

GOD'S HOUSE OF PRAYER CULTIVATES A VIBRANT SPIRIT

Part I • J.S. Boegl

PREFACE

What vision stimulates your heart as you follow Jesus? What do you hope your life will look like a year from now, or ten years from now? Do you hunger for wisdom? Boldness, favor and zeal to proclaim the gospel? Miraculous power? A richer, and more fulfilling life? This teaching is about responding to the Holy Spirit's invitation to look deeper and higher within His beautiful heart and understand the high vision He has for His people. In this hour of moral corruption, divine purging & evangelical barrenness we *must* personally & corporately, intentionally cultivate habits that will increase our Christlikeness, or we *will* be swamped by a million and one things that make for a dim spirit.

I. GOD'S DESIRE FOR EVERY BELIEVER: A VIBRANT SPIRIT

A. Living with a vibrant spirit is God's vision & passionate desire for every believer.

1. ***The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing to declare that the Lord is upright.*** (Psalm 92:12-15)
 - a. ***What:*** The Hebrew for *flourish* is *Da ash'na'im*; meaning: "vigorous ones", or "illuminated ones". The Old Testament also uses the word when referring to *stalwart warriors*. Here are the qualities of the *da'ash'na'im* as listed in Psalm 92:
 - they shall flourish
 - they shall be planted
 - they shall still bear fruit in old age
 - they shall be fresh and flourishing
 - they shall declare that the Lord is upright and faithful
 - b. ***Where:*** Those that *are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God*. This doesn't mean that the person is always in the prayer room. It means they're cultivating an internal reality that is sensitive and responsive to the presence of the Lord so that wherever they go they can live with a heightened awareness that God longs to manifest His intimate presence through their lives.
 - c. ***When:*** *in old age* speaks of an undimmed spirit through the entirety of one's life, regardless of the intensity of the season - even in a ***great and terrible day*** (Joel 2:31), the *da'ash'na'im* shall *declare that the Lord is upright* and there is no injustice in what He does.
2. Jesus, ***the true Light Who enlightens every man*** (John 1:9) encourages each believer: "You have the capacity to be filled and wholly enlightened by My power and character."
If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. (Luke 11:36)
The path (or the way) of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day. (Proverbs 4:18) [NASB]
Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament. And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:3)
And the glory which You gave Me I have given them... (John 17:22)
3. To cultivate a brilliant spirit is to mature in our Christ-likeness. Jesus is the most alive and glory-filled person in the world. To become more and more like Him is to become more and more vibrant.
We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Romans 8:29)
that we... may grow up in all aspects into Him Who is the head - Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

B. The invitation to cultivate a vibrant spirit is the same invitation as cultivating *wholeheartedness*. As we increasingly *love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength* (Mark 12:30) our spirit will become illuminated by the One we love.

C. Cultivating a vibrant spirit is us doing our part to help the ***bride mak(e) herself ready*** (Revelation 19:7) It's the dynamic process that Paul is speaking of in (Ephesians 5:27) when he describes ***a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*** It is cultivating the brilliance that Jesus saw in John the Baptist when He declared: ***He was the burning and shining lamp,*** (who was full of) ***light.*** (John 5:35)

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- D. A vibrant spirit is living with a heart that is fully and eternally alive; the condition in which we are allowing the *seven longings of our heart* to be wholly satisfied by Jesus and His righteousness. (See <http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/2921>)
- E. Living with a vibrant spirit is our consummate destiny.
Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2,3)
- F. We were built for righteousness! It's deceit to believe that believers will find any true satisfaction apart from living in righteousness. Righteousness is what our hearts have been hard-wired for. It's what will cause us to flourish as a person.

II. THE ALTERNATIVES TO CULTIVATING A VIBRANT SPIRIT

- A. ***Confusion:*** There is an honest lack of understanding in the church about what a vibrant spirit is, how vibrant we can be in this age, what we may do to cultivate it - and that we don't have *all day* to cultivate it.
- B. ***Contention:*** A person who pursues a vibrant spirit in God may often experience conflict and condemnation from those within the church who are threatened by a lifestyle that pursues more than the church's status quo.
- C. ***Compromise:*** Once the way has been discerned, many still fail to *count the cost* simply because the way requires so great a sacrifice of the rewards, values & applause of this world. We so easily lose a sense of urgency for God's vision for ourselves; our families, and our communities and fall into apathy and discouragement.
- D. ***Comparison:*** It's natural to want to pattern our vibrancy after the vibrancy of those around us rather than on the eternal vibrancy of Jesus. Resist the deception of living according to the *curve*. Our Standard is Jesus Himself, and His glory and righteousness.
And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:3)
- E. ***Corruption:*** Those who do not pursue cultivating a vibrant spirit are vulnerable to the corrupting power of the end-times onslaught of offense, unforgiveness and immorality. (Revelation 19:2)
They have corrupted themselves. They are a crooked and perverse generation. (Deuteronomy 32:5)
Put off your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. (Eph. 4:22)
...that you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4)
the unjust... promise liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. (2 Peter 2:9,19)
- F. It's *so critical* that we close the doors to the alternatives ***which so easily ensnare us*** (Hebrews 12:1) and help others do the same; perpetually filling our mind with God's understanding of how vibrant a spirit can be in this age, and settling the issues of compromise in our hearts.

