

Meet Your Psychiatrist: He Overcomes Your Fears

by Warren Wiersbe

Warren Wiersbe's sermon emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in helping believers overcome fear through understanding, power, and grace.

Duration: 49:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:32, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 2 Timothy 1:1-7, James 4:1

Topics: "Overcoming Fear", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the topic of fear and its consequences. He emphasizes that fear can tear people apart emotionally and spiritually, and that Satan uses fear to defeat Christians. However, he also highlights that the Holy Spirit can help believers overcome fear. The preacher then explains three basic truths that must be understood in order to experience victory over fear: the truth about fear itself, the truth about the Holy Spirit and how He helps overcome fear, and the truth about believers' responsibility to the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Begin a series of studies on the names of the Holy Spirit. There are many of them in the Bible. We'll be taking 10 or 12 of them.

There are many, many ways to study the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but during this series, with the Lord's help, I want to make this very personal. And I trust you will not think I am being facetious or irreligious when I want to present to you the Holy Spirit as your psychiatrist. Because the Holy Spirit of God works in the inner man.

I understand that there are about 30,000 accredited psychiatrists in the United States of America. That is one psychiatrist for every 7,000 people. And that is a crowded waiting room, no matter what terms you may couch it in.

Being able to see your psychiatrist after 6,999 other people can't be too easy. Fortunately, most people do not need professional help. Those who do should get it.

A person should never feel it's a disgrace to have to get professional help. In my ministry, I have referred people to Christian psychologists and psychiatrists, and they have been greatly helped by them. So a

person should not feel he's disgraced or abandoned because he has to get professional help.

But I think for most of us, the everyday problems that affect our emotions and our minds can be handled by the Holy Spirit. Now, when Jesus was here on earth, he took care of these problems for his disciples. When he left, he said, I'm going to send the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will take over, and he'll do exactly for you what I used to do.

So the Holy Spirit is not enabling us to travel second class. He's enabling us to travel first class. In fact, the Holy Spirit of God has several advantages over a psychiatrist.

Number one, he lives in us. That's where my trouble is. And number two, he's always available.

He never says to a person, I'm going on a vacation, and if you have any problems, just hold them until I get back. I don't criticize a doctor for having to do this. Doctors need vacations too, believe me.

He understands us completely. He diagnoses the case accurately, and he doesn't charge. Now, you understand, of course, that the charge for psychotherapy is a part of the therapy, and I can well understand why they have to do what they do.

Now, tonight we want to deal with the problem of fear, the Holy Spirit helping us to overcome the problem of fear. And fear is a basic problem. In fact, if you have not read Future Shock, you ought to read it and find out what's going on these days.

The future is coming at us so rapidly, and so many changes are taking place at such a rapid pace. People can't keep up with it. And doctors are discovering that there is a new malady now, where people are just nervous and afraid, and they aren't quite sure what's going on, and they're calling it Future Shock.

But you and I, even apart from that, face everyday fears. And, of course, fear is a very powerful thing. You never want to laugh at someone who's afraid.

Fear has physical consequences. I have known people who have been completely paralyzed by fear. They just didn't know what to do next.

Certainly it has emotional consequences, tears people apart. And for those of us who are Christians, it has very definite spiritual consequences. Satan loves to use fear to defeat the Christian.

Now, the Holy Spirit of God can help you to overcome fear. No matter what that fear may be, the Holy Spirit of God can help you to overcome fear. And in order for us to have the Holy Spirit's victory, there are three basic truths that we must understand.

Now, they're very simple. They're found in 2 Timothy chapter 1. I'm going to begin at verse 1 and read down to verse 7. Our text for tonight is verse 7. Now, as you know, 2 Timothy was Paul's last letter. He was a Roman prisoner.

He was facing execution. Timothy was his understudy who had taken over Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, that in thee also. Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Now the three basic truths we have to understand are these. Number one, we must understand the truth about fear.

What is it we really are afraid of? Secondly, we must understand the truth about the Holy Spirit. How does he help us overcome our fear? And thirdly, we must understand the truth about our responsibility to the Holy Spirit. What must we do for the Holy Spirit to be able to work? And so tonight we're going to talk about three basic truths.

