

Jim Martin
P.O. Box 291962
Dayton, Ohio 45429

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CHANGE IS THE GOAL

Dear Friends,

Many years ago I went to God in prayer about the demonstrations of His power taking place through various ministers. I wanted to know if the flow of His power is reserved for specific preachers or if it is available to all Christians. I told Him that if it is reserved for specific preachers, I am okay with that, but I just want to know. Further, if His power is available to all Christians, then I wanted to know how that power can be accessed. During this prayer I identified certain preachers by name that I knew God was using in power for healings and miracles.

My practice then, as it is today, was to listen to sermons and read the writings of certain preachers I trust. I was not seeking the answer to my prayer in the teachings of preachers, but in less than three weeks I heard or read from the sermons and writings of every one of the preachers I had mentioned in my prayer that the key to flowing in God's power is praying in tongues. Toward the end of the two weeks I began listening to a teaching series titled, "The Walk of the Spirit," by a preacher I had never heard of, Dave Roberson. In that series he not only shared that the key to walking in God's power is praying in tongues, but he also explained from scripture why it is the key.

Needless to say, I was very thrilled that God had answered my prayer. Even though I was already filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, I had never fully understood the connection between praying in tongues and seeing God's power flow through the life of a Believer.

After hearing what those preachers said, I decided I would devote much of my time to praying in tongues. Between my full-time secular job and ministry responsibilities, there wasn't a whole lot of time available, but I did begin praying. I wasn't foolish enough to think I would see results overnight; I knew it was going to take time. But I also realized that I had nothing to lose by praying in the supernatural language of tongues, because the Apostle Paul revealed 1 Corinthians 14 that by praying in tongues, I am speaking directly to God, I am edifying myself and my spirit is praying.

As I spent more and more time praying in the Spirit, God's power did, indeed, begin to manifest. I would pray for people and healings would take place. In some cases literal miracles happened as people diagnosed with cancer would return to their doctors and the cancer was confirmed as being completely gone. Talk about exciting! Now I no longer had just the testimonies of other preachers, but I too could conclusively declare that praying in tongues is indeed a key to flowing in the power of God.

I would have to say that those three weeks were some of the most critical in my entire life. The decision I made to begin praying in tongues put me on the path of the most

incredible spiritual adventure that continues to this day. Both my life and my ministry have changed dramatically in ways I had never imagined.

But an interesting thing began to happen. The more I prayed in tongues, the more my eyes were opened to see what was really going on during those times of prayer. In John 14:26, Jesus said the Holy Ghost would teach us all things. Then, in John 16:13 He said the Holy Ghost would guide us into all truth. Praying in tongues is a method of actively fellowshiping with the Holy Ghost, thus giving Him access to my spirit so He can teach me all things and guide me into all truth. This includes the truth of what God is really after during the minutes and hours I spend praying in the Spirit.

When I had first gone to God those many years ago, I was primarily concerned with seeing His power demonstrated through my ministry. I wanted to see people healed and delivered; not just occasionally but consistently, just as it happened in the life of Jesus. After all, He did say in John 14:12, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also..." When I examined the life and ministry of Jesus in scripture, I saw that every person who went to Him received their healing. I wanted to get to the same place in my own ministry so that everyone who needs healing will be healed.

God moved to give me the revelation that praying in tongues is a key to walking in His power. What He didn't do at that time was give me the revelation of what praying in tongues is really all about. I was interested in power; He was interested in something else.

You see, when people are born again they are spiritually translated out of the power of darkness and into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:12-12). This means that until we are born again, we have never been in the Kingdom of God. Since we were not a part of God's Kingdom until we were born again, we did not know what it is like to live as citizens of His Kingdom. In other words, when we are first born again, we are very ignorant of Kingdom principles and standards. The Apostle Peter describes us as being "newborn babes" (1 Peter 2:2).

What I have noticed over my years of living as a Christian is that so many Believers are captivated by demonstrations of God's power; I know in those early days I sure wanted to be in services where a minister was used of God in mighty ways. It's almost as though we think that demonstrations of God's power is a new thing. But what we seem to forget is that God's power has always been active in the lives of people. Beginning with the Old Testament, continuing into the New Testament and ongoing for the past 2,000 years of Christianity, God's power has been demonstrated in many ways, including healings and miracles.

Granted, since the born again experience is now available, along with the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we most certainly do have the opportunity to see God's power in action through individuals more than anyone in the Old Testament. But God is after more than just His power manifesting through His children.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

God's desire for His children is that they all grow, mature and develop into being a reflection of the image of Jesus. This is something completely unattainable by those in the Old Testament. When we are born again, we are recipients of God's life. Contained in His life is the potential to develop the character of Jesus. Just as Jesus reflected the Father, we can reflect Jesus. We will never mature to the place of becoming Divinity; but we can mature to the place of being just like Jesus as He was on Earth. The Apostle John even said as much in 1 John 4:17, "...because as He is, so are we in this world."

