

# LIVING IN THE POWER OF **PENTECOST**

**A PRAYER DEVOTIONAL**

BY STEPHEN G. DERGES



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# INTRODUCTION

On several occasions I've heard people say we need another Pentecost. Whilst I understand the reasons for that view, with respect, I don't agree – we just need to **live in the benefit** of Pentecost.

Sure, the Pentecost festival shortly after Jesus' ascension was an amazing moment in history. It led to the birth of the Church and the inception of worldwide mission.

However, it was an event – a moment in time.

Miraculous and momentous – yes; astonishing and awe-inspiring, absolutely, but our focus should surely be on the here and now and how the Holy Spirit impacts our lives today. We can look back in wonder on events but the reality and significance of any special occasion should be lived out daily.

It's heart-breaking to me that the ministry of the Holy Spirit causes so many disagreements and differences. Whilst some denominations exuberantly celebrate the benefits of Pentecost, others minimise, marginalise, or even completely disregard, the potential available to us. We don't have time and space to discuss these differences here but Christians are meant to live reliant on the Holy Spirit. Personally, I want to experience all the blessings, the "**good gifts**" our Heavenly Father has for me – and Jesus said that includes the gift of the Holy Spirit (see Luke 11:13).

So, over the next few days as we journey from Pentecost Sunday to Trinity Sunday, our focus will be on the work of the Holy Spirit in us – in this generation – and how we influence the individuals and the communities in which we are involved. Each day there will be a relevant Scripture to read and then we'll think through some of the issues to consider the personal implications that are relevant to us, before committing ourselves in prayer to living in the blessing and power the Holy Spirit has made available.

Please don't just read this devotional though – examine the Biblical references provided in their context; take time to study what the Bible says about living in God's purposes and ask the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts as He leads and inspires you.

*Stephen G. Derges*





# PENTECOST SUNDAY

*PROPHESIED ... PREDICTED ... PROMISED*

# PENTECOST SUNDAY

Prophesied...Predicted...Promised



**BIBLE**  
Reading Society  
HOLY BIBLE

**“In the last days, God says,  
‘I will pour out my Spirit on  
all people...’”**

Acts 2:17

## PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

As crowds of people witness the effects of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Peter refers to the Old Testament prophecy of Joel (see Joel 2:28-32) written many centuries earlier.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit was imparted virtually exclusively to prophets, priests, kings and other notable leaders for specific purposes or periods of time. Joel was pointing forward to a new dawn – a turning point in our relationship with God was coming.

At the start of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist declared that Jesus **“will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire”** (Matthew 3:11) and at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13-16) we read that the Spirit of God descended on Jesus and, according to John the Baptist, remained on Him (John 1:32-34).

Jesus told the disciples He would send them **“the Advocate, the Holy Spirit”** (John 14:26) and instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for this to happen (Acts 1:4-5).

The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was pre-planned – **prophesied, predicted, promised**. It was intentional, not an after-thought or accident, from the One **“who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will”** (Ephesians 1:11).

Pentecost is a watershed moment – now for the first time in history, every Christian – yes that's every Christian – would be empowered to contribute to mission of the Church in proclaiming the Kingdom of God and the transformation it brings.

As we begin this journey together, let's take a few moments to remember and reflect on a specific occasion in our personal experience of being led by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, **“those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God”**.

Here are 3 questions to consider about occasions when the Holy Spirit has

guided and directed us.

- ➔ What were the circumstances?
- ➔ What did we learn and what was the outcome – the result?
- ➔ How has that experience affected our lives subsequently?

It's always beneficial to analyse what's happened in our lives but to be honest, it's just history unless we appropriate the lessons we've learned. As we live our lives now, today, whilst our past experiences can inform and influence us, what really counts is our present-day response and our continued obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading.

Here are a few more questions that may be relevant.

- ➔ How will the Holy Spirit living in me impact my life and the lives of those around me today?
- ➔ How often do I ask the Holy Spirit to show me His plans and purposes and then submit to them?
- ➔ Am I prepared to pray for His direction and allow Him to work in me today?

