



Introduction

We hear a great deal today about the need for a Stimulus Package. Our economy and the world's economy is in shambles and getting worse. All economic indicators are pointing toward a worsening economy that may bring double digit unemployment rates by the end of the year. Congress has apparently just agreed on a new stimulus package that will create jobs and bail-out the banking industry. This almost \$1 Trillion program is called TARP—The **Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP)**. This is a program of the United States government; they will purchase assets and equity from financial institutions in order to strengthen the financial sector. We all hope it works and works quickly.

I was thinking about this whole mess and I began to wonder: what does God do to stimulate our spiritual lives? What does God's Spiritual Stimulus Package look like? How does God move us from point A to point B spiritually and bring about maturity and Christ-like behavior in our lives? He uses the gift of His Spirit.

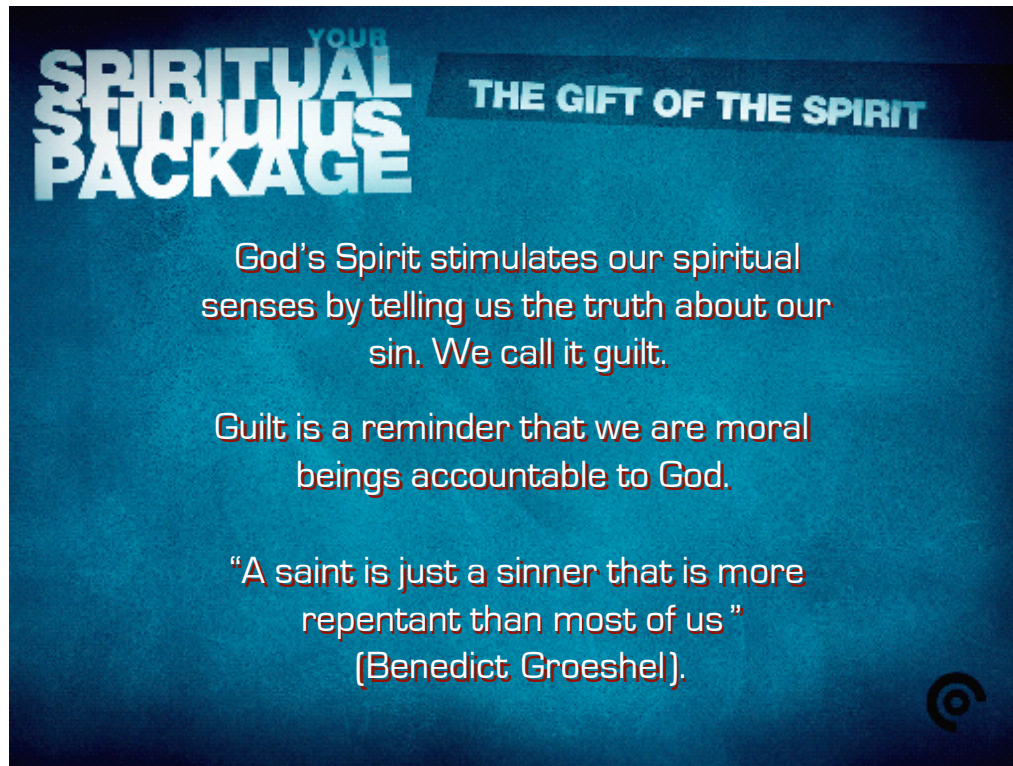
This morning I want to talk about how the gift of God's Spirit is one of the powerful ways that God stimulates our spiritual lives so that we do not waste the only life we have. Many of us spend our lives in the Christian unemployment line seemingly waiting for God to write our name in the sky and tell us what to do. Instead of growing, we stagnate. Instead of doing the work of bringing people into God's kingdom, we sit on the sidelines.

We need God's Spirit to stimulate our lives—to motivate us to grow and serve and clean up our lives so God can use us. I want to talk to you this morning about a distinctive gift from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit uses this gift to stimulate our lives. What is it? The gift of guilt. The gift of guilt moves us from shame to peace and from sorrow to joy.

Look with me at John 16:5-13.....

"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come" (John 15:5-13—NIV).



In January, 1998 millions of Americans were glued to their TV sets for countless hours as they watched the leader of the free world explain what happened between him and Monica Lewinski. Bill Clinton, who vehemently denied the allegations of his affair, was finally forced to admit that he had lied and had actually had an affair with “that woman...Monica Lewinski.” The leader of the free world was embarrassed before the entire global community because he could not control his most basic urges. He finally had to admit he was guilty.

