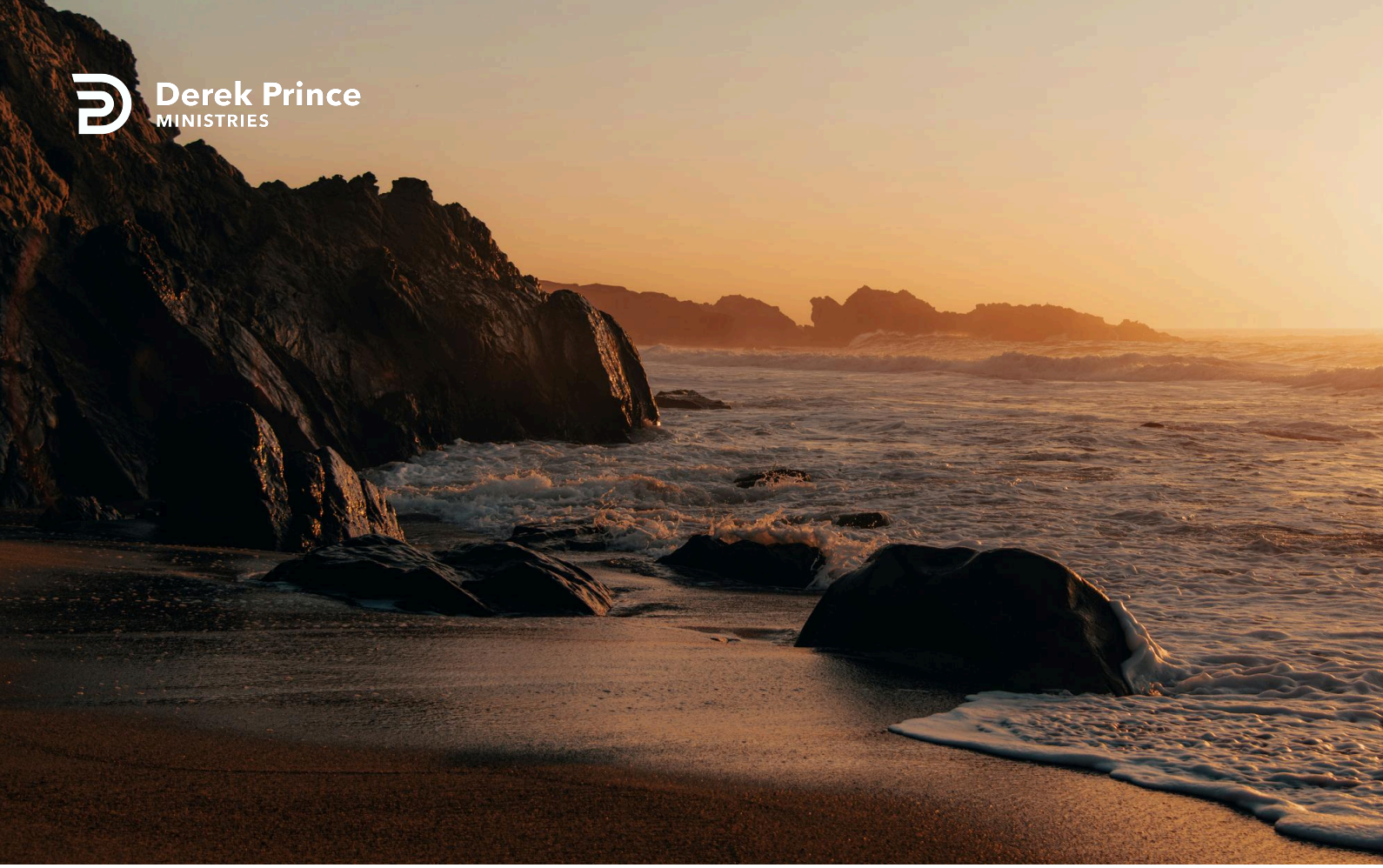


Acknowledging The Lordship Of The Spirit



Foundations (Day 224)
by Derek Prince

In connection to what we've seen yesterday: that the responsibility for exercising spiritual gifts or manifestations in a Scriptural way rests solely upon the believer himself, not upon the Holy Spirit, a special responsibility rests upon every minister called by God to lead the worship and service of a Spirit-baptised congregation. Not only must such a man direct his own spiritual ministry in line with the teaching of Scripture, but he must also allow himself to be, in God's hand, an instrument to direct the worship and ministry of the whole congregation in accordance with the same scriptural principles.

