

**The Miraculous Life**  
**Adult Retreat, Erie, Pennsylvania**  
**March 2018**

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” Joh 14:12*

**Study One: The Promise of the Miraculous Life, John 14**

**Introduction**

We only deceive ourselves if we think the CWL (“Christian Way of Life”) is less than what Jesus declares it to be!

*“As for the saints who are on the earth, they are the excellent [adivyr, “majestic”] ones, in whom is all my delight.” Psa 16:3*

In our travels around the world, we constantly meet majestic ones! They are our examples.

1. In this passage, Jesus promises to every believer the potential for living a miraculous life.
2. This life is nothing less than the continuation of the Living Word—the incarnation of Christ in us—increasing in power and effect.
3. The miraculous life is possible due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the inculcation and application of God’s Word.
4. God works in growing believers according to a specific plan, toward a definite goal.
5. The promise builds from “*greater works*” (Joh 14:12) to the coming of the “*Helper*” (Joh 14:16–18) and culminates in the indwelling presence of both the Father and the Son (Joh 14:21–23). These comprise the greatest set of promises ever given to those who believe!

*“When you said ‘Seek My face,’ My heart said to You,  
‘Your face, LORD, I will seek.’” Psa 27:8*

6. When? Psalm 132:6, as a shepherd in the fields of Ephrata
7. Fulfillment? First Chronicles 16:11, 23, 29—the miraculous life  
What is “*the beauty of holiness*”? Andrew Murray, in his book, *The Beauty of Holiness*, defines it with one word: “*humility*.”

**Point:** Jesus promises to us a miraculous life. Are we living it? And if not, why not?

**Six Things Every Believer Should Know**

**1. The Declaration of the Miraculous Life, Joh 14:12**

Here, the Lord Jesus promises, on His own authority, a miraculous life of power and effect.

*“Greater works than these he will do”* leaves no room for avoidance!

A quote/paraphrase from a class I taught over twenty years ago: “Every believer in Jesus Christ, born from above by the power of the Holy Spirit, has the potential for nothing less than to change his or her world, and having historical impact that will affect eternity.”

## **2. The Conditions for the Miraculous Life, Joh 14:12b**

The promise given here is dependent on the phrase, *“he who believes in Me.”* The pres. ptc. of *pisteuo* is a substantive, speaking not only of the person, but also of that which characterizes him/her. It is consistent, habitual faith.

The foundation of Paul’s theology is from Hab 2:4; *“the just shall live by faith”* (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). The first of these books is written to Gentiles and Jews, the second to Gentiles, the third to Jews.

The quote is written in such a way that it can be read two ways:

- a. Those who are just/justified find eternal life through faith.
- b. Those who are just (believers) are to live by faith.

Paul hints at his goal in the book of Romans with the phrase: *“from [ek] faith to [eis] faith”* (Rom 1:17).

I take Jesus’ meaning to be: “He who keeps on consistently believing in Me.” Paul actually develops Jesus’ meaning through an entire book! (Romans)

*“The gospel of Christ reveals the power of God because it reveals the righteousness of God,”*  
Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament*.

## **3. The Basis of the Miraculous Life, Joh 14:12c**

The miraculous life is made possible by the resurrection, ascension, and present session of Jesus Christ at the Father’s right hand.

**Point:** Too many believers are aware of Jesus’ experience up to the resurrection but are ignorant of His present session. Yet, this is the basis of all of Paul’s theology. What is Christ doing now?

- a. Preparing us a place, Joh 14:2
- b. Interceding on our behalf, Rom 8:33–34
- c. Reigning in the midst of His enemies, Psa 110:1–2
- d. Reigning through Spirit filled believer-priests, Psa 110:3–4; Rom 5:17, 21; 1Co 15:25

*“Because I go to My Father ...”* Only Christ reigning in Heaven could ever make possible the supernatural life of believers on Earth.

- a. Because it is based on His resurrected authority as God/man

*“The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies.” Psa 110:1–2*  
Remember Mat 28:18, *“All authority ... in heaven and on earth.”*

- b. Because only then could the Holy Spirit be given to us

*“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Joh 7:39*

- c. Because the baptism of the Holy Spirit, placing us “in Christ,” makes possible our transformation and conformity to Jesus Christ in His life and death

*“... do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ... For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” Rom 6:3, 5*

**Point:** At the moment of salvation, believers are united (*sumphutos*, “grafted in”) with Christ in His death (the benefits of the cross, Eph 1:3), burial, and resurrection—**positionally**. But only through spiritual growth are we united with His resurrection power **experientially**.

Note the change of tense, “*we **have been** united together in the likeness of His death ... we also **shall be** in the likeness of His resurrection*” (emphasis added).

