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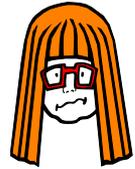
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Preface

How many times have you heard phrases that seemed to have great spiritual significance to older people, but somehow left you confused and even raised doubts and questions in your mind? Statements like: “God spoke to me and said...” (Did they hear a voice?!) “You just pray about it, and you’ll get an answer.” (How do I “get an answer”? Handwriting on the wall?!) “You need a love relationship with Jesus.” (How do I love someone I can’t even touch?) “Don’t believe what your *mind* says...believe your *spirit*.”

(You mean I can’t believe what I *think*? Is my mind useless?) “I saw in a dream...” (How do they know that dream was God and not Satan? I wouldn’t trust my dreams because I’m not “in control.”) “I’ve entered the ‘holy of holies.’” (She’s going to become a nun?!) “I had a vision...” (Sounds like yoga or TM...should I believe him?) and on and on.



We are bombarded with new thoughts and ideas, some encouraging, some conflicting, some just plain confusing! We know that prayer is supposed to be powerful and effective and meaningful in our lives and in the lives of those around us, yet many times it is not. We need to be honest and open about our doubts and feelings of inadequacies...our successes and our failures.

Take heart! This beginning study of communion with God will answer questions and unlock doors to further understanding that will encourage you spiritually and emotionally and teach you how to go on building a strong relationship with the Lord in the years to come. It will be different than any class or course you've taken before. If you're really going to enjoy it and learn from it, you must be ready to *do*...not just listen. I can guarantee an exciting adventure for you if you will commit this time and studying to God Almighty, your Father and Creator, capable of anything...and to the Holy Spirit, your Teacher, who will lead you to the feet of Jesus where you can sit and listen and learn and love and grow. But rather than just *talk* about what we'll be learning, let's go!



Caution: Prerequisites



This book is not for everyone! You see, when you open yourself to the spirit world, you need to be aware that there are both good and evil spirits. You need to be sure that you do not come into contact with evil spirits, as they seek to destroy you, using whatever means they can. Therefore, God has established some very definite safeguards for us.



1 Make sure that *daily* Bible reading is a part of your life.



2 Make sure that you are bringing your life into obedience to that which you are reading in the Bible.



3 Make sure that you have an attitude of submission toward your parents and your pastor. If you receive a leading in your prayer journal that is guiding you into a major decision in your life, for your protection you must submit it to those who are over you in the Lord.



In order for your parents to properly understand and assist you in your own journaling, it is important that they have taken the course Communion With God or read the book *Dialogue with God*.

If these prerequisites are not in your life, some of the principles of the book might be more difficult to follow. God really wants to talk to you, so just be sure you have someone spiritually mature who will walk with you on this journey.

God's Plan for Us

...starts with communicating (Him to us...us to Him)



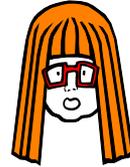
Write out Isaiah 59:2.

In the Old Testament, we hear a lot about altars and priests and sacrificing. Sounds pretty gory! But in fact, God used the Old Testament tabernacle, altar and sacrifices as symbols of our salvation. What did the people in the Old Testament do when they sinned? How could they be forgiven? Actually their sin separated them from God (as ours does) and their penalty should have been death. Instead, they'd find a substitution...a lamb



or goat or bull or bird...different animals for different sins and different amounts of forgiveness.

A priest usually had to do the actual sacrificing, as he was God's representative (God established these people, the Levites, as priests), and he went through various rituals and formalities getting ready for the sacrifice...then *did* the killing and offering to God with prayers and requests. Once a year, the priest went through all this preparation and sacrificing and then entered the "holy of holies" ...a special room in the tabernacle, whose entrance was covered by a large curtain (Exodus 26:33b, 40:3b). In this room, he received direct revelation from God for all the people for the coming year. No one could enter this place except the priests, and in fact, the people often tied a rope around his leg in case he was overcome by God's Spirit and fell over...then they could pull him out!