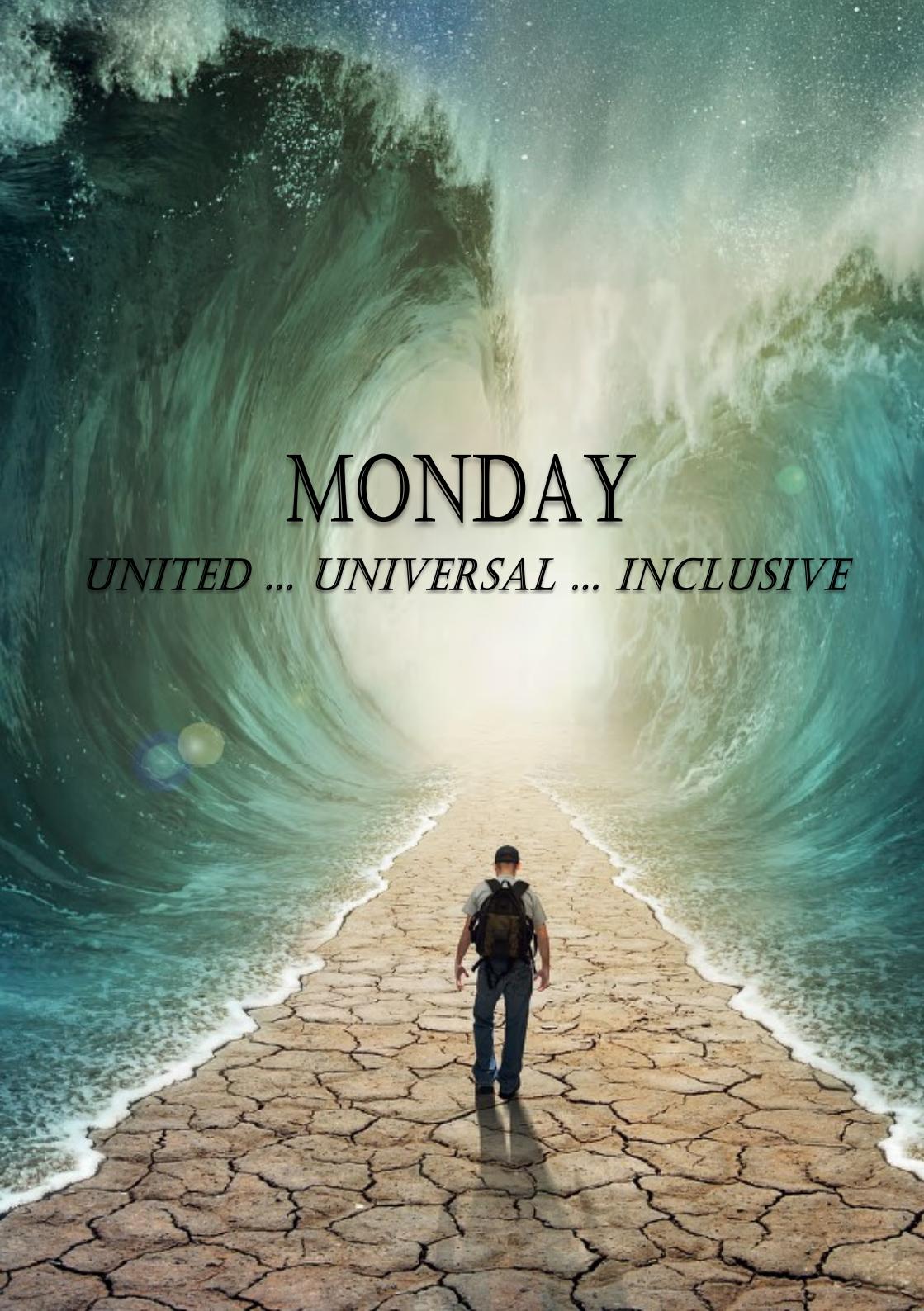
Now I recognise that some of us may have reservations in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, for example, the possibility of somehow 'losing control' or of being 'taken over' against our will. Maybe it's the fear of potential embarrassment or perceived lack of credibility that concerns us.

If that's the case it's imperative that we ask ourselves why that is and what we can do to overcome any anxiety we may have. Perhaps there's someone we can ask to stand alongside us and counsel us in these areas. We all need mentors to help disciple us into greater spiritual maturity.

As we will see throughout this Devotional, the Holy Spirit invites us to work alongside Him but remember – this isn't about how much of the Holy Spirit we have – but rather how much the Holy Spirit has of us.

*'Holy Spirit, I want to be fully available today and be obedient in everything You have for me. Empower me; guide me; inspire me; lead me I pray. Enable me to be aware of, and then take, every opportunity You give me to bless and positively input into the lives of people around me – whoever they may be and wherever I am.  
Amen.'*





# MONDAY

*UNITED ... UNIVERSAL ... INCLUSIVE*

# MONDAY

United...Universal...Inclusive



**BIBLE**  
Reading Society

**“When the day of Pentecost came,  
they were all together in one  
place”**

Acts 2:1

## PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are two specific aspects I'd like us to consider today.

Firstly, the disciples were **“all together in one place”** physically but I'd suggest they were also one together in unity of spirit and heart. We saw yesterday, they'd been told to remain in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4) to receive Jesus' parting gift – the Holy Spirit – so they waited in obedience, and they waited together.

Let's remember:

- God blesses unity: some translations of Psalm 133:1-3 says He **“commands”** His blessing when we **“live together in unity”**
- We're instructed to **“make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit”** (see Ephesians 4:3)
- Unity according to Ephesians 4:13 is a mark of spiritual maturity.

Let's be brutally honest: are there any areas of disunity, division or disagreement we need to address in our relationships?

Secondly, the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:17-18 highlights the universal nature of the gift of the Spirit, repeating Joel's prophecy

**“... I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”**

In the Kingdom of God there's no gender, ageism or socio-economic discrimination and although not specifically mentioned, I'd advocate no racial or ethnicity restraints either.

Everyone is included. Galatians 3:28 tells us we are **“all one in Christ Jesus”** whatever our back-story or our circumstances now and Colossians 3:11 reinforces that **“Christ is all, and is in all”** whoever we are.

There were 15 different nationalities and regional territories represented at the Pentecost Festival and in both Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 we read there will be multitudes from every tribe and nation worshipping in heaven. How glorious that will be!

Pentecost is a graphic illustration of the multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-cultural nature of the Kingdom of God.

How about us? What's our position?

- ➔ Do we consciously or unconsciously create barriers, impose limitations, create 'no-go areas' when it comes to others who don't necessarily conform to our preconceived behavioural norms or standpoints?
- ➔ Are there people we reject, disenfranchise or marginalise because they 'don't think the same as we do' or have a different theological view or liturgical model of worship?
- ➔ What about racial stereotyping or even gender disqualification? Do we overtly or covertly discriminate or inappropriately categorise others in our language or even jokes and anecdotes?
- ➔ Do we 'write people off' because they are either too young and inexperienced or too old and out of touch with the present day?
- ➔ Are we striving for unity aiming to live in peace with everyone?