The truth about fear, the truth about the Spirit, and the truth about your responsibility and my responsibility to the Spirit. The truth about fear. There are basically three different kinds of fear.

There is normal fear. Now God made us this way and it's good. The fear of pain.

I don't think anybody deliberately says, I want to go out and get hurt. Oh, children do this sometimes. You scold a child or you discipline a child and he says, I'm going to run away from home.

I'm going to go out in the worms. You've heard that. Fear is a normal thing and normal fear is good for us.

We say to a child, now if you go out in that street, you'll be hit by a truck. And so they get afraid. And so normal fear is a good thing.

You get a pain and you say, well, I wonder what that is. I hope it's nothing serious. And so you call the doctor.

This is good. You see, normal fear is a part of life. God has built into our bodies, glandular functions that help us when we're afraid.

I suppose it's been a long time since we as adults have really panicked, but isn't it amazing how your glands go to work when you really have to do something and you're frightened and it pours that extra energy into your body. God made us this way. Now there's abnormal fear.

There are some people who have abnormal fears. And of course the psychiatrists call these phobias. It comes from the Greek word, which means fear.

There's acrophobia, fear of heights. And there's hydrophobia, fear of water. Children get this on Saturday nights.

There is brontophobia, which is fear of thunder. There's some people who, when it starts to rain and thunder, they just dive under the bed or get under the covers. There's pyrophobia, which is fear of any kind of fire.

And there's agoraphobia, which is the fear of open places. And then the opposite is claustrophobia, which is the fear of closed in places. And the doctors list, oh, 25 or 30 different kinds of fears, fears of going over bridges, fears of going under bridges.

And these are, I think, a little bit abnormal. And the doctor has to find out where this came from because nobody wants to live this way. Nobody wants to live with this kind of a fear.

Now, the word that Paul uses for fear in verse 7 is not the word from which we get phobia. It's a different word altogether. It's the third kind of fear you must know about.

There are normal fears that are part of our bodily functions. There are abnormal fears which can interfere with us. And there is cowardice.

That's the word he's using here. God has not given us the spirit of cowardice. God has not given us the spirit of timidity.

Paul is talking here about people who are afraid to face life. They're not afraid of some individual little thing. When they just look at life, they're scared.

And Paul says to young Timothy, God hasn't given us the spirit of cowardice. Timothy over there in Ephesus, don't be a coward. Don't be timid.

Don't be afraid. Because God hasn't given you that kind of a fear. Now, when I read this, I say to myself, why in the world would Timothy be cowardly? Here's the apostle Paul saying, I'm praying for you day and night.

I tell you, you get somebody like Paul praying for you, that ought to encourage you a little bit. He says, your grandmother and your mother were devoted Christians. You grew up in a wonderful home.

I wonder why Timothy was frightened. Well, possibly it was a personality trait. Now, when you read Paul's letters, you discover he had two sidekicks, two helpers that he depended on greatly, Titus and Timothy.

When he really had a hard job, he sent Titus. He sent Timothy to help him over in Corinth, and he had to write a letter and say, look, when Timothy comes, you receive him. You be careful how you treat Timothy.

He wrote to Timothy and said, now, look, let no man despise thy youth. Be thou an example of the believer. He says here, I remember your tears.

Now, there's nothing wrong with tears. When Timothy said goodbye to Paul, for all he knew, he might never see Paul again. Nothing wrong with a man weeping.

But as you read the letters, you kind of get the impression that as a personality trait, Timothy was just a little bit on the timid side. But some other things were true. Just think of what they were expecting from Timothy.

Timothy was taking Paul's place in Ephesus. Just think of the kind of city Ephesus was, worshiping the goddess Diana, giving over to making money and making love, a wicked city, a place where the Christians had faced a riot and Paul had to leave town. Now he says to young Timothy, you're taking over.

Is it any wonder that young Timothy trembled a little bit and said, here I am taking Paul's place. Think of what they'll expect of me. Nothing is harder on a person than a great potential.