Paul anticipates this transformation in Rom 8:11, when he says:

*“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life [resurrection life, Rom 6:4; 7:6] to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”*

This is nothing less than resurrection life, through the combination of spiritual growth and the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

#### **4. The Mechanics of the Miraculous Life, Joh 14:13–14**

*“Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do.” Joh 14:13 (NASB)*

Jesus tells us here that the means of these “*greater works*” (Joh 14:12) is through effective prayer. The phrase “*in My name*” is equivalent to “*according to His will*” in 1Jo 5:14–15.

## **Principle**

Effective prayer not only asks for what is according to the revealed will of God (in other words, biblical prayers), but also prayer on the basis of doing the will of God (obedience).

Paul tells us that faith leads to obedience (Rom 1:5). Jesus tells us that love produces obedience (Joh 14:13). Hebrews tells us that “*without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Heb 11:6). There is no contradiction, since faith produces hope, and hope produces love (1Co 13:13; Col 1:4–5; 1Th 1:3; 5:8; Heb 6:10–12).

### **5. The Power Source of the Miraculous Life, Joh 14:15–18**

Genuine love of Christ is demonstrated by obedience to His Word.

“*If you love Me*” is in the third-class condition. This means it is potential, but not certain. Personal volition is involved.

Jesus explains here how it is possible that weak and frail human beings can be enabled and empowered to do these “*greater works*.” It requires that we be submissive—yielded, to the indwelling Spirit of God.

“*I will ask the Father*”—Jesus’ prayers are always *erotao* (Joh 14:16), “the request between equal parties.” Our prayers are always *aiteo* (Joh 14:13–14), “the request of an inferior to a superior.”

“*Another Helper*”—*allon parakleton*—another of the same kind as Jesus  
*Parakleton* can mean helper, leader, mentor, advocate, commander, etc. Only the Spirit of God can produce the love of God in and through us (Rom 5:5; Gal 5:6).

When believers are filled by the Spirit, “*the love of Christ compels us ...*” (2Co 5:14). This is subjective genitive (Christ’s love for us), not objective genitive (our love for Him, although this could be implied).

“*The Spirit of Truth*” (*cf.* Joh 15:26; 16:13)—only the Spirit of God can produce the works of God. Jesus prays to the Father, the Father sends down the Holy Spirit, the Spirit works according to the truth of God’s Word.

## **How God Works**

1. God the Father accomplished His work through His Son, in His life, death, and resurrection.
2. God the Son, Jesus Christ, accomplishes His work through the Spirit.
3. God the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work through God’s Word.
4. God’s Word, “*living [alive] and powerful*” (Heb 4:12), accomplishes its intended purpose and effect through the believer.

5. The believer in Jesus Christ can only accomplish the will and the work of God through faith (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38).

**Point:** The permanent indwelling of the Spirit is the key to all His “help.” The word translated “*Helper*” (*parakletos*) could be translated “helper, comforter, advocate, trainer, mentor” etc. It was used four main ways in ancient Greece:

- a. Of a mother, comforting a child who had fallen down
- b. Of a father, instructing, and disciplining a son
- c. Of a military commander, exhorting his troops in the face of the enemy
- d. Of a lawyer, arguing the case of his client

## **6. The Reward of the Miraculous Life, Joh 14:19–23**

The highest objective of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is to prepare a dwelling-place in the soul for the Father and the Son.

*“Now he who keeps His commandments abides  
in Him, and He in him.” 1Jo 3:24*  
*“He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit,  
for without Me you can do nothing.” Joh 15:5*

## **The Order of Events**

1. First comes the love for Christ (objective genitive), which is a response to His love for us (1Jo 4:9, 19).
2. This love leads to taking personal possession of His Word.
3. Possession of His Word in our souls, combined with faith, then produces the fruit of obedience.
4. The Holy Spirit is active at every stage of the process, and this is called “being filled by means of the Holy Spirit” (“*full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom ... full of faith and power ...*” Act 6:3, 8; Eph 5:18).

## **The Outcome of Abiding**

*“I will love him and manifest Myself to him ... My Father will love him, and  
We will come to him and make Our home with him.” Joh 14:21, 23*

1. There will be a supernatural impartation of Jesus Christ to the soul. The verb *emphanizo* means “to inform or to impart knowledge.” It also means “to give inner light” (*cf.* Eph 1:17–18; 3:16–17).
2. This will result in a greater relationship of love with both Father and Son.
3. They will both come and indwell that believer, making the soul a home and a temple, for Father, Son, and Spirit—the divine family.