We are all made in the image of God; we all have value and worth; we all have access to the one Spirit. There's no doubt we're all unique with different personalities, characteristics, experiences and abilities, but we're called to model inclusivity and acceptance and love as Jesus showed us through His servanthood and sacrifice.

After all, Jesus advocated this is the way we should demonstrate how we "**love others as well as you love yourself**" – Matthew 22:39 (The Message).

**'It's tough Lord. I can easily fall into the snare of favouritism or prejudice. Forgive me for treating others either as better or worse than me. Where I have caused disharmony, division or even discrimination against others, I repent. Help me to not prejudge others but rather harness their gifts, skills and experiences recognising and valuing the amazing diversity and variety that everyone brings to Your Kingdom. Amen.'**





# TUESDAY

*REACTION AND RESPONSE*

# TUESDAY

## Reaction and Response



**“Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’ Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine’”**

Acts 2:12-13

### PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

People react or respond in different ways when we share our faith. The inquisitive will ask questions and perhaps debate, whilst the cynics will poke fun and try to obfuscate to either disguise their feelings or to avoid having to think seriously about the issues.

Despite the ridicule, Peter shares the Gospel and boldly declares an answer to those who were questioning what was happening.

Acts 2:38 says, **“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”** As a result 3,000 people become followers of Jesus – not bad for Peter’s first recorded sermon!

But what changed Peter from being a coward to a courageous communicator; from a frightened follower to a fearless orator; from denying he knew Jesus to defending and declaring Him as Lord and Saviour? It could only have been the presence and power of the Holy Spirit working in him and through him.

Have we been put off talking about Jesus because we’ve had a previous bad experience? Sadly, I’ve been involved in a few motoring accidents in the past, however that hasn’t prevented me from driving.

I’ve also not always made the most of opportunities to testify to God’s graciousness and on other occasions, have handled situations ineptly. Thankfully though, I believe the Holy Spirit can, and does, redeem my ‘spiritual car crashes’. And I’ve learned valuable lessons so hopefully I don’t repeat the same errors in the future.

- ➔ Do we avoid speaking out and speaking up about our faith because previous encounters have left us feeling inadequate, disillusioned or because there’s been a lack of response or even hostility?
- ➔ What about our motivation to give other people the chance to know the Jesus we know and love?

- ➔ Do we shy away from opportunities because we're unsure how to start a conversation or we're uncertain how to articulate what we believe?
- ➔ Does our lifestyle, words and actions get in the way of people asking us to “give the reason for the hope” we have (1 Peter 3:15)?

Take some time to read Acts 2:42-47 which outlines how the early Christians lived their lives. They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching; fellowshipping together; celebrating communion; praying; sharing property and possessions; meeting needs; praising God.

And the result? They enjoyed the favour of everyone and people were added to the Kingdom every day! This seems to be an amazing model of how we can influence the world around us. The early believers' lifestyle was so appealing and attractive to other people that they wanted to participate in it.

Remember it's God's will that everyone should come to know Jesus as their Saviour (1 Timothy 3:2-5). Somebody shared with us the message of salvation – shouldn't we do the same for others?

And we're not in this on our own – we have the Holy Spirit's help.

The various translations of 2 Timothy 1:7 remind us we don't have a spirit of fear or timidity, but a spirit of power, love, self-discipline and soundness of mind. The Apostle Paul boldly states he could do everything through Christ's strength living in him (Philippians 4:13) and that same strength is available to us – the power of the Holy Spirit.

Over recent years I've been increasingly challenged to take spiritual responsibility for the communities in which I live, work and socialise.

- ➔ How can I positively influence the eternal destiny of my neighbours, co-workers and even my golfing partners?
- ➔ Do they see Jesus living in me and am I actively, willingly, consistently praying for opportunities to share my faith, not just in words but also action?

It's not always easy but let's faithfully and fearlessly do our part, even if there are setbacks, and allow the Holy Spirit to complete His work as He sees fit.

‘Father, sometimes I feel inadequate and even ill-prepared to witness to Your amazing love, grace and mercy. Strengthen me through Your Holy Spirit today and every day so to play my part in helping make Your will that everyone comes to know You, a reality. Instil me with the courage and confidence I need.  
Amen.’



A photograph of a man and a dog sitting on a wooden dock at night. They are looking out at a calm lake under a dark, star-filled sky. A bright, streaking comet is visible in the upper left. In the background, a small town with a church is nestled among hills. The scene is peaceful and contemplative.

WEDNESDAY  
*SOUND ... SIGHT ... SPEECH*

# WEDNESDAY

## Sound ... Sight ... Speech



“Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm...Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages...”

Acts 2:2-4 (NLT)

### PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

The coming of the Holy Spirit was a spectacular sensory experience:

- the **sound** of a mighty wind.
- the **sight** of what appeared to be flames of fire resting on each person.
- the miraculous impartation of new forms of **speech**.

No-one missed out – everyone experienced the astounding arrival and demonstration of the Spirit’s power. Imagine what it would have felt like to have not been there – I know I would have been extremely disappointed to have been absent. Maybe this is a salutary reminder of the exhortation in Hebrews 10:25 not to give up meeting together. And in the context of unity and harmony, God’s blessing rests on all of us collectively, it’s one of the benefits and outcomes when the local church meets.

Notice too, they were **all filled** with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages. I find it remarkable that the first evidence of ‘speaking in tongues’ is in the context of witnessing, i.e. evangelism.

