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## How to Experience His presence # 1

2012-10-27, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,

We've learned a lot from movies and TV haven't we?

- Anyone can land an airplane as long as someone in the Control Tower is talking them down.
- When the hero knows martial arts and is surrounded by 10 guys, they will take turns fighting the hero rather than all attacking him at once.
- A woman's hair, make up and lip stick always stay in place through the night, rain, bomb blasts and childbirth.
- Sheets are cut in such a way that on her side of the bed it comes up to her armpits but on his side it only comes to his waist.
- If a strange sound is coming from downstairs at night, a baseball bat will always be in the hall to grab.
- All bombs have large red numbers counting down the time.
- If you are being chased, go to a train station and run across and behind trains as you'll always lose your pursuers that way.

We've learned a lot from church and Christian conferences haven't we?

- God requires 3 'excited' songs and 4 'slow worship' songs before He will grant a single prophecy to the congregation. Which means...
- God knows when His turn comes to speak: Just as the last worship song ends and the worship becomes almost inaudible. After He speaks once He knows it is time for announcements.
- You will experience breakthrough by putting money at the feet of the speaker on the platform.
- If you shout and scream and yell at the top of your lungs God hears you much better.
- If the speaker thinks a demon is present, praying in tongues as loud as possible is required (and if you stretch forth your hands while doing so you will REALLY scare it).
- The proper expression of humility before a guest minister is to fall down backwards when he or she touches or pushes you on the forehead. If you can flop and throw yourself backwards for dramatic effect it will bring just that much more 'anointing'.
- The number of people carrying a minister's jacket, Bible, and spare bottle of water is directly proportional to that minister's 'anointing', popularity, status, and wealth.

In the same way real life isn't accurately portrayed on TV, how to enter into His presence and receive from Him isn't always accurately portrayed in church either. This series is about actual scripture and my life experience showing you how to experience His presence.

### The Father is a Spirit

Jesus said in John 4:24 that His Father is a Spirit, and in John 3:5-8 that we are 'born by the Spirit', what we call 'born again', meaning the Father's Spirit has re-created our human spirit. It is in our spirit that we have God's presence, and to sense Him, we must learn how to turn our attention to our spirit man.

When we are first re-created in our spirit through faith in Jesus Christ, it is similar to being a new-born baby. Peter said 'As new born babies, desire pure spiritual milk by which you may grow.' (1 Peter 2:2)

In Galatians 4:19 Paul said 'My little children of whom I am again in birth pains for you, until Christ is **formed** in you.'

We may be many years or decades old when we make that step to believe in Jesus, but in our spirit-man at the moment of belief, we are as a new born baby. As we grow in the Lord it is like Paul described above, similar to childbirth, with stops and starts, contractions and times of rest, but that process of discipleship is Christ being formed in us.

The word 'formed' above is 'morphoo' which means 'the form or feature of a person'. Paul was in childbirth again - not for their new birth but for their discipleship - praying that the fullness of the form or feature of Christ would grow in them. Even though our spirit man occupies the same amount of space as our body does, in innocence and ignorance we are born again like an adult sized baby and must mature.

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Consider that a new born baby has all the required body parts to drive a car, but it will be many years before his or her body grows to be able to fit in the driver's seat, and also have the mental ability to handle the driving of a car. But they are born with all the right parts, they just haven't grown into their ability. This is similar to being born again in our spirit, having all the right 'parts' so to speak, but not yet mature in Christ.

### What your spirit feels like

In Luke 24:32 the two men on the road to Emmaus who walked along with Jesus for what would have been about 5 miles or 8 km, said this: "Didn't our hearts burn inside us while He talked with us as we were walking along the road and explained the scriptures to us?"

These men were newly born again, having believed that Jesus is Lord and has risen from the dead. They were experiencing for the first time their born-again spirit, which was bearing witness to the things Jesus was teaching them.

The word 'burn' above means 'to set fire to, to light'. Notice that their minds noticed the burning as they walked, which would have been for an hour or so most likely, but they didn't realize who and what was going on until AFTER the Lord had gone.