*“The Christian who loves Jesus Christ is going to be favored with a special course in Christian Education, where the syllabus of the course is Christ and His kingdom and the teacher is Christ Himself! He has promised, ‘I will make Myself clear to him.’ Often Christians ... complain that their Christian lives are drab and uninspiring. Let them matriculate in His university and enroll in His course which may be entitled, Jesus Christ the Lord—His Glory, Beauty, Majesty, and Power! There is a prerequisite for the course. We must know His commandments. And there is a tuition cost. We must obey His commandments. It is taught at the graduate level. The class meets every day from the time the sinner is saved until the course is finished. There will be a final examination (2Co 5:10).”* Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament*, on John 14:21, Vol. 8, pp. 108–109.

*“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* Mat 11:29

*“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.”* Eph 4:20–21

## **Conclusion**

The miraculous life can only be learned from Christ Himself, through the knowledge of His Word, empowered by the Spirit, and bringing glory to the Father.

In our travels, we constantly meet men and women who are living examples of the miraculous life. We will meet them in this study. They live by daily making installments and investments in the miraculous life.

Small steps of Bible study, prayer, and obedience are down-payments on the miraculous life.

Have you made any down-payments today?

## **Study Two: The Genesis of the Miraculous Life**

The miraculous life begins with supernatural birth accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

### **1. The Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ**

*“... that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”* Mat 1:20b–21

No one familiar with the virgin birth would question the miraculous incarnation of Jesus Christ. This was the precise moment in history that the “*mystery of godliness*” began.

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh ...”* – 1Ti 3:16

This will be the subject of our conference in the Shenandoah Valley (Virginia), May 11–13, 2018. The historical/eternal impact of this is summarized in Rev 12:1–12. It was the beginning of the victory of Christ in the spiritual war—the angelic conflict (Gen 3:15; Psa 2:12; Psa 110:1–4).

## 2. The Spiritual Birth of the Believer

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” Joh 3:3, 7*

Every child of God is *“born of the Spirit”* (Joh 3:8). This birth is the consequence of faith in Jesus Christ. When Nicodemus asked, *“How can these things be?”* Jesus answered, seven times (Joh 3:10–21), *“believe in the Son of Man.”* Any other teaching (Calvinism) is false, *i.e.*, regeneration before faith, which contradicts the order expressed in Joh 1:12–13; Act 15:7–8; Rom 10:17; Eph 1:13–14; 2:8–10. The order is always:

- a. hear the Word of God,
- b. receive it by faith, and
- c. receive the regenerating work of the Spirit.

It is no small thing to willfully violate God’s revealed order of things!

The spiritual birth (regeneration) is effected in the lives of those who believe by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing [making new, new creation, 2Co 5:17] of the Holy Spirit, whom He [God the Father] poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” Tit 3:5–6*

**Point:** Supernatural birth assumes the purpose of supernatural life—the miraculous life which *“He [God] purposed in Himself”* before time began (Tit 1:1–2; Eph 1:9).

## 3. Ten Divine Undertakings of the New Birth

- a. Redemption: 1Co 1:30; Eph 1:7; 1Pe 1:19  
On the cross Jesus Christ paid our spiritual debt in full.
- b. Propitiation: Rom 3:24–25; 1Jo 3:2; 4:10  
God the Father was fully satisfied with the work of Christ for us.
- c. Forgiveness: Rom 4:7; Col 1:14; 1Jo 2:12  
All our sins—past, present, and future—are forgiven forever.
- d. Reconciliation: Rom 5:10; 2Co 5:19; Col 1:21–22  
We are transformed from enemies into beloved children of God.

- e. Justification: Rom 3:24; 5:1, 9; 1Co 6:11  
By faith in Christ we are declared righteous before God.
- f. Regeneration/New birth: Joh 3:3, 7–8; Tit 3:5  
We are born of the Spirit into the family of God.
- g. Sanctification: 1Co 1:2; 6:11; Heb 2:11  
We have been set apart from the world as God’s possession.
- h. Salvation: Rom 1:16; 1Co 1:18  
We are delivered from all condemnation—given eternal life.
- i. Accepted/Access: Rom 5:2; Eph 1:6; 2:18; Heb 10:19–22  
Because we are “in Christ” we have access to the Father.
- j. Adoption/Inheritance: Rom 8:15–17; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5; 1Pe 1:4–5  
Adoption places us into the family of God with all the privileges and powers of adult sons—with the certainty of inheritance.

These are but a few of the many great provisions God has made for those who trust in Jesus Christ. How tragic that too often believers live in ignorance of their exalted position in Christ!

### **Conclusion**

Just as Christ’s birth anticipated His life, ministry, death, and resurrection—even so ours anticipated the outworking of the amazing plan of God for our lives!

