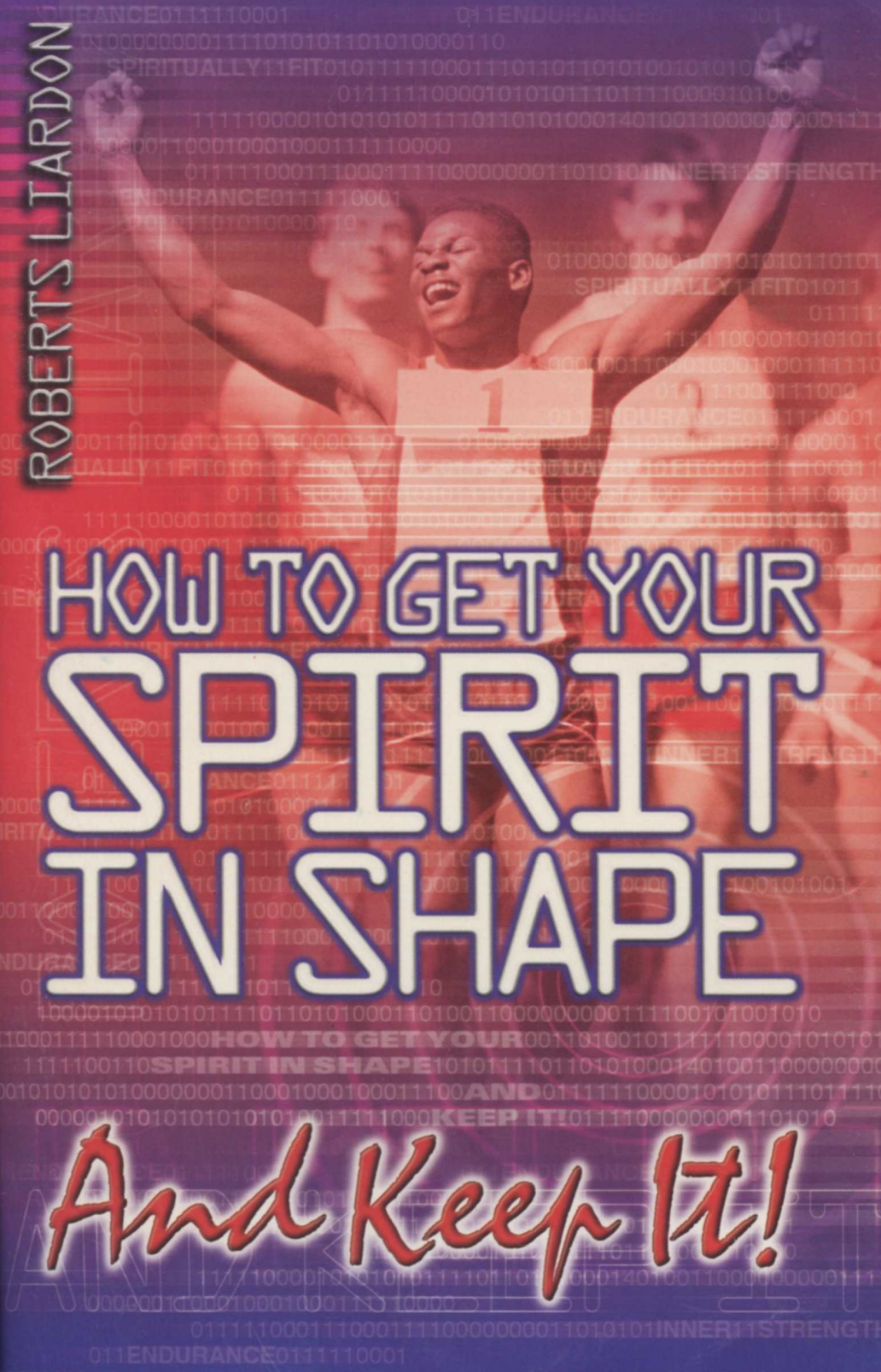


ROBERTS LIARDON



HOW TO GET YOUR SPIRIT IN SHAPE

And Keep It!



