

PARADIGM SHIFTS THAT WILL ROCK YOUR WORLD



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Enliven Blog

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Introduction: The Power of Perspective

What is YOUR Promised Land?

Twelve Israelite leaders go in to spy out Canaan—their Promised Land—on a reconnaissance mission. **They see the same things, experience the same things and hear the same things.**

Upon their return, ten of the spies describe what they have seen like this: “The land is fruitful, but:

- The enemy are GIANTS,
- WE are as small as grasshoppers compared to them
- And we CAN’T attack them because they’re BIGGER and stronger than we are.”

However, two of the men—Joshua and Caleb—come back with a different report. They say:

- “The enemy has no protection and—GOD IS ON OUR SIDE and He is going in front of us.
- We will have the enemy for lunch!
- We CAN take possession of this land.”

Twelve men go to spy out the Promised Land. **They see exactly the same things. They experience the same things. They hear exactly the same things. And yet they come to two different conclusions. Why is that?**

They had a different perspective on what they saw.

'...those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." Romans 8:14-15

Joshua and Caleb saw themselves as sons of a living God—a God who is faithful to fulfil His word—and it changed THE WAY they saw everything.

They viewed earth's circumstances from heaven's viewpoint and took God at His word.

The hearts of the other 10 leaders, however, still harboured a perspective from their years of slavery in Egypt. 'We have to look out for ourselves—we do not trust God to protect us.'

What is Perspective?

**Another expression for 'perspective is 'point of view.'
It is the way we see something.**

The word 'perspective' comes from two Latin words, meaning 'see' and 'through.' When we talk about seeing the world through someone else's eyes, we are talking about looking at life from their perspective, their viewpoint.

Our viewpoint will always come from our standpoint.

Today I climbed a hill. From the top, I could see more, and further, than I could from the valley below.

We will always SEE from the position we STAND.

God wants us to see from heaven's viewpoint—the perspective revealed in His Word.

If our standing is that of sons and daughters of a loving and powerful God, we will view life differently—we will have a Kingdom perspective.

Perspective Affects Attitude & Destiny

The perspective of the 10 spies affected the attitude of all Israel. It says the WHOLE NATION started to grumble. Perspective determines attitude.

We often hear about the importance of our attitude. As Zig Ziglar has said, '***Your attitude will determine your attitude!***'

Our perspective—the way we VIEW LIFE—is what determines our attitude. **Our attitude, in turn, affects the way that we think, believe, speak, pray and live our lives.**

In other words, **our perspective has a direct impact upon our daily living, as well as our destiny.**

The nation of Israel chose to take the viewpoint of the 10 spies and as a result of their unbelief they spent 40 more years in the wilderness.

Paradigm Shifts that will Rock your World

Seeing from heaven's viewpoint enabled the youth David to stand in front of Goliath with a sling and a

stone; it enabled Paul and Silas to sing praises to God in a dungeon. And it enabled Caleb and Joshua to take cities and nations for God—the promised land of Canaan—in their old age.

Deep down, each of us know that we have a God-given purpose and destiny to fulfil while here on earth. Each of us has our own 'Promised Land.'

It is vital that we examine our perspective, to see whether we are seeing from heaven's viewpoint. Are we standing in the Presence of God as His sons and daughters, as heirs of the Kingdom?

I believe that in this next season, the Holy Spirit is highlighting this area. **We must have a Kingdom perspective if we are going to impact the earth for God's Kingdom.**

Over the next few chapters I am going to be examining some paradigm shifts that I believe the Holy Spirit is bringing to the attention of the church at this time.

- It is going to take a different kind of Christian living to reach this generation with the good news of Jesus.
- It is going to take courage to allow the Holy Spirit to test

and shake our perspective, the traditional way that we have seen things.

I'm willing to go on the journey. Will you join me?

1. The Secret Of Living An Undivided Christian Life

Recently, I calculated that there are 168 hours in a week.



Then I wondered—how many of those hours does the average Christian spend in church activities?

- Maybe 2- 3 for a weekend service
- Another 3 for a small group activity

If you and I are extra busy, we may spend 8 hours of our week in church meetings.

That leaves 160 hours of our lives in every week.

160 hours of sleep time and wake time... between 50 and 60 hours of sleep and at least 100 waking hours.

SHOULDN'T ALL OF THAT TIME BE GOD'S? And, **'What would it look like if we lived our daily life with Jesus?'**

This is a question I ask regularly, and one that I grapple with in my book, 'How To Be A Supernatural Christian In Your Everyday World.'