Is the miraculous life at work in you?

### **Study Three: The Miraculous Life Involves Supernatural Growth and Focus**

*“I press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* Phi 3:14 (NASB)

Birth naturally anticipates growth, and effective growth demands focus.

We live in a generation of men and women who have never “grown up.” The reason is that, beginning in the 1950s, the focus and goal has been shifted from “growing up” to the self-centered object of “getting what I want.”

#### **1. Jesus’ Early Focus and Growth, Luk 2:39–40, 48–52**

Note how the growth of the boy Jesus is linked to His spiritual focus. Because He “*must be about [His] Father’s business,*” His growth was goal driven!

#### **2. The Necessity of Focus in the Believer’s Growth, 2Co 3:18; 5:14ff**

If we aim at nothing, we will hit it every time! Remember the story of the “crack shot” from an early American village: “I just shoot, then paint the target around the bullet hole.”

- In 2Co 3:18, we see that the focal point is the glory of God, in ever-increasing **measure**. The miraculous life is incremental.

### **The Seven Measures of the Miraculous Life**

1. The measure of **faith** (Rom 12:3)
2. The measure of **the Spirit** (Joh 3:34, no measure to Christ)
3. The measure of one's **spiritual gift** (Eph 4:7)
4. The measure of our **sowing** (Luk 6:38; Gal 6:7)
5. The measure of our **ministry** (2Co 10:13–15; 12:7)
6. The perfect measure of **Christ's standard** (Eph 4:13)  
It is this measure that all our lives and service will be measured by. This proves that we are to be living examples of the life of Christ.
7. The measure of our **eternal reward** (Luk 6:37–38; Mat 6:1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 18, 20–21; 1Co 3:11–15; Gal 6:7–8)

### **3. The Pattern of Growth**

- a. *“from faith to faith,”* Rom 1:17—spiritual birth to growth
- b. *“from strength to strength,”* Psa 84:7—spiritual growth to maturity
- c. *“from glory to glory,”* 2Co 3:18—reflected in this life, rewarded in eternity

### **4. The Five Daily Disciplines**

- a. Washing—Joh 13:3–5, 15; 1Jo 1:9
- b. Eating—Mat 4:4; Joh 6:35
- c. Walking/talking—Joh 15:7–8; Gal 5:16; 1Jo 1:7
- d. Working—Eph 2:10; Tit 2:14
- e. Resting—Mat 11:28–30; Heb 4:3

It is impossible to apply these disciplines and not grow spiritually.

### **Conclusion**

One cannot sustain growth, nor service, without a goal!

What is the ultimate spiritual goal to which you are aiming?

### **Study Four: Supernatural Preparation and Power of the Miraculous Life**

*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives ...”* Luk 4:18

## **The Clear Pattern of Spiritual Life Demonstrated by Jesus**

In reading the beginning of Jesus' ministry, a clear pattern is laid out.

### **1. The Anointing of the Holy Spirit, Luk 3:22**

At the baptism of Jesus, two identifications were taking place: the first was physical, the second was spiritual:

- a. Jesus was identifying Himself with sinful Israel (and by extension, with the sinful world). Remember that John's baptism was a "*baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*" (Mat 3:11; Mar 1:4). This is why John was shocked when Jesus came to him (Mat 3:13–15).
- b. The second was identification of Jesus as the promised, and long-awaited, Messiah (Joh 1:29–34).

### **2. The In-Filling of the Spirit, Luk 4:1**

Even though the Scripture tells us that:

*"For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God,  
for God does not give the Spirit by measure [to Him]." Joh 3:34*

Yet, Jesus lived out—in advance and in perfect degree—the life that God has planned for us. Therefore, He must be "*filled [by means of] the Holy Spirit*" (Luk 4:1).

*"The Second Person of the Godhead yielded completely to the Third Person of the Godhead ... Note that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be led by the Spirit. So are all Christians who are filled and therefore directed. Spirit-filled people never make mistakes. It is an ideal unattainable while we are in the flesh, but is a goal worth striving to achieve ... Jesus was led continuously ..."* Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 292.

### **3. The Leading, Compelling of the Spirit, Luk 4:1b**

Being led by the Spirit is the natural (or supernatural) outcome of being filled by Him. As Paul makes clear, those who are consistently led by the Spirit reflect His character in this life and will be joint heirs in eternity.