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And Keep It!

by
Roberts Liardon

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Chapter One

Three Kinds Of Fitness

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, IS FIT for the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:62 (KJV)

There are three kinds of fitness that I want to discuss in this book. The first is physical fitness, the second is academic fitness and the third is spiritual fitness.

If you have ever been to a fitness center, you have most likely seen people getting their bodies in shape. They were probably jogging or lifting weights in order to tone and strengthen their muscles. They were becoming fit physically. In America, people spend tens of thousands of dollars becoming physically fit.

There is also academic or educational fitness that some choose to develop. There are people who live their whole lives as professional students. They are continually conditioning their intellect to work in a certain type of career. They'll spend thousands of dollars to have somebody teach them about a certain subject so they can be fit enough to work effectively in that career. But there's a third kind of fitness that needs to become a part of our everyday life. It's called: *spiritual fitness*.

A few years ago, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, *"There is a divine fitness that we must develop in order to carry and walk with what God has given."* We must develop "spiritual fitness" so our inner man can carry the anointings that God is pouring out in these last days.

Spiritual Fitness Determines Success

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Spiritual fitness will determine your success or your failure in life. Your success will not be determined by how physically strong you are, how smart you are, who you know, where you go or what you did. It will be determined by what kind of spiritual condition you're in. There is a spiritual fitness that you must develop if you want to live victoriously in this end-time hour. Jesus says here, *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God...."* (Luke 9:62) In other words, no one beginning the Christian life, starting in ministry or working for a ministry, who looks back to their old way of life, is spiritually fit to be an effective worker. If someone starts out following the Holy Spirit, and then looks back, it is because they are not spiritually fit on the inside. A person that is fit spiritually never retreats! A person that is spiritually fit, never falters! The divine fitness on the inside enables them to keep on plowing!

Winning The Spiritual Marathon

You can tell if a person is spiritually fit by their actions and reactions to the various circumstances they face. A person that is spiritually fit responds to circumstances different than a man who is not spiritually fit. You can walk into a church or into someone's home and you can tell how fit they are spiritually by the words of their mouth and by their attitudes and reactions. There are many who are against what the Spirit of God is trying to do because they're not spiritually fit enough to see, hear and understand what He is saying today.

A person, a family or a church that is not spiritually fit cannot run in God's marathon. That's why some complain about living the Christian life. They complain that all the activities of their church take away from their family time. The reason they're complaining is because they're not spiritually fit enough to do both. They want to begin to eliminate one to do the other. Inwardly, their family is not spiritually conditioned to cooperate with the pace of what God is doing today.

Many times these kinds of complaints are nothing more

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than excuses to remain spiritually undeveloped. That's why some are saying "I can't pray strong; I just don't have it in me." When you try to provoke some people to pray with fervency, they short-circuit and shut down because their inward man has not been trained and disciplined. (James 5:16) They have allowed their fleshly nature to have its way and do what it wants to do. When their soul is not entertained, their flesh gets tired and it shuts their spirit-man down. They would rather go eat pie and watch TV than pray fervently in the Spirit. That's why, when the storms of life come and they need to fight, they are too weak to do it. It's not the devil's fault, it's theirs because they are not spiritually fit.

We have to develop and condition our inner man in order to fulfill the spiritual duties of the time we're in. That's the only way we can defeat the "giants" that will come to intimidate and oppose us as we step out in faith to obey the call of God. ■

Chapter Two

Face Your Giant

In 1st Samuel 17, we find the story of David, the young boy who was spiritually fit and went on to become one of Israel's greatest kings. In verse 11, we see the lack of spiritual fitness that was in the leadership of the nation during David's day:

"When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid."

1 Sam 17:11 (KJV)

These were the men who ruled Israel. King Saul was taller than any man and had a large army of well trained soldiers following him. Yet when the Philistine giant began to jeer and taunt, Saul and his great army trembled and withdrew. Their inner man was afraid because they were not conditioned for that kind of battle. Then in verse fourteen, David shows up:

"And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul."