As we’ve already seen, this was a multi-national crowd of people drawn from 15 different regions and countries yet everyone heard the message in their own language and dialect (Acts 2:6 & 11). The curse of Babel, where multiple languages resulted in confusion (see Genesis 11), was reversed at Pentecost as language brought revelation.

Please believe me that I’m not in any way decrying the use of the gift of spiritual language in our private and sometimes public devotions. On a personal level I find it’s an amazing benefit to “**pray in the Spirit**” (Ephesians 6:18) knowing He interprets and intercedes on my behalf even when I don’t know what to pray or how to express my concerns and thoughts (Romans 8:26-27).

But here’s the crunch.

- How relevant is the language we use especially around people who we are

trying to influence for Christ?

- Do we talk in ‘Christian-ese’ using terminology that may be irrelevant or even incomprehensible to someone who doesn’t yet share our faith?
- Are we in effect ‘speaking in unknown languages’ to others?

In Acts 4 we read Peter and John were questioned by the religious rulers after a man who was unable to stand or walk who begging at the Temple was healed. They were arrested and detained overnight. Threatened not to talk about the resurrection again, on their release, all the disciples prayed together, the place was shaken, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and subsequently **“spoke the word of God boldly”** – Acts 4:31.

This is an example of radical faith in action. Despite the opposition they faced from the authorities, they were willing to ‘speak up and speak out’.

Another example is found in Acts 5 when Peter and other apostles who had been imprisoned for acts of healing on the streets through miraculous and angelic intervention were freed, they were brought before the religious leaders and forbidden to proclaim the Good News about Jesus.

Again Peter refused to back down saying, **“We must obey God rather than human beings!”** – Acts 5:29. Despite being flogged, we read they immediately went out and **“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah”** (Acts 5:42).

I wonder whether I would be as ‘hardcore’ as the early Christians in sharing my faith but here’s a suggestion.

Take some time to write out and rehearse what Jesus means to us so we can testify (speak the truth) with clarity and assurance. This in no way limits the power of the Holy Spirit but it will help us to be composed and not get flustered if we’re asked to either share or defend our faith. In fact, Luke 12:12 (MSG) promises us **“...don’t worry about defending yourselves. The right words will be there. The Holy Spirit will give you the right words when the time comes.”**

Let’s boldly step out and speak out whatever situations may confront us.

**‘Holy Spirit, please enable me to simply yet powerfully communicate how much I appreciate all Jesus has done by bringing me into His Father’s Kingdom. May I convey my faith life story relevantly and effectively whenever I share what I believe and why. Amen.’**



# THURSDAY

## *THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT*

144

you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of God. joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, 23 Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

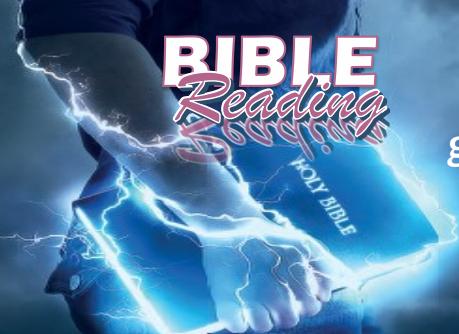
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CHAPTER 6

# THURSDAY

## The Fruit of the Spirit



**BIBLE**  
Reading  
Society

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law”**

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESVUK)

### PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

These nine characteristics should epitomise our lives. However, in the same way natural fruit takes time to grow and ripen, we can't expect a spiritual harvest to occur overnight. There's a process and often a time-lag involved. We **“are being transformed...from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord who is the Spirit”** (2 Corinthians 3:18 – ESVUK). The Holy Spirit's mandate is to fulfil the Father's desire for us to become more like Jesus – His life living in us (Galatians 2:20).

Notice it's a continuous process – **“we are being transformed”** – we've not cracked it yet! But hopefully change will happen as we allow the Holy Spirit to work on our 'rough edges' and develop spiritual maturity in us. Let's not be impatient whilst He does His work in us.

Also note, the fruit of the Spirit are not gifts – the choices we make determine the type of fruit that grows in our lives. So, here's a quick overview of each for us to consider.

- ➔ **Love:** Biblical love is not a feeling or an emotion, but a conscious decision to put others ahead of ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4); to not exercise our freedom to the detriment of others (Romans 14:3) and not harm anyone in anyway (Romans 14:13).
- ➔ **Joy:** isn't based on circumstances but in the assurance of our position in Christ. He is the source of real, eternal joy (John 15:11).
- ➔ **Peace:** Jesus promised us a different type of peace from that which the world gives (John 14:27). In fact, He is our peace because He has broken down every barrier (Ephesians 2:14).
- ➔ **Patience:** is often referred to as 'long-suffering' (Ephesians 4:2 NKJV) or 'patient endurance' (Hebrews 10:36 NLT). We are called to patiently persevere even in the middle of difficulties (Romans 5:1-5).
- ➔ **Kindness:** because God has shown us His kindness, we can be generous in

our time, finances, speech, actions (James 3:17-18) to support, bless and encourage others.

- **Goodness:** involves moral integrity, being honourable, respectability, having a clear conscience (Philippians 4:8; 1 Peter 3:16).
- **Faithfulness:** can people count on our reliability, loyalty, do we keep our promises, are we faithful in the little things so we can be trusted with larger responsibilities? (Matthew 25:21).
- **Gentleness:** often described as ‘strength under control’ is the opposite of self-assertiveness and is associated with humility. Philippians 4:5 says, “**Let your gentleness be evident to all**”.
- **Self-control:** this is one of the character traits required of church leaders (1 Timothy 3:2-3) but also have a look at Titus 2 where it’s encouraged for older men (verse 2); older women so they can demonstrate it to younger women (verse 5) and younger men (verse 6), i.e. everyone!