*"For as many as are led [ago—pres. pass. ind.] by the Spirit of God, these are the [huios—"mature"] sons of God ... heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together." Rom 8:14, 17*

*“For the love of Christ compels us ... [for] He died for all [the whole world], that those who live [believers] should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” (2Co 5:14–15)*

#### **4. The Empowering of the Spirit, Luk 4:14**

It is the purpose of the Holy Spirit to empower and enable human beings to act in the power of God. Samson is an example of one of the weakest of men, spiritually, who was given supernatural power to accomplish God’s will and plan (Jdg 13:1–5). The Nazarite vow was an outward picture and portrayal of submission to and filling by the Holy Spirit.

Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian believers (and for us) was that we would not miss this critical component of the supernatural life (Eph 3:14–19).

#### **5. Ministry of the Word by the Spirit, Luk 4:18–19**

The progression, as it is revealed in this passage, is:

- a. Anointing, Luk 3:22—for us, the baptism of the Spirit
- b. Filling, Luk 4:1a—for us, the result of yielding
- c. Leading, Luk 4:1b—for us, the effect of His filling
- d. Empowering, Luk 4:14—for us, the result of growth
- e. Effective ministry, Luk 4:17–19—Again, each of us has been gifted and enabled for some effective ministry, according to the plan of God (Rom 12:3–8; Eph 4:11–16).

There simply is no effective ministry apart from these stages being fulfilled in us.

#### **6. Plundering of the Enemy, Mat 12:28–30**

Although separated from the context of Luke 4, this is the logical and practical result of effective ministry:

*“I cast out demons by the Spirit of God ... how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods ... He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.” Mat 12:28–30*

There is a very strong and sobering point made here by Jesus. If we do not submit to the ministry of the Holy Spirit and participate in the in-gathering of souls, we will work against Him and scatter souls from Him!

### **Five Spiritual Commands**

1. *“Be filled with [by] the Spirit”*—Eph 5:18; cf. Col 3:16–17
2. *“Walk [by means of] the Spirit”*—Gal 5:16, 25
3. *“Do not grieve the Spirit”*—Eph 4:30
4. *“Do not quench the Spirit”*—1Th 5:19
5. Bear the fruit of the Spirit—Joh 15:4–5; Gal 5:22–23

## **Study Five: A Supernatural Life of Effective Prayer, Mar 1:35**

*“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place, and there He prayed.”*

*“... Greater works than these he will do ... And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do ...” Joh 14:12–13*

*“If you abide in Me, and My words abide [live] in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” Joh 15:7*

**Principle:** *“If effectiveness is doing the right things, efficiency is doing things right,”* Tim Ferriss, quoted by Tim Larkin in *When Violence is the Answer*, p. 195.

We may be effective in praying, but not efficient in results.

### **1. The Prayer Life of the Savior**

As in all things, the prayer life of the Lord Jesus is the example and standard to which believers ought to aspire. Consider the variety of His prayer life:

- a. He prayed early in the morning, Mar 1:35.
- b. He sought isolation for prayer, Mat 14:23.
- c. He prayed often, Luk 5:16.
- d. He prayed for extended times, Luk 6:12.
- e. He prayed with great simplicity, Mat 11:25–26.
- f. He prayed for others, Luk 22:32.
- g. He prayed in agony, Luk 22:44.
- h. He prayed persistently, Mat 26:44.
- i. He prayed specifically, John 17.
- j. He prayed, even when His prayer could not be answered, Mar 14:35.

When we read the Gospels, we cannot help but be struck with the fact that the prayer life of Jesus—as far as His own personal conduct is concerned—is the major focus of His life.

### **2. Jesus’ Emphasis on Prayer to His Disciples**

- a. In the flush of success, Mat 9:35–38:  
*“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers ...”*
- b. In the valley of despair, Mat 17:19–21:  
*“However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”*

- c. The key to spiritual greatness, Joh 14:13; 15:7:  
*“whatever you ask in My name ... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you ... ask what you desire ...”*

### **3. Persistence is the Way into Powerful Prayer**

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* Mat 7:7

*“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”* Luk 18:1

Consider Paul in the great shipwreck of Acts 27. While we have no evidence of him laying out the Gospel message (he very well may have), we do have emphasis on his witness through prayer (Act 27:33–35).

*“Prayer is not preparation for the work of God, prayer is the work.”* Oswald Chambers  
*“Prayer moves the Arm that moves the world.”* D.L. Moody

### **4. Intercession—the Most Effective Prayer, 1Ti 2:1–7**

Paul exhorts us to pray for all men, without exception. The basis for this exhortation is that God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,”* and this rests on the truth that Jesus Christ *“gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”*

Once again, this text destroys the claims of Calvinism regarding the idea of limited atonement. Scripture clearly says that Christ died for all men, and that God desires the salvation of all (Act 17:30; 1Ti 2:4; 2Pe 3:9). Calvinism is an attempt to explain the plan of salvation from a rationalistic scheme, rather than from clear revelation. Plain and simple statements of the Bible must be cleverly distorted to fit. Any system of theology that must constantly twist or redefine passages is suspect.