And they're going to expect me to, and I'm not Paul, and this is a big city. I grew up in a little city. And on top of that, Christians were being persecuted.

You see, Paul was on trial. If Paul lost his life, Timothy could lose his life. So when you get right down to it, Timothy illustrates to us what really makes us afraid of life.

We are either afraid of circumstances, or we're afraid of people, or we're afraid of ourselves. Let me explain that. If somebody here tonight is afraid to face tomorrow, you say, oh pastor, I wish I didn't have to go to work.

I didn't have to go to school. Oh, I just wish that somehow I could do like David said, get wings like a dove and just fly away someplace. It may be that you're just afraid of circumstances.

Something has come up in your job or your life. You can't explain it. You can't overcome it.

And these circumstances make you afraid. Or people. I imagine Timothy was concerned about people.

But most of all, when Timothy looked down inside, he felt very inadequate. And as he looked at circumstances and looked at people and looked at what was expected of him and then looked at himself, he said, Tim, oh boy, you can't do it. It's just too hard for you.

I think all of our fears of facing life, our timidity, our cowardliness, probably center in these three things. We're either afraid of circumstances or afraid of people or we're afraid of ourselves. Let me just put this in as a little parenthesis, then we'll move into the second truth about the Holy Spirit.

There are many people who deliberately shelter themselves from life. I had a relative who, when he was in second grade, deliberately failed his courses because in third grade you had to write with ink and he didn't want to write with ink. Now, interestingly enough, later on in life, he was offered a promotion on his job and he turned that down.

Now, my friend, all of us, when we look inside, feel very inadequate. I don't care who it is. We feel very, very inadequate.

And this is where the Holy Spirit steps in. God knows you're inadequacy. God knows you're a hunk of clay.

We don't have to come to God and say, oh God, I can't do this, I can't do that. He said, no, you can't. That's why I want to help you.

This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. When you were saved, God put the Holy Spirit down inside of you because he knew that you and I were born failures. You can blame that on our father, Adam.

He was a born loser and we're born losers, but thank God when you're born again, you're born a winner. Now we move into truth number two, the truth about the Holy Spirit. God has not given us the spirit of cowardice.

When you were saved, God didn't give to you a spirit of trembling and fear where you're afraid to face life. Rather, he gave unto you the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. Now the Holy Spirit of God is a person.

I want to make that very clear. A person is a creature with a mind to think with and a heart to feel with and a will to decide with and a spirit in which God can reside. We are not just animals.

Now we have some things in common with animals. If your dog dies, his body turns to dust. If you die, your body turns to dust.

The dog has to eat, you have to eat. But the dog doesn't function the way you function, I trust. The dog operates more by instinct.

But it's amazing how much you can train an animal. An animal has a mind, an animal has emotions. You ever step on a cat's tail? And an animal has a will.

Ever try to drag one of them off to a vet? It's interesting. But you see, you and I were given a personality. Now the Holy Spirit is a person.

He has a mind. In Romans 8, in verse 27, Paul says, God knows the mind of the Spirit. And so when you pray, the Holy Spirit's mind is at work when he intercedes for you.

The Holy Spirit has emotions. Grieve not the Holy Spirit. You can't grieve an electric charge, you can't grieve a combustion engine, but you can grieve a person.

And we read that the Holy Spirit even groans with groanings that cannot be uttered. So the Holy Spirit has a mind and emotions and he has a will. In 1 Corinthians 12, verse 11, God says the Holy Spirit distributes these gifts to every Christian as he will.

I'm spending time on this for this reason. There are a number of false teachers going around telling us that the Holy Spirit is not a person and the Holy Spirit is not God. The leader of these anymore is Garner Ted Armstrong.

The Radio Church of God, Armstrongism, denies the personality of the Holy Spirit and the deity of the Holy Spirit, which makes them heretical. Now the Holy Spirit is a person and the Holy Spirit is a gift. I want to underscore that.

God has given to us the Holy Spirit. Throughout the book of Acts, we find them saying, well, so that God has given to the Gentiles the gift of the Spirit. Since they receive the same gift as we receive, the Holy Spirit's looked upon as a gift.

