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### **“Is a Pauline Spirituality Still Viable?”**

Leslie T. Hardin  
Professor of New Testament  
Johnson University Florida

In his monumental work *Jesus and the Spirit*, Jimmy Dunn concluded that Paul’s vision of spirituality had faded by the end of his life. Dunn defined Paul’s spirituality as the *experience* of the risen Jesus, and believed that the charismatic experience had begun to formalize itself into more institutionalized forms by the end of the first century. Dunn noted that the Pauline vision remained attractive throughout the second century only because the alternatives were fraught with even greater weaknesses and dangers. But his ultimate conjecture was that “the Pauline vision is unworkable in practice.”<sup>1</sup> Dunn’s comments deserve scrutiny on two fronts: whether spirituality is to be defined largely in terms of experience or something else, and whether Paul’s vision of life in the Spirit (properly defined) is still relevant for the digital age.

Before writing off any Pauline spirituality as unworkable, a critical and reflective analysis of the spirituality that Paul *practiced* needs re-examination. In the multitude of books that have been written about The Apostle, discussion of his spirituality has been scarce, and an assessment of Paul the disciple of Jesus, the Spirit-filled man, may help us not only to understand the true nature of life in the Spirit, but also to clarify the ever-confusing definition of “spirituality.” In what follows, I want to reexamine what constituted Paul’s *own* spirituality in order to determine whether his vision of the Jesus-kind-of life has passed or is still part of the warp and woof of life in the Spirit. This paper begins with a brief introduction into the true nature of “spirituality” (definitions and descriptions) and then proceeds to examine what spiritual practices Paul engaged in to foster the power of the Spirit in his life. I conclude with a reassessment of Dunn’s comments and suggest that Paul’s vision of life in the Spirit was inherently timeless, and that all believers are called to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; cf. Phil. 3:17, 4:9; 1 Cor. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3: 7).

#### ***What does it mean to be “Spiritual?”***

Any discussion of a Pauline spirituality must wrestle with the ever-elusive nature of what it means to be “spiritual.” “Spirituality” is a catch-all term and is used with a wide variety of (sometimes even contradictory) meanings. In Christian theology “spirituality” is bound up with the work of the Spirit of God. But outside the faith that same term denotes anything that brings fulfillment, satisfaction, and a deep sense of meaning to one’s life,<sup>2</sup> and is arrived at in what Scot McKnight calls a “bricolage” fashion.<sup>3</sup> Nearly two decades ago Carl Henry said that “if one asks what spirituality is, one is likely to be met by a sidelong stare, as if this question would be raised only

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<sup>1</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 360.

<sup>2</sup> For example, D. S. Ferguson, *Exploring the Spirituality of World Religions* (Continuum, 2010), 15, defines spirituality as “the effort to fully utilize the relevant elements of our religious tradition and other religious traditions as our guidance in life, leading to our development as persons growing toward wholeness (holiness), insight, joy, and responsible living.” For a decidedly Christian view, see G. S. Scorgie, *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Zondervan, 2011), 27-33.

<sup>3</sup> Scot McKnight, “Spirituality in a Postmodern Age,” in *Stone-Campbell Journal* 13 (2010): 214-224. McKnight refers to the tendency to fashion spirituality out of whatever is available, not necessarily looking for what isn’t.

by a religious nincompoop,” that our talk of spirituality is often obscure, and that when it comes to trying to define the term, “Verbally, all is fuzz.”<sup>4</sup> Time has not brought clarity.

