

May 2018

Dear Brethren and Church of the Firstborn:

The Day of Pentecost is almost upon us. This day pictures the coming of God's Holy Spirit, which we celebrated for nearly forty years on a Monday before it was changed to a Sunday in 1974. The tragic result was that the whole church has been scattered. So, the church that was composed of one Spirit now has become an apostate church of many spirits, not really knowing what to believe regarding God's Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this *Monthly Letter* is to tell you what was revealed in the beginning regarding God's Holy Spirit, and then what we need to be doing to retain that Spirit that God gave us as a gift after He called us to the revealed Truth we heard from the beginning.

First, we vigorously denied the Trinity doctrine, claiming that it was a pagan doctrine. Mr. Armstrong taught us that the third part of this Trinity doctrine was not really a person—in a closed Godhead of three—but instead that the Holy Spirit is the power of God to convert the carnal mind in a salvation process. We learned that the Holy Spirit enters into a man as God's gift; to open his mind to understand spiritual knowledge so that he can now begin to worship the one, true God in Spirit, which is impossible without the Holy Spirit (John 4:23). This gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be earned or purchased with money, but it is given as a gift after repentance and baptism to enable us to overcome Satan and the sin of our own carnal minds. It is the power that can convert us if we are willing to obey God (Hebrews 5:9).

We were taught that the primary mission of Jesus Christ is to prove that the Law of God, His Ten Commandments, can be kept while existing in the flesh. We were taught that the Holy Spirit comes to the believer to implant the life and character of Jesus Christ in our minds in order to give us the desire to obey Him.

Finally, we were taught (and this was a biggy!) that the destiny of all true believers is to become God, even as God is God. We were taught that we can become part of the God Family, and that God is not just a Trinity limited to three persons. We also came to believe that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit separates us from the world, and that the world would begin to hate us (John 17:14).

Why? Because we would begin to keep the seventh-day Sabbath and God's Holy Days, which are a sign to the world that we are different. This difference comes about because of God's Holy Spirit in us, creating within us the very mind of Christ.

Many today have lost that spirit of oneness in Christ because they rejected God's Holy Spirit and changed the Day of Pentecost from Monday to Sunday in 1974. As a result, many have drifted away, not knowing what to believe or how to glorify God in their bodies.

We are told to glorify God in our bodies.

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:20) [*New King James Version* throughout unless otherwise noted].

Doing this necessitates that we examine the way we spiritually use parts of our bodies; in effect performing a spiritual checkup. The Bible talks in terms of how we use our minds, eyes, ears, mouths, hearts, hands and feet; seven parts in all. If we honestly examine the spiritual application of these various body parts, we may find hidden conditions that need to be addressed for our spiritual survival.

MIND

The mind is the body's most wondrous and powerful mechanism. It is the source of thought, and thought is what determines our actions. Both thought and action must be molded to the will of God. That is not easy since the natural mind, influenced by Satan, is filled with enmity against God and opposes His Law.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be (Romans 8:7).

Yet the carnal mind can be brought under control if only we will exercise the Spirit of God with which we are begotten at baptism.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

This, of course, is easier said than done, yet we can have the very mind of Christ with the help of God's Holy Spirit. It is possible!

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). To do that, we need to apply God's laws in our lives. It need not seem so impossible to overcome our carnal natures if we regularly pray, fast, meditate and study God's Word. Without exercising God's Spirit, we weaken and become unable to properly discipline ourselves away from the flesh.

Before and during the Passover season we must examine ourselves to see how abundantly we bear the fruits of the Spirit, as opposed to the works of the flesh.

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law (Galatians 5:19–23).

There is no law against the works of the Spirit.

All of our thoughts need to be brought into the captivity of Christ to make this happen.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments [reasonings] and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4–5).

This means we must control our thoughts because sin is first conceived in our minds. What we continue to think, we will eventually do, led by Satan's influence and our own human natures.

EYES

Though no bigger than ping-pong balls, the eyes are more complicated than the most sophisticated television camera. It is estimated that 80 percent of all our knowledge is gained through our eyes. So those who are blind spiritually to God's revealed Truth will not know much. But how do we use our eyes? Are they the means by which Truth enters our minds? Most people are blinded by Satan and cannot see the Truth of God.

But even if our gospel [of the revealed Truth] is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing [This is the correct translation, which happens through a process of time.], whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them (2 Corinthians 4:3–4).

Consequently, their eyes keep them in spiritual blindness by seeing only the false knowledge of Babylon today. Our eyes must not be used this way because it will blur our vision and cause us to stumble.

Think for a moment of all the subversive things it is possible to cast our eyes upon. Is it any wonder God uses our eyes as spiritual barometers? For instance, the eyes can be mechanisms by which lust is aroused.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world (1 John 2:16).