Compartmentalised Christianity

I learned early on in my life that Christianity was best kept in compartments, or boxes. Before long, I had my 'Church-On-Sunday' compartment, my 'Christian Friends' compartment, my 'School Christian Fellowship' compartment, my private 'Devotional Life' compartment—and so on.

Compartments are safe. They offend few and are acceptable to the world in general.

But compartmentalised Christianity is powerless. It doesn't transform lives, challenge ungodly mindsets or reach desperate and lonely people with the good news about Jesus.

It's time to explode the box.

The Undivided Christian Life

Something happened to me when I was around 13

years old that changed my perspective on life and faith.

I met a couple called Bob and Joan Leach. Bob and Joan were grandparents of a school friend. They had encountered the miraculous healing power of Jesus through the ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman and they were saved, on fire and spent their lives telling the story of what Jesus had done for them.

The most remarkable thing about Bob and Joan was that they lived an undivided Christian life.

They simply lived their daily life with Jesus.

Jesus was as present in their home as any one of us who was with them. If there was a need or a problem, it was a natural thing to pause in the moment and address Him in prayer.

Bob and Joan had remarkable spiritual gifts of healing and words of knowledge that they were as comfortable using in their home, street or supermarket as they were in church meetings.

Their example inspired me.

Jesus Lived An Undivided Life

Jesus lived the perfect example of an undivided life. **He lived out of His relationship with the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, every moment of every day.**

The Gospels tell us stories of His life and ministry set against the backdrop of homes, roadsides, celebrations and in public places. When people encountered Him, their lives were changed.

I have an old journal with yellowed pages in which I wrote a summary from A.W. Tozer's wonderful book, 'The Pursuit of God.' [1] In it, he wrote:

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our perfect example, and He knew no divided life...God accepted the offering of His total life, and made no distinction between act and act. "I do always the things that please him," was His brief summary of His own life as it related to the Father.

How To Live An Undivided Christian Life

'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and

place it before God as an offering.’ (Rom 12:1, MSG)

It’s time to break down the divide between the sacred and the secular, between the church and the world, between our spiritual life and the ‘rest of our life.’

How can we do this? How do we explode the box and put a stop to compartmentalised Christian living?

I’m still on the journey, but here are some keys that I have discovered along the way:

1. Stop rating some aspects of your life as ‘more spiritual’ than others.

Tozer reminds us that **the divide between sacred and secular, holy and unholy** was instituted in the **OLD TESTAMENT. Its purpose was to teach Israel of the holiness of God.**

However Jesus demonstrated a different way of living, and when He died on the cross, the veil that separated humanity from the holy of holies was torn in two. [1]

The Apostle Paul said, do EVERYTHING, even eating and drinking ... to the glory of GOD. (1 Cor 10:31)

2. Include God in your daily conversations.

Malcolm and I are probably like many married couples in that we find it hard to make a set time to sit down and pray together.

But we have started to develop an intentional lifestyle of including God in our everyday life. For example, if we are talking about something that is causing concern, we pause to pray about it—while we're in the moment.

We want to break down the divide and let God loose in our everyday lives, and amazing things are happening as we do.

Maybe you don't have a partner you can do this with, but you can do it yourself, or you might have a close friend you are journeying with who can encourage you in this.

3. Reflect on the truth that you are pleasing to the Father

Deal with the hook that keeps you trapped in compartmentalised living: the need to be accepted by people. You don't have to perform to please people when your confidence is based in your heavenly Father's complete acceptance.

Here are some more keys on living an undivided Christian life that I will be reflecting upon in coming chapters as I continue discussions on 'Paradigm Shifts That Will Rock Your World':

4. Look for God at work in the lives of people around you every day—and partner with Him in what He is doing.

5. Take your spiritual gifts wherever you go—they are given to you, not just for ministry, but also for mission—to make a difference in your everyday world.

6. Realise that you don't have to have a special gift to be a supernatural Christian.

[1] A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God.

For the chapter referenced in this discussion, see:

<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/tozer/5f00.0888/5f00.0888.10.htm>

2. How To Set Your Testimony On Fire Again

Have you ever been told some exciting news and then asked not to share it with anyone?



You are bursting with it. Even if you keep your mouth shut, your

expression may give it away. You may be distracted, or find it hard to keep still. You search your mind for someone—anyone—you can safely share the happy news with.

Last year my brother called from London, to share the news that he and his wife were expecting their first baby. My husband received the call while I was out shopping and couldn't wait to tell me.

By the time my brother located me—on my mobile phone—my squeal of joyful surprise was not as genuine as it would have been if he had shared it first. My delighted hubby had beaten him to it.

It is a universal law: good news just has to be given away!