In previous publications I have tried to outline a decidedly Judaeo-Christian view of spirituality as practical partnership with the Spirit of God (as the Spirit and his work are revealed in the pages of the New Testament).<sup>5</sup> Authentic Christian spirituality (revealed in the pages of Scripture and attested in the devotional masters) is to be found in what is common and mundane more so than in that which is ecstatic and mystical. It is partnership with the Spirit—“Spirit-ual.”<sup>6</sup>

A quick survey of the contemporary literature in this area reveals two distinct approaches to the *practice* of spirituality.<sup>7</sup> On the one side are those who suggest that Christian spirituality is mostly the work of the Spirit, with some corresponding activity on our part. The most prominent of these are Eugene Peterson<sup>8</sup> and Dallas Willard,<sup>9</sup> both of whom express their belief that the Spirit drives the process of transformation, to whom then the believer responds by providing outward, visible signs of that renovation. Included in this camp are those who, along with Dunn, define spirituality as *religious experience*. Thomas Tobin, in *The Spirituality of Paul* describes Paul’s spirituality in terms of his experience of the Spirit,<sup>10</sup> which the Spirit of God initiated in the vision of the risen Christ. Michael Gorman’s view of Paul’s spirituality also involves this kind of experience, but in relation to the cross of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

On the other side are those who suggest that the work of spiritual formation involves *initiative* on our part, and that the initiative we take provides the ideal conditions for the Spirit to work transformation in our lives. In other words, “Draw near to God and he will draw near to you” (Jas. 4:8). Richard Foster’s classic, *Celebration of Discipline*, approaches spiritual disciplines as the gateway to transformation. Practicing spiritual disciplines places the believer in a receptive position to receive fresh “grace” from the Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Mulholland’s view of spirituality, while notably striking balance between these two extremes, defines spiritual disciplines only in terms of things *offered to God on a*

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<sup>4</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, “Spiritual? Say It Isn’t So!” in *Alive to God: Studies in Spirituality Presented to James Houston*, ed. J. I. Packer and Loren Wilkinson (InterVarsity, 1992), 8.

<sup>5</sup> See Leslie T. Hardin, *The Spirituality of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 13-25; “The Quest for the Spiritual Jesus: Jesus and the Spiritual Disciplines,” in *Stone-Campbell Journal* 15 (Fall 2012): 217-227, esp. pp. 219-220; “Spiritual, Like Jesus,” in *Christian Standard* (Feb., 2013): 23-24.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon Fee used the term “s/Spiritual.” It denotes more than inner vitality, but specifically an outlook fashioned by the Spirit of God. See *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 24-26; *Paul, The Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), x-xi.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief summary of these views, their history, development, and implications, see Alister McGrath, *Christian Spirituality* (MA: Blackwell, 1999), 41-47.

<sup>8</sup> Eugene Peterson, *The Wisdom of Each Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 32: “The Christian life is mostly what is being done to you, not what you are doing.”

<sup>9</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 22-23. For Willard, Christian spiritual formation is a “Spirit-driven process.” Human action, no matter how well-intentioned always takes us back to the legalistic, outward righteousness of the Pharisee.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas H. Tobin, *The Spirituality of Paul* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1987), 61. “Paul’s religious sensibilities were formed by the interaction between the religious traditions of which Paul was a part and his own experience. In a very fundamental sense, this is what one means by a spirituality, a person’s basic convictions, attitudes, and sensibilities about God and the relationship of God to the world.”

<sup>11</sup> Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 2-3: “As a starting point for the understanding of spirituality ... we may describe it as the experience of God’s love and grace in daily life.”

<sup>12</sup> Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998), 7: “then is it not logical to conclude that we must wait for God to come and transform us? Strangely enough, the answer is no. . . . God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving his grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us.”

*regular basis*, which God may or may not choose to use for spiritual development.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps we find in this kind of approach a reaction to spirituality that is defined *only* by experience, and places proper emphasis instead upon our own human responsibility for spiritual formation.<sup>14</sup> Still others are saying that it's up to us to take the lead—to practice the disciplines and see if God will use them in his own time and for his own purpose.<sup>15</sup>

Tyson's view of the spirituality worked out in true personal relationship (i.e. partnership) between the believer and the Spirit comes closest, in my opinion, to the biblical witness.