In more recent days we have seen some of Washington’s Elites try to explain why they were qualified to hold some of the highest cabinet posts in the land but failed to pay their taxes. Two out of three who failed to pay their taxes withdrew their names from the running rather than go through with the headaches they would have experienced and the

shame of questioning during the nomination hearings. They had to give up on their dreams because of a lack of integrity.

We are no different from them. We have the same basic desires and we often give in as they did to those desires and find ourselves feeling guilty. God makes it clear in His Word that we all have a sinful nature that cannot be trusted and will get the best of us if not controlled by the Spirit of God.

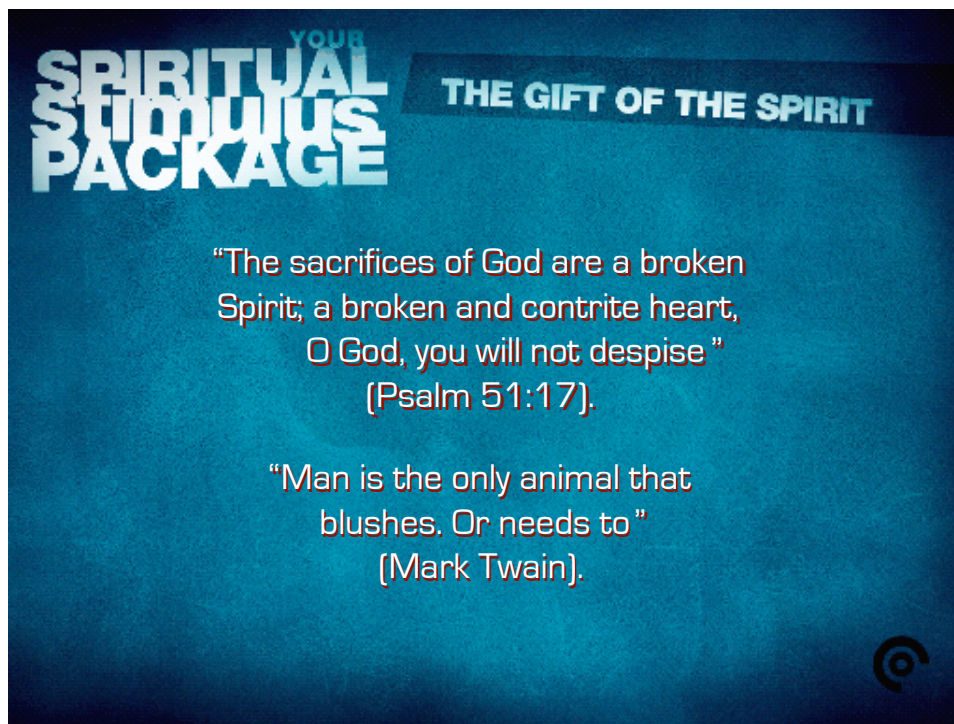
To make it clear to us what the works of our sinful nature are, God gives us a list in Galatians 5:16-21:

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:16-21—NIV).

