

ALTAR WORKERS TRAINING

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH “ALTAR WORK” IS BASED:

- 1) The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a gift.
 - a) However, just because receiving the Holy Ghost is a gift does not mean it is optional.
 - b) **You cannot reject the gift without rejecting the Giver!**
- 2) A gift cannot be earned or deserved; it must be received.
 - a) Receiving the Holy Ghost is NOT based on the seekers worthiness!
- 3) The altar worker / minister is a “spiritual mid-wife” who assists those who are seeking to receive this gift.
 - a) The worker cannot give the gift, but the worker can make it much easier for the seeker to understand and receive the gift.
 - b) Just as there are mid-wives and Doctors who are Obstetricians; in the Kingdom of God EVERY Saint should be a skilled spiritual “mid-wife.” However, there are those who have a Gift of Faith for praying people through to the Holy Ghost, these are spiritual “obstetricians.”
- 4) Receiving the Holy Ghost is not an emotional experience; it is a spiritual experience.
 - a) Emotion may accompany the experience but the actual experience itself is spiritual in nature.
 - b) Consequently, creating or attempting to maintain a high emotional pitch is not necessary to a successful altar service.
 - c) FAITH MUST BE HIGH, EMOTIONS MAY NOT BE.
- 5) Working with seekers is a supernatural ministry.
 - a) If we attempt to help someone receive the Holy Ghost through methodology alone or through human understanding or experience, we will become more of an hindrance than a help.

- 6) To become a truly skilled and effective altar worker, sensitivity to the Holy Ghost is the foundational prerequisite.
 - a) Failure to seek the Lord for a greater sensitivity will eventually prevent a person from ever truly becoming effective in the altar.
- 7) If a minister Senior to you approaches the seeker, STEP BACK and defer to them and their leadership of the situation.

NEGATIVES TO AVOID; IF YOU CAN'T HELP DON'T BE A HINDRANCE:

- 1) Don't shake them, move their heads, or "molest" their person in any other manner.
- 2) Do not yell in their ears; speak as softly as possible.
- 3) **Use something effective for your breath.**
 - a) Don't let your bad breath so distract a person that they do not receive the Holy Ghost.
- 4) **Do not touch a person of the opposite sex except on the head ONLY.**
- 5) Do not stand any closer than necessary to the seeker.
 - a) Avoid as much as possible "invading their space."
 - b) People get extremely uncomfortable when someone stands too close.
 - c) Regardless of whatever positive thing that you think you are communicating, you are hindering that person from receiving from God. **BACK OFF!**
- 6) Do not compete with another altar worker.
 - a) Even if more than two people are praying for the same person, they must not trample on each others efforts.
 - b) **THE SEEKER LOSES WHEN WORKERS COMPETE!**

THE FOUNDATIONAL WISDOM OF THE ALTAR WORKER:

Since the Holy Ghost is a gift, it is automatically received if all hindrances to receiving the gift are eliminated. From experience and Scripture we find that there are only five (5) things that can prevent a person from receiving the Holy Ghost. We will instruct the seeker concerning these hindrances believing that when these things are properly dealt with, the seeker will be filled. Reference verses will be included for your use as you feel it necessary to emphasize and strengthen each point.

THE FIVE HINDRANCES ARE:

A) THE FIRST HINDRANCE: UNREPENTED SINS

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

1) The Lord will not fill a person who is impenitent.

a) Many people want to receive the Holy Ghost, but they want to continue to “hold onto” some sin in their lives.

2) The first and most important act of faith that any person will demonstrate is repentance.

a) It could be effectively argued that a person who refuses to repent of all of their sin is guilty of “unbelief” — which is the greatest of all sin.

b) **“Unbelief” is the sin that is the most personal in affronting the person of our God.**

3) **A person who will not repent cannot receive the Holy Ghost.**

a) An altar worker needs to be able to know when a person is NOT going to repent so that they can discontinue praying with them.

b) It is very negative to everyone’s faith to continue to pray for a person who cannot and will not receive the Holy Ghost. **THEREFORE, STOP!**

4) Usually, I tell the seeker that they do not have to repent for each of their sins individually, but that they must repent specifically for anything that God brings into their minds as they are praying.

5) UNFORGIVENESS IS SIN!

- a) Sometimes it is necessary to also deal with a person's unforgiveness toward others.
- b) Any grudge that is constantly in their minds, or easily comes to mind must be dealt with FIRST before they can receive the Holy Ghost.
- c) Usually God will give the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to a person with unforgiveness knowing that He will deal with them about these things as time goes along.
- d) However, when a person's bitterness is so great or intense that it hinders their faith to receive, it becomes necessary to deal with their grudges before they receive the Holy Ghost because of the barrier that it presents to their faith, thus incapacitating the ability to receive.
- e) This would also include any grudges or unforgiveness that they may have toward themselves. This condition would be manifested by feelings of unworthiness to receive.