Okay, so what does this have to do with us? Simple. God has a plan for us that follows this same pattern set up in the Old Testament:



sacrifice—a substitute for us (Jesus, God's Son, took our place, and instead of **us** dying, **He** died for our sins—I Peter 1:18,19);



priests—**we** are the priests (I Peter 2:5), able to enter into the



holy of holies—Jesus' death split open that curtain, and we may now enter on our own, any time (Mark 15:38; Hebrews 4:16). All we have to do is **accept** what Jesus did for us. We can try to do lots of good deeds and be a nice person and try to get back in touch with God, but that's **not** His plan. All we need to do is acknowledge that Jesus is our substitution...a sacrifice for us...and *accept* that (Romans 10:9).



Write out John 1:29.

Have **you** accepted that? Describe when and how that happened, or what has been leading up to your acceptance of Him? Where *are* you in relation to Jesus?

If you've never accepted salvation from Jesus (and He would have died for you even if you'd been the only person around! Amazing, huh?!), then why not do it now?

Look up the following Scriptures and write a statement declaring what God has done for you. The first one is done as an example.

1 Believe that God loves you!

John 3:16 I recognize THAT God loves me and gave His only Son To die for me so I could live forever by believing in Him.

I John 4:16

2 Acknowledge your sin.

Romans 3:23

3 **Recognize** that Jesus Christ is God's provision for us... our re-connection with God through Jesus' death and resurrection.

John 14:6

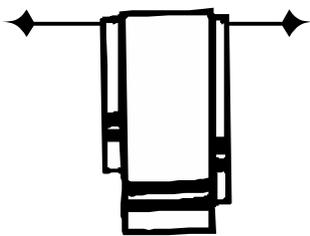
4 **Accept** what Christ has done for you and ask for God's forgiveness through Jesus.

John 1:12

5 Hallelujah! **Praise** Him for reuniting you with your Creator and the Planner of your life!

Luke 15:10

Water Baptism



The “sacrament of water baptism”— what does that mean? There are three sacraments which are accepted and practiced by nearly all of the Christian Church: the sacrament of marriage, the Lord’s Supper (Communion) and water baptism. Some churches recognize others, but these three are nearly universal.

What is a sacrament? Well, it is a ceremony or formal religious act which was ordained by God as a means of experiencing His grace in a special way. It is symbolic in nature, in that it pictorially illustrates a spiritual reality. But it is not an empty symbol. Types and shadows belong to the Old Covenant, not the New. In the act of a sacrament, God has promised to supernaturally move and meet us, imparting His grace in a specific way.

So what does the sacrament of water baptism mean? And what special grace has the Lord promised to impart through this

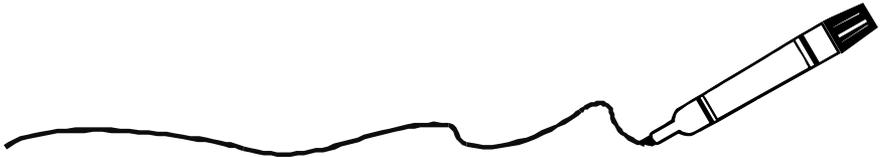
ceremony? As in other sacraments, the outward ceremony provides a symbolic clue to the spiritual reality. A part of us is buried and we are raised to a new life. Carefully consider the following passage:

“In Him you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but in a spiritual circumcision performed by Christ by stripping off the body of the flesh—the whole corrupt, carnal nature with its passions and lusts. Thus you were circumcised when you were buried with Him in your baptism, in which you were also raised with Him to a new life through your faith in the working of God as displayed when He raised Him up from the dead.”