Here’s a suggestion, why not take one fruit every day over the next nine days and think through the implications of each one personally? We could then ask ourselves some pertinent questions, such as:

- Where am I growing (or how can I grow more) in this fruit?
- What should my next steps be to develop one or more of them?
- What circumstances have the potential to derail me?

And have a look at John 15 where Jesus refers to Himself as the “**true vine**” and to us as the branches and encourages us to “**remain in Him**”.

Take a few moments to think through the pruning process:

- Pruning discards what is not fruitful and enables disease to be cut out
- Pruning encourages new growth, improves what remains and ensures it is capable of even greater productivity.

Yes, pruning is likely to be painful but no-one said living for Jesus and becoming more like Him would be easy. Let’s be courageous and willing to allow the Holy Spirit free reign in our lives.

‘Holy Spirit, please help me in growing these characteristics – may my life be a harvest field of fruit that will last. I want to be authentic in every area of my life so that my faith is never in doubt. I need Your strength and help today and trust You to continue Your work in me. Amen.’



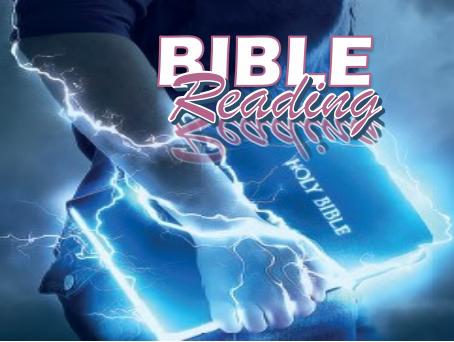


# FRIDAY

*THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT*

# FRIDAY

## The Gifts of the Spirit



**BIBLE**  
Reading Society  
HOLY BIBLE

**“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”**

1 Corinthians 6:19

**“You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple”**

1 Peter 2:5

### PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

We could spend another week (and more) just looking at this topic. There are so many Scriptures we could reflect on but the following table summarises the three primary New Testament passages that focus on “Spiritual Gifts”.

<u><b>GIFTS OF GOD</b></u> <b>Romans 12: 3-8</b>	<u><b>GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT</b></u> <b>1 Corinthians 12: 4-10</b>	<u><b>GIFTS OF CHRIST</b></u> <b>Ephesians 4: 11-12</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prophecy</li><li>• Serving</li><li>• Teaching</li><li>• Encouraging</li><li>• Giving</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Empathy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wisdom</li><li>• Knowledge</li><li>• Faith</li><li>• Healing</li><li>• Miracles</li><li>• Prophecy</li><li>• Discerning of spirits</li><li>• Speaking in tongues</li><li>• Interpretation of tongues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apostle</li><li>• Prophet</li><li>• Evangelist</li><li>• Teacher</li><li>• Pastor</li></ul>
Body ministry gifts (verse 4)	Gifts given for the common good (verse 7)	Gifts to equip us for works of service (verse 12)

In the same way our physical bodies are made up of many parts (Romans 12:20) each with its own specific function and purpose, we are the Body of Christ on earth where

everyone matters and everyone has a part to play – **no-one is exempt**.

We're **inter-linked** and **inter-dependent** on one another. Individualism and

independence have no place in the Kingdom – **we're in this together.**

Why? Because none of us has the complete package – we're not all gifted for every type of ministry but we can, and should, function in them together. We're not supposed to be in competition – we're designed to complement each other. Together we are the spiritual home of and for the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12:11 we're told the Holy Spirit decides and distributes the various gifts as He sees fit – we don't own these gifts – they are freely given to us. Let's appreciate the gift (or gifts) we have as well as the gifts of others. Yes, we can watch and learn from the ministry of other people who may be more skilled than us in order to improve, but the key is to be dependent on the source – the Holy Spirit (Jude 20).

Ephesians 4:12-13 gives us a step-by-step process: as we're equipped and built up, we'll become more united in faith and knowledge, grow in maturity and so move towards attaining the fullness of Jesus in our lives. How well are we doing on that score?

Here are some further pertinent questions.

- ➔ How does the presence and power of the Holy Spirit impact my daily life?
- ➔ In what ways am I exercising His gifts in my life both when the Church is gathered and when I'm in other contexts – family life, social relationships, at work or in business, with my neighbours – in fact, wherever?
- ➔ How does "**His divine power**" enable me to avoid being "**unproductive and ineffective**"? – see 1 Peter 1:3-11

And here are three questions for those who happen to be in church leadership (or any leadership role – in family, relationships, social or vocational situations):

- ➔ What am I doing to equip and encourage others in their ministry?
- ➔ Am I holding anyone back from fulfilling their God-given potential?
- ➔ Am I a gatekeeper or a releaser of others?

Lets allow the Holy Spirit to have **full reign** in our lives.

