

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MIND ASSISTING THE SPIRIT

If a believer desires to walk according to the spirit, he must know the laws of the spirit. Only those who know the laws of the spirit are able to understand the various senses of the spirit and their meaning and walk according to the demand of the senses in the spirit. All of the demands of the spirit are expressed through its senses. Ignoring the senses of the spirit will cause us to miss the demands of our spirit. Hence, understanding and walking according to the laws of the spirit are very crucial in our spiritual life.

However, in addition to understanding the laws of the spirit, believers who walk according to the spirit have to know another matter: the principle of the mind assisting the spirit. This principle is no less important than the laws of the spirit. In the pathway of walking according to the spirit, this principle has to be constantly applied. Understanding the laws of the spirit without understanding the principle of the mind assisting the spirit will still cause us to fail.

The laws of the spirit only explain to us the various senses of the spirit, their significance, and the way to fulfill their demands. Whenever we have the sense of the spirit, we can walk according to the sense of the spirit. If the condition is normal, we can walk accordingly; if abnormal, we can adjust our way of living. But we may not always have the sense of the spirit. The spirit may not always speak; sometimes it remains silent. In the experiences of many believers, the spirit often does not speak for many days. At this time, it seems that the spirit is inactive and sleeping within us. If the spirit remains inactive for a few days, should we not do anything for a few days and wait until the spirit moves? Should we sit quietly for a few days without praying, reading the Word, and working? Our spiritual common sense will answer, no, we should not waste time. However, if we do anything, are we not doing it outside of the spirit and in the flesh?

This is when we should apply the principle of the mind assisting the spirit. How does the mind support the spirit? When the spirit is sleeping, we should use our mind to work in place of the spirit, and before very long, the spirit will also join in to work. The mind and the spirit are closely related; they are a help to each other. Many times the spirit gives forth a sense which makes the mind understand and makes the person take action. However, sometimes the spirit does not move. Therefore, it is necessary for the believer to activate the spirit by exercising his mind. When the spirit does not move, the mind must activate the spirit. After the spirit moves, the believers are able to move according to the spirit. Activating the spirit by the mind is called the principle of the mind assisting the spirit. There is a principle in the spiritual life: in the beginning we should use the sense of the spirit to perceive the knowledge given to us by God; later we should guard and apply this knowledge with our mind. For instance, according to previous knowledge from God, if you see a great need, you should pray and ask God to meet this need. However, when you see a particular need, your spirit may not have a sense to pray. What should you do? You should apply your mind to pray; do not wait for the sense of the spirit to pray. All needs are a call to prayer. If in the beginning you ignore the silence of the spirit and keep on praying, before long you will sense something rising up within you—your spirit is now joining in the praying.

When our spirit is oppressed by Satan, or when we are entangled by our natural life, we sometimes do not even sense where our spirit is. The spirit sinks to such a low position

that we do not even have any sensation. We can sense our soul and body, but the position of the spirit seems void. What should we do? If we wait for the sense of the spirit to pray, there probably will not be an opportunity for prayer, and the spirit will also not be liberated. Therefore, the way to pray is according to the truth which we know and remember in our mind, standing against the principality of darkness. Although we do not sense the spirit, we should pray according to what we know in our mind. This activity of the mind will stimulate the spirit to move.

The prayer by understanding (1 Cor. 14:15) will stir up the spirit. Although at the beginning it may seem that we are only praying with empty and rather meaningless words, if we exercise our mind to resist by praying, the spirit will ascend after a while. Then both the spirit and mind will cooperate to work. Since we have learned some truths about the battle and the way to pray, even though we do not sense our spirit, we can still use our mind so that the spirit will join in because of the stirring in our mind. As soon as the spirit comes, we will feel that our prayer is very meaningful and free. The harmonious co-laboring of the spirit and mind is a normal state of the spiritual life.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In spiritual warfare, a believer does not always attack the enemy because he forgets the principle of the cooperation of the spirit and the mind. Therefore, he waits for "God's burden." He thinks that he does not have the "sense" to fight and should wait until he has such a sense before attacking the enemy with prayers. If he would merely pray according to his mind for a while, the sense in the spirit will immediately respond. We already know how wicked the evil spirit is and how he damages both the Lord's children and worldly people. We also clearly know that we should oppose him by prayer to speed him to the abyss. Since this is our realization, we should not wait for a sense in the spirit to pray. Even though we have no feelings, we have to pray. We should first use our mind to initiate the prayer, using words which we know curse the evil spirit; then our spirit will move, and the words with which we have cursed him will be backed up by the power of the spirit. In the morning, for example, the Holy Spirit may grant us a considerable anointing in the spirit to curse the evil spirit, but by noontime we may have lost this anointing. What should we do then? We must apply our mind to act in the same way that our spirit acted in the morning. This is a spiritual principle. What has been obtained in the spirit must be guarded and applied by the mind.

