

THE
WIND
AND THE
RUDDER

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RUDDER

*How to Live in the Power of the Spirit
Without Becoming Weird*

DAN SMITH

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This book is the fruit of God working through many people in my life. They have contributed greatly, both personally and professionally, and I am eternally grateful to each of them. I would like to recognize them here.

My wife, Jane, has provided a safe and peaceful place to live and work. Her love and encouragement gave me a solid foundation and helped me to see this project through to the end. She was an enormous help to me as my first editor. I love you, Jane!

My daughters, Stephanie and Lindsey, along with Lindsey's husband, Brent, are some of my biggest fans, and their love and encouragement has been a tremendous help and source of strength.

My associate and friend, Mike Flynn, who has authored five books himself, was a great help in editing the manuscript, and in providing practical suggestions along the way. Mike, I hope to keep learning from you and look forward to enjoying more times together at Starbucks.

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To the wonderful people of the Vineyard Community Church in Camarillo: You are simply the best people any pastor could hope for, and I couldn't have done any of this without your love, prayers, and encouragement.

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Thank you, Mom and Dad, for laying such a firm foundation of faith in Jesus. You introduced me to the Wind and provided the rudder for my life. And thanks, Mom Williams, who was such a prayer warrior and source of inspiration.

I will always owe a debt of gratitude to John Wimber, the founder of the Vineyard movement. Thanks, John, for modeling humility and love for the whole Church. You taught me so much and impacted my life profoundly. And thanks for the costly price you paid to give birth to and lead this movement.

Finally, I want to thank Drew Rivera and the team at Destiny Image for believing in me as a first-time author, and for working with me to make this dream become reality.

ENDORSEMENTS

The Wind and the Rudder is an inspirational and instructive work on “how to live joyfully in the power of the Holy Spirit.” Dan Smith is not an armchair theoretician; he has experienced and practiced the life in the Spirit he writes about. I encourage all who are thirsty to experience more of God to make *The Wind and the Rudder* a priority read.

BERTEN WAGGONER
National Director
Vineyard USA

This is a very well-written and timely book. I recommend it to anyone who longs to know and experience more of the Holy Spirit.

VINSON SYNAN
Dean Emeritus
Regent University
School of Divinity (Virginia Beach)

The Wind and the Rudder gives you great biblical foundation for living a life directed by the Holy Spirit. Dan Smith has a way of making things naturally supernatural. This book is full of foundational teaching, practical stories, and examples from history. Your life will never be the same!

DOUG ADDISON

Author of *Personal Development God's Way*

www.dougaddison.com

The New Testament envisions a conversational relationship with the Holy Spirit that builds up the Church and provides gifts and power to serve the world. But many of us have a difficult time finding such a relationship. It seems too hard to navigate waters that easily become weird. And it surely can invite controversy. But we have no choice. There can be no Christianity without the Holy Spirit front and center. If you are being led to explore the person and work of the Holy Spirit, Dan Smith, while you may not agree with every word he writes, is a veteran and reliable guide.

TODD HUNTER

Anglican Bishop

Past President, Vineyard Churches USA

Past President, Alpha USA

Author of *Our Favorite Sins* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2012)

Dan is a spiritual father many of us would like be associated with, and I highly recommend all believers and ministers alike to read this book.

APOSTLE PATRICK BALIGASIMA

Founder/President

Discipleship Missions Int. (Uganda)

The Lord is about to pour out His Spirit in new and amazing ways. Most Christians are excited about this, but are unaware that God wants to use them. Dan's book, *The Wind and the Rudder*, will not only open your eyes to see what God has already begun to do in our generation, but it will cause you to hunger for all that He has for you. It will teach you how to be prepared and equipped so you can step into your destiny, so your life can make a difference on earth for such a time as this.

RICK TAYLOR
Director of the Healing Rooms
of the Santa Maria Valley

If the Spirit-led life has baffled you at times, this book is the key to unlock those mysteries. In my 20 years of ministry I have yet to run across a writing that so brilliantly explains the complexities of what it means to work in partnership with the Holy Spirit like *The Wind and the Rudder* does. Dan Smith has penned a book for ministers and lay people that will enhance your walk with the Lord and give the biblical balance that is so needed in the lives of the 21st-century Christ-follower. Pick it up today, read it tomorrow, and begin putting it into practice the next day.

AARON DUNN
Pastor of Assimilation and Volunteer Ministries
Phoenix First Assembly
Phoenix, Arizona

Dan Smith's book is a welcome and timely contribution to the Church. His passion for God and heart for people shine through each page as he shares with us his insight on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Stemming from a lifetime of ministry, deep prayer, biblical study, and personal experience, Smith inspires us to embrace our identity as persons empowered and

led by the Spirit. This book is not only for those who wish to be better equipped for ministry, but for anyone who wishes to deepen their sensitivity to and understanding of God's personal and active presence in the person of the Spirit.

