his wife. Once his mind had been renewed according to the process that we have described, he still had to conform his conduct to the Word of God.

1Co 7. 5

*Do not deprive each other ...*

He decided to obey and approached his wife in faith, not worrying about past failures. God honoured his obedience. If he had *sought* his significance in the restoration of a sexual relationship with his wife, he would, no doubt, have been paralysed with fear of failure. However, as he had already *found* his significance in Jesus, he purely and simply obeyed the Word of God. Under these conditions, it always works !

### *Thoughts in keeping with the Word of God*

Inspire *words* and *actions*  
in conformity with the Word of God,

And eventually produce *feelings*,  
also in conformity with the Word of God.



How many problems arise when, quite often unconsciously, we seek our significance and security in the position we hold or the work we do for the Lord ! But how restful to simply act out of love !

*A doctor told us* how, before his conversion, he used to clothe himself with self-importance as he put on his white coat and took hold of his stethoscope and reflex hammer.

The change in motivations makes all the difference ...

### 3 - THE FEELINGS AND MOTIVATION OF JESUS

Col 3. 12-14

*As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience ... And over all these virtues put on love.*

1Jn 4. 19

In order to give love, we must have received it. We are able to love God and to love others because *He first loved us.*

Jesus himself received a tangible manifestation of the Father's love at the two crucial moments of his life : before the struggle with Satan in the desert, and before he started for the cross.

Lk 3. 22

*You are my Son, whom I love,*

Mt 17. 5

*With you I am well pleased.*

Insofar as we receive this revelation personally, insofar as we hear the Father say to us : "you are my beloved child", our motivations are transformed. In our turn, we are in a position to love the Lord, other people and ... ourselves! We are able to walk by the Spirit.

1Jn 5. 3

*His commands are not burdensome.*

We need two feet to walk in the spiritual world, just as in the material world. ***The light and power of the Holy Spirit*** are the two "feet" essential to our walk by the Spirit. However, this is not sufficient :



***COSMONAUTES*** cannot walk in space with two perfect athletic feet, because there is no attraction of earth. Likewise, it is not possible to walk by the Spirit, without ***the attraction of divine love.***

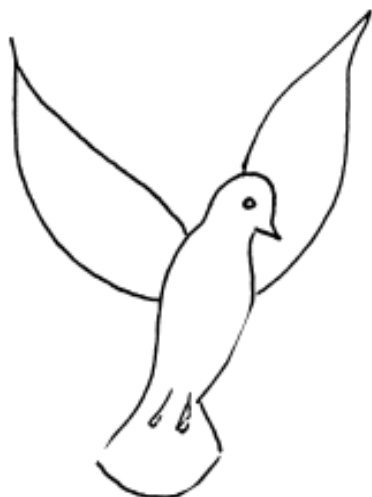


*It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
Taking them by the arms.  
I led them with cords of human kindness  
With ties of love. (Hos 11. 3-4)*

*When I am lifted up from the earth,  
I will draw all men to myself. (Jn 12. 32)*

***END OF CHAPTER***





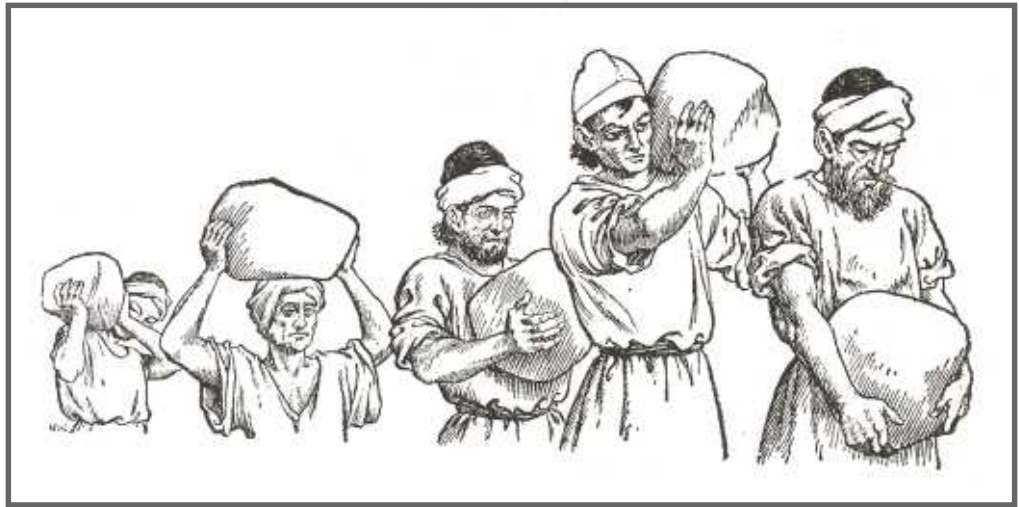
**WALKING BY THE SPIRIT**  
SECOND PART  
**CONQUERING**





# DECIDING

*You will cross the Jordan ... (Dt 12. 10)*



*Israel crossed the Jordan ... (Jos 4. 20-24)*

When we walk according to the flesh, we do whatever seems good to us. We act on our natural desires, just like the rest of the world. But here is the clue to crossing the Jordan :

Dt 12. 8-10

*You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord, your God, is giving you. But you will cross the Jordan ...*

### **CROSSING THE JORDAN CORRESPONDS TO DECIDING TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT, WHICH IMPLIES :**

- 1. Accepting the complete work of the cross of Jesus.*
- 2. Accepting to take up our own cross.*

Gal 5. 24-25

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

The cross is the gateway to our walk by the Spirit.

# I - The work of the cross

Lk 1. 68-75

Deciding to walk by the Spirit would be ineffective and have no consistency without the work of the cross. The cross of Jesus provided us with perfect salvation and complete deliverance, for our spirit, soul and body.

1Jn 2. 12-14

This deliverance takes place progressively in our lives, as we grow up spiritually. There are three stages to this growth, which correspond to the three spiritual ages described by the apostle John :

1. The forgiveness of sins characterizes spiritual childhood.
2. Deliverance from the power of sin characterizes youth.
3. Deliverance from the law characterizes spiritual maturity.

Let us take, for example, a young man who is a slave to impure habits.

1. He receives forgiveness for his sins at conversion.
2. He is delivered from his impure habits, as he receives self-control. (Gal 5. 22-23)
3. Then, he will enter into a new sexual life through marriage, **Love** replacing his former selfish behaviour. (1Co 13. 4-8)

So, we are delivered from the Law by Grace. We then become able to be led by the Spirit. Is not Christian marriage, indeed, one of the best images of Jesus' relationship with the Church, as his promised *Bride* ? (Rev 19. 7, 21. 9)



## 1 - THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The forgiveness of sins wipes away and cancels out the past, but it does not guarantee the future. The work of the cross goes a lot further than forgiveness.

## 2 - DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF SIN

After our conversion, it is possible to sin no more. Have we really grasped this ? We are not condemned to sin for the rest of our lives !

Such deliverance includes two stages :

1. Getting aware of our new identity in Christ.
2. Experiencing deliverance by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us examine these two stages.

### A. GETTING AWARE OF OUR NEW IDENTITY

1Jn 2. 12

Many Christians never go beyond the stage of "forgiven sinners", that is to say *spiritual little children*, because they appropriate only part of the saving work of the cross. They do not realize that, as soon as they are born again, their spirit is a new creation and has a divine nature.

2Co 5. 17

Ro 6. 6-7

*Our old self was crucified with him so that ...  
We should no longer be slaves to sin !*

It is an *accomplished* fact that our old nature, inherited from Adam, was crucified. We must be careful however, not to confuse *the old nature*, that is the old man who was crucified and is dead and buried, with *my own self* which I must *deny* all my life.

Jude 24-25

Ro 7. 22

To summarize what has been said, it is possible to no longer sin. Sin is no longer a fatality. Actually, the inner being, the spirit which is born again *delights* in God's law.

"But this is far from obvious !" This objection merits our consideration.



Let us imagine a young girl gifted with a beautiful voice ... Her parents, fearing she might boast about it, persist in telling her that she sings out of tune. She remains quiet for many years until one day, in a meeting, she is caught up in the presence of the Spirit, and begins to sing so melodiously that people fall silent to listen to her.

"Oh I'm sorry ! she apologizes, I didn't want to disturb you ... I didn't do it on purpose."

She cannot believe that she has such an amazing voice. It is nonetheless true and has always been so, even during the years when she did not manifest it.

The same can be said about the divine nature which is inside us. It is a reality and has been so from the moment that we were born again, whether we feel it and see it or not.

*Do autumn leaves wait until we notice them to become beautiful ?*

### B. EXPERIENCING DELIVERANCE



Heb 4. 2

How ? Simply by appropriating it by faith.

1Jn 2. 14

The renewal of the mind by the Word of God is a prerequisite to experiencing deliverance and it is the key to gaining victory over the *evil one*. This victory characterizes the state of *spiritual young people*.



Though seemingly contradictory, certain verses actually reveal a profound truth and are worth being thoroughly examined :

Col 3. 3-5

***For you died ... Therefore, put to death ...***

Ro 6. 11-13

*Count yourselves dead to sin ...  
Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body ...  
Do not offer the parts of your body to sin.*

If I am already dead, what does *put to death* signify ?



Deliverance from the power of sin can happen immediately at the new birth. For instance, a man may gain complete self-control in the area of sexual temptation or be instantly delivered from the bondage of drugs. More often than not, however, deliverance demands an act of faith on our part. That is why it is written : *You have died ... Therefore put to death ...*

For example, Elie did not give up smoking after his conversion, as if he was still enslaved to tobacco. Smoking is a sin in the sense that it is detrimental to the body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit and does not belong to us.

How was he delivered ?

He simply appropriated God's Word by faith. Trusting God's Word, rather than rely on his feelings, he considered himself dead to sin and delivered from the bondage of tobacco.

Then, putting his faith into action (*Put to death ...*) he decided to stop smoking for forty days and was willing to suffer if necessary.

Ro 6. 14

It was then that he realized that he was already freed, although not aware of it. (*Sin shall not be your master ...*) In fact, he did not even suffer four hours ! Moreover he was able to demonstrate to his work colleagues that he was able to stay free : as they insisted on his smoking a cigarette, he did so and yet did not fall into addiction again, while all his previous efforts to stop had failed.

In other words, the Holy Spirit enabled him to experience what Jesus had already achieved for him on the cross. The same could be said of any other form of slavery : drugs, sex, alcohol, money ... Deliverance from the power of sin is free.

### 3 - DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW

Ro 6. 14                      *Sin shall not be your master, because ...  
You are not under law, but under grace.*

1Ti 1. 9-10                    *Law is made not for the righteous.*

#### A - A NEW LAW INTERVENES

Ro 8. 2                         *Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life  
set me free from the law of sin and death.*

Let us return to the example given before : the *full deliverance* of the cross will bring to the young man enslaved to impure habits :



- \* The forgiveness of his sins,
- \* Freedom from the power of sin, in other words of his sinful habits, thanks to the fruit of the Spirit which is self-control.
- \* Freedom from the Law through the establishment of a new Law, that of love (in this case marital love.)

Jas 2. 8                        The law of "duty" is replaced by *the royal law of love.*



#### B - THE LAW WRITTEN ON OUR HEART

Jer 31. 33                    *I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.*

Col 2. 20-23                 According to this new law, we no longer depend on external rules. There is no need to protect ourselves with a "shell" of permissions and prohibitions, in the same way as molluscs ! We are framed inside, just like vertebrates. There is no need to hide in a cocoon of habits and traditions for a mere semblance of security !

Dt 30. 19                      *Choose life !* says the Lord.

Jas 1. 25                      Choose *the perfect law, the law of freedom*, choose the wings of freedom of the Holy Spirit !

#### C - FREEDOM IS NOT PERMISSIVENESS

1Co 10. 23-24                *Everything is permissible, but not everything is constructive.*

One day, when my husband was away, I was tired and could not pull myself together to go to the Full Gospel Business Men's dinner in my area. I spoke to Jesus about it : "Lord ? I am tired and I am not under the Law. So do I have to go out this evening, just because I am the leader's wife ? What do you think, Lord ?"



Gal 5. 13-14 (A.S.V)

This is the answer which I received : "It is true, you are called to liberty, *only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.*"

I did go to the dinner, but out of love and not out of a sense of duty. The truth is, I no longer felt tired.

The opposite can happen too : The Lord can ask you to miss a meeting, out of love for somebody. For example, he would ask a mother to make her children a priority. And yet, it is written :

Heb 10. 25

*Let us not give up meeting together.*

But it is also written :

2Co 3. 6

*The letter kills but the Spirit gives life.*  
It is not possible to merge the old system of the law with the new life by the Spirit, just as you cannot mix water with oil.

1Jn 2. 13

It is necessary to have known *He who is from the beginning*, to become a *spiritual father* enabled to love freely.



***To sum up, let us take hold of the full deliverance secured for us by the cross and resurrection of Jésus !***



***O DEATH,  
WHERE IS YOUR  
VICTORY ?***

## II - Taking up our cross

When deciding to walk by the Spirit, we pledge ourselves to follow Jesus, which implies that we must deny ourselves.

Lk 9. 23

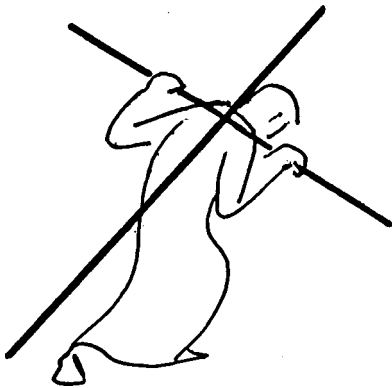
*If anyone would come after me,  
he must deny himself  
and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

To take up our cross is to deny ourselves, which truly and positively means offering ourselves to God. We will see later what blessing flows out of this.

### 1 - DENYING OURSELVES

Let us first examine what denying ourselves does not mean. We will then see what it does mean.

#### **A - IT IS NOT BEING PASSIVE**



**God wants** our faculties (our mind, will and emotions) to be active, and work in harmony, in keeping with the Holy Spirit. God will never think, feel or decide in our stead. He only asks us to renounce whatever goes against his will.

**Satan, on the contrary, would like** to make us think that we no longer have a right to exist, on the pretext that we are giving ourselves up to God, humbling ourselves before him and submitting to him. He wants us to believe that we are no longer to have desires, opinions or feelings, in short to be without savour, colour, odour, and without any personality.

Passivity is a gateway to evil spirits which seek to manipulate us and make puppets of us.

#### **B - IT IS NOT A SCHOOL OF FRUSTRATION**

Jn 15. 2

*Every branch that does bear fruit,  
he prunes,  
so that it will be even more fruitful.*

Lk 1. 78-79

Denying ourselves is *the path of peace*.

Denying ourselves is not an end in itself, indeed it has no meaning outside of love. In other words, it signifies **preferring Jesus ...** over everything else !

### ***C - IT IS PREFERRING JESUS***

Jesus is inseparable from his Word. Preferring Jesus also means preferring his Word.

#### ***Preferring Jesus to our habits***

When we decide to walk by the Spirit, we must be prepared for change. What a surprise Israel got, after crossing the Jordan ...

Jos 5. 12

No more manna !

Dt 8. 4

No more pillar of cloud or fire !

No more hard-wearing clothes !

No more made-to-measure shoes !

Jos 1. 2

*Moses, my servant, is dead,* said the Lord, this is no time to look back !

1Co 6. 12

It was not that the Lord had changed, but he desired to lead his people another way. Each method is good in due season, but let us not become enslaved to anything.



This reminds me of a very old story :

A man of God, a priest, was having a discussion with a Mother Superior from a religious community. She was strongly attached to her regulations. "The rules have proved very successful !" she kept saying. "Good Mother, he finally replied, when I was fourteen, how good my trousers proved to be ! But at the age of fifteen, I had to change out of them : they were too short !"

#### ***Preferring Jesus to our family and friends***

Mt 10 34-38

*Anyone who loves his father or mother ... his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

2Co 6. 14

This signifies that we must not compromise over the Word of God to avoid difficulties. Did not Jesus' family believe that *he was out of his mind* ?

Mk 3. 21

Jdg 6. 25

– *Tear down your father's altar to Baal,* ordered the Lord, speaking to Gideon.

1Sa 2. 29

– *Why did you honour your sons more than me ?* said the Lord, as a reproach, to Eli the priest.

1Ki 15. 13

– *Asa even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Ashera pole.*

1Ti 5. 8

This does not mean, in the least, that we should neglect our own families !

***Preferring Jesus to our ideas***

Isa 55. 8-9

In other words, we must accept to change our way of thinking whenever it does not conform to the Word of God.

***Preferring Jesus to our desires***

Ps 37. 4

Let us not confuse them with the desires that the Holy Spirit has written on our hearts, as he himself teaches us to discern where they come from.

***Preferring Jesus to our well-being***

Eph 5. 29

1Co 9. 27

We must take care of our bodies while governing them.

Lk 16. 13

***Preferring Jesus to money******Preferring Jesus to our reputation***

Isa 51. 7

*Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults.*



1Th 2. 4-6

Ac 24. 5

Paul was not trying to please men, but God who tests the hearts. Was he not called a *trouble-maker*, stirring up disputes ?

2Ti 3. 12

*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted.*

Mt 5. 11-12

Jn 8. 53

If we decide to walk by the Spirit, we can expect to be called fanatics, intolerant or proud people : "Wait a minute ! Who do you think you are ? Do you think you are the only one to have the Holy Spirit ?"

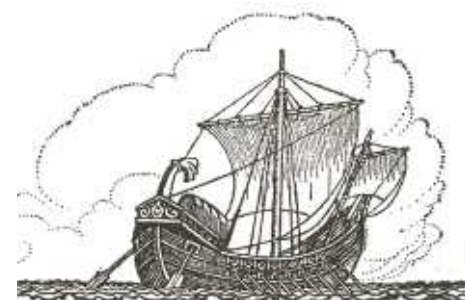
Php 2. 5-8

***Preferring Jesus to our rights***

Lk 10. 38-42

***Preferring Jesus to the work that we do for him***

Eph 4. 4

***Preferring Jesus to "our" church***

***TO SUM UP : WE MUST GIVE OVER TO JESUS THE RUDDER DIRECTING OUR LIVES AND ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AS LORD.***

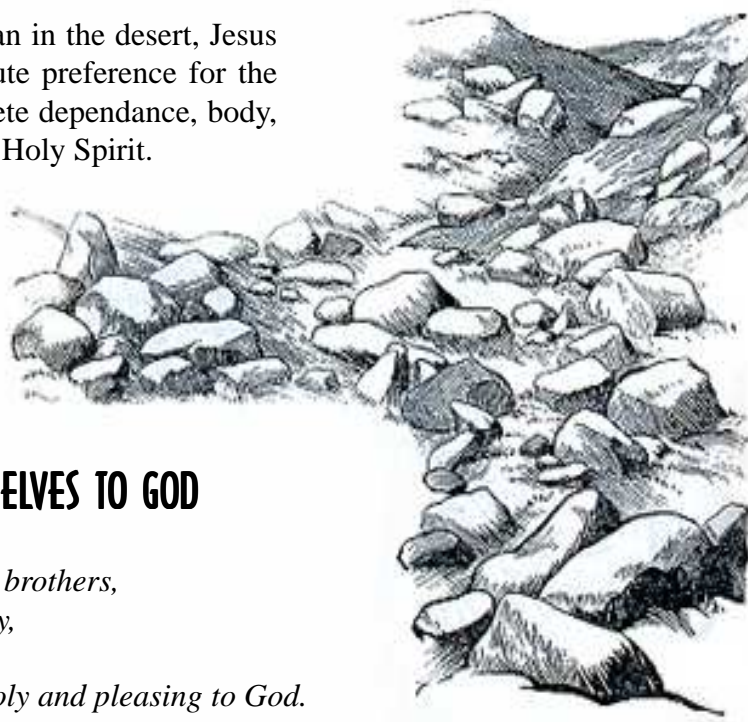
1Pe 3. 15

*But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord !*

Mt 4. 1-10

When faced with Satan in the desert, Jesus proclaimed his absolute preference for the Father and his complete dependance, body, soul and spirit, on the Holy Spirit.

Let us examine now the positive aspect of denying ourselves.



## 2 - OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD

Ro 12. 1

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.*

### A - BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Ge 15. 7-18

Could we not compare the believer to the victim Abraham offers on the altar ?

#### 1 - Abraham divides the animals

Heb 4. 12-14

Jn 15. 3

Jn 17. 17

This is a picture of Jesus, the High Priest, who divides in us what is of the soul and what is of the spirit, using *the sword* which is *the Word*. Thus, he brings to light what is hidden. This is how the Word of God *sanctifies* us.

Jn 16. 33

Rev 2. 10

Such separation, sometimes, requires being put to the test. But we must not fear *suffering* : Jesus' victory is ours ! The Bible repeats over and over again : *Do not be afraid ! Fear nothing !* (366 times !)



#### 2 - Abraham drives away the birds of prey

*The birds of prey* are the evil spirits which seek to steal our offering. They can be equated with :

- *Sleepiness* (tiredness, discouragement)
- *Fear*
- *Darkness* (doubt).

Abraham drives them away and stands firm. Finally :

#### 3 - God transforms the offerings into blessings

Fire falls from the sky and consumes the divided animals, sealing *the covenant* between God and Abraham.

## ***B - PRACTICAL APPLICATION***

Whenever we deny ourselves by placing an offering on *the altar* - the altar of the New Covenant being Jesus' cross - God transforms it into a blessing.

Ex 15. 23-25

The *bitter* waters of Mara became *sweet* when Moses threw in a certain piece of wood, which foreshadows the cross.

1Co 1. 18

Indeed, there is tremendous power at our disposal at the cross of Jesus ! The following is a very ordinary example, based on fact. We are using it because the enemy, the serpent, often takes hold of ordinary circumstances to inject his venom into our lives.

### ***1 - The offering on the altar***

We had to rent a studio for the skiing holidays. But I made the wrong choice, which worried me to the point of being obsessed with it. It was obviously a sign that the enemy was at work. Therefore, I put into practice what has just been said.

1Pe 5. 7

I said to myself : "God is not opposed to skiing, and it is certainly not my goal in life. This worry has dimmed my relationship with the Lord." So, I decided to hand the case over to the Lord and I prayed :

"Jesus, you bore all the enemy's oppression in my stead, on the cross... Therefore, I give this situation up to you. I unload it onto you. I accept to suffer if I have to, but I don't want to worry about it anymore. I can't do this on my own. Please, make this happen in me."



### ***2 - The birds of prey***

They did not fail to come ! "Wait a minute ... You should have done this ... You should not have done that ... Your holidays will be ruined, because of you !" And the like ... I drove those thoughts away (those birds of prey) by replying : "Satan ! You've got the wrong address ! It is no longer my problem, for I gave it to the Lord. Go and speak to Jesus about it !" When he saw that it was no use insisting, he let go of me. I was free !

### ***3 - The blessing***

After a time, we went on holidays. The studio was definitely unsuitable. It was tiny, dark and very inhospitable. I turned round to Jesus : "Lord, I put my offering on the altar ... but where on earth is your blessing ?" I found peace again. Almost immediately, the thought came to me : "Go and see the rental agency." A magnificent studio was awaiting us !