Now I want to underscore that for this reason. Your relationship to the Holy Spirit is one of grace. Would you remember that? It's not a relationship of law.

It's not a relationship of master slave, policeman, criminal. It's a relationship of grace. The Holy Spirit is a gift and graciously he was given to you and your relationship to the Holy Spirit must be on the basis of grace.

I say that because I find many Christians who say, oh, I don't deserve the help of the Holy Spirit. Oh, there's an announcement for you. Who does deserve the help of the Holy Spirit? Who even deserves the gift of the Holy Spirit? But God didn't give you the Holy Spirit because you deserve it.

You don't deserve the gift. He was given to you because God's gracious. And so the Holy Spirit is a gift and your relationship to him is on the basis of grace.

And what does grace mean? Whatever you need, God provides it. Now, having said that, let's look at the way the Holy Spirit conquers fear in your life. The Holy Spirit is not the spirit of fear.

Of course, he means by that cowardice, not godly fear. The Holy Spirit does want to put within our hearts a godly fear. I think that there's a little bit too much flippancy among some Christians these days.

I may be wrong, but I love to see Christians who have a holy respect for God. I think by and large we are that kind of people. I hope we are.

In our services, I trust that we are respectful without being embalmed. There is a kind of godly fear that is so awesome you don't feel at home. There is a kind of looseness that is so familiar you don't feel like you're in church.

I think there ought to be a nice balance there. So he's talking here about cowardice. Now, how does the Holy Spirit help you overcome the fear of facing life? Well, first of all, he is the spirit of power.

This takes care of circumstances. May I say it very clearly? No matter what circumstances God is calling you to go through, the Holy Spirit will make you adequate. Phillips Brooks used to say, do not pray for circumstances that match your abilities.

Pray for abilities to match your circumstances. It's the only way to grow. You can't stay in second grade all your life.

Now, the Holy Spirit of God is the spirit of power. He is able to move into your life and give you what you need to face what you're facing. Remember the story about the martyr? He was sitting in his prison cell, and the next day he was to be burned at the stake.

And there was a candle there, and he said to himself, I better start getting prepared. And so he put his finger in the candle and hurt. Well, he said, what's going to happen tomorrow? Just a finger in a candle tomorrow, my whole body's in the fire.

So he tried again and it hurt. He said, oh God, I'll never be able to do it. But you know, when they tied him to the stake and they lit the faggots, God gave him the grace that he needed.

You see, God won't give you dying grace until you need dying grace. Somebody asked Mr. Moody one day, do you think you have dying grace? He said, when I need it, I'll have it. This is true.

Now you're facing something next Thursday, two weeks from now, a month from now, and you're trying to get ready for it. You say, oh Lord, I'll never do it. But I guarantee when the time comes, the Holy Spirit of God can give you what you need.

You see, he did this for Jesus. When you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, will you remember that Jesus lived by the power of the Holy Spirit? Well, you say, but pastor, he was God, but he didn't live on that. That may be amazing to you.

When he came to this earth, he laid aside the independent exercise of his deity, and he depended on the Holy Spirit. And in human flesh, in his human flesh, apart from sin, Jesus Christ lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. And when he faced Satan in the wilderness, it was in the power of the Spirit.

And when he faced the needs in the temple, it was in the power of the Spirit. When they laughed at him and criticized him and he took care of it, it was in the power of the Spirit. Jesus lived on earth in the same way you and I must live, in the power of the Spirit.

The apostles lived this way at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. We find Jesus in the power of the Spirit. At the end of the Gospel of Luke, he says to his followers, now tarry in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.

And you move into Acts chapter 1, and the angels say, you wait, you wait in Jerusalem, and the power is going to come. You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and then you shall be witnesses. You shall receive, you shall be.

The Holy Spirit is the power to be. And they did. And when you read the book of Acts, you find that the Holy Spirit of God took ordinary people, like Peter, who was a bungling fisherman.

