

...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE *Holy Spirit*

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Fervent Prayer

By Steve Hill



Just prior to the passing of the bill legalizing same-sex marriage in Canada, we were forwarded an e-mail from one of the better known prophetic voices in Canada urging us all to pray so that we could “reach a critical mass of faith” and defeat the bill. Well, of course we prayed, but such a statement reveals a totally unscriptural understanding of prayer, of God, and of man, and of the relationship between God and man. In fact, it reveals a pagan mindset.

James teaches us that the “effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” and then gives us the example of Elijah who stopped the rain over an entire nation for three years and six months! Operative words? “Effective,” “fervent,” “righteous,” and (a solitary) “man.”

The religious mindset believes that prayers are effective if they are said in the right order, in the right place, repeated often, and repeated by more and more people—in short, “rite words in rote order” (to quote James Joyce). That is what they teach you in witch’s school. The church has invited Harry Potter to teach them how to pray!

Do you get those e-mails that ask you to pray for the sick child and ask you to send on the e-mail so that when one million people pray the child will be healed? Jesus did not ask the disciples to get the crowd praying! He simply commanded the sickness to go and told us to do the same. Effective faith is in what Jesus has done on the cross, not in how many people you can get praying. There is no “critical mass of faith” but there is a critical foundation.

God is not an impersonal inertia that must be forced to move by some “critical mass of faith.” “May the force be with you,” is from *Star Wars*, not the Bible. One man, Moses, in relationship with a living God, persuaded God not to destroy the nation that had danced around the golden calf.

Yes, there is the critical foundation of faith. We also must have appropriated what Jesus did in our own lives and be walking it out. We must be righteous. No righteousness? No authority!

Lutheran Renewal

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Canadian Christians must pray with righteous authority. It was the Anglican and United Churches which led the charge for gay marriage. They were blessing gay unions before it was legal to do so. They used their "authority" to promote gay marriage. That is moral authority but not the kind we want! Still, the church always leads.

But you are not part of the liberal church. Good! Charismatics have perfected serial polygamy, that is, the practice of divorce and remarriage to such an extent that high profile ministers divorce, remarry, and step back into the pulpit the week after. No moral authority there!

But you do not condone serial polygamy. Good! What do we do with the numbers that say the rate for premarital sex amongst church young people is about the same as in the general population? No moral authority there about the sanctity of marriage. Even your children do not believe you! Why should the prime minister?

But you do not condone that either. Good! What do we do with the numbers suggested by researcher George Barna that 40% - 50% of theologically conservative church leaders are addicted to pornography? No moral authority there!

And then there were all the e-mails asking you to send in letters to make your voice heard. Well, someone has said that "protest is the last resort of the powerless." Do you think that winning the cultural wars is simply a matter of demographics; that he who has the most children wins? How many have protested against gay marriage but have never shared Jesus with the guy across the street?

We continue to think that we are Christians because we go to a religious meeting in a religious building once a week. We continue to think that our job is to drag the world into that religious meeting. Why should they want to go? Most of the time you do not want to go either! Jesus commanded us to **go to them** and to make disciples out of them in their homes. Have you read Luke 10:1- 10 lately? We disobey the Master and do exactly the opposite of what He commanded, and then we get upset because we do not like the results. How can this be?



Faith does not change people. Ever try to "faith" someone to change? People change by grace which is released by love and service. Faith changes things but grace changes people. Our culture sees us protesting. Do they see us serving?

And what about "fervent"? "Fervent" refers to emotion, tears, strong crying and groaning. "Fervent" refers to passion and sacrifice. "Fervent" is the the kind of emotion that moves us to fast from food. "Fervent" is what breaks our addiction to mass media entertainment. "Fervent" is what drives us to actually pray rather than just talk about it. "Fervent" is a heart on fire because of oneness with a God who is a consuming fire!



We need a critical mass of **fervency!**
We need a critical mass of **reality!**
We need a critical mass of **obedience!**

This article was originally posted on Steve Hill's website, www.harvest-now.org. Steve and his wife Marilyn divide their time between Canada, Europe, and Central Asia. They lead church planting teams in Holland and Central Asia and partner with other church planters in Canada and Europe. Steve will be one of the speakers at the August 1-4, 2007 Holy Spirit Conference.

Steve and Marilyn Hill

THE GIFTS of the Spirit ARE FREE—

BUT THEY SURE Cost a Lot!

By Paul Anderson



“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.”

1 Peter 4:10,11

You can’t buy the gifts of the Spirit, but they come with a price tag. How much would the gift of healing cost? Perhaps the price of commitment or humiliation or misunderstanding, more than we may be willing to pay. Katherine Kuhlman, used of God a generation ago to bring healing to many, believed that more people would be healers if they were willing to pay the price. Those who exercise clear gifts of the Spirit have paid for their power or influence.