In the same way, we have seen couples giving over their burden of marital difficulties, and experiencing deep liberation. God usually begins by changing the state of our hearts before intervening in our circumstances.

We can also be freed from the domination of another person. A young woman who was being dominated by a young man, came to the foot of the cross with him in mind, and asked the Lord to deliver her. We were then able to break the tie keeping her in bondage to him. She immediately experienced a complete freedom from him.

### 3 - THE CURTAIN TORN IN TWO

Jn 19. 30

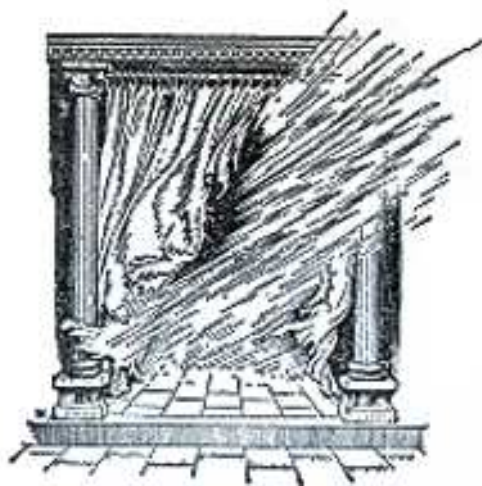
The blessing that Jesus acquired for us on the cross is superior, by far, to Abraham's blessing ! When Jesus had *accomplished everything*,

Mt 27. 51

*the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*

Heb 10. 19-20

Since then, *we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus.*



The Holy Spirit dwells in our renewed spirit, from now on. We are privileged

*to listen to him,  
directly  
and personally.*

He has the appropriate word stored up for every situation we might find ourselves in.

This is the New Covenant signed with the blood of the Lamb.

1Ti 2. 5

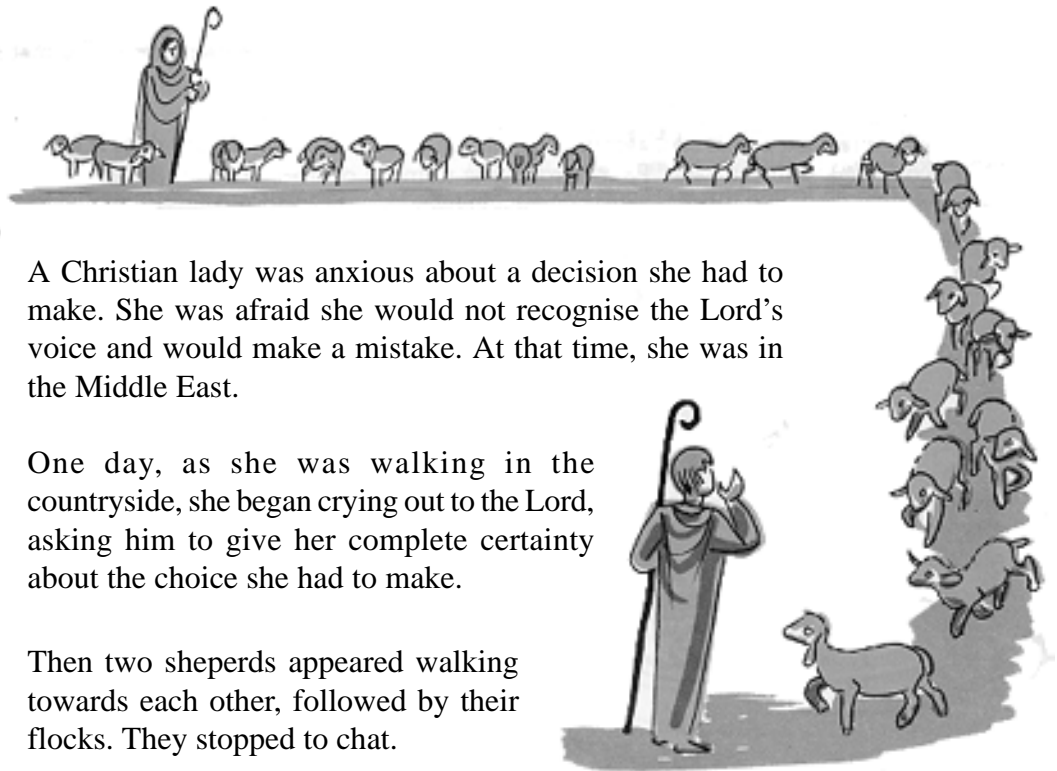
We must go beyond the stage of "forgiven sinner". We must penetrate into the sanctuary through the *torn curtain*, accepting Jesus as *the only Mediator between God and men*, in order to walk by the Spirit.

Let us now consider  
how the Holy Spirit speaks,  
and how to listen to him.

**END OF CHAPTER**

# LISTENING

### *MY SHEEP KNOW MY VOICE*



A Christian lady was anxious about a decision she had to make. She was afraid she would not recognise the Lord's voice and would make a mistake. At that time, she was in the Middle East.

One day, as she was walking in the countryside, she began crying out to the Lord, asking him to give her complete certainty about the choice she had to make.

Then two shepherds appeared walking towards each other, followed by their flocks. They stopped to chat.

While they were talking, the two flocks became mingled together. "What will they do to find their sheep, she wondered, how long will it take to sort them out !"

Jn 10. 5

She was at this point in her thoughts when the shepherds separated. Each one began to whistle and call his sheep. After a moment of confusion and disorder, each sheep followed its own shepherd.

Jn 10. 4, 27

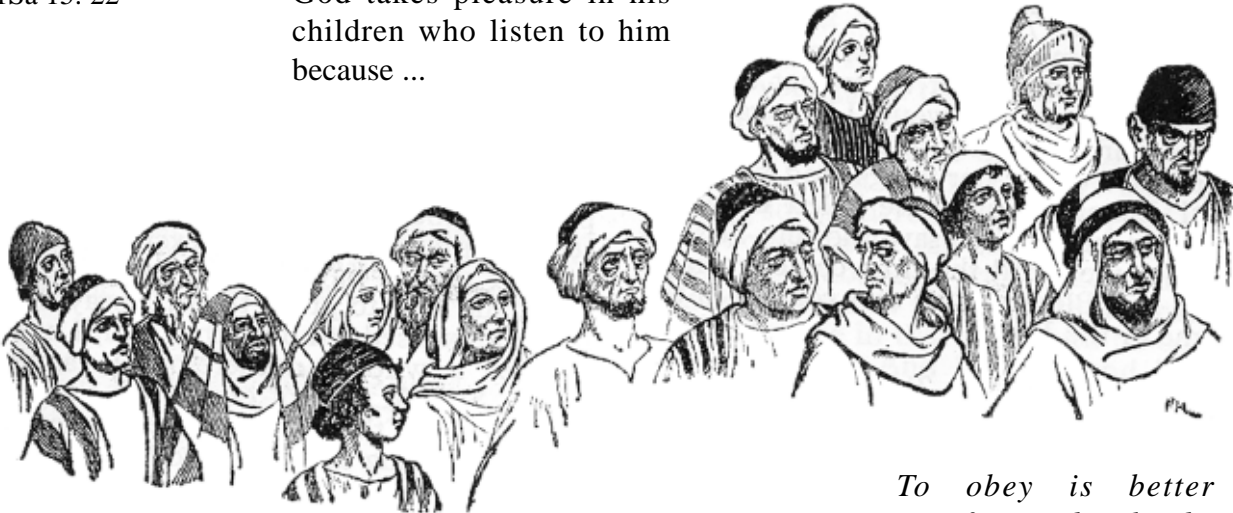
God spoke to her through what she had just seen : "I am your shepherd, you are my sheep and my sheep *know* my voice !" At that very moment she knew for certain that Jesus would talk to her and that she would recognise his voice. She would make the right decision ! All anxiety had disappeared.

Mt 27. 51

Yes, we can hear the voice of  
the good shepherd. The veil  
has been torn in two !

1Sa 15. 22

God takes pleasure in his  
children who listen to him  
because ...



*To obey is better than  
sacrifice, and to heed is better  
than the fat of rams.*

What we wish to establish clearly is that it is possible and normal to hear and recognise the Lord's voice in our every day life. Having understood this, we are going to look in the course of this chapter at :

**I - The different ways in which the Holy Spirit communicates with us,**

**II - The conditions to listen properly.**

Lk 8. 18

***THEREFORE CONSIDER CAREFULLY  
HOW YOU LISTEN.***

*Whoever has, will be given more.*

*Whoever does not have,*

*Even what he thinks he has,*

*Will be taken from him.*

# I - Communicating ways of the Holy Spirit

## *USUAL*

1. Revelation of the Scriptures,
2. Inward witness,
3. Voice of our spirit.

## *EXCEPTIONAL*

4. Voice of the Holy Spirit,
5. Visions,
6. Dreams,
7. Angelic apparitions.<sup>1</sup>



## 1 - REVELATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Jer 31. 33-34

The Holy Spirit writes the Word of God in our heart (our spirit) by means of revelation.

Jn 16. 13

*He will guide you into all the truth, in all areas.*

Ps 119. 105

*Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path.*

The Word of God is compared to the manna which it was necessary to take time to collect personally, daily.

### **A - TAKE TIME**

Ps 1. 1-3

Let us take time *to meditate* in order to allow the Holy Spirit to transform the written word (Logos) into the revealed word (Rhema)<sup>2</sup> which becomes an integral part of us and gives us life.

Mt 4. 4

*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every Rhéma that comes from the mouth of God.*

### **B - PERSONALLY**

Ex 16. 21

*Each person collected the food which he needed for himself.* God can use brothers or events to reveal his Word, but personal meditation remains the best and most vital means.

1Jn 2. 20, 27

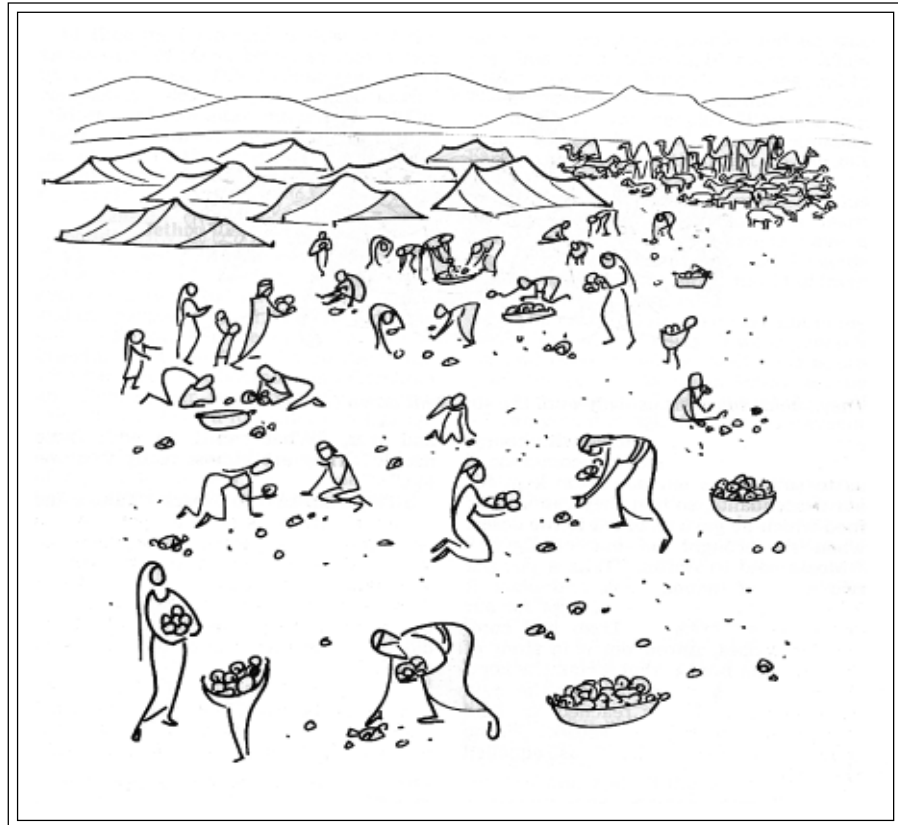
The role of the teacher in the church is to help Christians become aware of what they already have in their heart :

"Ah yes, that's it ! I knew that already ! "

<sup>1</sup> This list is not exhaustive. The Holy Spirit is not limited. <sup>2</sup> The Greek distinguishes very clearly : the general or constant Word (Logos) and the revealed or instant Word (Rhema) actualized in our life. This latter term *Rhema* is used about the origin of the faith. Turn to page 157.

**C - EVERYDAY**

Ex 16. 4

*The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.*

Ex 16. 19-20

The manna became *full of maggots and began to smell* when it was kept until the following day.

As a young Christian woman, whose husband was not a believer, used to say :  
 "Without a good daily portion of meditation on the Bible, we can't keep going".

In meditating on the Scripture, I have understood certain truths which have become decisive in my life :

**1 - We must never add to the Word of God**

Pr 30. 5-6

*Do not add to his words,<sup>1</sup> or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.*

Gal 3. 15

*No one can set aside or add to a human covenant ... duly established.*

Jude 3

*The faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

---

<sup>1</sup> To correctly understand the spiritual truths, we must stand upon the Word, in agreement with the principles and methods of interpretation included in the Bible itself : Pr 1. 1-2, Pr 2. 1-6, etc ...

## 2 - It is possible to know the truth

Jn 8. 31-32

*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.  
Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

Col 2. 2

We are not condemned to be in the dark or bogged down by different interpretations of the Bible. We can attain to *the full riches of complete understanding*, on condition that we do not stray from the Word of God.

The more we are saturated with the Scripture, the more the voice of the Holy Spirit becomes familiar and the less we have to ask God questions to which he has already given clear answers.

But usually, the concrete answers to our everyday questions are not actually written in the Bible. This is why we need to recognise the inward witness and the voice of our spirit.

## 2 - INWARD WITNESS

Ro 8. 16

*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.*

It is a conviction, an intuition, a peaceful assurance. It is the first inward witness we receive after the new birth. We "know" at the spirit level that we are a child of God without necessarily understanding it with our minds.

In the same way, we can know the will of God in every area of our lives, by means of the inward witness. It is like a "green light" within our spirit, a profound feeling of well-being which intensifies as we pray about the subject or, on the contrary, a "red light" on the inside, a feeling of uneasiness, a blockage at the spiritual level.

This is the usual, normal, way in which the Lord leads his children.

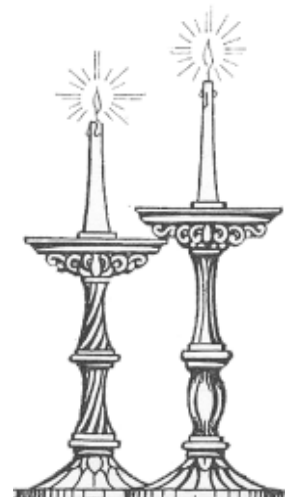
Ps 32. 8

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go. I will counsel you and watch over you.*

It is as though the Lord were lighting the lamp of our spirit to illuminate the path:

Ps 18. 28

*You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning. My God turns my darkness into light.*



**EXAMPLES**

- I have sometimes felt an inner resistance on listening to certain teachings. I could not have explained it, but I felt an uneasiness deep down. I have later understood the reason, when I realized that these teachings were not in line with the Word of God.

- One day, I tore up a letter and began again. I was ill at ease on re-reading the first letter and deeply satisfied on posting the second. In the evening, when I was not thinking about this any more, we had a moment of silence during our time of worship together as a couple, to listen to the Lord. I then received these thoughts :

"You asked me to give you examples of the inward witness. You had one today : when you tore up the first letter, you had a *red light* on the inside and when you posted the second, you had a *green light*."

It is as simple as that, but often we do not realize it.

Here is a last example :



One evening, a Christian family was sitting down to table in a restaurant. Just as they were about to order the meal, the father suddenly said :

" We must go home quickly !  
 - Whatever for ? they asked him.  
 - I don't know, but I feel that it is urgent."

They left hastily and found the house on fire. It would have burned down completely if they had waited. The Holy Spirit had warned them in time through the inward witness. If they had lost everything, some people would have been sure to say "It was God's will !"

**No ! There are some things which happen simply because we have not listened.**

Is it not written :

Jn 16. 13

*The Spirit of truth ... will tell you what is yet to come.*

### 3 - VOICE OF OUR SPIRIT

#### A - *IT IS A STILL SMALL INNER VOICE*

1 Ki 19. 11-12                    It expresses itself gently by thoughts or images. Let us not confuse these images with the "visions" we will talk about later.

Pr 20. 27                         The spirit, *the lamp of the Lord*, receives the thoughts of the Holy Spirit and transmits them to the mind which receives and understands them. In other words, the Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit, and what he says springs up into our mind in the form of thoughts or images :

Heb 10. 16                         *I will put my laws in their hearts,  
And I will write them on their minds.*

#### B - *EXAMPLES*

One day, I was getting ready to make a phone call when I heard this on the inside : "Do not telephone. It is not the right time". I did not take any notice of this warning. I was miles away from thinking that this could be coming from the Holy Spirit. In fact, it really was not the right moment ! The phone call just brought me trouble and confusion.

I had decided to wait until a friend's birthday to write to her, when I received this thought : "Write immediately. Afterwards, it will be too late." I obeyed, and my friend wrote back telling me that her mother was about to die. I was able to wrestle for ten days in prayer, for her salvation. Afterwards indeed, it would have been "too late ..."

One evening, I was contemplating the sunset on the river Yonne. The fast flowing current was making the water sparkle like thousands of diamonds in the middle of the river, but, near the bank, the stagnant water was giving off very dim reflections of light. Then the still small voice on the inside said :

2Co 3. 18                         So it is with your life. **It reflects my glory** to a greater or lesser degree, according to whether you are in the centre of my will or on the border.

This small voice of the spirit which transmits the thoughts of the Holy Spirit to the mind, can just manifest spontaneously, or when we are in conversation with somebody, or when we are contemplating nature, etc... God is sovereign. He can use whatever he chooses to talk to us : a person, an event, a landscape, and even **a donkey !**

Nu 22. 28-30

A little further on, we shall see the difference between the voice of our spirit and the voice of the Holy Spirit himself.





*Before going on to exceptional revelations, let us note the three following points :*

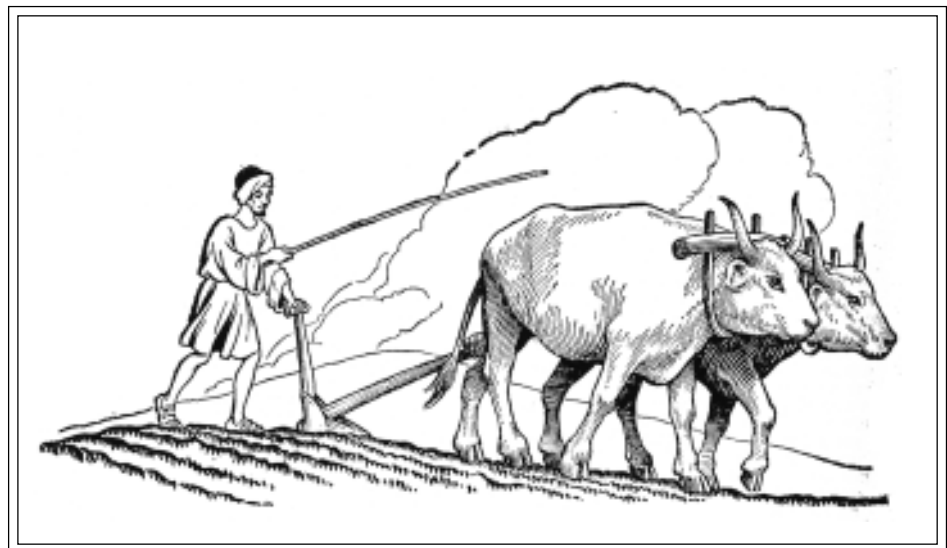
***1. No compartments !***

The revelation of the Scripture, the inward witness and the voice of our spirit, can all manifest simultaneously.

This is what happened when my husband retired. I sensed a certain call to go with him on his trips away and to assist him in the exercise of his ministry. However, I wasn't sure that I should give up my job as a social worker. So I asked the Lord. A few weeks later, I received an answer through Jeremiah (revelation of the Scripture) :

Jer 4. 3

*Break up your unploughed ground and do not sow among thorns.*



I then felt sure (inward witness) that the Lord was preparing new ground for me to plough. Then a thought (voice of my spirit) came to me : "If I continue my work, I will be sowing among thorns from now on." So I gave in my notice. I have never regretted it !

***2. No preferences !***

These three ordinary ways of receiving direction from the Lord are as "spiritual" as the most extraordinary visions. Let us not miss the divine supernatural by seeking after the sensational and spectacular.

- Lk 2. 27-32      The Bible never mentions any extraordinary manifestation in connection with Simeon when he is led to the temple by the Holy Spirit and, taking Jesus in his arms, begins to prophesy. Yet, what a revelation !
- 2Pe 1. 21      Can the same not be said of many of the prophets who spoke from God *as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit ?*
- Mk 2. 8      Jesus himself, according to his own testimony, was led by the Holy Spirit in an ordinary way, with the exceptions of a few instances mentioned in the Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, let us not seek after the extraordinary.  
This would be to give a foothold to the enemy  
who disguises himself as an angel of light.

Heb 2. 4      **3. No regrets !**

The Holy Spirit performs signs and wonders when he sees fit. But we must give primordial attention to :



The revelation of the Word,  
The inward witness,  
The voice of our spirit.

All these very simple ways of communicating and communing with God are always within our reach, and many Christians have heard the Lord speak to them like this without realizing it.

Let us come now to the exceptional manifestations which we cannot make happen or program, but which God gives as he sees necessary. They can happen, for example, when someone is sent out with a mission, is making an important decision, or is going through a difficult time. Without under-estimating the importance, we shall spend less time on this subject because it is not the usual way in which God leads us :

The voice of the Holy Spirit,  
Visions,  
Dreams,  
Angelic apparitions.

<sup>1</sup> In chapter 1, pages 7 and 8, we have seen how Jesus himself walked by the Spirit.

## 4 - THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The voice of the Holy Spirit in person has more authority than that of our own spirit and can even be audible.

1Sa 3. 3-14

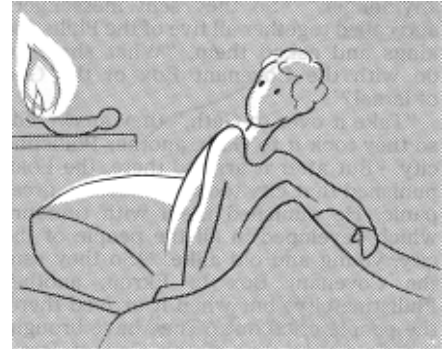
*Samuel* thought he heard the voice of the priest Eli.

Ac 8. 29

The Spirit told Philip to go and meet the Eunuch's chariot.

Ac 10. 19

*While Peter was still thinking about the vision (the vision of the sheet let down from heaven), the Spirit said to him :*



*Three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them for I have sent them.*

- \* One evening, in a corridor, at the age of eleven, I heard three words on the inside : *God is love*. They were not audible, but they were spoken with such force and with such gentleness, that they swept away in a moment, my anxiety and fears. I was no longer afraid of God. This is how the Holy Spirit led me to Jesus.
- \* Gladys Aylward, a little English servant-girl, received confirmation of her missionary call to China, while she was reading the second chapter of Nehemiah. A voice spoke clearly to her :
  - Gladys, is the God of Nehemiah your God ?
  - Yes, of course, she replied.
  - Then do as Nehemiah did and go !
  - But Lord, I am not Nehemiah ...
  - No, but surely I am his God !

