

# Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S. LAMPEL

## unnatural journey

Living by the Spirit

If we live by the Spirit,  
let us also walk by the Spirit.

*Galatians 5:25*

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**real**

## That's the problem, you see.

LIVING, FOR MOST PEOPLE, is an essentially *physical* process consisting of eating, sleeping, working, playing, carrying on a conversation with another physical being, playing softball on a Saturday morning, getting heartburn after too many burritos and a longer belt after the Thanksgiving feast.

The physicality of living is part of being human. It is looking into the eyes of a loved one, feeling the touch of a friend, and wincing at the loud anger of an enemy. It is rising in the morning to go to work, and returning home at the end of the day to mow the lawn or prepare dinner. It is physical, it is *doing*. Living is something one can see and touch, hear and smell. It is something played out employing all our senses. It is tangible.

The Spirit, on the other hand, represents an *intangible* process for most

people. Spiritual things are mysterious and puzzling, associated with inexplicable dreams and queasy feelings of dread. They fall into the area of prayers and incantations, angel whispers, and small hairs rising on the back of the neck.

Even within the Christian community the Spirit is often referred to as an “it.” One’s next door neighbor is a “she”; the delivery driver is a “he”; the second member of the Trinity, who once walked the paths of this earth, is certainly a “He.” But the Spirit—a mysterious, invisible being without what we would call a proper name—is often referred to as an “it.” And that perfectly describes the disengaged manner in which some of us consider all things spiritual.

Even Christians may prefer to segregate these two components into their

“spiritual life” and, well, all the rest. Spirituality is something exercised only at specified points on the calendar, say, every Sunday morning and every Wednesday night. The *really* religious, the fanatics in our midst, may even get spiritual more often than that, adding Sunday evening, or an occasional retreat or seminar, or Thursday morning Men’s Breakfast.

However it is organized, many Christians have drawn an imaginary, yet firm line between what is spiritual and what they consider daily living—which leaves us with the problem: How do we reconcile these two seemingly incompatible realms? How does one *live* by the Spirit? And given that, how does one *walk* by the Spirit?

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A good starting point would be to become better acquainted with the Spirit—that is, the Holy Spirit of God. And we can become acquainted with Him in a personal way, since He is not at all an “it,” but a real, living being. Jesus described the Spirit to His disciples on the night He was arrested,

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

*John 16:13*

The Spirit is a “he,” just like Jesus and God the Father. In fact, the Father and the Spirit are of the same type, as it were. According to Jesus,

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

*John 4:24*

The word “spirit” that Jesus used (*pneuma*) is the same word used in the Bible for the Holy Spirit. So, since God the Father and the Holy Spirit are of the same essence, if we can know and have a relationship with one, we certainly can with the other. ✧



# constant connection

The Holy Spirit is a living Person and should be treated as a person. We must never think of Him as a blind energy, nor as an impersonal force. He hears and sees and feels as any person does. He speaks and hears us speak. We can please Him or grieve Him or silence Him as we can any other person. He will respond to our timid effort to know Him and will ever meet us over half the way.

*A.W. Tozer*

WE FIRST MEET the Holy Spirit, as an individual, in the second verse of the Bible.

And the earth was without form, and void;  
and darkness was upon the face of the  
deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon  
the face of the waters.

*Genesis 1:2 KJV*

He was there in the beginning, and somehow it is reassuring to know that even then—as far away from us as the beginning of time itself—the Comforter was familiar with the dust from which we would be created. He was the keeper of all the raw elements that made up the earth, hovering over them like a mother bird hovers over her chicks. In the beginning the earth was nothing more than an amorphous blob of dark, watery nothingness, presided over by the third personality of the Godhead, the one who would one day become our great and compassionate Counselor.

Subsequent earthly events gave cause to display other character traits of the Spirit. In the book of Nehemiah He is described as a teacher.

“You gave Your good Spirit to instruct  
them,  
Your manna You did not withhold from  
their mouth,  
And You gave them water for their thirst.”

*Nehemiah 9:20*

Isaiah describes the future Messiah according to the wisdom He will receive from the Spirit.

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of  
Jesse,  
And a branch from his roots will bear  
fruit.  
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,  
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
The spirit of counsel and strength,  
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of  
the LORD.

And He will delight in the fear of the LORD,  
*Isaiah 11:1-3a*

And then when it came time for the Messiah to be born on earth, His conception was accomplished supernaturally by the Spirit.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

*Matthew 1:18-20*

What the Spirit does is exactly what the Lord does; the Spirit's work is not an additional or special work beyond the Lord's; the Spirit is the Lord at work.