The development of Christian Spirituality is a cooperative effort, it involves God's work (the gift of grace) and our work (the faithful response); taken together and intermingled these two works produce transformation, wholeness, and life with God.... we will have to recognize (in accordance with the NT analogies) that the life of grace is cultivated, nurtured, and grown over the span of a lifetime.<sup>16</sup>

This description of spirituality as practical partnership with the Spirit of God shows up in Paul's writings. The keynote (and most misunderstood) text is Philippians 2:12-13. Paul urges them to "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling," but in conjunction with God, "for it is God who works in you." Their "accomplishing" or "production"<sup>17</sup> of salvation occurs in conjunction with God's inner working. This same partnership appears earlier in the letter as Paul prays for God to increase their knowledge and understanding of the faith (1:9), but so that they might discern the path of holiness and express it in love (1:9-10). This partnership also appears in Galatians where Paul prays that Christ "be formed" within them (4:19), but simultaneously encourages them to "keep in step with the Spirit" (5:16, 22-25), avoid carnal living (5:17, 19-21), and continue to do good (6:10). This view of spirituality—as practical partnership with the Spirit of God—is not simply Paul's New Covenant way of expressing his relationship with the Spirit, but originates in the renewal of the covenant in Deuteronomy 29. Israel owed her existence not only to God's extension of grace in the covenant itself (29:12-13), but to her faithful response in abiding by the terms of the covenant (29:9, 18-28).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> M. Robert Mulholland, *Shaped By the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1985), 112-113: "Are you willing to offer something to God as a discipline and to keep offering it day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year—to continue offering it for God to use in whatever way he wants in your life and *have God do absolutely nothing with it*? If you are ... then you are engaging in a spiritual discipline that will cut to the heart of all of those dynamics of our culture that tend to misshape our formation."

<sup>14</sup> It was this over-emphasis upon spiritual *experience* to authenticate both conversion and ministry that caused early Restorationists like Barton W. Stone to return to a more biblical model (faith, repentance, confession, and baptism). For a more detailed accounting, see James B. North, *Union in Truth: An Interpretive History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1994), 33-45; James DeForest Murch, *Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1962), 83-96. The demand among modern evangelicals for religious experience as a necessary component of salvation in Christ was one of the main foci of Scot McKnight's addresses for The Parchman Lectures at Baylor in 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Scot McKnight articulated this as his view of the spiritual disciplines in "Spiritual Disciplines Today," the plenary session address of the *Stone-Campbell Journal* Conference (April 9, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> John R. Tyson, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality* (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 46.

<sup>17</sup> These are the possible ranges of meaning for *κατεργάζομαι* (*katērgazomai*). See W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker, "κατεργάζομαι," *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University Press, 1979), 421.

<sup>18</sup> This sense of maintaining inclusion into the covenant by keeping faithful first appeared in E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). Sanders combed the Jewish literature to prove that Judaism was not, in fact, a "works-righteousness" religion, but that adherents kept "works of the Law" as part of their covenant faithfulness.

### *The Shape of Paul's Own Spirituality*

If we define spirituality as partnership with the Spirit of God, then Paul's own spirituality takes on a strikingly practical quality. Paul engaged in regular spiritual practices which fostered the power of the Spirit. That power certainly led to an *experience* of the Spirit of the risen Jesus, but was forged in these everyday practices (which some call disciplines) that allowed the Spirit to have free expression in Paul's life and ministry. "Paul repeatedly emphasized the concrete shape of life in the Spirit,"<sup>19</sup> says Meye, who described the Christian experience as a life of "practicing the Spirit."<sup>20</sup> "Practicing the Spirit" is the language of spiritual discipline, and these "practices" deserve more serious attention in any discussion of a Pauline spirituality. What were the spiritual practices Paul regularly engaged in?