Philip Yancey, in his book *Rumors of Another World*, says this,

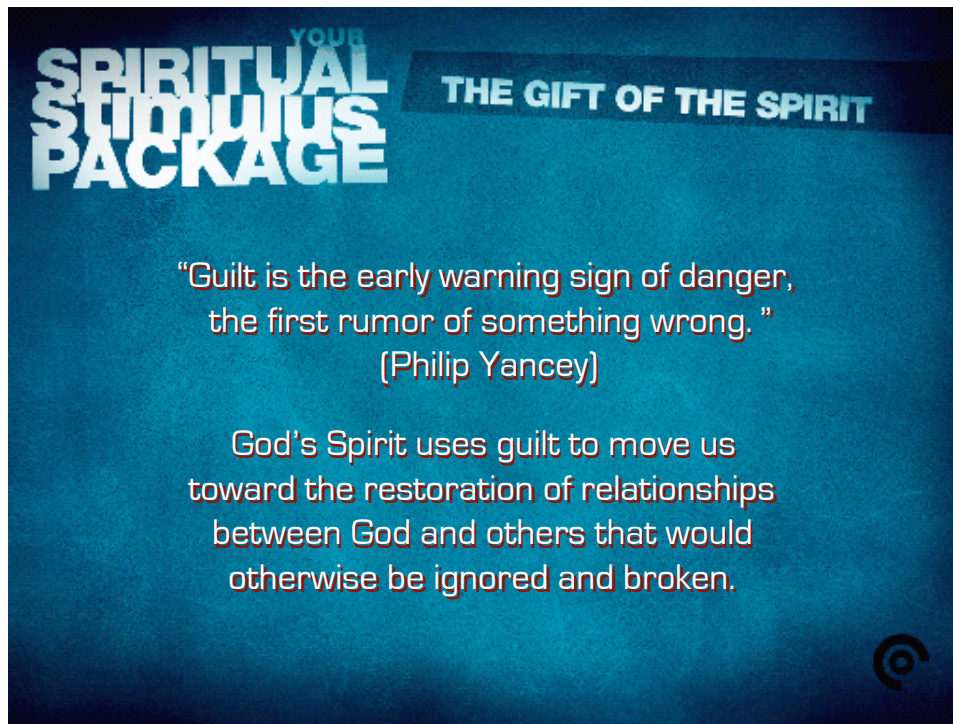
“Soren Kierkegaard likened the human condition to a person who has a three-story house and yet insists on dwelling in the dank cellar. I feel no attraction to prostitutes, drugs, or gambling, yet in a way these obvious addictions merely exaggerate my own tendencies. Mine may seem less

earthy, but in them too I detect the musty scent of a cellar dripping water and crawling with silverfish. A law of entropy governs the moral universe as well as the physical, tending toward disorder. Something tugs us downward and prevents us from realizing the good life, the *shalom*, that God intended for us” (Yancey, Philip. *Rumors of Another World*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2003, pg 144).



We are no different than King David, though we would like to think we are. King David could not control himself after seeing Bathsheba taking a bath. He decided he had to have her at all cost, so he did. He took another man’s wife. In fact, he took her from a man who was serving as a leader in David’s army. We all know the story and how it

ended in adultery and murder. When he was finally confronted with his sin by the prophet Nathan, he admitted he was guilty, but the price he paid for his sin was extremely high.



The truth is, guilt is a good thing. It causes us to confront our failures and moves us to change. Just like pain draws our attention to problems in our body that we might otherwise ignore and could possibly cause us great harm, God's Spirit brings the feeling of guilt into our lives to move us away from sin—sin that would break our relationship with God and others—and move us toward God's healing grace. This healing grace restores broken relationships and brings joy and peace into our lives.

I believe guilt moves us to do the right thing. Recently, I was in New York City with my family. We spent the afternoon in Soho and I met a street vendor there from Africa. She was from the country of Kenya. I asked her if she had anything that was uniquely African to sell. She showed me a small African sculpture of a family hugging

each other. The style was clearly African; I had seen them in Africa before. We got into a conversation about my work in Africa with the *Agathos Foundation*, building orphan villages.

She told me that she felt very guilty because she had intended to donate money to help the orphans but she had never done it. She asked me to take the sculpture as a gift and she also gave my wife, Gloria, some African jewelry. She said, “Please take it and donate the money you would have paid for it to the orphans. I feel so guilty that I have done nothing for them.” Her guilt had moved her to give on the behalf of others. Guilt is a good thing—it moves us to do the right thing.

King David may have been the greatest King in Israel’s history but it was his guilt that caused him to write one of the greatest Psalms in all of Scripture—Psalm 51. His guilty heart, his cry for forgiveness, and his restoration are recorded for all of us to see and benefit from. Let’s read it together and notice how he moves from looking backward to his sin to looking forward to God’s grace and a changed life filled with joy and peace. Even the title to this Psalm speaks of David’s guilty heart. Let’s look at Psalm 51 together.