Peter, who a few weeks before was doing everything backwards, and yet Peter stands up and preaches and 3,000 people are saved. He faces the judges and knows just what to say. He's in the prison, knows just what to do.

Wherever Peter goes, or John, or any of the followers of our Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit gave them what they needed. Oh, you say, but they were very special people. No, they weren't.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, he prayed like this, oh, I pray that the eyes of your understanding may be opened, the eyes of your heart, that you may know the hope of your calling, that you may know this power that you have. Then he prays in chapter 3 of Ephesians, oh, I'm praying that you may get your hands on this power, lay hold of it. Do you think that God had something special for first century Christians that we can't have today? I can't believe that.

Now, some people are afraid of the Holy Spirit. There's been so much excess and so much wildfire, and I'm afraid some counterfeit, that people get very frightened about the Holy Spirit. The devil loves that, because if we aren't living in the power of the Holy Spirit, we're living in our own power, and if we're living in our own power, it's going to run out, and when it runs out, watch out.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of power. He helps us to overcome circumstances. Now, this means that the next time we face something very demanding, and we're tempted to run away, that's the time to say, now, Spirit of God, that's what you're here for.

Take away my fear of circumstances and make me adequate. Secondly, he's the Spirit of love. This takes care of the fear of people.

It's so simple. You aren't afraid of someone you love. I want to underscore that now.

How can you be afraid of someone that you love? And the Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of love. I don't know about you, but love is not natural with me. I was born selfish, and it took a long time to start conquering some of these things.

When I was a youngster, I had perfect aim, and I could pick up a stone, and you watch out. I threw a butcher knife at my big brother one day. I missed him.

I had a horrible temper. Every once in a while, I had to keep fighting it. Love is not natural to us.

When we meet somebody, our first normal, natural response is, is he going to hurt me? I feel sorry for people who go through life, and other people are a threat to them. Whenever they meet somebody, he's a threat to them. Some folks live this way.

They're afraid, afraid of people. And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love, and the Spirit of God fills us with love. And you know what 1 John chapter 4 and verse 18 says, perfect love casteth out fear.

And so as the Holy Spirit of God fills us with love, we don't have to be afraid of people. Keep a marker in 2 Timothy and turn back to that very familiar love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. I want to show you something.

It's rather interesting. 1 Corinthians chapter 13, beginning in verse 4. If we don't have love for people, what happens? Well, love suffereth long and is kind. That means if I don't have love, I'm impatient with people and I'm unkind to people.

Love envieth not. Envy is a symptom of lack of love. How can you envy somebody you love? You want to see them get good things.

You want to see them enjoy life. Love wanteth not itself is not puffed up. If there's no love, there's pride.

And where there's pride, there's going to be a fight. What causes wars and fightings among you, says James? He said, I'll tell you what causes it. There's war down on the inside, yet you're grasping and you want to get things.

Love does not behave itself unseemly. Seeketh not its own. That's interesting.

Where there's no love, there's selfishness. Where there's selfishness, there's going to be a fight. And there's going to be fear.

Love is not easily provoked. Love thinketh no evil. You see, where you love somebody, you can't think mean things about them.

I wish that these words, love thinketh no evil, could be written on a great big plaque and put in every home and in every church. Because so often people misunderstand. When something happens, they don't quite understand.

Instead of saying, well, you know, the pastor loves me, he would never do a thing like that. Or, you know, they love me. There's some reason for this.

Right away, people start saying, oh, he doesn't like me. You ever notice that? And he says to us, look, if you love people, you aren't going to do that. Love rejoices not in iniquity.

That means if you love somebody, you don't go around talking about them. Love rejoices in the truth. Love beareth all things.

Oh, you say some of the things I have to bear with people, that's love. Where there's no love, you can't bear it. Love beareth all things.

Love believeth all things. Love hopeth all things. You know, when you love somebody, you're always hoping the best for them.

You keep forgiving and saying, well, you know, he'll do better next time. And love endureth all things. And so Paul, over in 1 Corinthians 13, and also in 2 Timothy 1, verse 7, simply tells us the Holy Spirit can help you not be afraid of people by giving you love.