"For me, the question was settled," she confided later. Thus began her extraordinary ministry to China.<sup>1</sup>

- \* One day, a young Christian girl, in charge of giving the signal for the end of work in Chinese mines, heard a voice calling her by name and ordering her to blow the whistle immediately. It was well before the normal time. This happened twice. She obeyed and the miners came up. When the last one had come out, an earthquake caused the collapse of several galleries. When she was questioned later, she simply replied that she had obeyed the voice of God. Many of the Chinese accepted the Lord on that day.

<sup>1</sup> See : *The Little Woman* by Gladys Aylward.

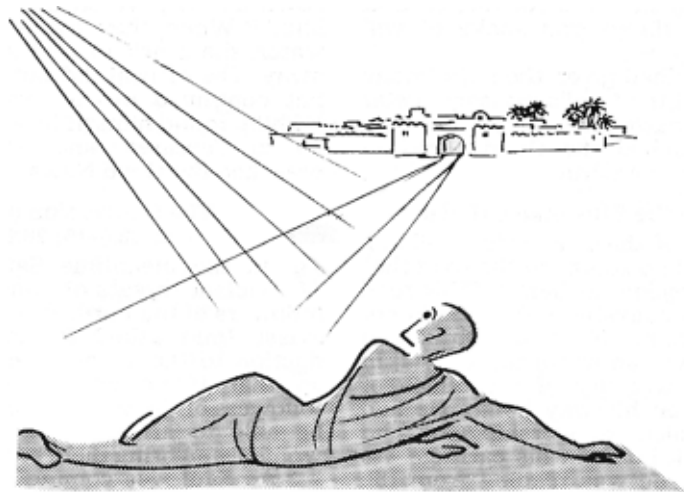
## 5 - VISIONS

We often hear people talking about "visions", when actually it is a question of inner pictures in their spirit. Would it not be better to say, in such cases, "I saw on the inside ..." <sup>1</sup>

Ac 26. 13-18

Visions are frequently accompanied by a mission. Moses, Peter, Ananias, *Saul on the road to Damascus ...*

**Who are you,  
Lord ?**



God still gives visions today. Many people have heard of the visions seen by Demos Shakarian, Kenneth E. Hagin ...

Ac 2. 17

My father in law, who was suffering from pleurisy, an incurable disease at the time, saw the Lord Jesus and "Mamou" <sup>2</sup> who was interceding for him saying : "Please do something !" He felt suddenly well. Jesus said to Mamou : "Give him a cup of tea", then he disappeared. My father in law came to himself ... totally healed !

## 6 - DREAMS

There are numerous examples in the Bible :

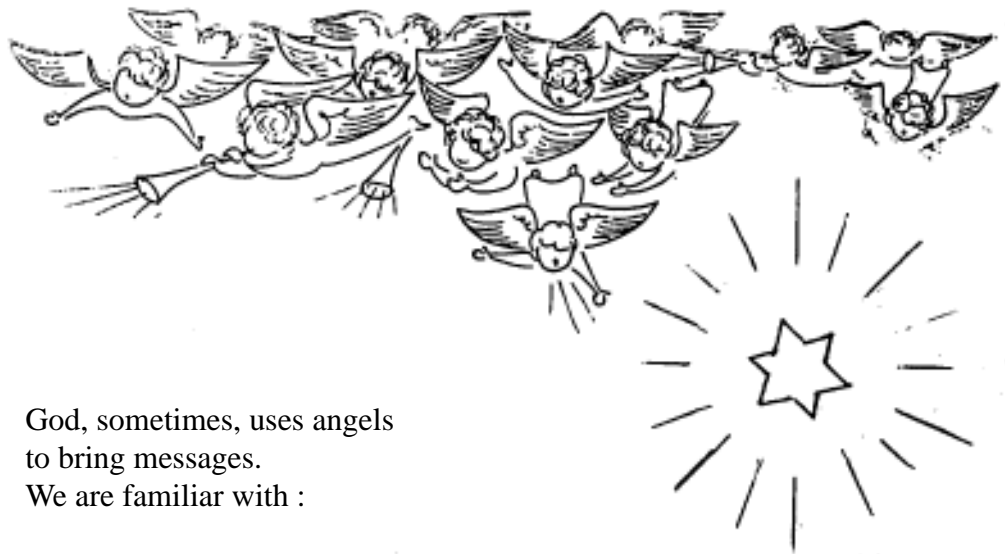
- |             |                        |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Ge 37. 5-10 | - Joseph               |
| Ge 41. 1-14 | - Pharaoh              |
| Mt 2. 12    | - The wise men etc ... |

Today, the Lord still guides us by dreams :

Elie received revelation of his ministry via two dreams which were later confirmed by the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> It is not at all, a matter of visualizing according to the "New age". See "Discerning" chapter 7. <sup>2</sup>Armenian expression to say "grand mother". She was alive at the time of the vision.

## 7 - ANGELIC APPARITIONS



God, sometimes, uses angels  
to bring messages.  
We are familiar with :

Lk 1. 26-38  
Lk 2. 8-14  
Mt 4. 11  
Lk 22. 43  
Mt 28. 1-7

The foretelling of the birth of Jesus to Mary.  
The news of the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.  
The comfort brought to Jesus in the wilderness  
And at Gethsemane.  
The announcement of the resurrection of Jesus, etc.

### **ANGELS STILL APPEAR TODAY !**

A mother, who was cruelly tested by persecution in China, told us how angels came to comfort her children after the death of their eldest brother who was martyred before their eyes.

Ps 91. 10-12  
Heb 1. 14

If angelic apparitions seem to be rare, their presence and protection are none the less real for *those who will inherit salvation*.

Mt 18. 10

Each *child* has a guardian angel, according to the words of Jesus. We do not lose them as we grow up !



## II - Conditions for a good listening

They can be expressed as follows :

1. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit,
2. Be available to the Holy Spirit,
3. Practice listening,
4. Know how to wait.

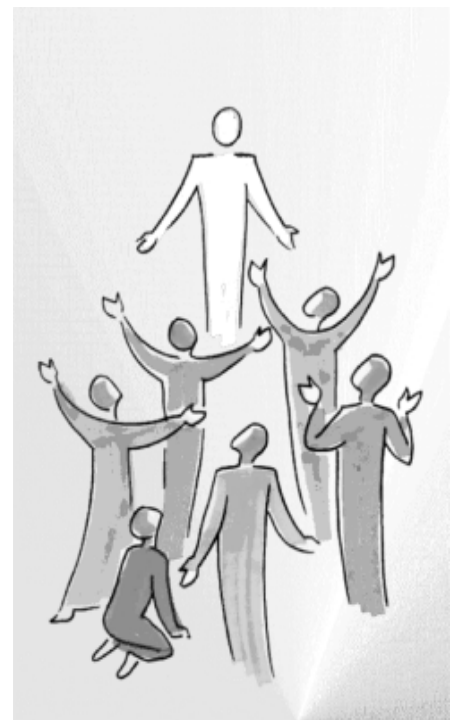
### 1 - BE SENSITIVE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### *THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON*

Jn 16. 7 He is as real as Jesus and the Father. He is alive, he is present, he speaks ! We don't have to beg the Father to send him. He has already done that. The disciples could not believe their ears when Jesus said : *It is profitable for you that I go away.*

Jn 14. 18 Jesus has kept his word :  
*I will not leave you as orphans.*

Jn 14. 26 **Jesus went to heaven.** He is at the right hand of the Father and will remain there until his return. But the Holy Spirit is on the earth. He is the one who comforts, teaches and guides us.



#### *THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR FRIEND*

Isa 11. 2 A friend full of *wisdom, power and the fear of God.* He has the same qualities as Jesus.

A discreet friend - one who is gentle as a dove and never imposes himself on us.

Jn 16. 14 The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. We keep our communion with him, by praising Jesus, by praying in tongues and especially by listening to him : *He who belongs to God hears what God says.* (rhéma).

Eph 4. 30 *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God* by taking little notice of his presence.

## 2 - BE AVAILABLE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

We can have ears, but not listen because we are tuned in elsewhere. We cannot be tuned into radio "Luxembourg" and radio "BBC4" at the same time.

### A - TUNE IN TO THE CORRECT WAVELENGTH

Isa 51. 4

*Listen to me, my people !*

We cannot at the same time listen to :

- U The Holy Spirit and the devil,
- U The Holy Spirit and the world,
- U The Holy Spirit and man,
- U The Holy Spirit and ourselves.



#### U *The devil*

Jn 8. 37, 44

There was no place for the Word of God in the heart of the pharisees, because their ears were tuned in to the devil.

#### U *The world*

1Jn 2. 15

If we are assaulted by the noise of the world : overinformation, radio, television, newspaper, etc ... we shall not hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

#### U *Man*

If we spend our time running from one person to another to find answers to our questions, instead of asking the Lord, we shall not hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, the advice of Christian brothers and sisters is precious to validate or invalidate what we have received or shall receive in the future. But God wants a personal, direct relationship with each of his children. We should not shift onto someone else the responsibility of seeking the will of God for ourselves.

The Lord will answer. He has promised :

Jer 33. 3

*Call to me and I will answer you !*

Let us take the simple example of a young Christian who asks : "Can I go dancing with my friends ?" It would be easy to say yes or no, but would not that encourage him to be passive ? Would it not be better to help him find for himself the Lord's answer, by showing him, for instance, some appropriate Bible verses on which to meditate ?

If too many Christians remain "spiritual babies" is this not partially due to the fact that their elders tend to "spoonfeed" them the answers ?<sup>1</sup>

### *U Ourselves*

It is true that outer noises screen the voice of the Holy Spirit, but the inner noises which perturb our thoughts do so even more : worry, guilt, bitterness. It sometimes takes time for our spirit to be the master on board ! Praying in tongues can help us here.

Heb 4. 9-10

*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God ...*

### ***B - SET ASIDE TIMES OF SILENCE***

If we train ourselves to listen to the Holy Spirit, (we shall see how to do this later on) during our private devotions, we shall acquire the habit of doing this in the middle of our daily routine.

Neh 2. 4-5

Nehemiah prayed to the Lord in the middle of a conversation with the king.



One day I had so much to do that I didn't know where to start. Does this happen to you ? I stopped for a moment, to listen to the Lord. Then I organised my timetable according to the thoughts I received. What a relief !

Try it. It is simple and it works !

Another time I "landed myself in it" as we say. The Lord showed me later that I could have avoided a torn meniscus and nine months of physiotherapy, if only I had had the reflex to consult him, when I was hesitating between two ski runs. Is God not present in all the details of his children's lives ?

### ***C - FIND A QUIET PLACE***

Elie and I have our "Emmaus road" (away from the telephone) where we go together or separately to listen quietly to the Lord.

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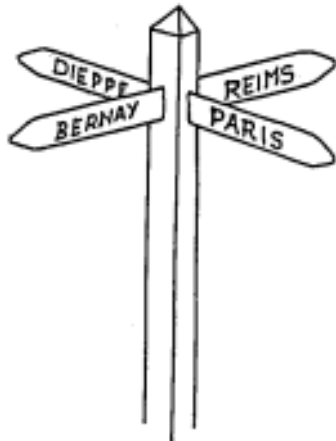
<sup>1</sup> Watchman Nee said : "one of the reasons that new converts are kept from receiving the fullness of the Spirit is the fact that the apostles established amidst them to pasture the flock, take over tasks belonging to the Holy Spirit !" See : *The Normal Christian Church Life*.



### 3 - PRACTICE LISTENING

Ro 15. 23-24

Often, common sense is all that is needed. The apostle Paul used his mind to make plans. The Lord gave us a mind to use. We are not going to ask the Lord if we should get up in the morning ! It is when we are hesitating as to what to do, that we must ask him.



One particular Saturday, my husband and I were concerned with four meetings of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship. They were to take place respectively in Dieppe, Paris, Bernay and Reims, four different French cities.

Here are the principles which guided us, as we sought the Lord about this. They are quite simple.

- A - Use your will.
- B - Use your mind.
- C - Be relaxed.

#### **A - USE YOUR WILL**

We must use our will to put ourselves on the Holy Spirit's wavelength :

Jas 4. 7

*Submit yourselves to God,  
Resist the devil and  
He will flee from you.*

#### ***Submit yourselves to God***

2Co 10. 5

We renounced our preferences (We would have liked to go to Bernay because of the speaker whose testimony we wanted to hear). By an act of will, we "set our counters to zero", without worrying about the fact that our feelings had not changed.

#### ***Resist the devil***

We forbade the devil to interfere with our thoughts and ordered him to be quiet, in Jesus' name.

Ps 18. 3

#### ***He will flee from you***

We entered into God's presence with praise and praying in tongues. Was not the *altar of perfumes*, symbol of praise, placed at the entrance of the Most Holy Place, where God dwelt and spoke ?

**B - USE YOUR MIND.**

God tells Christians to use their minds !

1Co 14. 20

*Brothers, stop thinking like children ...  
In your thinking be adults.*

Lk 2. 47

Jesus has an astonishing mind ... saturated with the Scripture and submitted to the Holy Spirit.

**1 - We hear the Holy Spirit on the inside**

Jesus listened and heard the Holy Spirit on the inside :

Jn 5. 30

*By myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear ...*

Jn 14. 17

It is the same Holy Spirit who is in us.  
It is the same Holy Spirit who speaks to us.  
It is on the inside that we hear him too.

**2 - The role of the mind**

We shall later see how necessary the mind is in discerning where our thoughts are coming from. Let us consider now its role in receiving the thoughts of God.<sup>1</sup>

The principle of **the priming of a pump**, will help us :

If we want to obtain water from a well when the pump is not primed, we pour water over the head of the pump to make it water-tight again. Then we can draw up water from the well by activating the pump handle. At first, it is water poured from outside which comes out of the tap, together with some air. But after a certain time, it is water from the well.

It is the same when we ask the Lord a question. We must not wait passively for a reply. Without making this rule into a general principle, let us just say that it is often necessary to "prime the pump" by thinking about the question, quietly, in the presence of the Lord. Won't the God of peace who sanctifies us wholly, sanctify our mind ?

Initially, it is our own thoughts which come out, like the water poured from the outside. Then the thoughts of the Lord come to us, just like the water from the well. We recognise them easily : they are beyond our understanding. They are simple and easy to put into practice. We feel liberated. We marvel at the reply !



<sup>1</sup> See *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee. Chapter : "The mind helping the spirit."

Let us say that in this comparison :

- The well represents our spirit,
- The water in the well : the thoughts of the Holy Spirit,
- The water on the outside : our own thoughts and reflections,
- And the pump : our mind.

It is often a lack of understanding of this principle which explains the failure of many Christians who, despite their good intentions, do not manage to hear the voice of the Lord. It is true that we can receive revelations spontaneously, without thinking, but it **usually** happens as we have shown.

In short :

We receive the thoughts of the Holy Spirit and acquire a conviction, while we are reflecting in prayer on the question asked. We must certainly never empty our minds !  
We must not be passive.

According to the same principle, Jesus asked for participation in the miracles he performed. To keep the same image, he asked for a gesture, an act of faith, in order "to prime the pump" of the power of God :

Mk 3.5

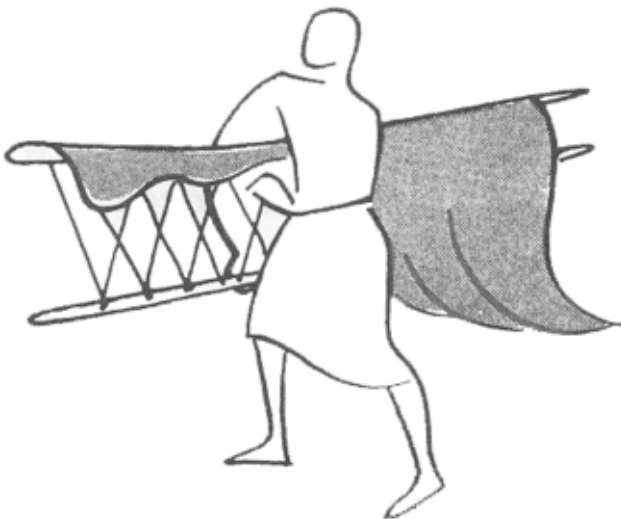
- *Stretch out your hand !*

Jn 9. 7

- *Go and wash !*

Mk 2. 11

- *Get up, take up your mat and go home !*



### 3 - Participate : why ?

Simply because the Holy Spirit respects our freedom too much to act without us.

1Co 3. 9

*We are co-workers with God.*

Ac 15. 28

*It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us ...*

Demons, on the other hand, seek to dominate and manipulate. Passivity is the best gateway we can give them.

**C - BE RELAXED**

Isa 30. 15

*In quietness and trust is your strength ...*

Heb 11. 6

*Anyone who comes to God must believe ...  
That he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

When we meditate quietly and calmly in the presence of God, we can receive a thought, a picture, an impression, a Bible verse ... We can have a conversation with the Lord about what we receive. For example, sometimes we say "Lord, if this thought comes from you, would you confirm it with a Bible verse."

?

**Let us return to the question we asked the Lord :**

What did he have to say to us about these four meetings which were to take place on the same day ?

As far as I am concerned, the inner dialogue went like this :

- " Are you going to these meetings for yourself or for other people ?  
 – For others, Lord.  
 – Then, where do you think they most need you ?  
 – In Reims, I replied, without hesitation.  
 – Then go to Reims ! "

The discernment (we shall deal with the subject in the following chapter) was easy, because my husband received the same thoughts in another form. What a marvellous meeting we had in Reims ! It is as simple as that.

Let us not make this process neither an exclusive one, nor the privilege of a special category of super-spiritual Christians.

1Jn 5. 14-15

However, listening to the Lord is essential for anyone standing in the gap to intercede. In this way, it is God himself who gives direction to our prayer ... in the direction of the answer !



We are sharing these very ordinary experiences in order to encourage Christians to enter into the wonderful adventure of listening to the Holy Spirit ... which **transforms prayer into dialogue.**

## 4 - KNOW HOW TO WAIT

The Lord answers immediately when necessary, but he often shows the way one step at a time.

Nu 9. 8 *Wait until I find out what the Lord commands concerning you ...*

replied Moses, to the men who had come to ask his advice about the celebration of the Passover.

Gal 1. 15-18 Paul waited *three years* before going to see the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

Jesus waited, with calm assurance, until the Father showed him the works he had to do.

Jn 5. 19-20 *The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does ... For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he does.*

Jn 17. 22-23 We can have the same assurance because the Father loves us as he loves Jesus :

**Jesus was always in time with his Father :**

Jn 2.4, 7.8, 11.6, 13.1, 17.1

### ***FIRST EXAMPLE : TO MAKE A DECISION***

We have asked the Lord a question. A fortnight later, there is still no reply ! What should we do ? According to the principle we have just defined :

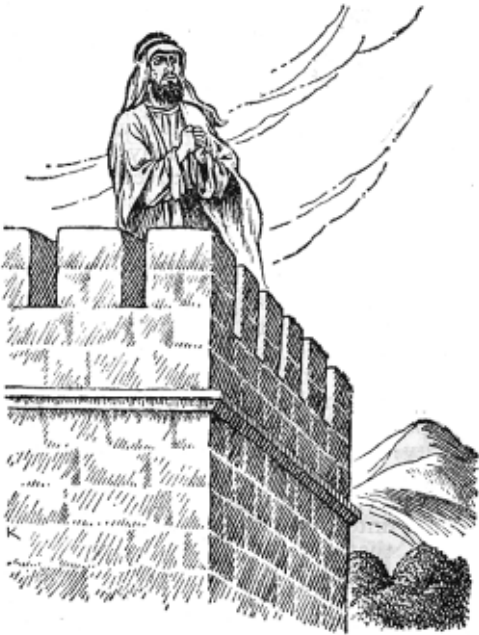
#### ***- Stay relaxed***

It is an order and it is possible, as much as we know that the answer will certainly come, according to God's promises.

Php 4. 6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything ... present your requests to God.*

Ps 25. 12 (RSV) *Who is the man that fears the Lord ? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.*





- ***Do not take any initiative***

Until we have received absolute certitude, we must continue to assume our former responsibilities.

This is what I did, for example, when I was considering stopping my professional career with a view to a new ministry.

- ***Do not be passive***

We must continue to think, to pray, to listen, to seek. We must watch out for the answer as Habakkuk says :

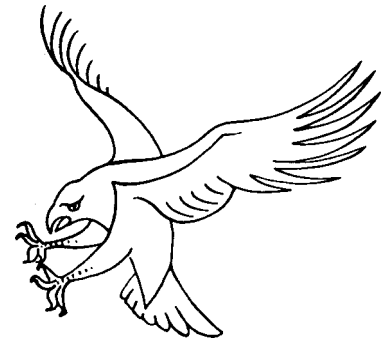
Hab 2. 1-3

*I will stand at my watch ... I will look for what he will say to me ... If the answer is slow in coming, wait for it. It will certainly come, and it will not disappoint you.*

***SECOND EXAMPLE : TESTED AND AFFLICTED***

Perhaps you have lost a child, despite prayers for healing ... or else, you are still sick despite the laying on of hands and prayers.

You wonder why you have not received the answer and what the Lord has to say about this ?<sup>1</sup>



Ge 15. 11

But instead of chasing away the birds of prey of impatience and doubt, and waiting for the reply, have you not accepted non-biblical "good" reasons to explain and justify the situation, such as :

<sup>1</sup>Some Christians consider sickness as being the will of God for our sanctification. Let's be clear : sickness can sometimes be connected to a lack of sanctification - *Jas 5. 15-16* - but in no case, does it confer sanctification. In the same way, tests are a warning to the sinner, but do not bring salvation to him. Jesus alone is our salvation and our sanctification (*1 Co 1. 30*). See *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee, chapter : "The sickness and the self".

**Sanctification** starts with being set free from the power of sin and from the Law, which means putting off our old nature, and it goes on with putting on the nature of Christ and so, shining brighter and brighter (*Pr 4. 18*).

"After all, the Lord does not always heal.  
Therefore, God does not always want to heal."

Or else, you may have based your arguments on a Bible verse, taken out of context, such as :

Ro 11. 33

*How unsearchable his judgments,  
and his paths beyond tracing out !*

We can always find a pseudo-answer to suit the situation, but thinking about it honestly, we can see that it is generally not biblical and based upon human experience, even incredulity. We know perfectly well that it is not satisfactory and that it blocks our communion with the Lord.

Mt 7. 7-8

Why ? Because we have not got to the bottom of the question before the Lord.  
**We have not waited for the reply.**

Isa 66. 12-14

Because of this we have not received the revelation, the blessing, or the consolation, which the Holy Spirit can and wants to give us.

Heb 6. 12

*We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who,  
through faith and patience, inherit what has been promised.*



As soon as you began to pray,  
An answer was given,  
Which I have come to tell you ...

Da 9. 23



1Th 5. 21

Even if we have understood how the Holy Spirit speaks and how to listen to Him, we are entitled to ask :

But how do I know  
if it is really the Holy Spirit speaking ?

