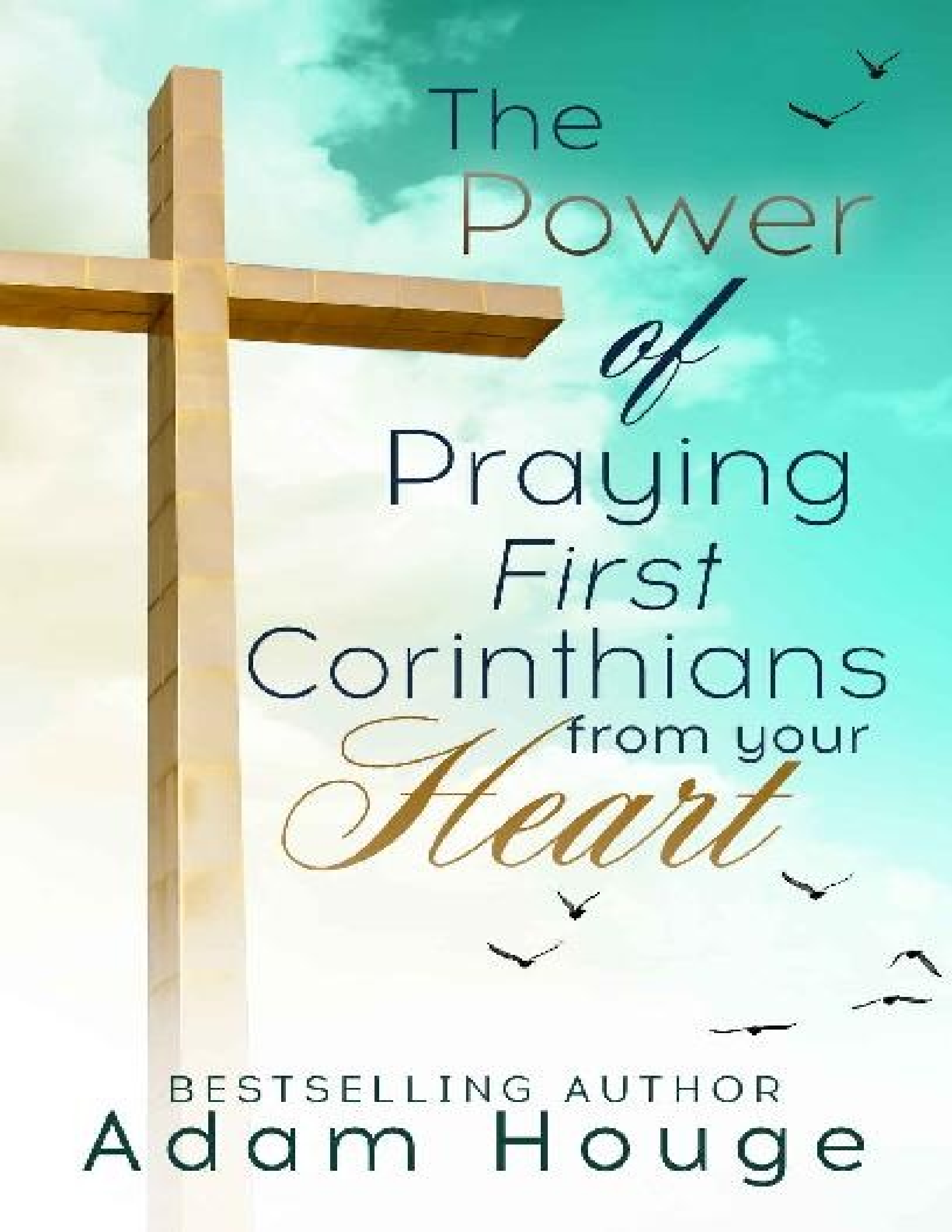

The Power of Praying First Corinthians from your Heart
BESTSELLING AUTHOR
Adam Houge

The Power of Praying First Corinthians from Your Heart™

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Introduction

There is nothing more powerful or life changing than God’s word. By His word He created life, and through His word we are strengthened in faith.

So consider taking the next 14 days to renew and strengthen your faith by meditating on and praying through God’s word. If you take the lessons in First Corinthians to heart you will not even be able to walk away without being changed.