Mark 11:22-26

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 **Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**

25 **And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.**

26 **But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**

B) THE SECOND HINDRANCE: DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and **so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.**

1 Peter 1:22 **Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit** unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

- 1) The Lord will not give the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to anyone who is unwilling to obey the Word of God - this includes water baptism in Jesus Name.
- 2) He will give them the Holy Ghost before baptism but only if they are willing to be baptized as soon as possible after receiving the Holy Ghost.
- 3) If there are any other things that they specifically know of in the Word of God that they are unwilling to follow, **they will not receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost until the repent of their disobedience.**
- 4) He will give the Holy Ghost to those who know nothing of Baptism in Jesus name as long as in their heart they are willing to be led by the Spirit of God into all truth.
- 5) Obviously, this criteria is very dependant upon a person's knowledge of the Word of God.
 - a) A person who knows little is less likely to be resistant to the authority of God's Word because they do not know the possible expectations that will follow.
 - b) Lack of knowledge is also one of the key reasons that it is so easy for a little child to be Baptized in the Holy Ghost — they do not know enough to resist God.

C) THE THIRD HINDRANCE: FAILURE TO HAVE "NOW FAITH"

2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, **I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**)

Mark 11:22-24

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, **Have faith in God.**

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall

believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 **Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. **And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

1) The seeker must have faith that they will receive the Holy Ghost today — RIGHT NOW!

Hebrews 11:1 **Now** faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

a) **This cannot be over emphasized!**

b) If they believe that God's Word is true and that He is about to give them the Holy Ghost, they must simply ask for the Holy Ghost as an act of faith.

c) They must not beg for the Holy Ghost — **this is unbelief.**

d) After asking, they must begin to thank the Lord for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

2) Faith is always present tense; just like God is the "I AM," so must faith in God be!

a) There is no such thing as faith for the future.

b) No one will ever receive the Holy Ghost by believing that they will receive the Spirit "someday" — **THIS IS NOT FAITH!**

c) **TODAY** is the day of salvation, **NOW** is the accepted time!

d) The seeker must be firmly and positively exhorted to receive the Holy Ghost **NOW!**

e) A gift is received when it is offered by the Giver, not when it is convenient to the recipient to receive it.

f) The Lord has called to whosoever will to come and drink of his Spirit — **He left the "when" up to us!**

3) Repeatedly asking for the Holy Ghost is not an indication of faith or desire. It is proof of lack of faith.

a) Do not allow a person to beg for the GIFT.

b) They must be instructed how to RECEIVE the gift: Jesus told us to simply ask.

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: **how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**

4) Thanksgiving is a demonstration of faith.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing **by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

a) Thanking the Lord for the Holy Ghost BEFORE you receive it is demonstrating faith and confidence in God and His promises.

D) THE FOURTH HINDRANCE: UNWILLINGNESS TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 24:14 **They shall lift up their voice**, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, **they shall cry aloud from the sea.**

2 Chronicles 20:19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, **stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.**

Psalms 66:8 **O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:**

Psalms 98:4 **Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.**

1) To receive the Holy Ghost, a person must worship — **OUT LOUD!**

a) A hand that is not open to give, is not open to receive.

b) For my spirit to be able to allow the spirit of God to come in I must open my spirit to Him in worship and praise.

c) **This must be done audibly and verbally. If a person is not willing to worship God out loud, they will not receive the Holy Ghost.**

- 2) As the seeker begins to thank, praise, and worship God, they **MUST** focus their minds upon Him.
- a) They cannot allow themselves to be distracted by those that are around them.
 - b) The more they “speak right to Him” the more they will enter into His presence.
 - c) Jesus said, “With God, all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27).
— The Greek word translated “with” means “in the midst of, near to, or in the presence of”
 - d) The more the seeker enters into the presence of God, the easier it will be for them to receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

E) THE FIFTH HINDRANCE: UNWILLINGNESS TO YIELD TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Matthew 12:34-35

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? **for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: **for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**

James 3:3-12

3 Behold, **we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.**

4 **Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.**

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 **But the tongue can no man tame;** it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these

things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

1) As the seekers worship, the Spirit of God will come to them; **in order to receive the Holy Ghost, THEY MUST YIELD TO GOD!**

a) God cannot and will not violate the will of any human in this life.

b) Therefore, speaking in tongues CANNOT be viewed as something so overpowering that the seeker loses control and is FORCED to speak.

2) In Acts 2:38, the Greek word *lambano* is translated *receive*, it means **“to take what is being offered.”**

a) God DOES NOT FORCE the Holy Ghost upon a “passive receiver.”

b) While the seeker does not “seize” the spirit, they MUST “take” the Spirit when the Lord comes to them and offers the Gift.

c) **The seeker must be made to understand this!**

3) Most “chronic seekers” become so as the result of the unbelief that comes from people who expect God to force the Holy Ghost upon them.

4) **No one has ever yet spoken in two languages simultaneously.**

a) As long as the seeker continues to force their own words out, the Lord will not over-ride their will and “make them speak in tongues.”