#### *Prayer*

The most notable aspects of Paul's spirituality are his practice of *prayer* and evangelism. Only the latter—Paul's empire-wide expansion of the Gospel—has received significant attention among biblical scholars. The deep well of Paul's prayer life still lies largely untapped. Several studies have been done on the prayer language in Paul's epistles,<sup>21</sup> but few have focused on Paul's habit of praying, a frustration complicated by the fact that there are no formal prayers in Pauline corpus.<sup>22</sup> But Fee notes that Paul "was a *pray-er* before he was a missionary or a thinker,"<sup>23</sup> and his habit of praying formed the most substantial link between his old life in Judaism and his new life in Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Descended from the holiness tradition of the Pharisees (Acts 23:6), Paul learned to pray from an early age. Faithful Jews were to recite *The Shema* (Deut. 4:6-9) twice daily,<sup>25</sup> and perhaps the *Amidah* (the Eighteen Benedictions). While there are no recorded prayers in Acts, Luke notes that Paul was constantly at prayer—during his conversion (Acts 9:11), in a Philippian jail (Acts 16:25), with the elders at Ephesus (20:36) and the disciples in Tyre (21:4-6), in the Jerusalem Temple (22:17), and on the island of Malta (28:8-9). Because of his religious training we naturally find prayers imbued with significant theological concepts and vocabulary, and Paul was not afraid to employ his training in service of his spirituality. Benedictions, doxologies,<sup>26</sup> and optative-mood wish-prayers all find their place in Paul's writings. Like Jesus, Paul also prayed in everyday language as he

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Sanders' point has been further articulated by devotees of the New Perspective on Paul. For development and treatment, see M. Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> R. P. Meye, "Spirituality," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 913.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 909. "Practicing the Spirit" for Paul meant "a comprehensive pattern of action governed by one's basic perspective."

<sup>21</sup> The most notable among them are Gordon P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); David M. Stanley, *Boasting in the Lord: The Phenomenon of Prayer in Saint Paul* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973).

<sup>22</sup> A frustration noted by several major scholars in this area. Krister Stendahl, "Paul at Prayer," *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 240, counsels that we do not have any formal prayers in Paul's epistles, only prayer-type language. See Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 6-24; W. B. Hunter, "Prayer," in *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 726.

<sup>23</sup> Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 147.

<sup>24</sup> Stanley, *Boasting in the Lord*, 42.

<sup>25</sup> Though J. D. G. Dunn, "Prayer," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. J. B. Green, S. McKnight, (InterVarsity: 1992), 617, suggests it may have been as many as three times a day.

<sup>26</sup> See P. T. O'Brien, "Benediction, Blessing, Doxology, Thanksgiving," in *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (InterVarsity, 1993), 69.

“petitioned” the Father (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:4, 4:6; 1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Tim. 1:3), made “requests” (like those addressed to a king; Rom. 8:27; 1 Tim. 2:1, 4:5), “pleaded” or “exhorted” (1 Cor. 12:8) and even “challenged” the Father (Phil. 4:6; Col. 1:9)<sup>27</sup> as he wrestled in prayer (2 Cor. 12:1-10). Paul found the freedom to imitate Jesus in addressing God as “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; cf. Mk. 14:36). The *content* of Paul’s prayers was always concerned with the Gospel, whether it was for his converts’ growth in the Gospel of Jesus (2 Cor. 13:9; Eph. 3:16-19; Col. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Thess. 1:11; Phm. 6) or asking for the next steps in his evangelistic ministry (Rom. 1:10-13, 15:23-32; 1 Cor. 16:7-9; 2 Thess. 3:1).<sup>28</sup>

### *Proclamation of the Gospel*

*Preaching the Gospel* was central for Paul’s spirituality, for in the proclamation of the Gospel men and women placed faith in Christ and the power of the Spirit was unleashed (Rom. 10:14-15; Gal. 3:1-2). Though Jesus was a Jewish messiah, Paul saw in Jesus (and his teaching) hope for Jews and Gentiles alike. The study of Paul’s gospel has, for the last two decades, focused on the meaning of justification, the “works of the law,” and whether or not Jesus’ death satisfied the wrath of God or demonstrated his covenant faithfulness.<sup>29</sup> But Paul’s gospel seemed to revolve around the *lordship* of Jesus, proved in his resurrection. When he preached in the synagogue, his message centered on Jesus as the eternal king reigning as Lord from David’s throne (Acts 13:16-40), and that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer and then rise from the dead in order to be crowned as such (Acts 17:2-3; cf. Luke 24:26). To the Gentiles he also preached that “Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10:9), a message that would have had overt political tones in the Roman Empire.<sup>30</sup> Paul unashamedly preached—in the synagogue, on the Areopagus, in the artisan shop, on the islands, from the boat and in the presence of the ruling powers of the empire—that Jesus “became obedient unto death,” that God honored his sacrifice by exalting him to lordship, and that every knee will one day bow and confess it (Phil. 2:6-11).