*F.D. Bruner*

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The work of the Holy Spirit is woven

throughout the history of mankind. He was there before the beginning, He works and gives and ministers in the lives of men and women from the first Adam to the Last, and He will be present after the end.

Though they would be loathe to admit it, some in the body of Christ—even those claiming special knowledge of, and power through, the Spirit—think of the Holy Spirit more as a feeling than a person. They associate His ministry with ecstasies, religious exuberance, and special momentary glimpses into divine knowledge.

The Spirit certainly *is* mystical—associated in Scripture with wind and breath, fire, water, words, and as the appearance of a dove—but He is far more than a feeling. He is as vital to the ongoing process of our salvation as the other two members of the Trinity, for without the Spirit we would lose touch with God.

Without the Spirit we would never know God through Christ in the first place.

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It is the Spirit who calls us to Christ, and then, at the moment we join the

Father's family through faith in the blood of Christ, something quite miraculous and supernatural occurs: We are instantly indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He comes in to establish a permanent link between us and the Father. It is Jesus Christ's selfless act at Calvary that actually saves us, but it is this spiritual connection established at the moment of redemption that sustains our communion with heaven on a daily basis.

Let me remind you that when we talk about the Spirit of God, we are not talking about a small part of the whole. The Spirit of God is, in fact, God. And as a member of the Godhead, He is incomprehensible and infinite in nature.

*Charles R. Swindoll*

Without the Spirit's ministry in our life we would be useless in God's service; anything we did for the Father would be accomplished under our own power and inspiration, and thereby useless to His Kingdom. Without the Spirit there would be no life-change in a believer, and we would look and behave like any other soul on earth. ✧



Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,  
Vouchsafe within our souls to rest;  
Come with Thy grace and heav'nly aid,  
And fill the hearts which Thou has made.

To Thee, the Comforter, we cry;  
To Thee, the Gift of God most high;  
The Fount of life, the Fire of love,  
The soul's Anointing from above.

The sev'nfold gifts of grace are Thine,  
O Finger of the Hand Divine;  
True Promise of the Father Thou,  
Who dost the tongue with speech endow.

Thy light to every sense impart,  
And shed Thy love in every heart;  
Thy own unfailing might supply  
To strengthen our infirmity.

*Latin, 9th Century*



**giving up to gain**

# What does it mean to live by the Spirit?

ONCE WE REMOVE the artificial barrier erected between the spiritual and the corporeal—once we accept the fact that, as a disciple of Christ, we have become a spiritual being—it then becomes easier to take hold of the concept of living by the Spirit. He is kin; through the blood of Christ, we have become like Him.

Though he does not explicitly mention the Holy Spirit, Paul, in his speech to the Areopagus on Mars Hill in Athens, describes an essentially spiritual relationship between God and man.

“The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation

of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’”

*Acts 17:24-28*

Because we have been given the gift of free will (or might that be more a curse than a gift?) we are free to live outside of His Spirit. But therein lies only misery. The believer who refuses to live by the Spirit is swimming upstream, against the current. God is committed to pouring His blessings into our life, and He does this through the Spirit connection. When we determine to live outside of that connection, we short-

circuit the life He wishes to flow into our life.

The inhabitation of the Holy Spirit does not ensure that we will proceed under His power. Like the other members of the Godhead, the Spirit is a gracious, courteous dweller. Knowing His way is superior, He patiently waits for us to agree.



It is always a little dangerous to draw upon the peculiar wisdom of Hollywood for understanding the mysteries of God, but there is a moment in the first *Star Wars* film that is not a bad illustration for how we are to live by the Spirit.

Our hero, Luke Skywalker, has just learned that he has in his genes the makings of a Jedi Knight. In their ship flying through space, Luke's mentor, Obi-Wan Kenobi, is trying to teach him about the pervasive, mysterious Force. The young Skywalker is jousting with a small round remote which periodically fires a stinging blast at him, and he's doing a poor job of fending off the blasts with his light saber.

As Luke is once again stung by the remote's blast, Obi-Wan reminds him, "Remember, a Jedi can feel the Force

flowing through him." To further prove the power of this mysterious, invisible Force, Obi-Wan places a helmet over Luke's head—a helmet that completely covers his eyes. "Try it again, Luke. This time let go your conscious self."

Luke is incredulous. "With the blast shield down, I can't even see. How am I supposed to fight?"

Obi-Wan replies, "Your eyes can deceive you. Don't trust them."

Frustrated by his inability to master this more spiritual side of being a Jedi Knight, Luke still cannot fend off the remote's attacks.