1 Sam 17:14 (KJV)

David was the youngest member of his family. His father had sent him to the battlefield to see how his brothers were doing and to bring some food to them. While David was visiting with his brothers, Goliath began to taunt the armies of Israel once again.

"And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, 'Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely to defy Israel is he come up:

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and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel."

1 Sam 17:23-25 (KJV)

Saul was not just intimidated, he was terrified! When you'll give your daughter away to get rid of what's scaring you, you're in great fear! It's amazing what fear will cause people to do! But notice how David responded:

"And David," verse 26, "spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to this man that killeth the Philistine, and taketh away the reproach of Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

1 Sam 17:26 (KJV)

David heard the same taunting that everyone else heard and he felt the same fear that everyone else felt. So what gave David the ability to take the stand that he took? David was spiritually fit! He did not live by his outward feelings, he lived by what he knew on the inside. His inward fitness gave him the ability to boldly say, *"What shall be done for the man that kills Goliath?"*

Someone who isn't spiritually fit, cannot stand in the midst of an atmosphere full of fear and say those words. Someone with an unfit spirit will bow to the atmosphere and tremble with the rest of the people.

The Stench Of Jealousy

When Eliab, David's older brother, heard David speaking, he was overcome with jealousy.

"And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 'Why comest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.'"

1 Sam 17:28 (KJV)

David did not go to the battlefield for the sake of trying to

become famous or popular; *he was simply obeying his father*. His father had asked him to bring food to his brothers and find out how they were doing. While David was there, Goliath showed up and provoked the righteous indignation within David.

When there is an inward fitness in someone and they are strong and fervent, it will cause those who are spiritually unfit to bring forth false accusations and misrepresentations. Someone with an unfit spirit can't give honor when it's due. David's brother should have said, "We're all a bunch of chickens! Praise God, *somebody* showed up to kill the giant!"

Religious Critics Are Spiritually Unfit

When David showed up and said, "Let's kill this guy!" It infuriated his older brother.

"Who do you think you are? How dare you say those things?" he said.

When the words of someone with a fit spirit hit the atmosphere, the arrogant soul of those who are spiritually undeveloped will begin to react with anger. That is why spiritually developed people will face persecutions and false accusations in this hour. It will come against them because of the fitness that they have in the spirit world.

Spiritually fit people have the ability to pray fervently for long periods of time. They have the ability to cast out devils, without blinking an eye. They have the ability to prophesy, move and initiate things in the spirit realm. People with unfit spirits cannot initiate. They cannot believe long, pray long or hold fast to the Word of the Lord.

What It Takes to See the Causes Of God

In verse 29, David said:

"What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

1 Sam 17:29 (KJV)

People with unfit spirits cannot see the causes of God.

They are full of fear and they'll do anything to survive. Whatever it takes to stay on the scene, they'll do—including compromise.

Someone with a fit spirit sees the cause of God and does not bow or compromise in an atmosphere of fear. They stand in their inward character and fight for the cause of God to prevail. They have the ability to stand and believe alone, if necessary.

False Growth & Maturity

There is false growth and maturity that many are displaying in this hour. It's not true spiritual maturity—it's intellectual and theological dominance spewing its ignorance all over the Body of Christ. Where is the voice of true revelation? Where is the voice of those who have the revelation of the Word as well as the power of the Word working in their life? Why aren't they speaking? Where are their mighty acts?

"Well I'm doing them."

Well, if you are doing them, why hasn't there been much change in the spiritual climate of your environment? If what you're saying and doing doesn't cause a change in the activities of the people in your territory, it's a good sign that you need to develop a stronger inward man. You can't knock out the Goliath of your territory unless you are spiritually fit!

■

Chapter Three

Every Territory Has A Goliath

Every territory has a Goliath, and they all roar and taunt the people of God. When a "roaring Goliath" speaks, the people of God in that region will show whether they are fit or unfit by the way they respond. In the Bible, when Goliath began to roar, the armies of Israel, along with their great king, fled. David's reaction was the opposite of the others. Why? Because David had developed a spiritual fitness on the inside of him. When the taunting and the roaring began, David stood in Goliath's face and said, "Let's silence this guy!"

