



1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24

**KINDLE
THE
SPIRIT**

REV. IN KEE KIM

Scripture Passage

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Sermon

Kindle the Spirit

To overcome this Covid crisis, we have to be strong. If we are not strong, when this crisis is over, we will come out as being worse than before. We have to be strong so that we can come out of this crisis as a better person than before. More positive, more resilient, more understanding and more compassionate, wiser, and more hopeful.

This is what St. Paul said: ***Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).***

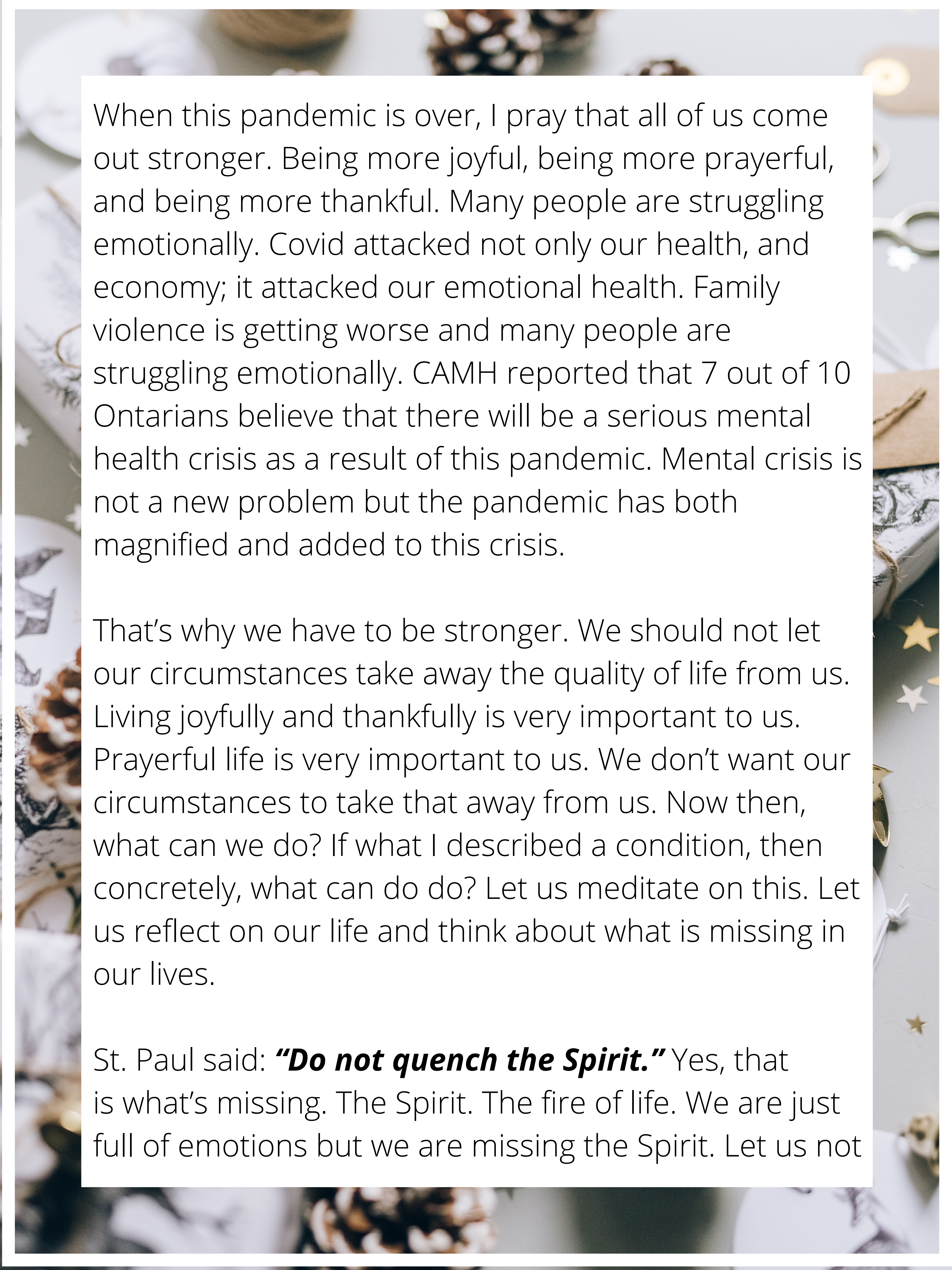
Being always joyful, being always prayerful, and being always thankful; that is what it looks like to be a strong person to me. To me, a strong person to me is not a stubborn, aggressive, and rigid person. To me, a person is a person who is always joyful, prayerful, and thankful. These are the characteristics of strong people.