"Stretch out with your feelings, Luke," Obi-Wan says.

Luke centers himself and calmly raises his weapon. We see that he is now relying less on himself than on the guiding Force. The remote turns and fires once, twice, three times—and each strike is effortlessly rebuffed by Luke's flashing light saber.

"You see," Obi-Wan says, "you can do it. You've taken your first step into a larger world."

A spiritual kingdom lies all about us, enclosing us, embracing us, altogether within reach of our inner selves, wait-

ing for us to recognize it. God Himself is here waiting our response to His presence. This eternal world will come alive to us the moment we begin to reckon upon its reality.

*Tozer*

God's Holy Spirit is certainly not identical to George Lucas' fanciful Force, but the method by which one taps into His power is similar. We do not live by the Spirit by depending on our own power and abilities, but rather by giving up those gifts to a higher power.

The key to living by the Spirit is *surrender*.

Ah, and there's the rub. If there is anything that stands against the popular philosophy of today it is the concept

**‘Breathe on me, ‘Breath of God,  
‘Fill me with life anew,  
‘That I may love what ‘Thou dost love,  
‘And do what ‘Thou wouldst do.**

**‘Breathe on me, ‘Breath of God,  
‘Until my heart is pure,  
‘Until my will is one with ‘Thine,  
‘To do and to endure.**

of surrendering one's independence to a greater authority. It is simply not done. But our lives will not become spiritual until we let go of the physical. We will not tap into the power of God—who is a spirit—until we become a part of the limitless spiritual world that surrounds us. As Tozer points out, it is within reach, but it waits.

From my desk I look out over a short slope that goes down to the pond behind our home. Beyond the pond is timber—in the summer a dense jungle of green-leafed trees, bushes, tall weeds and grass. In the woods live myriad birds, deer, raccoon, possums, squirrels and chipmunks, wild turkeys and other beasts. From my desk, in the summer, I rarely see them in the timber; I see only a heavy curtain of green. But I know they live in there because they emerge from time to time.

If one day I decide to pay the animals a visit, I could open the gate behind the barn and go crashing through the underbrush astride my tractor. The tractor would conveniently smash through the brush, making my progress easier. In fact, if it really becomes too dense even for it, I could take along my chain saw; it would make short work of the

low branches that impede my progress.

All that might get me in to where the beasts live, but once I was there I would find myself very much alone. Entering the woods on my own, very physical terms would virtually guarantee a solitary vigil.

I could, however, choose to enter the woods on the terms of its inhabitants. I could climb over the gate and quietly enter the dense stand of trees on foot. I would carefully go around obstacles instead of crashing through them, and even step where my footfalls would make little noise. I would be silent and move cautiously, becoming one with the dense vitality of the forest.

Soon I would be serenaded by songbirds and the melodic croaking of frogs. Pheasants would screech from the neighboring field and turkeys would gobble and strut within a few yards of my position. Deer would browse the lower branches in my line of sight, and possums would waddle by dragging their naked, rat-like tails. Antic squirrels would leap from branch to branch overhead, complaining and scolding, but making me feel at home in their world. Quietly, a little at a time, I would become one with my surroundings.

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We do not “live by the Spirit” by physical means. Jesus told the woman at the well that human beings do not choose the manner by which they acceptably worship the Lord God, but must, instead, offer their worship in a manner pleasing to its Object.

In the same way we cannot choose the manner by which we live by the Spirit; it is a spiritual world that must be entered on its own terms. This means that living by the Spirit is not accomplished by attending church, serving on the Building and Grounds Committee, teaching Sunday School, or taking your favorite casserole to the potluck dinner. Living by the Spirit is not accomplished by forcing oneself to read through the Bible in a year, or by stopping work every day at ten o'clock to pray.

All of these activities may be associated with the spiritual life, but they are not, in themselves, spiritual. Spirit-living means that we are energized by the Holy Spirit; that is the first milestone of the journey, not the last. Church activities do not guarantee spirituality any more than driving a four-wheel drive vehicle into the woods guarantees

a chance to dwell with wildlife. Busyness, even at church, more often drives *away* spirituality.

Works do not lead to a Spirit-filled life, but are, instead, its result. ✧

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Till I am wholly Thine,  
Until this earthly part of me  
Glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
So shall I never die,  
But live with Thee the perfect life  
Of Thine eternity.

*Edwin Hatch*

A large, textured brown ring is centered on a dark grey, textured background. The ring has a slightly irregular, hand-made appearance. In the center of the ring, the text "one with God" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word "one" is lowercase, "with" is lowercase, and "God" is uppercase.

