

Summer of Personal Worship

WEEK 3 - EMPOWERMENT

***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law”
Galatians 5:22-23***

(Original thoughts shared by Pastor Charles Stanley)

Do you know that followers of Christ are directly connected to the divine energy of God who willingly gives it to us so we can carry out the work He has called us to do? We can neither harness nor store the power of the Holy Spirit but use it as God gives. This power is not just for preachers, evangelists, or people who work in special ministry; it is available to every believer who willingly surrenders moment by moment in submission and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

We cannot garner the power of the Spirit in order to use God. Conversely, we experience His power when we surrender to be used by Him. God releases His power through us as we walk in obedience to Him. There are three ways He releases His power to us:

1. Through the fruit of the Spirit, God’s power and only God’s power enables us to exhibit love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, which reveal the character of Christ in us.
2. Through witnessing. Scripture always refers to the power of the Holy Spirit in relationship to witnessing and glorifying God. It is His power through us that emboldens us and carries out the work; and
3. Through the work we are called to do.

Our Summer of Personal Worship activity is about examining our commitment to Jesus as His followers, trying different ways to worship God, and increasing our communication with Him through prayer. If you intentionally seek a relationship with God you will be transformed and your Christian walk will be different.

Day 1

I hope you have heard and believed that God’s purpose for you is to worship Him, to love others as God loves us, and to share the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus. All three are no easy task because, it is in our nature to do the opposite. We left the garden confused but still deeply in love with God but soon our love for one another failed – Cain and Abel.

Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians that “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). The thought that an army of evilness is in pursuit of us and wants to destroy anything good in us is an overwhelming thought. But, rejoice for as we will see this week, God is on our side, Jesus already destroyed Satan’s greatest weapon against us (bondage of sin) and the Holy Spirit wants to empower the willing with gifts, blessing, power and His sword to win the battles of this earth.

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We cannot do what God has set aside for us to do without releasing our power and will to His power and will. May God bless you with wisdom and power this week.

Review the material below (scripture, reflection video, praise song and prayer) to prepare yourself for the upcoming week. Reflect on each item and speak with God about your relationship with Him. Ask Him to reveal areas where you can grow this week.

SCRIPTURE - Galatians 5:22-23 New International Version (NIV):

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law”

REFLECTION VIDEO - *Since God Chose You*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzXy_97tyDI

PRAISE SONG - *Holy Spirit*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPPMSfCdUng>

PRAYER - Consider adopting this as your daily prayer for the week.

Holy Spirit, you know I have my own expectations about what I should and should not do. I now surrender to you my ideas, my limitations, my preferences, and my goals. Fill me, Holy Spirit, with all your supernatural gifts! Empower me to accept and grow in the supernatural life as much as the early disciples did. I want to be useful to you. I want to go where you lead me. Holy Spirit, send me forth gifted and empowered to make a difference spreading the Good News of God’s forgiving love.

Day 2 - Love

Is there someone you love? Someone who you would do all you can to please and all you can to ensure you do not cause them harm. Yet despite your desires and effort, there will be a time when you will fail them; you will behave as if you don’t love them. If you fail the one you chose to love how can we love our neighbours whom we really don’t know? The answer is AGAPE.

The totally selfless love that comes from and is rooted in God. It is. It delights in giving even though the other person may be unkind, unlovely, unworthy. Agape determines to do whatever is best for the loved one. It willingly sacrifices itself for another’s good. Agape gives when it gets nothing in return. It does not even think of getting something back. Agape is what God wants for us and is one of the fruits the Holy Spirit offer us to love as God desires.

Today’s scripture is often reserved for weddings yet it contains wisdom that we must remember daily when we interact with the world. Read today’s scripture, meditate on them, put them in your heart and when you leave your home, carry them with you and remember them when you encounter those made in the image of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with this love.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Day 3 – Peace & Joy

Why do we become disappointed? Is the reason for our grief godly or not? Has our pride been hurt? Had we made up my mind that something had to happen our way and in our time then it didn't? Does our disappointment lead to an inner turmoil such that we are not at peace with ourselves or our abilities to do anything right? Are we setting our minds too much on earthly things?

God offers an assurance of hope and with that should come joy. Jesus actions at the cross broke the destructive effect guilt, which wants to rob us of joy and peace. We can be forgiven and so we must let go of our disappointment and seize the hope.

Read the following scripture and meditate on it and then speak with God about things that unsettle your heart and rob you of joy.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” **Romans 15:13.**

Day 4 - Patience

Have you ever worked with someone who seemed never to be satisfied with your efforts? You start off working together and they'd offer encouraging words and even helped. However, soon they seem to be barking two word sentences at you. You could see them getting angry and before long, this person manages to push you aside and do the task themselves. You stand their shaking your head wondering if there was anything worth saying to them about their impatience.

Are you hot tempered? Quick to get angry? Scripture shared these are the marks of a fool. Many need to get their anger under control and keep it ruled, or it will hamper or destroy their lives. No impatient person will never be able to share the gospel of love as God desires because something else is ruling their lives.

Read the following scripture and reflect on it. Listen to this week's song again and then mediate on the verse. If you are impatient the Holy Spirit will nudge you. Listen and ask for help to overcome this bad character trait. Maybe you know someone who is impatient and you have seen how it is affecting their relationship as a parent, a spouse, or as a friend. Talk with God about that person, asking Him to change them and use you. Don't be eager to jump in and try to correct another, let the Holy Spirit guide you.

