

Church of God, The Eternal

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December 2006

Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

This year has almost flown by already and we are in the winter part of the year again. With pleasant thoughts, it is an honor to have the privilege to address you once again.

Once in a while there is someone who wonders whether he or she really does possess the Holy Spirit. How can we determine whether or not we are led by God's Holy Spirit? Are there ways to know if you are being led and do possess fruits of the Holy Spirit?

We can know. The evidence is in the way we conduct our lives, our overall approach to God's truth, and our proper fear, respect and honor to our Heavenly Father and Savior Jesus Christ.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).

Do we choose whether or not we want to possess God's Spirit? Or do we even have that choice? God's Word pertains to each of us that are called in the last days, just as it did to the people to whom it was addressed at the time it was spoken.

Jesus told His disciples:

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you (John 15:16).

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love (John 15:9).

We were chosen and predestinated by God to take on the very traits of His Holy Spirit and to someday become spirit as God is spirit. That choosing by God was done long before we were even born; it was done by God before the very foundation of this physical earth that we live on. Think of the power and majesty of our great God, who is capable of looking into the future and planning out how He wants things to be in our time and place on this earth.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Romans 8:28–30).

We see that God not only chose us to take on the traits of His Holy Spirit and become holy, but it was *His will and good pleasure* to bring this about in the lives of all whom He has chosen.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (Ephesians 1:4–5).

God surely promised us the awesome future of becoming spirit and being a part of His family, but that comes with the price of implicit obedience and going against the thoughts and aspirations of this human flesh, so that we literally give up the life that comes naturally to us and that we desire as physical beings. We must do this so that we may take on the fruits of the Holy Spirit—that spirit power of the very God of this entire universe.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (John 15:11).

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (John 15:10).

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples (John 15:8).

We need the sincere desire to honor God, and sincerely seek to serve Him in all of our lives.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you (John 15:16).

If we are fruitful in the good works of the Holy Spirit, then we are going to be faithful, zealous, humble and always striving to uphold and live a life of service to God and His truth. In doing so, God is honored and glorified.

It will not be easy, but we are promised help to go on and produce those fruits of the Holy Spirit, and our reward will make our trials and tests of this life seem very insignificant.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:20).

But the Comforter, which is the Holy [Spirit] whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Romans 8:17).

Do We Have the Spirit?

In determining if we personally possess the traits of the Holy Spirit, we need to ask ourselves these questions:

1) Are we conscious that an influence and work of the Holy Spirit has been drawing us away from the corrupt passions and vanities of this world?

2) Are we conscious of a desire to yield to that influence, and to be conducted in the path of truth and life?

3) Do we show no resistance? Do we follow cheerfully and obey this pure influence, leading us to mortify pride, subdue passion, destroy lust, humble our ambition, and destroy the love of wealth and of the world? If so, we are His children. God will not lead us astray, and our peace and happiness will consist only in yielding ourselves to His influence totally.

This is the work of the Spirit, and if we are aware of this positive orientation and influence in our lives, that is how we begin to know that we possess the true fruits of God's Spirit and are truly the children of God. God is not going to force or cause us to be obedient against our wills. He wants us by free choice to choose to serve Him and to love His way of life. If we sincerely love His way and diligently set out to be obedient, God will be that positive force in our lives, leading us in the path of righteousness. We can know, and if we put forth the effort to serve Him and truly to allow Jesus Christ to be the personal savior in our lives—to deliver us from ourselves, from living as natural human beings and doing what just comes naturally to us—we do not have to be in doubt of whether or not God is working with us through His Holy Spirit.

Evidence of God's Spirit at Work

Here are ten points by which we can recognize and see the evidence, if God's Holy Spirit is indeed working in our lives:

1) God's Spirit helps us understand things of the spirit. God gives the impulse and desire to grasp spiritual things which are the very foundation of His truth. God plants that seed.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Without the influence of the Holy Spirit we will not understand spiritual things because that is the only means by which to have that understanding.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10).

God, through that call and revelation to us by His Spirit, has opened our minds to understand His spiritual knowledge. He influences our thoughts in a positive way to see that true light.

2) God's Spirit will elevate our goals and values from the physical to the spiritual and will instill an understanding and desire for godly traits.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Our decisions will be guided by a greater purpose than those temporary and physical ones that may seem so right at the time.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1–3).

3) We will understand God's Word and His plan for the future of mankind.

To this world, the things of God do not seem natural and are rejected. They think we are a little strange and even foolish for our keeping the Holy Days and Sabbaths, and at the same time giving up a lot of what this world, as they know it, has to offer.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

God's Word is His Spirit in action in the lives of the obedient. We have been given the understanding of the plan of salvation and knowledge about the future of man that this world simply does not know or accept.

For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light (Psalm 36:9).

God gives us enough knowledge of His plans for our future; He gives us all we need.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians 13:12).

4) The Holy Spirit imparts to us mental attributes of God—a very part of the mind of God.

a) The knowledge of God.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God (Ephesians 3:17–19).

b) Understanding of God and His Word.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

c) Wisdom of how to use knowledge.

When we strive to do the right thing and obey God, we can make decisions based on the mind of God through the influence of His Holy Spirit. That is the means by which we receive the knowledge, understanding, and very wisdom of God. We do not figure it out by study and our own capabilities, but by direction from God through His Spirit.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5).

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

5) The Holy Spirit imparts to us God's personality traits.

God's love for us is unchanging.