Just consider the effects pornography or materialistic advertisements have on people. Do you allow your eyes to see violence and sex on television, or movies that depict people breaking God's laws in any number of ways? Do you look at physical things you would like to get and then begin to covet them, thereby breaking the Tenth Commandment?

David said, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:3, *King James Version*), but rather, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord" (Psalm 25:15, *KJV*). Is this your attitude? It should be if you are going to develop the mind of Christ. You cannot do both; you cannot serve two masters.

We must discipline ourselves to take our eyes off that which may harm us in our salvation process.

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire (Matthew 18:9).

Of course, this is a figure of speech and is not meant to be taken literally. It is a warning to encourage us to use our eyes properly. We must overcome looking at things that separate us from knowing and living the Truth of God.

Consider the myriad right uses for the eyes: Do we look upon others with compassion? Do we look upon the Word of God in intense daily Bible study, knowing that the Holy Spirit in us is strengthened by reading the Word of God? Do we watch prophesied events as they race toward the end of Satan's rule on earth? Do we look to God for His mercy and pray "Thy Kingdom come"?

Which is entering our eyes, light or darkness? If we seek to remain the children of light, the Day of the Lord will never take us as a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:1–5).

EARS

Our ears make a computer look like a crude concrete mixer. They are filled with enough electrical circuits to provide phone service to a good-sized city. Through the ears we receive verbal communication.

Unfortunately, Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and he infiltrates our minds by influencing the words spoken to us by others. These wrong, illicit words are more lethal than a venomous snake. They are often designed to destroy someone's reputation or instill wrong knowledge by bearing false witness or lying, thus breaking the Ninth Commandment. For that reason, we must carefully evaluate everything we hear. Just because something is said does not mean it is true, or that everyone needs to know it. Too often people with wrong motives alter the truth and cause irreparable damage.

He who hates, disguises it with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself;
When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, For there are seven
abominations in his heart (Proverbs 26:24–25).

So, beware of politicians or those seeking a high office. Do they really speak the truth? Once we know a person is trying to lead us astray or to destroy someone's reputation, we simply have to stop listening to him, especially a false prophet who seeks to glorify himself.

I have not sat with vain [or idolatrous] persons, neither will I go in with
dissemblers [hypocrites, *NKJ*] (Psalm 26:4, *KJV*).

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err [stray] from the
words of knowledge [godly knowledge] (Proverbs 19:27, *KJV*).

Tell such people you would prefer not to partake in such conversations. Do not listen to them. What we do not hear, we cannot gossip about.

We must also guard our ears from the filthy, violent and blasphemous words that are heard every day on the television, radio and movies, in what is called the entertainment industry of today. When this leaven comes in, be quick to put it out, or it will leaven the whole body, and that will quench God's Holy Spirit over time.

Remember that Satan is the god of this world, and he controls the entertainment industry today that spews forth all the words of sex, violence and disrespect for others. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find any entertainment today that is not peppered with swear words, and those words have a way of filling your thoughts. Even if you do not say them out loud, you can find yourself mentally breaking God's command against filthy speech. So, guard your ears from hearing such words and continue cleaning them out of your mind by filling it instead with the Word of God through reading inspiring Scripture. Make this your goal!

Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your heart to my knowledge [God's Word] (Proverbs 22:17).

We must open our ears to God's correction. This is hard to do!

My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights (Proverbs 3:11–12).

God delights in the humble—those who are quick to hear His correction. Remember to maintain humility when listening to the ministry. They may not always be eloquent, but they do speak for God by and through the power of God's Holy Spirit. Do you listen attentively to sermons? Do you apply them personally? Are you objective, or too emotional? Remember that those who have developed spiritual maturity will not be ruled by emotion; they will do what is right in the eyes of the Lord, not the world. Give heed to the quality of the material you allow to pass into your ears.

MOUTH

Through our mouths we are nourished and can communicate with others—both, important and enjoyable activities. But through Satan's influence, man puts his mouth to wrong use by caving in to the pulls of the flesh. From a physical point of view, the diets

of many affluent nations cause them to be overfed and undernourished by eating "deneutralized," processed food.

Yet there are those who *seem* to be religious in quoting Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." True, the Kingdom of God is far more than meat and drink, but we still are required to care for the bodies God has given us.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [which] is in you, [which] you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Are you allowing lust for the wrong kinds of foods to destroy that temple, or are you keeping it strong and healthy so that the Spirit of God desires to dwell there? The desire for the tongue to taste all these processed goodies will lead to bad health. The chemicals in processed foods will destroy your immune system and make your body more susceptible to disease.

Beyond the responsibility to observe proper dietary habits, we are told to use the tongue correctly. The tongue is one of the most difficult parts of the body to keep under control.

Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (James 3:5–8).

So, ask God for help! God's Spirit in you can control your tongue. Many of the Proverbs admonish us to guard our uses of the tongue, especially in the area of gossip. We sometimes gossip without even realizing it.