(Colossians 2:11,12 Amplified)

Under the Old Covenant, circumcision was instituted as a token of the covenant between God and man (Genesis 17: 9-14) and as a seal of the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:11). It was a cutting away of the flesh, a physical reality. Under the New Covenant, something spiritual is cut away. Our old fleshly nature, the old man, the body of sin, is cut away by Christ through the sacrament of water baptism. This is not a gradual putting to death or overcoming of old patterns and lifestyles. Rather, it is an instantaneous cutting away of our whole corrupt carnal nature. The Greek tense indicates that the action takes place at a specific moment in time. It is accomplished at our water baptism.





What are some of the results of this circumcision of our hearts? Please write out Hebrews 8:10 to see what God has promised to us.

Jesus was baptized. We need to follow His example!

Matthew 3:16,17

Have you been baptized? (Circle one and fill in.)

YES

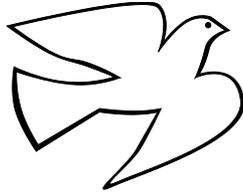
(When? Where? Describe.)

NO

(What do you think of it?
What questions do you
have about it?)

God also says we should **tell** people about our experience of accepting Jesus' forgiveness and turning the control of our lives over to Him.

Mark 16:15



Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Write out Acts 1:4,5,8.

Now let's talk about another baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Baptism" means to "immerse" or "plunge," so we are simply talking about an immersing in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised that when He left this earth, He'd leave with us a Teacher or Counselor to help us carry on and to give us the power we need to be His representatives on this earth (John 14:16,26, 16:7,13). This Teacher is the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit isn't Someone we can see or touch or smell or taste. He's not *tangible*, so He seems hard to define, and hard to even talk about sometimes! But God communicates to us through His Holy Spirit, so it is important that we be filled up with this Spirit to be able to use His power and strength and guidance to the fullest.

God described how people in the New Testament were filled with the Spirit and how it affected them. He emphasized that they should not try to go out and tell others about Jesus and His salvation until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. If they needed it then, why shouldn't *we* need it now?!

God wants us to be "thirsty" for Him. He is looking for "hungry" and "thirsty" people to pour His Spirit into (John 7:37-39a) . If you are not really concerned about doing God's will in your life or if you're not willing to be 100% committed to the Lord, don't ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit! God **wants** us to have Spirit-led power and strength and wants it a *lot*! So, if you are serious about living for the Lord and communicating with Him "to the max," then ask Him to fill you with His Spirit! It won't make you perfect. It won't dissolve all your problems. But it will give you a resource that is awesome and mind-boggling and incredibly important in order to be effective disciples of Christ!





Read Acts 2:4,14-40, 9:17,18, 19:6 and write a summary of what you find.

The people in the New Testament that received the baptism of the Holy Spirit acted **differently** (Acts 2:43, 8:19). They were able to speak in tongues (other languages that they didn't know), they were bolder, some prophesied, they were more powerful, they did signs and wonders...*WOW!!* Lots of cool things! And the result was that God was glorified and His message of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and eternal life with Him was boldly proclaimed to all the world! I can't guarantee how God will show Himself through **you** when He fills you with His Spirit, but...He *will*. He is looking for hungry and thirsty people and is waiting for you to **ask!**

Have you been filled with, baptized with, the Holy Spirit?
(Circle one and fill in.)

YES

(When? How?
What's different?)

NO

(What questions do you
have about this experience?)

God's Word



Write out Psalm 19:7...

...and II Timothy 3:16,17.

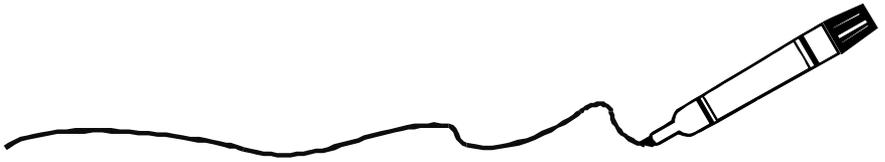
The Bible, very simply, is God's Word to us. Many try to discredit it, call it an interesting piece of literature, or use only parts of it, but we need to understand *clearly* that God inspired men to write down His message to us, and if we're interested in knowing what God has to say to us, one way is to simply look in the Bible.

