

***The Oracles of God,
A Handbook:***

The Distilled Essence of God's Word

Preface

At the End saints must walk in the Spirit like the apostles did at the Beginning.

That is this handbook's thesis, and to facilitate that goal, the distilled essence of God's Word is presented in seven pillars that define the apostle's walk.

1. Be Born Again.
2. Be Baptized with the Spirit.
3. Obey God's Word.
4. Operate in the Gifts of the Spirit.
5. Walk in the Fruit of the Spirit.
6. Stand in the Armor of God.
7. Prevail in Spirit Warfare.

In actuality there aren't seven pillars. Rather, they are a fully integrated truth functioning in seamless unity. Even so, the concept is easier to examine if its parts are set forth separately. To grasp these verities is to capture the lifestyle of the apostles, the traditions we're commanded to follow. Therefore, let us study the way they walked and kept their traditions. For this, let Paul be our guide.

Breathing out threats and murder against believers, Paul traveled to Damascus full of mayhem and hate. As he drew near the city, a light shone round him from heaven. He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Astonished & trembling Paul said, "Lord, what shall I do?"

The Lord sent him to the city and directed Ananias to Paul to lay hands on him, that he might receive his sight, for Paul was chosen to bear Jesus' name to Gentiles, kings, and children of Israel.

Ananias obeyed, went to Paul and prayed. His sight was restored. He was filled with the Spirit, then arose and was baptized. ¹

Paul had met Jesus, recognized His Lordship, was born again, baptized with water and the Holy Spirit. He'd come to the Lord, and thereafter to His path. He was the Lord's man, with a single desire to please God and Jesus, which he did by walking in the Spirit.

¹ Acts 9:1-18.

In this start Paul was immersed in the first three pillars: born again, filled with Spirit, and walked in obedience of the Word. Next, turning to the fourth pillar, the gifts of Spirit, Paul identified them, ² encouraged their usage, provided protocols for that, ³ and himself walked in them throughout the epistles. Before viewing his usage of the gifts, listen to his introduction of them, ⁴

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries to God...he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...I wish you all spoke with tongues...For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays...What is the conclusion? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with understanding... ***I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.***"

Paul differentiated between a message in tongues (to be interpreted) and praying in Spirit (praying in tongues). While both are important, praying in tongues is more so. All believers are urged to pray this way. Praying in tongues is projected into the present when Paul wrote, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (tongues), being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Likewise, Paul walked in the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discernment, and tongues. Yes he was an apostle, yes the anointing of the apostle was upon him (greater than normal believers) but every believer who walks in the Spirit has access to all the gifts disseminated by the Holy Spirit Himself.

Next, let us turn to the fruit of the Spirit, keeping in mind it is the Spirit's fruit, not man's. Yet it is easy to see that those walking in Spirit walk in love, joy, peace, faith, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. The deeper one walks in the Lord, the more purely the gifts flow through her/him.

Thus we've move seamlessly into five pillars. The sixth, the armor of God, will be the same. As the armor applied to Paul, so to all. God's armor is vital and available from apostle to least saint: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, sword of Spirit, and praying in tongues—seven pieces of divine armor to empower and protect even meekest believers from wicked evil. As the apostles walked in the protection of God's armor, so can we.

This brings us to the seventh pillar, spiritual warfare, about which Paul said,

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God to pull down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself

² 1 Corinthians 12.

³ 1 Cor 14.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:2-18.

against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...⁵

The weapons of our warfare include the gifts, fruit, and armor already discussed, without which we would fail. But such glorious empowerments don't mandate victory. Something more is required: it is the total engagement of your heart as warrior. You must strap on your armor and take your place in the battle with all your might and skill. You must furiously fight for Jesus your Captain until death. You must be fully engaged. Paul said, "You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Thus we follow the apostles, including into spiritual war. Of himself, Paul said, "I stand in jeopardy every hour. He even fought a dreadful spirit beast (*thay-ree-on* from dark regions under the earth) at Ephesus. You can read of Paul's warfare in Acts and the epistles,⁶ but the point is that warfare was constant and intense. Yes, Paul was an apostle, but you must not use that as excuse. Know that in the Great Tribulation a powerful, terrible beast is going to make war on the saints, who must also war against evil the way Jesus and the apostles did: that is, they are going to walk in the Spirit and proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God to a lost and dying world exactly like Jesus and the apostles did. In the end a vast multitude will be saved from eternal damnation in the great revival of the last days. In spite of this spiritual victory the beast and his armies will kill most, if not all, of the saints. But what a glorious way to go—like the Master Himself.