**'Thank You Heavenly Father that You want my life to become more like the life Jesus led here on earth – full of grace and mercy, lovingkindness and of power to do Your will.**

**Holy Spirit, prune me and pour whatever gifts into me as necessary and enable me be effective and productive. May Your will be done in my life here on earth.**

**Amen.'**





# SATURDAY

*NAMES ... TITLES ... MINISTRY*

# SATURDAY

## Names ... Titles ... Ministry



**“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me (Jesus)”**

John 15:26

### PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are over 30 names and titles given to the Holy Spirit in Scripture plus various descriptors alluding to His activity. Here are just five for us to mull over:

- ⇒ **Fire:** to purify and refine. Hebrews 12:29 calls God “**a consuming fire**”
- ⇒ **Wind:** or ‘breath of life’ – depicting power and guidance. When talking to Nicodemus, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as an uncontrollable but dynamic force (John 3:8)
- ⇒ **Water:** to refresh and cleanse us from sin and to provide rivers of living water flowing from us (John 7:38-39)
- ⇒ **Oil:** anointing us for service and ministry (1 John 2:27)
- ⇒ **Dove:** the gentleness and peace that provided encouragement and empowerment to Jesus at His baptism (Luke 3:22).

Titus 3:5 (NLT) says, “**He (Jesus) washed away our sins, giving us new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit**”. This reinforces what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:5 that no-one can enter God’s Kingdom unless they are born again of “**water and the Spirit**”.

The Holy Spirit’s titles include:

⇒ Teacher	⇒ Counsellor	⇒ Helper
⇒ Advocate	⇒ Comforter	⇒ Guide

In addition, He intercedes on our behalf and He is a “**deposit guaranteeing our redemption**” (Ephesians 1:13-14) by Whom we are “**sealed for the day of redemption**” (Ephesians 4:30).

The first four of those titles – Advocate; Counsellor; Comforter; Helper – are derived from the Greek word ‘paraclete’ which is found four times in John’s Gospel and once in 1 John 2:1 where Jesus is also called our Advocate. Literally ‘para’ means ‘beside’ and ‘clete’ stems from a verb meaning ‘to call’. The Holy

Spirit is the one we can call to be alongside us.

‘Paraclete’ is also a military term. Roman soldiers were paired up together – they were each other’s ‘paraclete’, fighting back-to-back with adjacent pairs protecting their partner’s side. In the same way, the Holy Spirit ‘has our back’ and protects us against our spiritual enemy who is out to try and destroy us.

Whilst His disciples were somewhat perplexed when He announced He would be leaving to return to the Father, Jesus reassured them by saying the benefit would be that He would send the Holy Spirit to come alongside us and be with us – John 16:7.

When Jesus was on earth He was with the disciples – we have the Holy Spirit within us. He goes where we go and is available anytime, anywhere to guide and direct us; to inspire and empower us; to remind us of what Jesus said and did; to graciously reprove and convict us.

We’re going to end today by reading Ephesians 3:14-21 – maybe do so in a couple of different translations to understand the nuances and implications. The apostle Paul’s amazing prayer for the Ephesian Church is full of references to the Holy Spirit’s power at work in our lives. Paul declares us to be:

- ➔ Strengthened with power with Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith
- ➔ Rooted and established in Christ’s love with the power to grasp how wide, long and deep it is even if it is beyond human knowledge
- ➔ Filled with the fullness of God.

And the Holy Spirit works in us to do “**immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine**”. In addition, Paul writes in Ephesians 1:19-20 that there is an “**incomparably great power for us who believe**” – and it’s the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

Let’s ask the Holy Spirit to dispense some of that unparalleled, unsurpassed power of His into our lives today – not for our own benefit or even kudos – but to enable us to live for God’s glory and purposes.

After all, if we’re looking to see God’s Kingdom come and His will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven, we need all the resources available to us.

‘Lord Jesus this is amazing – You sent the Holy Spirit to live within me. Help me live today and every day in the knowledge that He is always with me and that He will guide me into all truth. Please help me to appropriate the benefits of the incredible resources the Holy Spirit has for me. I submit to Him today without reservation. Amen.’





# TRINITY SUNDAY

*FATHER ... SON ... SPIRIT*

# TRINITY SUNDAY

Father ... Son ... Spirit



**BIBLE**  
Reading Society

**“Therefore go and make disciples of every nation, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”**

Matthew 28:19

## PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

Today is Trinity Sunday yet whilst the term ‘Trinity’ doesn’t appear in the Bible, the concept of a Triune God runs from Genesis right through to Revelation. An Anglican Rector friend I know, says he often asks the Bishop to come and preach on Trinity Sunday because this is such a paradoxical mystery that it’s too difficult for him to grasp! It’s been said, ‘if you try to explain the Trinity, you will lose your mind, but if you deny Him, it you will lose your soul’.

The Bible teaches there is one eternal God Who exists in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – each distinct yet working together in perfect unity, submitting to each other and worthy of equal praise and worship.

- Philippians 1:2 refers to the Father as being God
- Titus 2:13 tells us Jesus is “**our great God and Saviour**”
- Acts 5:3-4 (MSG) says Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit – not to men but God.

Just think about these scriptures for a moment:

- The Father send the Son (Jesus) into the world – 1 John 4:9
- The Son returned to the Father – John 16:10
- The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world – John 14:26 and Acts 2:33

It follows therefore that all three – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are distinct in nature and function.

Author Francis Chan writes in his book, ‘Forgotten God’, that we should not relegate the Holy Spirit to being considered as a ‘force’, ‘power’ or ‘influence’. He is a Divine Person – co-equal with the Father and Son – someone to be honoured and revered.

Numerous passages refer to the Trinity working together in complete harmony and unity – here are just three of them:

- **In salvation:** we’re chosen by the Father; sanctified (made holy) by the

Spirit; sprinkled with Jesus' blood (1 Peter 1:2)

- ➔ **In prayer:** we're strengthened by the Spirit in our inner-being; Christ lives in our hearts by faith; we're filled with the measure of the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- ➔ **In growing as a Christian:** we're chosen by God; loved by the Lord; sanctified by the Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

So here are a few final thoughts.