Then David's jealous brothers said, "Oh you just came here to see the battle. We know the naughtiness and the pride of your heart!"

Notice they accused David of having the wrong motive. The truth was, David was inwardly fit and his brothers were not.

"What have I done now?" David responded.

When you have a developed spirit, there will be many reactions to you. The majority of the human race does not spend much time developing their inward man. That's why great men like Dr. Oral Roberts cause such a dramatic reaction in the earth. He was able to stand and say, "I'm going to build a Christian university," when other Pentecostal preachers said it could never be done. Why did they say that? Because their spirit had not been developed to the place of knowing that faith in God can produce the impossible!

Undeveloped eyes can't see well. Undeveloped ears can't hear well. Undeveloped feet can't go far or do very much. All those unbelieving preachers had was a big mouth and a puny, undeveloped inner man!

How Do You Respond to Your Goliath?

You can tell what stage of inner development someone is in by the way they react to certain divine announcements and by the way they respond to the "Goliaths" of their territory.

David said: *"Is there not a cause?"* 1 Sam 17:29 (KJV)

People with undeveloped spirits do not always understand why those with developed spirits do what they do. That's why some say, "Why do you have to pray so fervently in tongues? Why do you have to preach like that? Why can't you be like all the others?"

Those with underdeveloped spirits do not see, hear, or understand why things are the way they are. That's why religious conflicts arise. That's why there are misunderstandings. That's why sometimes it looks like there is an ungodly "split" or "tear" but it is really just someone with inner spiritual development beginning to travel in the direction that God has called them.

There Is A Cause!

The new generation that God is raising up will be made up of individuals who have developed their inward man. They will operate in a different way than we've been used to, and those who refuse to develop themselves spiritually will be the first to speak out against them and persecute them. The undeveloped will do these things because they do not have the depth of understanding that is necessary to see the causes of God in this hour.

There is a cause for the spiritual activities of this generation! There is a cause! And this generation must settle it now, no matter what people may say: there IS a cause for strong prayer, governing churches, prophetic utterances, strong music, warring against principalities for the sake of changing climates, reaping the harvest and creating a spiritual atmosphere that is conducive to the move of God! These things are essential to the move of God in this hour!

It's Time To Blow Up The Boat!

Someone with an undeveloped spirit will say, "Well, I don't see things like that. I don't understand why you have to be so militant." Those who make comments like that are usually honest and God will grace them with understanding if they will be open their heart and mind to Him. But sometimes there is an arrogance attached to those kinds of statements because those with unfit spirits don't want to change. They live a shallow spiritual life and call it deep. They like the way they live and they want to just keep doing the same old thing. They say things like, "You don't have to rock the boat!"

This new generation is not only going to rock the boat, it's going to blow the boat clear out of the water! They will not be afraid of Goliath! They will make a stand for the cause of God because their inner man is developed and they are not afraid to confront!

David Was Being Obedient

"And Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.' But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep....'"

1 Sam 17:33-34 (NKJ)

Notice that David said, *"Your servant used to keep his father's sheep...."* This response shows that David was being obedient. A part of developing a fit spirit is learning to obey with joy and without complaining. You'll note that David didn't do what he wanted to do, he did what his father told him to do. He was obedient to watch his father's sheep. Obedience brings strength to a person's life. Paul said:

"You cannot correct disobedience until you've fulfilled your own obedience."

2 Cor 10:6 (NKJ)

There are many churches trying to be governmental churches today and that's a good desire, but they are not

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being effective because they're not fulfilling their own obedience. You don't have the power to correct disobedience until you are first obedient. And having a fit spirit means knowing how to obey no matter the circumstance. You cannot wage war in the heavens until the obedience of your private life is fulfilled. You have no power to correct wrong unless your personal life has been corrected before God. That's why much of the warfare message today has been overtaken by hype. When you focus on the message and not the foundation of character and right living, there will be no power to back the message. You see, many who have raised their voices to bind the work of satan and to hinder his activity in the earth have had no power against him because of their personal disobedience. Disobedience can only be corrected by the obedience that's in you. That's what gives you the authority to speak and see results.