### Think on...

My experience has been that people who are very cerebral or are busy thinking while in worship often have trouble turning their mind to what is happening inside their spirit. By cerebral I'm not talking smart, rather those who are so used to thinking, to processing things mentally rather than by what they 'feel' inside, the act of sensing what is happening in their spirit is new to them. Some are many years old in the Lord but still clueless on the moving of the Spirit in their heart or in a meeting, or how to experience His presence.

But to be able to experience His presence, to be 'in the Spirit' to feel and sense what is going on spiritually, a person must be willing to turn their attention to their inside, and look for that 'burning' or presence in their spirit.

### Stop and notice

That means when we first sense that burning as the two above did, we have to stop and take notice of it. When I was a teen I worked long and hard, having experienced that burning or presence in my spirit in one of our teen prayer meetings, to find that 'wavelength' again.

It was like an old radio (which wasn't old when I was a teenager) where to find the radio station and that clearest reception of the signal, I'd slowly move the dial back and forth, listening for the station I wanted, and then once found, fine tune the signal by just the slightest touch of the dial left or right.

I'd think to what song we were singing, what I was thinking, when I felt His presence inside me. I'd work to get back to that 'wavelength', mentally putting myself back in the same context I felt Him. And then I would feel His presence flow up out of my spirit...yes feel, sense, become aware of His presence again inside.

### Remember?

I'd be driving along and thinking on the things of the Lord when a great revelation would come to me. Wow, I thought, that is so good I'll never forget it, so I'll write it down later. When 'later' came, I couldn't remember what that revelation was. It made my heart burn within me, I saw how that revelation connected to other things in scripture and life, it was amazing....but that evening I couldn't remember a thing.

The reason is that revelation from God is in the spirit man, and unless you write it down or talk it out - do something to involve your mind and body which will record it, that revelation will be lost because it never made it into your mind. It stayed in your spirit.

To get it back you have to mentally and spiritually place yourself back in that same context. OK, I was driving along on that road at that place, I was thinking about...hmmm...listening to a Christian worship song...thinking on...and I'd go back there mentally, spiritually, finding that wavelength...praying in tongues as I did so...then that flow of revelation would start all over again, just as it had earlier in the day...it was finding the 'wavelength' which unlocked some door in my mind which allowed the flow of Life in my spirit to wash into my mind.

But...Since those years I've always kept a pen and paper in any vehicle I drive, truck, car, rental...always. Because I don't want a revelation to stay in my spirit, I want to commit it to memory, and to do that I have to involve my mind and body, thus the pen and paper.



### He is 'real'

God is a Spirit and we are born again in our spirit, so if you want to experience His presence you will have to learn about your spirit and His Spirit. He is very humble, 'real', doesn't get freaked out at our human frailties and imperfections, and is committed to us.

And living inside us, you don't have to yell and scream to get His attention. He is as close as thought...start looking inside for that 'burning', that presence, that peace...find that 'wavelength' again down inside you, not between your ears...for down inside is your spirit and that is where we find communion with Him...more next week, blessings,

John Fenn

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## How to Experience His presence # 2

2012-11-03, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,

I started this series last week about how to enter into the Father's presence –

I shared that Jesus said His Father is a Spirit, and that we are born again in our spirit man. Therefore it is in our spirit that the Father speaks to us; His (Holy) Spirit to our spirit - all things flow upward and outward from what He shares, reveals, speaks in our spirit. (John 4:24, 15:26-27, 16:13)

### How to tell if it is in your spirit

I also shared last week how the 2 on the road to Emmaus commented after the Lord disappeared from their midst: "Didn't our hearts burn inside us while He talked with us...?" (Luke 24:32)

They were describing their spirit man 'burning'. Notice their minds noticed something happening down on the inside of them. The act of your mind noticing your spirit man like they did is something you've done countless times before.

Have you ever spoken something you shouldn't, and as soon as you did you felt grieved, bruised, down inside? That is your spirit man, which is born of the Spirit of Truth, telling you the truth - you sinned - and your mind noticed it.

Now think, where exactly did you sense that grievance? In terms of area of the body, it was in your chest area, or your gut/stomach area, yet it wasn't physical, it was in your spirit.