While the gifts, fruit, armor—and companion training—will be useful in that harvest, which is why this handbook is written, even so, these will not be enough to empower the marvelous revival that is to happen on earth. More is required, and God will supply two additional blessings:

1) He will send His two witnesses on the first day of the tribulation: And they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth...If anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies...They have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire."⁷ Their ministry will pave the way for the kingdom, even as John Baptist's did.

2) Yet the most powerful event will be at the mid-point of the tribulation, when evil is rampant and the hopes of mankind overrun—God will pour out the Holy Spirit's latter rain, which may be even more glorious than the early rain of Pentecost. The latter rain will fuel a most spectacular end time harvest, those to be saved being so great a number that can't even be counted. This cannot happen without God's Presence and Power,

⁵ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

⁶ Acts chapters 19-28 and 2 Corinthians 11:22-12:13.

⁷ Revelation 11:3-6.

AND HE IS COMING FOR JUST THAT REASON!

Outline

Introduction

Pillars

- 1. Born Again**
- 2. Baptized With the Spirit**
- 3. Obey God's Word**
- 4. Operate in Gifts of the Spirit**
- 5. Walk in Fruit of the Spirit**
- 6. Stand in Armor of God**
- 7. Prevail in Spiritual War**

Empowerments

- 1. God's Word is Living**
- 2. God Empowers His Will**
- 3. God's Word Only**
- 4. Antithesis**

Introduction

As tightly wound as words can be written, Jesus said,

**Go make disciples and teach them
to keep all My commandments.** ⁸

To obey this is to succeed. But how do you keep all of His commandments? The answer is to “Walk in the Spirit just as the apostles did.” ⁹

How, then, did they walk?

Answering this question is the heart of the handbook. In spite of believers being commanded some twenty times in the Bible to follow the apostles, most have no idea how important it is or that **God Himself commands them to do so**. I suspect you, too, doubt this, and since it is ultra-important, I stop right here to demonstrate that it is true. Of numerous passages, let us just look at five:

Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. ¹⁰

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ¹¹

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. ¹²

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. ¹³

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the

⁸ Matthew 28: 19-20.

⁹ Romans 8 and Galatians 5.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 4:16-17.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 11:1-2.

¹² 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7.

¹³ 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ¹⁴

As you see, these are commands from God in His Word. They cannot/must not be ignored! Do you understand? Paul taught his ways in Christ everywhere and in every church. And he commanded all of them to imitate him. His words applied to the churches then, and still to us today and until the end.

Perhaps you might venture, “If this is true, why does the church ignore twenty such passages?” The answer is in an oxymoron called ***transparent mysteries*** in God’s Word, where *transparent* means *evident, clearly written, easy to perceive* and *mysteries* denote *things difficult or impossible to understand*. Yet this disparate condition describes God’s dealings with His people throughout history. Whether one understands His Word or not is the matter of his/her heart before God. It only takes one passage to demonstrate this point. In talking to the prophet in chapter six of Isaiah, God said,

Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed. ¹⁵

Because His people continually rejected His law and despised His word, He put a spirit of stupor on them. To understand why, all you need to do is to read the first five chapters of Isaiah. There you see that He reasons, even pleads, with them to turn back to Him, but they ignored and rejected Him and chose their own sinful way.

And so it is today, if a person wants to understand and please the Lord, God will open the mystery of His word and show them truth; but if they refuse to obey, though the words are transparently clear they appear as mystery to those prone to disobey. In other words, God decides whether or not they will be permitted to understand His word based on their hearts. This phenomenon appears throughout the Word.

For now, let us return to the focus of the booklet, which is written for many who, deceived by false prophets, will find themselves in the terrors of tribulation. Yet therein, in such dreadful conditions, many will turn their hearts to the Great Lord Jesus who said these blessed words two thousand years ago: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” ¹⁶

¹⁴ 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7.

¹⁵ Isaiah 6:9-10; 29:10; Romans 11:8.

¹⁶ Revelation 3:19.