In 1 Sam 17 verse 34, the story continues:

"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God. 'Moreover David said, 'The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you!'"

1 Sam 17:34-37 (NKJ)

King Saul was probably saying to himself, "What do a lion and a bear have to do with Goliath?" It's all the same principle. It doesn't matter how big the "Goliath"—if your insides are right, you can handle anything!

Some people say, "I can't handle Goliath but I can handle lions and bears."

It's the same principle. David didn't grow any taller; he didn't pump any more weight to have bigger biceps. When he came out to fight Goliath, he wasn't wearing the armor of

Saul, he was wearing what he was familiar with—what he had proven—what he was comfortable with in his spirit.

Run Toward The Problem!

A part of having a fit spirit is knowing what works and then not letting go of it. People with unfit spirits will try everything *but the right thing*, they'll run around trying everything except what God has really asked them to do!

David's fitness on the inside gave him the ability to destroy Goliath. He got five smooth stones and went out to face him. And David *ran* to meet Goliath, he didn't just walk toward him casually! (1 Sam 17:48)

Someone with a fit spirit can run toward the enemy! He will never run away from the problem! If you're facing something today and you're running from it, stop in your tracks and turn around! Begin to develop a fitness in your spirit so you can face your Goliath! It's not just the anointing that you need, it's a fit human spirit! When you have a strong inner development, the anointings that come upon you will remain and help you bring forth fruit in your life! ■

Chapter Four

Spiritual Fitness & The Anointing

Today there's a wrong degree of focus on the anointing. Many are saying, "Oh, the anointing! We need the anointing!" Some people will try to get the anointing without developing any inward character. They'll even steal your Bible to get it! I've had that happen several times! I had one Bible returned because I prayed conviction on the person who took it. I wanted my Bible back; it was mine, not theirs! They brought it back to me and said, "I stole your Bible because I wanted your anointing."

I said, "Well you can't get it by stealing!"

Today there are people who run to get an anointing, but they lose it as fast as it hits them because they're not spiritually fit. They haven't developed the inner strength and character they need to carry it.

There needs to come a strong focus on the development of the human spirit in these last days. I know that doesn't sound as attractive as receiving an anointing, but when the anointing comes, at least you'll be able to contain it.

The Anointing Chasers

I had Benny Hinn speak at my Invasion conference one year. Many times, people with no inner development will come to Benny's meetings to receive the anointing from his ministry. They lose it as fast as they get it because they haven't done what it takes to develop their inner man through regular fellowship with the Holy Spirit, fervent prayer, worship and consistent Bible reading.

It's not Benny's responsibility to prepare your inner man so you can keep the anointing that God is imparting. That's

up to you! Benny is doing his part. Other men, other women of God are doing their part, but the rest is up to you.

Many lose the anointing because they are not spiritually fit enough to go through the persecution or the wars that come when they carry that type of anointing. Some today have even become anointing "junkies" chasing ministries for their anointings. If they would spend as much time developing their inner man as they do chasing anointings, they would be able to hold on to what God gives them and do some good in the earth!

Special Anointings

There have been times God has given me a special anointing to impart to a church in a certain part of the world. I knew it by my inward man and I knew it by my flesh, because I could feel it. I knew it was there. But when I would begin to pray for them to receive it, I would feel it wane in me. It was because there was no development in their spirit to handle the anointing and the commissioning.

Don't be like that, my brother and sister! Only those who thoroughly prepare their inner man will be able to carry the anointings that will be given in this last great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

God gave David the anointing because he was spiritually fit enough to face Goliath and destroy him. Why wasn't King Saul able to do it? It was because he had no inner development!

Inner Responses Attract Anointings

Inner reactions against evil will always attract anointings. Your inward man's response to the evil activities of your environment will attract an anointing that will empower you to break that which provokes you. That's why the apostle Paul, when he saw the idolatry of Athens, was stirred in his inner man. The idolatry provoked Paul inwardly and his inner reaction brought the anointing he needed to hit

the stronghold of the territory and knock it out. (Acts 17:16-17)

God is wanting to give us stronger anointings, but He can't if we don't develop our inner capacity to carry them! Some are losing some valuable impartations of God because of their underdeveloped, unfit spirits. They may have great hearts, good intentions, but there must be the right development to keep what God gives in these final hours.