### *Devotion to Scripture*

Also prominent in Paul’s everyday practice is a *devotion to Scriptural authority*. Raised in the home of a Pharisee, Paul learned Scripture from an early age. Growing up outside Palestine, his earliest exposure would have been to the Septuagint, and most of the biblical citations in his letters come from its Greek translation.<sup>31</sup> When he trained under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), he almost certainly learned the Scriptures in their original language and wasn’t afraid to employ his training to support his arguments (Gal. 3:16). But he always knew the *sense* of the text and never built a theological argument from a particular translation. This *sense* of the text (the context in which it originated, the

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<sup>27</sup> G. Stählin, “αἰτέω, κτλ.,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:191-193. Stählin notes that this term has an overarching connotation of “demanding for one’s self,” and that Jesus never used this in his own prayers. Though the vocabulary is different (ἑρωτάω, *erōtaō*), William David Spencer and Aida Besancon Spencer, *The Prayer Life of Jesus: Shout of Agony, Revelation of Love, a Commentary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 115-117, suggest that Jesus used it in the sense of “challenge.”

<sup>28</sup> K. Stendahl’s discussion of Paul’s prayer life as bound up with his evangelistic travel itinerary is most fascinating. See his “Paul at Prayer,” 242-244.

<sup>29</sup> The debate is fully in view in N. T. Wright, *Justification* (InterVarsity, 2009), 19-108, and the literature cited there (both for and against).

<sup>30</sup> For more on the favored imperial terminology and how Paul’s gospel commandeered it, see N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 59-79; A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, [1927] 1995), 338-378.

<sup>31</sup> See Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), x-xi, points out that Paul’s citations hardly ever depend upon the Hebrew OT, but almost always come from the Septuagint.

point it intended to drive home, and the appropriate contextualization of its force in the life of the reader<sup>32</sup>) was formed from Paul's study of the *entirety* of the Old Testament, not just a few favorite verses. Quotations and allusions appear in his letters from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.<sup>33</sup> Paul found the precepts of Old Testament Scripture necessary even for Gentiles,<sup>34</sup> and believed Scripture a pedagogue (Gal. 3:24), useful for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). The words of Jesus were also a source of Scriptural authority, in Paul's view.<sup>35</sup> This kind of knowledge of Scripture came through repeated exposure to the text and was aided by the Spirit in bringing to Paul's knowledge an understanding of every good thing he had in Christ (1 Cor. 2:6-12; 2 Cor. 3:16-18). This is commensurate with Isaiah's description of the Spirit as one of "wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge" (Isa. 11:2).

### *Corporate Worship*

Paul made a regular habit of *worshipping with the community of faith* as a part of his spiritual regimen. Luke portrays Paul meeting with the church in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26), observing the Lord's Supper with believers in Troas "on the first day of the week" (20:7), and strengthening the churches of Galatia (16:4-5). Like the Jewish synagogue service, the Christian worship liturgy included Scripture reading (1 Tim. 4:13; cf. 1 Cor. 14:26), prayer (1 Tim. 2:1), observance of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-26), and fellowship (Acts 2:42).<sup>36</sup> Hymn singing (1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-20; Acts 16:25), baptism, and the encouragement to give of tithes and offerings (1 Cor. 16:1-2) were also staples of worship. Paul refused to forsake his Jewish heritage, though, and continued to worship in the synagogue (Acts 13:5, 14-15, 42-44; 14:1; 16:13; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8) and in the Temple (Acts 21:26-27). He found there opportune times to speak about Jesus and to outline his vision of Jews and Gentiles worshiping as one people in fulfillment of the original promise given to Abraham (Gen. 12:3, 17:4-5).