MARÈQUE STEELE IRELAND
Affiliate Assistant Professor of Theology
Fuller Theological Seminary

If there is ever a time for a powerful book like this, that time is *now!* *The Wind and the Rudder* is an amazing reminder that, as we "do life," there is a wonderful helper who empowers us to fulfill our promised destiny—a destiny we were not created to fulfill alone. So sit back, and allow God, through His Spirit, to fill your sail with an undeniable power, which will revive you and bring joy back into the journey.

JASON BRIDGE
Senior Pastor, Word of Life Family Church
Phillips, Wisconsin

The Greek word translated "disciple" (*mathetes*) literally means "learner." Dan Smith is a long-term learner. This book is not theoretical; it comes out of practical experience in putting the Word of God to work. I have worked with Dan for 9 years and have found him to be a practitioner of the things he writes about in this book. The word "balance" well describes him: he goes all out for the things God puts on his heart and he doesn't permit success to influence his ability to assess things maturely. You will enjoy the forthright stories in this book as well as the conclusions Dan draws out of them. If you put them into practice you'll find that this book has changed your life.

REV. MIKE FLYNN
Founder and Director of FreshWind Ministries

A warm and passionate testimony to the creative, renewing energy of the Holy Spirit, drawing on years of pastoral experience. At a time when the Church desperately needs to “sail with the wind,” there is much here to ponder and take to heart.

JEREMY BEGBIE
Duke University

I enthusiastically recommend *The Wind and the Rudder*. For those of us with eyes to see, we will receive a picture of what the Spirit of Jesus is preparing for His beloved Bride. Biblical and historical examples of the work of His Spirit are woven throughout the pages. The author is a seeker; a man of integrity whom I have known for 25 years. Maturity and spiritual sensitivity will be needed for the glorious days ahead. Like a compass, *The Wind and the Rudder* points us to the coming King.

PHIL GUTHRIE
Founder and President, Radio Nueva Vida

Scripture says there is a river that makes glad the people of God. That river is the Holy Spirit. The early Church learned to work with the Spirit, and that made all the difference. Dan gives us clear instructions, personal experience, and wonderful stories that will help us navigate the river of God in the coming harvest revival. Dan’s book, if believed, will help us not miss our day of visitation.

RICK WRIGHT
Senior Pastor, The Gathering Place
Studio City, California

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FOREWORD

THERE WAS A TIME, AND it was not long ago, that the Evangelical church and much of the rest of the church was afraid of the gifts of the Spirit. Praying for the sick, speaking in tongues, and prophesying were at the least held suspect or at the most demonic. Theologies had developed that said all of these gifts and many more had been a vital part of New Testament experience, but with the full development of the Bible, they were no longer needed and thus ceased to operate when the canon was closed. The Bible then replaced the Spirit; it became the only way that God could speak.

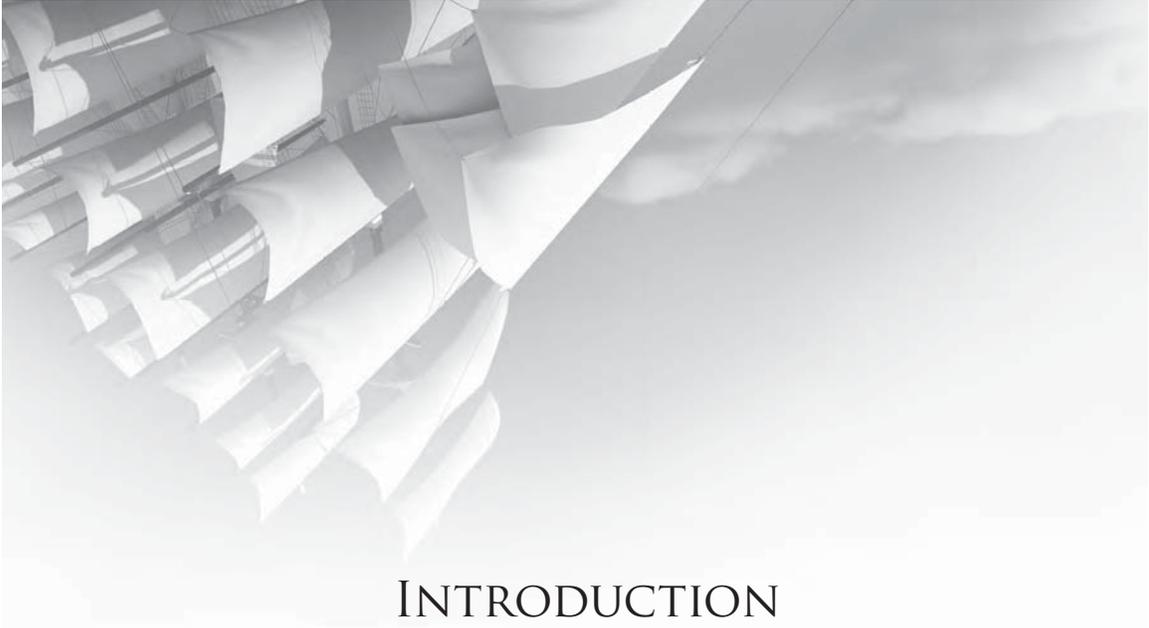
But things have changed. Early in the twentieth century the Pentecostal movement erupted on the world scene that caused a tsunami of the Spirit accompanied with signs following such as those once rejected or ignored gifts. This was followed in the Sixties by a second spiritual tsunami called the Charismatic movement that upset the spiritual landscape in old-line denominations, the Roman Catholic church, and many Evangelical churches. Though many in the church would continue to say