Helping Christians develop into the image of Christ is a primary goal of the Holy Spirit. All of the change necessary for us to be a reflection of Jesus takes place in our born again spirit. The Holy Spirit knows every part of our life which needs to change, including all the areas in us which need changed that we do not realize exist. This is part of what Romans 8:26-27 is talking about:

²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

As we pray in tongues the Holy Spirit is working in us to produce change more than He is to produce power. It isn't that God doesn't want us walking in His power, but His greatest desire is that we live every day in a manner that is a living, breathing reproduction of the example Jesus set when He was here doing the will of the Father. You see, our Father fellowships with us the most in those areas where we have changed.

One of the first areas of change concerns what we believe. A mind governed by religious tradition will have enormous difficulty believing it is possible to become like Jesus. However, the more we sow the Word of God into our heart and pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit is then able to take the word that is sown and make it more real to us than ever before. He is able to help build us up on the faith which has come from the Word (Romans 10:17 and Jude 1:20), and we then will begin to see ourselves differently.

As this is happening, our belief system will begin transforming. We will start recognizing that what God has said is absolutely true: we *can* become a genuine reflection of Jesus and His glory. The more this takes place, the more our desires will change.

I have noticed that in my own life I still desire to see God's power demonstrated through my ministry, but it is no longer a priority. In 1 John 4:16 we read that God is love. After years of praying in tongues, the Holy Spirit has helped me grow to the place that I now understand my greatest need is to change into the same image of the glory of the Lord and to "become" God's love.

Along with this, I have come to realize that the more I mature into His image and develop His love, the more His power will flow. In fact, walking in His power will be a natural by-product of the change that takes place in me.

I have also since realized that along with praying in tongues, such things as worship, fasting and meditating in God's Word are first and foremost about becoming like Jesus as

living example of God's love. There are times now when, as I begin praying, I tell God that my desire is to become like Him more than anything else. When I worship, I tell Him that I want to conform to the fullness of His love. His desires for me and now becoming my desires.

The more I am changed, all those things in my life which need to be purged will fall away. This is true for any Believer. All works of the flesh will begin to be cut away and a person will live free from their control. Instead of trying to force yourself to eliminate bad habits, the transformation into the image of Jesus and God's love will result in those things yielding to the dominion of God's life in you.

Had I not spent the time in years past praying in the Spirit, I'm not sure that I would have come to the comprehension of this truth. My hope is that you will read this and grab hold of the same understanding given to me by the Holy Spirit. Instead of focusing so much on receiving financial and material blessings or experiencing an incredible anointing of God's power, focus on changing into the image of the glory of the Lord and His love...all the rest will fall into place!

In His Grace,

Jim

2014 SPRING PRAYER AND POWER CONFERENCE

Several people have asked about our conference next year, so here are the details. The Spring Prayer and Power Conference will begin Sunday, April 27 and run through Friday, May 2. Pastor Dave Roberson and Gary Carpenter will be with us again; other ministers may be here as well. Our primary host hotel will be:

Country Inn and Suites - Fairborn South
3971 Colonel Glenn Highway
Beavercreek, Ohio 45324
(937) 439-2222

www.countryinns.com/fairborn

We have a limited number of rooms blocked off for the conference. Some people have already booked their room. If you are planning to be here, I suggest you book your room as soon as possible. When you call the hotel, tell them you are booking a room for the Grace Christian Center conference. Various room sizes and special rates are available.

SPECIAL "MARK OF THE BEAST" SERMON

Recently, I preached a four-part sermon on the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). In this sermon I share what the Lord showed me concerning the mark and other issues involving end-time events. Quite honestly, He showed me things I have never heard anyone else preach. This includes a major key in understanding, discerning and interpreting what will really take place during the final seven "tribulation years."

In no way do I profess to be an end-times prophecy expert. But the Holy Spirit told me years ago that many things currently being taught are going to be proven wrong and the closer we get to the end, the more we will know the truth about end-time prophecy as recorded in scripture. This is precisely what God told Daniel in the Old Testament:

¹And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

²And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

³And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

⁴But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

(Daniel 12:1-4)

In this sermon (titled "The Mark of the Beast - One Possibility") I walk step-by-step through various passages to help you see some of the error in popular end-time teachings.

You can order "The Mark of the Beast - One Possibility" by using the form below (all four parts will be send to you on one MP3 CD). However, I want to forewarn you: depending on what you have believed concerning end-time prophecy, you may be tremendously challenged by some of the line-upon-line revelations I show you from God's Word. Therefore, I suggest you follow along closely in scripture as you listen and be willing to reconsider things you've heard taught in the past.

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_____ Please send the MP3 CD of the sermon, "The Mark of the Beast - One Possibility."

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My love gift for this month is: \$ _____
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JIM MARTIN MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 291962 • Dayton, Ohio 45429 • USA

www.jmmgrace.com • PastorJimGCC@gmail.com