### *Disciple-making*

Paul *made disciples* and began to "entrust these things to reliable men" who could carry on his work (2 Tim. 2:2). There are over a hundred persons connected to Paul in the New Testament and his letters are filled with the names not only of his converts and those he wanted to greet, but of

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<sup>32</sup> For more on the faithful contextualization of the original text in the life of the reader, see Leslie T. Hardin, "Searching for a Transformative Hermeneutic," in *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5 (2012): 144-157.

<sup>33</sup> Quotes and allusions appear in Paul's letters from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Kings, 2 Samuel, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Habbakkuk, and Malachi.

<sup>34</sup> On several occasions in his letters Paul writes of OT concepts and stories as if his Gentile readers were already aware of their import. Stories and inferences from the lives of Abraham (Rom. 4:1-3; cf. Gen. 15:1-6) and Adam (Rom. 5:12-19; cf. Gen. 3:1-24, Hagar and Sarah (Gal. 4:21-31; cf. Gen. 16:1-16, 21:8-21) and Moses (1 Cor. 10:1-5) appear along with concepts like "the two will become one flesh" (Eph. 5:31; cf. Gen. 2:24), "every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses" (2 Cor. 13:1; cf. Deut. 19:15), "honor your father and your mother" (Eph. 6:2-3; cf. Exod. 20:12), and "peace and safety" (1 Thess. 5:3; cf. Jer. 6:14; Ezek. 13:10-16).

<sup>35</sup> As Paul defended his right to receive monetary remuneration from preaching the Gospel, he prefaced a quote from the Old Testament ("do not muzzle the ox," Deut. 25:4) and "the worker deserves his wage" (Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7) with the phrase, "for Scripture says" (1 Tim. 5:18).

<sup>36</sup> That Acts 2:42 is seen as comprising the major elements of the early Christian worship service is attested by I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Eerdmans, 1989), 83; I. H. Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* (Eerdmans, 1980), 127; J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. N. Perrin (Fortress, 1966), 118-119. For more on the elements that comprised the first-century worship service see Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Eerdmans, 2003), 137-151.

those whom Paul trained to be his partners in preaching the Gospel.<sup>37</sup> Of course, not all of them traveled with him, but those who did were among his closest apprentices, and the terms “fellow worker” (Col. 4:11; 2 Cor. 1:24; 3:9, 8:23; 1 Thess. 3:2), “fellow soldier” (Phil. 2:25; Phm. 2), and “my loyal son” (1 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4; Phil. 4:3) are reserved especially for them. Paul trained them according to the ancient model of *spending time with the teacher*. Skilled as a leatherworker (Acts 18:3),<sup>38</sup> Paul could easily set up shop in any town-center marketplace with little more than a small set of leather-working tools. Most ancient philosophers taught in these shops, intertwining their teaching with everyday work.<sup>39</sup> This is likely where Paul met Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-4), and as Jesus made disciples among people from every walk of life, so Paul was open to disciple any who were willing. They traveled with him, listened to him preach and teach, and passed on what they heard. Even those who carried Paul’s letters to the various churches were educated enough in Paul’s thought to interpret his comments should questions arise among the readers.<sup>40</sup> His apprentices were comprised of Jews (e.g. Barnabas, Silas, Apollos) and Gentiles (e.g. Titus, Luke, Ephaphras) from a wide variety of social backgrounds and occupations. Paul wasn’t successful in every situation, for men like Demas (Col. 4:14; Phm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:10), Phygelus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1:15), Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20) abandoned Paul and his work in the Gospel. Nevertheless, he continued to take Jesus’ commission and example seriously and “make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19).

