

## Summer Focus – August 12, 2026

### Engage With the Spirit

Early in the summer, the Holy Spirit spoke to me the phrase “engage with the Spirit.” So I needed to look up the words first, to begin to understand what He was speaking to me about.

**Engage** primarily means to participate in an activity, hold someone’s attention, or interlock parts. It is a highly versatile verb with meanings ranging from hiring services to entering into conflict or making a formal commitment like a betrothal. The definition shifts, depending on the context:

- **Participation/Involvement:** To take part in or commit to an activity (e.g., “to *engage* in conversation” or “to *engage* with a community”).
- **Attention/Interest:** To attract, captivate, or hold focus (e.g., “the novel *engaged* her attention”).
- **Commitment/Agreement:** To pledge oneself, particularly to a formal agreement like a promise to marry.
- **Employment:** To formally hire or secure the services of someone (e.g., “to *engage* a lawyer”).
- **Mechanical:** To cause parts of a machine to interlock or mesh together (e.g., “to *engage* the gears”).

To be **engaged** means to be:

- Involved in activity; occupied, busy
- Pledged to be married; betrothed
- Greatly interested; committed
- Involved especially in a hostile encounter (*I think of military here, a fire fight or a battle*)
- Being in gear; meshed (*Vision of the cogs – Nancy Hadley*)

And finally, the meanings of **engagement**, in addition to betrothal, can include:

- An arrangement to meet or be present at a specified time and place ( e.g., a dinner *engagement*)
- A job or period of employment especially as a performer (e.g., a speaking *engagement*) – in the body of Christ, each person has a role and function, a “job” if you will.
- Something that engages; a pledge
- The act of engaging; the state of being engaged
- Emotional involvement or commitment
- the state of being in gear
- a hostile encounter between military forces

## **Rules of Engagement**

From there, He begin to speak to me about “Rules of Engagement.” I knew this term had to do with military conflict, and had read more about this in reading the decorated American sniper Chris Kyle’s autobiography many years ago.

In the book, *American Sniper*, Kyle discussed the strict Rules of Engagement (ROE) that required clear evidence of a threat, such as an IED or weapon, before firing a shot. Snipers were required to document their actions after missions, detailing time, place, location, threat, etc, to justify their use of lethal force and protect the military from accusations of violating ROEs. The book also touched upon the pressure soldiers faced from navigating ROEs while fighting an enemy that disregarded them.

**“Guard your steps and focus on what you are doing as you go to the house of God...” - Ecclesiastes 5:1 (TPT)**

In a group prayer setting on June 11, 2026, one of the other individuals prayed to release “a new sound judgment.” In this, the peoples would be able to rightly judge atmospheres and hearts. They could move past assumptions and rightly judge by the Spirit.

- My paraphrase as Holy Spirit is speaking to me about engaging with the Spirit: The Lord is releasing a sound judgment (think sound mind- 2 Timothy 1:7) so that we can correctly move in the **rules of engagement** with the Spirit of God.

There are **“Rules of Engagement”** in the house of God. These ROEs are different than our personal, intimate time with God in the secret place.

To engage with the Spirit is active, not passive. It requires our initiative; to take ownership, action, and responsibility.

We all know that we have to receive from the Lord, but are we being proactive to take the steps we need to take in order to receive from Him?

- Are we showing up on Sunday mornings expectant, or is it the drudgery of 10:15, “this is the way we go to church,” getting there 15 minutes late?
- Are we faithful in our personal times of prayer and word?
- Are we in our cells ready to receive but also ready to share and participate, or are we just showing up so our cell leaders aren’t reaching out to ask if everything is ok because you haven’t been to cell in 3 weeks?

### **Engaging with the Spirit in Worship:**

- Stand up
- Stand on the carpet
- Sing out – even when you don't know the song being sung
- Raise your hands
- Dance
- Jump
- Kneel or lay prostrate before the Lord

### **Psalm 149:6-9**

<sup>6</sup> Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand,  
<sup>7</sup> To execute vengeance on the nations,  
And punishments on the peoples;  
<sup>8</sup> To bind their kings with chains,  
And their nobles with fetters of iron;  
<sup>9</sup> To execute on them the written judgment—  
This honor have all His saints.  
Praise the LORD!”

### **Psalm 150** - Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord!

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!  
Praise God in His sanctuary;  
Praise Him in His mighty firmament!  
<sup>2</sup> Praise Him for His mighty acts;  
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!  
<sup>3</sup> Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;  
Praise Him with the lute and harp!  
<sup>4</sup> Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;  
Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!  
<sup>5</sup> Praise Him with loud cymbals;  
Praise Him with clashing cymbals!  
<sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.  
Praise the LORD!”