If you want to prove how "valid" the Bible is, I recommend Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. We're not going to prove its validity. We're starting on the premise that the Bible is indeed God speaking to us. We haven't started talking about how we communicate with God and how He communicates to us (that's coming soon!) but just as a sneak preview, God's Word, the Bible, is one important way in which He communicates to us.

I can just hear some of you saying, "But I don't understand the Bible. It's boring. It uses funny words." Who said we have to understand everything instantly? Give it a try! God reveals a little bit at a time, as much as we can understand (Job 32:8). And as we are faithful to follow Him and pursue His ways, He opens our understanding *as we need it*.



We've been brought up in an "instant" generation (everything happens fast, from cereal to sitcoms!) and we do need to slow down and grasp God's message to us as He sees we're ready for it. Read, ask, search...but also trust, listen, wait. I think you'll be surprised to find that there are parts of the Bible that you can understand right now. So enjoy and learn from *those* parts! The Bible is a *volume* of information, advice, meaning, encouragement, warning, joy...a treasure to enjoy your whole life! Don't panic and assume it's not relevant or won't make sense to you. Relax and believe there are parts of it that can be clearly understood by you *now*!



Write out James 1:5.

Spiritual Encounters

3. Tried and Tested
by my mind and
learned knowledge
of God



2. to my spirit

1. From God

Most religions have some kind of god that they worship. They usually *hope* it's somewhere listening and watching and they *hope* it doesn't get too mad and destroy them! Christianity is different!!! Christianity proclaims and **knows** that it has a living and loving God! It goes beyond a list of rules or laws, and shows us that we can have direct spiritual contact with the living God that created us. Pretty exciting when you think about it!

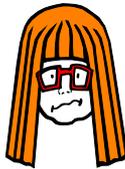
Now maybe you have never felt like you *heard* from God or made any kind of a spiritual contact with Him. Okay. Let's look at a few things and see if we can figure out *why*. God tells us over and over that He has given us His Holy Spirit and that we will be led and taught by Him. That must mean hearing from Him, right?



So how do you hear from a spirit?

Christianity is a relationship with Jesus, the King of Kings. Jesus came to earth to communicate directly with us. He had to take our place as a substitute sacrifice and die, live again to prove His victory over death and His power, and sit at God's right hand to intercede (mediate) for us. So He sent us the Holy Spirit, and by means of this Spirit to spirit (Holy Spirit to our spirit) encounter, we communicate with God.

Simple, huh? Well, not so simple when you discover that we've been kind of part of the world. In have very few ideas world is like (except for because we've been all the answers. We are a rational people and have wonderful minds and we can do anything, right?! "You can do anything you put your mind to"—how many times have you



heard that? And you know what? It's often true! We do have great minds (look Who created them!) and we can do just about anything we decide we want to do. The problem is our minds left to themselves often lead us away from God rather than to Him.

Read I Corinthians 1:18 - 2:16. What does this say to you?

The point is, we don't want to be the ones deciding how to use our minds. Please write out John 5:19 and Romans 12:1,2 in your own words.

We don't use our renewed minds; we offer them to God for Him to use.