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Day One

Being Unified through the Spirit

"*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" 1 Corinthians 1:10

Lord, I know I must increase my fellowship as I see Your return approaching. So help me to be unified fully with my brethren in the manner You desire. Help us to come to the same mind and same love through Your Spirit. But even if they should not agree with me, I commit myself today to being the example of Your love. I also dedicate myself to searching for the perfect and complete truth in Your word, that I may live by it.

*****

Whose mind do we have? Is it not Christ's? But how do we obtain His mind? Through the Holy Spirit, no doubt. Commit yourself today to growing in the Spirit and in your understanding of His voice. If we would all listen to the Spirit's voice, especially as we read our Bibles, like-mindedness would come naturally.

Take it to heart to be a peacemaker, but do not be a man-pleaser. True and everlasting peace comes through Christ. If your brothers or sisters have an argument with the truth, then guide them lovingly to it. Remember, a bone that is broken heals stronger. Likewise, do not be afraid to disrupt physical peace in order to facilitate spiritual peace through unity among the brethren. As it is written,

"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Jude 3:1

If you are unsure on any point of the faith, then do not contend earnestly for your position, but instead seek God earnestly for wisdom. Then, when He has taught you, remember from whom you have learned and hold onto this knowledge. Share those truths the Holy Spirit gave to you and, in this way, create unity among your saved family and friends.

The greatest causes of contention in the church today are differences in opinion

regarding doctrines. Each person nowadays has his or her own interpretation; but if we all listen to the Holy Spirit and are taught by Him together, we will be naturally inseparable.

Day Two

Focusing on the Teachings that Matter

"*Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*" 1 Corinthians 1:12–13

Help me to focus on the teachings that matter, remembering that Your Spirit teaches all things. Let me not glorify one man who does God's work above another man who does likewise. But I commit myself to glorifying You alone always.

*****

In today's modern terms, the attitude that is admonished in this scripture can be likened to "I am of this church, and you are of that church." Everyone seems to think that the church he or she attends is the best one in the city. Then each church acts as if it is an individual body; but in Christ there is only one body with many members. One church is an arm, and another a leg.

Do not neglect a needy brother or sister just because the person worships at a different facility. Do not allow a rift to exist due to differences in belief. Rather, allow the Spirit to guide you to all truth, and encourage others to do the same—no matter what church they are from. For we all belong to one Savior. We all have the same Father and worship the same God. So strive to be unified through love, truth, and the Holy Spirit.

Day Three

Growing in God's Wisdom

"*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.*" 1 Corinthians 2:1

Lord, I commit myself to growing in true wisdom. I will submit to Your Spirit so that He can speak through me. Help me to understand how to do this fully and always. In this way I may glorify you in everything I say.

*****

In today's church some sermons have lost their fire and replaced it with eloquence and heady knowledge. When Jesus came, however, He didn't come with eloquence, but with the power of the Spirit of God. The works of His hands spoke louder than His words.

Each of us is called to season our words with salt. This salt is the Holy Spirit. When witnessing, don't deliver a canned witness, but instead allow the Spirit to guide your heart to the words that the individual person needs to hear. Every person needs something different, and God knows others' hearts better than we do. So in all things allow the Spirit to speak for you.

Learn to do this in fellowship, at work, when with friends or family, and at every moment of life. Bridle your tongue so that God may have control. As Jesus taught us,

"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Matthew 12:36–37

If our words have been spoken by God, shall we not be justified?

Day Four

Increasing Your Faith

"*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 Corinthians 2:4–5

Lord, increase my faith so that Your works may be more abundant in my life. Please help me to grow intimately closer to You, that demonstrations of Your Spirit—both in fruitful love and in power—would be a natural part of who I am.

*****

Where has the power gone in the church? Where are the true miracles that could inspire the broken or help an unbeliever to believe? There are some, but they are few—in the first-world countries, at least. Living in a wealthier nation forces us into a corner of thought.

God's sovereignty slowly loses out to our own plans, in some Christians' lives. Rather than allow the Lord to plot their course, such believers fall into a trap of self-reliance because the ability to do so is always right there at their fingertips. God's way makes less sense, and logic wins the day. As a result, their faith abandons the truth found in God's inward voice and finds its resting place in their own interpretation of His word—both the Scriptures and the voice of God. In essence, such believers, without realizing it, become their own god.