Now there's a third word, ministry of the Holy Spirit. He overcomes circumstances by giving us power. He overcomes our fear of people by giving us love.

Thirdly, he overcomes our fear of ourselves by giving us a sound mind. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power at circumstances, of love, that's people, of a sound mind, that's myself. Now this little word, a sound mind, is used only here in the New Testament.

It's a word that really means discipline, self-control. God has given us the spirit of self-control. You know why you're afraid of yourself? Because you can't control yourself.

Now I'm not a psychiatrist or the son of a psychiatrist, but I've learned this in my own life, that when I get afraid of what's going on down inside, it's because I say I can't control it. Now my friends, the only way to control things out there is to start controlling things in here. Adam learned that way back at the beginning of time.

God put a crown on Adam's head and said, you're the king of creation, but before you can reign and control others, you've got to prove you can control yourself. I can't put all the fowl and the fish and the animals and all of my creation under your control if you can't control yourself. By the way, mothers and dads, you have learned, I'm sure, that we can't discipline our children if we don't discipline ourselves.

They know. And so he gave Adam a test. He said, now you can have everything here, but you can't have that tree.

And of course, that's where Satan went to work. And Adam proved that he couldn't control himself. Eve couldn't control herself.

And ever since then, you and I were born with our machinery goofed up. God made us in his image, but sin has come along and really thrown a monkey wrench in the machinery. And I dare say that many people here tonight, if not all of us, in some area on the inside have a problem with self-control.

And the Holy Spirit is the one who moves in. Now, you know where self-control comes from? You say, my will. Uh-uh.

Your mind. Your mind. Now, there are whole religions built on the mind.

I don't go along with much of what they say, but the Bible says, as he thinketh, so he is. Disciplined living begins with disciplined thinking. Now, God wants us to be disciplined.

God wants our time to be disciplined. It's a tragedy the way Christians waste time. God wants our money to be disciplined.

God wants our strength to be disciplined. God wants our thoughts to be disciplined. And that's where it all starts.

The Holy Spirit of God gives us a sound mind. He gives us a disciplined mind. He gives us self-control.

You say, well, I'd sure like to have some self-control in my life. It'll make my life a lot different. Yes, it will.

And it comes from the Holy Spirit of God. So here we have the Holy Spirit of God meeting the three fears that most people face. Fear of circumstances.

He's the spirit of power. He can help you face anything. Fear of people.

He's the spirit of love. And fear of yourself. That you just can't handle it.

He gives you a sound mind. He gives you a disciplined mind. And that mind gets disciplined before long your body gets disciplined.

And before long life becomes orderly and beautiful and functional and you get things done. Many years ago I was involved in the Ministry of Youth for Christ and we had a Bible quiz program. It isn't done too much today, but back in that day it was a big thing.

We had thousands of teenagers all over the United States and Canada memorizing the Bible and quizzing. Some of the things we did were kind of ridiculous, but it accomplished some purposes. There are men in the ministry today and men and women on the mission field today who came through that program.

But here's the interesting thing. We began to discover that Christian students who were having difficulty with their studies, with their grades, when they started memorizing the Word of God, their grades went up. Now this was not an accident.

We saw this happen all over. I had young people come to me at Winona Lake and say, you know, our team lost the contest, but I don't really care. During this year I have been studying the Bible and memorizing scripture.

I've become a better student and my grades have gone up in high school. You know why? The Holy Spirit is the spirit of discipline. You look at people and say, my, he's a disciplined person.

She's born this way, not on your life. The most undisciplined thing I've ever had in my home was a baby. No baby is born disciplined.

Baby comes in the world and says, well, here's my schedule. You better follow it. When the Holy Spirit of God goes to work in your life, my friend, something happens in your mind and you quit being fuzzy-minded and you quit being flighty in your thinking.

And all of a sudden you begin to move into a beautiful situation of discipline through the Holy Spirit. Which leads us now to our third truth, the truth about our responsibility to the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, this does not come automatically.