For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed (Malachi 3:6).

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16).

It is only through the very means that Christ paid the ultimate price of love for us that we can ever possess the true love of God in our hearts and minds.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us (Romans 5:5).

As He is unchanging in the character and strength of His affection, so should we be. We can only properly express our gratitude to God if we also truly have and show the proper love and affection toward His people.

Our happiness here and forever depends altogether on our continuing in the love of Christ. We have no source of permanent joy except in that love which takes on the very personality traits of Jesus Christ. Those traits are shown in us by our being peaceable, humble, gentle, merciful, kind, easily entreated, impartial and not hypocritical. Inner peace and joy is given for obedience and shows on the outside as a generous spirit of service and giving.

6) The Holy Spirit imparts God's character.

The Spirit in us will fear God and give Him full precedence for right and wrong. By acknowledging God's supreme authority, we are to use that knowledge for growth.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

God's character is just.

He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The law is God's will for mankind, the standard and rules of life, the very light of our pathway. It reveals to us the character of God.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good (Romans 7:12).

And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments (Revelation 16:7).

God's character is pure.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17).

If we strive to live by every word of God, then we will take on the attributes of God's character, nothing near perfection, but we will be growing and developing in His character traits and striving for the day when we can be made perfect.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Philippians 4:8).

God has many character traits and we must allow God to instill in us His very nature and character as an integral part of our character and nature. Traits of God's character are identical to His personality traits. God is impartial, He is good, He is love, He is merciful and compassionate, not revengeful, but long-suffering. We need to be taking on these character traits, and the only way that can ever happen is by our submitting to God as the Master Potter so that He can mold us by the influence of His Holy Spirit through the experiences, trials and tests of this life. Are we really recognizing that influence in our lives? That can only be achieved by a closeness to God through prayer and study. The Apostle Paul said to the Ephesians, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

7) The Holy Spirit writes the laws of God in our hearts.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jeremiah 31:33).

God's law is written in the very fleshly tables of our hearts by His Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:3).

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (1 John 4:6).

8) The Holy Spirit gives us the power and energy to overcome and grow.

It gives us the power of self-control to overcome Satan. God's Spirit gives us the courage to face crises in our lives. The more it is exercised, the more we are able to make wise decisions through the Holy Spirit and to receive inspiration and encouragement.

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:12–13, 17).

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

9) The Holy Spirit causes the qualities of God in us to flow out to others as rivers of living water. This is a very important point that requires living the truth of God from the heart.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37–39).

This outflowing of love, joy, and peace given us by the Holy Spirit will be reflected in our dealings with others, and most importantly, it will be a positive force of the Spirit of God.

10) God's Spirit will constantly comfort and reassure us of the opportunity to enter into His rest and to look beyond this present existence.

If we love His Way of Life with our whole beings, it will keep us inspired to keep working toward that day.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) (Hebrews 10:23).

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

It is very possible to initially possess God's Holy Spirit and then become lethargic and indifferent and lose that power. We must keep the pressure on ourselves, realizing the time is short and we truly do need to redeem it.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded (James 4:8).

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Ephesians 3:20).

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16).

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (Ephesians 3:15).

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

Yes, God's people are waiting for those promises to be fulfilled. Our hearts and minds cannot grasp the magnificence and glory of it because we are physical. God has not revealed that to us. God has given many promises that, if we are obedient and truly take on His very nature and character traits by allowing Him to transform us into His image, we can reap those rewards that He has in store for each of His chosen. We are weak and will make many mistakes. We will only become perfect at the resurrection, but we must be on that road and pathway now if we ever expect to go on to achieve it.

God is slow to anger and His blessings are given as promised. He deals with us as the all-wise, all-knowing God.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. . . . But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Psalm 37:9, 11).

We as human beings like to be in control. We must learn to surrender to God's control. Sometimes the reason we fail is that we are impatient with circumstances. We are working on God's timetable and schedule. God is working things out in our lives so we will have a relationship with Him and will be learning the proper lessons.

We must always remember God is all-knowing, all-wise, all-merciful and all-loving, and He knows His plan for us and that there is a time appointed for man once to die. After that will be the reward for the fruits of our works. To those of us still living at the time of the resurrection, our reward will immediately begin if we have been faithful. We can inherit those promises if we do not faint, become careless, indifferent or give up. We must go on and receive those blessings and inherit all things.

- a) He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin.
- b) He that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally.
- c) He who receives the precious gift of faith and the Holy Spirit will become the begotten son of God; and he shall receive the Spirit of holiness, to walk as Christ also walked, and in God's own time be born as a Spirit being in God's Kingdom.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

Beloved children of God, let us walk together in these days of constant troubles, trials and tests. Let us encourage one another, be a help to as many as we can, and show compassion and love, especially to God's own children. Let us be a source of inspiration and kindness that can only be shown by God's guiding power in our lives.

Brethren, we can know whether or not we possess the Spirit of God. It will all be revealed in our lives, our actions, our drives, our aspirations and our deeds and in our overall fruits day to day. If we truly have God's Spirit resident in our lives, then His Spirit will reveal that to us as the Apostle Paul recognized.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16).

Let us run this race with the patience of God's Spirit; let us go on and finish this race so we can all be together in God's Kingdom, a glorious time of peace and contentment.

My deep love to each of you as God's Chosen,
Your servant and friend,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leon S. Whitaker".

Leon S. Whitaker

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon W. Brisby".

Jon W. Brisby