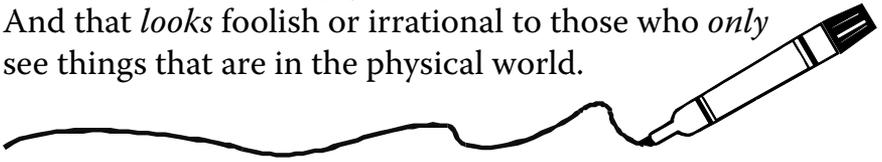
Let's compare these two approaches (mind/spirit) and see if we can start understanding the differences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is real is what I can feel, see, hear, taste or touch. 2. What is real (reality) is sensed and understood through my mind. 3. My goal is to develop my mind. 4. I live out of what my mind is telling me. 5. My mind directs me through thoughts I have considered and figured out. 6. My mind is cultivated by using it in academic study. 7. Direction is received from it by meditating over stored knowledge. 8. Out of the mind flows <i>Logos</i>*—the written, recorded Word. 9. A Christian who has only developed his mind flows with a knowledge of the <i>Logos</i>. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is real is what is in the spirit world. 2. What is real (reality) is sensed and understood through my spirit. 3. My goal is to develop my spirit. 4. I live out of what my spirit is telling me. 5. My spirit directs me through spontaneous, unmeditated thoughts that are placed in it by the Spirit of God. 6. My spirit is cultivated by using it in communication with God. 7. Direction is received from it by waiting quietly upon the Lord, allowing Him to inject into my heart His thoughts (<i>rhema</i>*). 8. Out of the spirit flows <i>rhema</i>—what God is speaking to me at that moment. 9. A Christian with a developed spirit flows with the power of the Spirit, all grounded in a knowledge of the <i>Logos</i>. |
|---|---|

*See the next chapter for an explanation of these words.

Being a Christian does not mean throwing your mind away. Your mind is used as you approach God, but your mind has now found its proper place. Although it is the organ that processes and tests communications we get from God, it is not the organ through which we receive communications. The spirit is. The mind and spirit work hand-in-hand.

Direction in your walk comes by “*rhema*” through your spirit. Your mind acts as a check and safeguard, comparing all “*rhema*” to “*Logos*.” Communication or revelation itself is not foolishness; it simply knows how real the spirit world is! And that *looks* foolish or irrational to those who *only* see things that are in the physical world.



Think about stories you know in the Bible and give some examples of things God told people to do (or things that would happen) that seemed pretty foolish. Write them down...

(If you are having trouble getting ideas, try Genesis 22:1-18!)



Have you ever seen anything yourself or heard of anything now that seemed foolish but God proved otherwise? What?

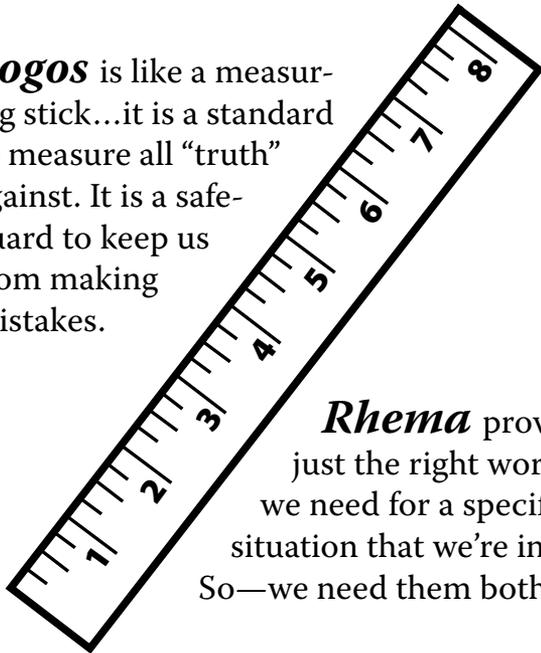


Can you think of any times when you felt like you had heart-to-heart or spirit-to-spirit communication with God? When you knew He was telling you something to do or say? Write it down.

Rhema and Logos

“**R***hema*” and “*Logos*” are two Greek words that are both translated “word” in English. “*Logos*” refers to the entire Bible, the written Word. “*Rhema*” refers to a specific word of God for a specific situation.

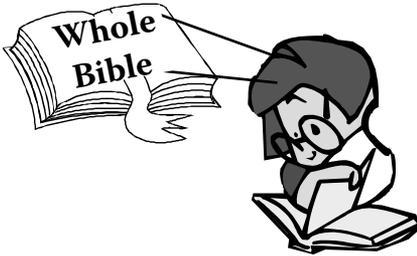
Logos is like a measuring stick...it is a standard to measure all “truth” against. It is a safeguard to keep us from making mistakes.