“For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

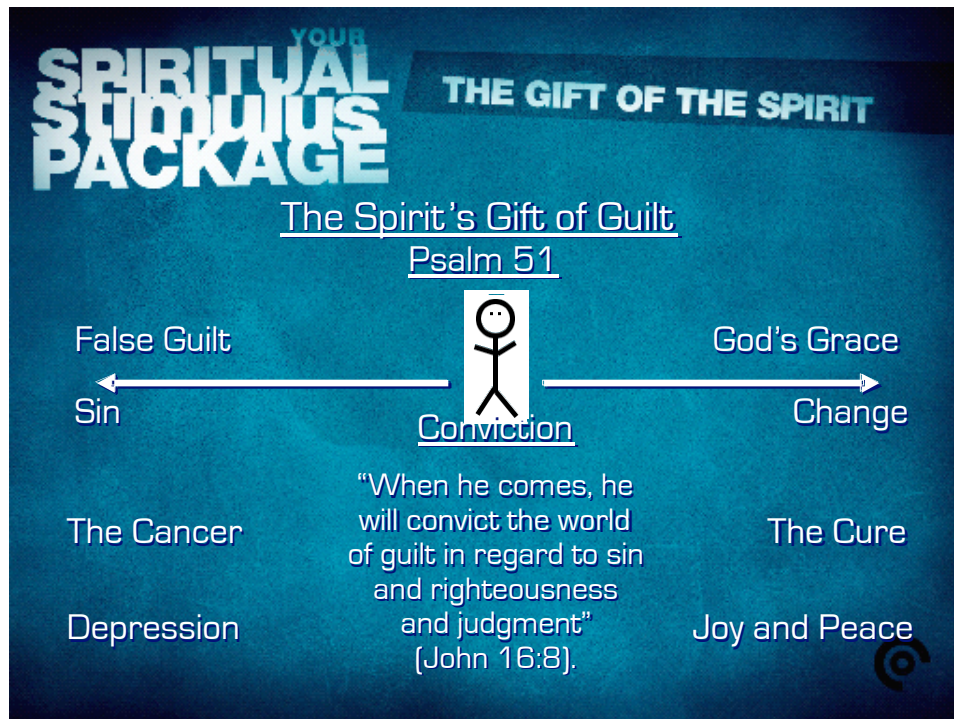
3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

- 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are proved right when you speak
and justified when you judge.
- 5 Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- 6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
- 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
- 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will turn back to you.
- 14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God,
the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
- 15 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
- 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.

18 In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

The purpose of guilt is to move us from sin to change. Sin is like cancer; a few cancer cells flowing in our blood stream can eventually metastasize and cause death if not treated. This next slide illustrates how God uses guilt to move us away from our sin to God's grace. From the cancerous effects of sin to the miraculous cure of God's forgiveness and grace...from feelings of guilt that can cause depression to the joy and peace that only God can give.



The point of this slide is this: God's Spirit brings feelings of guilt into our lives to drive us to do things. It causes us to look back and acknowledge our sin, but God fully

intends that we don't stay there. His ultimate goal is not to move us backward but forward—to change by forsaking our sin and accepting God's grace and forgiveness—to move us from the cancer-like effects of sin to the cure for our sin. God's grace brings joy and peace (shalom) to our lives.

The purpose of the gift of guilt is to move us forward. God makes it clear in Philippians chapter three that we are to find forgiveness, forget the past and move ahead. Read what God tells us, “But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead” (Philippians 3:13—NIV). What is ahead for us is God's amazing grace. What is ahead for us is a restored relationship with a loving God.

God doesn't want us to have sociopathic tendencies about our sin, ignoring our wrongdoing. He wants us to feel the guilt and then do something about it. Guilt is one of the great indicators that we belong to God. It moves us to heal our relationship with Him that has been broken by sin. Our guilt is a gift from God that can bring change and move us to a life of joy and peace. Paul reminded us of this in Scripture when he wrote, “***May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit***” (Romans 15:13—NIV).

God doesn't want you to wallow in your guilt—that's false guilt. God wants to extend his grace to you by reminding you of sin you need to deal with so you can move forward and find joy and peace in a restored relationship with him.

This next slide demonstrates what God teaches us to do with our guilt.

YOUR SPIRITUAL STIMULUS PACKAGE

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

What does God's Spirit want me to do?

- Listen and be sensitive to his voice.
- Agree with Him about your sin.
- Confess and forsake your sin.
- Accept His healing grace and move forward.
- Experience the joy and peace that only He can give.

There are a multitude of verses in the Bible that tell us to forsake our sin and move on to the goal—which is the healing power of the grace of God. We can't continue in our sin and remain in a right relationship with God and others. The goal is change that brings healing to our wayward soul (Hebrews 10:26, 1 John 1:9; 1 John 3:6-9).

The first step is to come to the cross and find forgiveness for your sin. God gave His Son for you (John 3:16). You can experience the healing power of God's grace that brings salvation to your soul.

I hope that we will all see guilt for what it really is from this day forward—an awe-inspiring gift from God's Spirit. A gift that drives us to the cure for the sin that ails us. The cure is God's wonderful grace.