that they are neither Charismatic nor Pentecostal, they would also go on to say that they believe all of the gifts of the Spirit are for today and that they want those gifts to be expressed in their churches. It could be rightly said that the twentieth century was a century in which the Holy Spirit's work was forcefully felt through all the church.

An ever-increasing number of books are being written on the Holy Spirit by scholars and practitioners across the theological spectrum. Yet they are not only writing about the Holy Spirit in redemption—inspiring the Bible, convicting sinners, illuminating the Word. These are all very important functions of the Spirit, but they are only a small part of the Spirit's work. There is much more. The Spirit speaks to us, gifts us to serve both in the church and the world, and anoints us to do the works of Jesus such as preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and freeing people from spiritual bondage. The Spirit builds the church to be a reconciling community that breaks down the walls of prejudice, destroys sectarianism, and cares for creation. There is nothing in our lives that the Spirit is not related to in some way.

The Wind and the Rudder adds another very helpful book to this genre. It is a very practical guide for those who want to live in the Spirit and who need some skills to help them do so. It is not written by an armchair theoretician. Dan is an experienced practitioner who has learned to live naturally in the supernatural. He has prayed for the sick, prophesied, and cast out demons. He not only tells you what the Spirit wants to do in your life, he also shows from years of experience how to cooperate with the Spirit in a non-religious way. Your heart will be warmed, your mind will be challenged, and your faith will be strengthened in the reading.

BERTEN A. WAGGONER
National Director
Vineyard USA



INTRODUCTION

THE NEXT GREAT AWAKENING HAS already begun.

In Santa Maria, California, the Healing Rooms, staffed by volunteers from over 30 local churches, have seen hundreds of medically verified healings of every imaginable disease, and are seeing people come to Christ almost daily.

An evangelist with InterVarsity in Los Angeles told me that he recently gave an altar call at a secular university and was stunned when over 50 students responded to the invitation to receive Christ. When I asked him if this was becoming a trend, he said, “Definitely.”

A group of Christians, trained in “prophetic evangelism,” recently staffed a booth at the Santa Barbara County Fair, on which they put a sign, “Refreshment for the Journey.” They engaged curious individuals in conversation, giving them words of prophetic encouragement and insight (what many would call “Words of Knowledge”). Such was their impact that they were awarded First Prize in the non-profit category!

In Redding, California, an army of youth regularly invade local malls, praying for strangers that they had earlier received clues about in prayer circles, often with dramatic results (they call these outreaches “Treasure Hunts”). Their church has become a training ground for young people from all over the country who are desperate for the power of the Spirit.

Radio Nueva Vida, based in Camarillo, California, has become the largest Spanish Christian radio network in America. My friend, Phil Guthrie, who is the president and founder, shares with me week after week amazing stories of hundreds upon hundreds of people finding Christ through their broadcasts. They regularly see people healed and delivered from demons right in their offices. God is bringing revival to the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S.!

This is only a small sampling of evidence that I have seen in the last year or so, but I would bet many of you can testify to similar things, and even greater works of the Spirit in your own communities. Thousands of people across the U.S. have been praying for a nationwide revival, and I just don’t believe that God will ignore their cries. Someone has said, “Whenever God is ready to do something big, He sets His people praying.” We have all heard stories of how the Spirit has been moving with power in other countries, and many of us are getting tired of being long-distance spectators. You may even be burned out as you read this book, but be encouraged—God has not forgotten you, and God has not forgotten America.

In my own church, we have been sensing a growing desperation for a massive outpouring of God’s Spirit, and as I have interacted with other pastors, I’m finding the same thing happening in other churches across the country. The Holy Spirit is up to something big and we need to prepare.