### **5. The Intercession of the Spirit, Rom 8:26–28**

This passage is very instructive, in that it teaches two great truths:

- a. First, that the Spirit intercedes while we are praying. We may not know precisely what to pray for, but as we strive to pray according to the will of God (Joh 5:14–15), the Spirit “translates” our prayer to bring it into line with the Father’s will.
- b. Not only this, but the Spirit “helps” (Rom 8:26a) in an amazing way. The Greek word is *sunantilambano* and has the idea of one who “takes hold with us on the opposite side.” It was used of two men lifting a heavy log. Only the Spirit does the “heavy lifting.” This single word conveys the two ideas: *“our weaknesses ... for we do not know,”* and the fact that the Spirit *“makes intercession ... according to the will of God.”*

## **6. The Intercession of Jesus Christ, Rom 8:34–35**

What Paul speaks of here, in principle, we can see literally in the high-priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17. I would suggest that this was the greatest and most powerful and comprehensive prayer ever recorded, and yet it takes less than three minutes to read it out loud!

In this passage, Paul ties together the past and the present work of the Lord Jesus. In the past, He died for us, securing our eternal salvation. In the present (His Present Session), He intercedes for us both individually and collectively as His Church. This intercession follows the same format as the prayer in John 17: that we be delivered from the evil one, that we be sanctified by His truth, that we be united with Him in spirit so that the world may have a convincing witness and believe in Him.

## **7. Two Perspectives of Intercession, Joh 14:13–16**

This passage is fascinating, because it uses two different words for our prayers and those of Jesus. When Scripture speaks of Jesus' prayers, it uses two different words, with a great distinction of meanings.

In Joh 14:13, Jesus speaks of our prayers when He says, "*whatever you ask in My name.*" The Greek word translated "*ask*" is *aiteo*, and it speaks of the request of an inferior to one who is superior. This is logical as we are mere flesh, and we pray to Almighty God.

Yet, down in Joh 14:16, when Jesus says, "*I will pray the Father,*" the word used is *erotao*, a word that means "the request of one who is equal." Jesus spoke to the Father as One who shared His essence. Only in Christ, and when we pray according to His will, can we ever speak to God in this way. The word *aiteo* is never used of the prayers of Jesus.

Interestingly, Luke uses *erotao* of the Pharisee who "requested" Jesus to eat with him (Luk 7:36). This is done to show his inferior conception of His equality with Jesus. You can check this out in *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.

We have the power to enter into the lives of others—from those near at hand to those around the world—through intercessory prayer. Of all our spiritual powers, this is one of the greatest.

How often do we use it?

## **Study Six: A Life of Supernatural Words and Deeds**

*"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."* Joh 6:63

*"Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own ...'"* Joh 7:16–17

## **1. As Exemplified by Jesus**

The Gospels tell us little about Jesus, personally. We do not know what He looked like. What were His favorite foods? How exactly did He dress? What things most delighted Him in His fellowship with men?

What we have recorded are primarily words and deeds, and these were supernatural in every sense. There was nothing in the life of Jesus that was not supernatural in nature.

When He spoke, His concern was for the souls of the people, and their eternal destiny, as with the woman at the well (Joh 4:10–14). When He acted, His deeds matched His words in every instance, as with the woman taken in adultery (Joh 8:1–12). His aim was always to meet the needs of men with the provisions of God’s grace.

## **2. His Purpose for the Believer**

What we see revealed about the life of Jesus Christ should be the aim of our own lives. Just because we cannot hope to fulfill this goal perfectly is no excuse not to “aim for the stars.” Since I was a boy, I have always loved the motto of the State of Kansas: “*To the stars through difficulty*” (*Ad Astra Per Aspera*). As Christians, we accept only Jesus Christ as our standard of living, speaking, and acting. We all know we will never “fully” measure up. As Paul said in Phi 3:13–14:

*“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press [on] toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

## **3. A Life of Spiritual Power**

God has made provision for each one of us to live a life of supernatural power and impact. Our heavenly Father has not overlooked a single one of us. While we each have a different part in His plan, different gifts and capabilities, we all share in the same provisions of His power.