The Ultimate Good News

To all who received [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13)

As Christian believers, we have been entrusted with the ultimate Good News, the story of how:

- Jesus came to earth and died for the forgiveness of our sins, so that we could be restored in relationship to the Father
- He was resurrected that we might share in His life
- We enter into this new birth, not through anything we can do ourselves, but by faith in Him alone.

This is wonderful news, and all of would agree, truly GOOD news

And yet, many of us go through times when we are no longer excited about the good news of the Gospel. We have lost the urge to share it with others.

There have been times in my own Christian life when I have known in my head that the Gospel is good news, but my heart has lost the song.

In these seasons, I can look back and remember what God has done in the past, but I do not have a current testimony of God's goodness.

When this happens, **I am not the only one who is affected—others around me lose the opportunity to hear Good News.**

The Power Of A Testimony

Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:38-39)

God has designed that the Gospel be expressed through the vehicle of our testimony. When the two are teamed up, extraordinary power is released to lead people to faith in Jesus.

- The word testimony is a legal term and dictionary meanings include 'an outward sign,' and 'evidence in

support of a fact or statement, proof.'

Our personal testimony stands as proof of the truth of the Gospel—evidence that it is life-changing Good News.

- The root word of testimony, 'testi', comes from a word meaning 'witness.'

Our testimony provides a witness to others of what Jesus has done for us—and that what Jesus has done for us, He can do for them.

The story of how we first encountered Jesus and how our lives were changed when we accepted Him into our lives powerfully illustrates the Gospel.

But our testimony is not *just* the story of what took place when we first believed.

The ongoing stories of God's Divine intervention in our lives have tremendous power to witness to others, as we talk about:

- How God impacts our lives every day
- Answers we have had to prayer
- What God has spoken to us

- How we have seen Him at work in our lives and in those around us.

Through this current testimony of God's grace, we know, and others see, that Jesus is the only explanation for what is taking place in our lives.

As the Apostle Paul explained,

'You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.'

How To Recover Your Testimony

Right now, I can't wait to share with others all the good things I am seeing happen in my life and in the lives of others around me. However, it hasn't always been that way.

Have you lost the fire? Here are some things that have helped me to recover a current testimony of God's goodness:

1. Recognise that Something is Missing

If you can't come up with an existing reason to be thankful about what God is doing in your life, something is missing.

We can always have a current testimony of God's goodness in our lives, even if that testimony is of His empowering or His comforting word to us in the trials we are experiencing.

2. Meditate on What Jesus has Done for you

Take some time to meditate on what the Bible says about God's love for you personally, as well as what Jesus has accomplished through His death on the cross and how it applies personally to you.

Remember your experience of salvation and how encountering God for the first time changed your life. Think about what He has done since, and about all of His faithfulness.

3. Ask God for a Fresh Infilling of His Spirit

Pray and ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit. It is a prayer He loves to answer.

As you encounter Him in this way, you will fall in love with Jesus again.

Every time I have experienced a significant new infilling with

the Holy Spirit, my passion for God and for people has been restored.

3. Take time to Listen—Receive a Word from God

To hear God speak to you is to encounter Him. He wants to speak to you about His love for you, His involvement in your past and present circumstances, and His purpose for your life.

4. Pray—and Watch for what Happens Next

If you are aware that you have lost the fire of your testimony, talk to your Father about it. Ask Him to move in your life, pray and then open your eyes. You will soon see Him at work.

We can't give away what we do not possess ourselves.

When we recover a fresh and vibrant testimony of God's goodness to us, the Gospel will be Good News to us once again—and nothing will hold us back from sharing it with others.

3. You Don't Need A Special Gift To Be A Supernatural Christian

Have you ever declined to do something because you are 'not gifted' in that area?



I have.

'I'm not gifted in that area' is an apology that I have used often, especially when it comes to things like hospitality or evangelism.

And this can be a very good thing!

In the church environment particularly, it is vital that we serve where we are gifted and passionate and called.

***'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'* (1 Peter 4:10)**

But—what about in my relationships and my **everyday life**?

Does 'I'm not gifted in that area' work as a reason to not speak to someone about Jesus, or not to pray for a family

member who is sick, or not to provide hospitality when it is needed?

Don't be Intimidated by Others' Spiritual Gifts

We will never truly be fulfilled until we step into the fullness of life that we are designed for—and be comfortable with our own unique expression of spirituality.

I have an old Toyota Camry, which is a vehicle that serves my family and me well. If I am driving and alongside me a hot, turbo-charged Ferrari pulls up, I don't say, "What is the point of me being on the road? My car is not as powerful as that one."