We are going to try to answer this question in the following chapter.

**END OF CHAPTER**

## ***MOTORWAY A 13 - 130 KMS AN HOUR !***

We were approaching Rouen. It was cold. Having been on the road for two days, I was eager to get home. Denise said :

- " Fabienne has asked us to pray for her sick child.
- We are quite close. Why don't we go there ?
- I am exhausted ! Some other time ...
- What about asking the Lord ?"

Well, now I was caught ! At 130 kms an hour, there we were, listening to the Lord. I had really had enough. Moreover what I heard was not at all what I wanted to hear. Perhaps Denise had received something else. After all, was it really the Lord who had spoken to me ?

- Have you received anything ? I asked her.
- Yes ! The Lord told me to go along with what you received. So, what did he say to you ?
- He reminded me that he never refused to answer a request of this kind !

So we went ... We had a lot of trouble finding the apartment block in the cold and dark. The child's father was there. An unbeliever ! I felt no anointing at all. Finally, I took the baby in my arms and prayed a short prayer : "Lord, heal this child ! Amen." And I gave the baby back to his mother. I was pleased to leave.

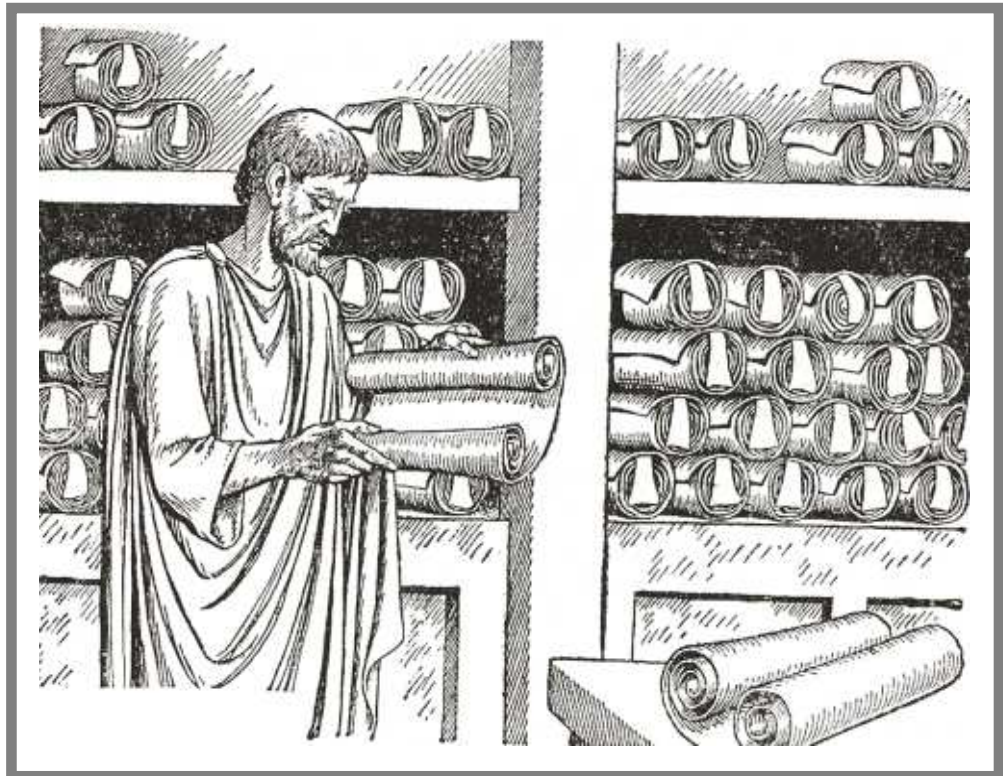
But this is the best part of the story : the child was healed and the father converted !

It is always worth listening to the Lord, even when driving at 130 kms an hour, and even when tired !





# DISCERNING



*They examined the Scriptures every day  
to see if what Paul said was true.  
(Ac 17.11)*

# DISCERNING

We sometimes hear people say : "The Lord told me ... The Lord told me ..."  
But was it really the Lord ? How can we know ?

Let us answer the question by looking into the roots of the various thoughts, images and visions which we receive. We shall then suggest a few tests for discernment. Finally, we shall have a look at the traps to avoid. In short, we are going to examine :

- |  |
|--|
| <p><i>I. Three sources</i><br/><i>II. Nine tests</i><br/><i>III. Four traps.</i></p> |
|--|

## I - Three sources

Everything we receive (thoughts in particular) can come from three sources :

- 1 - God*
- 2 - Ourselves (our soul)*
- 3 - Satanic powers.*

Satan has a talent for pumping thoughts into our minds and making us think that they come from us. These thoughts are usually shaped in the first person :

"**I am** just making up this speaking in tongues.  
It is not from the Holy Spirit."

"**I am** no good at anything ! **I can't** even cook !"

***BEWARE ! Our thoughts truly are a battlefield.***

1Jn 4. 1

*Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits  
to see whether they are from God.*

Eph 5. 10

*Find out what pleases the Lord.*

Pr 14. 15

*A simple man believes anything, but a prudent  
man gives thought to his steps.*

## II - Nine tests

Let us propose nine tests to discern truth from error and examine them one by one. They can apply to ordinary revelations, as well as to the most spectacular visions.

### NINE TESTS TO DISCERN

- 1 - *The Word of God*
- 2 - *An attitude of obedience*
- 3 - *Freedom*
- 4 - *Simplicity*
- 5 - *Common sense*
- 6 - *A sense of peace*
- 7 - *Discerning with our brothers*
- 8 - *Prophecies*
- 9 - *Love.*

### 1 - THE WORD OF GOD

Ex 25. 21-22

The tablets of the Law were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, in the Holy of Holies. God would speak to his people from there. In the same way, what he says to us today must be in line with his Word. The first test could therefore be expressed thus :

**What does the Bible say on the subject ?**

#### ***A - HOLY SPIRIT AND WORD OF GOD : INSEPARABLE !***

2Pe 1. 20-21

The Holy Spirit, who is the actual author of the Bible, never contradicts himself.

Gal 1. 8-9

We must accept the Word of God just as it is, without trying to adapt it to our own ideas. Everything that does not conform to the Word (thoughts, visions, dreams ...) is to be rejected.

1Co 4. 6

*Do not go beyond what is written.*

Rev 22. 18-19

Let us not add anything, nor take anything away.

#### ***B - EVEN THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE TESTED***

2Co 13. 1

We must test the Word of God with the Word of God ! This prevents us from putting a false interpretation on a verse taken out of its context :

Mt 4. 4

*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*

Mt 4. 5-6  
2Pe 3. 16

Satan knows well how to quote the Bible and twist its meaning.  
This is the way he manipulates *ignorant and unstable people*.

Jer 23. 36

*You distort the words of the living God,*  
says Jeremiah to the false prophets.

### **C - LET US AVOID FALSE INTERPRETATIONS :**

Eph 1. 11

- ***In him we were also chosen, having been predestined ...***

Some people have taken this verse as meaning that only certain people are destined for salvation. However, other verses exclude this interpretation :

1Ti 2. 4

*God wants all men to be saved  
and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

2Pe 3. 9

*He wants everyone to come to repentance.*

Mt 7. 1

- ***Do not judge, or you too will be judged***

Some people have taken it as meaning that we have no right to hold an opinion. Let us shed light on this by looking at other passages in the Bible :

1Co 2. 15

*The spiritual man makes judgments about all things,  
but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment.*

Gal 2. 11-14

*When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face,  
because he was clearly in the wrong ...  
He was not acting in line with the truth of the Gospel.*

Not judging means not locking someone up in judgment or condemnation.

Lk 16. 13

- ***You cannot serve both God and Money***

We are sometimes inclined to glorify material poverty, by mistaking it for humility. This is certainly not God's way of thinking. The apostle John wrote to Gaius :

3Jn 1-2 (K.J.V.)

*I pray that you may prosper in all  
things ... just as your soul prospers.*



1Ti 6. 10

*The love of money, and not money in itself, is a root of all kinds of evil. The Lord is for his children's prosperity but against covetousness and selfishness. It would be easy to add to the list, but ...*

Ac 17. 11

**Let us imitate the Bereans !** They were examining *the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*

## 2 - OBEDIENT ATTITUDE

### A - AN OBEDIENT ATTITUDE IS NECESSARY TO DISCERN ...

Jesus clearly states that such an attitude enables us to discern the will of God.

Jn 7. 17

*If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out*

Jn 5. 30

*whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.*

### B - OBEDIENCE TO GOD

Ac 4. 19

It means unconditional surrender to God, that is to say to his Word, and not to a man or a structure. Some people would like to impose their own point of view and substitute for the Holy Spirit. Paul himself was careful not to rule over the Corinthians' faith. However, when defending the truth was at stake, he never once relented for the sake of submission.<sup>1</sup> In fact, true spiritual authority, which is derived from divine authority, requires first and foremost that the one who exerts it must :

2Co 1. 24

Gal 2. 5

Ti 1. 7-9

*Hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught ...*

This is the basis for authority in the Body of Christ. The ministry gifts thus established can be helpful, provided we do not refrain from personally seeking the will of God.

Ro 6. 16

***DON'T YOU KNOW THAT  
YOU ARE SLAVES TO  
THE ONE WHOM YOU OBEY ?***

### C - OBEDIENT ATTITUDE : WORK OF SANCTIFICATION

1Th 5. 23-24

It is God who does the work of sanctification in us. Our part is to desire it. Only He can give us an obedient heart. In fact :

Ro 8. 7 (K.J.V.)

*The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

<sup>1</sup> We are prone to replace obedience to God by unconditional submission to others. We are asked to submit to one another *out of reverence for Christ* (Eph 5. 21). It is possible, if we listen to the Holy Spirit together. See chapter 12 of *Spiritual Authority* by Watchman Nee.

### 3 - FREEDOM

2Co 3. 17                   Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

1Sa 14. 24                   Anything that burdens us with a constraint, or a lack of inner freedom, is suspect. For example, the fast imposed by Saul on the whole people, though fighting had worn them out, was not inspired by God.

### 4 - SIMPLICITY

2Co 11. 3 (K.J.V.)           Paul is afraid the minds of the Corinthians might be corrupted and stray from *the simplicity of Christ*.

### 5 - COMMON SENSE

#### A - COMMON SENSE AND DISCERNMENT

The intellect is valuable in discerning and in listening to the Holy Spirit.

Eph 5. 17                   *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

Ps 32. 9                   *Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle.*



Pr 3. 5-6                   God may ask of us something beyond our understanding - In this sense we cannot *lean on our own understanding* - However, it will never be inconsistent with the common sense he has given us.

Jdg 11. 30-35               **Jephthah** should have repented of his stupidity instead of sacrificing his daughter as a burnt offering. God does not ask us to stick to an error, but rather to repent. That is to say we must seek divine guidance once we have acknowledged our stupidity and not make matters worse !

Ex 18. 13-26               When **Moses** was overwhelmed with work, he got the solution to his problem through some mere common sense advice : "Delegate your authority !"

## ***B - COMMON SENSE AND UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES***

Understanding the Scriptures is also a matter of common sense. It is not a question of making God say whatever you want on the pretext that it is written in the Bible. So as not to go off track, it is good to ask oneself two questions :

### ***1 - Who is speaking ?***

Jb 42. 7

- \* Is it God ? (Directly or through the voice of a prophet or an apostle).
- \* Is it a man ? In this case, there could be quite a muddle ! God never put his signature to the speeches of Job's friends !
- \* Is it Satan ?

### ***2 - Whom is this Word meant for ?***



- \* The Gentiles ?
- \* The Jews only ?
- \* Jews and Christians ? For example the promises of God.
- \* All Christians ? (The New Testament and Epistles especially).
- \* Simply a few Christians ? In this case, the Word is given once only and the context is clear about it.

How many fruitless controversies have risen from our failure to consider these questions ! In short, all of the Word of God is true and inspired by God, but it does not all apply to us in the same way.

Mt 15. 16

Mt 16. 9

*Are you still so dull ?  
Do you still not understand ?  
Said Jesus to his disciples.*







## 7 - DISCERNING WITH OUR BROTHERS

1Co 12. 21, 27

We are *the Body of Christ* and we need each other. Our brothers and sisters' discernment is very valuable in order to validate or invalidate what we ourselves have received. We shall expand on this subject in chapter 9.



## 8 - PROPHECIES

1Th 5. 20- 21 *Do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good.*

Dt 13 1-4 A prophecy, even if it is **fulfilled**, may not come from God.

Jn 3. 1-10  
2Ki 20. 1-6 A prophecy, even if it is **unfulfilled**, may come from God !

Jer 18. 7-10 There are some prophecies which are conditional.

## 9 - LOVE

We have saved the best until last !

***God is Love !***

1Jn 4. 16  
Isa 40. 11



2Co 2. 4

Everything coming from him is stamped with love. Even his reproaches are encouraging !

## III - Four traps

### 1 - THE OPINION OF THE MAJORITY

1Co 10. 11

What everybody, even all the people of God, thinks, says or does, is not a criterion of truth. The history of Israel, which is written to set an example and to warn us, has much to teach us on the subject !

Nu 14. 10-11

*The whole assembly* wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua who had followed God's advice, versus everybody else.

1Sa 8. 4-9

*All the elders* of Israel demanded a King despite the advice of Samuel and of God himself !

Ac 25. 24

*The whole Jewish community* demanded Paul's death.

Mk 7. 9-13

We can nullify the Word of God for the sake of worldly customs and traditions. We can even go as far as to do away with the Living Word in the name of the Law !

The whole crowd shouted to Pilate :

**CRUCIFY HIM !**



## 2 - FALSE PROPHECIES

1Ki 13. 11-24

It can be seriously misleading to make a decision based only upon a prophecy. We have witnessed a disastrous financial situation, broken marriage and ministry doomed to failure, because of false prophecies. The gifts of God are perfect, but the channels through which they flow are not so. Here are a few landmarks:

A prophecy from God must

1Jn 4. 1-3

1Co 14. 3-4

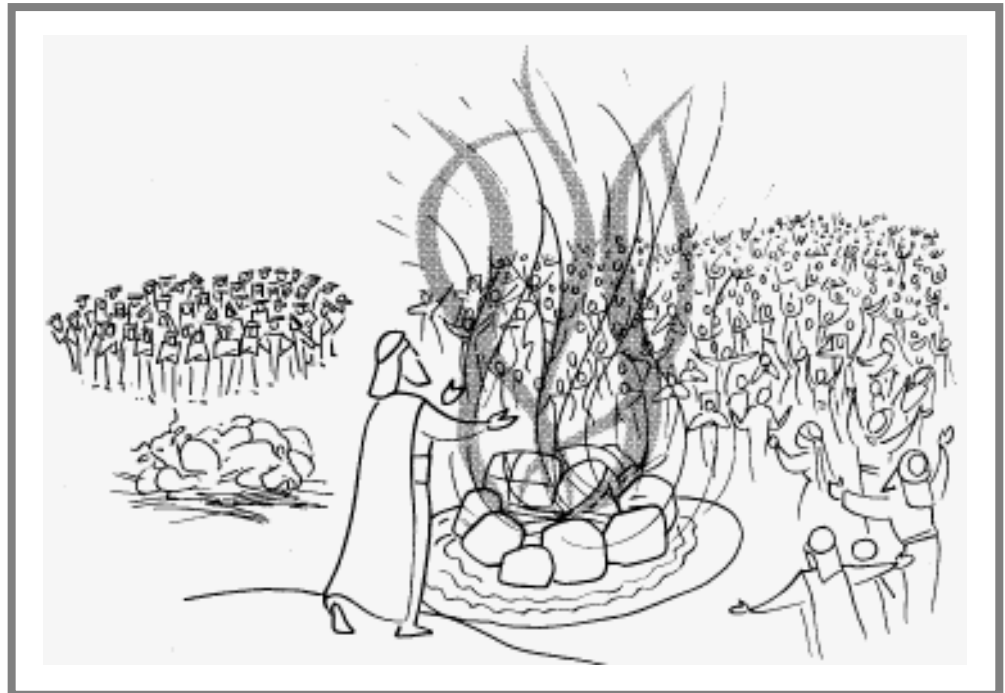
- Be in line with the Word of God.
- Be encouraging and *edifying*.
- Confirm what we have already received, or what we will receive directly from the Lord.

Mt 7. 15-20

A true prophet is recognized *by his fruits* and the quality of his life.<sup>1</sup>

We must not run after prophecies. Each Christian must first seek the face of the Lord for himself, to receive his directives. However, if the Lord sees fit to allow a prophecy as well, hallelujah !

### ELIJAH AND THE FALSE PROPHETS OF BAAL



<sup>1</sup> The ministry of the prophet goes well beyond giving prophecies, but the subject is not within the scope of our book.

### 3 - FLEECE

Isa 7. 11

Sometimes God uses circumstances to speak to us. We can ask him for a sign to strengthen and back up a conviction, when an important decision is at stake. Isn't it wonderful ? However, we must allow him to be free to choose the sign himself. No manipulating of the Holy Spirit !

***What does "putting out a fleece" mean ?***

For example, it may be saying : "Lord, if you want me to do such or such a thing, then bring this or that to pass."

Lk 4. 16-18

It can also be to open the Bible at random and look at the passage we have fallen upon as the Lord's answer. In the synagogue, Jesus *found the place where it is written* about himself in Isaiah. He did not read it at random.

***Putting out a fleece can be an easy option***

It keeps us from seeking the face of the Lord and waiting patiently for his answer. It is a valid step for a spiritual baby, in certain cases. However, there is a better way : God can speak to us directly.

***Putting out a fleece can be dangerous***

2Co 4. 4

Satan, *the god of this age*, can intervene in the circumstances, and make us think that it came from God.

Jdg 6. 36-40

True enough, Gideon put out a fleece before the Lord. And it worked !

1Sa 14. 6-15

The same thing happened to Jonathan.



But Gideon and Jonathan were neither priests, nor kings, nor prophets.



Heb 9. 8

Access to the Holy of Holies was not yet open to them. They were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as we are. They were under the Old Covenant.

- \* Kenneth E. Hagin tells us how he was "fleeced" to quote his own words, when he accepted the position of pastor in a church to which God had not called him. He had put out a fleece : "Lord, if the vote is one hundred per cent for me, I shall consider it is your will that I accept this position." This is exactly what happened, but he lost all the anointing in the exercise of his ministry for fourteen months until he realized he was in the wrong place and left this church.

"I would be full of fire as I prepared my sermons, he said, but the moment I went into the church, it was as if someone had poured a bucket of cold water over me ..."

- \* When our son John said to the Lord : "If what my parents are telling me about Jesus is true, then make this glass here move onto that table over there ! One, two, three !" ... It didn't work !

## 4 - SATANIC SIGNS AND WONDERS

2Th 2. 9-10

*The work of Satan will be displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

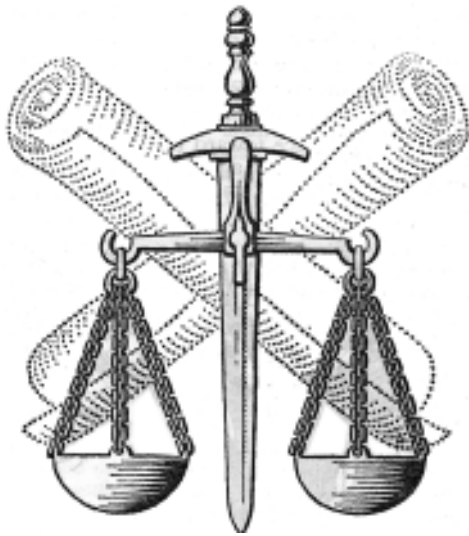
Mt 24. 24

*False Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect, if that were possible.*



2Co 11. 14

Once again, **the key to discern is the Word of God.** However subtly disguised the visions, apparitions and words of satanic origin may be, there is always a mixture ... Whoever has a love for the truth will eventually see clearly.



*Three sources ...*

*Nine tests ...*

*Four traps ...*

We could say more ... We have given the broad outlines to discernment. To sum up, let us come back to this wonderful promise of Jesus :

Jn 7. 17

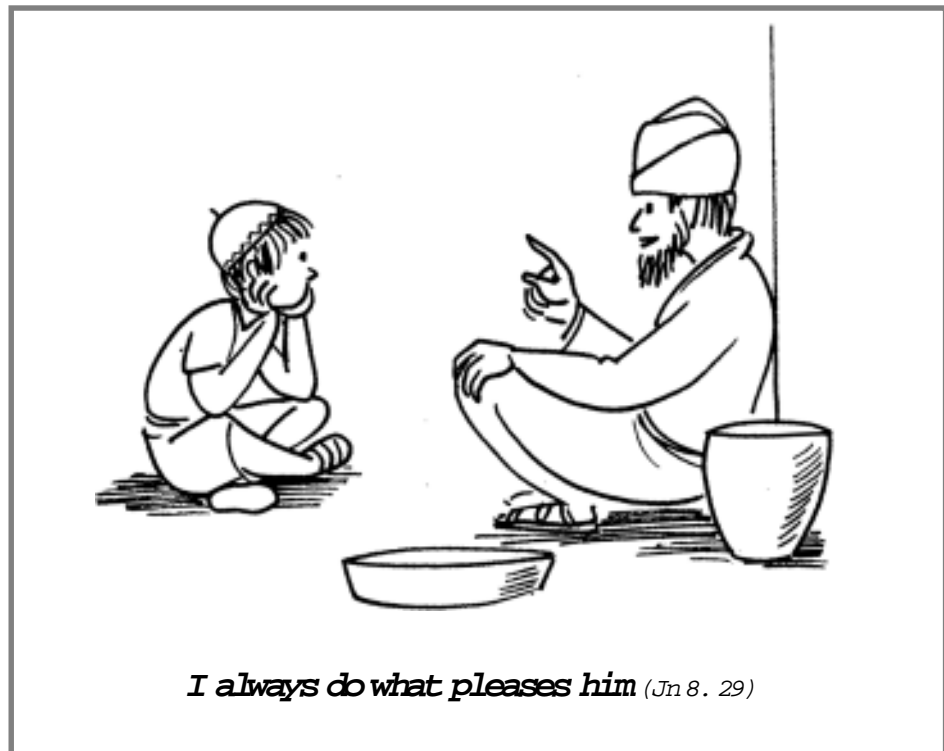
***If anyone chooses to do God's will ...***

He will identify the origin of the thoughts, intuitions, pictures, visions ... whatever he receives, and possibly whatever others receive. This is precisely the subject we are going to deal with in the following chapter :

**OBEYING !**

***END OF CHAPTER***

# OBEYING



- Jn 1. 12                      We are accountable in proportion to the revelation we have received. If we are not ready to obey, it is better not to consult the Lord !
- 1Sa 10. 1-10  
1Sa 13. 8-14                      Saul lost his kingship because he did not obey, despite all the signs he had received.
- Dt 29. 29                      *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*
- Heb 3. 7-8                      *Today, if you hear his voice,  
Do not harden your hearts ...*



# I - Let us not be afraid of obeying

## 1 - IT IS EASY

What God asks us to do is always clear and within our reach.

2Ki 5. 10-14

*Naaman*, the leper, simply had to wash seven times in the Jordan, to receive his healing.