St. Paul said that this is God's will for us.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

That is God's will for us. This is what God wants to see in us. Only strong people can have this.

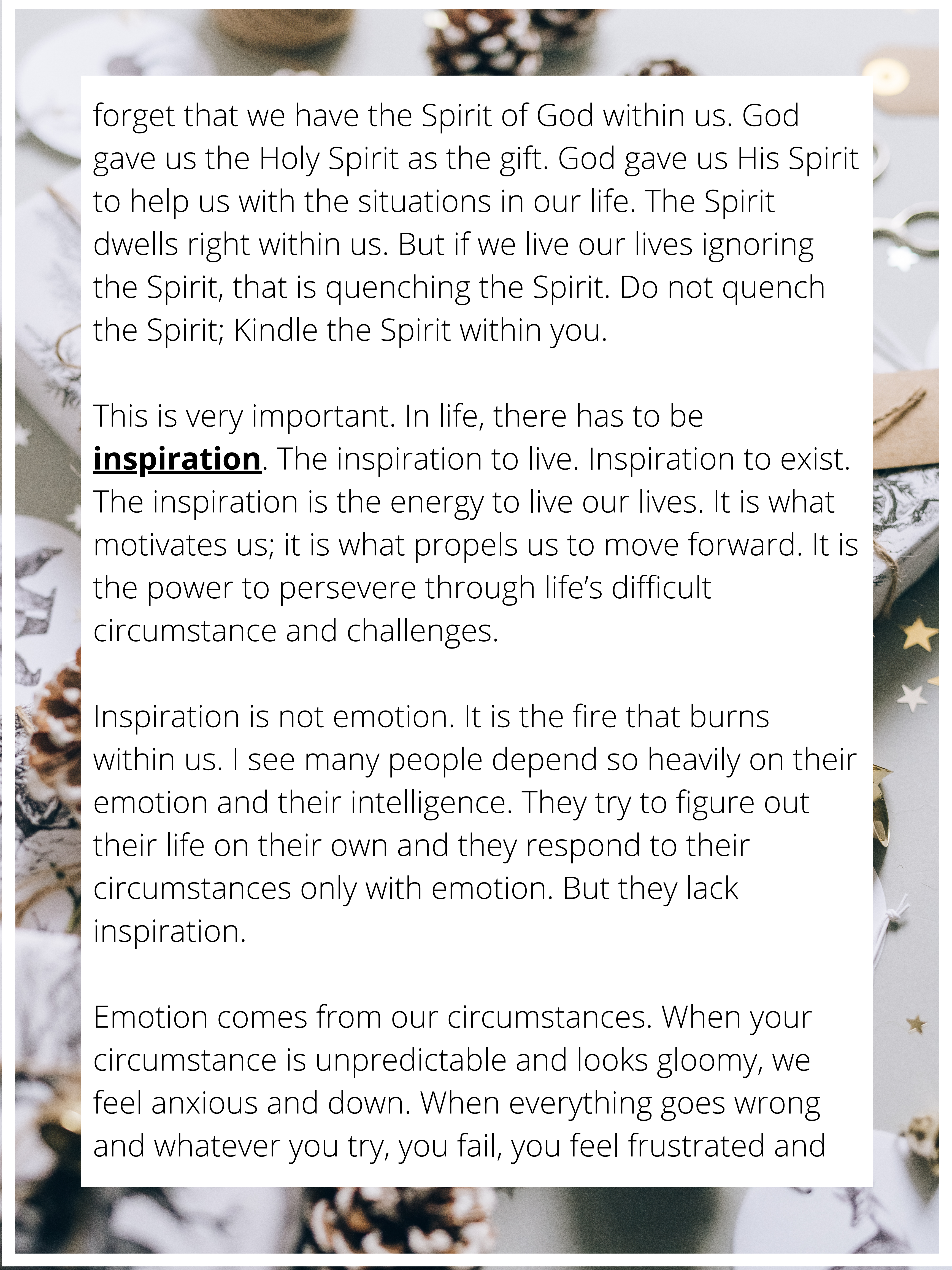
What St. Paul is saying here is not about what you do. This is not something we can do. Paul is just describing what the quality of a spiritual person is like. He's just talking about the condition and quality of a person. A strong and spiritual person always lives with joyfulness, prayerfulness, and thankfulness. He's just describing it. Being joyful – we cannot do it just because we think it is good to be joyful. Can you? When you are not happy inside, when you are not comfortable inside, how can you be joyful? It's not something you can do just because you want to do it. Being thankful is the same. When you are filled with anger and frustration, how can you be thankful in all circumstances? Depending on what we have inside of us, what comes out will be quite different. If you are very frustrated inside, that frustration will come out. When you are thankful on the inside, that will come out on the outside.