Come Out Of Soulish Activities!

Many try to keep the anointing through soulish activities. You can't do it. That's why some preachers destroy their own families. They don't know how to develop their inward man, so they can live strong and live right in the spirit world even when they're home with their wife and kids. They live in the soul realm instead. They don't know what it's like to be anointed and to have that mighty power surging through their inner man!

When you're under the anointing, nothing bothers you! You feel like you're the Jolly Green Giant stepping on ants! But when the anointing lifts, you're supposed to live off the inward man's development and strength. When people don't have that inward development and that anointing lifts, there comes great trouble! They begin to try to live in the anointing for the security, for strength and for the everyday happenings. Instead of going home and being a husband and a dad, they stay a preacher and destroy their home-life! They do it because they don't want to leave the anointing that brings that feeling of strength and security. They don't know how to live in the private side of their life because they haven't developed their inner man.

You Can't Overcome Without A Fit Spirit!

You can't govern a territory without a fit spirit! You can't conquer a principality without a fit spirit! You can't do great things for God without a fit spirit! You can't do it! You have to

be fit for the kingdom work, kingdom life and kingdom duties.

David was fit and he killed Goliath. Daniel was fit and he faced the lions' den without fear. Someone with an unfit spirit, will scream as he's being thrown in! He will compromise and do whatever it takes to get out! But someone with a fit spirit will go through a dark storm with inward peace and come out on the other side with victory!

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had fit spirits. When Nebuchadnezzar had music played, they refused to bow to his image! They never wavered in their stand even when they were brought before those of authority. When Nebuchadnezzar said, "I'll play the music again."

They said, "We still won't bow!"

What gives someone the ability to stand strong like that? It's not just an anointing, my friend! It's that inward development; that inward capacity which gives you the ability to stand against the odds. Anointings are not given for your everyday life! They're given to help you get your God appointed job done! When your job is finished, the anointing lifts and you have to go back to living by your decisions. You have to decide to obey the Word and the Spirit, my friends!

Don't Live Off The Anointing

There are Christians today who try to live off the anointing and not by the Word. That's why many mistakes are made. That's why there's trouble in their life that they sometimes can't overcome. They live by the anointing and not by the Word!

Anointings are like the icing of your Christian life. The Word of God is the substance and the development of your human spirit.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had a clear understanding of God's Word and they refused to compromise. When Nebuchadnezzar said, "Heat the furnace seven times hotter," they were strong enough to say to him; "Our God is able to deliver us; but even if you throw us in the fire, we're

still not bowing!"

Their fit spirits enabled them to survive the fiery furnace.

Such As I Have Give I Thee!

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked for alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

Acts 3:1-8 (KJV)

Now notice what Peter says here, *"Such as I have..."* What you have on the inside, you can give to others. Someone with an unfit spirit does not have much to give. An unfit spirit gives opinions, gives fears and warnings from soulish observations and not from true spiritual discernment; but someone with a fit spirit, like we see here with Peter and John, has something on the inside of them. Peter and John were fit enough to carry the power that healed the man.

"Such as I have give I thee...", Peter said.

What did Peter have? He had inward fitness that enabled him to carry the anointing that lifted the lame man out of his problems.

The miraculous in this day is not just going to come because of the anointing that you carry, but also because of the development of your human spirit. Great mistakes will be made in the name of the anointing unless this generation understands these things.

Conflicts Accompany Anointings

Everyone wants a fresh anointing today. They'll come up to me in a prayer line and say, "Pray for me, I want your anointing."

"But do you want the conflicts I go through too?" I'll respond. "I'll pray for you, and if God will give it to you, you can have it. But know this, when you get it, there are great challenges that will come with it."