## 2 - IT IS AN ACT OF FAITH

Heb 11. 8

Walking by the Spirit means walking by faith. It means obeying one step at a time, just like *Abraham* who set out *even though he did not know where he was going*.

Jn 2. 7-8

At *Cana*, the servants began by filling the jars with water. *Only then*, Jesus told them what to do with them.

Ex 14. 16-21

Faith becomes effective as soon as it is expressed in an act of obedience.



Jas 2. 26 - *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

Ac 8. 26-31

*Philip* went to the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, and once he was there, the Holy Spirit told him what he had to do.

We needed a photocopier machine. Elie received this thought from the Lord :



"Go to such a shop in Paris and once there, I will show you the one you should buy." We obeyed and once we were in the shop, *he knew* which one to choose : it was a model on special offer which afforded reductions and enlargements. At the time we did not even think of buying such a sophisticated machine and we didn't know that we would have need of it in the future.

As to the Lord, he knew ! Isn't it wonderful to be led by him and to obey him ?

### 3 - WHAT IF I WERE MAKING A MISTAKE ?

#### ***A - USE COMMON SENSE***

As long as we don't have a clear answer, let us use common sense ! The mind, which has been renewed by the Word of God and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, is a valuable help and should not be disregarded.

#### ***B - BE MODEST***

Mt 25. 21

Let us start with little things when there is hardly any risk.

I had an abscess on my left eyelid. The doctor had told me to consult a specialist if it had not cleared up after a week's treatment. We were due to go to the city of Tours and there had been no improvement. What should I do ? I asked the Lord and received this thought :

"Wait. See about it when you get back."

We set off free from care. The risk was small. On our return, there was no trace of the abscess at all !

#### ***C - BE HUMBLE***

Mt 18. 4

We must be humble enough to accept the idea that we can make a mistake. The risk is there, we cannot deny it ! However, all things considered, do we not run an even greater risk of making a mistake by refusing to listen to the Holy Spirit ?

*Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth. (Nu 12. 3)*

This is why :

*The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. (Ex 33. 11)*

Mt 11. 29

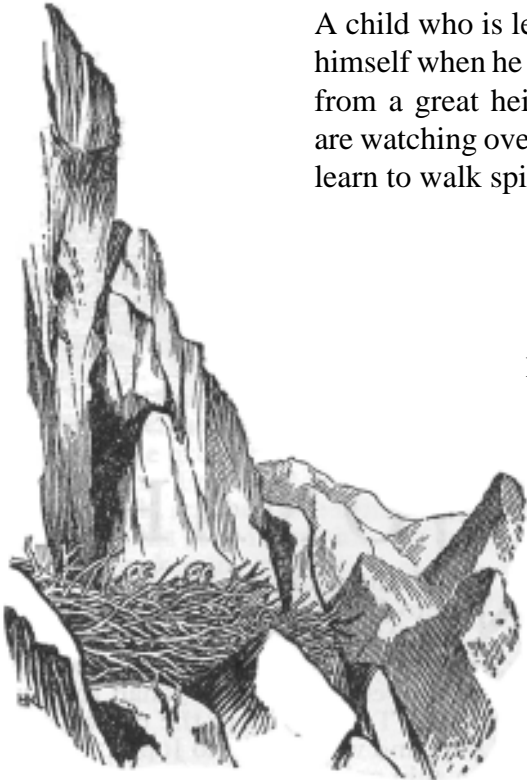
Humility is one of the essential character traits of Jesus and of the disciple learning to walk like him.

Ps 25. 9

*He guides the humble ... and teaches them his way.*

***D - OUR FATHER WATCHES OVER US***

A child who is learning to walk does not hurt himself when he falls, because he does not fall from a great height and because his parents are watching over him. It is the same when we learn to walk spiritually.



Dt 32. 10-12

As the eagle teaches *its young* to fly, so God *spreads his wings* to catch us if need be. Our Heavenly Father will not allow us to make serious mistakes if we have an obedient heart. On the contrary,

**He will teach us through our mistakes.**

Heb 5. 14

He will make us into spiritual adults *who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Jer 18. 4-6

*Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel !*





I can still see myself lying on a stretcher in the maternity hospital, because of a miscarriage.<sup>1</sup> I was desperately struggling not to rebel. The more I forced myself to say over and over again :

*Father, not as I will, but as you will ...*

The less my heart was in it. I could not bear to hear the cries of healthy living babies, that kept reaching my ears. After an hour or so, I cannot say exactly how long, the Lord spoke to me :

Gal 2. 20

"Do you not know that you are no longer the one who lives, but it is Christ who lives in you ? When will you allow me to do what you are quite unable to achieve by your own strength ?"

Isa 26. 12

I accepted and stopped struggling. I did not even try to pray again. Christ in me, by the power of the Holy Spirit, said *yes* to the Father, and enveloped me in a cloak of peace,

Php 4. 7

*The peace of God, which transcends all understanding ...*

### 3 - OBEYING IMMEDIATELY

Mt 2. 13-14

**Immediately**, just as Joseph set off in the middle of the night, to flee to Egypt, with Mary and Jesus.



**Immediately does not mean before** we have acquired absolute certainty, when an important decision is at stake. We must be :

Certain that it was the Lord speaking,  
Certain that it is the right time to go.

God can call at a certain time, and give the order to set out months or even years later.

---

<sup>1</sup> We do not think that such a situation is by itself the perfect will of God, but this is another subject.

## 4 - OBEYING FULLY

Ge 6. 22

*Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*

Ge 7. 5

No more, no less.

Pr 18. 9

*One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.*

In 1965, the region of Santa Rosa in Guatemala suffered from a severe drought. Animals died, crops were ruined, businesses went bankrupt, people left ... There was a shortage of water everywhere. People wept, did penance, begged God to send rain. It did not rain, but the Holy Spirit spoke to a small congregation, by means of a message in tongues and its interpretation :

"Dig a well in the pastor's courtyard.  
You will find water there."

There was strong opposition when the pastor and the elders began to obey. People called them fanatics and lunatics ... particularly as the ground of the pastor's yard was very hard and the shape of a mound. They went on, though. On the fourth day they hit a huge block of stone. It took them two days to remove it. Then ...

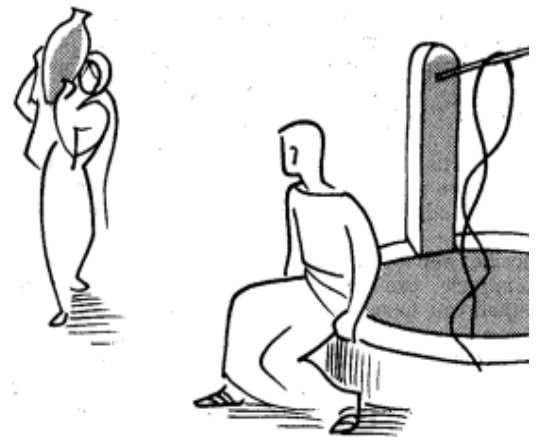
The water gushed forth ! Pure plentiful water ! The entire town came to the well, which was the only source of water in the region. Two of the elders stood guard and welcomed people saying :

Jn 4. 13-14

*Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,  
But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst !*

Ac 2. 47

The town was transformed and the Lord added hundreds of people to the church that year. Such was the fruit of the total obedience of a handful of Christians.



### ***OBEYING FULLY DOES NOT MEAN GOING BEYOND GOD'S ASKING***

**We must learn to say no** to the demands that do not come from God. The enemy tries to wear us out, whereas Jesus says to us :

Mt 11. 29-30

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

## 5 - OBEYING DESPITE THE CONSEQUENCES

Ge 22. 7-8

In reply to Isaac's embarrassing question :Where is the lamb for the burnt offering ? Abraham simply answered :

*God himself will provide.*

Indeed, when God sends, he provides. The consequences of our obeying the Lord are not our problem.



Ac 8. 5-8

Philip left Samaria, without worrying about the work that he had begun in this country in full revival.

A Rwandan politician was due to be re-elected as the leader of his party. He was converted just before the elections, and God asked him to abandon politics. He obeyed despite pressure and threats : "If you do not accept a new term, we will burn you, your family and your belongings." He had ten days to think it over ...

He remained firm in his decision to obey God. When ten days had gone by, they shut him up in his house with his family. While they were getting ready to set fire to it, in front of the crowd that had gathered, a violent storm broke out. Many people were killed by lightning and the survivors ran away. This man who had been obedient to the point of death - and the death of his family - became instrumental in a powerful revival.<sup>1</sup>

Ac 1. 1

When we obey the Word of the Lord, we continue the work that Jesus has *begun*.

Rev 19. 7-8

We achieve *the righteous acts of the saints* which are *the fine linen, bright and clean* the Bride will adorn herself with, before the wedding of the Lamb.

Is not Jesus waiting for this adornment to be ready ? **Then he will come back !**

***END OF CHAPTER***

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<sup>1</sup> *Signs and Wonders Today* (Ed. Vida).

# LISTENING

## IN A SMALL GROUP



In this chapter, we are suggesting an exercise for a small group. We have put this into practice many times and never been disappointed. We are in no way trying to establish a new "technique", as though all we had to do was to press a button to automatically hear the voice of God. Our goal is simply to help, encourage and reassure "beginners".

We shall start off with a biblical illustration. We shall then suggest a practical exercise for a small group. Finally, we shall see what a wonderful friendship the Lord thus offers us :

- I - Biblical illustration
- II - Practical exercise
- III - Having God as a friend ...



# I - Biblical illustration

2 Chronicles 20

What did King Jehoshaphat do to receive direction from the Lord in a critical situation ? <sup>1</sup> Let us read carefully :

Verses 1-5



*A vast army is advancing to attack him. Jehoshaphat immediately decides to enquire of the Lord.*

He assembles all the people of Judah. At this point, we might expect him to attend to what is most urgent and tell about the tragic situation he finds himself in. Not at all !

## \* **JEHOSHAPHAT BEGINS BY PRAISING THE LORD !**

It is the best way of entering into the presence of God and of getting ready to receive a word from him :

Verse 6

*Are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand ...*



## \* **JEHOSHAPHAT PROCLAIMS THE PROMISES OF GOD**

Verse 9

*If calamity comes upon us ... We will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.*

## \* **ONLYAFTERWARDS, DOES HE PRESENT HIS PROBLEM TO GOD**

Verses 10-12

His final words simply are : *We have no power ... We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you !*



<sup>1</sup> We have quoted this example from the teaching of **Douglas Calcott**, which was an inspiration to us for this chapter. This teaching took place in Ittré (Belgium) in August 1984, at a meeting for the leaders of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International.

**\* GOD GIVES A WORD**

Verses 13-19            In this case, he does it by using Jahaziel. God gives precise and reassuring guidance. Jehoshaphat and the whole people bow down to worship the Lord.

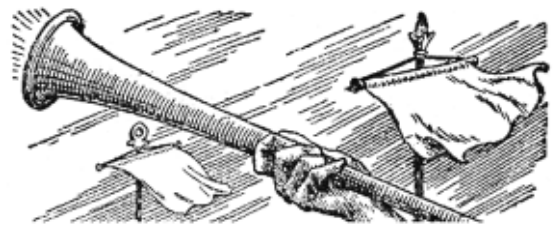
**\* JEHOSHAPHAT OBEYS**

Verses 20-21            He is no longer afraid. He can even impart his courage and confidence to others. He goes out to face the enemy, following the instructions given by God. He sets out with praise !

Immediately after this act of faith and obedience :

**\* GOD INTERVENES**

Verses 22-30            As they begin to sing and praise, the Lord sets ambushes against their enemies and they end up fighting against each other.



It takes three days for the Israelites to collect the plunder ! Then the people return to Jerusalem praising God. So, it all begins and ends with praise.

**\* JEHOSHAPHAT IS JUST A MAN**

Verses 35-37            A few verses later, the same Jehoshaphat associates himself with the ungodly king of Israel. He undertakes the building of boats, without consulting the Lord. We then see the Lord *destroy* his work !

What a striking contrast ! God is not bound by anybody. The only thing to which he pledges himself, is his Word. When we take a stand in line with the Word, we enter the flow of his power and blessing. But by going against God, Jehoshaphat deprived himself of the blessing.

Let us now see how we can put this teaching into practice.



## II - Practical exercise

Let us see first how to form a group to seek the Lord together, then what steps to take next.

### 1 - FORMING A GROUP

It is better not to be too many. The experience we are speaking of refers to small groups of four or five people. As a rule, couples should be in the same group. In order to listen to the Lord together,

*There must be confidence, friendship and transparency.*

We emphasize this strongly. Unless such conditions are met, it will be very difficult to receive the Lord's thoughts and to have the freedom and openness to share them. People must feel comfortable and unafraid of being judged or rejected when sharing something, even if what they have received may not seem relevant to the question asked.

*We cannot listen to the Lord's voice  
with just anybody.*



#### *Does it require spiritual maturity ?*

If we wait until we have reached the height of maturity to listen to the Lord in a group, we shall never do it ! Nevertheless, it is a good thing if among them there are one or two Christians already used to being led by the Holy Spirit and sensitive to his voice.

#### *Is it necessary to have a leader ?*

Yes, if a leader is meant to be someone who helps others to express themselves, and who makes each person feel comfortable and valuable within the group. Such a leader will know how to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and when the time comes to take another step.

## 2 - STEPS TO TAKE

Let us consider once again the steps taken by Jehoshaphat. They can help us as we begin to listen to the Lord as a group (and even individually).

- |                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| <i>1 - Defining the question</i> |
| <i>2 - Praising</i>              |
| <i>3 - Listening</i>             |
| <i>4 - Sharing</i>               |
| <i>5 - Discerning</i>            |
| <i>6 - Thanking</i>              |
| <i>7 - Obeying</i>               |

### 1 - DEFINING THE QUESTION

This is often what takes the most time. There must be only one question chosen per group. If several people each have a good question, the group could meet again later to deal with the other ones.

#### \* *Coming to real agreement*

Often, we think we are in agreement, but the interpretation of the question differs from one person to another. We must take time to listen to each other and make sure the problem is well defined. One question often conceals another one. Sometimes, we must stop discussing and ask the Lord to shed his light on the matter.

A young woman once asked this question in a group : "Should I keep my dog, my three cats ... and all the junk in my place ?" As we looked further into the matter, we discovered that the real problem was a serious feeling of insecurity. The Holy Spirit reminded her of the day when she had seen her mother throw away the toys she valued so much ... From that day on, in fact, she was seeking protection by surrounding herself with a crowd of animals and objects.

In another group, a woman asked : "Is it all right for me to start work again ? What do you think, Lord ?" In fact, the question screened off her frustration as a wife, due to a lack of communication with her husband. He was too busy to listen to her and they did not know how to seek advice from the Lord together for matters concerning them both.

*When the real question is found out,  
the answer is near at hand.*

**\* No closed questions**

A closed question leaves no alternative but a yes or no answer. There is no room for expansion. We must not programme or limit the Holy Spirit ! For example, we should not ask the Lord : "Should I do this or that ? but rather : "What should I do in this situation ?" Or else : "What do you think of this situation ?" And let us be precise.

So, let us not ask a closed question as did Joshua :

Jos 5. 13-15

- *Are you for us or for our enemies ?*
- *Neither ! replied the Commander of the army of the Lord.*

This reminds me of a snatch of conversation overheard at the dinner table one day when we were teaching this subject:

- *Would you like water or beer ?*
- *Neither ! Wine !*

**\* No speeches !**

A clear question does not need "wrapping up". When the phrasing is short, it shows that everyone is truly in agreement. King Jehoshaphat simply said :

2Ch 20. 12

*We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you !*

**2 - PRAISING**

Ps 22. 3 (K.J.V.)

*You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. Praise really helps us to disconnect from the problem and turn to the Lord, to hear his voice.*

*It is not by chance that the altar of perfumes was placed at the entrance to the Holy of Holies.*



Therefore, we set aside the problem and praise the Lord :

Ps 25. 15

*My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare !*

We might come up against a few difficulties here, because many Christians do not know what praise is. It is worth explaining : True praise consists in blessing somebody for who he is. To bless my husband or my wife is to name his or her qualities. To bless God is to proclaim his nature and his qualities. Each person should do this in turn and **briefly** :

- You are our Father !
- You are our Shepherd.
- You are the Prince of Peace.
- You are the light of the world !
- You are the God of the impossible ...

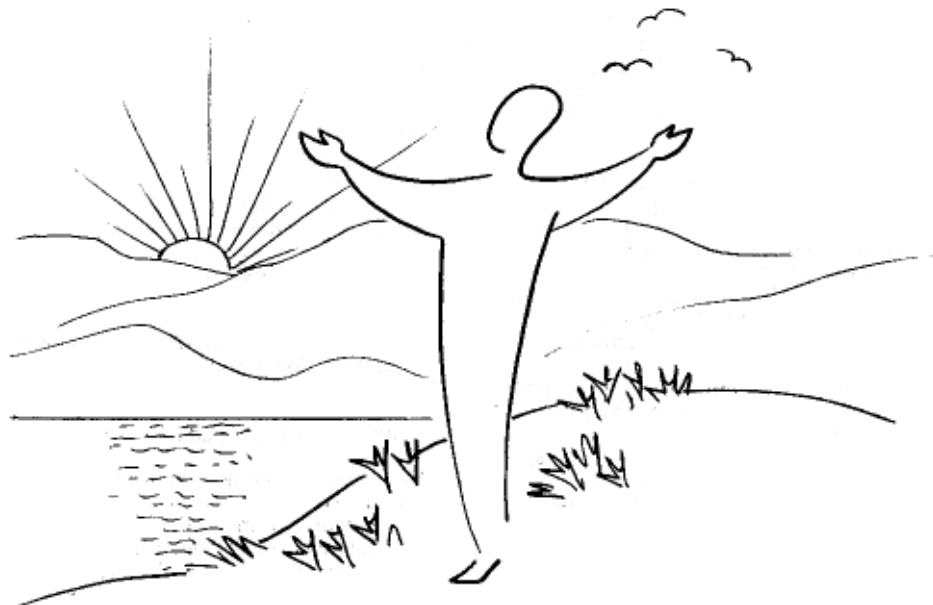
Singing and praying in tongues fit in here. If, however, someone begins to pray about a problem or to thank God for a blessing received, we must stop him tactfully and resume praise. We sometimes confuse praise and thanksgiving. Praise focuses entirely on God. Thanksgiving mentions his gifts and blessings, which more or less, draws our attention back to ourselves.

In this atmosphere of praise, the Holy Spirit often causes a promise of God to rise up in our hearts. It may be the beginning of the answer. Let us take this marvellous word of encouragement as an example :

Jer 29. 11

*For I know the plans I have for you,  
declares the Lord,  
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.*

When we sense the presence and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, it is time to ask the Lord the question, as simply as we have phrased it, and to listen to the answer.



### 3 - LISTENING

Jn 8. 12

Jesus promised to give us light. Let us therefore be quite relaxed, which does not mean passive. We must not forget the principle of the pump (revise, if necessary, how to practise listening pages 88 to 91). Let us think calmly about the question in the presence of the Lord and allow each person the time he needs to listen.

### 4 - SHARING

Each person speaks in turn to say, as faithfully as possible, what he has received : thoughts, images, biblical verses, convictions, impressions ... This must be done soberly, *without comment*. Comments will come later. If not, we might interpret what we have received before we get all the elements from the Lord, which would muddle everything up. The leader can take notes for the final synthesis.

If we are not satisfied, we should not hesitate to ask the Lord the further enlightenment and go back to listening.

### 5 - DISCERNING

We assemble all the pieces of information which each one has received. We examine whether they agree and how they are complementary. We must come to a unanimous agreement. It is important that the person concerned be convinced that the guidance received does come from the Lord. If not, it is necessary to start over again. When a word comes from the Lord, everyone is convinced of it and at peace. Sometimes it goes beyond our understanding and shows us the way to the solution within our reach !

### 6 - THANKING

Do not forget to thank the Lord and pray for the person who has received the answer. Encourage him or her to walk the path of obedience.

### 7 - OBEYING

Everything said in the previous chapter about obedience, is relevant here. When we take the first step of obedience according to the guidance we have received, the Lord shows us the next steps. Everything is made clear little by little. The sometimes inextricable tangle of our problems unravels as we look in wonder !

### 3 - PRESENT DAY EXAMPLE

Douglas Calcott tells this story ...

*Defining  
the question*

Our eldest son whose school education had been disrupted and who had no idea of what he wanted to do, was faced with a decision to make as to the courses to be followed. We found ourselves with a form to fill in ... He had to choose a curriculum and a university.

So we got together as a family. We began by defining the problem and by agreeing on what exactly we wanted to ask the Lord. In this case, it was quite simple : our son didn't know what he wanted to do and nothing interested him !



*Praising*

Immediately afterwards, we entered into praise and proclaimed the promises of God.

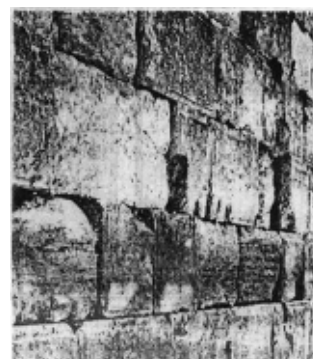
*Listening*

We then received a verse :

*He explained to them what was said  
in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (Lk 24. 27)*

*Sharing*

We were wondering what connection there could possibly be between the disciples on the road to Emmaus and the choice of a degree course. However when we listened again, the Lord pointed out clearly : ***It has to do with past events and ancient history.***





*Discerning*

Our son looked up with such a startled expression : " Oh ! That's amazing ! I forgot to tell you that ***ancient history is the only subject I am really interested in !***"

We made enquiries as to which universities provided the course. There were five of them. We had to state our preference.



We met together again. After praising the Lord and proclaiming his promises, we asked the Lord the question, and we received this verse :

*I lift up my eyes to the hills ...  
Where does my help come from ?  
(Ps 121. 1)*

*Obeying*

When our son went to one of these universities for an interview, he had to spend the night there. What a surprise he got on opening his bedroom window in the morning ...

It looked onto a wonderful mountain landscape ! ***At that very moment he "knew" that the Lord wanted him there !***



It was in Wales. He enrolled at this university and from then onwards began to enjoy studying. At present, he is training to be a professor.

## III - Having God as a friend ...

### 1 - GOD'S FRIENDSHIP

Ps 25. 14 (A.S.V.)

*The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him.*

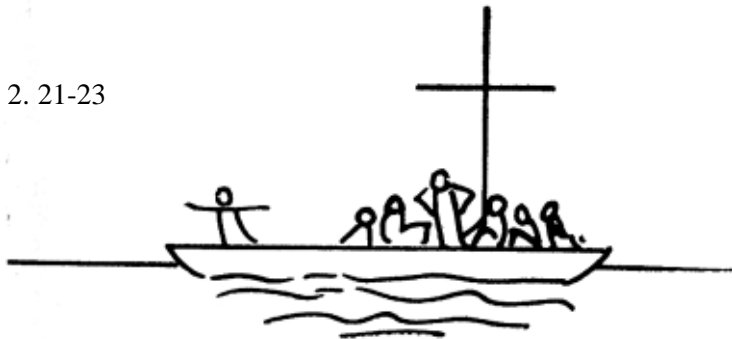
To fear God means to listen to him and obey him, doesn't it ?