As we turn to the Seven Pillars remember, God wrote the New Testament through apostles, who defined and lived in the truths of seven magnificent pillars. These are not optional. They define the way the apostles walked; they are mandatory; they are available.

Let us turn to them now.

Seven Pillars

1. Born Again

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God. For no man can do these signs unless God is with him.

Jesus' miracles were astonishing. He raised the dead, restored lepers, healed the sick, paralyzed, afflicted. He cast out demons, fed the multitudes. He did these things all the time. Therefore Nicodemus could say, "We know that no one can do these things unless God is with Him."

But Jesus was not diverted by Nicodemus. Rather, He made an astounding proclamation theretofore unknown to man:

Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.¹⁷

Until Jesus revealed that man had to be reborn (because his spirit was dead) we didn't know it. When God created Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life.¹⁸ Yet the fateful day when Adam and Eve ate the fruit, their spirits died. Not their souls (their mental facilities, reasoning) nor their bodies: just their spirits. Man can live without spirit, but he can no longer live in holiness in the presence of God. Therefore, Jesus explained man must be reborn before he can reunite with God.¹⁹

Humanity still doesn't realize it is governed by the selfish flesh unleashed in the garden when Adam died; nor does it know of the spirit life that exists in the presence of God with Adam before he sinned. Nor does it know it is possible to be restored to God and dwell in His Spirit.

²⁰

No wonder Nicodemus was perplexed. He had no idea part of him was dead. He stammered, "How can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" He didn't understand.

And so the Lord told Nicodemus,²¹

¹⁷ John 3:3,5.

¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:23, (He created man spirit, soul, and body).

¹⁹ Insight into this is provided in Genesis 2:15-17; 1 Cor 15:42-58.

²⁰ Romans 3:21-31.

²¹ John 3:5.

I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Spirit rebirth is the launch point into the Kingdom. It sets the stage for pleasing God and dwelling with Him forever.

And that is God's desire. He chooses to be involved in the lives of His children.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you to will and to do for His good pleasure. ²²

But there is even more. Look at Jesus Himself, who said,

Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ²³

Did you get that? God, who is Spirit, was in Jesus when He walked on earth as a man; and He is in believers today, because He chooses to be! You see, after Jesus was resurrected, one day He just appeared in a room with His disciples, without opening a door. He was Spirit.

Jesus said,

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. ²⁴

There is a Spirit world! And being born again by believing in Jesus is the gateway into it. So the question, for those who want to enter God's Spirit is, "How can I be born again?" And that glorious answer is found in Romans. ²⁵

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Word says, **WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME.**

²² Philippians 2:12-13.

²³ John 14:9-10.

²⁴ John 4:23-24.

²⁵ Romans 10:8-11.

If you will confess with your mouth the Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. It is that simple, that is, if you really believe. But there is a vital premise: if you really believe in Jesus, as this confession implies, then you will seek after Him with all your heart. You will become a disciple, shun sin, and learn to understand and keep all of His commandments. ²⁶

And from that point of rebirth into the spirit, God's Spirit and glory begin to open to you.

But the hour is coming, and now is when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship him in Spirit and truth. God is Spirit. And those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. ²⁷

You cannot worship God in Spirit until your spirit is reborn, but when it is, the Spirit of Christ enters, and for the first time you begin to know the living God. You can feel His presence. This is the starting point with Christ and His Father, your Father, forever. And what a glorious starting place it is!

²⁶ Matthew 28:18-20.

²⁷ John 4:23-24.

2. Baptized with the Holy Spirit

Jesus commanded His disciples to tarry until they were endued with power from on high,²⁸ when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore,

They returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, near Jerusalem. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying, the disciples, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers. These all continued with one accord in supplication and prayer.²⁹

They spent ten days in one accord in supplication and prayer. Do not hurry past this **in one accord** prayer and supplication, for

IT IS THE MANDATORY FIRST STEP!

Keep in mind that before and during the tribulation there will be desperate circumstances. You may be alone, or almost so, with little spiritual support or knowledge. This handbook may be one of your few companions. At that time supreme actions and focus will be required from you. Scripture enjoins believers to seek God **with all their hearts**, which was what the hundred and twenty were doing. So must you! After which, your personal Pentecost can come, just as happens in the next quotation.

