**Lesson 12**

**The Spirit Teaching**

Having covered the ministries of the Holy Spirit in the process of Regeneration, we now move on to the various ministries of the Spirit after the soul receives saving faith . . . the process of Sanctification. Sanctification is the process that begins after our conversion and continues for the remainder of our natural lives. Sanctification is the process in which the Holy Spirit conforms and transforms us into the image of our Savior in holiness.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit post-conversion is His teaching ministry.

***John 14:26— 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 that I said to you.***

There are three fulfillments of Jesus’ promise in John 14:26.

1. Those words received their first fulfillment in the men to whom they were immediately addressed: the Apostles were so filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit that their proclamation of the gospel was without flaw and their writings without error. Those original ambassadors of Christ were so taught by the Third Person in the Trinity that what they delivered was the very mind of God.

2. The *second* fulfillment of the Savior’s promise has been in those men whom He called to preach His gospel throughout the Christian era. No new revelations have been made to them, but they were, and are, according to their varied measure and the particular work assigned to them, so enlightened by the Spirit that the truth of God has been faithfully preached by them.

3. The third and widest application of our Lord’s words are unto the entire household of faith, and it is in this sense we shall now consider them.

**Believers are taught by the Spirit**

***Isaiah 54:13— All your sons will be taught of the LORD; And the well-being of your sons will be great.***

***John 6:45— It is written in the prophets, 'and they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.***

This is one of the great distinguishing marks of the regenerate: all of them are “***taught of the LORD***.”

* There are multitudes of unregenerate religionists who are taught, numbers of them well taught, in the letter of the Scriptures. They are thoroughly versed in the historical facts and doctrines of Christianity, but their instruction came only from human media—parents, Sunday School teachers, or through reading religious books. Their intellectual knowledge of spiritual things is considerable, sound, and clear; yet is it unaccompanied by any heavenly unction, saving power, or transforming effects.
* In like manner, there are thousands of preachers who abhor the errors of “Modernists” and who contend earnestly for the faith. They were taught in Bible Institutes and theological schools, yet it is to be feared that many of them are total strangers to a miracle of grace being wrought in the heart. How it behooves each of us to test ourselves rigidly at this point!

**A word of caution**

It is a common fact of observation, which anyone may test for himself, that a very large percentage of those who constitute the membership of evangelical denominations were first taken there in childhood by their parents. The great majority in the Presbyterian churches today had a father or mother who was a Presbyterian and who instructed the offspring in their beliefs. The same is true of Baptists, the Methodists, and others.

Many professing Christians have been brought up to believe in the doctrines and religious customs of their ancestors. Now, we are far from saying that all the knowledge possessed of divine things is but traditional and theoretical. No indeed. Yet we do say that such a training in the letter of the truth makes it more difficult, and calls for a more careful self-examination, to ascertain whether or not he has been taught of the Lord.

**In other words**, being raised in the church and having a right and thorough understanding of the Bible and sound doctrine places such a person in a precarious position.

Though we do not believe that grace runs in the blood, yet we are convinced that, as a general rule, God does place His elect in families where at least one of the parents loves and seeks to serve Him, and where that elect soul will be nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

* At least three-fourths of those Christians whom the writer has met and had opportunity to question, had a praying and Scripture-reading father or mother.
* Yet, on the other hand, we are obliged to acknowledge that three-fourths of the empty professors we have encountered also had religious parents, who sent them to Sunday School and sought to have them trained in their beliefs; and these now rest upon their intellectual knowledge of the truth, and mistake it for a saving experience of the same.
* And it is this class which it is the hardest to reach: it is much more difficult to persuade such to examine themselves as to whether or not they have been taught of God, than it is those who make no profession at all.

**Question:** Pink is saying that it is more difficult to persuade a “believing unbeliever” to examine himself to see if he has saving faith than an “unbelieving unbeliever.” Do you agree? Why is this?

**Tests for the Spirit’s Teaching**

It should strike fear in the heart of every Christian to think that he or she is somehow self-deceived into believing that he or she is in Christ, when, in fact, they might not be. So, the obvious question is, “how may I know whether or not my teaching has been by the Holy Spirit?

The answer to this plea is, “by the effects produced.”

**First**, that spiritual knowledge which the teaching of the Holy Spirit imparts is an *operative* knowledge. It is not merely a piece of information that adds to our mental store, but is a species of inspiration that stirs the soul into action.

* The light that the Spirit imparts reaches the heart.
* It warms the heart and sets it on fire for God.
* It masters the heart and brings it into allegiance to God.
* It molds the heart, and stamps upon it the image of God.
* Here, then, is a sure test: how far does the teaching you have received, the knowledge of divine things you possess, *affect your heart*?

**Second**, that knowledge which the teaching of the Spirit imparts is *a soul-humbling* knowledge. That *spiritual* knowledge which comes from God reveals to a man his empty conceits, his ignorance and worthlessness, and abases him.

* The teaching of the Spirit reveals our sinfulness and vileness, our lack of conformity to Christ, our unholiness; and makes a man little in his own eyes.

**Third**, that knowledge which the teaching of the Holy Spirit imparts is a *world-despising* knowledge. It makes a man have poor, low, mean thoughts of those things that his unregenerate fellows (and that he himself, formerly) so highly esteem.