*My car may be ordinary, it may not go as fast, but **it is the only one that will taxi my children around, carry my family's groceries and get me to work.***

In the same way, we must not allow the fact that we do not have a spiritual gift of prayer, prophecy, healing and so on, intimidate us, or stop us living the supernatural life that is our rightful inheritance as Christians.

You and I will connect with people in our everyday life that the pastors and gifted people in our church will not, and occasions for prayer will arise when there is no one present but the Lord and us.

Where is the evangelist when the opportunity arises for you to discuss your faith with a neighbour, or work colleague, or lead your child or grandchild in a salvation prayer?

Where is the prophet when you or someone near you is struggling in your daily life, and needs direction or breakthrough, and could benefit from an encouraging word from God?

A Spiritual Gift, or a Characteristic of Christian Living?

It is vital that we grasp the difference between what a spiritual gift is, versus what is a basic characteristic that we should be exhibiting as followers of Jesus.

For the most part, **spiritual gifts are turbo-charged, Holy Spirit-boosted versions of attributes that should be present in the life of every Christian believer.**

For example:

- Every Christian is a witness and can share the Good News about Jesus (Col 4:5-6). However, a person with a **gift of evangelism** will see more people make commitments to Jesus through his or her ministry than the average Christian.
- Every Christian can pray (1 Thess 5:17, Eph 6:18). In fact, prayer is foundational to our relationship with God. Some Christians will pray more, and experience more miraculous results, because they have a **gift of prayer or intercession**
- All Christians can prophesy (Acts 2:17-18)—i.e., hear God’s voice for themselves and others. Some people can prophesy more powerfully, with greater accuracy and at a higher level, because they have a **spiritual gift of prophecy**

The same is also true of other areas such as healing (James 5:16), helps (Mark 10:43-45), giving (Rom 12:13) and hospitality (1 Peter 4:9).

This is why, in Ephesians 4, Paul describes the 5-fold

(‘Ascension’) ministries—not as exclusive ministers in their area of giftedness—but as those whose primary calling is *‘to equip God’s people for works of service.’* (Eph 4:11-12)

The Basis for Supernatural Christian Living is Not a Spiritual Gift

It is true that some people do have a higher degree of giftedness than others in prayer, healing, prophecy, and so on.

But having a gift is not the basis for you being able to share with someone about Jesus, or pray, or receive a message from the Father for yourself or someone else.

Your ability to hear God’s voice is your right as a son or daughter in His Kingdom.

The source of your authority is the Name of Jesus Christ. What He has accomplished on the cross, and the authority that He has given to you as His committed follower, is the basis of your prayer power.

Further—and this is amazing—**you and I have the same Holy Spirit indwelling and anointing us, who**

empowered Jesus to go about His life and ministry in the Gospels.

I have come to realise that there is NO ONE more qualified than you and I

- to hear from God
- to offer a prayer
- to have a Divine appointment
- to be involved in leading someone to Jesus
wherever we are in our everyday world.

Some Questions to Consider:

- What spiritual gifts am I aware that I do NOT have?
- Have I used the absence of a spiritual gift as a reason to not expect that God could use me to help love and lead people to Jesus, or to pray, or to believe God for miracles in my everyday life?

Prayer

Father, I want to be fully alive—to be all you have called and designed me to be.

Help me to be comfortable with my own unique, down-

to-earth expression of spirituality and to not be intimidated by the spiritual gifts and strengths of others.

Thank You that Your Spirit anoints and empowers me to be a supernatural Christian in my everyday world—to live a life for which Jesus is the only explanation, and to love and lead people to you.

In Jesus' Name

4. Give Yourself (And Your Gifts) Permission To Shine

In the last chapter I shared about how you don't need a spiritual gift to be a supernatural Christian. And I asked the question, 'What spiritual gifts do you know that you DON'T have?

***But what about the spiritual gifts that you DO have?
Can they be expressed in your everyday life?***

The Mantle of My Father's Favour

In Genesis 37, Jacob had a richly ornamented robe made for his favourite son Joseph. Joseph's coat set him apart and caused him to stand out from the crowd.

Everywhere Joseph went, he wore the mantle that represented his father's favour.

In God's Kingdom, each of us is the Father's favoured son or daughter (Gal 3:26-29). The unique mix of spiritual gifts He has given to us individually is like Joseph's richly ornamented robe.

***'We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.'* (Rom 12:6)**

I want to live an undivided Christian life—where I am the same person in my daily life that I am in my church life and devotional life with God—not confining my faith to set times and places.