Who are we to interpret the word of the Lord? That work is for the Holy Spirit. Our faith must be solely and incredibly in the word of God alone. We must not make alterations, interpretations, opinions, or assumptions. God's words are perfect and must be believed no matter the cost. True faith is not the mere state of believing; it is the outward action of the inward heart. Therefore, practice faith through obeying the Holy Spirit. He is always speaking, so practice the ability to listen constantly. Don't be distracted by the day-to-day activities and the grind of work. Keep your eyes fixed on the Spirit at all times.

Remember that the sword of the Lord is the word of the Lord. Everyone calls the Scriptures "the sword." While this is true, many Christians seem to forget that God's sword is a two-edged blade, being sharp with Scripture as well as with the active voice of God. We must have a fully honed and balanced blade before we can wield it skillfully. We must both study His word and listen intently to the

Spirit that we may know how God intends us to apply His word.

So Beloved, sensitize your ears to the Holy Spirit and be swift to obey Him even if it doesn't make sense. Remember that the most effective faith is carried out blind. The less you have to go on, the more incredible your faith is.

But if you struggle with hearing God's voice, then take the time to grow in discernment. Not every voice that comes to our hearts is God. Satan loves to masquerade as God, and our own hearts can deceive us masterfully. Therefore, the only way to determine God's voice perfectly is to take the time to grow in discerning and understanding it. You must press into it and be intentional about daily growth.

Have you been dedicating yourself to such growth? If not, then commit yourself to doing so today.

Day Five

Earnestly Seeking to Be Taught by the Spirit

"*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*" 1 Corinthians 2:13

Lord, help me to understand Your voice more clearly, that I may be taught by You always. I choose to surrender to You now in this so that I can grow in the Spirit and be taught by You at all times.

*****

Are you being taught by the Spirit? What has He taught you lately? Everything in your walk with Christ must be taught to you by the Spirit. When you read your Bible, learn to spend more time listening to God than you do thinking. Some Christians seem to have a habit of listening to their own thoughts while reading the word, rather than paying attention to how the Scriptures jump out at them and relate to their life.

When the scriptures seem to come alive, this is when the Spirit is speaking. Memorize and meditate on those portions. Grow in them, for they are practical lessons for today. As you do this continually, each lesson will be like a brick in a foundation that the Spirit will use as a basis of comparison for future lessons. Thus will He bring you to a fuller and greater understanding of His word, through intricately woven lessons of faith.

Day Six

Seeking True Wisdom

"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'…" 1 Corinthians 3:19

Lord, I desire Your wisdom. Increase me in it and in Your word, that I may grow thereby. Bless me with the depths of wisdom You gave Solomon. That way I may live according to Your truth and everything that pleases You.

*****

God's wisdom is all that matters. His truth can only be communicated by His Spirit. If we are not connecting our ears to His lips, we'll never hear the true words by which we must live. Some preach the gospel with a canned witness or with heady knowledge, thinking that these things are useful for the world to believe. But faith never comes through man's understanding of God; rather, it comes through blind obedience to His word.

Even in our own walks, we can build up worldly wisdom without realizing it. By interpreting the Scriptures and forming opinions about God, however, we do not lay bricks of truth upon the foundation of Christ. Instead, we must take heed to truth and pursue it with all our hearts. All wisdom is false and worthless if it is not the wisdom of God's truth.

But are our opinions about God actually worldly? We have two natures, both the old man and the new man. The old man interprets the word of God, whereas the new man hears the word of God to live by it and obey it. The word we hear is the voice of the Holy Spirit by which we all must be taught. It is said that you must think before you speak; yet before God speaks, it is best not to think at all. Just wait for His word and listen.

If we drown out God's voice with our own thoughts, then it is obvious that the old man has taken charge. The old man is the worldly man, and thus the wisdom we build during these moments is worldly wisdom.

Now, some may argue, "I am listening to the Spirit merely by reading my Bible." It is true that God's word is Spirit-breathed. However, there are many who read God's word—both believer and unbeliever—yet not all of them understand. As we read,

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory…” 1 Corinthians 2:7

And furthermore, as Paul goes on to explain,

“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:10

God reveals His wisdom and mysteries to us, especially the wisdom and mystery of the word, through His Holy Spirit. So seek wisdom from above, not from merely studying and trying to figure out how the Scriptures apply to you. Rather, study the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit as you listen to His voice. Remember that every time the pages come alive, God is talking. So read until the Scriptures speak to you. Become familiar with each book and study it thoroughly.