The outpouring of God’s Spirit is the primary thing, but not the only thing we need. There have been many times in history when the wind of God’s Spirit has begun to move powerfully

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through an individual, in a city or across a nation, only to see healthy, long-lasting revival aborted due to the lack of a rudder. One of the attempts of this book is to help provide the stabilizing force of a strong rudder during times of dramatic renewal and revival.

Adventure..... Mystery..... Power.....
Grace..... Satisfaction..... Destiny..... Favor.

These are a few of the things we are meant to experience when participating with Jesus in this incredible mission He has called us to. When He lived among us, the Spirit led Him into one adventure after another. He was anything but predictable, conventional, or conforming. He was adored by outcasts, hated by the establishment, and followed by thousands. The message He preached was revolutionary, challenging, and compelling. Those who were privileged to know Him intimately were changed forever. They had been caught in His gravitational pull, and were undone, or broken, or awestruck. But they all knew, in a way they had never known before, how deeply they were loved, how much they would suffer, and how great was their destiny. They would become world-changers.

“The Blackbird” is the nickname for the SR-71, perhaps the most highly developed strategic reconnaissance plane ever built. It was designed with a metal skin that would expand because of the heat from of flying so high and so fast. It was built with six expansion points, enabling it to literally stretch in flight. It was truly a miracle of engineering. However, when it was sitting on the ground, it would leak fuel all over the place from those relaxed expansion points, needing drip pans placed under it, like an old car in a stained driveway, and was anything but impressive.

All of this was by design, and it is a picture of the Christian. We have been designed for supersonic flight and mind-numbing performance. We have been designed to be like Jesus. He modeled the Spirit-empowered life, challenged His disciples to

do the impossible (like feed thousands with a boy's lunch, or walk on water, or cast out stubborn demons), and seemed frustrated when they couldn't. There is a whole dimension of living that has gone un-experienced by most followers of Jesus, and He still waits. We are like the Blackbird, designed for greatness and lofty flight, but, sadly, most of the time we sit in the hangar, unimpressive. We sit earth-bound.

There are also a few Blackbirds who fly fast and high, but, like the early prototypes, have flaws that make them unstable, and sometimes the consequences are disastrous. The faster we fly, the more crucial the stabilizing systems become. At the risk of mixing metaphors, we are like sailing ships, designed for Wind power and helpless without it, but once the Wind begins to blow and the sails are raised, the integrity of the rudder becomes most important.

A "revelation," for lack of a better word, came to me about 17 years ago, during a prayer meeting in Canada, and was accompanied by a mental picture. In this picture, I saw an old ship, perhaps something out of the 17th or 18th century. The ship had masts, but the sails were tied up and had not been used for some time because the sea was dead calm, and there had been no wind for a long time. As a result, the sailors were struggling hard with many oars, similar to the old Viking ships, with rows of sailors on each side, rowing hard to propel the heavy vessel.

Then something interesting happened: The wind began to blow, and as the wind blew, the sailors looked around, a little confused, because it had been so long since they had sailed with the wind behind them, and for a while they didn't know how to respond. At first a few, then others, began heading for the sails, to unfurl them. One by one the sails began to fill with the wind, and the sailors started pulling in the oars. As the ship picked up speed, the sails now completely deployed and filled with wind, the sailors began smiling, looking at one another, some even laughing, as fatigue gave way to joy and relief.

Introduction

One of the reasons for writing this book is to share what God has taught me since that “revelation” 17 years ago, as I have sought Him for clarity and understanding, and as I have attempted to put those things into practice in my own church. If we believe that there is another historic windstorm of God’s Spirit about to be poured out across the earth, then it is time to learn a new set of skills because what many of us have been prepared for is “rowing,” but for what is coming we will need to learn to sail!

The Body of Christ, and particularly those in leadership, has largely become accustomed to a mode of ministry that is laborious and exhausting. But there are strong indications that there is a new and wonderful season dawning upon us, bringing a momentum of the Spirit that will radically change the way many of us experience church.

I’ve been a Christian most of my life (except for a four-year period of rebellion, between the ages of 17 and 21). As a pastor’s kid, I saw my parents put in many long hours of hard work, and suffer much heartache, while doing the “work of the ministry.” And having been a pastor myself for over 30 years, my wife and I know what it is to labor, plan, strategize, recruit, motivate, teach, and suffer disappointment. I understand the self-doubt, the battles against all forms of temptation, the constant struggle not to compare myself with other, more “successful” pastors, the yearning for a richer harvest and healthier disciples, the occasional burnout, the sickness of heart over hope deferred, and countless other challenges faced daily by thousands of pastors and leaders. I have also experienced those welcome surges of Spirit-given momentum that bring new hope, joy, relief, and power, like the wind filling the sails of the old ship, and I am one voice in a growing chorus that is shouting, “The Wind is coming again!”