- ➔ Acts 7:51 warns us against "**resisting**" the Holy Spirit. I'm sure many of us (me included) have, at times, consciously decided not to follow those 'still, small voice' promptings we've had when the Holy Spirit has been urging us into action.
- ➔ 1 Thessalonians 5:19 cautions us "**not to quench**" the Holy Spirit. Have we ever quenched (other translations say 'stifled', 'held back', 'suppressed', 'restrained') the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives? If so, we need to repent and claim forgiveness.
- ➔ Ephesians 4:30 urges us not to "**grieve the Holy Spirit**". The Amplified Version extends this passage using words such as 'offend', 'vex' and 'sadden'. Let's ensure our behaviour doesn't cause Him grief.
- ➔ Ephesians 5:18 exhorts us to be "**continuously filled with the Holy Spirit**". How resolute are we in our desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit's resources?

I'd like to suggest that the time has come for us to abandon our uncertainties and doubts, even our misconceptions.

I recently visited a water mill where a fast flowing river enabled numerous cogwheels operating the mill stones to gradually turn the grain into flour.

Each day the Holy Spirit invites us to become channels through which He flows rather than reservoirs holding back His power!

Let's ask Him to refill us again and again – in fact, why not make it an everyday prayer?

**'Thank You Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that You want to work in me and through me. Holy Spirit, please forgive me for any reservations or reluctance I may have and help me to be dependent on Your power. May I live in the benefit of everything You have for me as I recommit myself to undertaking Your purposes today and in the future.**

**Amen.'**



# A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

I hope and pray these brief reflections have been beneficial as we've travelled through our Pentecost journey.

The original version of this devotional was developed in 2020, updated in 2023 and it has been a privilege to revise and extend the content for this 2025 edition. I've certainly found re-visiting the material stimulating and it has reminded me of truths that I can so easily overlook or even forget.

As well as being utilised by numerous individuals in their personal meditations, the devotional has also been used by churches and Christian ministries as the basis for sermons series as part of their Pentecost activities and in small group settings.

My undying gratitude also goes to my wife Rosalyn for her unwavering support and encouragement – thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We have no idea when Jesus will return – it's a definite that He will – so in the meantime, the challenge for all of us is to live out our faith in such a way that others will come to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour and become His disciples, continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.

If the devotionals and books I've written help the extend God's Kingdom, then I will be eternally grateful.

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## About the author

Stephen Derges was previously Pastor of a Baptist Church and subsequently Chair of Trustees and the Leadership Team of an Independent Evangelical church in Devon. He is also a Trustee of Houses of Light (formerly Neighbourhood Prayer Network) and involved in several inter-church leadership activities.

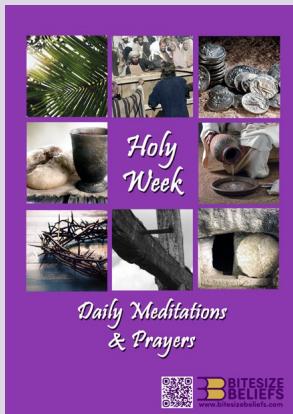
He writes for various publications and websites, speaks at churches and conferences and has broadcast on local radio and television on faith and business leadership.

Both Stephen and his wife, Rosalyn, are certified Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® practitioners.

See opposite and overleaf for other **Devotionals** and the  
“**BITESIZE BELIEFS**” series of books written by Stephen G. Derges.  
All are available as FREE pdf downloads from the website.



# OTHER DEVOTIONALS



*Holy Week*  
Daily Meditations & Prayers

BITESIZE BELIEFS  
www.bitesizebeliefs.com

'Holy Week', sometimes known as 'Passion Week', leads up to the most cataclysmic event in history – the death and resurrection of Jesus.

But because the Jewish day starts and ends at sunset, scholars debate the actual sequence especially as the Biblical narrative isn't always chronological and some events happen overnight.

This publication endeavours to piece together the four Gospel records to work out the timeframes and what happened, when.

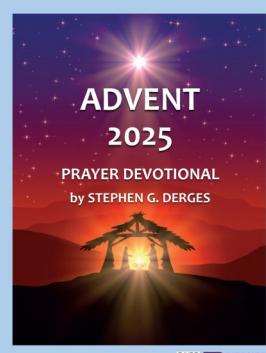
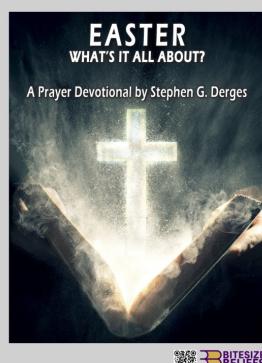
There are many lessons we can learn as we begin to appreciate the significance of this amazing week.

This devotional aims to 'go back to basics' and investigate why Easter is considered the most significant festival in the Christian calendar.

We'll endeavour to establish:

- Why Christians believe the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is of such vital significance.
- How a sacrificial death ushers in a new relationship with the Triune God for everyone.
- That an empty tomb and miraculous resurrection defeats the power of death and its hold on us.

And we'll explore how Easter fits into the glorious plan of salvation – God's rescue strategy for mankind.