5) **God does not speak in tongues; He enables us to.**

a) The second “they” is not in the text of Acts 2:4 because of the grammatical rule of redundancy — “they were filled; they spoke in tongues”

b) If people do not understand this they will actually end up RESISTING the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

6) The Holy Ghost “gives” us the “utterance” and we do the speaking in tongues.

a) Thayer’s definition of *TO GIVE*: “to give, grant, supply, furnish, bestow; to cause, to cause to come forth, to commission.”

b) Strong's definition of *UTTERANCE*: "to enunciate plainly."

c) Thayer's definition of *UTTERANCE*: "**to speak out, to speak forth, to pronounce; [speaking] not a word of everyday speech but one 'belonging to dignified and elevated discourse.'**"

7) At the appropriate moment as they are near to "yielding," I usually tell them that they are going to be speaking a "heart" language.

John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

John 7:38 (New King James Version)

38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**"

John 7:38 (The Living Bible)

38 **For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in me.**"

a) The sounds that they are to speak do not come from their heads, they are coming from their heart — the seeker will usually more "feel" what to say than "hear" or "think" what to say.

b) The seeker will not understand what they are saying.

c) They must give their voice to the sounds.

d) God will not speak them for them.

e) I also tell them, "Right at the first it will probably 'feel' like you are making up the sounds, but you are not. Just keep yielding and you will realize that you are 'hearing' yourself speak."

8) "Switching" from the language of the head to that of the Spirit is very similar to what a person does who speaks two natural languages and switches between them "at will."

9) Many times as I sense that a person is near to being Baptized I will speak the command of Jesus when He breathed on them in John 20:22. I say, "Receive the Holy Ghost, in Jesus' name"!

DOES EVERYONE WHO RECEIVES THE HOLY GHOST SPEAK IN TONGUES? YES!

John 3:5,8

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and **thou hearest the sound thereof**, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: **so is every one that is born of the Spirit.**

John 3:8 (Young's Literal Translation)

8 the Spirit where he willeth doth blow, and his voice thou dost hear, but thou hast not known whence he cometh, and whither he goeth; thus is every one who hath been born of the Spirit.'

John 3:8 (Today's English Version)

8 The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

John 3:8 (Darby's Bible)

8 The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it comes and where it goes: thus is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Acts 2:4-6

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Acts 2:6 (Amplified Version)

6 And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together and they were astonished and bewildered, because each one heard them [the apostles] speaking in his own [particular] dialect.

Acts 2:6 (The Bible in Basic English)

6 And when this sound came to their ears, they all came together, and were greatly surprised because every man was hearing the words of the disciples in his special language.

IS LAYING ON OF HANDS IMPORTANT TO HELPING A PERSON RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST?

Acts 8:14-19

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 **Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:**

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 **Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.**

18 And **when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given**, he offered them money,

19 Saying, **Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.**

- 1) There are two primary ways that people receive the Holy Ghost.
 - a) A sovereign outpouring with which humans are very minimally involved.
 - b) The assisted seeker variety that seems to be the most common in the Bible.
- 2) In the “assisted” process, the “laying on of the hands” of the altar worker is extremely important.
 - a) When your hands are on the head of the seeker, you are no longer feeling what you personally are experiencing, but you are now feeling what the seeker is feeling.
 - b) This allows you to know right where they are: whether or not they are feeling the Holy Ghost, if something is hindering them, etc.
- 3) The sensitivity to what the seeker is feeling and the confidence the altar worker has in what they are sensing is an acquired skill that must be developed by practice.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OR PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR WORKER TALKING IN TONGUES WHILE PRAYING FOR THE SEEKER?

Romans 8:26-27

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

- 1) The altar worker speaking in tongues helps them to get in the Spirit of God and to be sensitive to it as they are ministering to the seeker.
- 2) It also helps the Spirit of God to flow more easily while ministering to the one who desires to receive the Holy Ghost.
- 3) Equally as important is the fact that as an altar worker, I do not know this person's heart, I do not know what they need; therefore, I do not know how to pray for them. Because of this, I allow the Spirit to pray through me until He gives me something that He wants me to say to them to assist them.

MENTORING NEW WORKERS

- 1) It is important for those who want to become effective altar workers to stand near, pray quietly, and listen as an experienced altar worker is ministering to a seeker.
- 2) This is the most effective method of becoming a better altar worker.
- 3) You cannot become a better altar worker sitting back in your seat.

VERY IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- 1) Encourage people who have received the Baptism to continue to yield to the Holy Ghost once they start to speak in tongues.
 - a) Do not stop praying with them or stop them from praying just because they make a few sounds that are not in English.
 - b) This is extremely important so that they can develop more “liberty” in the Holy Ghost and in yielding to the Spirit by speaking in tongues.
- 2) The more the seeker speaks in tongues, the stronger their faith will become.

1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Jude 1:20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,
- 3) For a while (weeks, months), pray with the newly filled during church services until they speak in tongues.
 - a) They need to be renewed regularly in the experience until they learn to do this for themselves.
- 4) FINALLY, THE ADVERSARY WILL TEST THE FAITH OF THE NEWLY FILLED!
 - a) HE WILL TRY TO PUT DOUBTS IN THEIR MINDS AND CAUSE THEM TO QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE “REALLY” RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST.
 - b) BE READY FOR THIS — UNDERSTAND THIS, BE SENSITIVE TO THIS, AND BE READY TO COUNSEL THEM ACCORDINGLY.