**one with God**

# **There is a close relationship between worship of God and the Spirit-energized life. Both are spiritual pursuits, and both have the same enemy.**

## **Self.**

WORSHIP OF GOD AND SPIRIT-LIVING do not come naturally to a people preoccupied with self. Like the disciples waiting for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, *our* spirit may want to worship, but our natural body and inclination—will not move in that direction. So when our own pleasure and convenience are our priorities, we will never walk by the Spirit.

Worship and walking by the Spirit are developed, practiced skills. They do not happen accidentally; they happen because we have set our minds on them as something worthwhile and profitable—first for God, then for ourselves. Both pursuits are centered on God.

Unfortunately we have devalued spiritual living to the point that any illustration of it sounds like a vignette out of the sixties, told to the accompaniment of finger cymbals and the wafting

of incense. Spiritual living has become synonymous in our day with empty-headedness. To live by the Spirit denotes laziness, a lack of common sense and gumption—or it denotes Eastern mysticism lived under a crystal pyramid somewhere in the arid vastness of Arizona.

Even in the church, living by the Spirit is often associated more with ecstasies than day-to-day Christian living. For many it is the antithesis of such things as evangelism, sound biblical instruction, witnessing, and “traditional” doctrine. What those who hold to this position fail to realize is that none of those other activities are even possible without the ministry of the Spirit in a life. The true Spirit-quickened life is not one of lazy self-indulgence, but one packed with vitality, intelligence, and supernatural wisdom.



The world in which we live, and, sadly, many members of the body of Christ, are uncomfortable with things of the Spirit because they are uncomfortable with the knowledge *brought* by the Spirit. In our world, the truth is multiple choice. Anything that declares any one truth—to the exclusion of all the rest—is either dismissed or ridiculed. We live in a society in which all the sharp edges have been rounded off. The Spirit has sharp edges, and that is why He is so unpopular. That is why a life lived in Him can be so inconvenient.

Thus the main mark of a life “walking by the Spirit” is that it is conducted according to the truth of God’s word. The Spirit wrote the words, and it is the Spirit who dispenses their truth to the one in whom He dwells.

Any spirit that does not point us to God the Father and Jesus Christ will not be the one, true Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has no agenda of His own; He speaks only the truth from the Father and Jesus Christ. Seeking no glory for Himself, He always, unselfishly, points us toward the Father and the Son. So a life filled and motivated by the Holy Spirit will always be a life that points to God.

Living a life that is moved by the Spirit of God is, essentially, a deep and powerful joining of our spirit to His. Tozer writes that

the highest love of God is not intellectual, it is spiritual. God is spirit and only the spirit of man can know Him really. In the deep spirit of a man the fire must glow or his love is not the true love of God.

We shouldn’t make the mistake, however, of assigning the Spirit world to the fragile, fleeting land of our emotions. C. S. Lewis writes that our emotions are valid, but that we should

accept these sensations with thankfulness as birthday cards from God, but remember that they are only greetings, not the real gift... The real thing is the gift of the Holy Spirit which can’t usually be—perhaps not ever—experienced as a sensation or emotion. The sensations are merely the response of your nervous system. Don’t depend on them. Otherwise when they go and you are once more emotionally flat (as you certainly will be quite soon), you might think that the real thing had gone too. But it won’t. It will be there when you can’t feel it. May even be most operative when you can feel it least.

Spirit-living is no more complicated, and no less grand, than simply taking God at His word and living as close to Him on a regular basis as is humanly possible. It is not the product of cold reason, but it is brokenness, it is humility and dependency, it is bowing before Him in utter honesty and openness to declare our love and devotion.

But it is also not the result of riding the precipice of high emotions, where the bottomless pit is so near at hand, one false step away. It is thanksgiving for the beauty that surrounds us, it is reminding ourselves of His hand in everything that comes our way, it is considering Him to be our highest and best teacher of everything there is to know.

In one sense, “living by the Spirit” is coming to grips with the fact that God, through the Holy Spirit, is the root source of and sustaining power behind our very existence; “walking by the Spirit” is how that knowledge is played out in our daily life.

And in both, God is preeminent. ✧

For You do not delight in sacrifice,  
otherwise I would give it;  
You are not pleased with burnt offering.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God,  
You will not despise.

*Psalms 51:16-17*



**nurturing the unnatural**

THE EASIEST DESCRIPTION of living and walking by the Spirit is a human life so absorbed into the life of God that His presence pervades every component, every nook and cranny of that life. It doesn't guarantee—or even suggest—sinless perfection, but rather a supernatural perspective on the natural. It means living every day, seeing every object and event, interacting with every person from an unnatural, spiritual perspective.