### Sin recently?

Paul said of sinners in Ephesians 4:17-19 of sexual sin in particular, 'who are past feeling, having turned themselves over to loose living and uncleanness...' In the Greek 'past feeling' is 'apalgeo', which means 'to cease to feel pain for' (an act of sin).

We get the English word 'apology' from it, and in this use another way to say this verse is that a person is "past apologizing for their sin". They are calloused and self-righteous in their justification of their sin:

They are past feeling that dirtiness, that unclean feeling, that grievance and remorse when they sin so they offer no apology...that sense of sin happens in the spirit man. The mind is merely 'picking up on' or noticing that sense of grievance, shame, dirtiness that their spirit man is feeling and reacting to.

### Branded

Paul later said the same thing a different way: "Now the Spirit speaks specifically that in the latter times some will very slowly depart from the faith, seduced by spirits and teachings of demons...having their conscience seared with a hot iron." (I Timothy 4:1-2)

The word 'seared' is better translated 'branded'. Not surprisingly, it is the Greek word 'kausteriazō' and is where we get both 'caustic' and 'cauterize'. Caustic is something acidic, eating away at you.

It is the act of a hot iron burning the outside skin so that all the blood and juices are sealed inside. Paul paints a picture of this 'past feeling/no apology' made by a person repeating and repeating and repeating a sin, until they become seared over in their conscience, past feeling their spirit being grieved and unable to sense any shame or wrongness about their sin in their mind.

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### Happy thoughts now

In I John 3:19-21 the apostle John said "If our heart blames us, God is greater than our heart. If our heart doesn't blame us, we have peace before God."

The Greek word 'blame(s) us' is 'kataginosko', made up of 'kata', against, and 'ginosko', to know something. Literally then, "If our heart knows something against us, God is greater than our heart. If our heart doesn't know anything against us, we have peace before God."

When our heart has something against us, that is we sense in our spirit we have sinned, God is greater and all that is required is that acknowledgement in humility as we seek forgiveness and right standing again.

I shared these 'negative' things of the spirit man because all of us know the feeling of sin, and we know the act of our minds noticing our spirit when it feels grieved, shamed, dirty by that sin, and it is important to know the stages of 'desensitizing' that goes on.

### Turn that attention to your spirit

It is that exact same act of the mind noticing what is going on in our spirit as it pertains to sin, that also allows us to sense His presence within. We look for His presence in our spirit, which is as simple as turning your attention inside, the same way you do when you misspeak and have that sudden grievance in your spirit that you notice. Start noticing His presence, His peace inside you.

Like I always tell people I've laid hands on for healing; look for the healing, not for what remains to be healed. In the same way, look for His presence, not the last bit of grievance, look for His peace down inside you, in your spirit.

### Dinner interrupted

My wife, Barb, had just set a very nice dinner on the table. She had worked on it all day long, slow cooking a beef roast surrounded by carrots and potatoes and onions and herbs and spices in our big black enameled roasting pan. The house was filled with the aroma of the feast we were about to eat.

All 3 boys were seated, and I on one end of the table and she on the other, when after prayer and as we started to portion out the boy's plates, she stopped: "I'm sorry, I just can't eat right now. I've had such a burden to pray all afternoon, and I've prayed as I've cooked, but I can't stand it any longer. I have to go to the bedroom and pray this out, someone's life is at stake."

And with that, she left as the boys and I pondered yet another one of mom's prayer burdens. About 45 minutes later and well after the meal she emerged from our bedroom refreshed and ready to eat. "I don't know who it was for, but it was for someone in Thailand and their life was at stake, so I had to pray it through until I got the victory. When that peace came on me I knew it was going to be OK for them." (This sort of thing has happened countless times in our over 34 years of marriage, as she is an intercessor like no one I've ever seen)

### Groaning

Physically speaking, Barb's body was in the kitchen preparing the meal, her mind (soul) was busy with what goes in at what time and how hot the oven should be and do we have clean dishes, sort of thing. In the midst of all that her mind, her soul, also noticed a burden in her spirit. A heaviness, a present urging to intercede not just in our native English, not just in tongues, but I heard deep groanings like someone in labor coming from our room.