One of the best methods to grow in the Scriptures and in understanding the voice of God is to write everything the Spirit speaks to you. Write everything He says word for word, not paraphrasing. That way you may attune your ear to His words and understand Him more clearly. If you paraphrase God’s word, you’ll understand His voice as a paraphrase and may miss out on some smaller but vital details. But if you record precisely the words His voice speaks, you’ll expand your knowledge boundlessly and perfectly.

Nor should you write your own thoughts; rather, write only what the Spirit speaks. By so doing, you’ll train your ears to listen to God over your own heart. This will come in handy later on, such as during a trial.

Finally, memorize everything that speaks out to you. If you struggle with memorizing, then stop trying to make it your own effort. Instead, apply faith. Pray that God will help you memorize the word. Then believe with all your heart that He will help you retain the scriptures you memorize. Yes, you need to put forward the effort to memorize; but as you do it by faith, you’ll find that the more faith you have, the easier it is to retain His word.

The trick is twofold, however. You must memorize only what speaks out to you and not some random verse you like. Then you must apply faith. Keep stride with the Teacher’s lesson and do not randomly flip through the workbook (your Bible).

Remember that Jesus said,

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will

teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." John 14:26

Have you ever applied this scripture before? Start now and it will change your life forever. Be submissive and let the Spirit help you in every situation, teaching you and bringing God's word to remembrance. If this technique of memorization is a process with which you are not familiar and you would like to read more information about it, see the more detailed discussion in my book *How to Memorize the Bible Fast and Easy*.

Day Seven

Running to Obtain the Prize

"*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*" 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Lord you're worth everything to me. Help me to run with endurance that each of my strides in life will please You. Help me to know and understand Your will that I can strive, not according to my works, but Your work as Your Spirit moves and works in my life. Help me to understand Your will that I can be fully submitted to it, remembering that my life is a pilgrimage.

*****

How have you been running the race? Have you been passionately diving into all that Jesus is? Have you been pouring into your relationship with Him and growing in Him? As a child grows, it changes. How have you been changing and becoming more intimately attuned to the Spirit of Christ?

Beloved, examine yourself always and test yourself. A race is not won by looking backward, so don't look at your previous accomplishments and boast in them. The race is still going! Your current life is not about how you once ran, but about how you're currently running. If you've done well, then press forward. If you've stumbled and skinned your knees, get back up. This race can still be won!

Everyone who races for a medal presses forward, ignoring everything that lies behind. As Paul said,

"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13–14

Focus on the goal. Keep your eyes fixed on the prize. Make today a day of dedication: Dedicate yourself to walking more passionately in Christ from this day forward. Be the image of His love and walk in His Spirit, listening to His

voice, pursuing His truth, and obeying Him diligently.

Day Eight

Avoiding Modern Idols

"*Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.'*" 1 Corinthians 10:6–7

Lord, I commit everything I am to You. Keep me pure in my fellowship and pure in my walk. I will not allow idols to rise up in my heart. Nor idleness to overtake my mind and hands. But if this should happen without my realizing it, then I pray You would reveal my idols to me, that I may repent.

*****

Notice how the scripture does not mention the gold bull (Baal) when talking about idols? Instead it mentions the idle activities in which the Israelites participated. Why does the scripture describe idleness as idolatry? Because we can't all relate to the primitive religions of worshipping golden gods and engraven images. However, we can relate to the kinds of activities that were centered on their worship. If we give too much time to idle and purposeless things, then we render our time to a personal idol we've created. Idol literally means, "Thing of nothingness" and if we choose to be idly entertained, rather than pressing continuously into the Spirit, we will be distracted by the nothingness of this world. Every idol begins as a distraction, then slowly takes over the time and attention God deserves to have.

Have you ever noticed how some fellowship nights at certain churches spend less time focusing on prayer, worship, or study of the word and more time on games and food? The Israelites worshipped golden gods, but we sin by worshipping excessive entertainment, overindulgence in food or activities not pertaining to Christ, and excessive attention to credit, money, our careers, and our own plans to prosper ourselves. God has a plan for each of us, and we are called to render ourselves to His plan.

But is it really wrong to increase ourselves financially? Consider these questions: For what purpose do we labor, and in what are we trusting, when we further ourselves? How can we further God's kingdom if we're caught up with building our own? How can we bless others and the name of God if we're caught up in blessing ourselves?