They were all in one accord in one place and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.³⁰

This was the Lord's promised New Covenant. You can look in the Old Testament prophets and see that this was God's glorious solution to the hopelessness of mankind trying to live without the Spirit of God being in them.

But rather than look at a number of those OT texts, we for conciseness, just pick up information from Acts.

...And it shall come to pass in the last days, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My

²⁸ Luke 24:49.

²⁹ Acts 1:5-8.

³⁰ Acts 2:1-8.

maidservants I will pour out My spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy...and whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. ³¹

This was God's promised New Covenant, and the Holy Spirit was gloriously, generously poured out on mankind. In the Spirit, many wonderful things happened. While the first recipients were Jews, soon thereafter believing Gentiles were added. Let us look at a few passages that describe the marvelous things that happened in churches (Jew and Gentile) as God's Spirit came into their midst.

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. ³²

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God...³³

O foolish Galatians...Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?...Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?...Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³⁴

Throughout the epistles the Holy Spirit as the power of God is the difference maker in individual lives and in churches; without which, there is almost no life.

³¹ Acts 2:17-21.

³² 1 Corinthians 2:4-5.

³³ 1 Corinthians 2:9-13.

³⁴ Galatians 3:1-5.

3. Obey God's Word

We must obey God's Word, all of it all of the time. And we can! Two specific commands make this possible: Walk in the Spirit; Follow the apostles. Concerning the first,

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but by the Spirit...Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.³⁵

As to following the apostles, we are often told to follow them, do what they did, live like they lived, pray like they prayed, for they were the Lord's empowered role models to all believers for following Jesus. And part of their task was to show us how to walk in the Spirit and obey the Word. Yet these things are little understood today.

But back to the beginning of their assignment. The Lord commanded His apostles to go make disciples (emulators of Himself and His apostles) and to teach them to keep **all His commandments**. And gloriously, His commands are not burdensome³⁶ to true believers, but rather are a delight. And listen, my friend, if keeping God's word does not delight you, you're far from where you need to be.

But what are His commandments? Why, they are the entirety of the Bible, rightly understood. Well how in the world can I keep **all** the Bible's commands?

There is a wonderful answer: **Walk in Spirit as the Apostles did.**³⁷ If you do that, you will be well on the way to keeping all His commandments.

It is likely that many readers of this handbook will say, Until I picked this book up I've never heard of following the apostles and keeping their traditions. Why is that so important? How does that enable me to keep all Jesus' commandments?

Let's answer this question with an important story about Paul. This is the bottom line for walking in the Spirit's power against the enemy. In it Paul leaps from ink-on-paper directly into our lives as he **PROCLAIMS,**

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries...He who speaks in a **tongue edifies**

³⁵ Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:16-18.

³⁶ 1 John 5:3.

³⁷ This we are instructed to do some twenty times in the New Testament.

himself... (Jude adds ³⁸ “But you, beloved, ***building yourselves up*** on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Paul adds, “I wish you all spoke with tongues...Let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with understanding... For you indeed give thanks well...***I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all***”...³⁹

When the Spirit was poured out on the Jews at Pentecost, they all spoke in tongues. When the Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, they spoke in tongues. When Paul taught about the use of tongues, he said he wished they all spoke in tongues. He concluded His argument by confessing, ***I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all!***

Why? Because he knew how incredibly important it is to speak in tongues! Remember in Ephesians six where Paul introduced the seventh piece of God’s armor, that is,

...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...⁴⁰

Praying in the Spirit in Ephesians 6:18 is the same as 1 Corinthians 14:1-18. Tongues are part of the Spirit’s empowering weaponry. They are a vital component of the weapons to which Paul refers in 2 Corinthians 10.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strong-holds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.⁴¹

Ephesians 6:18 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ⁴² are as precept and example. We are instructed to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (that is, in tongues) for the saints. And what is it that we should be doing in those prayers? We should be pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing (in the evil spirit world) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We are, through such praying, to bring every thought of the saints into the obedience of Christ—especially as regards hearing, believing & appropriating the Word of God into the lives of the saints.

³⁸ Jude 1:20-21 and 1 Corinthians 14:4 are the only verses in Bible that tell us how to edify ourselves (build ourselves up) in spirit.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:2-18.

⁴⁰ Ephesians 6:18.

⁴¹ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

⁴² Look them up for yourselves.