Jesus stood near the now dead for 4 days body of His friend, Lazarus. Earlier in John 11 Jesus revealed He knew by the Spirit that Lazarus had died, but as people were trying to arrest Him in that area, He had to wait until released by the Father to go to his dead friend.

Once there, v33 says "...He groaned in his spirit and was troubled." And again in v38: "Jesus again groaning in Himself came to the grave."

If you read the story you see that emotionally speaking, Jesus was overcome with the death of his friend, but emotions didn't raise Lazarus from the dead. It was the intercession beyond words, the groaning in His spirit, that did so.

Romans 8:26-27 describes the deepest groaning of intercession as 'beyond words', which describes Barb's burden for a stranger in far off Thailand, and Jesus at Lazarus' grave.

### Rivers from a river

Jesus said in John 7:38 for those who come to Him, out of their 'belly' will flow rivers of living water. The word 'belly'



here is exactly that, and has 3 meanings based on context. The first use is that of the belly, the appetite. This same word is used as 'womb'. Clearly neither of those meanings fit the context. The 3rd meaning and use here is: "The hidden, innermost recesses of being". Out of our hidden and innermost recesses of being will flow rivers of living water. That's out of our spirit, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

Notice that in Revelation 22:1 there is a single river, the River of Life that flows from the throne of the Father. That river of the Holy Spirit enters our spirit and then flows out of us in tongues and groaning's, dividing into rivers, plural, flowing in intercession for many people and issues as the Father leads.

Recognizing what is happening in our spirit man is key - and I'll pick it up here next week...your homework is to think through those times you felt grieved, repent if you have an area you are seared over, and practice switching your attention back and forth from 'out there' the world around you, to 'in here' where the Father lives, to what your spirit is feeling and sensing.

Blessings,  
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## How to Experience His presence # 3

2012-11-17, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,  
The town of Rocky Ford, Colorado where I was once a pastor, had a ministerial breakfast each Thursday at a local motel and restaurant.

One morning one of the pastors asked if we'd heard what happened to brother \_\_\_\_\_ in the nearby city of LaJunta. Many of us knew him, an older pastor of the Lutheran church.

He was visiting a member of his church in the local nursing home, a lady now blinded by diabetes and age, and sat down in a chair next to her bed as they began talking. As they visited he helped himself to the little bowl of peanuts on the nightstand next to her bed until they were nearly all gone.

About 45 minutes into his visit, the woman said: "There really isn't much for me to do at this point in my life. About the only enjoyment I have left is eating chocolate. One of the staff brought me some chocolate covered peanuts, but I don't like peanuts so I just sucked off all the chocolate and spit them out into a little bowl on my nightstand." (I've seen this story printed or told by others over the years since, but I can tell you it really happened.)

### Mistaken identity

Not being able to tell the difference between your spirit and the Holy Spirit can lead to mistaken identity not unlike the pastor above. We make decisions we think are God but turn out not to be, leaving us in confusion and loss wondering how we could do what we just did to end up like we are.

### Qualities of our spirit

Barb loves sunset. I love sunrise. Fall is her favorite time of year, I love spring. She has a strong sense of right and wrong. If someone has weird spiritual vibes around them, she notices. I see the potential in people and their gifts. I first notice the spiritual season and process going on in their life.

She is a project person who must complete a project before starting another. Until complete all else is distraction from her task. She is thorough. I flit from project to project, juggling 6 or so projects at once, working a little here and a little there, completing them over time. She reads 1 thing at a time, I am reading 4 books with another 2 I read a page here and there regularly, and 3 magazines. That doesn't count the half dozen or so 'Calvin & Hobbes' cartoon books I have on or in my nightstand, for a little humor and distraction before falling off to sleep.

If I have to focus on a single project around the house for longer than a day, it looms before me as 'work', with no enjoyment in it for me, just a job that has to be done. She relishes long projects and when complete, everything will be in order, in place, and pleasing to the eye. Therefore she gets attached to things, while things hold little attraction to me, though I'm more of a romantic than she in many ways. I love her spirit, she loves my spirit. Our spiritual traits compliment and complete one another.

### You are who you are

These are qualities of the spirit man, for it is who we are, how we function, how we relate. There were no soul.