### **Engaging With the Spirit in the Word**

- Put your phone away
- Bring a Bible- a paper one, not just a phone.
- Active listening- make notes, underline in your Bible, etc

\*All of the below information came from a Google search AI summary done in the Safari web browser when searching “reading on a phone versus physical books.” There are numerous reliable sources that document these findings.

“Reading on a phone generally induces shallower, fragmented brain activity with a heavier cognitive load compared to physical books. Tactile paper books promote deeper focus, stronger memory retention, and enhanced neurological mapping of text through physical sensory cues.

The neurological and behavioral differences between the two formats are significant:

- **Brain Waves:** EEG studies indicate that reading on paper activates higher-frequency brainwaves (beta and gamma), which are tied to focused problem-solving and deep reading. Phone reading often correlates with lower-frequency waves (theta and alpha), associated with lighter mental states and mind-wandering.
- **Physical Anchors:** Physical books provide spatial landmarks—like the thickness of the pages, holding the left and right sides, and the stable location of paragraphs. Research shows this physical dimensionality helps the brain mentally map narratives and retain the chronological order of information.
- **Cognitive Load & Sighing:** A study in Nature Scientific Reports found that phone reading causes overactivity in the prefrontal cortex and suppresses natural "sighs" (deep, restorative breaths). This heavier load and lack of reset-breathing ultimately lead to lower information comprehension.
- **Scrolling and Skimming:** Eye-tracking data reveals that scrolling on a phone encourages skimming in an "F" pattern rather than fully absorbing words. This creates a "metacognitive failure," where phone readers feel highly confident in what they read but score significantly lower on comprehension tests.”

To summarize: less comprehension, mind wandering with the phone screen, versus improved comprehension and absorbing the text, retaining information, and improved problem solving and deep reading with a physical paper book.

The phone Bible apps, google to find a verse or phrase, look up translations and notes, etc, can be a wonderful tool for personal study time. It may even help you to follow along if we are reading a translation we don't have available on our screen. However, it can absolutely become a snare, both in corporate time and in your personal time with the Lord.

“Let me just respond to this text real quick.”

“Oh look, an email.”

“Hey there’s a sale at \_\_\_, I should go soon. Actually let me just look real quick in their app. Well now that I’m in there let me just make my grocery order real quick for tomorrow.”

We must **guard our hearts** and **focus** to engage with the Spirit.

## **2 Timothy 2:4**

“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”

In our context “affairs of this life” could include anything that distracts or hinders us from engaging with the Spirit of God:

- Phone/screen and all that comes with that
- Kids/parenting
- Your work day before you came to church on a Wednesday night
- Your week ahead on a Sunday
- Where is lunch?
- How much longer will worship/word go?  
Boredom = flesh  
“Flesh down, spirit up! Front and center, ready to receive.”
- Mind wandering to anything other than submitting to the Spirit of God  
“But we have the mind of Christ” – 1 Corinthians 2:16

Think of a fighter jet pilot. When they come across an enemy threat, they are **engaged** with the enemy, and then they are in for a dog fight. If their attention is broken, shifted, or they become distracted, for even a second, it can turn deadly.

But the opposite of giving in to distracting – oh the glory that He longs to bring when we engage with the Spirit.

“Lord, we ask for your Shekinah Glory to come.”

With just one touch He gives us:

- Encounter
- Healing
- Deliverance and freedom
- His face
- Love
- Revelation
- Grace
- Strengthening and refreshing

**Psalms 73:16-17 (ESV)** – it seemed wearisome, until I came into the house of God

**Psalm 73: 21-28 (ESV)**

**“**<sup>21</sup> When my soul was embittered,  
when I was pricked in heart,  
<sup>22</sup> I was brutish and ignorant;  
I was like a beast toward you.  
<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, I am continually with you;  
you hold my right hand.  
<sup>24</sup> You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will receive me to glory.  
<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.  
<sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.  
<sup>27</sup> For behold, those who are far from you shall perish;  
you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.  
<sup>28</sup> But for me it is good to be near God;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
that I may tell of all your works.”

**Engage with the Spirit.**

**Exercise your faith.**

**Believe for MORE.**

**Purpose FULL!**

**Those with Kingdom VISION have revelation of God’s PURPOSES.**

**The PURPOSE OF GOD STANDS!**

**Purpose spurns from INTIMACY.**

**Purpose initiates IDENTITY.**

**The Holy Ghost is seeking our intimacy, to initiate your identity, and give you purpose. To spur your heart to believe for MORE, to know and to act in faith, knowing His purposes will always stand, because they always come to pass.  
Amen!**