We are to follow the apostles. We are to cry out in prevailing prayer for the church as Paul did.

Consider his prayers in Ephesians.

...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*... ⁴³

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ⁴⁴

This is how we are to pray. This is what it means to follow the apostles. Know that praying in tongues is integral to triumphant praying. You must not ignore this command.

Likewise, all the gifts of the Spirit are given to believers because they are wonderfully good and because we are blind, weak, and defenseless without them. How dare any believer ignore them or any teacher teach against them, considering Scripture's earnest injunction to seek for and use them as the precious treasure they are.

Remember, the apostles were given to us by our Lord to teach and model the way to live and walk in the Spirit. They are our examples; they were the first and only men anointed by the Spirit. They showed us how to live, and they commanded us to follow them and to do what they did. Why do most ignore them as if they never existed?

⁴³ Ephesians 1:17-20.

⁴⁴ Ephesians 3:16-19.

4. Operate in Gifts of the Spirit

Now we turn more specifically to the Gifts of the Spirit as set forth in 1 Corinthians twelve. The gifts are given to each member of the body as determined by the Spirit. They provide insight into spiritual matters (and power to operate therein) that would not otherwise be available. The Word tells us that the gifts will cease when no longer needed.⁴⁵ It also tells us when that will be. This is so very important. Read it for yourself: It is specific:

When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part (the gifts) will be done away. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but **then** (when the Lord returns and we see Him face to face and know Him just as He knows us), **THEN WHEN WE SEE JESUS JUST AS HE SEES US**, THEN WE WILL NO LONGER NEED THE GIFTS.

UNTIL THEN, WE DESPERATELY NEED THEM! Is not that clear? And, like all Scripture, it says what it means, means what it says, (no matter who says it doesn't), and we are to obey it! Beware of false teachers that say this is not so, for they are on extremely dangerous ground personally.

With that, let us look at the gifts, understanding that they are all supernatural (that is, above the abilities of natural man). As you consider them, think of the wonderful benefits to the church when these gifts are understood, believed, and utilized.⁴⁶

1. Word of Wisdom—insight into the true nature of things. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

⁴⁷ This injunction was understood and practiced throughout the early churches.

2. Word of Knowledge—come to understand. “But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.”⁴⁸ It was commonly understood in the early church that faith, speech, and knowledge from the Spirit were available and useful to all and in all the churches.

3. Faith—firm persuasion; conviction based upon hearing. “A woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well’.” But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour.”⁴⁹ Oh for precious faith to believe God for your own needs.

⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 13:8-12.

⁴⁶ The definitions of these terms come from noted Greek Scholars.

⁴⁷ James 1:5.

⁴⁸ 2 Corinthians 8:7.

⁴⁹ Matthew 9:20-22.

4. Gifts of Healings—a means of healing; the result of the act. “And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.”⁵⁰ Such is the glory of ‘gifts of healing’.

5. Working of Miracles—power, works of supernatural origin and character. “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.”⁵¹

6. Prophecy—speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. “And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles’.”⁵²

7. Discerning of Spirits—distinguishing whether of evil or of God. “Then Saul...filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.’ And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.”⁵³

8. Kinds of Tongues—supernatural gift of speaking in another language without its having been learnt. “How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation...But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.”⁵⁴ That the body of Christ may learn and be encouraged and that the Kingdom of God be advanced.

9. Interpretation of Tongues— (See 8.)

⁵⁰ Acts 3:4-9.

⁵¹ Acts 8:5-8.

⁵² Acts 21:10-11.

⁵³ Acts 13:9-11.

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:26-31.

The Spirit gives these gifts for the profit (the blessing) of all. What a generous concept—the blessing of every member of the body of Christ; everyone. Each person being an important part of the whole. What a great God!

This was worked out in a practical setting,

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification...For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.⁵⁵

They met together, worshipped and ministered to the Lord, and learned how to hear His voice and open to and learn from the gifts of the Spirit. It was important to be trained in the Spiritual gifts under the oversight of elders, and then, when alone, they could safely hear from the Holy Spirit when they needed to do so.

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:26, 31.