“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly” **Proverbs 14:29.**

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Day 5 – Kindness & Goodness

Have you ever heard the expression “you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar”? It was used to suggest that if you sweeten your approach you will be more successful in having someone listen to you. Setting aside the fact that no one really wants to catch flies in order to do something nice to them or the fact fruit flies are attracted to vinegar, the premise that being kind has a positive effect in people. However, we must be mindful as to why we are being nice. In the expression, we are attempting to attract flies in order to get rid of them. We must not show kindness or do good things in anticipation of a reward.

God choose to offer us grace or bless us when we do good deeds, but just because we behave properly does not mean God must then bless us. When the Holy Spirit changes us, people will observe our kindness and goodness and in humility, we should notice the same.

Remember that kindness is more about our attitude and goodness than our actions. Read these scripture passages below, meditate on them, and praise God for this and continually ask to be blessed with these fruits of the Spirit.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” Colossians 3:12

“Trust in the Lord and do good;” Psalm 145:17a

Day 6 – Self-control & Gentleness

Gentleness involves humility and thankfulness toward God, and polite, restrained behavior toward others. The opposites of gentleness is often displayed with anger. A lack of self-control can lead to us falling to poor inter-personal relationships and unhealthy temptations. Self-control is defined as the ability to manage your actions, feelings and emotions. It is the quality that allows us to stop ourselves from doing things we want to do, but they might not be in our best interest.

This week we are focusing on the fruit of the Holy Spirit because we want to be empowered so we can be used by God. Today’s scripture speaks about God’s desire that our self-control does not fail us and we fall to temptation. He knows we can be tempted to respond negatively and harshly to those around us or to do or take something that can cause us bodily harm. God says He will provide a way out so we can endure and overcome temptation.

Consider reading the following verse using the Lectio Divina practice introduced last week. When you are done take some time to talk with God and to listen for Him.

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” 1 Corinthians 10:13

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Day 7 - Faithfulness

Faithfulness is belief in what the Bible says about God—His existence, His works, and His character is true. It is believing that God is who He says He is and continuing in that belief despite what is going on in our lives. Faithfulness means we trust what God says in the Bible, and not necessarily what the world or our own eyes tell us. “We trust He will work out everything for good. We trust He will work His will in us. And we trust that our situation on earth is nothing compared to our future reward in heaven. The only way we can have such faith is by the Holy Spirit's influence” (from Bible Gateway).

When faced with a crisis a father approached Jesus and asked Him to heal his son. We know very little about this man. There is no suggestion he was a follower and had witnessed other miracles. He knew Jesus was different and had to believe He was divine because he asked Jesus to heal His son. He probably had sought help elsewhere and knew what people thought about him and his son, but went anyway with his past disappointments. Jesus was not concerned whether the father understood what Jesus was doing but was concerned whether he believed.

Do you believe the Holy Spirit offer us gifts in order to change us so we can share the gospel to others? Do you believe you can be changed by the fruit of the Holy Spirit to impact lives around you?

Read the following scripture and mediate on it. When you pray, ask yourselves the two question above and seeks God's strength to believe.

“Everything is possible for one who believes. Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” **Mark 9:23b-24**

Remember, don't just read for the sake of reading but take time to mediate and reflect upon what you read and allow God to speak through it to you thought the day.

PRAYER WALKING

Some people pray best when they are moving and so prayer walking can be a wonderful gift for those who like to get up and move around. It is a type of intercessory prayer that invites people to go to the site of their concern, for example: the office, the conference room, the dinning room, the kitchen, the school, the hospital, or the government buildings. The immediacy of the context can fuel prayer and offer a way for listening more deeply to God as to what are His concerns of the place.

DESIRE: To align myself, while walking in particular places, with Christ and his intercession for the kingdom to come

DEFINITION: Prayer walking is a way of physically walking with Jesus through places (hospitals, homes, businesses, churches, schools, playgrounds, neighbourhoods, service agencies, etc.) that you are concerned about. From the vantage point of proximity, prayers for the kingdom to come are offered to God.

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SCRIPTURE:

“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.” (1 Peter 4:7)

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour” (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

PRACTICE INCLUDES:

- Slowly and deliberately walking through places for the purpose of intentional and listening prayer
- Walking through your church, school grounds or job site, giving to God the people and activities that go on there
- Walking through hospital, government facilities, service agencies, and places of need, fear, conflict, and decision making, blessing the rooms and praying for the activities and people that gather there
- Walking through neighbourhoods and bringing each household to God one by one
- Taking a group of children or adults on a prayer walk; talking to them about what it is like for them

GOD-GIVEN FRUIT: what happens when you participate in this activity?

- Seeing places through Jesus’ eyes
- Becoming quiet and listening to God’s prayer for a particular place
- Allowing the visual nature of this journey to prompt prayers
- Gaining a perspective on the larger activity of God
- Holding a place or person before the Lord when you don’t know how to pray for them; growing in awareness that the Spirit is praying for him or her—and you are with the Spirit in his prayer
- Becoming aware of people and places that you ignore, don’t care about or have hard feelings toward; repenting
- Praying with others in environments of shared concern
- Exploring God’s vision for places and people who gather there

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

- Walk through your home or church in the company of Jesus. Pray for each room and what happens there.
- Spend time walking with others believers (or alone if necessary) through your workplace. Pray with or for your colleagues, the custodians, clients, delivery people etc. Offer yourself to be Jesus’ hands and heart in this place.
- Visit the playground, sports complex, library or school near you. Where possible, walk through it in the company of Jesus (if you cannot gain access, walk around it). Pray for those who play or study there.

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- When you are on vacation or in a natural setting, allow God to draw you into prayer for that particular place. Let your interaction with the created world lead you into prayer.
- Before a neighbourhood picnic or community event, join with another believer who will prayer walk with you for the people who will attend the event. Ask the Lord to give you His heart for them. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in this event.