When this pandemic is over, I pray that all of us come out stronger. Being more joyful, being more prayerful, and being more thankful. Many people are struggling emotionally. Covid attacked not only our health, and economy; it attacked our emotional health. Family violence is getting worse and many people are struggling emotionally. CAMH reported that 7 out of 10 Ontarians believe that there will be a serious mental health crisis as a result of this pandemic. Mental crisis is not a new problem but the pandemic has both magnified and added to this crisis.

That's why we have to be stronger. We should not let our circumstances take away the quality of life from us. Living joyfully and thankfully is very important to us. Prayerful life is very important to us. We don't want our circumstances to take that away from us. Now then, what can we do? If what I described a condition, then concretely, what can do do? Let us meditate on this. Let us reflect on our life and think about what is missing in our lives.

St. Paul said: ***"Do not quench the Spirit."*** Yes, that is what's missing. The Spirit. The fire of life. We are just full of emotions but we are missing the Spirit. Let us not



forget that we have the Spirit of God within us. God gave us the Holy Spirit as the gift. God gave us His Spirit to help us with the situations in our life. The Spirit dwells right within us. But if we live our lives ignoring the Spirit, that is quenching the Spirit. Do not quench the Spirit; Kindle the Spirit within you.

This is very important. In life, there has to be **inspiration**. The inspiration to live. Inspiration to exist. The inspiration is the energy to live our lives. It is what motivates us; it is what propels us to move forward. It is the power to persevere through life's difficult circumstance and challenges.

Inspiration is not emotion. It is the fire that burns within us. I see many people depend so heavily on their emotion and their intelligence. They try to figure out their life on their own and they respond to their circumstances only with emotion. But they lack inspiration.