This book is written, both for those who identify themselves as Evangelicals and for those who call themselves

THE WIND AND THE RUDDER

Pentecostals/Charismatics (although, many of us are, in fact, a mixture), and for the many Catholics and members of main-line denominations who truly love Jesus. It is written out of a great love for the whole Body of Christ, and with a passion that all of us become skilled at learning to minister effectively and powerfully in the footsteps of Jesus. For many of us, this means learning a new appreciation for and understanding of what it means to work in partnership with the Holy Spirit and making the necessary adjustments, so that we can move forward with Kingdom effectiveness and theological integrity.

But the burden of this book is really two-fold: To help an ocean of Jesus-followers discover the thrill, the adventure, and the passion of the Spirit-filled life they have been called to, and to help other believers, who have had some experience of the Spirit, to discover balance, understanding, and a new sense of mission. We must have both the Wind and the rudder. It is my hope and prayer that this book will help to bring a fresh passion and understanding to the Church of Jesus Christ, and that it may be a helpful tool in the hands of the Spirit to equip and mobilize the army of God for the coming harvest.



Chapter 1

SAILING IS BETTER THAN ROWING

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:25

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE tension-filled days in our home. You’ve had them, I’m sure. It seemed like everything I said came out wrong, and what was worse was that everything my wife, Jane, or my daughters, Lindsey or Stephanie, said also seemed to come out wrong, or be taken wrong. If our home were a big piece of machinery, it would have sounded horribly noisy, like metal scraping against metal, desperately in need of oil or grease. It was as if everyone had gotten up on the wrong side of bed, and the whole day had gone like that. Finally, some time in the early afternoon, I had to go to the store for something, and, to be honest, was relieved to get out of the house and to enjoy, for a little while, the peace of being by myself in the car.

When I returned and pulled into the driveway, I paused before I turned off the motor and prayed a simple prayer: “Lord, help us. Help us change the atmosphere in our home.” Even before I’d finished that short prayer, the words “ice cream” popped into my mind. It all took about five seconds. I went

inside and announced to the family, “Let’s get out of here and go get some ice cream.” Immediately everyone was on the same page—no disagreement here! Within five minutes we were in the car and on our way to the ice cream store, and just like that, the entire mood of our family had changed! We had been rowing; now we were sailing.

There are two distinctly different paradigms for ministry in the church of Jesus Christ. The first paradigm, with which we are all too familiar, is characterized by hard work, long hours of planning, digging for ideas, running to the latest workshops or seminars that promise great results, and often pressuring people to serve in ways that help fulfill someone’s vision. This is rowing, and is common in an environment where there is little “wind” of the Spirit.

The second paradigm for ministry also involves planning and effort, to be sure, but of a different kind. This mode of operation takes seriously the partnership dynamic of people working in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. It is more heavily weighted toward prayer, sometimes with fasting, and consciously learning to become sensitive to the impressions given by God—more generously than many realize. This is sailing, and is more common where there is some movement of the Holy Spirit.

A friend of mine, Tom, is a Senior Vice President of Information Systems for a national corporation. He and his staff had been struggling for days to find a solution to a software problem that had all but paralyzed their department. Then one day, as Tom was driving in his car thinking about what to do, it occurred to him that he really hadn’t prayed about the situation. So right there, in his car, he asked God to show him what to do. By the time he got back to work, everything started clicking. Suddenly new ideas started coming, creative energy began flowing, and the problem was solved within

hours. First they had tried rowing; then came sailing. Sailing is better than rowing!

THE SPIRIT AND MOMENTUM

John Maxwell says momentum makes everything go better and makes everyone look better. Sports teams know this, which is why, when a basketball team begins to rack up points, the opposing coach will often call a time-out. He understands the importance of interrupting the momentum of the other team. When you have momentum going for you, everything seems easier, progress happens more quickly, people are more supportive, your weaknesses are overlooked, your strengths are magnified, and favor seems to come naturally. No wonder Maxwell calls momentum “The Big Mo!” Political campaigns know this, which is why they spend so much time, energy, and money trying to develop it. At a certain point, a wave of energy seems to build, people are more and more inclined to get on board, and it becomes almost impossible to stop.

Before the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were simply waiting. They knew Jesus was alive because He had revealed Himself to them several times since His resurrection. But they didn’t know much of anything else. Where do we go from here? What do we do now? So, in obedience to Jesus’ instructions, they simply stayed in the city, waiting and praying. Then it happened: Boom! It is significant that the Spirit came “*like a violent rushing wind*” (Acts 2:2 NASB). What better picture of momentum and power could the Spirit Himself have given Luke as he inspired him to write this account in Acts. Momentum is what the Spirit produced on that memorable morning, as that divine wind carried the disciples for years throughout the known world, expanding the kingdom with explosive force and changing history forever.