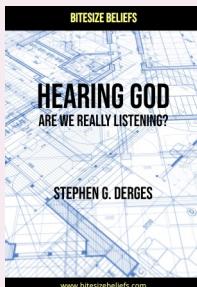
Although the original focus of **Advent** was on the birth of Jesus, over the centuries there's been an increasing emphasis on His **Second Coming** – Jesus' return as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Whilst we'll explore both aspects in this Advent Devotional, the primary focus is on the 'why?' and the 'who?' rather than 'the when?' as we reflect on four themes:

- The Promises
- The Purpose
- The People
- The Presence

My hope is considering Advent will help increase our faith and understanding of God's purposes for us.

# THE “BITESIZE BELIEFS” SERIES

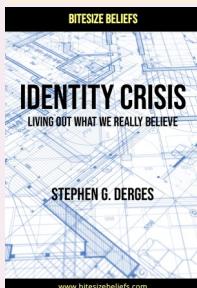
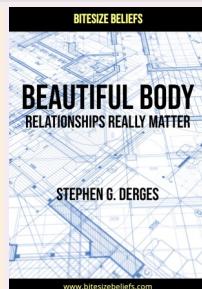


We're bombarded by 'messages' all the time but how do we decide what's important, what can be trusted and what's relevant to us? Does God 'speak' to people these days and if He does, how and when and where? And how would you know it was God anyway?

**'HEARING GOD'** helps address these issues and many more and the various ways God communicates with us.

Jesus said our love for one another would demonstrate we are His followers, but do we live it out? Do people see unity or division and discontentment among us? How can age-old disagreements and misunderstandings be resolved? It's not good enough to sweep problems under the carpet, otherwise we'd trip up every time we walked into Church.

**'BEAUTIFUL BODY'** offers clear guidance on what the Bible teaches about relationships, in a simple, practical manner.



Many of us have become 'schizophrenic Christians' – people who say they believe one thing but practice something entirely different. What do we really believe? Can we trust the Bible to help us in practical ways so that we're not dismissed by other people as being weird or cranky?

**'IDENTITY CRISIS'** looks at how we can live meaningful, purposeful lives based on God's Word to impact those around us, without having to shout from street corners.

**“Every day we are bombarded with stories and conflicting messages of who we are and how to live – complexity and confusion reign. Into this uncertainty, “BITESIZE BELIEFS” offer crystallised nuggets of Biblical truth.**

**Full of engaging examples and moments of reflection, regularly punctuated with masterfully chosen Scriptural references, “BITESIZE BELIEFS” will be of significant help to anyone seeking to lay foundations of truth in a world drowning in misinformation. These books are a gift to the church!”**

Phil Knox

Author, Evangelism & Missiology Senior Specialist – Evangelical Alliance UK

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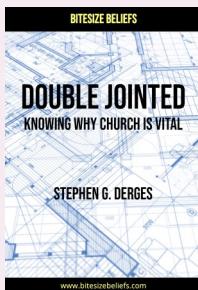
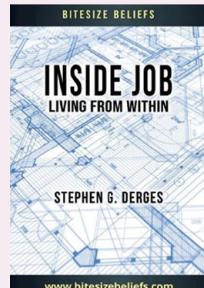


[www.bitesizebeliefs.com](http://www.bitesizebeliefs.com)

# Seven practical 'how-to' books outlining Biblical principles for today's Church

Our everyday choices affect us and the people around us. How and why we determine our decisions has both implications and consequences. Will we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God? What does it mean to 'see' from heaven's perspective?

**'INSIDE JOB'** examines how to align ourselves to God's Kingdom purposes and the interaction between attitudes, beliefs and thought processes, especially when we're under pressure or facing turbulent times.

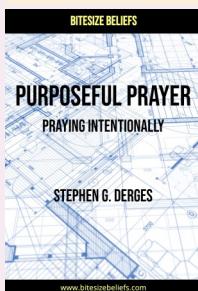
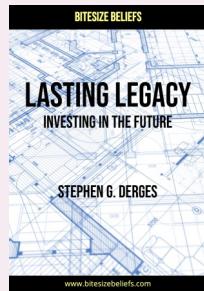


Ever felt you'd like to be a Christian on a desert island because too many pressures are put on you by being part of 'church' – whatever form that might take? And what about the fear of getting too involved with other people?

**'DOUBLE JOINTED'** considers the issue of involvement in the Body of Christ and why understanding God's original purposes for the Church means our ways have to change if we want to enjoy an abundant life.

We spend our lives investing in our reputations and careers, accumulating money and possessions, as well as developing personal and family relationships. But what will people say about us when we finally leave this planet? What will be written on our tombstone?

**'LASTING LEGACY'** explores the impact and influence of our lives. Our footprints on earth should mark a trail for others to follow, providing a launch pad for those that succeed us, as we impart our wisdom and experience to the next generation.



Many of us have hang-ups about when, where and for how long we should pray. But prayer isn't a 'blank cheque' – God has ordained certain principles we should take on board. And there's a massive difference between someone who knows about prayer and someone who actually prays!

**'PURPOSEFUL PRAYER'** offers helpful hints and tips to enhance how, and for what, we pray and how using Scripture in prayer helps us navigate life's demanding and changing challenges.

***“...this is applied Biblical truth with a punch”***

**Rev. Malcolm J. Duncan**, Theologian-in-Residence – Spring Harvest  
Senior Pastor – Kensington Temple London City Church

The vision of **Houses of Light** (formerly Neighbourhood Prayer Network) is to see at least one Christian living on their street **PRAY** for their neighbours, **CARE** for their neighbours and **SHARE** Jesus with their neighbours, believing that in 2030, there will be 5 new disciples of Jesus on every street.

Join us by registering as an individual or as a church on our website:

[www.housesoflight.net](http://www.housesoflight.net)