Jn 15. 14

*You are my friends*

*if you do what I command.*

Jas 2. 21-23



What security there is when we have asked the Lord and received his directives before acting ! What peace when difficulties arise ! Trials become opportunities to depend more closely on him and to deepen our friendship with him.

Mk 4. 35

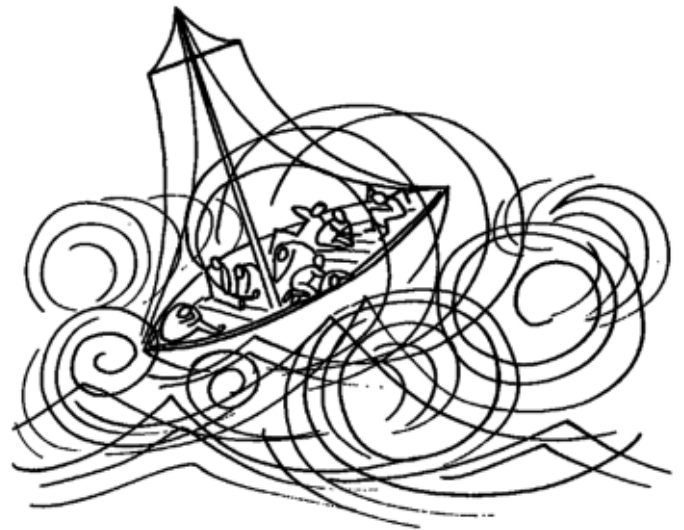
When Jesus himself says : *Let us go over to the other side*, there is no reason for us to fear the storm.

Mk 4. 40

*Why are you so afraid ?  
Do you still have no faith ?*

Jer 1. 12

*I am watching to see that my Word is fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>*



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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 3 : *The faith that moves mountains.*

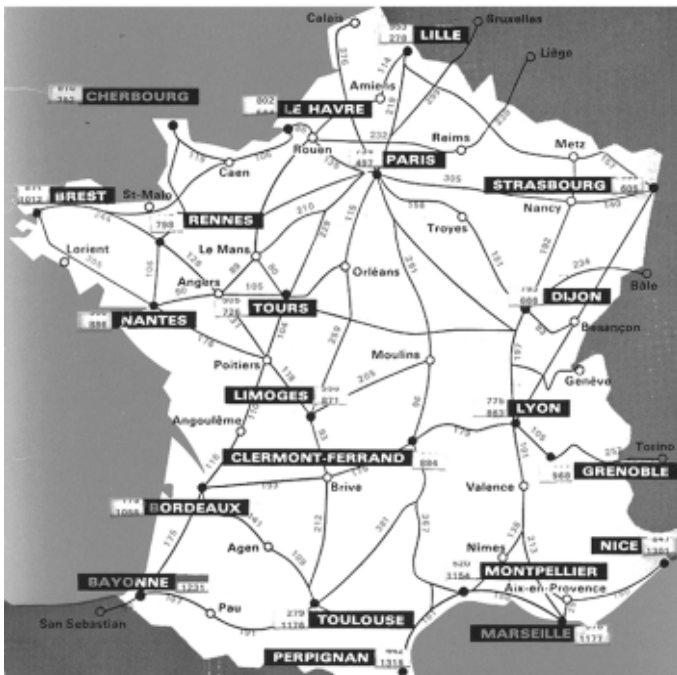
## 2 - THE UNITY OF BROTHERS

Can the friendship of God be separated from the unity of Christian brothers ? The closer we get to the Lord, the closer to one another. When we submit together to the Word given by God in a definite situation, we avoid tension, criticism, unwise decisions, confusion and ... division ! We find :

*Harmony, peace, joy, and unity !*

The Word of God makes all the difference ! What a blessing for the Body of Christ when married couples, church elders, leaders or members of a community ... seek advice from the Lord together, instead of endlessly discussing, each one defending his own point of view !

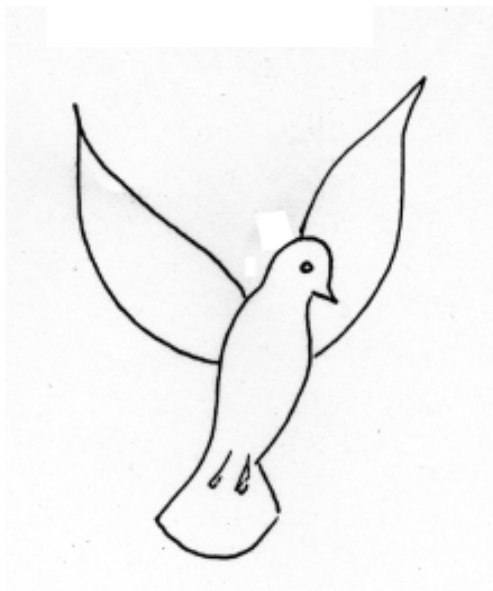
We were invited to the wedding of a nephew in the city of Saint-Jean-de-Luz (near Bayonne). It was an opportunity to see all the family again. But we already had an engagement that same day in Perpignan, in connection with the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International.



I eagerly wanted to go to the wedding and besides I was afraid our absence might be misunderstood. On the other hand, Elie thought that we should keep to our first commitment. We could have spent a long time discussing the matter ... However, we have made it a habit to seek advice from the Lord in such situations. The answer we both received was the same, though differently shaped : we had to go to Perpignan and our absence from the wedding would give us an opportunity to meet the newly married later on and have closer relationship with them, which is exactly what happened. What a lot of tension had thus been avoided !

Almost wherever this teaching is put into practice, we are amazed at the Lord's answers, the surprise of the participants and the close fellowship which develops between them.

**END OF CHAPTER**



## **WALKING BY THE SPIRIT**

### **APPENDICES**

Let us now try to look into and expand matters which have been referred to many times in this book. These form the basis for the Christian life, and we must have a clear understanding of them so as to walk by the Spirit.

- 1 - The new birth.**
- 2 - The baptism in the Holy Spirit.**
- 3 - The faith that moves mountains.**



## Appendix 1

# THE NEW BIRTH



## I - What exactly is the new birth ?

We use various expressions to describe this experience : conversion, salvation, personal encounter with Jesus Christ ... However, as we sometimes say : "It doesn't matter what you call it, as long as you have it !"

Out of all these expressions, we shall retain the one which Jesus himself used : the new birth.<sup>1</sup>

Everything can be summarized in two words :



- 1 - It is a birth
- 2 - It is a gateway.

---

<sup>1</sup> We could elaborate here on all the benefits linked to the new birth : expiation, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, purification, sanctification, redemption ... We shall limit ourselves to what seems essential and prerequisite.

## 1 - IT IS A BIRTH

Just as we receive the life and nature of our parents at our natural birth, so we receive the life and nature of God at the new birth. The natural man, created by God, thus becomes his child.

### A - THE LIFE OF GOD

#### - Eternal life

Jn 5. 24                      Jesus calls the life of God : *eternal life*.

1Jn 1. 2                      *We proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us ...*

Jn 3. 16                      *For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

#### - Spiritual life

##### \* Our spirit is regenerated

Jn 4. 24                      *God is spirit. He gives life to our spirit :*

Ezek 36. 26                      *I will put a new spirit in you.*

Our spirit, once dead and separated from God as a result of sin, thus becomes a new creation.

2Co 5. 17                      *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.*

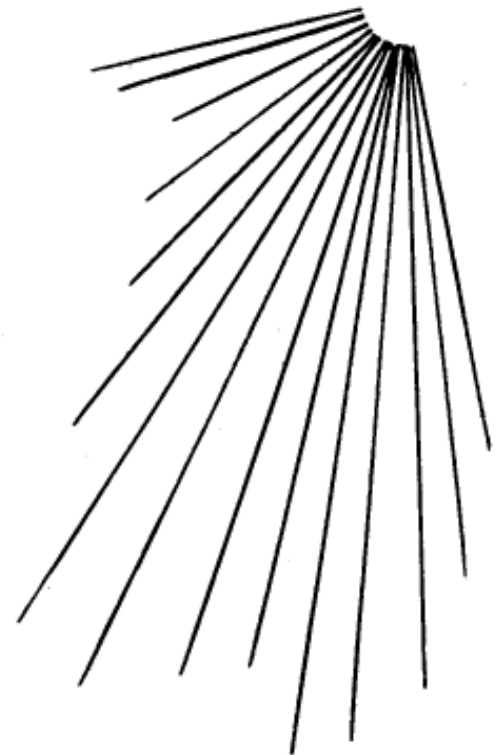
Eph 2.10                      *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus ...*

**We**, here, refers to our spirit, the essential part of our being. The soul and the body do not change at the new birth. Their restoration has only just begun.

##### \* The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in our spirit

Eze 36. 27                      *And I will put my Spirit in you.*

1Co 3. 16                      *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you ?*



**B - THE NATURE OF GOD**

At the new birth, one becomes :

- |   |
|---|
| <p><i>a. Child of God</i><br/> <i>b. Saint</i><br/> <i>c. Heir</i><br/> <i>d. Priest.</i></p> |
|---|

**a. Child of God**

2Pe 1.4

*A partaker of the divine nature :*

Jn 1. 12-13

*To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

**b. Saint**

2Co 5. 21

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Holiness is the fruit of the presence of the **Holy Spirit**.

1Co 3.17

*For God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.*

Ro 7. 22

The regenerated spirit *takes pleasure in the Law of God*. He can no longer tolerate the former way of behaving, speaking and thinking. For example,

1Jn 3. 20

Someone who used to get angry and be self-righteous about it before his conversion,



will now feel miserable if he relapses, for *his heart*, that is to say his spirit, *will condemn him*.



**c. Heir of God**

Ro 8. 17                   The born again Christian is no longer relevant to the first Adam.  
*All that Jesus is and all he has is our inheritance :*

Col 1. 12                   The character of Jesus !  
 The health of Jesus !  
 The authority of Jesus !  
 The promises of God !

**HIS CHARACTER**

Ro 5. 5                    *God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Gal 5. 22                This love **progressively** shines out from within in its different forms. The first manifestation is generally a deep peace never experienced before.

**HIS HEALTH**

Mt 8. 17                *He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.*

**HIS AUTHORITY**

He imparted to us his authority over sickness, and over demons ...

Lk 10. 19



*I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome **all** the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*

**THE PROMISES OF GOD**

2Co 1. 20                All the promises of God are *Yes* in Christ, including those of the Old Covenant. However we must :

Ac 20. 32                **Get to know these promises through the Word of God.**

Heb 6. 12               **Take possession of them by faith.** (Appendix 3).



**d. Priest**

Heb 1. 1

God first spoke to us through *the prophets*, then through *the Son*. There were two successive covenants corresponding to :

The levitical priesthood,  
The priesthood of the Son.



Heb 7. 16

The first priesthood was made *on the basis of a regulation*, the second *on the basis of the power of an indestructible life*.

Heb 8. 1  
1Ti 2. 5

Jesus is the great *High Priest* of the New Covenant, the only *Mediator* between God and men.

1Pe 2. 9  
Rev 1. 5-6

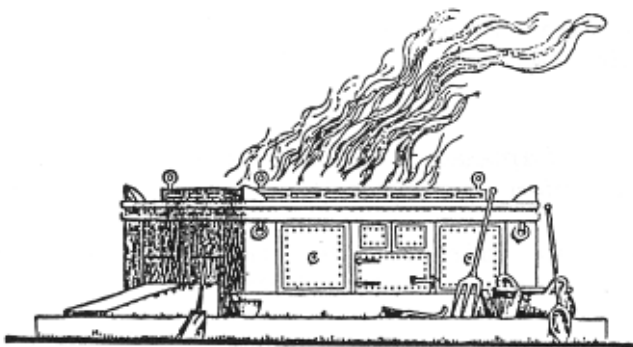
In him, we are a *royal priesthood*, which means that we are *priests*. Therefore,

Heb 10. 19

We have access to the Holy of Holies.  
We can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Ro 8. 14

Thanks to our new and true identity in Christ, we are enabled to be led by the Spirit of God.



## 2 - IT IS A GATEWAY

### A - GATEWAY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Gn 1. 26 God entrusted man with dominion over the world, but when he sinned, Adam gave it over to Satan, who from that day became the prince of this world.

1Jn 5. 19 Ever since, *the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

Col 1. 13-14 When we were born into the life of God, *he rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*

Jn 3. 3-7 *No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.*

This *kingdom* is more than the Church : the angels are part of it !



Ro 14. 17 This kingdom is ... *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

1Co 4. 20 It also implies power and blessing :

Mt 10. 7-8	Power of healing.
Mt 12 28	Authority over demons.
Dt 28 1-14	All sorts of blessings.

### B - GATEWAY TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

Gal 3. 27 At the new birth, we become a member of the Body of Christ. We are *baptized into Christ* and thus incorporated into the Church. As a matter of fact :

1Co 12. 13 *We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body. (Literal translation from the Greek).*

Ac 2. 47 *And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

### C - WHAT ABOUT THE WATER BAPTISM ?

Mt 28. 19 It is an act of obedience to the Lord and, through it, the Church testifies to the spiritual event which the new birth is.

Ac 10. 47 *Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.*

Ac 2. 41 It is the public testimony of the miracle of death and resurrection which has taken place in our innermost being.

## II - How does the new birth come about ?

Ac 4. 12

**It is not** through a church, nor through a sacrament, nor a religious practice, nor through the intellectual acceptance of christianity, nor through good conduct, nor through some good work, however heroic it may be.

Let us consider what is God's part and what is our part in this prodigious event.

### 1 - God's part

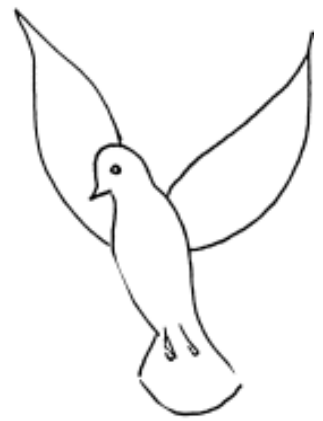
As we have seen, God always works "with both hands". And these hands are :

#### His Word and his Spirit.

This is particularly true concerning the new birth.

Jn 3. 5        *No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*

Jn 7. 37-39    *The water referred to here, is the Holy Spirit promised to those who believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit who works with the Word of God.*



Jas 1. 18

*He chose to give us birth through the word of truth.*

1Pe 1. 23

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed,<sup>1</sup> but of imperishable, through the living and enduring **Word of God.***

Ac 11. 13-14

The angel said to Cornelius : *Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you **a message** through which you and all your household will be saved.*

1Co 6. 11

*But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by **the Spirit** of our God.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Here the word *seed* is translated from the Greek *spora* (σπορα) . But in many other verses of the New Testament, the Greek word is *sperma* (σπέρμα) . For example in 1Jn 3. 9 : *No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed (sperma) remains in him.*

## 2 - Man's part

This can be summed up in one word : **Believe !** Accept Jesus ! It is not a matter of intellectual assent, but of faith which is a commitment of the heart.

Ro 10. 17

Let us not forget that *faith comes by hearing and hearing from the Word of Christ.*

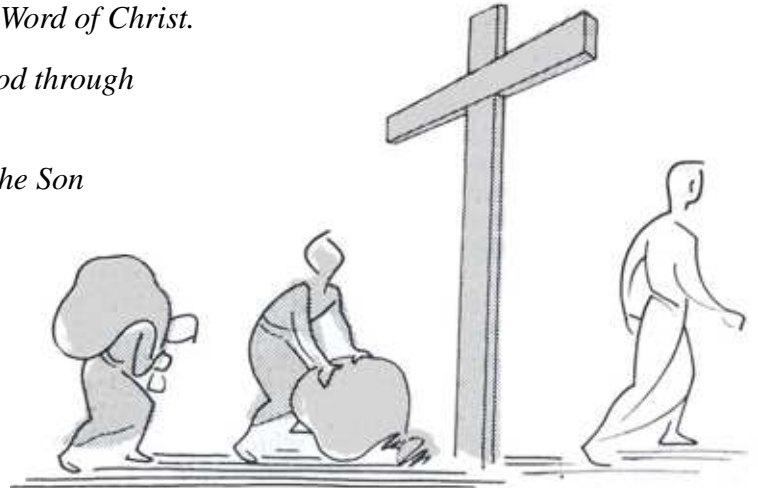
Gal 3. 26

*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Jn 3. 36

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.*

Jn 5. 24  
1Jn 5. 13  
1Pe 2. 6  
Ro 10. 13



### **A - It is free !**

Eph 2. 8-9

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. Paul insists : **Ro 3. 24, 28 - 5. 15 - 6. 23 - 9. 30** ...*

Isa 64. 6

*All our righteous acts are like filthy rags.*

Some people will say that it is too easy ... Really ? Man would like to have something to do with it. He would like to earn his salvation !

1Pe 1. 18-19

Is not *the blood of Jesus* sufficient ?

Jn 19. 30

Has not Jesus paid the price and *accomplished everything* ?

### **B - The choice is up to us**

Each person must make a personal decision. As Thomas Roberts used to say, "God has no grandchildren".

2Th 3. 2

We can refuse : *not every one has faith.*

Jn 5. 40

*You refuse to come to me to have life !*

### **C - What about repentance ?**

Lk 3. 8-14

Repentance is the **decision** to obey the Lord as we are being enlightened. *It will bear fruit*, in due time. For example, several months after his conversion, our son John was led by the Holy Spirit to give back what he had stolen.

## **A FRIEND UNDERSTOOD ME**

It was a problem of euthanasia which had led him to prison. He had killed his wife as an act of love, so he thought. She had been suffering from an incurable disease. No medical treatment could relieve the pain. She would beg him to end her life, saying : "If you love me, understand that I cannot go on suffering like this." So it happened that one day she did not wake up ...

All that drove him mad. During twenty years in prison, he had taken refuge in violence. Four guards were needed to hold him back ...

Suddenly there was a shout. "It's number 36-42 again ! Lets go, guys !" But what did they see through the spy-hole of the cell ? Our man, sitting quietly with the New Testament open on his knees. He had started to smile as he looked at the picture of the cross, which we have reproduced on the opposite page.

"What' s the matter with you ?" they asked.

"I have discovered a friend !  
He has set me free !  
He has understood me !  
Today is Easter day for me."

He now is a gardener in the prison which has become his home. This is where he feels happy ... with Jesus !



## III - How to lead up to the new birth ?

We must not lose sight of the practical objective of this teaching. Neither must we take the following outline as a recipe. It is the Holy Spirit who brings life, not *the letter* of the law.

Here are some practical suggestions to help someone before, during and after this decisive event.

### 1 - BEFORE

Jn 7. 37

*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink !* Jesus says.

Jn 16. 8-9

We cannot force anybody, nor can we convict a person of sin. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, we can make other people thirsty. We can make them want Jesus because of the sweet savour of Christ in us and of his love overflowing from us.

Mt 5. 13

1Pe 3. 1-4

*You are the salt of the earth ...*

Peter explains how a woman can make her husband thirsty for Jesus ... *without words !*



We can also bind the evil spirits which blind the minds of unbelievers and keep them from coming to the Lord. We can exercise the authority of Jesus for them over these spirits, by declaring, for example :

"Evil spirits blinding the mind of X ...<sup>1</sup>

In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to cease all your destructive action in his mind ! I cover X ... with the precious blood of Jesus and I order you to leave him alone, until he has the freedom to choose for himself between life and death ! Between Jesus and Satan ! I Bind you and I command you to leave immediately, in the name of Jesus !"

<sup>1</sup> Be precise as to the name and even the address of X ... knowing that distance does not exist in the spiritual realm, and that the spirits hear when we speak to them in the name of Jesus.



## 2 - DURING

### A - CONFESSION OF FAITH

Ro 10. 9-10

*If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

We can help someone *to believe in his heart* by reading (or better still, by making him read) some appropriate Bible verses, for example :

Jn 3. 16 - Jn 1. 12-13 - Eph 2. 8-9 - Ac 16. 30-31 ...

We can help him then *to confess his faith* in Jesus by making him repeat such a prayer :

1Jn 4. 15

"Jesus, I come to you, just as I am. You are the Son of God. You died on the cross for my sins. You rose from the dead to give me life.

Mt 6. 12-15

I am a sinner. Forgive my sins as I forgive those who have hurt me. I accept you as my Saviour and I accept you as the Lord of my life. Come and reign in my heart. From this moment on, be my Master and my Friend !"

It is not necessary to go to a meeting in order to take this step, but the presence of Christians may help.

### B - POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES

#### a. Lack of repentance

2Co 6. 14-16

Some people seek blessing and a solution to their problems, without accepting the conditions. They want to find peace, while at the same time holding on to their sin. They must choose !

#### b. Difficulty in forgiving

Gn 4. 4-8

1Jn 3. 12

Explain clearly that it is sufficient to **want** to forgive : "Lord, I want to forgive X ... I cannot do it by myself. Do it in me. Put your forgiveness and your love for this person in my heart."



Let us not forget that we must also forgive ourselves. It is the revelation of the Father's love which enables us to do so.

### ***C - Occultism***

It could be necessary to mention the different forms of occultism :

Horoscopes, fortune telling, witchcraft, spiritism, table turning, transcendental meditation, yoga, healers, alternative medicine etc ...

The person concerned must ask the Lord for forgiveness, and utterly renounce such practices.

Ac 19. 19

He or she must also agree to rid the home of any occult object possibly lying there, were they works of art, valuables, or knick-knacks, books, magazines, records ... We can then free him or her from satanic bondage in the name of Jesus Christ. We must also make sure to break the bonds tied up in past generations.

Dt 7. 25-26

Ex 20. 5

Finally, let us point out that we come across more and more people bound by spirits of death as a result of abortion (sometimes with no awareness of it : the coil, abortive pills). We insist, for these problems occur very often.

## **3 - AND AFTERWARDS ?**

Lk 8. 55

After he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus commanded *to give her something to eat.*

1Pe 2. 2

Each new birth is a resurrection of the spirit. We must make sure that the new-born Christian is fed :

That he has a Bible.

That he is not left alone.

That he receives teaching based on the Word of God.

Ac 2. 42

The apostles' teaching and the fellowship of believers are top priorities among the conditions of spiritual growth.



It is good to encourage the new Christian to witness to his faith. It is a powerful weapon against the enemy. We have known a young man who was up against many problems, because he didn't dare bear witness to his conversion within his family.

Rev 12. 11

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.*

***END OF APPENDIX 1***



# BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT



## YOU WILL RECEIVE ... POWER !

Here are just a few points attempting to answer most frequently asked questions :

- 1 - What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit ?*
- 2 - How does it differ from the new birth ?*
- 3 - How does one receive such baptism ?*
- 4 - Speaking in tongues ... What's the use ?*
- 5 - Earnestly desire spiritual gifts !*

# I - What is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit ?

Ac 2. 38  
1Co 3. 1-3

It is not a favour we can earn. It is a gift.  
It is not a certificate of spiritual maturity.  
It is not a luxury intended for the happy few.