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(emotional or educational) experiences in our upbringings to form us into liking on the one hand sunsets and projects complete, and on the other sunrises and projects started. We are this way naturally.

And the fact that she can only do 1 thing at a time while I can do several, is not a character flaw in each of us that must be changed. Yes, I've learned through her to work a task to completion, and she has learned to be more flexible as it relates to her projects, but having those traits and not others is not a character flaw, sin, or other indication of being imperfect. They are just traits of our Father in us.

### **The soul is the issue: Confusion begins**

The qualities in your spirit man, the things that make the core you, you, will bear witness with another person's spirit who is created similarly, or a similar call on their life. That spiritual attraction doesn't mean God is telling you to go in that direction, it just means your spirit man relates to someone else's spirit.

It is like the Bible student who came into my office in tears, wondering why the missionary's message at chapel so touched her. I told her it was because she too was called to Missions, so her spirit bore witness with his mission work - that didn't mean God was calling her then and there to the mission field, or to work in his ministry, just that they had similar call in life. Attraction is often mistaken for rightness, and even love.

### **Here are some other examples:**

1) A couple both love mountains, so when they visit a mountain town seeking God to see if He wants them to move there, their spirits relate to the setting and they feel peace, so they take it as God and move. When jobs don't arise and life is difficult they wonder why God led them there.

**Reality:** Their spirit man loves the mountains, but that doesn't mean God wants them to move there. They mistook the qualities in their spirit that make them who they are, for God's voice. As a result they didn't 'do the homework' in the natural, to reason things through, to seek confirmations about the move, to work up a budget and orderly plan, choosing rather to spiritualize everything since God seemed to be involved in their move, which He wasn't.

2) A person interviews with 2 different companies, 1 where the corporate culture closely matches what feels right in their spirit, the other has no spiritual attraction to the corporate culture. They take job #1 but are miserable in spite of the more Christian corporate culture around them, trapped doing a job they hate.

**Reality:** They were attracted in their spirit to the Godly values expressed in the corporate culture without examining in the natural their actual job description. Had they done so, they would have taken job #2 which closely matched their skills and what they wanted to do instead of thinking the attraction in their spirit to the Godly culture of job #1 was God leading them.

3) There are issues in a person's heart and marriage they know God wants dealt with, but they are afraid of what might happen if they are addressed, so they draw back from church, from the relationships in church, and from subjects too close to the maturity God is trying to birth in them. They know in their spirit this issue needs to be dealt with, but they keep it bottled up inside so no one can get close. (Including the Lord)

**Reality:** They are running from God because of the spirit of fear instead of dealing with the issue as it confronts them in the course of life. They reason away confronting the issue because 'things aren't as intense now', and God's peace in their spirit is used as an excuse for not dealing with it, instead of understanding that peace is there so they CAN deal with the issue/sin/circumstance. Grace in our spirit is not God's permission to ignore issues; it is His empowerment to deal with issues.

Otherwise they end up doing what James calls 'lying against the truth', which means the wisdom of God is revealed to them in their spirit, but they lie to themselves and others and give excuses. Wholeness in this area is new to them, so they are afraid of what might happen if they confront the issue. Thus while in reality bound by a spirit of fear, they hide behind grace in their spirit, twisting it's purpose.

4) People go through a difficult time like a job change, a death, an illness (mental or physical), and they feel the overwhelming peace of the God in their spirit carrying them through the crisis. Because His peace is so strong in their spirit they refuse to deal with things in the natural realm like the emotions revolving around their future, tending to spiritualize everything. When asked, they refuse to be specific about what they are thinking, won't let themselves think about planning, avoiding direct questions while answering with spiritual sounding answers that say nothing.

**Reality:** They refuse to examine themselves, refuse to admit they are where they are through decisions they've made, or issues they've refused to deal with. They put what is their responsibility onto God, not realizing He will let them reap what they are sowing. The Lord can be very gracious with His peace in our spirit carrying us through



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difficult times, but that peace is not intended to prevent us from dealing with real life decisions nor ignore issues in our heart, that peace is there in our spirit to empower us to deal with life.