Simply because the Holy Spirit is resident doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit is president. Just because the Holy Spirit lives in us does not mean that the Holy Spirit controls us. And we have some responsibilities.

Now there are three of them and I want to make them just as clear as I can. He writes to Timothy and he says in verse six, stir up the gift of God that is in He's comparing the Holy Spirit to fire. The word he uses is composed of three little Greek words, fire up life, fire up life.

He's saying, stir up the fire and get life in it. You see, when you were saved, the Holy Spirit came in and he's compared to fire. Now, Paul is not suggesting the fire may go out and you'll lose your salvation.

Of course not. Jesus said the spirit abides forever. But didn't Paul say quench not the spirit.

We drove through some of those beautiful forests out in California several years ago and you turn the corner and here's an area all blackened out. And you say to somebody, what happened? Oh, somebody didn't put a fire out. You see, they want you to quench the fire out there.

But Paul said, don't you quench the fire in here, quench not the spirit. Back in first Timothy, he says, neglect not the gift here. He says, stir up the gift.

You know what happens when you neglect the fire, it goes out. Now I'm not saying the Holy Spirit leaves you. I'm simply saying that he doesn't supply what you need.

Now what does fire supply? Fire supplies energy. He's the spirit of power. Fire supplies warmth.

He's the spirit of love. Fire supplies light. He's the spirit of a disciplined mind.

And so when we are stirring up the fire down inside, it affects all three parts of our personality. The Holy Spirit works in my mind. He's the spirit of self-control.

He works in my heart. He's the spirit of love. He works in my will.

He's the spirit of power. But it's my responsibility to stir up the Holy Spirit. Now how do you do this? Well, the first thing we have to do is take care of the ashes.

You know what's wrong with many Christians? And I confess this to my shame. I've been through it. We let the ashes accumulate.

Back in the Old Testament, early in the morning, the priest used to get up and go out to the altar, and the fire was burning. It was kind of low. And he used to clean off the old ashes and put fresh fuel on the altar and lay a burnt offering on it.

He kept the fire going. Now do you do that in the morning? You see, in the morning when we wake up, as I said in a message not too long ago, we come to the Lord and we say, Lord, here I am reporting for duty. And I don't want to be afraid.

I don't want to be afraid to face this day. I don't want to be a coward today. I want to be a conqueror today.

And so, Lord, forgive me of my sins and take off these old ashes. And you open your Bible and you put some fresh fuel on the fire and you pray. Remember what they said to Jesus on the road to Emmaus? Did not our heart burn within us as He talked with us in the way? What was He doing? Opening up the Scriptures.

If you want your heart to burn, if you want the Holy Spirit of God to really move in power in your life, start your day with the Lord and keep the ashes off. So often, I betray no confidences when I say this, so often people come to the pastor and they say, oh, my spiritual life is just so cold. Or I'm lukewarm.

You say, well, are you spending time with your Bible? No. Got any unconfessed sin in your life? Yeah. Well, let's take care of it.

That's what does it. Keep the ashes off and keep feeding the fire. Keep meditating on the Word and praying.

And the Holy Spirit of God begins to grow in power. The fire gets a little brighter. There are three spiritual temperatures in the Bible, and only three.

Jesus said, because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And some Christians are cold. That's why Peter stood by that fire and warmed himself.

He was cold. Then he says, I would that you were either cold or hot, but you're lukewarm. You ever have lukewarm drink of some kind? Hot chocolate or coffee or tea.

But then they said, did not our heart burn within us? Now you've got one of three spiritual temperatures tonight. It's either cold, lukewarm, or hot. So our first responsibility is to stir up the fire and make sure that the Holy Spirit has something to work with.

Secondly, we must surrender. We must surrender. Now the Holy Spirit does not do the work for us.

He does the work through us. Paul said, I can do all things through Christ. Not Christ does everything for me.

What do we surrender? We surrender our mind because he wants to be the spirit of self-control. We surrender our heart. He wants to be the spirit of love.

We surrender our will. He wants to be the spirit of power. We surrender the inner man.

The inner man is your mind and your heart and your will. And you just turn this over to the Holy Spirit. You know what happens? He takes it every single day.