Many who aren't ministers don't understand what goes on behind the scenes. They only see what is on the platform. They don't see the price that is paid to get there. Do you truly know how many conflicts you're going to have to fight to stay in the anointing? Do you know what it takes to carry an anointing? It's easy to say, "Give me the anointing." It's another thing entirely to carry it.

We've got to make sure we know what we're carrying, folks. I want what God has to impart through men like Kenneth E. Hagin, Benny Hinn, Dr. Morris Cerullo, and Dr. Oral Roberts. We need all that these men are giving to our generation. When they lay their hands on us and speak those anointed words, they transfer anointings to us by God's commission. We must learn to carry them and keep them with us and not play games with them. We have to develop our inner man and live right so we don't lose these anointings when wars arise against them. If we don't develop our inner capacity to carry these anointings, we will bow to the temptation to quit and run away. It is essential that we hold on to these anointings and keep them alive. ■

Chapter Five

Developing A Strong Inner Man

I once had a well-known body builder come to one of my meetings. We happened to be staying in the same hotel because we were going to be interviewed on a television show that night.

"I've been listening to your tapes," he said.

"That's great. Do you like them?" I responded.

"Oh, very much Brother Roberts, but I have a problem. I'm tortured by a certain type of spirit."

"Really?"

"Yea, it really tortures me. What am I supposed to do about it?"

"You said you've been listening to my tapes, is that correct?"

"Yes."

"Have you *heard* them?" "Well I think so."

"How much weight can you lift?"

He named the amount and I was amazed. He could have picked me up and threw me through a wall and that would have been the end of me! One punch and I'd have been in heaven forever! He had tremendous physical strength.

"How much do you work out everyday?" I asked.

He told me that he worked out for three hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. It was obvious; this guy's arm was as big as my thigh! He waddled when he walked because he was so big!

We went to a restaurant so we could talk further. He almost wore out the waitress with the way he wanted his food

cooked! He ordered three meals and he had to have them all cooked a certain way.

I thought, "He does all this to stay physically fit. He lifts weights, wears out a waitress to eat the right kind of food, but yet he has a problem spiritually. If he would've used half of that workout time for spiritual development, he would have developed spiritual muscles too. He would have been able to knock out that spirit that is tormenting him."

The reason some Christians are tormented in life is because they have unfit human spirits. They don't have the strength to knock out the devil.

Sometimes Christians will say, "I read my Bible, I pray, I go to church, I tithe, I do the things that I'm supposed to do—I must be spiritually developed."

You're only developed to the degree of diligence you have applied in these areas. There are degrees of faith that must be released in order to enter into greater inner capacities.

Three Ingredients For Inner Development

There are at least three basic ingredients that are needed in order to develop your inward man. The first is your Word level. Your Word level is important to the development of your human spirit.

"But Pastor Roberts, I read the Bible today."

Yea, but did it feed your spirit or just your mind? Bible reading should never be an intellectual activity. Some Christians spend all their time investigating every Greek or Hebrew word in the Bible. They know so much Greek that they can't even speak normal. When they get up to share a revelation, no one gets it, not even themselves.

I'm not against the Greek and the Hebrew studies, but at the same time, I don't want to get so "Greeked out" that there's no relevance to what I'm saying. Head knowledge will make your head tilt to one side after awhile because it has

grown so big! When you read your Bible you have to make sure your spirit is being fed and not just your mind.

Effectual Fervent Prayer

The second ingredient that you need to develop a strong inner man is fervent prayer.

"Well, I pray everyday."

Yes, but do you pray fervently? In James 5:17 we read:

"The effectual FERVENT prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James 5:16 (KJV)

Notice that this talks about *fervent* prayer. You can't develop a strong inner man by praying casually. You have to pray with white-hot intensity! You need to pray real strong everyday in your native language and in tongues.

Tongues is supposed to be a major part of your prayer life. Praying in tongues is not weird, it's normal. Praying fervently in tongues is normal too. You need to yield to the different depths and utterances that the Holy Spirit brings up in you when you're praying in tongues. The stronger and deeper the utterance, the stronger your human spirit will become. A strong man's prayers will sound strong and feel strong because they are coming from someone with a fit spirit. Someone with an unfit spirit can't pray very long with strength and authority. Their prayers are usually weak and wishy-washy.