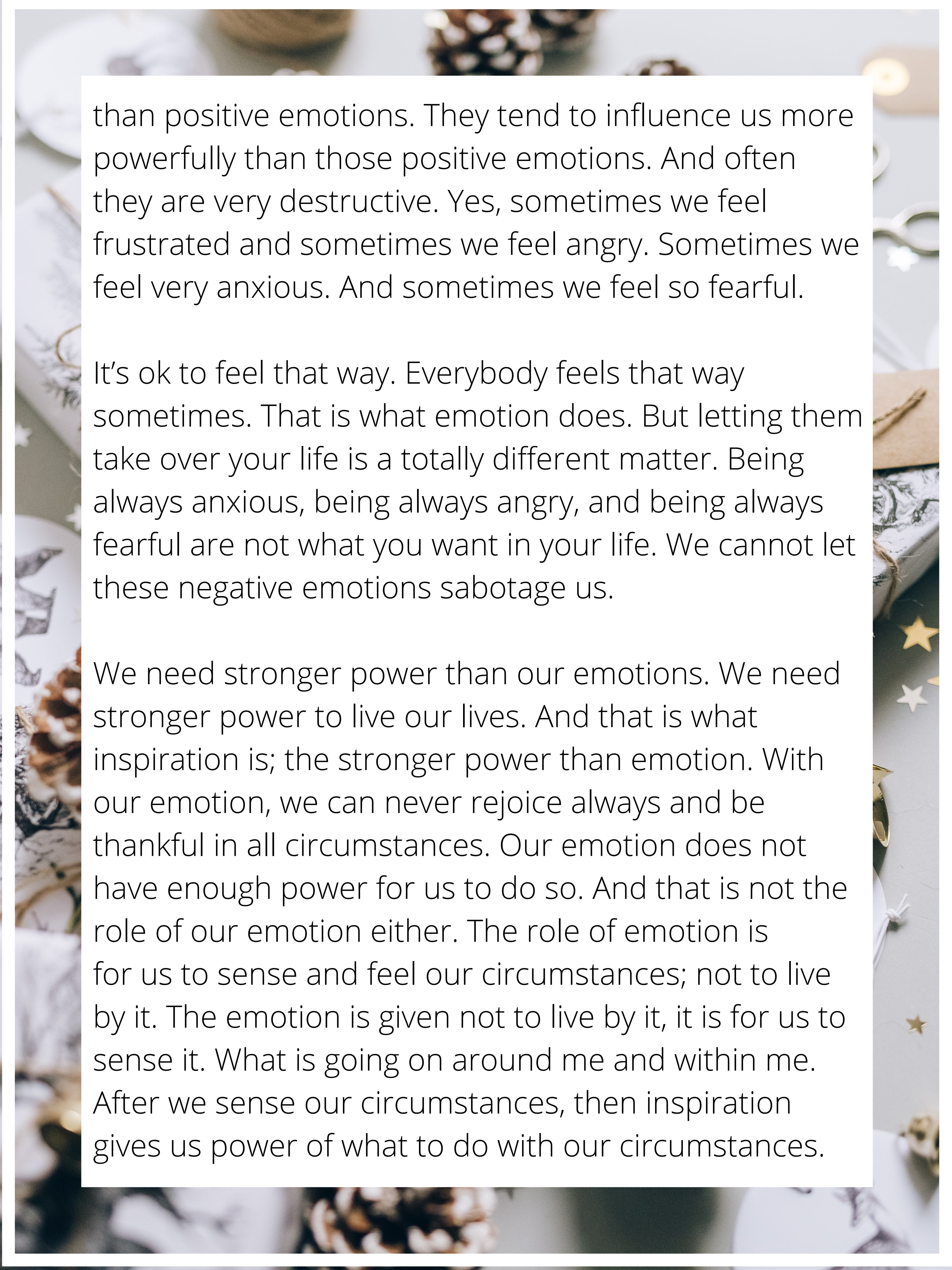
Emotion comes from our circumstances. When your circumstance is unpredictable and looks gloomy, we feel anxious and down. When everything goes wrong and whatever you try, you fail, you feel frustrated and

even angry. So emotion comes from our circumstances. And it goes up and down, depending on our situations. You don't need to feel bad about it, that's what emotion is. In the morning you feel great, in the evening sometimes you feel so lousy and down.

But the inspiration does not come from our circumstances. It comes from the Spirit that is within us. When we are in touch with the Spirit that is within us, we get inspiration. Without inspiration that comes from the Spirit within us, we tend to focus only on our emotion, because that's the only resource that we have.