He says, thank you. And he goes to work and he puts thoughts of God's truth into your mind. And he puts, he puts God's love into your heart.

You see, love has to be balanced with truth and truth has to be balanced with love, speaking the truth in love. And then he gets a hold of our will and he enables us to do things we never thought we could do. So we must stir up the gift.

We must surrender. But there's a third responsibility we must share. That means we've got to spread the fire.

It only takes a spark to start a fire going. Do you ever meet some Christians and after you leave them, you say, you know, I feel so much better. You know why? They shared some of the fire.

Now, I don't mean by this tongues of fire. I don't mean some ecstatic thing. I just mean the warmth of somebody's love.

The sharing of somebody's light. It's a beautiful thing. When Christians get together and they're all walking in the spirit, the fire has a way of spreading and you have a real warm meeting and you go home and say, oh, it went so fast.

But let a couple of Christians get in there who were cold and the fire gets to them and hits the ashes and it stops. And then they go home and say, it's a cold church. Nobody's friendly there.

You see, God doesn't give us this fire down inside to keep it. God gives us the fire to share it. And I think you and I want to be that kind of a Christian.

This next week, we want to find somebody who's cold and we want to share some of the warmth. Somebody who's weak and we want to share some of the energy. Somebody who's ignorant.

We want to share some of the light. It's a beautiful experience. The trouble is some of us go through life burning other people in the wrong way.

Our tongues can be set on fire of hell, James chapter four, or our tongues can be set on fire of heaven, Acts chapter two. And I think you people are the kind who want to have tongues of fire coming from hearts that are warm through the power of the Holy Spirit. And so our responsibility is just simply to yield to him and to keep the fire going and then to share.

And the more you share the fire, the more you get. And the more we give, the more we receive. And it's a wonderful experience.

But the minute you get selfish, the spirit of love dies down. Now, life is difficult. You've heard me say many times, life is not a playground, it's a battleground.

And the older we get, the more difficult it becomes. I'm not trying to scare anybody. I'm just stating a fact.

Life is difficult. The more responsibilities you have, the more difficulties you can have. There's no need for us to be afraid.

We don't have to be cowards when it comes to life or death, because we have the Holy Spirit down inside. I close with asking you two questions. Number one, do you have the Holy Spirit down inside? Are you saved? Now, the only way to get the Holy Spirit, he's a gift, is to receive Jesus Christ by faith.

And when you receive Jesus Christ by faith, you get the Holy Spirit. He's the blessed byproduct. He's the divine dividend.

And he comes to move into your life. Do you have the Holy Spirit? Now, if you don't, you can't face life. You've got to find a substitute.

That's why Paul says, don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. That's the big substitute for the Holy Spirit today. When somebody's facing something that overwhelms him, he gets drunk.

He's got to bolster himself with a few drinks. Wine is the world's substitute. Alcohol is the world's substitute for the Holy Spirit.

We don't need that. We have the real thing. My second question is this.

What is your relationship to the Holy Spirit? Are there some ashes that need to be taken off the altar? Do you and I need to spend more time in the Word of God and prayer, getting that fire where it ought to be? Oh, it's a great experience. I trust that the next time we meet together, whether it's Wednesday night or next Sunday morning in Sunday school or church, you'll come and be able to say, you know, pastor, all this week I was helping to spread the fire. And it's been such a warm, wonderful week because God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of self-control.

Let's pray. Father, we are grateful for the abundant adequacy of the Spirit, that we don't have to depend upon our feeble resources. We can yield and find all that we need in him.

Now forgive us for grieving the Spirit with unconfessed sin and rebellion. Forgive us for quenching the Spirit with disobedience. We pray, Heavenly Father, that you'll help us to have a wonderfully exciting relationship with the Holy Spirit.

We do even now surrender our hearts and our minds and our wills that he might work in us and through us. I pray for those here without the Savior. Lord, help them to come and surrender to him.

I pray for Christians who are defeated, who need a fresh new beginning. Help them to make that beginning because you are willing to receive and cleanse. This we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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