* It opens his eyes to see the transitoriness and comparative worthlessness of earthly honors, riches, and fame.
* It makes him perceive that all under the sun is but vanity and vexation of spirit.

**Fourth**, the knowledge that the teaching of the Spirit imparts is a *transforming* knowledge. The light of God shows how far, far short we come of the standard Holy Writ reveals and stirs us unto holy endeavors to lay aside every hindering weight and run with patience the race set before us.

* The teaching of the Spirit causes us to ***deny ungodliness and worldly lusts***, and to ***live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*** (Titus 2:12).

**The Spirit Applies Knowledge to the Heart**

A natural and intellectual knowledge of divine things may be obtained through men, but a spiritual and experiential knowledge of them can only be communicated by God Himself.

* You may devote yourself to the study of the Scriptures in the same ways you would to the study of some science or the mastering of a foreign language; by diligent application, persevering effort, and consulting works of reference (commentators, etc.).
* You may steadily acquire a comprehensive and accurate acquaintance with the letter of God’s Word, and become an able expositor thereof.
* But in you own strength you cannot obtain a heart-affecting, a heart-purifying, and a heart-molding knowledge thereof. None but the Spirit of truth can write God’s Law on you heart, stamp God’s image upon your soul, and sanctify you by the truth.

Conscience informs you that you are a sinner; the preacher may convince you that without Christ you are eternally lost—but neither is sufficient to move you to receive Him as your Lord and Savior.

Something more is required above and beyond the outward presentation of the truth.

* There must be the inward application of it to the heart with divine power if the will is to be moved.
* And that is what the teaching of the Spirit consists of: it is an effectual communication of the Word that works powerfully within the soul.

Why is it that so many professing Christians change their view so easily and quickly? What is the reason there are so many thousands of unstable souls who are “***tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;***” ***(Eph 4:14)***?

Why is it that this year they sit under a man who preaches the truth and claim to believe and enjoy his messages; while next year they attend the ministry of a man of error and heartily embrace his opinions? It must be because they were never taught of the Spirit.

As the apostle John warns his flock . . .

***1 John 2:19— They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.***

Why is it that so many professing Christians are unfruitful?

* Month after month, year after year, they faithfully attend worship services, and yet remain unchanged.
* Their store of religious information is greatly increased, their intellectual knowledge of the truth is much advanced, but their lives are not transformed.
* There is no denying of self, taking up their cross, and following a despised Christ along the narrow way of personal holiness.
* There is no humble self-abasement, no mourning over or efforts to mortify indwelling sin.
* There is no deepening love for Christ, evidenced by a running in the way of His commandments.
* Such people are “***ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth***” (**2 Timothy 3:7**), i.e., that “knowledge” which is vital, experiential, affecting, and transforming.
* They are not taught by the Spirit.

Why is it in times of temptation and death that so many despair? Because their house is not built upon the Rock.

A saving knowledge is not a knowledge of divine things but is a divinely-imparted knowledge. It not only has God for its Object, but God for its Author. There must be not only a knowledge of spiritual things, but a spiritual knowledge of spiritual things.

**What does the Spirit teach?**

***First***, He reveals to the soul “the exceeding sinfulness of sin” (Rom 7:13), so that it is filled with horror and anguish at its baseness, its excuselessness, its turpitude.

***Second***, the Spirit reveals to the soul the utter futility of all efforts to save itself.

* The first effect of conviction in an awakened conscience is to attempt the rectification of all that now appears wrong in the conduct.
* A diligent effort is put forth to make amends for past offenses, painful penances are readily submitted to, and the outward duties of religion are given earnest attendance.
* But by the teaching of the Spirit the heart is drawn off from resting in works of righteousness that we have done (Titus 3:5)—and this, by His giving increasing light, so that the convicted soul now perceives he is a mass of corruption within, that his very prayers are polluted by selfish motives, and that unless *God* will save him, his case is beyond all hope.

***Third***, the Spirit reveals to the soul the suitability and sufficiency of Christ to meet its desperate needs.

* It is an important branch of the Spirit’s teaching to open the gospel to those whom He has quickened, drawn, and converted— to open their understanding and affections to take in the precious contents of the gospel. ***He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.*** **(John 16:14)**.
* This is His prime function: to magnify Christ in the esteem of “***His own***.” The Spirit teaches the believer many things, but His supreme subject is *Christ*.
* The apostle John makes this point regarding the teaching of the Spirit in 1 John 4:1-3 . . .

***1 John 4:1-3— 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.***

The Spirit *continues to teach* the regenerate throughout the remainder of their lives. He gives them a fuller and deeper realization of their own native depravity, convincing them that in the flesh there dwells no good thing, and gradually weaning them from all expectation of improving the same. He reveals to them “the beauty of holiness,” and causes them to pant after and strive for an increasing measure of the same. He teaches them the supreme importance of *inward piety*.

**Question:** The longer you live the Christian life the more you witness men and women in the church turning away from God and departing the faith. In some instances, the departures are truly shocking . . . men and women who outwardly appeared to be devout and devoted to the Lord who suddenly announce that they no longer believe. And we invariably ask, “how could such a godly person, who appeared to love the Lord, suddenly turn away and deny the faith???” Based upon what you have learned in this week’s lesson, what is the answer?