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## THE SPIRITUAL RESOURCES OF FAITHFUL WITNESSES

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It is no secret that the evangelistic fervor of the contemporary evangelical Church has grown cold. In growing numbers, churches are embracing the idea that reaching people for Christ can be done most effectively on Sunday mornings by highly-skilled professionals in carefully orchestrated settings. As a result, increasingly, we are seeing the conversion of corporate worship for the *visible* church into the *semblance* of worship for the *potential* church. In such a situation, the work of evangelism in the local church becomes the job of the worship team and the Sunday morning speaker, while the role of the *laos* of God is reduced to little more than encouraging their friends and associates to come have a look.

Thus, it should not surprise us that the Body of Christ, when scattered throughout the community, has become more and more ineffective at proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Gospel, which the first Christians so urgently and confidently noised about wherever they went (Acts 8:4), hardly ever escapes the lips of seeker-friendly believers today. After all, why should they risk getting it all wrong or offending someone close to them, when they can bring those same people into a comfortable, theater-like environment, where they can move to a familiar beat, join in the singing of happy songs, and hear a word of spiritual exhortation delivered in winsome, engaging words, carefully calculated not to offend, by the congregation's master communicator?

I suspect, however, that even the leaders of our megachurches recognize that this situation, which they have helped to create, is not what the Book recommends. And I further suspect that it will not be long before we will once again be hearing cries and urgings for the people of God to become more active in the work of personal evangelism.

The question then becomes, "How do we best get them witnessing more consistently, boldly, and effectively?" There is no shortage of evangelism training programs, and many churches will no doubt turn to one or more of those in an effort to jump-start their lay witness. Others will opt for the view that recommends the "big tent" approach to evangelism: Contract with a reputable evangelist for a series of meetings and enlist large numbers of the laity as "counselors" in the hope that some of the skills they acquire during that experience will transfer into their everyday lives afterwards. Still other churches will try to make their existing programs more open and warm to the unchurched, enlisting lay men and women throughout the church for a kind of "friendship evangelism." And others will seek to create new small- and large-group contexts for bringing the community into contact with the Gospel through the exertions of church members as inviters, hosts, and fellow seekers after truth.

All these methods of evangelism have validity. But these are all the same methods of enlisting lay people for evangelism that existed *prior to* the seeker-church phenomenon. Their failure then to create and sustain a vital and growing lay witness is part of the reason why the seeker-church came into being in the first place. It brought its approach to evangelization by surrogate, which runs contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the heritage of the martyr church, and which has helped to dampen the flame of personal evangelism on the part of evangelical Christians.

Is this simply a vicious cycle? Or is there another way to motivate, equip, and deploy lay men and women in the work of evangelism? Is there a way which is both more Biblical than the ones described above, and which holds out the promise of a more sustained, more powerful, and more persuasive witness than what we have seen in this generation? It is my conviction that there is, and that that method involves paying more attention to the *inner life* of disciples than to leading them with hastily-learned techniques or deploying them in artificial settings where we hope a captive audience will hear the truth.

#### THE INNER LIFE THE SOURCE OF EVANGELISM

Thus far in our efforts to involve lay people in the work of witness-bearing we have concentrated mainly on *external* matters. We have sought to give them techniques and tools for evangelism; to activate them in environments conducive to Gospel conversation; or to provide them with gifted speakers and warm settings to which they might invite their friends. But helpful as these external solutions might be to what John Stott has identified as "our guilty silence," they overlook the fundamental teaching of Scripture—and the witness of Christian history—which tells us that *sustained and powerful witness arises from within the transformed heart of a believer*. Not even the absence of such externals as we have mentioned above can dampen the flame or dim the brilliance of that heart-driven witness for Christ.

Consider these few Scriptural witnesses to this truth (all quotes from NASB, emphasis added):

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from thy presence, and do not take thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit.

*Then I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will be converted to thee (Psalm 51:10-13).*

*The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds persuasiveness to his lips (Proverbs 16:23).*

*Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life (Proverbs 4:23).*

*You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart (Matthew 12:34).*

*If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38).*

From these it is clear that persuasive, effective proclamation of the life-giving Gospel, proclamation that is used of God to impart life and convert sinners, comes out of hearts filled with the eternal riches of Christ and his Spirit. If we spent as much time and effort training the people of God, exercising and testing them, focusing their attention and energies on and holding them accountable for their inner lives as we have done on the externals of their calling as Christ's witnesses, we should no doubt have realized by now a much livelier and more visible lay witness, as well as a much greater return on our investment for the progress of the Gospel and the Kingdom purposes of Christ.