Walking by the Spirit means seeing even ourselves as something set apart from the natural. It means seeing not only those things that happen around us from the Spirit's perspective, but even our own thoughts, actions, and desires as somehow detached from earthly considerations. This is not to say that we robe ourselves in sackcloth and ashes, and disengage ourselves from all

earthly responsibilities and experience, but that we understand that everything we are and accomplish—from the exalted to the mundane—is now part of someone higher than ourselves.



There are lives scattered throughout Scripture that afford us glimpses of what it means to walk by the Spirit, but there is surely no finer example of a life conducted from beginning to end by the Spirit of God than that of King David.

While still a teenager, this remarkable boy was confronted with a situation that was making grown men cower in fear.

Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits

and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron; his shield-carrier also walked before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

1 Samuel 17:4-11

David hadn't come to fight, but had been sent to the front lines to deliver food to his brothers, who were among the rest of the Israelites quaking with fear at the sight of the giant Goliath.

Young David, however, wasn't at all impressed with the Philistine blowhard.

Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?"

1 Samuel 17:26

**Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,  
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.**

**I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,  
No sudden rending of the veil of clay,  
No angel visitant, no opening skies;  
But take the dimness of my soul away.**

All those around him, from the lowliest recruit to King Saul himself, were only thinking in natural, physical terms. They sized up the enemy, compared it to themselves, and decided that cowardice was the better part of valor. But David thought in *spiritual* terms. He was more embarrassed by the cowardice of

his own people than he was afraid of the enemy. Israel was God's chosen people; He had promised to protect them. So why be afraid of this lowly Philistine? How could his size and strength ever compare to the limitless power of Almighty God?

[Goliath] said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."

1 Samuel 17:43-47



Later in his life, after he had succeeded Saul as the king of Israel, and had enjoyed success in battle, David reached the conclusion that since the Lord had been good to him, he would like to do something good for the Lord. The king thought it wasn't right that he should live in a palace built of cedar while the ark of God was still housed in a tent. In fact, as David's son Solomon recounted later, the Lord was pleased that the king would have such noble intentions.

"Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart.'"

*2 Chronicles 6:7-8*

David was to be disappointed, however, for God had chosen Solomon to be the builder of His temple—not David.

"Nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who will be born to you, he shall build the house for My name."

*2 Chronicles 6:9*

To put this moment in contemporary terms, say a grown son scrimps and saves to buy his elderly father an expensive gift out of gratitude for the fine way he has been raised. Now more mature, the son realizes that he enjoys a good life because of the splendid job his father did in bringing him up, so he wants to do something really nice for him. So the son writes a check large enough to cover the cost of a brand new car, places it in an envelope and hands it to his dad.

The father opens the gift and is suitably surprised, but instead of thanking his generous son and heading for the nearest showroom, he says, "Well, that's very nice, but no thank you." He hands the check back to his stupefied son. "I'd rather have your son buy me a new car. Thanks anyway."

We can well imagine the hurt feelings, even anger that this would create in the heart of the son. How dare his father be so ungrateful! After all, the old man's present car is getting ready to die; he really does need a new one. Why not just be gracious and accept the gift. And what's this nonsense about waiting for the next generation?

No one would have found fault with

King David if he had had a similar response to God's rejection of his gift. It would have been perfectly natural from an earthly, human perspective. But David was someone who lived and walked by the Spirit.

His perspective was unnatural.

David's response was remarkable. Instead of pouting, or stomping off in angry disgust, he went in and sat before the Lord. In quiet humility he expressed his gratitude for the good life God had given him.

Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord GOD, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord GOD.

"Again what more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, O Lord GOD! For the sake of Your word, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness to let Your servant know.

"For this reason You are great, O Lord GOD; for there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all

that we have heard with our ears.”

*2 Samuel 7:18-22*

Then, with his heart filled with praise and adoration for his God, he finished,

“For You, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made a revelation to Your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house’; therefore Your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to You. Now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant. Now therefore, may it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You. For You, O Lord GOD, have spoken; and with Your blessing may the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”

*2 Samuel 7:27-29*

That is what it is to live by the Spirit. That is what it is to walk through life empowered by God through His Holy Spirit. Good and positive events are not clutched too tightly, and painfully disappointing events are not despised. Through the power of the Spirit, we happily release from our grasp the Father’s pleasant blessings, and embrace any unpleasantness that will draw us closer to Him. ✧

**Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.**

**Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,  
One holy passion filling all my frame;  
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,  
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame.**

*George Croly*