5. Walk in the Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit ⁵⁶ is

1. Love, the selfless love of God.
2. Joy, exceeding joy, exult, rejoice greatly.
3. Peace, unmolested, undisturbed well-being.
4. Longsuffering, self-restraint in provocation, does not retaliate or punish; opposite of anger; associated with mercy.
5. Kindness, used of goodness of heart, kindness.
6. Goodness, that, being of good constitution, is beneficial in effect.
7. Faith, firm persuasion, conviction based upon hearing, faith in God/Christ.
8. Gentleness, inwrought grace of the soul; chiefly towards God. Temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good and therefore without disputing.
9. Self-control, temperance.

Against such there is no law.

Do you see how glorious these nine fruit are? Think through them. Consider the impact a person who exudes such characteristics would have on everyone he or she meets. Sense the winsomeness to those who hurt of one manifesting such nature. Who in the sorry world would not be touched by such. That was exactly who Jesus was.

While perhaps we should look in depth at usage of each of the nine, let us just zero in on one, starting with the first, love.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. ⁵⁷

And another text.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Galatians 5:22-23.

⁵⁷ 1 John 4:16-19.

⁵⁸ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Oh that we may walk in such love. How beautifully winsome it is.

Likewise, the other fruit are also winsome beyond measure. But note, these fruit of the Spirit are in fact just that, “fruit of the Spirit” not the individual. You see, the contrast between God’s Spirit and our nature is as great as between heaven and earth. You cannot walk in these things except you are baptized with and walk in the Holy Spirit. And that point is integral to our study.

6. Stand in the Armor of God

Here a mystery is disclosed about a spiritual war raging in heavenlies and on earth—without man’s knowledge, except that the Word of God says it is so. The purpose for this section is to identify the warfare and introduce the weaponry available for our part in the battle.

But you might be thinking, “What? What are you talking about? What war? What do we have to do with that? Do you think this is really true? Surely you can’t believe this, can you?”

If you’re thinking like that, you are already a victim, hardly more than spiritual cannon fodder. But you don’t have to remain in ignorance. You must not, for you can have the whole armor of God! Look at Ephesians 6, for it contains some of the most important words in the Bible.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.⁵⁹

Open your heart to the power in this paragraph. It instructs you to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might; it catapults you into the realm of Spirit, a sphere so far outside man’s natural boundaries that you can but glimpse the dimmest silhouette using your mind; it protects and impels you onto a battlefield in the heavenly realm with spiritual hosts of wickedness; and thereupon, it empowers you to prevail. Its truth is far beyond the experience and reasoning of natural man.

God’s armament is for you. Its component parts are wonderfully impenetrable by the powerful weapons of the enemy. They are summarized as follows:

1. Girded your waist with truth.
2. Put on the breastplate of righteousness.
3. Shod your feet with the gospel of peace.
4. Taken the shield of faith.
5. Taken the helmet of salvation.
6. Taken the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
7. Always pray in all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

Let us take a closer look at them.

⁵⁹ Ephesians 6:10-21.

The first is **TRUTH**, which is understood as “the manifested, veritable essence of the matter.” In other words, Jesus is the essence of and purpose for all things: He is the Truth of it all. In the context of God’s armor, Jesus is in and around you; thus the core of your being is protected by Eternal Truth.

The second, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, relates directly to Father God Himself. Your heart and vital organs are protected against all evil by the breastplate of God’s righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate **God’s righteousness**, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins previously committed, to demonstrate **His righteousness**, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ⁶⁰

The third, the **GOSPEL OF PEACE**, is the peace that comes upon the heart and life of those who embrace the glad tidings of the good things of God. It results in unmolested, undisturbed wellbeing in the believer, and in this state of peace the feet of those who believe hurry to carry the Gospel to others in the hurting world. ⁶¹

The fourth, the **SHIELD OF FAITH**, is in relation to God. It is a firm conviction that produces a complete acknowledgement of God's truth; it's personal surrender to Him. The object of Abraham's "faith" was not God's promise; Abraham's "faith" rested on God Himself. ⁶² With the Shield of Faith you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

The fifth, the **HELMET OF SALVATION**, refers to the protection of the mind against all the lies of evil which attempt to rob believers of the treasures found in the Word of God, including the Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit, the armor of God, the joy and peace of His love and all the other of His many enrichments and promises. Yes, the Helmet of Salvation is an enriching armament.