To do this successfully requires, in a high degree, special qualifications: first of all, a thorough, practical knowledge of the Scriptures, and then wisdom, authority and courage. Where these qualities are lacking in the leadership, a congregation that seeks to exercise spiritual gifts and manifestations will be like a ship at sea in the midst of powerful winds and treacherous shoals with an ill-trained and inexperienced captain in charge. Small wonder if the end is a wreck!

I have now been associated with full-gospel ministry for more than fifty years. During those years I have observed two things which have done more than anything else to hinder the acceptance of the testimony of the full gospel. The first is the failure to exercise proper control over the public manifestation of spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of tongues; the second is strife and division among Spirit-baptised believers, both among members of the same congregation and between one congregation and another. Each of these has its origin in one and the same error: the failure to acknowledge the effective lordship of the Holy Spirit.

So many Spirit-baptised believers have their own particular concept of liberty. Some imagine that liberty consists in shouting. If only we can shout loud enough and long enough, they seem to think, we shall work ourselves up into liberty. But the Holy Spirit is never worked up; He either comes down or He flows forth from within. In either case His manifestation is free and spontaneous, never laborious or wearisome.

Other Spirit-baptised believers lay all their emphasis on some other type of expression or manifestation, such as singing or

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clapping hands or dancing. In many cases the reason for this is that God once blessed them along those lines and they have come to believe that God's blessing will always continue to come along this same line and never along any other. God blessed them once when they were shouting, so they always want to shout. Or God blessed them once when they were dancing, so they always want to dance.

They have become so limited in their outlook and concept of the Holy Spirit that they can never conceive of God's blessing them in any other way. Quite often they even despise other believers who will not join them in their shouting or their dancing or their hand-clapping. They may suggest that these other believers are not really "free in the Spirit."

There is not necessarily anything unscriptural in shouting or dancing or clapping hands. The Bible provides clear examples of all these things in the worship of God's people. But it certainly is unscriptural and also foolish to suggest that any of these forms of expression necessarily constitutes true spiritual liberty. A person who believes he must always worship God by shouting or dancing or hand-clapping no longer enjoys true spiritual liberty; on the contrary, he has returned under a special kind of religious bondage of his own making. Such a person is as much under bondage as the Christian at the opposite end of the religious scale who knows of no other way to worship God than with the words and forms of a printed liturgy.

Devotional

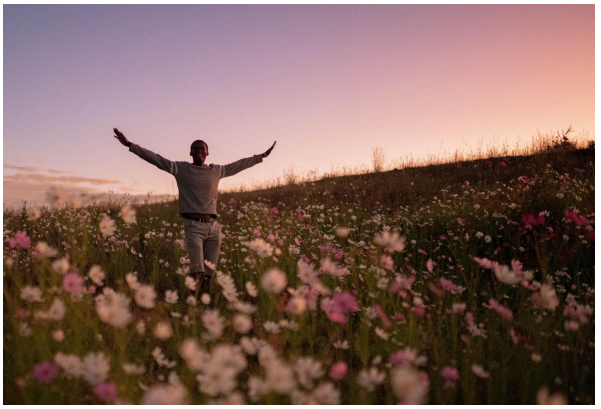
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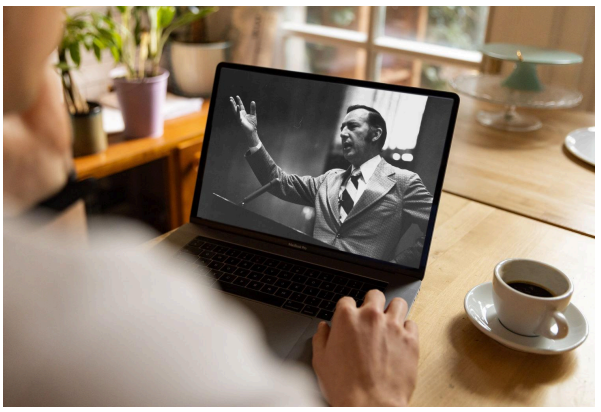
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