Or consider the record of Christian history. Those first generations of believers apparently never had the benefit of sophisticated evangelism training programs, multimedia witnessing tools, carefully-coordinated evangelistic campaigns, or skilled musicians, technicians, and orators to bring to their neighbors the saving message of Jesus Christ. What they did possess was a vital spirituality, grounded in

the apostles' teaching and the nurturing strength of Christian community, by which they managed to go everywhere evangelizing with their message as they turned their world upside-down for Jesus Christ (Acts 2:42; 8:4; 17:6). Their experience has been repeated in every generation of Christians that has known revival and sustained evangelistic outreach, as historians such as Michael Green, J. Edwin Orr, and Iain Murray have shown.

How, then, can we change our focus and begin to concentrate on developing the inner resources of God's witnesses? What should that focus be? What disciplines must we seek to nurture? And where can we look for some models of how we might proceed and what we might expect from such a refocused effort?

We cannot here answer all those questions completely. Rather, my purpose is to mark out, through the example of one well-known, faithful witness, the broad parameters of a renewed focus on equipping, motivating, and deploying the lay people of our churches for the work of evangelism in our time.

### THE WITNESS OF DANIEL

That the prophet Daniel was a man of deep spirituality is beyond doubt. We see him standing courageously against the most powerful monarchs of his day, taking his stand for God's truth against the schemes and vanities of men. We find him often in prayer concerning God's will, both for himself and his day, as well as for beyond. We note his dependence upon Scripture, and we marvel at the sublimity and power of the revelations entrusted to him. We even hear a pagan noble woman describing him as a man in whom is the spirit of the Most Holy God (Daniel 5:11). Living in the midst of an age and a people who had ferociously demonstrated their scorn for his God, Daniel nevertheless managed to sustain a vital spirituality that set him

apart from the rest of his contemporaries and enabled him to serve the Kingdom purposes of God, despite frequent threats and opposition.

Daniel was also a powerful witness for the living God. His extended witness to Nebuchadnezzar led eventually to that king's conversion to God and publication of his mercy and grace throughout the Babylonian empire. Before Belshazzar he boldly denounced the monarch's arrogance and pronounced the judgment of God on his debauched rule. Warned against praying without prior permission, Daniel braved a den of lions to keep faith with God, and to exhibit faith before Darius and his court.

Obviously Daniel had not been trained, either as an evangelist or a preacher. The only tools at his disposal were his firm conviction of the absolute truth of God's Word, his unswerving sense of God's presence, and his perfect submission to the divine plan for his life. His life was an example of service and integrity. His spoken witness was direct and uncompromised. He showed no reluctance to affront the feelings of those whom he called to repentance and faith in the living God, realizing, no doubt, that jarred emotions can sometimes pry open the door to hardened hearts. His words were filled with warnings of judgment and the courage of his convictions, not blithely memorized outlines or clever illustrations. His example leaves no doubt as to what is intended by the exhortation, "Dare to be a Daniel."

The key to Daniel's effectiveness as a witness for the Lord lay in none of the things that evangelicals today might look to in order to re-ignite the flame of witness among lay men and women. Instead, Daniel's witness was fueled and driven above all by a vital spirituality, an inner life that was immersed in and obedient to God, and that had been shaped for his purposes by disciplined spiritual growth.

### THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

Five aspects of a vital spirituality combined to make Daniel a powerful witness for the Lord.

First, Daniel was fully yielded to the Spirit of God. We see this in his sensitivity to the leading of God. Offered the opportunity to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court, Daniel did not have to ponder his decision long (Daniel 1:3-21). A natural response of one whose home had just been destroyed, his place of worship ransacked and razed, and himself carried off into captivity by a pagan king, would have been either to spit in the face of that king's offer of a place in his court, or, in fear, to accept such an offer without question or qualification. Daniel's response, however, was to accept the king's offer, but strictly on terms agreeable with the Word of God. He would serve Nebuchadnezzar, but on his terms—and God's—and not those of a pagan monarch. He was led of God, and not by his fury, his fears, or the agenda of a pagan ruler, in responding to this opportunity.