But when life is hard, when things are not going well, we should be very careful about our emotion. Our emotion will become very negative. Because our circumstances are not that positive. If we let our negative emotion take us over, we can make so many mistakes. Letting our emotion take over our life is to quench the Spirit. If you are not paying attention to the Spirit, the Spirit slowly gets buried within you and the fire dies down. We should not quench the Spirit; we should kindle the Spirit.

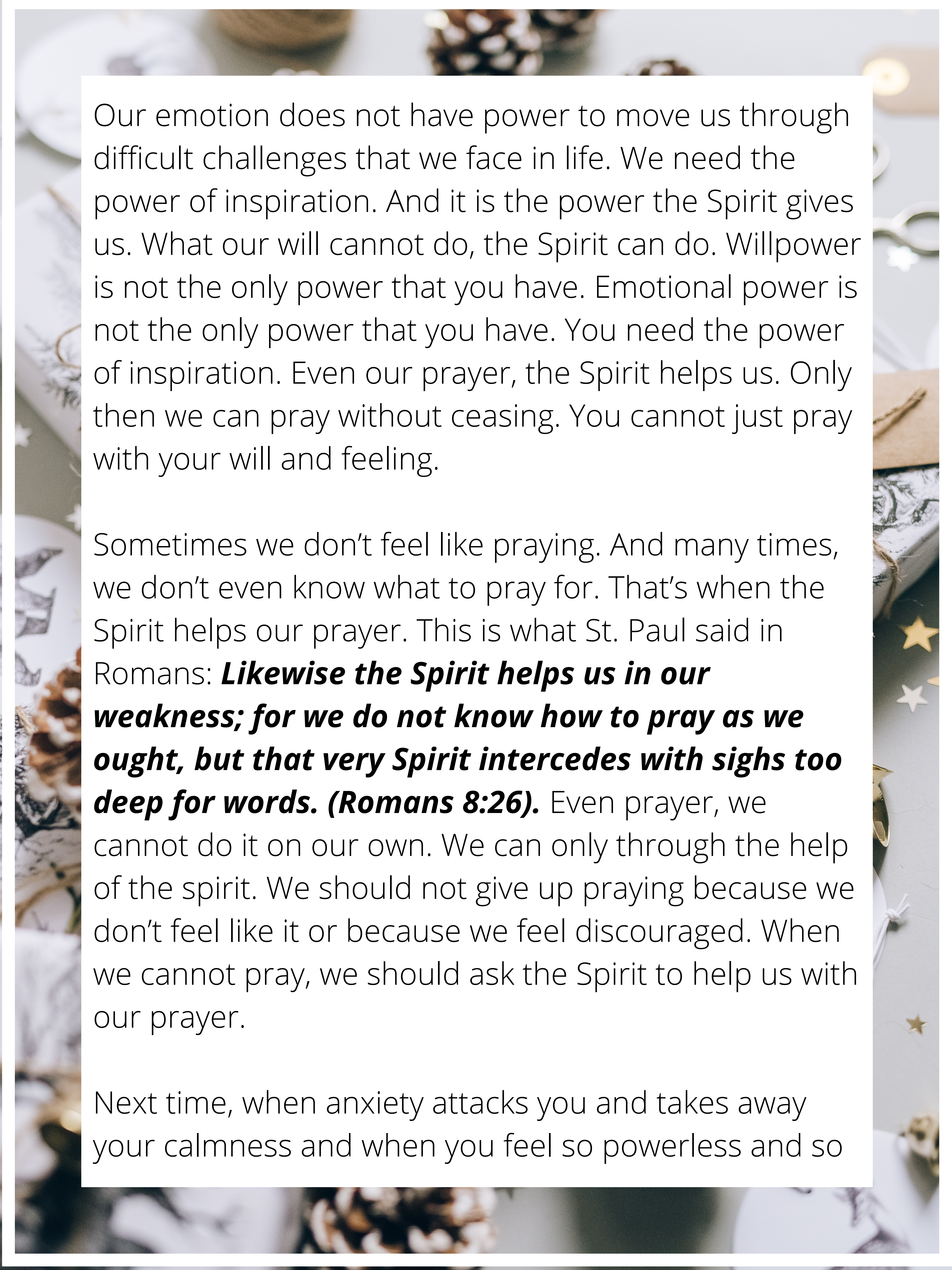
Negative emotions we experience are more powerful