He who covers [conceals] a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends (Proverbs 17:9).

Especially if what you repeat is a private matter. So, do not air people's sins by mistake.

Are we guilty of passing on rumors? What about backbiting, making promises that are not kept, lying, or speaking evil of those God has placed in power over us?

David asks this question:

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend (Psalm 15:1–3).

This is difficult to do, especially when someone is reproaching us. Yet, we do not have license to retaliate in like manner.

This next scripture was much quoted by Mr. Raymond Cole:

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9).

No matter how bad a person is, the Lord will eventually grant him repentance, just as He did us, so it is not wise to judge a person until the end of his days.

It is harder for a person to repent and return if he has been bad-mouthed throughout the congregation. We can mistakenly quench the Spirit of God in converting sinners by rendering evil for evil. Even too much talking can get us into trouble. "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19). Why? Because we are less likely to reveal a secret or someone's past sin that God has forgiven.

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. [That is scary to think of.] For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matthew 12:36–37).

With the help of God's Spirit, we must learn to use our tongues as instruments to inform, encourage, and in some cases correct others. There is a right time and a right way to speak. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). How true! Correction at the wrong time can do more harm than good, so wait until the person is receptive. Remember, only God's Holy Spirit can convict one of sin.

HEART

The heart is the body's strongest muscle. Without its activity, life would cease. What does the heart represent in the Bible? It is the source of our attitudes. The carnal heart produces evil thoughts, covetousness, pride, foolishness and deceit.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man (Mark 7:21–23).

That is true if we express these attitudes by our bad behavior in the flesh. Therefore, it is necessary to undergo a change of heart by cutting away this carnal flesh that defiles a man. "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts" (Jeremiah 4:4). This is accomplished through repentance and baptism, and receiving the Holy Spirit. The circumcision of Christ is the cutting away of the carnal flesh and becoming more sensitive to the spiritual leading of Christ by and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But our hearts can develop problems after baptism if we begin to resort back to the flesh. We can become spiritual heart attack victims by allowing wrong attitudes to develop under Satan's pull of our heartstrings. This can happen when we let down our defenses and become lazy and tired of feeding the Spirit of God within our minds or hearts. We must be sure to love God and His ways with the entire heart.

'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment (Mark 12:30).

This commandment God's people break much, much too often. Let us be honest! Do we put God first in our lives? Do we give God the firstfruits of our time in prayer and Bible study in the morning before we start the day, when we are fresh and alert? Or do we leave God the last few moments of our time before we stumble into bed at night, tired with the cares of the day? Is spending time with God top priority with us—more important than anything else? It is not easy. In fact, it is the most difficult thing we have to face—not allowing the cares of our lives and all of our responsibilities to become more important to us than our spiritual responsibilities. Yet, this is the heart that God desires. Anything less than that constitutes false worship that quenches God's Holy Spirit!

HANDS

The hands are designed to carry out the work of the body by holding, moving and utilizing objects. Man's ability to write, build, plant, eat and play would be greatly curtailed without his hands. No wonder God uses the hand as a symbol for work.

"He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich" (Proverbs 10:4). This verse shows the need to work hard! Man was made to work six days. "Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (Exodus 20:9). Too many are failing to be successful by their sheer laziness. Paul even had to admonish Christians to overcome their unwillingness to work.

For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies [talkers, not workers]. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread [earn their own living] (2 Thessalonians 3:10–12).

We can break the Eighth Commandment by not returning a fair day's work for a day's pay, and as profitable servants we should return more than that. We must examine our work habits to see if they are pleasing to God. We should put all our effort into whatever we are doing.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

We should also share our productivity and assist others when we are able, especially with those of the household of God.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so (Proverbs 3:27).

Obviously, there is a limit to what any one person can give, but giving is the ultimate goal of the Christian life and should be our first consideration in every circumstance, realizing we cannot out-give God. How many of you have experienced this in your lives?

FEET

Our feet carry us more than sixty-five thousand miles in an average lifetime. Biblically, our feet are the principles, or tools, by which we achieve our goals in this life. Do our feet carry us back into Egypt, or away from Egypt?

"The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble" (Proverbs 4:19). When we stumble in our salvation process, do we really understand why we stumbled? How can we walk and not stumble?

David said: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105, *KJV*). God's laws should guide everything we do so that our feet do not stumble. Think about where you are headed in life and do not wander aimlessly, or your feet may stumble and take you somewhere that you do not want to go. Do you have goals? If so, will they lead you to the Kingdom of God, or detour you into the path of unrighteousness?

Matthew 6:33 (*KJV*) tells us our number one priority: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"—not our own righteousness, which can only be accomplished by God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us, which was revealed only once on the true Day of Pentecost.

Love to you all, brethren, with the affection that can only come through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard W. Litz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Richard W. Litz