He further showed sensitivity to the Spirit of God when he offered to tell and explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:16-24). With his own life, and that of his companions, at stake, he stepped forward to assist his anxious and impetuous master, without any indication that God would give such an answer to him. He trusted that God would provide for him and waited in prayer for the Spirit to make his leading known. He was not disappointed.

Daniel's sensitivity to the Spirit of God is perhaps best seen in his having been chosen as a vessel of revelation for some of the most extraordinary prophetic visions in the whole of Scripture, visions concerning the course of human history, the coming of God's Kingdom, and the work of the Son of Man. Something about Daniel's make-

up, his daily disciplines and routines, his mindset and outlook, and his particular place in history made him a most fit vessel for the Spirit's powerful work. What God had made of Daniel, that is, what Daniel had become in the hands of God—what he, by submitting to God's discipline, had grown to be—was exactly what the Spirit of God could fill and use in the circumstances in which he found himself.

The mission of the church—the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the work of building his church as the expression of that Kingdom on earth—requires in every age men and women who are filled with the Spirit of God. Apart from his powerful, convicting, life-changing, church-building work among us, nothing that we do will endure or have the desired effect. Today, when the fires of evangelism have grown cold, we need a fresh infusion, a new welling-up, of his presence in our midst. We need men and women who are filled with the Spirit, not just as an exercise in cleansing from sin, but as a way of life that makes them ever open, ever ready, and ever able to advance his Kingdom designs through their own lives and circumstances. These will be people whose lives are so constructed, whose ways are so developed and inclined, like radio receivers inalterably wired to a single frequency, to allow them to hear and heed every impulse of the indwelling Spirit as he guides them through their Kingdom callings in life.

According to the apostle Paul, such filling of the Holy Spirit is the experience of those who order their lives to accommodate it. We may identify four different attributes or disciplines of those who know the Spirit-filled life. First, they are not filled with the wasteful distractions and diversions of this world: "Do not get drunk with wine . . ." (Ephesians 5:18). Here wine is probably a symbol for anything in this world which, while not harmful in and of itself, can become a source of dissipation. Any number of worldly interests and occupations might equally substitute,

including, entertainments, work, hobbies, or material possessions. Those whose minds and hands are filled with such things cannot respond to the promptings of God's Spirit when he is calling them to Kingdom work. Distracted by lesser things, they fail to hear the still, small voice of the Lord and, instead, waste their time, energies, and resources in serving themselves or pursuing lesser ends than those of the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. We must learn to keep these good gifts in their proper place in relationship to the larger vision of God's calling for our lives. And we must hold on to none of them so tenaciously, nor dwell on them in our minds so constantly, that they dull our hearing when the Spirit of God is seeking to lead us.

Second, they will know the filling of God's Spirit who cultivate a dialog within themselves that centers on psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and that nurtures a heart of sweet singing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19). What's on your "spiritual screensaver"? A screensaver is a computer program that is designed to protect your monitor from having permanent images burned into it while you are away from your desk. When you let your computer rest while still on, the screensaver snaps into place with images of planets, fish, morphing geometric forms, or any of hundreds of other designs. You don't have to turn it on; your computer is programmed to default to your screensaver whenever you pause in your work for more than a particular period of time. But it does this only because you have installed the program to make it happen.

Our spirits have their own "screensaver" that snaps into place during those periods when we let our minds wander. A popular song, a recurrent fantasy, images of some favorite person, place, or activity—these are the kinds of things to which most people's minds resort in unguarded moments, because these are the things that we have allowed to configure our subconscious mind.

Paul counsels us instead so to discipline our minds and hearts that they will “rest” instead on spiritual matters. We must train our minds to settle naturally into choruses of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs—channels of openness to God—during those moments of rest in our daily routine. By working consciously and deliberately to learn the music of Zion, and by consistently recalling and singing that music in our conscious moments, we will find that our spirits will rest in this mode more readily than in any of the paltry diversions of mundane life. And, when this kind of activity comes more and more to characterize our *resting* moments, we can be sure that, in our *active* duties, we will be much more inclined to respond positively to the leading of God’s Spirit.