By covetousness we commit sin. As it is written,

“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Colossians 3:5

Beloved, although I am using hard words, I do not speak them to discourage or condemn you. For Jesus has given us a way out, and it is necessary that each of us grasps it. It is necessary that we take our relationship with the Lord seriously, pressing into Him fully.

So in today’s moment of devotion, take the time to examine yourself. Do you have any idols? Every idol begins as a distraction from God until it takes time away from Him. So is there anything that’s distracting you from meditating and abiding in the Spirit? How are you lining up with God’s heart and plan? Have you been pressing into the kingdom and into growth? For we all must grow in the Lord. A vine that does not grow does not bear much fruit. What did Jesus do to the fig tree that bore no fruit? But if you desire to be well-pleasing to the Lord, then take it to heart to grow in your relationship.

Study your Bible. Come to know the Scriptures perfectly. If you believe that all things are possible through Christ, then you know that it is possible to grasp every concept of the word and to understand His voice precisely. So study the word while being attentive to the Spirit’s voice, that you may grow in His truth and teachings. Idleness and idols tend to cloud our vision of God and muddy our understanding of His voice. But if you grow, the ability to understand His voice will come naturally and easily.

Beloved, take it to heart to lay the desires of your heart behind, to pick up your cross, and to walk in the Holy Spirit. Doesn’t Jesus deserve such devotion from us? Therefore, let this time of devotion be a commitment to continual growth in Christ and abstinence from meaningless activities. For ‘idol’ literally means “thing of nothingness,” and when we partake in nothingness, we are not fellowshipping with Christ as we ought but, rather, gratifying the desires of our own hearts.

Day Nine

Understanding the Severity of a Modern Idol

"*What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?*" 1 Corinthians 10:19–22

Jesus, I understand how serious a person idol is. I will not sacrifice my time to demons through idleness. Instead, I will commit myself to abiding in the Spirit always.

*****

Yesterday we discussed how idleness is a form of idolatry. To practice any form of idolatry, whether by having faith in abundance or indulging in anything not pertaining to Christ, is to sacrifice your time and a piece of your heart to the will of demons.

Beloved, do not make the Lord jealous by not making time for God. God is the master of your life and deserves every moment of your time. So stop setting time aside for Him and keeping the rest for yourself. Rather, fully and wholeheartedly dedicate yourself to Jesus. Take the time to meditate on and abide in His Spirit throughout the day. Pray and worship constantly throughout the day.

Day Ten

Loving from the Heart

"*Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.*" 1 Corinthians 10:24

Jesus, I commit my heart to practicing Your love continually toward all people. Open my eyes to those who need it. I choose to be a continually kind person, no matter the circumstances happening in my own life.

*****

It's easy to say that we'll become the image of God's love, but the real test comes when we are suffering our own trials in life. God calls us to look not only at ourselves, but also at others. Love like there's no tomorrow and don't let your plans in life get in the way of God's love.

I once knew an old man who was set to retire. He had one year left at the hospital and a large lump of money saved up. He was set for life; all he had to do was wait. At that time God sent a brother in the Lord to the man. This brother was homeless from a series of uncontrollable financial disasters, and to make matters worse, his wife had just given birth. Now they were facing the loss of their children because social services was pressing them to get off the streets: Living in a car in the dead of winter was no place for a newborn.

Having met the wealthy brother in the hospital, he asked him for prayer—and a home. Not money, but help with finding a place to stay. The wealthy man was convicted by God to help, but out of fear of losing his retirement money, he turned down the needy family. "This man's young and I'm old. If I lose what I've worked for, I can't rebound like he can!"

But the young man and his family weren't looking for money, just a place to stay. God must have convicted the wealthy man to do more—hence his words—so he closed his heart out of fear of loss. He refused to pray for the man or help him in any way.

Satan has a funny way of tempting us to act contrary to the works of love. We pray hard to have an opportunity to accomplish them, but then, when they're at our feet, we are swallowed by fear, afflictions, and doubts. But that's just like Satan—to tempt and afflict us in order to keep us from fulfilling all righteousness.

Beloved, do not fear the fulfilment of kindness. For those who fear are not made perfect in love.

Day Eleven

Can Other's Learn to Walk like Christ by Imitating You?

"*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*" 1 Corinthians 11:1

Lord, I commit myself to growth. Give me the holiness, faith, love, and everything else I need in my walk, that I may also say to others in all confidence, "Imitate me"—knowing that they will be imitating Christ in me.

