

## CHAPTER 4

# THE HOLY SPIRIT

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.  
—Luke 24:49

You won't be able to experience the full presence of God on earth apart from the Holy Spirit. The calling that God has for you is designed with the power of the Holy Spirit in mind. Take a look at one of the first things that the apostle Paul asks a new group of Jesus followers:

[Paul] asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.  
—Acts 19:2-6

Don't attempt to follow Jesus and achieve your purpose apart from the Spirit of God. It may be surprising to you that Jesus himself said to the disciples that it's better that he go away:

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.  
—John 16:7

Jesus is saying, “I want to be with you and strengthen you,” but because He had taken on the constraints of humanity He could only be in one place at one time. So he said, “If I go, I can send my Spirit to live with everyone, everywhere. There is nothing more comforting, and embracing than the presence of God through the Holy Spirit.”

There are two primary functions of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is there for closeness and for power. First let’s talk about closeness. I’ve spoken to this concept throughout this book; God wants to be close to us. This next verse talks about the fellowship of the Holy Spirit:

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
—2 Corinthians 13:14

God wants fellowship, which is both friendship and partnership. As you invite God to fill you with his Spirit, you’ll receive a great sense of the presence of God and his love for you.

The other central function of the Holy Spirit is to provide power to accomplish your calling, which plays a part in God’s larger plan on earth. Here is what Jesus told the disciples before he left earth:

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”  
—Acts 1:4-5, 8

You will receive power to be a witness for Jesus. As you begin to walk with the Holy Spirit, he'll speak to you and empower you to be a witness in what you say and do.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

—Acts 2:1-4

## **WALK BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit being able to be in and fill each believer is the total fulfillment of God's desire to be Immanuel—God with us. While we live on earth, we have access to the Holy Spirit. He wants to provide wisdom, counsel, power, comfort, direction, and friendship.

When we learn to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, we're more fulfilled and more effective. The Holy Spirit also guides us in living a life that honors God. Here are a few verses describing what our lives begin to produce as we follow the Spirit versus our own way:

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh 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.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ

Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.  
—Galatians 5:16-25

If we're going to follow Jesus, we have to learn to listen and obey the voice and leading of the Holy Spirit. Jesus leads us through his Word and his Spirit. As we walk in step with the Holy Spirit, we'll begin to display the fruit of the Spirit that Galatians 5 showcases for us.

## **SUPERNATURAL POWER**

You may have heard about or already experienced the supernatural power of God. All of this is done through the power of the Holy Spirit working through humans.

In ourselves, we don't have the power to heal people or set them free from oppression, but when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, there is a power that is now available to us. Even Jesus didn't do miracles until he was water baptized and the Holy Spirit came on him:

You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

—Acts 10:37-38

The world that you and I live in is hurting and desperately in need of the love and power of God. This is why he wants to empower you with his Spirit—to bring life everywhere you go. We release this power in the name of Jesus when we lay our hands on someone and pray in faith!

## **BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that

they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

—Acts 8:15-17

Being filled with the Holy Spirit as a young teenager became the game changer in my ability to know and follow Jesus. In most biblical accounts, believers received the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues when someone laid hands on them. There were also reports of people getting filled as they simply heard God's Word spoken.

If you want all that God has for you and are ready to receive the Holy Spirit that he provides for us, connect with your pastor or another mature spirit-filled follower of Jesus and ask them to pray with you to be filled. You also may simply open up your heart and ask God to fill you with his Spirit.

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

—Luke 11:13

## **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

When we're filled with the Holy Spirit, we are given spiritual gifts that deepen our walk with him and increase our effectiveness as the Church. The apostle Paul outlines for us many of the different gifts available to us as followers of Jesus:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another

prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

—1 Corinthians 12:4-11

The different gifts that God gives to us through the Holy Spirit are there to build up the body of Christ. When we open up our life to be used by God, he will partner with and empower us.

Paul speaks to one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that builds up our spirit and draws us closer to the heart of God when he notes in 1 Corinthians 14:4, “Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves.” This prayer language or “tongue” is powerful for developing closeness with God and power in prayer.

## **YIELD, BUT DON'T STALL**

Although the Holy Spirit is present to lead and guide believers, God has empowered and commissioned us to take dominion on earth and to fulfill what he’s spoken to us in his Word. We don’t need to sit around and wait for the Holy Spirit to tell us to do what is already written in the Bible.

Take a yielded posture that says, “I’m going hard after the purpose of God, but I’m keeping my heart sensitive to hear and adjust if the Holy Spirit speaks to me.” Take time daily to pray in the Spirit, so you’ll be equipped and emboldened to do all that Jesus wants you to!

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## CHAPTER CHALLENGE

### STUDY IT THROUGH:

What did Jesus tell the disciples to wait for? Acts 1:4-5

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In John 14:26, what is the Holy Spirit called?

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What will we receive when the Holy Spirit comes? Acts 1:8

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How does the Holy Spirit help us when we don't know what to pray? Romans 8:26-27

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After repentance, what does Acts 2:38 say we will receive?

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What does John 16:13 say the Holy Spirit will guide us into?

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### WALK IT OUT:

- Before you read the Bible, invite the Holy Spirit to reveal truth in the verses you're reading.
- If you haven't been baptized in the Holy Spirit like the Bible describes, reach out to your pastors and ask them to pray with you to receive this baptism.
- If you've already been filled with the Holy Spirit, be intentional about using the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit has given you.