In the Gospels, wherever Jesus went, He was simply Himself, and His prayer life and spiritual gifts were on display for all to see. No matter where He was, He was always ready to impart healing, teach, set someone free or share a word of knowledge.

This challenges me.

Lately, I have become more conscious of not holding back my faith and who I am before others, and this includes being open about the spiritual gifts God has given me.

For a start, **this is a matter of personal integrity.** As I grow in gifts of prophecy, or prayer, for example, why should I be one way with Christian friends or in meetings, and then shut that part of my life down when I am out and about?

And yet (let's be honest) many times, this is exactly what we

do.

Too often, our spiritual gifts are like a coat that we pull out of our wardrobes when we are heading to church or to any place where we are meeting with our Christian friends. But then, when we leave church, we take the coat off as we walk out the door.

What would happen if we started 'wearing' our spiritual gifts everywhere we went—in our homes, workplaces, schools, shops and neighbourhoods?

I want to be like Joseph, unashamed to wear the mantle that my Father has given to me. I want to freely display who I am in Christ, as well as the Holy Spirit and His unique expression and anointing on my life.

Embracing Our Unique Giftedness

My husband Malcolm has a 'missionary' gift. Wherever we go he delights in talking to people from other cultures, befriending them and discovering where they are from. (This occurs frequently in restaurants, when I want to have a private, romantic moment).

Whilst the focus of my blog is primarily on prophetic and

prayer gifts [1], there are many more spiritual gifts that can be expressed in our everyday lives. For example, I have often admired people who have gifts of hospitality, like Mary and Martha did. (Luke 10:38)

Like the colours in Joseph's robe, we have different many and varied gifts. Even when we have spiritual gifts that are similar to those of others, the expression and strength of those gifts will be unique to us.

We should never compare ourselves with others or feel inferior in our spiritual gifts.

I hear many people express doubt about having a gift, even though they have used it in church life, have seen others helped and brought closer to Jesus by it, and had its presence confirmed by Christian leaders.

Why does it seem more spiritual and humble to downplay or even deny the presence of a spiritual gift in our lives?

Are You Wearing Your Mantle?

If Joseph had hidden away the mantle of his father's favour, his brothers may have been more accepting of

him.

He may have experienced fewer trials. **But he would never have been sent ahead of God’s people to Egypt, or have been used of God to save the nations of that region from perishing through famine.**

So take ownership of your unique spiritual gifts. **Throw the mantle of your Father’s favour around your shoulders for all to see, and give yourself—and your spiritual gifts—permission to shine.**

As I go on this journey, here are some things I am starting to do more of:

- Sharing openly with others—regardless of their beliefs—about activities that I am involved with that are to do with my spiritual gifts
- Being honest about interests I have and values I carry that relate to my spiritual gifts
- Being open to the Holy Spirit to use me wherever I am in my everyday life
- Using my spiritual gifts, whatever they are, when opportunities arise for Jesus’ love to be expressed through them to people
- Working on expressing my spiritual gifts (especially those

of a revelatory nature like prophecy) in a natural, non-religious way

***'For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.'* (2 Tim 1:6-7)**

5. The Greatest Evangelist In The World Today

Who is the greatest Christian evangelist in the world today?

Do I hear someone say, 'Billy Graham,' or 'Reinhard Bonnke?'



The greatest evangelist on earth today is the Holy Spirit, and He lives inside of you and me [1] (John 14:17).

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

I want to know and experience the Holy Spirit in His fullness—not just in part. This means embracing all He is and everything He has come to do in and through me.

The Holy Spirit empowers us and aids us in living the Christian life. He provides spiritual gifts for ministry; He is our Comforter, Helper, Teacher and Guide.

However, the disciples did not only receive Him as Helper.

They also received Him as the One who would empower them to witness—share the good news of salvation and lead people to Jesus (Acts 1:8).

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He announced His arrival with wind and fire... and with 3,000 people turning to faith in Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:41)

Power From On High

It was October 1994, and I was reading **Charles Finney's book, 'Power From On High.'** [2] In his commentary on the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1-2), Finney wrote:

'We have the same promise that they had... Let us, then... accept the commission; fully consecrate ourselves, with all that we have, to the saving of souls as our great and our only life work. Let us go to the altar with all we have and are, and lie there and persist in prayer until we have received the enduement.'

I recorded in my journal:

'I was greatly struck by Finney's comment that our 'life work' is the saving of souls. Like so many others, I have considered this to be someone else's lifework and not my own. If this IS true (and I believe it is), then there are great ramifications.

*Have I accepted Christ's commission as my own commission?
Dare I?*

If I have not accepted the appointing, how can I expect the anointing?