than positive emotions. They tend to influence us more powerfully than those positive emotions. And often they are very destructive. Yes, sometimes we feel frustrated and sometimes we feel angry. Sometimes we feel very anxious. And sometimes we feel so fearful.

It's ok to feel that way. Everybody feels that way sometimes. That is what emotion does. But letting them take over your life is a totally different matter. Being always anxious, being always angry, and being always fearful are not what you want in your life. We cannot let these negative emotions sabotage us.

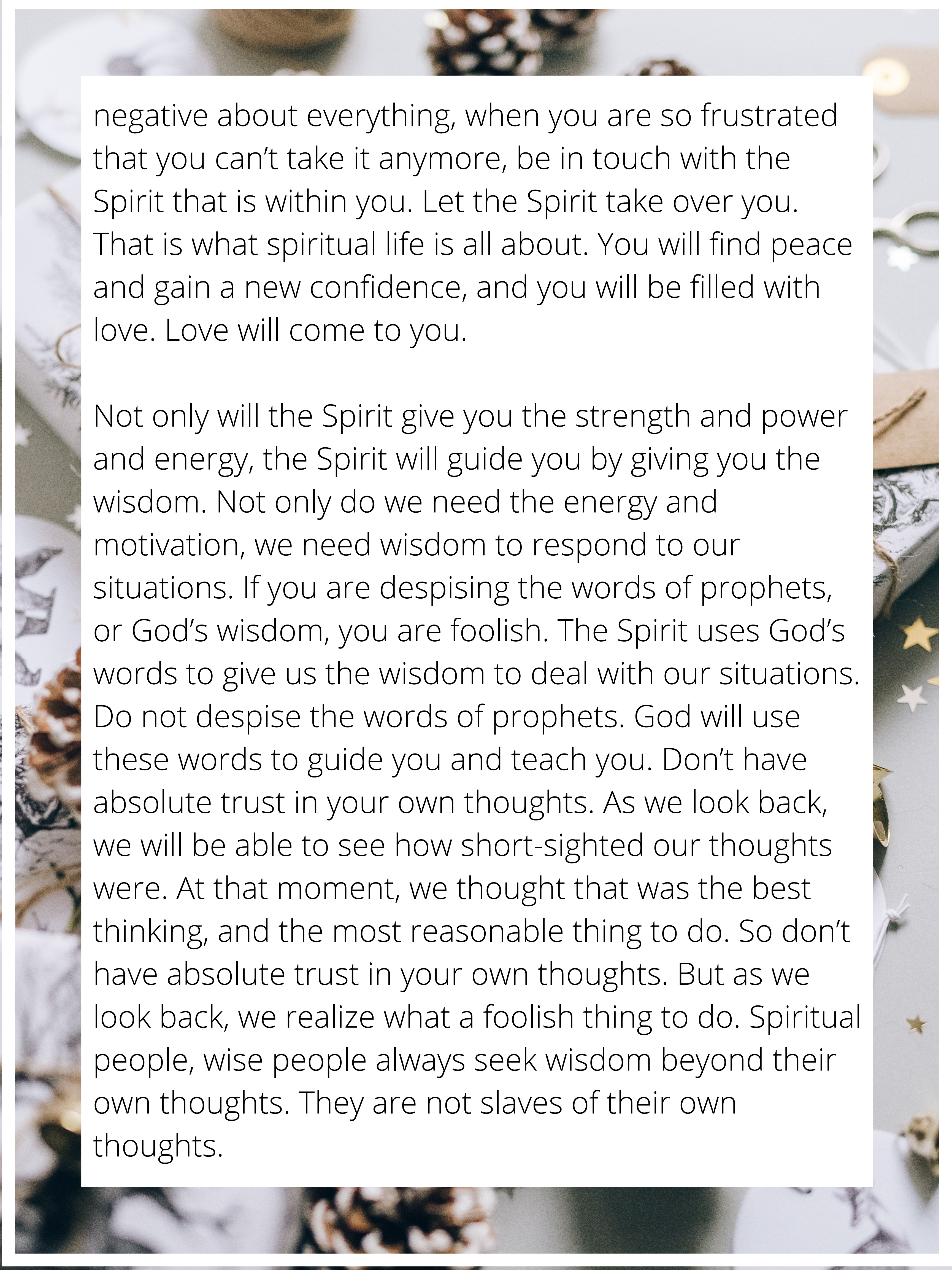
We need stronger power than our emotions. We need stronger power to live our lives. And that is what inspiration is; the stronger power than emotion. With our emotion, we can never rejoice always and be thankful in all circumstances. Our emotion does not have enough power for us to do so. And that is not the role of our emotion either. The role of emotion is for us to sense and feel our circumstances; not to live by it. The emotion is given not to live by it, it is for us to sense it. What is going on around me and within me. After we sense our circumstances, then inspiration gives us power of what to do with our circumstances.