*****

Are you confident enough to tell others that they can safely imitate each detail of your walk? Paul had this confidence. And if you don't, then take the time to examine why.

When you find what's holding you back, then you'll know the areas in your life where you need growth. Focus on changing these parts of yourself. Press into Christ and take daily growth seriously. Do not only draw near to God during a time of devotion, but rather draw near Him always—continually abiding in and focusing on the presence and voice of the Holy Spirit. When reading God's word is not possible, this can be best accomplished through continuous prayer and worship.

Can you worship without ceasing? Press into it daily, focusing on and singing praise to the presence of God, and watch how it changes your life through time.

Day Twelve

Judging Ourselves First

"*For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*" 1 Corinthians 11:31

Jesus, open my eyes to my own conduct. I know that I cannot grow unless I focus on the areas of my life that need sharpening. I understand that I am not having a negative or ungodly mind by being hard on myself to increase in Your love and grow in You always. For You said that I must remove the plank from my own eye. Therefore, help me to remove not only the planks but also the specks that obscure my vision of You.

*****

Take the time to test your own heart. Are you practicing abiding and walking in the Spirit? Are you diving into the word daily and growing in it as you should? Are you listening constantly for that still, small voice so that you may hear the Spirit in order to obey Him? God is always speaking to you, but are you taking it seriously to hear Him and obey Him throughout the day?

Beloved, test yourself always and do not judge another. It is easy to examine others to see how they need growth, but we ought to turn our eyes inward and commit to a lifetime of growth toward excellence in Christ.

Be swift to glorify the Lord and not your own works. Judge yourself against Christ. How do you lack? Don't look at your successes, but instead examine what needs work in your walk, that you may press forward.

Do those who run a race stop halfway through the course to look back at the goals they have accomplished? Certainly not! They press forward with their mind focused on one thing: obtaining the prize. And we also have a prize that lies ahead of us.

Therefore, Beloved, run in such a way that you may obtain this prize, keeping your mind fixed on the Spirit of Christ continually. Judge yourself, that you may grow.

Day Thirteen

Growing to Understand Perfectly

"*Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.*" 1 Corinthians 14:20

Lord, I dedicate myself to growing continually in Your word and in Your truth. Stretch my understanding and increase my wisdom. Make me more like You.

*****

Have you been taking diligent study of the word seriously? Have you allowed the Holy Spirit to teach and guide you through the pages?

Keep your course with His lessons. Read the pages from which He speaks to you. You must put to memory and meditation anything that comes alive for you, that you may practice it later. Beloved, be dedicated to increasing in wisdom daily.

Day Fourteen

If You Do Everything Through God's Perfect Love, How Will You Go Wrong?

"*Let all that you do be done with love.*" 1 Corinthians 16:14

Lord, increase me in Your love. May each of my words and actions express the goodness, kindness, and soberness of your heart. Let me not be carried away by negative emotions—whether anger or fearful thoughts. But I commit myself to being perfect in love and in the way I express it toward others.

*****

Has every word and every action of yours been done through love? Test yourself, and press forward into the goal of perfect and continuous love toward all.

Has your love been perfect lately? Although we are not perfect people, love—perfect, gentle, kind, and unconditional love—should come naturally to us since the Holy Spirit has been poured out on our hearts. We know that the first fruit of the Spirit is love. Therefore, submit to the Spirit and press forward to become the image of God's love daily.

I’d Love to Hear from You!

As an author I regard the feedback of my readers highly. When considering a book, many people weigh reviews in the balance.

If you enjoyed this book, please consider helping others make an informed decision. Leaving a review can help spread the message of the gospel and increase other’s faith through these books, and it would be a great way to support this ministry for free!

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The following is a list of his bestselling titles, which may interest you.

The 7 Most Powerful Prayers That Will Change Your Life Forever

The 7 Spiritual Habits That Will Change Your Life Forever

The 7 Habits That Will Change Your Life Forever

Slaying Your Giants: How to Have Massive Faith

How to Memorize the Bible Fast and Easy

About the Author

Adam is a preacher, teacher and #1 internationally bestselling author of over 100 books on the Christian faith. He is a devoted husband and father of three boys. Through his travels, he’s seen the need for a new awakening and a new revival: a revival of the heart. Come join Adam on this journey of redemption and experience God like never before!

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