### Experiencing His presence daily

You can see that experiencing His presence is not just about during a time of worship or prayer, but throughout the day in decisions large and small. I can feel Him in my spirit 24/7/365, and a large part of that is realizing He lives inside me 24/7/365 to deal with life as it comes at me - I don't work to 'get into His presence', I live in His presence - and so do you! More next week on this. I hope this is a blessing to you, until next week then, blessings,

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## How to Experience His presence # 4, Parrot

2012-11-24, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,

My grandfather was a doctor who started his practice in the small town of Philippi, West Virginia, where my mother was born in 1934. Even today Philippi only has a population of 2870, so he was a true small town doctor in the early 1930's. Later he moved his young family to Kokomo, Indiana, where mom grew up, married, and I was born and raised.

One day when I was 17 and visiting my grandparents, granddad used my visit as an excuse to eat his favorite snack; a bowl of Breyers vanilla ice cream - the kind with specks of vanilla bean. As we sat down to our bowls at the kitchen table he began telling me about beginning his practice in Philippi:

### Fever

"One day Mrs. Richardson called and made an appointment with your grandma to come to the office because she was sick, but she didn't show up for the appointment that afternoon. (My grandma was a nurse and my grandfather's assistant at that time) I was worried she was too sick to come, so I walked to her home and knocked on the screen door.

It was summer and back then we didn't have air conditioning, we just opened the doors and windows. After I knocked on the front screen door Mrs. Richardson said 'Hello. Who is it?', so I replied, 'Mrs. Richardson, this is Dr. Good. You didn't keep your appointment so I wanted to stop by and check on you. Are you alright?'"

He paused for each of us to take a bite of rapidly melting ice cream, and I became puzzled, as he was holding back a smile and his eyes glistened as he remembered: "She said again, 'Hello, who is it?'. So this time I said a little louder, 'Mrs. Richardson, this is Dr. Good. How are you feeling, do you need help?'"

### Delirious

"By this time I thought she was delirious from fever, or maybe too weak and disoriented to respond properly, so I was very concerned for her. I quickly ran around to the back door at the kitchen, and it had a screen door like the front. The kitchen was empty except for a parrot in a cage, so I knocked on the door and peered through the screen with my hands cupped around my eyes as I called out quite worried, "'Mrs. Richardson, this is Dr. Good. Do you need help?'" (I was on the edge of my seat as now I was worried for her).

But granddad started to laugh so hard he had to wipe tears from his eyes, leaving me confused. I remember suddenly realizing I may not have many times like this with him left, so etched every detail into my young mind, as I tried to guess the reason for his laughter. Grandma made herself busy putting away dishes to allow him time to tell the story, barely containing her giggles, which I suspected came as much from enjoying him laugh as much as remembering the story.

Hardly containing himself he continued: "John, as I pressed my face against the screen door the parrot talked to me in a loud and clear voice: 'Hello, who is it?'"

And with that we all burst out laughing as he stated the obvious; "I had been talking to a parrot the whole time!" For me, the laughing was partly due to the story, partly due to the site of grandma and granddad laughing so hard together, she touched his shoulder gently over the shared memory, and suddenly I felt like a by-stander privileged to witness something marvelous and poignant, and which would never come again.

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Less than 2 years later grandma died unexpectedly and he lost the will to live. I submitted that story to Reader's Digest for publishing in one of their humor columns, but I was privileged to hear it directly from him. And Mrs. Richardson? He later found out she had begun to feel better so walked to town for some shopping but hadn't bothered to cancel her appointment.

### **Know the Lord, or just know the Word?**

My grandfather thought he knew Mrs. Richardson's will because of her word. She had called my grandparent's house, talked to grandma, described her symptoms, and made an appointment. Then grandma told granddad what Mrs. Richardson had said. He knew Mrs. Richardson by her word relayed through someone else.

Some Christians know the Lord in the same way my granddad thought he knew Mrs. Richardson. An intermediary, a go-between, has told them about Him, telling them what He said, so they think they know Him for they have His Word. But when a crisis comes when they really need to hear from Him, well....

My grandfather discovered he didn't know Mrs. Richardson's voice or else he wouldn't have been talking to her parrot. So too when believers try to follow what they think is God's Word in a crisis or time of decision, they discover they really don't know His voice - and can't imagine why He is being so mean to them, or why faith isn't working or why He seems distant and uncaring. But they don't know Him, they know His Word, what others say about Him, some teaching about principles and concepts. But they don't know Him.