Patrick Baligasima received Jesus while he was practicing his engineering profession in Uganda, and knew God had

called him into full-time pastoral ministry. His father was vehemently opposed, knowing he would have a hard time supporting a family as a pastor, and began telling everyone in his village that his son Patrick had lost his mind. So for a full year, the entire church consisted of Patrick, his wife, and one friend.

Then his father became critically ill and was unable to find a cure, either from doctors or witch doctors. Finally, in desperation, he decided to visit his son. He had decided that if his son's prayer could heal him, he would turn to God. As Patrick began to pray for his father, a demon manifested, and Patrick cast it out. His father was immediately healed, and began testifying all over the village. The following Sunday, 300 people showed up at Patrick's church. From 3 to 300 in one week—that's momentum!

That church has now grown to over 2,500 people, and 400 churches have been planted all over Uganda from that one church. The Spirit of God, through the healing of one man, initiated a wave of momentum that is still sweeping thousands of people into the kingdom. Sailing is better than rowing!

Life is hard. Marriage takes work. Raising kids is a challenge. Ministry of any kind can be a grind, because ministry is just another word for serving, and serving always requires something from you. So whether you're "ministering" to your family or serving at work, or at church, or in your community, you are at risk of being worn down. Statistics indicate that only 10% of pastors are still in the ministry by the age of 65. It simply could not be God's plan that we should be miserable and worn out as a result of serving Him or serving people.

Yes, ministry does require an expenditure of energy. The saying, "no pain, no gain," is accurate, yet there is a "good tired" and a "bad tired." In Ezekiel 44, when God was giving the prophet instructions about the new temple and priesthood, He made it clear that the priests were not to wear woolen garments, but clothes made only of linen, so that they would not

perspire. It has been said that some ministers try to compensate by perspiration what they lack in inspiration. This reflects the difference between a paradigm of ministry that is highly dependent on human effort, and a paradigm of ministry that is highly dependent on the power of the Spirit.

When Zerubbabel was frustrated in his efforts to rebuild the temple, God spoke through the prophet Zechariah, "...'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty... 'This mountain (of opposition) shall be removed'" (Zech. 4:6-7 paraphrased). And as we know, in spite of great opposition, with continued encouragement by Spirit-inspired prophets, the temple was completed.

As we struggle with the often discouraging, meager results of our own best efforts to build our churches and persuade a disinterested culture about Jesus, it's time to take a fresh look at a better way. Jesus told the disciples not to leave the city until they were empowered by the "gift of the Father" (see Luke 24:49). We must become desperate for a new wind of the Spirit. Sailing is better than rowing!

WAITING FOR THE WIND

I hate waiting. It is by any measure one of my least favorite things in life. I get impatient waiting in line at the supermarket. I get impatient waiting at red lights, especially when there are no cars anywhere to be seen in the opposite direction! I hate waiting for someone who was supposed to meet me at Starbucks fifteen minutes ago. I just hate waiting, period. Perhaps you do too. Yet waiting is one of the most important lessons we have to learn if we are serious about being faithful and effective disciples of Jesus. It is this discipline of waiting on God's timing that tests every one of us. We are addicted to activity, to being busy, because we tend to feel that if we're not busy, we're not being productive.

When we are waiting, it may seem like nothing is happening, but waiting is definitely not a passive activity. Waiting is neither easy nor passive. It is hard work. It is during the work of waiting that we begin to struggle with questions like whether we have really heard from God. It is while we wait that we begin to wonder if maybe we missed God somewhere, or if maybe we have sinned in some way and got disqualified. After a few years of waiting, Abraham and Sarah began to doubt that God really meant He was going to give them their own son, so they hatched an abortive attempt to bring about God's promise in their own way by having Abraham sleep with Sarah's maid (Gen. 16:1-2).

Whenever God begins a significant work, waiting is almost always a part of the process for its unfolding and eventual fulfillment. King Saul failed the waiting test when Samuel the prophet told him to wait for his arrival, so he could make the offering to God before going to war with the Philistines (I Sam. 13). King David passed the waiting test when, after Samuel anointed him as king, he had to flee for his life and live like an outcast for years, before God finally had him appointed king over Israel.

Waiting on God's perfect timing was one of the things that made Jesus so effective, and what will make us effective. When given the news that Lazarus was deathly ill, Jesus waited for two more days before going to him (John 11:5-6). Because He waited for God's moment, and didn't react out of the pressure of the situation or out of a codependent reaction to please those who had been sent to get Him, Jesus experienced an incredible victory and God gained great glory.