### *Holiness/Holy Living*

Paul also made every effort to *live a holy lifestyle*. Raised in the Pharisaic tradition, Paul learned a style of holiness that called all Jews to abide by priestly regulations as a way of preserving the true faith of Israel.<sup>41</sup> But once he met Jesus, Paul bought into Jesus’ vision of holiness and began to work *out* the holiness that the Spirit of God worked *within*. For Paul, holiness began with internal sanctification by the Spirit which worked itself into daily living. Paul continued to observe the ceremonial aspects of Jewish holiness, shown in part by his refusal to take Titus (a Gentile) into the Court of Israel in the Temple (Acts 21:28-29), the purification rites he took there (Acts 21:23-24), and his decision to circumcise Timothy as the Law commanded (Acts 16:3). Paul continued to observe all the major commandments (minus Jesus’ reinterpretation of the Sabbath), and the precepts of the major nine are the backbone of his ethical teaching. Paul’s life was the embodiment of Isaiah’s command—“Depart, depart, come out from there! Come out from it and be pure” (Isa. 52:7-11; 2 Cor. 6:17)—and his conscience was clear in everything he did (Rom. 9:1; 1 Cor. 4:4; 2 Cor. 1:12).

### *Spiritual Giftedness*

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<sup>37</sup> E. E. Ellis, “Coworkers, Paul and His,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin (InterVarsity, 1993), 183.

<sup>38</sup> This is the likely sense of the term σκηνοποιός (*skēnopoios*, “tentmaker”). See R. F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul’s Ministry* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 20-25.

<sup>39</sup> R. F. Hock, “Paul’s Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978): 560, n. 31, lists several examples of ancient philosophers whose method of teaching was to discourse in the artisan shop. It was a place for learning, discussion, and debate in addition to work. See also Hock, *The Social Context of Paul’s Ministry*, 31-33, 37-42.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 87: “These cosenders or, more often, other associates would also deliver the mail and, following ancient custom, probably interpret its comments.”

<sup>41</sup> This is how W. Meeks describes the ideals and philosophy of Pharisaism. See *The First Urban Christians* (Yale University Press, 1983), 97.

As a part of his daily practice of the Spirit, Paul *exercised his spiritual gifts*. Spiritual gifts were as new to the Christian experience as the indwelling of the Spirit himself, and Paul used a variety of expressions to describe them, including “spiritual gifts,” “manifestations of the Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:7), “service” (1 Cor. 12:5), “workings” of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:6), and literally “Spirit things” (1 Cor. 12:1). The prominence in his letters on this subject (1 Cor. 12-14, Rom. 12, Eph. 4:7-13) and his comment that he wanted no one to be ignorant of them point to Paul’s experience of what he taught: all who have the Spirit have been gifted by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:5-5; Eph. 4:7), and that giftedness is to be employed in service of Christ and his church (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:12). Paul never identified his own spiritual gift as such, but remarked that he was set apart from birth to preach (Gal. 1:15; cf. Isa. 49:1, 5-6; Jer. 1:5-6). The few miraculous elements that appeared in his life—e.g. tongue-speaking (1 Cor. 14:18) and healing (Acts 19:11-12; 28:8)—served to further his preaching ministry, not his ego.

### *Pastoral Care / Shepherding*

Paul *pastored those under his care*. Paul’s gift seems to have been evangelism, and Paul made many converts and planted many churches. But he refused to let those new converts fend for themselves. He took great pains to help them grow in the faith, whether that meant teaching among them for a long period of time (Acts 18:11), disciplining wayward sheep (1 Cor. 5:1-2), or protecting them from false teachers who threatened to destroy their faith (Acts 20:29-30; Gal. 1:6).<sup>42</sup> On the few occasions when Paul couldn’t physically be present, he sent proxies to shepherd believers in his stead (e.g. Timothy and Silas in Berea, 1 Thess. 3:2; Titus in Corinth, 2 Cor. 7:6-7, 13-16, 8:16-24) and wrote letters imbued with his presence and thought.<sup>43</sup> Paul was the “founding father” of these churches, and took pains to care for them as a parent would for a child.<sup>44</sup> Images of parenthood pepper his correspondence—mother (1 Thess. 2:7; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 4:19) and father (1 Thess. 2:11; 2 Cor. 4:14, 6:13). He used his authority as an apostle of Christ to defend his ministry against savage wolves, but Paul’s relationship with his converts was more familial and relational than apostolic and positional.

