

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Water from Rock, February 7, 2017, Tim Smith

“Live by the Spirit.”

Galatians 5:16a

“The Christian life in all of its aspects --- intellectual and ethical, devotional and relational, upsurging in worship and outgoing in witness --- is supernatural; only the Spirit can initiate and sustain it.”

J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*

The English word “spirit” comes from the Latin spiritus. There is a remarkable range of meaning in the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament words for “spirit”. The Hebrew word for “spirit” is ruach, and the Greek word is pneuma. Both words signify “breath”, “wind”, and “spirit”. English has no word that covers the range of meanings for ruach or pneuma. Like all Biblical words referring to God ruach and pneuma are word pictures with vivid, lively meanings. The basic meaning of both is “air in motion”, whether in the form of breath, breeze, or violent storm. Spirit speak of invisibility that has visible effects, symbolizing the invisible reality and power of God. The Spirit signifies God in action. Compare the Celtic Christian’s term for the Spirit: “Wild Goose”.

INTRODUCTORY SCRIPTURES

Job 27:12-3

*“Job again took up his discourse and said:
‘As God lives, who has taken away my right,
and the almighty who has made my soul bitter,
³ as long as my breath is in me
and the spirit of God is in my nostrils,
⁴ my lips will not speak falsehood,
and my tongue will not utter deceit.*

Job 32:8-9

*⁸ But truly it is the spirit in a mortal,
the breath of the Almighty, that makes for understanding.
⁹ It is not the old that are wise,
nor the aged that understand what is right.*

DISCIPLINES FOR LIVING BY THE SPIRIT: Daniel and Disciplined Spirituality

[Note: I am indebted to the insights of Jack Levinson in his book, *The Holy Spirit for An Inspired Life*]

- I. Three generations of pagan rulers recognized the presence of the Spirit in Daniel's Life.

Generation 1: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

Daniel 4:8-9 “⁸*At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods — and I told him the dream:*
⁹*‘O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery is too difficult for you. Hear the dream that I saw; tell me its interpretation.’*”

Daniel 4:18: “¹⁸ *This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are unable to tell me the interpretation. You are able, however, for you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods.*”

Generation 2: King Nebuchadnezzar's daughter-in-law and his son (King Belshazzar)

Daniel 5:10-11 “¹⁰*The queen, when she heard the discussion of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting-hall. The queen said, ‘O king, live for ever! Do not let your thoughts terrify you or your face grow pale.* ¹¹*There is a man in your kingdom who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father he was found to have enlightenment, understanding, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods.’*”

Daniel 5:13-14: “¹³*Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king said to Daniel, ‘So you are Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?’* ¹⁴*I have heard of you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that enlightenment, understanding, and excellent wisdom are found in you.’*”

Generation 3: King Darius the Mede

Daniel 6:1-3 *“¹It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, stationed throughout the whole kingdom, ²and over them three presidents, including Daniel; to these the satraps gave account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³Soon Daniel distinguished himself above all the other presidents and satraps because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king planned to appoint him over the whole kingdom.”*

II. Daniel’s Disciplines

Daniel 1:8 *“⁶But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself.”*

Here is the spiritual discipline of simplicity: “The inward reality of single-hearted focus upon God and his kingdom, which results in an outward lifestyle of modesty, openness, and unpretentiousness and which disciplines our hunger for status, glamour, and luxury.” (*Life with God Spiritual Formation Bible*) Richard Foster says, “Simplicity is freedom.” (*Celebration of Discipline*) Dallas Willard says simplicity is “the arrangement of life around a few consistent purposes, explicitly excluding what is not necessary to human well-being.” (*Spirit of the Disciplines*)

Daniel 6:9-10 *“⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict. ¹⁰Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open towards Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open towards Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously”.*