If we are serious about learning to sail on the wind of the Spirit, we must submit to the discipline of becoming increasingly sensitive to God's timing. It is during these seasons of waiting that we subjugate our own willfulness and independence; that we begin to discover that real power doesn't come

from our good ideas, busyness or strategies, but from the Spirit of God. One of the last bits of instruction Jesus gave to His disciples before ascending to heaven was, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but *wait* for the gift My Father promised...in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4-5). What did they do? They waited. Waited and prayed, prayed and waited. And then the Wind came!

Learning to wait for God’s timing honors the sovereignty of God. In other words, it’s not all up to us. So much of where we are in life is simply a function of God’s sovereign plan. The reason we haven’t yet seen the fulfillment of what God has promised us is not necessarily because we’ve somehow failed or gone off course, or because we haven’t gotten the “formula” right. Perhaps it simply isn’t His time yet. God is God—He is always in control!

Waiting on God is not only important in the personal issues of life; it is also important in the context of ministry. For example, in training our church’s ministry team, we teach them that when someone comes up for prayer after the service, they should not assume that what the person asks prayer for is necessarily the first thing God wants to address. They know that the first thing to do is to wait for a sense of leading from the Holy Spirit. God knows what the most important issues are in their lives, and if we learn to partner effectively with Him, we will be the most help to people.

This is exactly what Jesus did when a crippled man’s friends lowered him through the roof and set him down in front of Jesus (Luke 5:17-26). Most of us (assuming we would even have enough faith to attempt to pray for the man’s healing) would charge right in and begin to pray that God would heal his paralysis. But Jesus said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” Only after the man was restored in his relationship with God did Jesus address the physical issue and heal the man. If we want to learn to sail with the wind of the Spirit, we must learn to see

what God sees, hear what He's saying, and wait for the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

I used to love to watch a pastor named John Wimber during his "clinic times," when he would model ministry. Typically, after teaching from the bible, he would say something like, "Okay, now put your bibles and notes away. We're going to pray and invite the Holy Spirit, and He's going to come and begin to touch people." Then he would pray a simple prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to come; and then he would wait. And wait. And wait.

The first time I saw him do this, he waited so long I was becoming fidgety and uncomfortable (remember, I hate to wait!). He would just pace on the stage and occasionally look out over the congregation. Then eventually, he would begin to share what the Lord was saying, and, inevitably, there was a fruitful time of ministry. If we're going to become truly effective in ministry, we have to learn to "dial down" our emotions (rather than getting hyped-up), get our spiritual antennas up, and wait patiently, until we sense God speaking. It may take longer than we like, but it's so worth it. Sailing is better than rowing!

LETTING GO

About eight years ago, a close friend and former member of our church, who had since moved from California to Texas, called me with what she believed was a "word from the Lord." Lois told me, "The Lord wants you to let go." Then she added, "You're working too hard."

I've always believed in the value of hard work. I believe in the Judeo-Christian work ethic, and that we should see our work as a noble calling. But I've always guarded against becoming a workaholic; I've observed my "Sabbaths," taking Mondays off and even napping when possible during my workday, because I'm in this for the long haul. So when Lois

told me I was working too hard, I didn't understand. And what was this about "letting go"? Let go of what?

I'm a little slow ("little" would be an understatement!), because it's taken me eight years to begin to understand what "letting go" means. But I've come to believe it's one of the most important lessons God wants to teach us, and it's vital if we're serious about learning to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. It has to do with learning to switch gears. Because we are unable to control the wind (that's God's arena), we must work diligently to the best of our ability in the absence of wind (what I call "rowing"), learn to discern when the wind begins to blow, then switch to "sailing" by letting go of the oars and lifting the sails. What I mean is this: When the Spirit begins to initiate ministry of some kind—an unexpected encounter, a burst of inspiration, inner impressions or "pictures," etc.—we must learn to pay attention, to "let go" of our agenda, schedule, other priorities, and follow His lead. It was this holy flexibility that made Jesus and the first disciples so effective. They knew how to detect the moving of the Spirit and made it their habit to respond...with wonderful results.

This is not a lesson that comes easily for Westerners like us. We have been marinated in the juices of a materialistic, scientific worldview for three centuries, since the so-called "Enlightenment," and we're much more comfortable with our binders of plans and strategies, and the support of technology. Obviously there is a place for these things, but for many of us, ministry today bears little resemblance to what was modeled for us by Jesus and the first-century Christians. What once was vibrant, powerful, and unpredictable has too often become stale, ineffective drudgery.