When they pray they say things like, "Lord if it is your will to do this, then please do it, amen."

Then they'll try to tell you it is scriptural to pray like that! They call it their doctrine; I call it ignorance!

Don't Create Your Own Doctrines

Some people create their own weird doctrines because they're too weak to live by faith! They haven't developed their

inner man to the point where they can believe the Word and confront Goliath! (Jude 1:20) They'll create doctrines like, "God doesn't want to heal everybody. He puts sickness on some so He can get the glory for it." That's called stupidity! Why would Jesus pay the price of taking stripes on His back so we can be healed, and then turn around and curse us with sickness and disease? How does He get glory out of that? He receives glory when we receive the healing His stripes paid for!

Attending The Right Church

Another ingredient that is part of developing your spirit life and becoming fit is attending the right kind of church. I know this sounds basic, but you'd be surprised by how many attend churches that don't help them develop a strong inner man.

I've been in church all my life. The first place my parents brought me after I was born was a church. I've gone to church more than any place else in the earth. I've gone to more churches than movies. I've gone to more churches than restaurants. All I remember when I was growing up was being in church. I know what I'm talking about when I say that some churches are not worth attending!

You have to find a church that will help you become spiritually fit. You have to have a pastor whose preaching is confrontational! You need a church that provokes you and challenges you so you don't end up thinking that you're deep when you're really not! Confrontational preaching helps bring a fitness to your spirit. Strong revelation will also help bring a fitness to your inner man. Don't go to a dead church, my brother and sister; go to a live one!

"How do I know if my church is dead or not?"

Answer these four questions. Do they give an altar call and get people saved? Do they have opportunities to get filled with the Holy Spirit? Do they pray for the sick and do they cast out devils? If they don't do these things, then they're dead!

"Well, I know that my church is alive because we love each other."

Well sinners love each other too! You need more than that to develop a strong inner man! A church that is alive will do more than just help you become socially active! A vibrant church will help you develop inner spiritual fitness so you can keep the anointings that God has given and live strong in them!

A church should be spiritually active. It should be busy saving souls, filling them with the Holy Spirit, healing people's bodies and casting out devils. These are the four basics.

"Well, my church doesn't have any problems."

That's because it's probably dead! Something that's dead has no problems! Only something that is alive can have problems! A living church will have both victories and challenges!

Associate With The Right Kind Of People

You have to go to the right church and associate with the right kinds of people in order to become spiritually fit.

"How do I know what the right kinds of people are?"

When you're with a person, or a group of people, what is the dominant thing you're left with when you leave their presence? If you're left stuck in your head, that will tell you where those people are at and what kind of influence they're going to have on you. If you walk away in a critical state, there's a good chance you've been with critical people! If you walk away in a lustful state, it's a good chance that the people you've been with have been involved in lustful activities. You have to know who you're hanging around with and gauge them right.

When I'm with people, after I leave them, I check how I feel, physically, mentally and spiritually. That usually tells me what kind of person I've been with. If this wrong thing begins working in me, then I have to put myself back in place

How To Get Your Spirit In Shape And Keep It!

and stay alert if I have to be around those people again.

When you go to a church, if you walk out thinking, "I don't believe in this, and I don't believe in that, and I'm scared of this, and I'm scared of that," you went to the wrong church!

If you go to a church and you walk out wanting to do the gospel, wanting to help people grow with God, wanting to build the kingdom of God, you have found a good environment to grow in. Be submissive to the leadership and enjoy the environment.

It's Time!

It's time to develop your inner capacity so you can believe and *live* in what God wrote in the Bible! Being physically fit is nice, being mentally fit is good, but being spiritually fit is a *must* for survival in these last days! ■

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Blessed with a gift of unusually strong preaching, Roberts Liardon has answered a world-wide calling of God, which came to him when he was an eight-year-old boy. Having preached in 94 nations, Roberts Liardon is founder and senior pastor of Embassy Christian Center and Spirit Life Bible College, and was twice elected the Most Outstanding Young Man in America.

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