My reflections on Finney's work coincided with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our church and upon us. **At that time I was set free from three years of emotional and physical pain—but the impact of the Spirit's visitation did not stop there.**

The tangible Presence of the Spirit on our lives and in our home spilled over to our neighbourhood. My husband Malcolm and I saw salvation and miracles happen in the lives of people around us as a result.

As I look back on this past year of 2010, I see the same pattern. An outpouring of the Spirit on our personal lives has resulted in the drawing of people

around us to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit Loves and Leads People to Jesus

The Holy Spirit is intimately involved in the process of salvation.

In the same way that the Spirit hovered over the waters at creation, He is at work, moving unseen in the lives of those of people around us who do not yet know Jesus. (Gen 1:2; 2 Cor 5:17)

The heart of the Holy Spirit is that of Jesus, who came to 'seek and save the lost'. (Luke 19:10)

The heart of the Spirit is that of the Father, whose desire that no person perish moved Him to send and sacrifice His Son. (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9)

The Spirit of God loves people passionately and indiscriminately.

4 Ways that the Holy Spirit Helps in Evangelism are:

1. By testifying to people of the Gospel's truth (John

15:26, Acts 5:30-32)

2. By confirming the message of salvation through answers to prayer—signs, miracles and the operation of spiritual gifts (Heb 2:4, Rom 15:19)

3. By bringing conviction that leads people to repentance (1 Thess 5, John 16:8)

4. By empowering Christians to be witnesses (Acts 1:8, Luke 24:46-49)

The Holy Spirit empowers ordinary Christian believers to be witnesses, but He also directly impacts the hearts of people who need salvation, convincing them of their sin and need for a Saviour.

Our prayers, our faith, and our actions help determine whether or not the Spirit is released to do His work.

What if you are not Gifted in Evangelism?

Maybe, like me, you would say that you are not gifted in the area of evangelism.

It is true that there is a gift and an office of evangelist (Eph 4:11, 2 Tim 4:5). An evangelist is empowered and called to make evangelism a primary focus of their ministry, as well as to equip the church for evangelism.

Can someone who does not have a spiritual gift of evangelism be an effective witness?

Here's the ultimate test: can an introverted, prophetic-intercessor-type person like me lead people to Jesus?

Evangelism may not be my personal strength, but my Divine Partner, the Holy Spirit, is the greatest evangelist in the world today.

- I am also a part of a Christian community that shares my passion to bring people to Jesus.

I have discovered that my inability is not a handicap to the Holy Spirit. The pressure is off. **Instead of striving, I need only focus on cooperating with the Spirit, as He loves and leads people to Jesus.**

How can we Partner with the Holy Spirit in Evangelism?

Here are some keys that can help:

1. Be filled with the Spirit

If you have already been baptised in the Holy Spirit, pray for a fresh infilling (Acts 4:24-31)

2. Acknowledge the evangelistic role of the Holy Spirit

and take time to reflect on what that can mean for you and the lives of people around you

3. Recommit to being a witness—sharing the good news about what Jesus has done for you with people around your life□

4. Pray for those around you who don't know Jesus and believe that the Spirit is at work in answer to your prayers

5. Watch out for Divine appointments. Look for what the Holy Spirit is doing in people around you and simply cooperate with Him.

6. The Least Likely Are The Father's Most Wanted

The Least Likely List

Do you have someone in your world right now whose heart seems hardened towards God?

Someone, who—if you were to make a list of those who would be **least likely** to become a Christian—would be first on that list?

Who else is on your list?

The imaginary list we have just made represents the PERCEPTION that we have about people close to us who do not yet know Jesus as their Saviour.

I believe that our Heavenly Father wants us to review our perception, shake it up and exchange it if need be—until we see people around our lives the way HE sees them.

The question is: will we?

Why the way we see People Around us is Important

The way we view people in our lives who don't know God is vital:

- If we believe someone is hardened towards God and unlikely to become a Christian, that belief will affect our thoughts, prayers and actions towards that person.
- **If we believe God is at work in a person's life, we will be expectant and pray, speak and act accordingly.**

Most often, we look at the evidence of our 6 senses—what we have seen and heard, as well as our history with people—and make a judgement about the state of their heart towards God and their potential for salvation.

But the Bible reveals a different viewpoint: the Father's perspective.

The Father's 'Most Wanted List'

If Jesus' disciples had a 'Least Likely List' of those God would welcome into His Kingdom, the Romans—despised, brutal invaders—would have been at the top of the list, followed

closely by Gentiles and Samaritans.

But Jesus continually surprised them.