The issue is not whether effort is involved—all ministry requires effort. The issue is the *source* of the energy. How much of the energy is coming from us and how much energy is being provided by the Spirit? One of the clues is the effect ministry

has on the ones providing it. When we are functioning on our own “steam,” we tend to expend more energy and have less joy. When we have the wind of the Spirit behind our backs, we expend less energy and have more joy. When the 70 disciples returned from their mission, Luke tells us they “*returned with joy*” (Luke 10:17). There can be joy in ministry!

According to the Apostle Paul, in Second Corinthians 3, the ministry we’re involved in is “the ministry of the Spirit,” and is, by its very nature, “glorious.” When we attempt to do the work of the Spirit in the power of our own energy (physical, emotional, or mental), ministry stops being glorious and becomes predictable and cumbersome.

FINDING THE FLOW

Popular Science, in one of its past issues, had an interesting article about a company that is designing huge kites to help pull cargo ships across the oceans. The idea was that these kites would be released from the ships and ascend to the air currents high above, where they would fly ahead of the ships and provide extra pull. It was estimated that these giant kites would cut energy and fuel costs by at least one-third.

In much the same way as these air currents high above, there is a “flow” of energy that the Holy Spirit provides, faintly discernible much of the time, but thankfully more obvious some of the time. We can learn to detect these divine breezes, and, in doing so, become more fruitful and less-exhausted partners with the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus.

Lloyd Ogilvie, former pastor of Hollywood Presbyterian Church and chaplain of the U.S. Senate, relates the story of how he discovered this dynamic during a particularly challenging week:

Exhaustion set in. While doing a television taping I realized the overload was making me less

than maximum. What was usually done with ease became arduous and difficult. Living on my own resources proved to be very inefficient. The business of the previous days had shortened my devotional time and the pressures had distracted me enough so that I didn't draw on the divine energy I usually find so sufficient through moment-by-moment prayer through each responsibility.

It was during this time that Ogilvie also experienced an electrical power failure at his house. He then goes on to relate how the Lord spoke to him:

"My son, you were created to be a transmitter of me. You've blocked the flow of my spirit by attempting more in this week than I guided and set as priorities. You've had a power failure just like your house. To do my will effectively, you must depend on me and the flow of my power."¹

I have experienced this many times in preparing my sermons. Often God will give me a burst of inspiration (usually during my times of prayer in the early morning), and I'll begin writing notes. At first the ideas will flow quickly, and the beginnings of an outline will form nicely. Then, before long, I'll start searching my mental "hard-drive" for more ideas or illustrations, and before I know it, usually within 15-30 minutes, the flow will slow to a trickle. That's when inspiration morphs into perspiration and the fun stops, usually without my even realizing it. That's what I'm talking about. That's when I've left the "flow" of the Spirit, like a bird veering away from the air current that was carrying it, and I begin to lose altitude.

Now I've learned that when that happens, I simply put down my notes and do something else until another time, when, hopefully, the wind will blow again. Or I simply stay put, return to the simplicity of meditating on Him and the

knowledge of His love and goodness, quit trying to get a sermon, and often the inspiration returns. Don't misunderstand; I love diving into my reference books and commentaries, but if I can do this without losing my awareness of the Holy Spirit, there is usually a greater sense of inspiration and enjoyment.

Have you ever been in a plane when it hit an air pocket? You're flying along nicely, reading your book or taking a nap, when suddenly, "Thump!" The plane drops unexpectedly, the engines rev as the air around the plane changes composition, and everyone gets a little shaken up. That's what it feels like when you veer away from Spirit-given momentum and begin relying on your own resources.

Proverbs 3:5 says, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding"* (NLT). Another way of saying this is, "Depend on the Lord and on His resources, and don't depend on your own energy or intelligence." Isaiah 40:30-31 says, *"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord [some translations read, 'wait on the Lord'] will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."* What an amazing picture of those who find the "flow" of the Holy Spirit; like eagles, they soar, carried by the momentum of a holy wind! Waiting, depending on God in a posture of faith, will reward us with the energy of God. Sailing is better than rowing!

The thing about sailing is that you are utterly dependent on wind. In that respect, rowing is easier, because you can, at least, do something! But if we are to cross the oceans of Kingdom adventure, rowing is definitely not the way to go. And if we are ever to become remotely as effective as Jesus was, we have to understand that there is simply no other way than being deeply and continually empowered by the same power that moved in and through Him—the power of the Spirit.

Sailing Is Better Than Rowing

Understanding that Jesus intended for us to emulate Him is the starting point. But that understanding must develop within us a desire for the Holy Spirit to transform and empower us, to produce fruit and activate gifts. And, ultimately, that desire must be fanned into a flame of passionate desperation, fueled by an unshakable confidence that He will do it.

ENDNOTE

1. Lloyd Ogilvie, *Praying With Power* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1983), p. 90.