The sixth, the **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**, is the Word (rhema) of God. It is living and powerful and cuts through anything. About it the prophet proclaimed, "Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?" ⁶³ Consider its glory, from which, for illustration, we extract one small verse, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” ⁶⁴ When we confess our sin in obedience to this verse, the mighty Sword of the Spirit shatters all doubt and voices of evil and brings glorious deliverance from the burden of sin. It's so real you can feel God's forgiveness in your heart.

⁶⁰ Romans 3:21-26.

⁶¹ Romans 10:15.

⁶² W. E. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, p. 222.

⁶³ Jeremiah 23:29.

⁶⁴ 1 John 1:9.

The seventh, **PRAY IN THE SPIRIT**, is where Paul gave specific directions, specifying praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...⁶⁵ What does Paul mean by ‘Praying in the Spirit’ as set forth herein? Praying in Spirit in Ephesians 6:18 is the same as 1 Corinthians 14:1-18. Tongues are part of the Spirit’s empowering weaponry. They are a vital component of the weapons to which Paul refers ⁶⁶

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strong-holds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...

Thus Eph 6 and 2 Cor 10 are as precept and example. We are instructed to pray always with all supplication and prayer in the Spirit (that is, in tongues) for the saints. And what is it that we should be doing in those prayers? Why we should be pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing (in the evil spirit world) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Through such praying we can bring every thought of the saints into the obedience of Christ.”

This wonderful injunction reflects the very heart of the apostles. The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said,

It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

⁶⁷

The apostles understood the importance of prevailing prayer for teaching and hearing the Word. They knew that, without overcoming prayer, there is no victory.

⁶⁵ Ephesians 6:18-20.

⁶⁶ 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

⁶⁷ Acts 6:2-4.

7. Prevail in Spiritual Warfare

We must understand and use God's empowerments for the welfare of the body of Christ, so let us look at Paul's overview of the challenge.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to obedience of Christ...⁶⁸

It was obvious to Paul, and it is clear in Scripture, that spiritual warfare is on-going and full-time. Paul wrote to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith,⁶⁹

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

God has provided wonderful empowerments (gifts, fruit, armor) for spiritual life and victory. But there is more. Victory cannot be achieved by halfhearted mental assent. You must be all in! Think about the force of those words; then consider another way Paul put it:

For though we walk in the natural man, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strong-holds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.⁷⁰

A story from the 1830's⁷¹ explains Paul's expressions:

1. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life.
2. Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

In other words, it tells how to prevail in Spirit Warfare.

⁶⁸ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

⁶⁹ 2 Timothy 2: 1-7.

⁷⁰ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

⁷¹ Yeager, Dr. Michael, *Daniel Nash A Man Mighty In Prayer: The Key to Revival*, pp. 43-44, 54-55. Kindle Edition.

Born in 1792, Evangelist Charles Finney was considered to be one of the most effective of all revivalist preachers in US history. He had an important role in Second Great Awakening. It is said that 83 percent of his converts never backslid. Finney understood the importance of prayer in revivals and depended mightily upon the work of the Holy Ghost to bring deep conviction to his listeners. He knew that it was not just the word of God, but a deep work of prayer, in faith, looking to heaven in order to set the captives free.

He was always thankful for his prayer partners Daniel Nash and Able Clary who would travel ahead to the revival location, rent humble quarters, and begin to groan and travail in prayer for days or weeks, until they had “prayed through.” They prayed earnestly before, during, and after Finney preached. On his part, as Finney began to minister he was waiting expectantly for the Holy Spirit to come, after which Finney would bring them in and instruct them in the way of the Word.

Dr. Yeager, whose book we quote, added an interesting anecdote about the teamwork between the men of prayer and Finney: “It was reported that Finney left his evangelistic ministry for the pastorate within three or four months after Daniel Nash’s death.”

He went on to say, “With due credit to Finney for what was done, most of his success was due to the praying men who had made up the hedge and stood in the gap with tears that they had shed. Be sure that the groans they uttered are written in the book of the chronicles of the records God has laid up in heaven.”

History records that Finney lived an active life for another forty years after teaming with Daniel Nash and Able Clary (who died before Nash), and that after this partnership, Finney was a pastor, professor, Bible School president, social activist for abolitionism, and related matters.

But he did little in evangelism thereafter. Surely at least part of the reason was no one took up the mantle as a mighty warrior in God to pull down strongholds, cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. In other words, to pay the price on their knees in prayer for the victory that took place in the pulpit. And since the mighty weapons of Spirit warfare were no longer employed over Finney’s work, it passed from history.