A third discipline that conduces to the filling of the Holy Spirit is thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:20). Paul charges us always to give thanks in all things in order to know the filling of the Spirit of God. How difficult it is for the Spirit to fill, guide, and use those who react to their circumstances with grumbling and complaining, and with fears and doubts! It is easy to give thanks when we *feel* thankful. But if we give thanks only at such times, very little in the way of faith is required of or exercised by us. To give thanks always, in all things, even the hard and unpleasant things, is to express our confidence in the promise of God that he is working *all* things together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28). In such people, people who are given to thanksgiving in all things, the Spirit of God is more likely to bear fruit, express his presence in the form of spiritual gifts, and manifest the power essential to effective witness for Christ.

Finally, they will know the filling of the Holy Spirit whose posture toward others is one of readiness to serve (Ephesians 5:21). The Spirit is given to the church in order to mobilize us for ministry to one another and to the

watching world. As long as our outlook on the Christian life is one of always seeking someone to minister to us, we deny the mission of the Spirit and quench his mighty presence in us. To know the filling of the Spirit we must go ever equipped with our towel and basin, looking for the next opportunity to be used of God as agents of his grace (John 13:1-15). As we submit to one another, paying attention to the needs of others and looking for ways to help, we will find the Spirit of God giving us insight, compassion, and the wherewithal to serve with greater and greater consistency. Applied to our lives in the world, this will mean that we will be more and more able to spot the open doors for witness when the Lord is directing us to go through them, and we will have the grace and wisdom to know what and how much to say on any particular occasion.

Daniel knew the filling of God’s Spirit and was greatly used as a witness for the Lord. In his daily life he maintained the kinds of disciplines and reflected the kind of order and practice that Paul described as characteristic of those in whom the Spirit of God was making himself known with power. Until we, too, begin to adopt those disciplines and to bring our lives, by God’s grace, into conformity with that kind of practice, we shall not know the Spirit’s powerful presence and work within us to the extent that Daniel and Paul did, and our witness for Christ will suffer as a result.

### THE WORD OF GOD

Daniel was an effective witness for the Lord because he knew and trusted in the Word of God. In many ways Daniel’s familiarity with God’s Word was apparent. Consider, first of all, his response to Nebuchadnezzar’s plan in chapter one. Was Daniel merely being stubborn in insisting on a diet of vegetables and water, instead of the king’s portion? More likely, he was trying to do what he could to

hold to the ways of God in his situation. He doubtless knew of Solomon's warning about eating the king's portion, how that could easily lead to compromise of convictions (Proverbs 23:1-3). He may also have been trying to keep as close as possible to the Word of God through the prophet Ezekiel—a contemporary of Daniel, whose preaching he would no doubt have heard—concerning the nature of Israel's diet while in captivity (Ezekiel 4:9-13). While it would have been too much to ask the Babylonians to make him bread comprised of vegetables, he could at least get as close to that as possible by requesting only vegetables and water.

We shall see later that Daniel's prayers were also salted with references to and quotes from the Word of God. His reading and study of the Word of God appears to have been very broad, and his acceptance of its teaching was without question. He was a man of God's Word.

We can perhaps get something of a closer look at Daniel's approach to God's Word from his account in Daniel 9. First, we observe that Daniel read *reflectively*. That is, he read and studied his Bible with one eye on it and one on himself and his world. He did not merely note, from his reading of Jeremiah 25, that seventy years were appointed for Israel to fulfill captivity in Babylon, treating these words like some curious theological fact and nothing more. Instead, he thought back over his own time in Babylon and calculated the years he had been there—seventy years! Suddenly this rather incidental word of Biblical prophecy took on new relevance. Daniel saw that it had direct and immediate application to him and his generation.

This led, in the second place, to his reading the Word *personally*, that is, with a view to what it required of him. Daniel knew that God only delivered those who turned to him in repentance and faith, calling upon him to fulfill his promises to his people. So he prepared himself according-

ly, entering into a period of fasting and prayer which included confession of sin and supplication of the Lord's mercy. In addition, he called upon God to be faithful to his covenant and to provide deliverance for his people according to his Word. Daniel's understanding of the Bible led to direct action on his part, in the form of prayer and fasting, to fulfill the requirements of that Word and to prepare for its blessing.

Finally, Daniel read God's Word *expectantly*, that is, fully confident that God would do what he had written in his Word. And, *when* he acted, Daniel wanted to make certain that he was among those who had prepared themselves through faith and obedience to receive the blessing.