III. PIERCING THE DECEIT OF A DIM SPIRIT

- A. We need to know, and be attentive to the condition of our personal, spiritual vitality.
 - 1. Our spirits do not automatically move from dullness to brilliance. A soul that does not diligently attend to its vitality will soon find itself insensitive and unresponsive.
For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed... (Matthew 13:15)
 - 2. As waves of discouragement, drudgery, and anxiety ebb and flow through our heart, they will become numb and cold, and then hard and corrupt if we do not learn how to keep them tender and responsive.
 - 3. How do we guard against the stealthy creep of stagnation in our spirits? The first step is to ask God for grace to remain attentive to our condition. Then we may pay attention to some common symptoms that accompany an increasingly dull spirit. Here are seven:
 - a. A loss of hunger for the "Word of God"

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- b. A waning sense of wonder and awe regarding the person of God Himself
 - c. An increasing numbness in the act of worship, whereby the holy and the glorious is treated as common
 - d. A gnawing desire for isolation; from other believers *and* from being honest and authentic before God
 - e. Prayerlessness – a lack of intimate conversation
 - f. A persistent attitude that emotionally questions the wisdom of taking Him at His Word and faithfully investing in His Kingdom
 - g. A *wretched* loss of longing, affection for & enjoyment of the person of Jesus
4. Which of these symptoms threaten to short-circuit the vibrancy of your spirit today? Keep in mind, that one symptom will infect and affect the other aspects of our heart. One dimension of a diminished spirit, if left untreated will inevitably dim the others. It is essential that we vigilantly tend to the issues that dull our spirit.
 5. Each of us need the illumination of the Spirit to accurately discern the condition of our own spirit.
"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)
How the gold has become dim!" (Lamentations 4:1)
 6. We also need/want a spirit of humility & brokenness in order to receive and respond to His revelation of the condition of our spirit. We want the Spirit's illumination to prove beneficial and fruitful.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51:17)
all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (1 Peter 5:5)
- B. We need to set our will to *not* live with a dim spirit. It's not safe to live with a dim spirit in this age. It's dangerous to be a believer and walk with a dull spirit. It's impossible for a leader.
- C. We need to understand what makes for a dull spirit. If we are determined to have a vibrant spirit, we will pay attention to the subversive deceit of those symptoms that cause hearts to grow cold and spirits to grow dim. Here are several questions to help us remain sensitive to our vibrancy:
1. How may I be *despising the Lord or the Word of the Lord*?
 2. Where am I operating in self-sufficiency?
 3. Where, and why am I exalting my self?
 4. How am I allowing my mind to be debased, or earth-bound in it's thinking?
 5. Where is my heart growing cold, lethargic and/or apathetic toward Jesus?
 6. Where am I tolerating an identity built on self-evaluation rather than God-evaluation?
 7. Where am I pursuing faithless, self-satisfaction?
 8. In what way(s) am I excusing myself from having the cross being applied to my life?
 9. Where can I not break free from sin; and where am I in bondage and addiction to sin?
 10. Where am I forcing my own way?
 11. What are the self-accusing thoughts that nag my thinking?
 12. Where has my spirit entertained and given in to fear and phobic thinking?
 13. Where is my love for Jesus growing cold?
 14. How am I withdrawing from experiences of intercession and prayer with God?
 15. Where have I let timidity rule my heart instead of bold love for Jesus?
 16. Where are my thoughts about God becoming stale, small and narrow?
 17. Where am I harboring accusation, suspicion and anger?
 18. Where am I growing content in remaining insensitive toward God's Spirit?
 19. Where are my investments of faith in God becoming weak, bland and meager?
 20. Where am I turning a blind eye to compromise with the Word of God?
- D. It's good for the Holy Spirit to enlighten our hearts, so we may recognize these symptoms within our selves so we can mourn & repent over the big and little ways that we've given ourselves to forces that will dim our spirits.
...the goodness of God leads you to repentance... (Romans 2:4)
- E. We need the body (safe, significant brothers and sisters in our life) who will love us enough to help us deal honestly with these enemies of our spirit - in a spirit of grace and celebration.
Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ. (Eph. 4:15)

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