Our emotion does not have power to move us through difficult challenges that we face in life. We need the power of inspiration. And it is the power the Spirit gives us. What our will cannot do, the Spirit can do. Willpower is not the only power that you have. Emotional power is not the only power that you have. You need the power of inspiration. Even our prayer, the Spirit helps us. Only then we can pray without ceasing. You cannot just pray with your will and feeling.

Sometimes we don't feel like praying. And many times, we don't even know what to pray for. That's when the Spirit helps our prayer. This is what St. Paul said in Romans: ***Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. (Romans 8:26).*** Even prayer, we cannot do it on our own. We can only through the help of the spirit. We should not give up praying because we don't feel like it or because we feel discouraged. When we cannot pray, we should ask the Spirit to help us with our prayer.

Next time, when anxiety attacks you and takes away your calmness and when you feel so powerless and so



negative about everything, when you are so frustrated that you can't take it anymore, be in touch with the Spirit that is within you. Let the Spirit take over you. That is what spiritual life is all about. You will find peace and gain a new confidence, and you will be filled with love. Love will come to you.

Not only will the Spirit give you the strength and power and energy, the Spirit will guide you by giving you the wisdom. Not only do we need the energy and motivation, we need wisdom to respond to our situations. If you are despising the words of prophets, or God's wisdom, you are foolish. The Spirit uses God's words to give us the wisdom to deal with our situations. Do not despise the words of prophets. God will use these words to guide you and teach you. Don't have absolute trust in your own thoughts. As we look back, we will be able to see how short-sighted our thoughts were. At that moment, we thought that was the best thinking, and the most reasonable thing to do. So don't have absolute trust in your own thoughts. But as we look back, we realize what a foolish thing to do. Spiritual people, wise people always seek wisdom beyond their own thoughts. They are not slaves of their own thoughts.

We reflected on the characteristic of a blessed person. ***“Blessed people - their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.” (Psalm 1:2).*** Kindle the Spirit within you, the Spirit will give you the wisdom you need. When you read John, this is what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit: ***But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14:26).*** And again in Chapter 16, ***“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13).*** Not only what is going on presently, but things that will come. So the Spirit will use these words to teach you, guide you and reveal good things to you.

Inspiration and wisdom – that’s what we need. The power and wisdom, that’s what we need. Then we will be able to discern what is good and live out what is good. And we will have the power to resist all forms of evil. Be strong. You can overcome this difficulty with the help of the Spirit.