RAPTURE

It is the same with the faith of rapture. In the beginning we acquired "the spirit of rapture," but before long we may feel as if our spirit is empty, as if we do not have any sense concerning the imminence of the Lord's coming and the reality of our rapture. At this time we should remember the principle of the mind cooperating with the spirit. We should pray with the mind in the absence of a sense in the spirit. If we simply expect our spirit to be filled again with the sense of rapture, we will not acquire it. We have to consider and pray according to what we know in our mind, then what we acquired previously will fill our spirit.

PREACHING

This principle must not be forgotten in the spreading of God's truth. We know that the truths we learned in the old days are just stored in our brain. If we impart them to people only from our mind, there will not be any spiritual effect. In the beginning we no doubt knew these truths in the spirit, but now it seems as if the spirit has faded and

there is only the memory. What should we do to have our spirit once again filled with these truths in order to spread these truths to others from our spirit? We can do nothing except exercise our mind. We should reconsider these truths and pray again before God, using these truths as the center. Before long, we will be filled again in our spirit as before. The truths were originally acquired in the spirit and preserved in our mind. Now because of our prayer according to the mind, they reenter our spirit. In this way we are able to once again proclaim the truths which we have known in our spirit.

INTERCESSION

We all know that intercession is a very crucial matter. We often have time for intercession but do not have the inspiration of the spirit. We do not know what we should pray for. This does not mean that we do not need to intercede and can vainly spend our time for other purposes. Rather, it means that we should use our mind to intercede, hoping to stimulate the collaboration of the spirit. Hence, at this moment we should exercise our mind to consider whether our friends, family, and co-workers have any need. When we think of a need, we should intercede for it. If the spirit within us still remains cold, we should realize that He does not want us to pray for that matter. It may occur to us that the church in our locality has some deficiencies, that the churches in all the localities are in the midst of some temptation, that the Lord's work in certain areas is hindered, or that God's children have a need of some particular truth. Once we think of a certain item, we should intercede for it. If our spirit still does not respond after a while, and we are still praying with our mind, we should realize that the Lord does not want us to pray for this matter either. If there is the anointing of the Holy Spirit as we are praying for another matter and the sense of our spirit also responds, we should know that we have touched and prayed for the appropriate item. The principle that we should use is of the mind assisting the spirit to locate its inclination. Sometimes we only need to use our mind to consider a little, and the spirit responds; sometimes, however, we have to wait for a while before the spirit agrees with us, because our mind is too narrow, and we may not quickly realize through the spirit what the Holy Spirit delights in. Sometimes God desires to enlarge the scope of our prayers; He desires us to pray for the nation so that all of Satan's work behind the scenes will fail. He may want us to pray for all the sinners in the world or for the whole church. If our mind is only set on the present, it will take some time before these things occur to us and for us to arrive at the prayer in which the Holy Spirit is in one accord with the mind. After we have obtained the cooperation of the sense of the spirit, we should pour out all the burdens of the spirit for this matter. We should pray for the various aspects of this matter in a detailed and adequate way until our spirit is unloaded. Then we can continue to intercede for other items.

This is one of the principles in our spiritual life. Whatever new prayers God gives to us, we obtain them in our spirit. But after a period of time, we cannot expect God to fill our spirit with this new prayer again. We have to continue praying with our mind, regardless of our feelings. Eventually we will obtain this prayer again in our spirit.

KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

We already know that God's leadings are not always "direct"; rather, some are "indirect." In His direct leading, God's Spirit moves in our spirit so that we may know His will. We only need to pay attention to the motion in our spirit to know the will of God. However, of all that we should do in our lifetime, not everything will be directly told to us from God. There are many needs which we see. What should we do concerning them? For example, we may be invited to a place to work, or something else may suddenly happen

to us. This is not initiated directly from the spirit, but it reaches us through others. Our mind may realize the importance of solving this matter, but our spirit may not be responsive. What should we do to obtain God's leading? After something happens, we should ask God to lead us in the spirit; this is called indirect leading.

This is the time for the mind to assist the spirit. When there is no stirring in his spirit, a believer should use his mind. If the spirit continuously uttered its intention, it would not be necessary for the mind to assist the spirit. Since, however, the spirit is sometimes silent, the mind has to fill the position of the spirit. At such a time, the believer should use his mind to consider and ponder his doubts and difficulties before God. Although his prayer, consideration, and pondering all issue from his mind, after a while, the believer will see that his spirit also joins into his prayer, consideration, and pondering. When he senses the spirit, which was previously silent, the Holy Spirit will lead him in the spirit before too long. In this way we can use our mind to assist the spirit. We should not think that something should not be done because the spirit does not move; rather, we should "draw up" our spirit with our mind to make it alive, and let it resolve whether the matter is according to God's will.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SPIRIT'S ACTIVITIES