### *Suffering*

Paul’s *endurance of suffering* for the cause of Christ may not be a discipline per se, but is the fruit born from a gratitude to Christ for the suffering which brought about Paul’s redemption and was prominent enough in his life to warrant consideration as a regular practice of his spirituality. Suffering was a major component of Paul’s regular experience in the faith (2 Cor. 11:16-12:10) and the “marks of Jesus” (Gal. 6:17) were a source of legitimizing authority against the false apostles (who wanted to water down the gospel to alleviate suffering; Gal. 6:12). Paul may have seen himself as the one to complete the Song of the Suffering Servant (Isa. 42-56) and after the suffering of the Servant (Jesus) bring salvation to the Gentiles (Paul).<sup>45</sup> Identification with and participation in the

<sup>42</sup> Specific predators are identified throughout the epistles: Hymenaeus (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17), Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14-15), Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17), Elymas (Acts 13:6-12), believers who refused to work in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:6), and the “super-apostles” plaguing the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 11:1-15, 12:11-13).

<sup>43</sup> The letter was deemed a surrogate for personal presence in antiquity, as the letter was thought to carry the real presence of the writer. See Stanley Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Library of Early Christianity, ed. W. A. Meeks (Westminster, 1986), 38-39, 62, 65.

<sup>44</sup> E. Best, “Paul’s Apostolic Authority--?” in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27 (1986): 17-18.

<sup>45</sup> The Song of the Suffering Servant, in its simplest outline, involves

- 1) Israel’s disobedience (48:1-11),
- 2) God’s plan to redeem her (51:17-23) by
- 3) sending the servant to suffer in her place (42:1-4; 49:1-5; 50:1-6; 52:13-53:9),
- 4) reward him with renewed life for his obedience (52:13; 53:10-12) and then



Song of the Servant naturally meant suffering, and Paul was “ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13), knowing that God would vindicate him just as he did Jesus (Phil. 2:6-11).

These are the regular practices, disciplines, or practical expressions of life in the Spirit that Paul engaged in on a regular basis. They are not disciplines born out of Paul’s personal preferences or ego, but were offered in partnership with the Spirit toward the imitation of Christ.

### ***Conclusion:***

Defining spirituality as a profound, charismatic *experience* of the Spirit of Jesus will ultimately disappoint. Experience is subjective, and at the mercy of any number of situational, personal, psychological and physiological factors. Defining spirituality this way led Dunn to conclude that this charismatic experience had faded by the end of the first century, and that Paul’s vision of a charismatic community living life in the Spirit was simply unworkable in practice.

But on Paul’s own terms, spirituality is more than experience. It is an everyday, practical partnership with the Spirit of God, one that gives the Spirit free reign in the life of the believer and free space to accomplish his purposes in maturity, holiness, and Kingdom advancement. In this way, Paul’s vision is not unworkable. Kingdom-minded people still need access to the Father (through Scripture, worship, and prayer), still need to offer that same access to those who want it (evangelism), still need to grow those believers into Christ-likeness (shepherding and disciple-making), and still need to live lives that are worthy of the suffering of Christ (holiness and endurance of suffering). This comprises the essence of a thoroughly Pauline spirituality, which is still effective in any age—medieval, industrial, or digital—if practiced in a manner after Paul’s own discipline.

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5) offering that salvation to Jew and Gentile alike (49:6, 22-23; 55:1-56:8).

In the strictest sense, Jesus only accomplished 1-4, for as late as Acts 9 (Saul’s conversion) the gospel still hasn’t been offered to the Gentiles. It may be that Paul saw himself as a counterpart to Jesus, desirous to finish the story and present the Gentiles to Christ as a fragrant offering on the day of his return (Rom. 15:16). See A. Köstenberger and P. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson (InterVarsity, 2001), 148, 165-166, 170.