

Education Does Not Render Superfluous The Supernatural Testimony Of The Holy Spirit



Foundations (Day 246)
by Derek Prince

It has sometimes been suggested that a high degree of learning and education in God's ministers may render superfluous the special, supernatural testimony of the Holy Spirit. However, the outstanding example of the apostle Paul demonstrates that this is not correct. Intellectual learning, though useful on its own level, can never be a substitute for the supernatural power and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Paul was a man of high intellectual gifts and wide learning, both in the field of religion and philosophy. Yet, in his presentation of the gospel, he deliberately renounced the appeal to his own learning or the use of purely human forms of reason and argument.

> "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

In presenting the gospel message, Paul deliberately renounced what he calls "excellence of speech or of wisdom," and again, "persuasive words of human wisdom."

He implies that, had he chosen to use such forms of appeal as these, it was in his power to do so. But he renounced them in favour of an altogether different type of proof of the truth of his message. This other proof Paul describes as "the demonstration of the Spirit [that is, the Holy Spirit] and of power."

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Notice that word demonstration. This implies something open, public and perceptible to the senses. The Holy Spirit did not work with the apostle Paul merely as an invisible, imperceptible influence. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit were openly demonstrated in his ministry.

Why did God appoint, and Paul approve, this supernatural form of testimony to the truth of the gospel message? Paul tells us the answer:

> "That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:5)

It is not God's purpose that the faith of His people should be based upon argument and proof on the level of human understanding. The only satisfactory foundation for the faith of each believer is in a direct personal experience of the power of the Holy Spirit in his own heart and life.

> "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient – in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." (Rom. 15:18-19)

Here Paul refuses to base the authority of the gospel message, committed to him by God, upon any personal qualities of his own – such as his own natural talents or learning. He states clearly that obedience to the gospel is not to be produced by any such qualities as these, but only by "mighty signs and wonders." And these, he says, are the work of the Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit.

Devotional

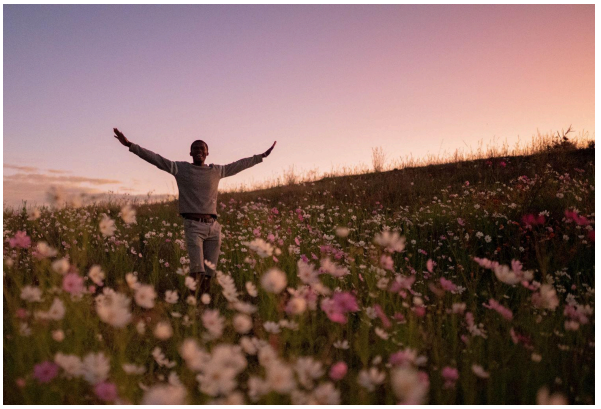
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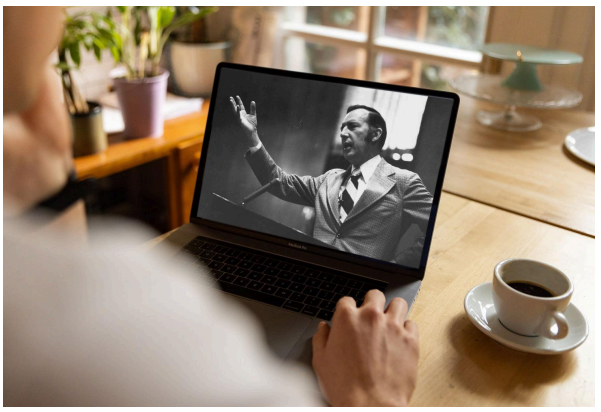
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