Time and time again, Jesus showed His disciples that those on their 'Least Likely List' were actually on the Father's 'Most Wanted List,' along with everyone else.

A Roman commander came to him asking for healing for his daughter. Jesus healed his daughter with a word and praised him saying, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." (Matt 8:10)

A Gentile woman came asking for deliverance for her daughter and the disciples wanted to send her away. Jesus tested her faith and then exclaimed, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." (Matt 15:28)

As Jesus ministered, **He sought out the unloved, the unwanted, the despised.** Tax collectors, prostitutes, criminals—all were welcome in God's Kingdom.

One time, Jesus went out of His way to speak with a Samaritan woman with a bad reputation. An entire Samaritan city came to faith in Him after hearing the story of how she encountered Jesus.

Realising Jesus had been speaking with a Samaritan woman, the disciples were mystified. Jesus said to them, 'Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.' (John 4:35)

I believe Jesus is speaking the same to us today:

'Open your eyes and look at people—see them the way I see them. They are ready to come to Me.'

Heaven's Perspective

Here are 4 insights that I believe are vital to having God's perspective about people in our world who don't know Him yet.

1. God is Already at Work In their Lives

Paul said in Acts 17: 26-27

From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

If there are people in your world, to whom you are connected in some way and who does not yet know Jesus, be assured that God is already at work in their lives.

The fact that God has arranged for them to be connected to you is just one evidence that He is already at work in their lives, positioning them to seek Him.

2. They are Created for Relationship with God

'He [God] has set eternity in the hearts of men,' states the writer of Ecclesiastes.

Peel away the layers and within every person is a need for God—a place of hunger that will only be fulfilled by a relationship with the Father through Jesus.

Created by God and for God, each person's need for Him is written into his or her DNA.

In spite of what may be presenting, that inner need, the voice of the spirit within them, is continually letting them know of their need for God—even if they are currently trying to fill that need with other things.

3. Nothing They have Done Affects God's Response to Them

As Jesus demonstrated, the worst of sinners are candidates for the grace of God.

Choices they have made seem to have led them further away from Him. The degree of possibility of their salvation—at least in our eyes—seems to be reduced.

Sometimes we have a personal history with people that gives us reason to believe they are unlikely to respond to God. We may even have been hurt by them.

But none of these things affects God's heart towards them or His ability to reach and transform them. **They are on His 'Most Wanted List.'**

4. Their Degree of Hardness of Heart does not Impact God's Ability to Reach Them.

The Holy Spirit can break through the hardest of hearts. **That is why you are His today. And what He has done for you, He can do for others.**

It can happen in an instant. A criminal came to faith in Jesus in his dying moments on a cross. All it took was a one-

sentence declaration of faith. (Luke 23:40-43)

Don't be deterred by a person's seeming attitude towards God. They might be a heartbeat away from faith.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

(2 Cor 5:16)

We tend to see people through the lens of our culture, our priorities, our opinions, and our personal history with them.

It's time to take off these glasses and see people the way that Jesus does.

When we do, faith will rise up in us. We will pray, speak and act accordingly, giving the Holy Spirit freedom to move through us. And miracles of salvation will result.

'Open your eyes and look at people—see them the way I see them. They are ready to come to Me.'

Prayer

Who was on the top of your 'least likely list? Let's pray for him or her now:

Father, right now I bring _____ before Your throne.

Thank You that you are already at work in _____'s life,
drawing him/her to You by Your Spirit.

Thank You that _____ is on Your 'Most Wanted List'; that you
sent Jesus to die for _____ that he/she would not perish, but
have eternal life with You.

Send Your Spirit to reveal Jesus to him/her, to assure
_____ of the truth of the message of salvation.

Lord, I ask that You would send Your angels to continue
setting up Divine appointments. Connect _____ with your
people who will speak words of life to him/her. Speak to
_____ through circumstances and at every opportunity, day
and night.

Help me in my relationship with _____ to take opportunities
to share Your love, to speak Your word and to have timely
insights to share. Anoint me by with Your Spirit to be Your
representative to _____. I choose to stir up my faith with
regard to _____'s salvation.

In Jesus' Name

7. Escaping a Half-Lived Christian Life

***'On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'* John 7:37-39**

Some years ago, we were visiting Pukekura Park in New Plymouth, NZ. Pushing our young son along in a stroller, I noticed a man-made waterfall. "Look, Stephen," I enthused, "What a beautiful waterfall!" and we paused to watch it.

In the meantime, my husband Malcolm was reading a notice behind us that said, "Insert a coin into the slot behind the wall to start the waterfall." We found a coin and put it in the slot.