Rhema provides just the right word we need for a specific situation that we’re in. So—we need them both!

Maybe this diagram will help:

Logos



The mind reading and understanding the Bible.

Rhema



As I direct my heart and mind to seek the Lord His Spirit speaks into my heart, directly impressing His thoughts and ideas upon it.

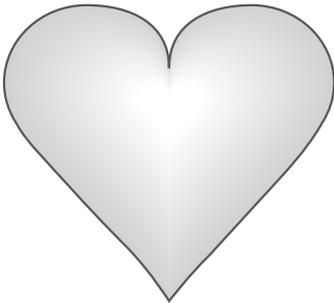
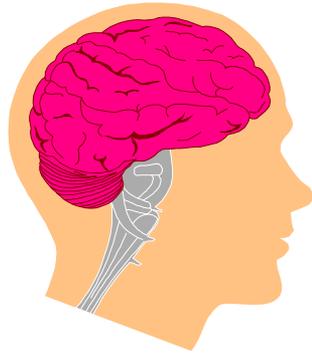
“*Rhema*” is what we’re looking for. *Rhema* is God speaking to us. So how do we know God’s voice in our hearts? Let’s try to answer that!

Usually our minds are *full* of different thoughts jumping all over the place. The key word for us today is “spontaneous”—natural, unforced, not thought about ahead of time.



Rhema is sensed as a spontaneous thought, idea, word, feeling or picture.

Thoughts from my mind are *analytical*.



Thoughts from my heart are *spontaneous*.

Can you remember a time when you suddenly had an impression of someone and you either thought about him or prayed for him? You had not been thinking about him; the thought just came out of nowhere. You were experiencing *rhema*. God's voice is a "chance idea" that intersects our

minds...simply appears suddenly in our hearts...an idea from God that lights upon our hearts and is registered in our minds as a spontaneous thought.

God's interjected thoughts into your heart will be something like this:



They are like your own thoughts, except that you sense them as coming from the heart, not the brain. They will be spontaneous, not analytical.



They can come easily, as God speaking (in the first person).



They are often light and gentle, and easily cut off by any exertion of self (your own thoughts, etc.).



They will have an unusual content to them. They will be better, wiser, kinder, and often somewhat different from your thoughts.



They will cause a special reaction within your being (a sense of excitement, conviction, faith, life, awe, peace, etc.).



When you decide to do what these thoughts say, you know that you will also have the strength to do it and be able to do it joyfully.



Your spiritual senses are trained as time goes on, and you will more easily and frequently experience God speaking in this way.



Remember: *God is speaking to you all the time*, and you are receiving His injected thoughts. Until you begin distinguishing them from your own, you are simply grouping them together and assuming they are yours. In learning to distinguish His voice, you are learning how to separate the spontaneous thoughts that are coming from Him from the meditated thoughts that are coming from your own mind.



Just a thought...

If we don't learn to hear God's voice, but we want to do what's "right," our only choice is to follow the rules we can find in the Bible. (See Deuteronomy 5:22-31 and Hebrews 12:18-29.) Rules are "comfortable," right? At least you know what is expected of you! But unfortunately, as the Israelites found out (Deut. 5:

22-31; Heb. 12:18-29), rules became more rules, until it was a real hassle to follow any of them! The more you study, the more rules you find and the harder it is to keep them all. So you either don't study at all and ignore God, or you try to follow all the "rules" (the *letter* of the law and not the *spirit* of the law) and go crazy! How sad! How much better to search out a relationship with the *living* God Who has made available to us the *living* Holy Spirit through His *living* Son, Jesus! Such a better way!



Be encouraged to learn
how to hear God's voice!!!