## It is the normal equipment for every Christian

Ac 2. 39

*The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off,  
for all whom the Lord our God will call.*

## It is being clothed with power to witness

Ac 1. 8

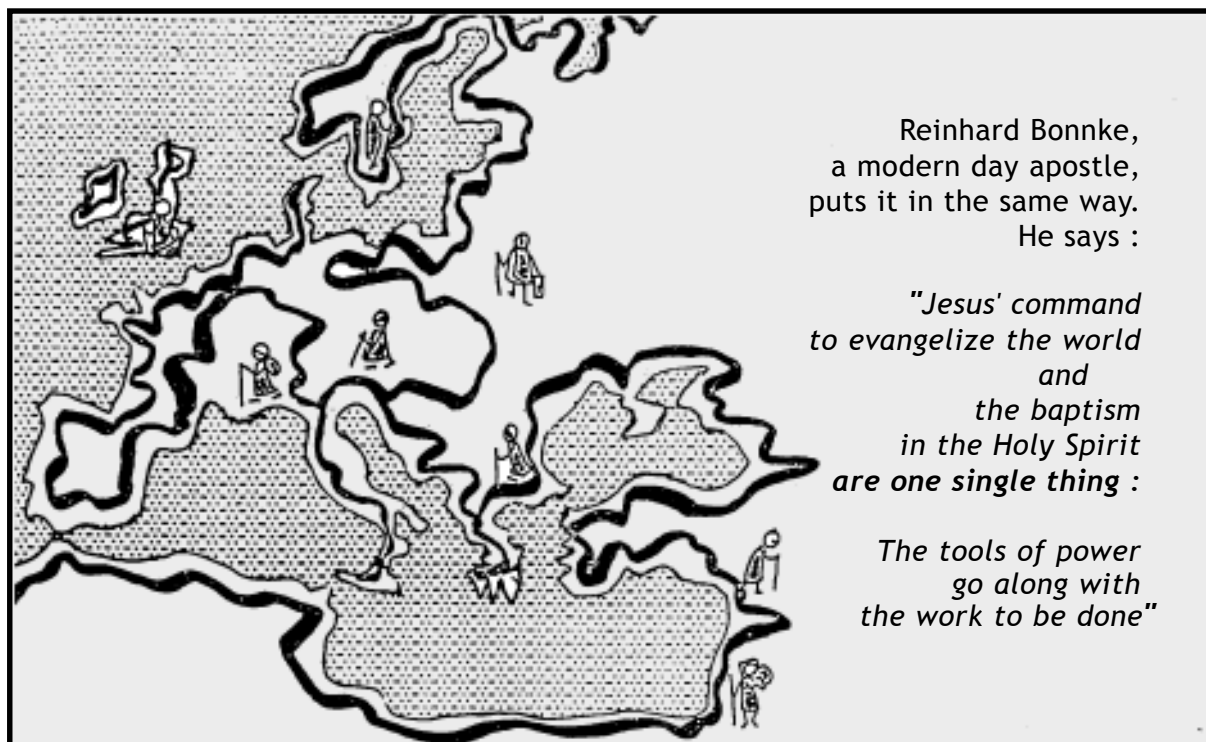
*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you  
will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and  
to the ends of the earth.*

Heb 2. 4

*God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and  
gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

1Co 2. 4

*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words,  
but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power ...*

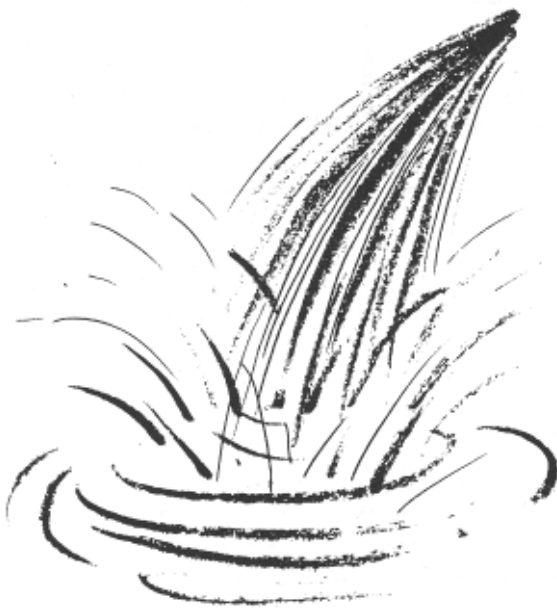


## II - How does it differ from the new birth ?

Jn 4.14  
Jn 7. 38

*The water I give him will become in him a **spring** of water ...  
**Streams** of living water will flow from within him.*

Let us say this again, the baptism in the Holy Spirit always goes along with being clothed with power. The new birth is the beginning of the spiritual life and the fundamental condition to receive this baptism.



### 1 - STREAMS OF LIVING WATER

Jesus compares the living water we receive at the new birth to a *spring*, and the living water overflowing from within at the baptism in the Holy Spirit to *rivers*. **It is the same Holy Spirit** we receive on both occasions, but in a different way.

Yonggi Cho explains this by saying that he saw his wife in a different light when she became a mother. However she was still the same person !

The disciples received the Holy Spirit as "the enlightening current", so to say, after the resurrection (Jn 20. 22).

Lk 24. 49  
Mt 3. 16

But Jesus told them to wait for *the power from on high*, "the dynamic current", before setting out to conquer the world, just as he himself was baptized in the Spirit before he entered into public ministry.

### 2 - THE FRUITS AND THE GIFTS

**Life** manifests itself in fruit, **power** through spiritual gifts or charisma.

Gal 5. 22-23

*The fruit of the Spirit is love*, in its many-sided expressions : *joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

The fruit is permanent in character. It must grow and ripen throughout life.



1Co 12. 11

With the exception of praying in tongues the gifts are for occasional use.

*The Holy Spirit gives them to each one, just as he determines, to meet a specific need at just the right moment. However, we must not be reluctant to use them, as we shall see later.*

There are nine gifts, often classified as follows :

Revelation gifts	Power gifts	Inspiration gifts
<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Word of wisdom Word of knowledge Discerning of spirits	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Dynamic faith Gifts of healing Gift of miracles	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Prophecy Tongues Tongues interpretation

To illustrate the difference between the fruits and the gifts, let us take the example of faith which is listed with both the fruits and the gifts.

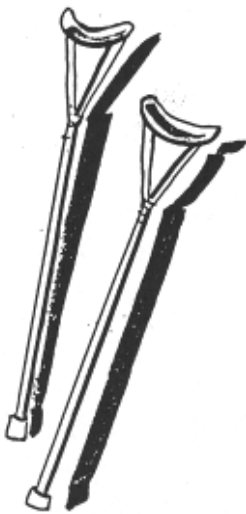
### *Faith is a fruit*

Gal 5. 22-23

Some translations of this verse use the word "faithfulness", for the Greek word can mean faith, faithfulness or trust, but here, it means *faith* in God, confidence in God, which is a *fruit* of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

Ro 12. 3

We each have *a measure of faith*. It grows as we grow spiritually.



### *Faith is a gift*

In this case it is *the faith of God*.<sup>1</sup> It is the spiritual dynamite which moves mountains. We do not have this at our disposal at will. It is God who gives it in certain circumstances, to meet a specific need.

Charles Price, a friend of Demos Shakarian, was praying one day for the healing of a crippled little girl. "When I laid hands on her, nothing happened" he said. "A feeling of death weighed heavily on me. I began to pray for her again, and this feeling just grew stronger."

The child's mother, in tears, began to shout : "Why doesn't Jesus want to heal my daughter ?"

<sup>1</sup>Literal translation from the Greek. We shall go into this subject further in Appendix 3.

Then somebody had a word of knowledge : "Have you ever practiced magic or occultism ?" She admitted that she had been involved in spiritism, repented of it and accepted Jesus as her Saviour. When Charles Price laid hands on the little girl again, she leapt to her feet, and was healed.

If healing had taken place the first time hands were laid on the child, the mother might have sunk farther down into occultism, instead of being converted.

The Holy Spirit gives gifts *as he wills* ...



### 3 - THE WINGS OF THE DOVE

**Fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit** go together like the wings of the dove which, in the East, are said to have nine feathers, a symbol of the nine gifts for one and the nine facets of the fruit of love for the other. What balance there is when these two wings work together in harmony ! A bird with one wing missing can only circle round ...

- 1Co 14. 1                      *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts.*
- 1Co 13. 2                      *If I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

**LET US SUMMARIZE WHAT HAS BEEN SAID :**

At the new birth		At the baptism in the Holy Spirit	
Jn 1. 12 Gal 5. 22	We receive the <i>life of God</i> . This life manifests itself through the fruits of the Spirit.	Ac 1. 8 1Co 12. 8-10	We receive the <i>power of God</i> . The power of God manifests itself through the gifts.
1Th 5. 16	The <i>fruits</i> are permanent in character.	1Co 12. 11	The <i>gifts</i> manifest as the Holy Spirit determines.
Jn 4. 14	Jesus speaks of a <i>spring of living water</i> . The spring gushes forth from within us.	Jn 7. 37-39 1Co 12. 7	Jesus speaks of <i>rivers of living water</i> . The rivers overflow to others.



## III - How does one receive such a baptism ?

### 1 - CONDITIONS

#### A - BEING BORN AGAIN

Peter preaches conversion at the first Pentecost.

Ac 2. 38

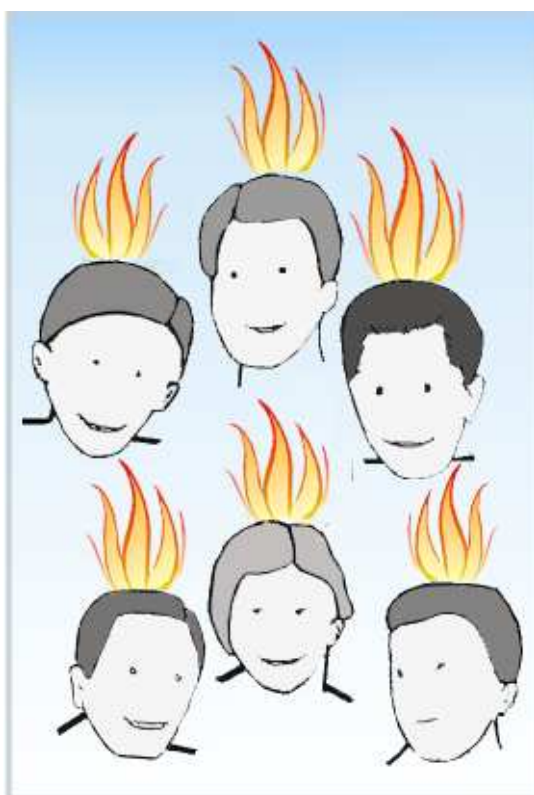
*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

#### B - WANTING TO OBEY GOD

Ac 5. 29, 32

*We must obey God rather than men ! God has given (the Holy Spirit) to those who obey him.*

This was the reply given to the high priest at the plenary session of the sanhedrin, that is to say at the highest religious court in those days !



*Tongues of fire ...  
rested on each one of them*

#### C - ASKING UNRESERVEDLY

It is Jesus who baptizes in the Holy Spirit and no one else (Jn 1. 33). It is best if the person concerned prays for himself. Jesus desired each person to ask for what he wanted. *What do you want me to do for you ?* he asked the blind man on the road to Jericho.

There is an anecdote about a lame man who said : "Pastor, the last thing I want is your praying for my legs ! Just pray for my stomach, because I am soon going to get a disability pension for my legs !"

Some people would really like to receive the baptism in the Spirit, but not the speaking in tongues ! It is not like having the choice in a market place. The decisions belong to the Lord.

## 2 - A TYPICAL EXAMPLE

She had been wanting the baptism in the Spirit and the gift of speaking in tongues for a long time : "Lord," she said one morning, "I have been asking you for the baptism in the Spirit for ten years. Today will be the last time ..."

Here are the stages we went through with her :

### A - CHECKING

\* The reality of the new birth

As we did not know her personally, we asked her to repeat the sinner's prayer (see page 140).

\* Forgiveness

We asked her if there was any resentment or bitterness in her heart. Thinking about it, she admitted to it :

"After my mother's funeral, nobody came up to me ! I have been bitter about this ever since."

We brought this situation to the cross. She received healing for her hurt. Then, she acknowledged her resentment towards a few people who had made fun of her old age.

\* Occultism

She had given a statue of Buddha to one of her sisters after a trip to Taiwan. Wasn't it art ? We did not have to convince her, for the Holy Spirit did his work without us intervening. She asked forgiveness for this sin and then remembered that she had also "played the pendulum".<sup>1</sup>

### B - OBEYING THE LORD FIRST AND FOREMOST

She had no difficulty in this area. She understood that being filled with the Holy Spirit, she had to obey him first and foremost, if the question ever arose.

### C - PRAYER OF ASKING

Ac 19. 6

Just as we were about to lay hands on her and pray, the Holy Spirit took over : a wave of joy flowed over her along with speaking in a forceful tongue and she began dancing !

<sup>1</sup> We often have to make sure there has been no abortion which is a gateway to spirits of death and leads to bondage.

## IV - Speaking in tongues ... What's the use ?

### 1 - SPEAKING IN TONGUES ...

- Ac 2. 4                                Speaking in tongues is the gift which usually accompanies the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> In fact, nobody understands speaking in tongues, and people tend to belittle it. But could it not be the antidote to the sin of Adam who ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ? He wanted to know !
- 1Co 14. 5, 18                        However, this gift gives us many advantages and should not be despised. Paul would like everyone to speak in tongues !
- 1Co 14. 2                                Speaking in tongues is prayer,  
1Co 14. 16-17                            praise or thanksgiving, isn't it ?<sup>2</sup>
- Col 3. 16                                We can express it audibly or inwardly, or else in the form of spiritual songs (singing in tongues).

### 2 - WHAT'S THE USE ?

The Bible clearly teaches us the usefulness of speaking in tongues for communion with God, edification and prayer :

#### **A - COMMUNION WITH GOD**

- 1Co 14. 14                                *If I pray in a tongue ... my mind is unfruitful. My restless thoughts calm down. My soul enters into rest, but my spirit prays. It is active. This makes me wholly available to the Holy Spirit and favours my communion with God.*

#### **B - EDIFICATION**

- 1Co 14. 4                                *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself. He recharges at will his spiritual, emotional and even physical batteries. Healings have been seen to happen in such circumstances.*

#### **C - PRAYER**

- Ro 8. 26                                When we do not know how to pray, *the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and inspires prayer.*

---

<sup>1</sup> When speaking in tongues for the first time, one may come up against a spiritual or psychological block (See page 149). It is up to us to open our mouth and speak, to receive this gift by faith.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking in tongues can also be an exhortation from God to a church (1Co 14. 27-28).

## V - Earnestly desire spiritual gifts !

### 1 - HOW TO OBTAIN THE GIFTS ?

1Co 12. 31

*Eagerly desire the greater gifts.  
And now I will show you the most excellent way.*

1Co 13. 1-13  
Gal 5. 6

Paul shows us *the most excellent way* to receive the gifts of the Spirit. It is *love !* Elsewhere, he stresses the importance of *faith expressing itself through love*, of course he is talking about *agape* love.

So according to this principle, to see the manifestation of the gift of healing, we must first feel compassion for the sick person. We shall feel a strong need to go and pray for him, and ... the Lord will heal him !

Then others will come and ask for prayer and progressively the gift of healing may become a ministry, with all the necessary spiritual gifts : discerning of spirits, words of knowledge, words of wisdom ...

We cannot make up agape love. It is God who gives it. However, we have a part to play. The spiritual gift will not come out, if we remain inactive.

#### A - THE EYES OF THE HEART

Mk 10. 21

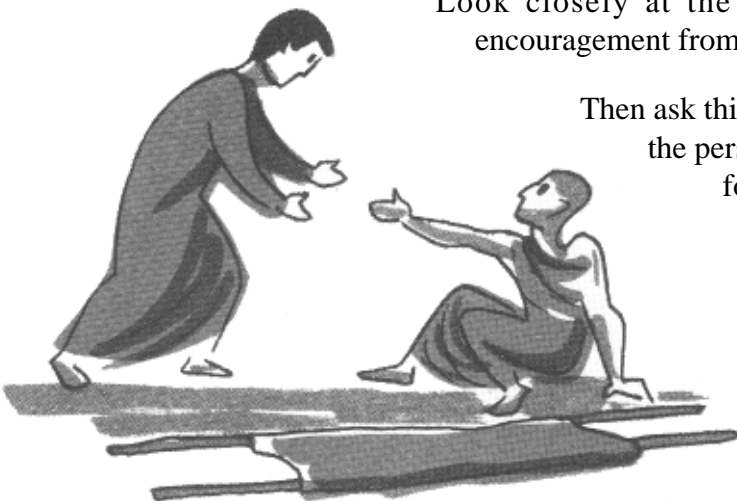
How can we feel compassion for someone without seeing him ? We must do as Jesus did and see with the eyes of our heart. If we look lovingly upon the assembly during a meeting, the Holy Spirit will show us the suffering and the needs of some people.

**Here is an interesting experiment.** It was put into practice during a session on the gifts of the Spirit :

Look closely at the people in the room, then give a word of encouragement from the Lord, to the person who seems most in need.

Then ask this person (in turn) to give a word from the Lord to the person who fills him with most compassion. And so forth ... During this exercise we noticed that many people were freed from timidity, up until then, they had not dared to speak out the prophetic words which they had in their hearts.

They did not believe them to be words from the Lord.



***B - THE EARS OF THE HEART***

Job 31. 35

People have a great need to be listened to ! Listening is *the most excellent way*, provided there is love. We do not try to convince or to change the person we are speaking to. We simply ask the Holy Spirit for guidance before replying. He will give the right words and we shall witness many healings such as inner healing or psychosomatic healing ...

***C - LET US DARE TO SHOW LOVE !***

Mt 13. 12

Let us not be afraid to go up to the person whom the Lord has shown us by filling us with his own compassion. *Whoever has will be given more... Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.* Let us not hold back !

## **2 - SPEAKING IN TONGUES, A KEY TO THE OTHER GIFTS**

Many spirit-filled Christians limit themselves to speaking in tongues. Yet this gift leads to interpretation and on to prophecy.

1 Co 14. 5

*He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets ...*

1 Co 14. 13

So how do we receive the interpretation of tongues ? Of course, we must first ask for it. Then, we must not be inactive but obey the Word :

1 Co 14. 15

*I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind ...*

Let's alternate between praying in tongues and praying in English, without too much thinking. Let's pray from our heart. Then what we say in English, could well be the interpretation of our prayer in tongues. What is more, prayer is not a monologue. If we pray in this way, we shall end up interpreting the Father's answer. We witnessed this recently, with a lady who was experiencing it for the first time.

1 Co 14. 3

Is not such an answer from the Lord a form of prophecy ? Prophecy will lead to gifts of healing, then to miracles, and finally all the other gifts will be expressed, at the time appointed by the Holy Spirit, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ !



***END OF APPENDIX 2***

## **YOU ARE NOT GOING TO DIE !**

During a meeting. A young woman of about thirty. The more the pastor prayed for her, the more agitated she became.

*"Tell her that she is not going to die today,"*

a persistent small inner voice repeated three times. He was very puzzled : "Is this really you, Lord ? What should I do ?"

*"Tell her that she is not going to die today !"*

During this inner struggle, the woman cried more and more. Finally, the pastor told her the words he had received. She was overwhelmed by these few words, and quieted down. She gave her heart to the Lord, received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and was delivered from drugs and prostitution ... in just a few minutes !

"Why were you crying so much ?" the pastor asked her afterwards. This was her answer :

"This morning as I got up, I heard an audible, threatening voice :"

*"Today, you are going to die !"*

She had then gone out into the street, and had met a Christian woman. This was how she had come to the meeting to find ... **LIFE !**



# THE FAITH THAT MOVES MOUNTAINS

Jude 3  
Gal 5. 22

Our subject is not the doctrinal contents of faith, nor is it the faith that every Christian inherits as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. (See p. 145 -146). We shall be talking here about the faith of which Jesus said :

Mt 17. 20

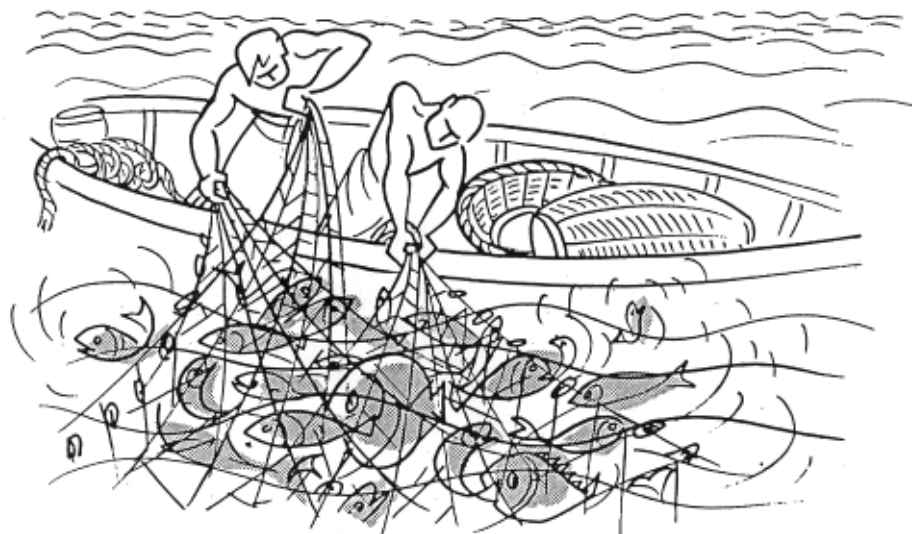
*If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there" and it will move.*

***Nothing will be impossible for you.***

This subject is closely linked to walking by the Spirit.

We shall consider in turn :

***WHAT FAITH IS,  
HOW TO OBTAIN IT,  
WHAT OBSTACLES THERE ARE TO FAITH.***



*At your word, I will let down the nets ...*



# I - What faith is

## 1 - FAITH IS NOT EVIDENCE

2Co 5. 7

Faith <sup>1</sup> is based on the Word of God. Evidence is based on the data from our senses or our reasoning.

Jn 20. 25

*Unless I see ... I will not believe it !*

Like the apostle Thomas, some sick people want to see the signs of their healing before they can believe it. This is putting the cart before the horse. We must believe before we see ! The miracle does not give us faith, it is faith which produces the miracle.

Jn 2. 23-24

*Many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them ...*

Ro 4. 19-20

Faith does not deny the evidence : Abraham *faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead.* Yet for him, the promises of God were more important than appearances. This reminds me of the remark of a young mother :

Jn 11. 40

The doctor had declared her new-born girl to be down's syndrome. This diagnosis was confirmed by the blood test. However the mother said firmly : "the Word of God is truer than appearances." How surprised the paediatrician was when, month by month, he observed that the baby's development was completely normal ! In this case, is it not the parent's faith which made all the difference <sup>2</sup> ?



## 2 - FAITH IS NOT BELIEF

Faith is spiritual. Belief is mental.

Heb 4. 2

We can adhere mentally to a truth, believe that a biblical promise is true, and yet not take hold of it by faith. Thus belief can give the illusion of faith.

Jn 5. 39-40

The pharisees were filled with beliefs ...