To our amazement, hidden floodgates opened and out came a massive downpour of water.

THAT WHICH I HAD THOUGHT WAS THE WATERFALL WAS IN REALITY ONLY A TRICKLE.

I came away thinking, "How like our experience of God. We become so accustomed to the measure we have known of His

Presence and power, that we believe it is all that is available to us.”

Little do we know that beyond our experience is a vast supply that our Father is waiting for us to plug into.

The River of God

I long to have a lifestyle where people around me are being impacted by the Spirit’s power:

- Where my home life honours God
- Where my family, neighbours and workmates are being drawn to faith in Jesus
- Where regular answers to prayer for healing and freedom demonstrate the mercy of a loving Father

Not just on a Sunday or at church meetings, but in the everyday.

Is such a life possible?

In Ezekiel 47, the prophet had a vision of a River that flowed from God’s temple into the surrounding land of Israel.

This River, sourced in God’s Presence and Rule, brought

transformation, life and healing wherever it went.

Speaking of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Jesus later said, *"Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."* (John 7:38)

This was a picture of the Holy Spirit moving through the life of a Christian—through you and me.

The Half-Lived Christian Life

God purposed that we be both receivers and releasers of His life, living not only for Him but also from Him.

Jesus said to His disciples, *'Freely you have received, freely give.'* (Matt 10:8)

Our Christian life is supposed to be a continuous rhythm of receiving and releasing, receiving and releasing.

However, many times as Christians we have periods when we give without receiving, or receive without giving. In these times, the flow of the Spirit through our lives becomes restricted or blocked.

I find it helpful to stop regularly and check how I am going in

this area.

Am I vitally connected to God? Am I excited about my life with Him and sharing about it with others?

Or is there a blockage somewhere?

Here are two checklists to help reflect on this. You may see a symptom you identify with, or you may be able to add your own.

Signs you are Receiving Without Releasing

- You attend church on Sundays, but people around your daily life are not moved towards God by the life you lead or demonstrate
- You may be bored with your Christian life and feel that you are caught in a rut
- You have received a lot of teaching but when you stop to think about it, you are not putting it into practice
- You long to see the power of God impacting others around you and wonder why it is not taking place

- You may have Christian friendships, but lack meaningful relationships with those who don't know Jesus
- You may be involved in a ministry, but wonder why it is not as fruitful as it once was.

When we receive but do not give out, we eventually become stale in our Christian experience.

We may believe that receiving more teaching or personal experiences of God's power will help, but ultimately, we remain dissatisfied.

Signs you are Releasing Without Receiving

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

The purpose of fruit is not for the vine or tree itself, but to be given away—to feed the hungry. However Jesus also taught us that we can only bear fruit when we are connected to and receiving from Him, our Source.

Here are some indicators that you are serving without being replenished:

- You are busy with Christian service, but are often short of time for your private devotional life with God
- You are feeling weary, spiritually and emotionally
- You find yourself going through the motions of living a Christian life or serving God, but it has become more of a duty than a passion
- You wonder where the power of God is
- You find it difficult to stop and receive from God—after all, other people are relying on you
- You do not have a current testimony of answered prayer or of God’s goodness towards you personally.

When we release without receiving, we are giving out of our own resources. Without being re-filled, we inevitably become dry and can ultimately burn out.

I confess this has been my personal downfall. It has always been easier for me to achieve than to receive.

Being replenished spiritually does not come naturally for

many—it requires discipline.

Keys to Escaping the Half-Lived Christian Life

Receiving and releasing is the rhythm of the Christian life that God designed us to live.

If you have recognised signs that you need strengthening in one of these areas, here are some keys that may help:

1. Take time to meditate on what living a life of receiving and releasing means for you personally. The first step towards change is to realise that something is missing
2. Pray—talk to Your Father about it. Take time to encounter God and be filled with His Spirit
3. Become dissatisfied with your current lifestyle enough to do something about it. Decide on a specific course of action that will effect a change in your life
4. Find a Christian friend, leader or mentor who you can share with and who can help keep you accountable to lasting change.

Prayer

Father, I want to live a life where I am fully alive—connected to You in a vital relationship, being filled with Your Spirit on a continual basis. I confess that I have not always stayed in this place and ask that You would fill me now.

I choose to change my priorities so that I can live connected to You in a greater way.

I also want to see other people around my life impacted with Your love expressed through me.

I want to be not only a receiver, but also a releaser of Your life and love to others, making a difference wherever I am.

Teach me from the Bible, Your Word. Show me how the life Jesus lived can be my life also.

Help me to hear Your voice, so that I can follow you every day.

In Jesus' Name.