### **a. The Power of His Word**

*“Therefore I ... do not cease to [pray] ... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ ... may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ... that you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe ...”* Eph 1:15–19

It is worth reading and pondering on this entire section. The gist of Paul’s opening prayer is that through the Word of God and the spiritual illumination which we are given to understand it, we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and partake of His resurrection

power. It is God's will for every single believer to participate in this power through consistent spiritual growth and maturity.

b. The Power of His Spirit

*"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... that He would grant you ... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith [Joh 14:21–23—fulfilled] ... to know the love of Christ ... according to the power that works in us." Eph 3:14–20*

This is the second part of Paul's prayer in Ephesians: the first part for enlightenment (Eph 1:15–21), the second part for enablement (Eph 3:14–19). The focal point of the prayer is power, the means is by learning His Word, and then by submitting to His Spirit. Every child of God has the potential to impact his or her world by utilizing the power of God made available to us through the amazing resources of His grace (Eph 1:3).

Is the power of God at work in your life?  
If not, the problem lies in one of two areas: ignorance  
of His Word, or resistance to His Spirit.

**Study Seven: Supernatural Way of Thinking/Humility, Phi 2:5–9**

*"He must increase, but I must decrease." Joh 3:30*

1. The Humility of Jesus Christ

*"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Mat 11:29*

How amazing that the God who created everything would come in the Person of a humble shepherd! The humility of Jesus in every interaction with men is astounding. If we could quantify or prioritize the qualities that made Jesus what He is in the Gospels, I think it would be a toss-up between humility and love. And in reality, there can be no love without true humility.

The following is an excerpt from the book *The Beauty of Holiness* by Andrew Murray, pp. 13–14.

*"I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. Luke 22:26*

*"In the Gospel of John, we have the inner life of our Lord laid open for us ... Though the word "humble" does not occur, we shall nowhere in Scripture see so clearly wherein His humility consisted ... The 'not I' in which Paul expresses his relation to Christ, is the very spirit of what Christ says of His relation to the Father.*

*“The Son can do nothing of Himself. John 5:19*

*“I can of Myself do nothing. John 5:30*

*“I am come not to do My own will. John 5:38*

*“My teaching is not mine. John 7:16*

*“I am not come of myself. John 7:28*

*“I have not come of myself, but He sent Me. John 8:42*

*“I seek not My own glory. John 8:50*

*“The words that I say, I speak not from Myself. John 14:10*

*“The word which you hear is not Mine. John 14:24*

*“These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ’s life and words. It is this: He was nothing, that God might be all,” Andrew Murray.*

## **2. The Humility of Paul**

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Phi 2:5*

Paul based his own humility, and that which he exhorted others to have, on the greatest example of humility ever seen on this earth.

It was in following the ideal of Christ that Paul humbled himself to such a degree (see Phi 3:7–14). In fact, the longer he lived and served, the deeper his humility became. Consider the three following self-evaluations of the apostle:

- a. *“For I am the least of the apostles ...” 1Co 15:9, AD 56.*
- b. *“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints,” Eph 3:8, AD 60.*
- c. *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,” 1Ti 1:15, AD 62.*

The longer he lived, the more he grew, the smaller he became in his own eyes.

## **3. Humility Demonstrated by Timothy, Epaphroditus, Phi 2:19–30**

Paul’s example had an impact on those who were his disciples and fellow-workers. Timothy and Epaphroditus both exhibited advanced attitudes of humility. Of Timothy, and of him alone, Paul was able to say:

*“For I have no one like minded, who will sincerely care for your state.  
For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” Phi 2:20–21*

Then, Epaphroditus (who may be one and the same with Epaphras, Col 1:7; 4:12), of whom Paul could say:

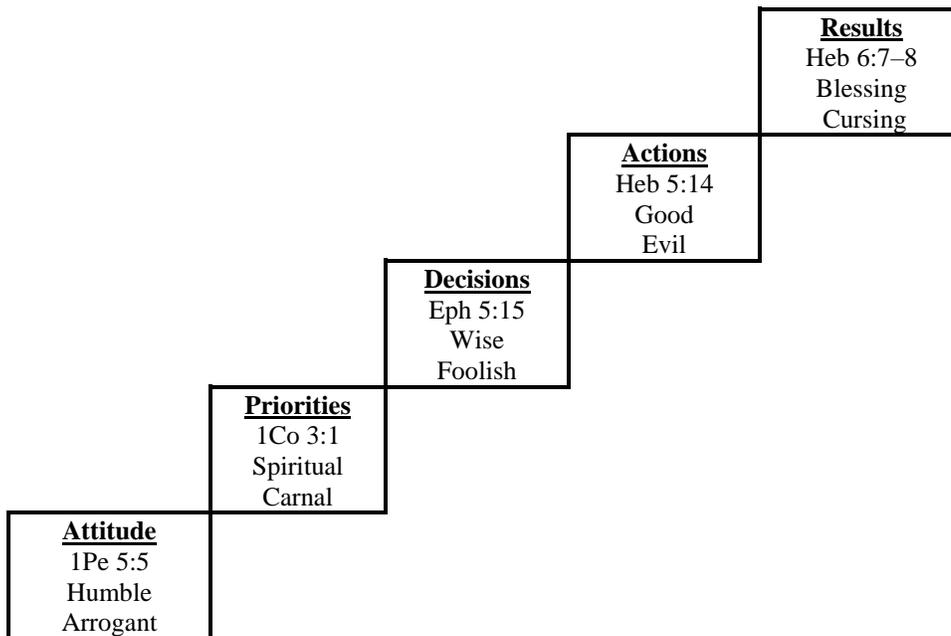
*“Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.”* Phi 2:29–30