Mk 1. 24

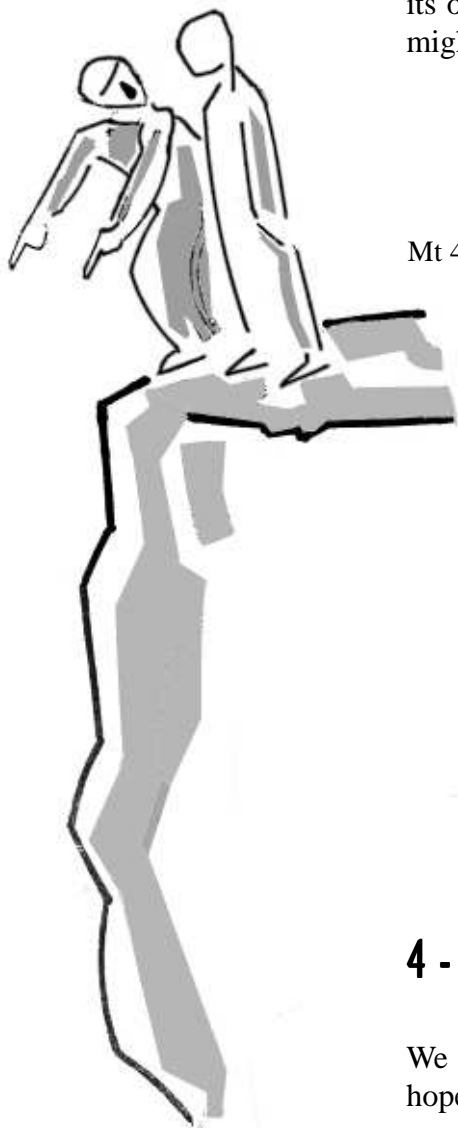
The demons too !

<sup>1</sup> Let us say it again : we are dealing with the faith that moves mountains (See p. 153).

<sup>2</sup> We shall further see, that each person must exercise his own faith, as soon as he is in a position to do so.

### 3 - FAITH IS NOT PRESUMPTION

Presumption is a kind of self-persuasion. It uses the Word of God for its own ends, *without revelation* of this Word. Taken to extremes, it might seek to manipulate God.



Mt 4. 6-7

Presumption leads to acting insanely.

#### ***THROW YOURSELF DOWN !***

We know the tragic story of the three young Korean women who drowned as they tried to walk on the waters of a swollen river. They claimed to do what Peter had done ... But they had never received the revelation that he had !

There is also the story of a Christian who wanted to demonstrate his faith by plunging his hand into a basket of snakes. He almost died as a result.

Sure enough, these are extreme cases, but a sick person who throws away his medicine without having received faith for his healing, also acts presumptuously.

### 4 - FAITH IS NOT HOPE

We often confuse faith and hope. Faith is always for now, whereas hope is for the future :

*Martha answered, "I know **he will rise again** in the resurrection at the last day."*

Jesus has never said to anybody : "Your hope has saved you", or "your hope has healed you." Somebody who says "I hope that the Lord will heal me" will probably have to wait a long time ... Thus, a man kept on *hoping* for fifty years that he would receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit ! But he received it instantly as soon as his hope was changed to faith !

Jn 11. 24

Mt 8. 13

*It will be done just as you believed it would.*

Mk 11. 24

*Believe that **you have received it**, and **it will be yours**.*

## 5 - FAITH IS THE FIRM ASSURANCE ...

Heb 11. 1 (ASV)

*Faith is assurance <sup>1</sup> of things hoped for,  
a conviction of things not seen.*

Heb 11. 1 (NIV)

*Faith is being sure of what we hope for  
and certain of what we do not see.*

Faith, inevitably, gives rise to the miracle. It enables us to appropriate our healing or any other blessing based on a biblical promise, in advance of and despite the appearances.<sup>2</sup>

***This certainty is based  
ONLY  
on the Word of God.***

Let us repeat that faith does not deny the existence of symptoms, sensations, feelings, reasonings, experiences and the like. But it gives greater credit to the Word of God than to all the rest. Faith considers all that is opposed to the Word of God to be a lie from the enemy. Faith is sure that, sooner or later, circumstances must come into line with the Word of God.

Faith never says "Lord, **if** it be your will ..." because the Word of God always expresses the will of God. There is no doubt about the matter !

On her wedding day, her very considerate father promises her a car ! The young bride, who knows her father well, never doubts his word. She already owns this brand-new car ! She jumps for joy when she thinks about it ! Yet she has neither seen nor tried it. She does not even know what colour it is. But she is sure of her father's word.

***SHE IS SURE  
OF HER FATHER'S  
WORD***



<sup>1</sup> The greek word used in the original - *hypostasis* - is translated by assurance or substance. So, we can see that faith brings to existence the things hoped for. <sup>2</sup> Promises usually go along with conditions. An example : Prov 3. 7-10

## II - How to obtain faith

It is impossible to make faith out of human effort, because it is divine in nature. Only Jesus can give it :

Heb 12. 2

*Jesus (is) the author and perfecter of our faith ...*

Jn 16. 14

We obtain faith that moves mountains when we are in contact with Jesus, just as we obtain electricity from a power-plant. It can happen instantly, but in general, we must draw so near to Jesus as to touch him. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to do so.

### 1 - HOW DO WE DRAW NEAR TO JESUS ?

Gal 5. 22

Faith, that is to say confidence in Jesus, which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, enables us to draw near to him :

Heb 4. 16

*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may ... find grace to help us in our time of need.*



To draw near to Jesus means to hold on to his Word, and persevere. It means to put our trust in him, by resting on his promises. It has nothing to do with trying desperately and uselessly to manufacture faith for ourselves ! It has also nothing to do with passivity.

*As the bee goes* from flower to flower to gather nectar, so we must wander in the "garden" of God's Word, in order to find revelation. That is to say, we must meditate on the permanent word LOGOS until we receive the instant word RHEMA, a precise, living, tailor-made, revealed word which corresponds to a given situation.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, we receive faith when shifting from *Logos* to *Rhema* :

Ro 10. 17

*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.*



<sup>1</sup> The logos Word applies to everybody. For example : *Live at peace with everybody* (Ro 12. 18). The rhema Word speaks to me personally: "So go and make peace with James, your neighbour !" (See page 75)

***Practically, whatever the problem, we are supposed to :***

### ***A - SEARCH***

Look for what the Bible has to say on the subject. The more our minds are renewed, the less we have to search. We shall find for example:

3Jn 2	If we are looking for work,
Jas 1. 5-6	If we lack wisdom,
Ps 103. 3	If we need healing,
Ps 127. 1-2	If we long for rest !
Ps 33. 18-19	If we are afraid of famine.

### ***B - MEDITATE***

Meditation is not making highbrow comments. It is reflecting on the Word of God and seeing how it relates to me in my present situation.

Jn 15. 7

*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

If we do not do our part, we keep God from doing his. Kenneth E. Hagin recounts how he laid hands on his young daughter suffering from a malignant tumour near her eye, to no effect. He then spent two nights meditating on the biblical verses concerning divine healing. Then he received revelation which gave rise to faith, and the child was healed !

Heb 4. 14

*Proclaiming the Word of God which applies to a situation, is part of the meditation. **We shall never obtain anything beyond what we proclaim.** Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*

### ***C - OBEY***

Lk 5. 5

Peter replied : *because you say so, I will let down the nets. **When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break ...** It was not enough to say so, it had to be done.*

1Jn 1. 7

As we meditate on the Word, the Holy Spirit shows us what may block our faith. *If we walk in the light ...* communion is re-established.

### ***D - PRAISE***

Ps 22. 4

We have already looked at the importance of praise to enable us to listen to the Lord. We cannot meditate on the Word of God and lament about our problem, at the same time.

## 2 - HOW DO WE TOUCH JESUS ?

### A - A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Mk 5. 25-34

The woman subject to bleeding for years, could have reacted negatively when she heard about Jesus :

"What is the use ? I have spent all my money to no avail ..." If she had reacted in this way, she would never have been healed. Instead, she was confident in Jesus. She decided to get close to him and touch him.

#### \* *She draws close to Jesus*

She says : " If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Notice that she speaks in the future tense. She finds hope. It is the path leading to faith.

She acts : "*She came up behind him in the crowd.*" She puts her words into action. Her confidence grows the closer she gets to Jesus.

#### \* *She touches Jesus*

She touches his garment. Immediately she feels in her body that she is healed.

Jesus, too, senses that power has gone out from him. He says "*Daughter, your faith has healed you.*"

The faith of Jesus into her, has become her own.



Mt 14. 36

We sometimes hear people say : "I had faith and it didn't work ..." This is to misunderstand the nature of faith. True faith, the faith of Jesus, always works. *All who touched Jesus, were healed.* However, we can lose the faith we have received, most commonly by speaking negative words. On the contrary, witnessing is an excellent way of keeping it :

Mk 5. 33

*Then the woman ... came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.*

In front of everybody ! In this way her faith was strengthened and other people were encouraged. There was victory !

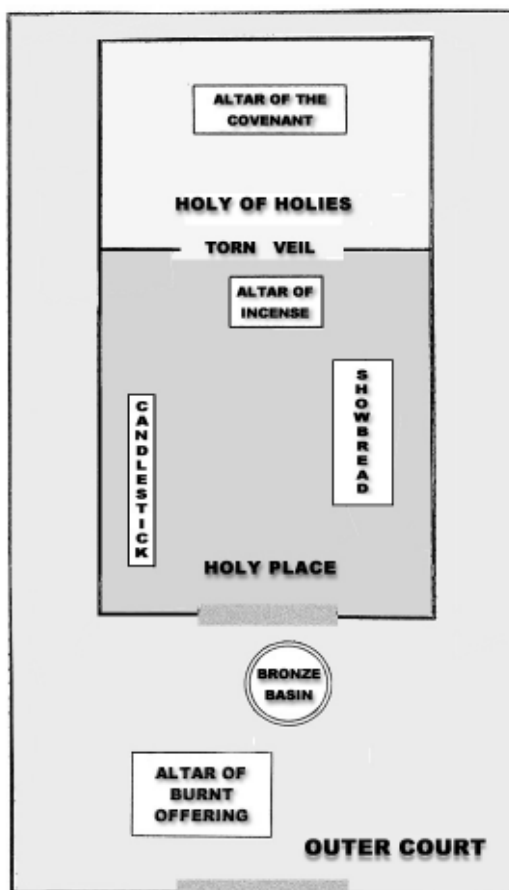
**B - TOUCHING JESUS TODAY**

Heb 13. 8

Jesus' compassion for the sick and his power of healing have not diminished since the time when he walked the roads of Galilee. Today, too, we just need to touch him to recover our health.

Heb 8. 1-2

Jesus is now in heaven, seated at the right hand of God, in the true tabernacle. The Holy Spirit invites us, and urges us, to enter and receive our promised inheritance.



*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Heb 4. 16)*

There is a sure way to get to the throne of grace. The earthly temple shows us the stages. We must walk through :

- The outer court
- The holy place.

**THE OUTER COURT** is a place of purification. There we leave everything which could hinder our communion with the thrice holy God : sins, resentment, bitterness, fears, doubts ... *The blood of Jesus cleanses our consciences from every dead work. (Heb 9. 14)*

In the **HOLY PLACE**, we receive light, strength, fellowship. We enter into praise which leads to adoration. Then we catch sight of *the torn Veil* and we can go, boldly, into the Holy of Holies. (Heb 10. 19-20)

Jn 14. 6-9  
Jas 1. 17

In the **HOLY OF HOLIES**, we touch Jesus, *the Author of our faith* (Heb 12.2), *the Way to the Father !* Then the Father, the source of every good and perfect gift, cannot help blessing us ...

Eph 3. 20

*Immeasurably more than all  
we ask or imagine.*

**THE GLORY OF GOD ON HIS FACE ...**

Charles Price tells the moving story of a crippled man who was not healed though he had attended many meetings. How many times people had prayed and begged the Lord to heal him ! One day, as Price was laying hands on him again, he began to weep and said :

*Purification*

*"I came here, confident of what I thought to be my faith. I now realize that I was taking for a virtue what was actually hypocrisy : people took me for one that could endure pain without complaining, and I was proud of my reputation ...*

*Communion*

*Doctor Price, I need Jesus much more than healing. I am craving for his presence !"*

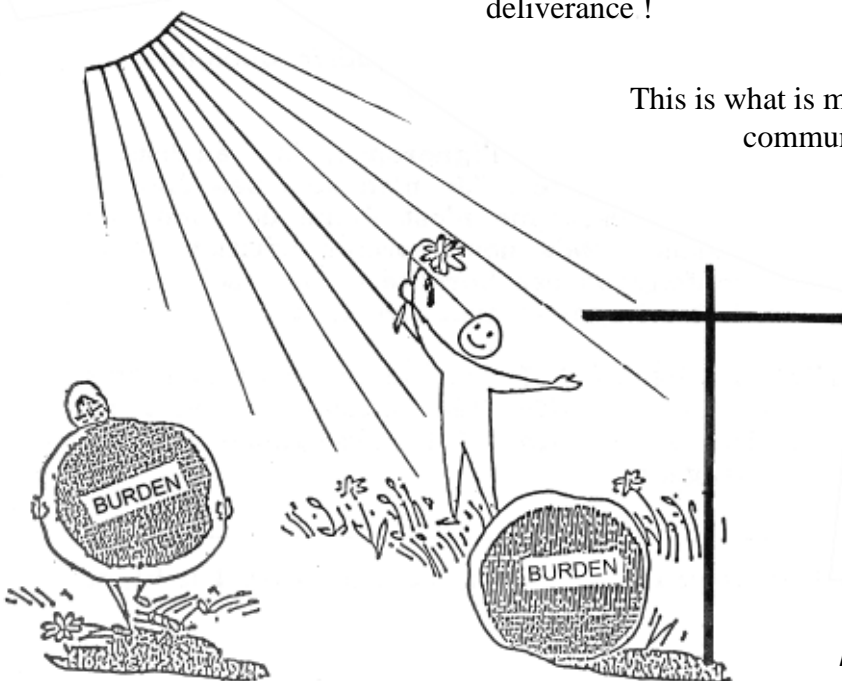
It is good thus to come to the end of our own resources. Jesus never scorns a broken heart.

*Adoration*

A few days later, our invalid was patiently waiting in his wheelchair for the doors of the auditorium to be opened. **His face was shining with glory.** He told us of his encounter with Jesus : he had spent the night in prayer, not just in intercession, but especially in praise and worship. At four o'clock in the morning, the intense presence of the Lord had flooded over him ! From that moment on, **he knew** that his struggle was over. His soul bathed in a gentle, divine peace.

*Healing*

Charles Price said : "He doesn't need to wait for the meeting. The Great Physician is here !" A moment later, the man got up out of his wheelchair. He was running, jumping and praising God for his deliverance !



This is what is meant by "touching Jesus" : adoration, communion, peace and ... faith. If we draw close to Jesus with **perseverance**, the faith that moves mountains will manifest itself.

*Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

*(Heb 7. 25)*



## III - Obstacles to faith

Since faith is so simple, why is it so rare ?

1 Ti 6. 12

Faith is *a fight* ! It comes up against obstacles. In order to overcome them, we first need to recognize them. Let us name those which seem to be the most common :

- 1) *Ignorance of the Word of God*
- 2) *Impatience*
- 3) *Worry*
- 4) *Bitterness*
- 5) *Passivity*
- 6) *Pressure from those around us.*

### 1 - IGNORANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD

Hos 4. 6

*My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.*

Ro 10. 17

What good is an inheritance if the heir does not know his rights ? It is through the revelation of the Word of God, that faith comes to us. We emphasize the point intentionally : the greatest obstacle to faith is ignorance of the Word of God.

**Misunderstanding** of this Word is sometimes worse than ignorance. Is it not more difficult to receive revelation when we contend that "we know", when in fact we don't know ? Filtering the Word through traditions, habits and false doctrines is the worst enemy of faith. The people of Nazareth, "used to" Jesus, claimed to know him and yet ...

Mk 6. 5-6

*He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them ... And he was amazed at their lack of faith.*

**False humility**, which stems from ignorance, is another barrier to faith. It makes us say : "I am not worthy of it ... It is too good for me ..." Sure enough, nobody is worthy of God's gifts ! Nobody but Jesus ! But, we are heirs to the worthiness of Jesus ! We must be careful not to confuse humility with unawareness of our identity in Christ. The Lord warns us:

2 Ch 29. 11

*My sons, do not be negligent now !* Let us arm ourselves with the Word of God **before** confronting the difficulties. Do we wait until we break down to fill up the tank ? The following testimony is eloquent and encouraging :

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<sup>1</sup> This list is not exhaustive. The Holy Spirit will reveal to us what may block our faith, if we listen to him with an obedient heart.

A little boy of nine was in intensive care ... Both his kidneys were no longer working. His parents were only allowed to see him several minutes a day. The doctor was unsuccessfully trying to warn them of his imminent death. "No ! He will live !" they would say, "because Jesus took up our infirmities and carried our sicknesses."

The father said to his son : "If you can't sleep at night, say this over and over: *Jesus took my infirmities. He carried my sicknesses and by his stripes, I am healed.*" The boy did so and three nights later, he was healed ! His parents gave this testimony :

"If we had not learnt to stand firmly on the Word of God **before** these dark moments, we would have lost our child."

## 2 - IMPATIENCE

Jas 5. 7

*See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, and how patient he is ...*

Lk 8.15

We too, must wait patiently for the revelation from which faith springs. When we rush for the blessing, we run the risk of missing the greatest thing : communion with the One who blesses.



Heb 10. 36

*You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*

## 3 - WORRY

Ph 4. 6-7

Worry and faith cannot cohabit ! Before talking to us about prayer, God says "*Do not be anxious about anything ...*" because anxiety would cancel out the effects of prayer.



## 4 - BITTERNESS

Mk 11. 25-26

Jesus underlines the importance of forgiveness, immediately after the lesson on faith and the practical demonstration of the withered fig-tree. Let us not forget that not forgiving ourselves is also an obstacle to faith.

That evening, she returned home in despair. She had, once again, received prayer for healing, to no avail ...

"Dear Jesus, she groaned, I have tried so hard to have faith and I can't do it ! Everybody has tried to pray for me and nothing has happened ! Speak to me, Lord ! *My only hope is in you !*"

Heb 12. 15

She then remembered a woman, a schoolteacher, who had taken over from her and robbed her of her pupils' affection. The bitterness had never really left her since. So she went to see this schoolteacher and, as they prayed together, the Lord filled her heart with love for her.

Jb 42. 10

"I shall be healed at the meeting this evening !" she said. "The Lord has given me his faith ! I am sure that I have really received it." Yet, apparently, nothing had changed ... True enough, her cancer disappeared that very evening !

## 5 - PASSIVITY

We cannot, indefinitely, receive gifts from God through the faith of others. Ministry such as laying on of hands, the anointing with oil, the prayer of believers, is precious, but, sooner or later, we must exercise faith for ourselves, if only to hold on to the blessing we have received. We must learn to breathe with our own lungs !

Pr 18. 7, 21

We can nullify the effects of the faith of others, by negative words :

"Here we go ! Here it is again ! I have backache again. I must have got it wrong. The Lord hasn't healed me."

Do such words not open the gate to the enemy ? Will they not induce him to rob us of the blessing ?

## 6 - PRESSURE FROM THOSE AROUND US

Did not the woman with the issue of blood have to overcome her fear in order to make her way to Jesus, through the crowd ? A crowd undoubtedly hostile and certainly threatening. Was she not "unclean" ? Untouchable ! How daring of her ! Likewise, don't we have to row up the stream of the world around us, in order to exercise faith ? The air we breathe is saturated with unbelief. Sometimes even inside churches ... If we seek the approval of others, we block the channel of faith.

Jn 5. 44

*How can you believe if you accept praise from one another ?*

Heb 11. 6

*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*

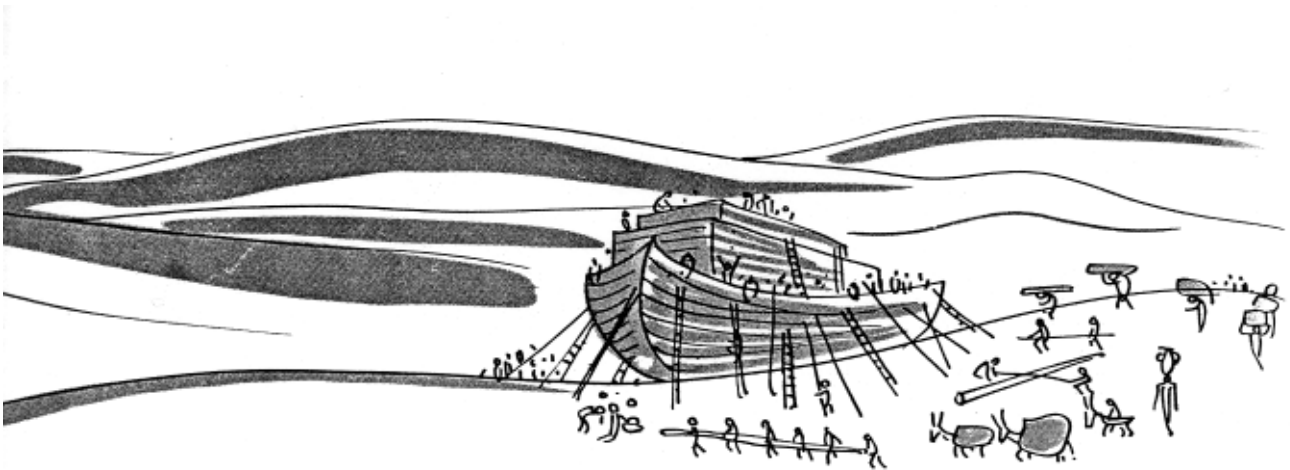
We have to choose ... Noah made a choice. He did not concern himself with the reactions of those around him :

Gn 6. 9, 22

*He walked with God ... He did everything just as God commanded him.*

Heb 11. 7

**BY FAITH NOAH**, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear, **BUILT AN ARK** to save his family .



***Faith, without works, is dead.***

**THE END**



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## Bibliography





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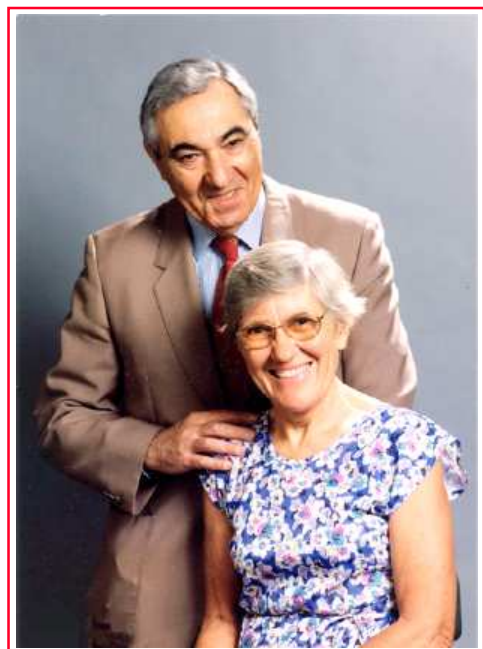
Annie Vallotton

Hearing the voice of God daily and living in fellowship with Him as with a friend, is it not the normal Christian life ?

Is it not also the condition of the revival we are longing for ?

We will miss great blessings if we do not learn **to walk by the Spirit.**

Such is the purpose of this book.



Elie and Denise  
Yapoudjian