

# Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

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## FRUITFULNESS: THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**The role of the Holy Spirit is crucial to our life as Christians.** He is the One who convicts us of our sin (Jn. 16:8-11). He washes us, cleansing us and making us new (Tit. 3:3-5) as ones “born of the Spirit” (Jn. 1:12,13; 3:1-8). He, furthermore, comes to dwell in us as the seal and guarantee of our inheritance (II Cor. 1:21,22; Eph. 1:13,14). His presence in our lives is like God has marked us as “belonging to Him”. For us, this is to indicate that God intends to come back and fulfill His promises to us. Beyond merely being a sign, however, the Holy Spirit actively communicates with us that we are God’s children, giving us assurance internally of our new relationship to our Father (Gal. 4:5,6; Rom. 8:15-17). He has come in the place of Jesus to be our Teacher, Guide, and Helper (Jn. 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7-15).

**Jesus had informed the disciples that He was going to be leaving them, but that the Holy Spirit would come to take His place.** He even emphasized that **this new relationship with the Spirit would be more advantageous to them than if He Himself had remained with them** (Jn. 16:7). This becomes more clear when we begin to understand the different dynamics that are at work in our relationship with the Spirit which could never have been available to us in relationship to Jesus, the incarnate God-man. For example, the Holy Spirit is not limited by time and space, as Jesus had been when among the disciples. Indeed, this new relationship with the Spirit would be far more intimate and personal than was ever possible previously under the Old Covenant. Before, like Jesus Himself was, the Spirit was “with them”. Now He can come to dwell inside each one of us. Furthermore, He was coming to stay, i.e., to be with us forever (Jn. 14:16). There would be no time when we could possibly be out of His care. Thus, He is able to fully and specifically deal with each of us on a personal basis. He is able to commune with us, direct us, motivate us and lead us from the inside-out, i.e., from our hearts. It is also His role to equip and enable us to do ministry. **He was the operational force in Jesus’ ministry** (Lk. 5:17; Jn. 10:37,38; 14:10), **and He has been given to us for the same purpose** (Jn. 14:12, 23). His primary motivation, and the object of His every action, is to glorify Jesus (Jn. 16:14). **Simply stated, without the Holy Spirit’s ministry, there is no Christian life on any level whatsoever. He is the creator, sustainer, developer, and expressor of the life of Jesus within the heart of every believer.**

**The Holy Spirit is like the life sap of the True Vine.** The Vine is the source and producer of the sap, but without the sap there is no growth or life communicated to the branches. **The sap is the *medium of sustenance* to the branch, though it only passes along the nutrients which the Vine itself has produced.** In the Scriptures, He is likened to living water (Jn. 4:10ff.; 7:37-39). This living water has its fountain-head in God Himself (Jer. 2:13). It symbolizes the renewal and re-creation which transforms the wilderness and waste places into places of beauty and lush vegetation (Isa. 32:15; 35:1-10; 41:17-20; 43:18-21; 44:1-4; Ezk. 47:1-12; Ps. 107:33-38). In Old Testament typology, this water came from the rock (Christ -- I Cor. 10:4) which had been smitten. The rock was only to be smitten once. Thereafter water was to come from it upon the thirsty cry of God’s people (Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-13). Such is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to humankind. He is the basis for all that is lush and beautiful in the Christian life. He comes from God only through Christ, the One bruised and smitten for us (Isa. 53). Jesus has died once for all time, opening up to us forever the limitless resources of God for living, He who is the true fountain-head of life. **We, in turn, partake of that rejuvenating and refreshing life-flow as we in faith have been joined to Jesus. The Holy Spirit then becomes a well-spring of life within us, cleansing us, filling us, and flowing from us as we abide in Jesus.** He is the water of life which enables us to be lush, green, and fruit-bearing in the midst of even the worst drought (Jer. 17:7,8; Ps. 1:3; 92:12-14). His upholding presence is made apparent by the unnatural freshness maintained under difficult circumstances (II Cor. 4:6,7; 12:1-10).

Father, we thank You for the life of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us. He is the one who is the medium of life for us as branches of the Vine. Father, enlarge our capacity for His working in us. Guide us into discovering the freedom whereby the bondage of sin gives way to life. Father, we do not want to restrain or limit Your working in us. We pray that the beauty, wholeness, and fruitfulness of Jesus would, in fact, be manifested in our lives, for Your name's sake. We trust in, and appeal to, Your ability to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think by the power that is already working in us, ...that is, by the life of Your Spirit.

**FOR MEDITATION: John 6:63; Galatians 4:6.**

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

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**God's Love Displayed in the Body of Christ**

“[In the Bible,] both Israel and the church are described as brides whose beauty is traced to God's love for them. Paul tells us that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her to ‘present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless’ (Eph. 5:27). This verse about Christ's love for the church has great bearing upon God's evangelism strategy.”

“[An] intriguing thought about a beautiful bride as the displayer of God's splendor is found when we [really consider] the analogy. God's bride is not a person, but people in relationship. Consequently, the beauty described is one of *corporate* function and relationship, rather than outward form and appearance. This is what our Lord meant when He said, ‘All men will know that you are My disciples if you meet on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.’ No, believe it or not that is *not* what the text says. ‘They will know ... if you love one another.’

“Christ's bride is the church -- people in relationship to one another. *God has designed your relationships with other Christians as the primary context in which His nature surfaces and becomes an observable, tangible phenomenon.* Not many nonbelievers are reading the revelation of God's graces revealed in Scripture. Many are reading the revelation of God revealed in *your* life and relationships. Like it or not, Scripture calls us living epistles, read (as a book) by all men. We are literally ‘Bible translators’ for lost people.

“Evangelism, then, is stereophonic. God speaks to His creatures through two channels: the written Word, and you, His ‘living epistle’. God's redemptive love is declared in Scripture, demonstrated at the Cross, and displayed in the body. God has chosen a bride. He desires to love forth its beauty. It is this beauty, the visualization of God's own beautiful and complete character, that communicates to an unhearing world. Christ has proven this method of evangelism; it remains for individuals, and the church as a whole, to embark upon *the pilgrimage of beauty*, and thus become God's effective communicators of truth.”

Excerpts from Life-style Evangelism by Joseph C. Aldrich (Multnomah Press: Portland, OR. 1981). Pp. 26,36,37.