How different was Daniel's approach to the reading and study of Scripture from what we are used to today. For too many of us, our study of the Bible is primarily an academic exercise. Too often we fail to discern the application of God's Word to our daily lives, to the times in which we live, and to the continuing unfolding of God's covenant. For instance, how many of us actually believe that the night is coming when no man shall work, and that we must do the work of the Kingdom now, while it is day? (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) As a result, while our reading and study may bring us a measure of inward peace and satisfaction, it fails to lead us to take the kinds of action that demonstrate faith in God and that put us in the stream of his sovereign action in history. More than this is required if we are to stand boldly for the Lord as witnesses for him. We cannot expect our witness for the Lord to rise to the level of Daniel's until our study of God's Word resembles his more completely.

#### PRAYER

Daniel was a man of prayer. Together with the filling of the Spirit and the Word of God, prayer gave Daniel a depth and reality of communion with God that made his a pow-



erful witness in his day. We should note four aspects of Daniel's prayer life which can benefit us in our witness to the Lord.

First, let's consider the *elements* of Daniel's prayer. Five stand out—praise (2:20-23), confession of God's greatness (9:4, 7, 9), acknowledgment of God's covenant faithfulness (9:11-15), confession of sin (9:4-8, 10, 11, 15), and supplication (9:16-19). We sometimes do well with the first and last of these; but the middle three hardly ever appear in our prayers. Yet these were the very elements of prayer that helped Daniel to keep sight of the God he served, his past deliverance of his people, his faithfulness to his Word, and his sovereign might. They also served as means for him to express his own faith in God and his Word and, thus, to be suited through prayer for service in God's economy.

Second, notice the *tone* of Daniel's prayers. Here is no dry rehearsing of mere rote prayers, accumulated lists, or catchy formulas of prayer. Here we see real passion in prayer—a sense of anticipation, urgency, and deep longing, perhaps best expressed by the oft-repeated, "O God!" Daniel's heart, as much as his head, was in his prayers.

Third, we cannot fail to comment on the *frequency* of Daniel's prayer. He did not pray only when circumstances presented a need, or when preparing for God to act. In Daniel 6:10 we read that Daniel was accustomed to praying three times a day, a practice he may have learned from the Psalms (Psalm 55:16-17; 119:164). Even though he was a busy man, Daniel managed to set aside regular time each day to retire to a private place to give praise and thanks to God. Of this practice, which was also the practice of the apostles (Acts 3:1; 10:9) and the early church, we know next to nothing in our day, having allowed the world to mold us according to its pace and agenda, rather than we it. For most of us, if we are able to squeeze a few minutes of prayer into the beginning or end of each day, this tends to

suffice. Such praying will not prepare us to be witnesses for Christ after the manner of Daniel.

Finally, let us observe that Daniel's prayers were filled with references to and quotations from the Word of God. It is not too much to say that the Bible appears to have been Daniel's guide to prayer. We find him referring to Psalm 113:1-2 (Daniel 2:20), Job 12:13 (Daniel 2:20), 1 Kings 8:47 (Daniel 9:5), as well as to various aspects of God's dealings with his people in the past (Daniel 9). It's apparent that Daniel felt his prayers were more likely to be answered in the way he sought when he used the very words of God to guide him in his moments before the throne of grace.

How might Daniel's example in prayer benefit us and help us to be better fitted for service as witnesses for Jesus Christ? Might not we expect to grow in our knowledge of and love for the Lord if our manner of praying were more along the lines of Daniel's? And might we not expect that such praying would affect the consistency and power of our witness for the Lord?

### FASTING

Fourth, we note fasting in Daniel's panoply of spiritual resources (Daniel 9:3). Daniel fasted to focus his prayer at a critical time to demonstrate his trust in the Lord and confidence in his Word and to express repentance for his and Israel's sins. The example of many biblical saints commends fasting. It is expected by the Lord of his followers (Note that, in Matthew 6:16, Jesus did not say "if you fast," but "whenever."). The Scriptures give us many occasions for which fasting is appropriate. These include, times of repentance (Jonah 3; Nehemiah 1), preparation for ministry (Ezra 8:21; Matthew 4; Acts 14:23), the search for God's will (Acts 13), intercession for others (Psalm 35:13), for strength in the midst of affliction (Psalm 109:21-25), set-

ting aside resources for the needy (Isaiah 58:6-11), and as an exercise of routine spiritual discipline (Mark 2:18-20). The focus on the Lord and on the reliance on the resources of his Spirit that are achieved through fasting can strengthen our spirits for the work of bearing witness to the Lord.