It broke George Johnson’s heart a few years ago when we weren’t adequately prepared for a deliverance situation at the Holy Spirit Conference. He went home and read every book that he could find on deliverance. He also cried out to God for several years to raise up the ministry of deliverance—and God raised *him* up. He is being used to bring freedom to many, but he has paid and continues to pay a price. Now George sometimes travels with me to conferences and congregations. Often, I don’t see him from morning until night because so many need his gift. It wears him out, but he loves the work of bringing liberty to people.

When I sensed as a local church pastor that God wanted to bring a prophetic word on Sunday, I would call Jean Hahn. God often spoke clearly to her. When she received the call, she would say tongue in cheek, “Thanks a lot,” because she knew that the call meant spending hours of prayer into the night to hear from God. Her gift was free, but she had to pay a high price for the privilege of speaking on His behalf. It didn’t come easily.

On another occasion Jean’s husband called to tell me that she had received a vision. He thought that she should share it at the Lenten service. For some reason I was nervous about this, but I did call on her after preaching a less than average sermon that night. She simply and quietly shared what she had seen. I then told the worshipers that I was going to the altar to pray and that those who wanted could join me. Not a compelling altar call, but I was nearly stampeded. People poured out of the pews and up to the front. Why? Because they had heard from God. Peter spoke about the gifts in this way: *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God”* (1 Peter 4:10,11). Jean had heard from God and had spoken the words of God—and listeners knew it. They weren’t coming forward because I had preached a good sermon. Her four minutes brought almost the whole congregation to the altar, not my twenty minutes. This

demonstrated the power of spiritual gifts, but it also demonstrated that while gifts are free, they cost us something. Jean paid a price, and the recipients benefited. Paul wrote that *“God is at work in us, but life is at work in you”* (2 Cor. 4:12). Nowhere can that truth be seen more profoundly than in the exercise of spiritual gifts.

If Katherine Kuhlman is correct, God is looking for people willing to die to themselves, to their own time, their own schedules, their own opinions, their own fears, so that they can *“faithfully administer God’s grace.”* The Greek word for grace is *“charis.”* The gifts of the Spirit are gifts of grace—*“charisma.”* The charismatic renewal has been named from the gifts of the Spirit—the *charismata*. The gifts come out of the grace of God, freely given. But those who receive them must pay a price. And the greater the anointing, the higher the price.

God gave to Roy Jones, an architect in our church, the gift of discernment. Occasionally people from the congregation, and sometimes outside of our church, would call to tell me about strange things going on in their home—lights turning off, noises, moving shadows. I always called Roy and asked him to accompany me. We would arrive at the house, go inside, and I would look at Roy. God had given him a remarkable gift, and it seemed as if he could smell a demon. He would shake his head to affirm some kind of activity of the enemy. I offered the prayers that commanded the demons to leave, but Roy discerned their presence. Though a businessman with a rigorous traveling schedule, he made ministry a top priority. He was willing to pay a price to be available. He knew that his gift was not his own; it belonged to those needing the discernment.

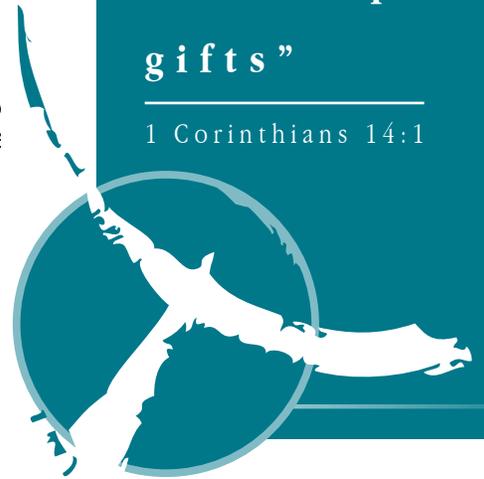
So how do we receive the gifts of the Spirit? Unlike the fruit of the Spirit, which is developed over an extended period of time, gifts can be received in a moment. Scripture says that the Spirit *“gives them to each person, just as he determines”* (1 Cor. 12:11), which might cause us to wait passively to see what we are given. But at the end of that chapter, Paul says to *“eagerly desire the greater gifts”* (v. 31). And just in case we missed it, he says it again: *“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spirit gifts”* (14:1). So, divine sovereignty works hand-in-hand with human desire. Could your desire for spiritual gifts be described as zeal? Have you convinced God that you want to exercise the gifts of the Spirit? Are you asking God to empower you with His gifts—again and again?

If God has given you an intense desire to prophesy or to bring healing to others or to set captives free or to teach God’s word with accuracy and clarity, then perhaps He has also given you the willingness to die to yourself in the exercise of them. Just remember:

they are free—but they cost a lot!

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spirit gifts”

1 Corinthians 14:1



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