#### **4. The Law of Humility, Jam 4:10; 1Pe 5:5–6**

*“Humble yourselves ... and He will lift you up.”*

The only way up in God’s economy is down. We must learn the lesson of John the Baptist, that *“He must increase, but I must decrease,”* Joh 3:30.

#### **The Five Steps of Spiritual Success or Failure**



Every day, we choose the path we will take; and in the accumulation of our attitudes and actions, we either advance or retreat in the spiritual life.

#### **Study Eight: The Miraculous Life has a Supernatural Impact on Others**

*“The people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”* Mat 7:28–29

## **The Authority of Jesus**

Certainly, Jesus had the authority, as not only the very Author of Moses' Law, who wrote it in stone with His finger (Exo 31:18), but He is also the Living Word of God made flesh (Joh 1:14). No preacher could ever approach this authority!

Yet, another aspect of His contrast with the scribes was that He spoke out of love for the people, with compassion for their needs (Mat 9:36), and from a humble, sacrificial heart (Mat 11:29). He was non-judgmental (Joh 8:15; Mat 7:1); He was not motivated by any gain for Himself and spoke only to draw men and women into a right relationship with God.

## **Deeds that Matched His Words**

*“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” Joh 8:7*

In the incident with the woman taken in adultery, all of the above—His authority, love, compassion, and self-sacrifice—are evident. It cost Him to undertake on the woman's behalf. In demanding the “sinless” to cast the first stone, He re-affirmed His earlier teaching, found in Mat 7:3–5, about dealing first with the beam in your own eye. Everywhere He went, He created waves because He represented the power most foreign to this world—the matchless grace of God!

## **Impact from Obscurity**

It is not necessary to “make a name” or “be someone of note” to have such impact in the world. What is necessary is to be transformed—by the Spirit and the Word of God—into a reflection of Jesus Christ, however imperfect. Greatness of soul cannot fail to have an impact.

*“He who rules his spirit [is greater] than he who takes a city.” Pro 16:32*

The very presence of the godly, Christ-like believer—the combination of conduct, words, and deeds, the unmistakable fragrance of genuine humility—cannot fail to impress on others the reality of one who has been with Jesus Christ.

*“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John ... they marveled.  
And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Act 4:13*

## **The Field of Battle**

*“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2Ti 2:3*

How willing are we to endure real hardship, to bear the heavier part of the load, in all our earthly relationships? Consider five Christ-like areas that would change our lives—not to mention the lives of others:

1. An attitude of genuine humility—Phi 2:5–9; 1Pe 5:5–6
2. Unconditional love for others—1Co 13:4–8  
(This passage alone could transform our lives. So much more than just a relaxed mental attitude!)
3. Willingness to forgive—Mat 6:14–15; Eph 4:32
4. A sacrificial nature—Phi 2:3
5. A courageous sense of justice—Joh 8:1–12; Luk 10:38–42

### **In the Arena**

1. As disciple-makers—Mat 28:18–20
2. As husbands/wives—1Co 7:13–16
3. As parents/children—Eph 6:1–4
4. As bosses/employees—Eph 6:5–9
5. As friends—Rom 14:14–19; 1Co 10:23–31

Joshua understood the essence of the spiritual life as it relates to daily decisions:

*“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ...  
But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”* Jos 24:15

Those who have great spiritual impact do not achieve it by one great effort. It is always the accumulation of many daily decisions and actions, which add up over time into a life of power and influence. Longfellow captured the idea:

*The heights by great men, seized and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight.  
But they, while their companions slept  
Were toiling upward through the night.*

As Paul made clear to the Corinthian believers, *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (2Co 6:2). Far too many believers live lives of spiritual mediocrity as they dally—one day at a time—until the time allotted to them is gone.

**Don’t waste your life!  
Today can be the beginning of a life of humility, study, growth,  
and power. It is yours to choose—choose well!**