The Lord leaves us with these challenging words,

Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? ⁷²

⁷² Luke 18:8.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but found no one.⁷³

Is your heart stirred by such thoughts, or do they pass over as if you never heard?

⁷³ Ezekiel 22:30-31.

Precepts and Antithesis

This handbook is established upon three foundations: 1. God's Word is just that—**God's Word**; it governs all things; 2. God empowers His Work; and finally; 3. This book is based on what God says, not man.

1. God's Word—is God's Word!

The Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart...His thoughts are higher than our thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth...His word does not return to Him void, but accomplishes what He pleases...⁷⁴

Did you get that? His Word is living; it is actual living and powerful! It is absolute truth that God Himself spoke and substantiates. It is the guide book for believers and sets the guidelines for all created beings, good and evil.

Here is a summary of its importance,

And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.⁷⁵

If God says it, it is so. It is to be understood, believed, and obeyed—every time.

⁷⁴ A blending of Hebrews 4:12-13 and Isaiah 55:8-11.

⁷⁵ 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

2. God Empowers His Work

If God commands you to do something, He will empower you to be able to do so. Likewise, God has decreed that in the last days there will be such an astounding surge of salvation that the resultant harvest will be too large to count.⁷⁶ But what will be the genesis of the tremendous power enabling such salvation? Why the same Holy Spirit that powered the marvelous outpouring at Pentecost! He will be the One who does it again at the end. It is He, the Holy Spirit.

And it is He who will empower those who, in accordance with the challenge of this handbook, set out to “Walk in Spirit like the Apostles Walked.” God will not leave you to try to do this in your own power and resolve. He will help you do it!

As we approach the end of time, God begins to unfold the events of the end. To understand this is to rejoice at His greatness, He who set these things in motion at the beginning, all of which will activate in accordance with His plan. But He wants us to know and admire that He knew from the beginning what was to happen at the end. What a Great God! Therefore let us carefully look at what we already read with *transparent* clarity but have not yet understand, that is until He unveils His *mystery*.

⁷⁶ Revelation 7:9-10, 14.

3. God's Word Only

This handbook simply quotes the Word of God as the absolute bottom line of all truth—which, of course, it is. Since God says it, you can proceed confidently knowing that, correctly understood, no verse ever disagrees with any other. As your understanding matures, you will be more and more established in its truth, as you see verse after verse clarifying and enriching your understanding.

Likewise, this book is not a theological treatise. No time is wasted arguing with opinions of men or churches. In other words, its thesis is: This is what God says. He will never disagree with Himself. Our responsibility is to understand, believe, obey, and teach His Word to others.

Antithesis

Some may sneeringly say, if these Seven Pillars are so precious, why does the church not practice them today? The tragic answer is that in less than a hundred years the first church forsook its love for God and became busy in religion its own way. About this, Jesus sternly warned,

...I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.⁷⁷

He told them they were disobeying the first command: to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. He warned them to repent, or He was going to remove their lampstand from its place. But they didn't repent, and He did remove their lampstand. He removed their right to churchhood; He removed the Holy Spirit from them; He left them to a religion of their own making, which exists until today. He warned every church of every age **and every individual in every church of every age** what to do and not do.

We must test ourselves by Revelation chapters two and three, for each letter ends with stupefying words,

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Implicit in this warning is this: if you don't have ears to hear, don't hear. Everyone will be judged by whether obedient or not.

After the Gentile church age ends (when Jesus vomits it out of His mouth around AD 2028) then God will revive the Jewish remnant.

Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days (two thousand years) He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight.

⁷⁸

But what of the Gentiles, those vomited out of His mouth—those for whom this handbook is written? What of them? They will find themselves on the threshold of tribulation.

⁷⁷ Revelation 2:4-5.

⁷⁸ Hosea 6:1-3.

May they discover and use this handbook, for there is but one other terrifying alternative, the same as spoken to the Jews just before they rejected and killed Jesus,

Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.⁷⁹

The Lord God prefers that all repent and be saved. But most will rebel and go their own way. But none will ever get by with a whining snivel...

but, but nobody told me...

You have been warned again, oh man, whoever you are.

⁷⁹ Matthew 23:29-36.