### VISION

Finally, Daniel was sustained in his witness by a compelling vision of the Lord and his Kingdom. As he was carried into Babylon from Jerusalem, Daniel's faith was not centered in his own personal dilemma or needs. He brought with him into captivity a basic understanding of God's rule over all that he had made, as well as of his promises of a future blessing for all the families of the earth. That basic understanding was greatly augmented by his experience in captivity. We can see this in several ways.

First, Daniel was made to understand that God's Kingdom would be expressed in a new and powerful way in human history (Daniel 2:36-45). Daniel had learned to think of God as ruling from heaven over the affairs of the creation (cf. Psalm 104). He would even have known that God would one day manifest his Kingdom on earth through a Davidic line, and that his would be a Kingdom in which righteousness and peace would continue to expand without end (2 Samuel 7:8-16; Isaiah 9:1-7). But the vision which God gave through Nebuchadnezzar cemented in Daniel's mind a vision of God's Kingdom overwhelming and destroying all the kingdoms of men until it spread and grew to fill the whole earth.

What confidence this must have inspired in the prophet as he undertook his daily tasks in the courts of these temporal monarchs. What boldness this vision seemed to have injected into Daniel's witness for the Lord. In a day when Christian vision seems all too often limited to personal wellbeing and to fevered cries for political

activity we must understand that we serve an infinitely powerful King. Nothing can resist his Kingdom. Through the progress of the Gospel, it overcomes every foe.

In addition, Daniel was made to understand that this Kingdom would be given to "one like a son of man," that he, in turn, would bestow it on "the saints of the Most High," and that, although they would face severe persecution from secular authorities, they would ultimately prevail, holding on to the Kingdom with an unbreakable tenacity, shining like stars in the heavens as they led others to find righteousness from God, and ultimately seeing and sharing in the total victory of their sovereign Lord (Daniel 7:13-27; 12:3). No wonder Daniel could speak with such confidence and boldness before the most powerful secular rulers of his generation. No wonder he was not intimidated by their threats. He knew where they and their kingdoms stood in the larger scheme of things; and he knew that as long as he faithfully represented his eternal sovereign, no ultimate harm could possibly come to him.

### CONCLUSION

Daniel's vision of the Kingdom of God was perhaps the crowning element in his spiritual wardrobe. Filled with the Spirit of God, rooted and grounded in God's Word, disciplined in prayer and fasting, and motivated by a vision of the sovereign God, Daniel could not help but speak up and proclaim the truth and demands of God for wretched and rebellious men. Powerfully molded in the inner man, Daniel's outward life flowed as the temporal expression of eternal realities that had taken him captive, heart, soul, mind, and strength. What he lacked in evangelistic training, techniques, and tools he more than made up for in what Francis Schaeffer called "true spirituality."

In our day, we treat the disciplines of the spiritual life like vitamin pills. Yes, we must take them daily, for they are

necessary supplements to Bible study, evangelism training courses, preaching, and fellowship with other Christians. We could probably do without them—and, sadly, far too many Christians do—but it's best to take at least something every day, just for good measure.

We know next to nothing of the feast of spiritual vitality that comes from a life anchored to, organized by, and consistently expressive of the kinds of inward spiritual conviction and vitality that Daniel manifested. It is not because we are unaware of these disciplines, or because we do not consider them to be important to the life of faith. It's just that, as far as our witness for Christ is concerned, they have not been considered the primary source of power and consistency for this calling. Church members are encouraged to be more faithful in attending Sunday school, small groups, evangelism training, and outreach than in developing the kind of disciplined spirituality that characterized Daniel and that has been a hallmark of faithful witnesses for Christ in every generation. Let pastors and elders begin to train the people of God for vital spirituality, for a daily life in Christ that is grounded in Scripture, empowered by God's Spirit, framed out by prayer and fasting, and driven by a vision of a Kingdom that cannot fail. Let pastors and elders begin to hold their people accountable for the development and maintenance of such a lifestyle, and we will begin to see more in the way of a spontaneous, powerful, and sustained witness for our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we begin again to hear the call for more active involvement of the laity in witnessing for Christ, let us consider how we might focus more on the *inner* resources of vital spirituality as the key to consistency and effectiveness in this great calling. For without strength of Spirit in the inner person, no amount of external helps will suffice to keep us active and on the march in making God's Good

News known to the lost men and women of our generation.

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