In our spiritual life there are many things that should be done. For this reason, the work of the mind cannot be neglected. Being filled in our spirit is different from the ocean tide coming in and going out at will. To be filled in the spirit, we must fulfill its requirement. This implies that the mind must initiate what the spirit is ready to do but has not yet begun. If we sit and wait for the sense of the spirit, it will never come. Neither should we overemphasize the work of the mind. We should know that only the activities that are done in the spirit have spiritual value; therefore, we should not walk according to the mind. Then why do we use the mind? We use the mind, but it is not the goal. Rather, our purpose is to stir up the spirit to do the work. The spirit must be the one who works. Therefore, the spirit is still very crucial. Employing the mind is simply for stirring up the work of the spirit. Therefore, when we apply the mind to draw up the spirit, if there is neither a response nor an experience of the anointing after a period of time, the work of the mind in that regard should cease and turn in another direction. In spiritual warfare as well, if we have a sense of "void" within us for a long period and no sense of the spirit, we should stop; however, we should not stop simply because of the impatience of our flesh. Although sometimes we are weary, we know that we should continue. At other times we know that we should stop. There is no fixed law. For the mind to assist the spirit in this way is like priming a mechanical pump. Some pumps require a cup of water to be poured in first in order to create some suction power which draws the water up as we are pumping. The relationship of our mind to the spirit is the same as the cup of water to the pump. If we do not use a cup of water as a starter, water cannot be drawn up; similarly, if we do not initiate with our mind, the spirit will not rise up. If we do not use the mind to initiate prayer, it is like a person who does not pour in a cup of water, and after pumping a couple of times, says that there is no water in the well.

Truly there are differences in the work of our spirit. Sometimes it is as strong as a lion, and sometimes it is as indecisive as a babe. When our spirit is weak and cannot help itself, the mind should act as the spirit's nursing mother to look after it. The mind cannot replace the spirit, but it can assist the spirit to enliven it. When the spirit descends from its controlling position, the believer should use the power of the mind to pray and raise it up again. Should the spirit sink because of oppression, the believer should use his mind to examine the condition and then pray strongly until the spirit

risers up to be liberated again. A spiritual mind can maintain the tranquil position of the spirit. The mind can restrict excessive activities of the spirit and also uplift an excessively depressed spirit.

Simply speaking, our spirit can only be filled again by the activities of our mind (in the spiritual realm). In principle, whatever we have done in the spirit, we should now do with our mind. Then when the Holy Spirit anoints us, it confirms that we are doing it in the spirit. In the beginning of a certain situation, you may not have any sense of the spirit. However, once you acquire the sense of the spirit, this indicates that the spirit wanted to work this way, but it was too weak to do so. Through the assistance of the mind, it is able to express what it previously was unable to express. Whatever we need in the spirit can be obtained by simply considering in our mind and praying. In this way we will be filled in spirit. Regarding assisting the spirit, another point must be observed: spiritual warfare involves spirit warring with spirit. When our spirit wrestles with the evil spirit, the strength of our entire being is one with the spirit for the battle. The most important part is our mind. The entire strength of the spirit and the mind must be united together for the attack. If the spirit becomes suppressed and loses its strength to resist, the mind should continually fight for the spirit. When the mind fights by praying, resisting, and opposing, the spirit will receive a supply to rise up once again for the battle.

THE CONDITION OF THE MIND

Because the mind can assist the spirit, even though its position is much lower than the spirit, a believer must keep his mind in a normal condition to enable it to search the interpretation of the spirit and assist in any weakness of the spirit. The activities of the spirit are governed by their laws. Likewise, the activities of the mind are governed by their particular laws. When the mind is free to work, the burden is light. Should it become stretched (like one stretches a sling), it cannot work freely. The enemy knows that we need the mind to assist the spirit in order to walk according to the spirit. Therefore, he always presses us, keeping our mind excessively stretched and unable to function normally in order that it will not be able to assist the spirit when it is weak.

Moreover, our mind is not simply an organ to assist the spirit; we also obtain light through it. The Holy Spirit of God gives light to the mind through our spirit. If the mind is exercised excessively, there is no possibility for it to receive light from the Holy Spirit. The evil spirit knows that if our mind is in darkness, our whole being will also be in darkness. Therefore, it endeavors to cause us to think excessively so that we cannot be quieted to work. As a believer walks according to the spirit, he must prohibit his mind from continually turning. Concentrating on one theme, anxiety, sorrow, or overly considering what the will of God is, makes the mind unable to bear the burden and work. Only by maintaining a quiet and peaceful mind can one walk according to the spirit.

Since the mind occupies such an important position, when working with others, a believer must be cautious not to interrupt the thoughts of his brother. Breaking a train of thought can cause the mind to suffer. When the Holy Spirit leads a believer to consider a matter through the spirit, an interruption by others is a very fearful thing. If a thought is interrupted, the mind will be stretched, and consequently, it is harder to work with the spirit. Hence, not only should we keep our mind free, we should also take care of the mind of our brothers. Before speaking to a brother, we should first check the trend of his thought and then speak to him. Otherwise, we will cause him to suffer.