### **How did they do it?**

Christians in our day are doing things backwards from what the first century believers did, yet they turned their world upside down in a matter of years while we find ourselves having less influence in our world with each passing year. New Greek and Roman believers in Jesus didn't know a lot about Jewish culture, they didn't know the Old Testament, and the New Testament hadn't yet been written.

What if all your Bibles and teaching cd's, MP3's and reference books were suddenly non-existent? What if you had no chapter and verse in your memory because there was no chapter and verse to memorize? Answer: You would be faced with getting to know the One who lives in your spirit.

Today we put all our efforts into the written Word and knowing Him by the Word. While that is well and good of course, the first century believers didn't have the New Testament - they got to know His presence within. He was their guide. He was their instructor. He was their leader and help in time of crisis and decision. There were no scrolls to turn to chapter and verse, there was only Christ in them, the hope of glory. They HAD to know Him. We seek principles, they sought God.

### **No resources**

Classic commentators believe Mark's and Matthew's gospels were written as late as 66-70 AD, after the deaths of Peter and Paul and some 40 years after the cross, though some believe Mark and then Matthew were written in the 30's or 40's AD, and some say the 80-90 AD time frame. But those are just 2 gospels out of the whole of what became our New Testament.

Luke ends Acts with Paul in Rome in a rented house, around the year 62 AD so we know Acts was written after 62, and Acts is just part 2 of the gospel of Luke, each originally written to a Roman Christian named Theophilus who wanted to know about this Christ who now lived in his born-again spirit. (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1)

Peter and Paul both died around 66 AD, and John didn't write his gospel, his 3 letters, and The Revelation until the late 90's or early 100's AD. There was no New Testament for Christians to turn to!

So how did new believers in the first century know God if not by His written Word? It was by knowing HIM. Conversationally, naturally, walking through life with Him. If they needed to know about what the Father had for their future, there was no prayer line to call, no hotline to call where for \$20 per month they could call and get a personal prophecy.

There was no Christian conference on deliverance, no conference on getting your kids and family saved, no bookstore with a theology aisle or the study of Old Testament history and culture. They had no resource except the God who lived in them. And that was enough to turn the Roman Empire upside down!

### **Think of it!**

When Paul told the Ephesian believers to no more be 'children tossed to and fro and carried about with every new doctrine coming to them by cunning and deceitful men, but to speak the truth in love and grow up in Him in all things',

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how were they going to do that without a chapter and verse to stand on? (Ephesians 4:14-15)

When Paul wrote to the Romans, educating them about the Jewish law, and told about how part of him wanted to do right and part of him wanted to sin, and how to overcome sin by walking in the newness of life in Christ, how do you think they were able to do that without chapter and verse, a prayer line to call in time of temptation, and no page to turn to for 'standing on the Word'?

### **Gilligan's Island**

They had to know the Lord inside. Theirs was a determined faith. A purposeful faith. They had backbone, they knew Christ lived in them made a majority in any situation, even in the face of martyrdom. No devil, no Caesar, could separate them from the fact they knew, they felt, they walked with God who lived inside them. They had no chapter and verse on which to stand, they knew His presence inside them.

They had to walk in His presence in them, for there was no other way to know Him. Are you too dependent on what others say of the Father and Lord? What if you had no Bible, no Christian TV, no teaching at all other than the testimonies of those around you as to what the Lord has done in their lives, and your own memories of His faithfulness in your life?

So maybe for a season be like Gilligan and the castaways: No phone, no lights no motor car, not a single luxury, like Robinson Crusoe, as primitive as can be...set aside our modern helps, and learn to depend on knowing Him, living in His presence, switching your attention back and forth through your day from the world around you, to Him on the inside, and then back again...and converse, offer a thought, ask 'What do you think of this Father?'...and tune your ear to His still, small, voice floating up from your spirit.

And never again lose your single mindedness of first and foremost knowing Him who lives in your spirit; let all else just be support, not the primary focus of Christ in you, the hope of glory.  
New subject next week, blessings,

John Fenn  
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