

STORMIE  
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LEAD ME,  
  
HOLY  
  
SPIRIT



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

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## **LEAD ME, HOLY SPIRIT**

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

[www.harvesthousepublishers.com](http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com)

ISBN 978-0-7369-4410-6 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-4775-6 (Deluxe)

ISBN 978-0-7369-4411-3 (eBook)

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**Printed in the United States of America**

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 / DP-CD / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



This book is dedicated with humble gratitude  
to my Father God, for loving me;  
to Jesus, His Son, for saving, healing, and delivering me;  
and to the Holy Spirit, who has filled and led me safely and purposefully  
for more than forty years.

I pray that You, Holy Spirit, will lead me in the writing of this book  
so that others may know and love You as I do.



If you live according to the flesh you will die;  
but if by the Spirit you put to death  
the deeds of the body, you will live.  
For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,  
these are sons of God.

ROMANS 8:13-14

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# What Does It Mean to Be Led by the Holy Spirit?

I remember my first encounter with the Holy Spirit.

It happened during the Jesus Movement—which went from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. At the time I not only didn't know what the Jesus Movement was, I had never even heard of it. Come to find out later, I was part of it.

It was October 1970. I was living in Los Angeles and working in Hollywood as an entertainer on television, but I was suffering with the worst anxiety, fear, depression, and just about every other kind of negative emotion. I had survived an abusive childhood with my mentally ill mother, and I thought that working my way to success would silence the demons within me that sapped my strength, enthusiasm for life, and any possible peace I could have had.

It didn't work.

In less than five years everything in my life became unbearable. The paralyzing fear, anxiety, and depression I experienced daily had taken their toll. I didn't want to live with the pain anymore. I wanted to die.

My friend Terry took me to meet her pastor, Jack Hayford, who talked to me about God. He said the way to a better life, both now and

in eternity, was to have a close relationship with God. That could only happen through His Son, Jesus. If I received Him as my Savior, He would save me from the free fall I was in, and He would forgive me of all past sins and mistakes and release me from their consequences forever. I could start over with a clean slate. And equally amazing, Jesus would give me the Holy Spirit of God to live in me and change me from the inside out. It would be an inside job, but the changes would be evident on the outside as well.

Pastor Jack also said God had a purpose for my life. He would take away all my fear, anxiety, and sadness and replace them with His love, peace, and joy, and He would enable me to fulfill that purpose. I had never heard of anything so amazing before. Even though it sounded to me like a crazy thing to do at the time, something in me believed the pastor was telling the truth. So I took a leap of faith—and I have never regretted it.

That was many years ago, and to this day I remember clearly how I felt before I received the Lord. There was nothing inside of me strong enough to combat the endless emptiness and unimaginable pain I struggled with daily. I didn't feel as though I belonged to anyone or anything. It was nearing the end of the 1960s drug fest, and although I pretended to be part of it, I never felt that I fit there. I didn't feel that I fit anywhere, actually.

After I received Jesus as Lord in Pastor Jack's office that day, with Terry giving me prayer support, I started attending their church. For the first time in my life I felt a great connection there. I had been in different churches a few times before, but they always seemed dead to me, and I didn't want to get sucked into that deadness. They made me feel bad about myself, and I was already good at that. So I never went back. But in this church I sensed something remarkable the moment I walked into the sanctuary. I could not identify it at first. But I soon learned it was the presence of the Holy Spirit of God. And it was palpable.

Everyone else who went there sensed the same thing. It was impossible not to notice. It was dynamic and life changing. It was the power of God's love, joy, and peace enveloping us, and it was touching, healing, comforting, edifying, and transforming us all. No one I knew who

was serious about the Lord ever left a meeting there the same as they entered. No matter what sin, error of thinking, bad attitude, sadness, or discouragement you came in with, you left changed for the better. Regardless of what your mental state was when you arrived, by the time you left it was more focused, more sound, and more hope filled. It was the presence of God washing over you—cleansing, refreshing, strengthening, clarifying, softening, melting, molding, enlarging, and infusing you with Himself. It was powerful and unforgettable. None of us who attended that church for any period of time ever forgot it.

Nothing weird ever happened at church. There was no “What is that person doing?” because people didn’t make themselves the center of attention. The Holy Spirit was unmistakably the center of it all, and people soaked up His presence like sponges. It didn’t make us strange; it made us more normal. It didn’t make us act crazy; it made us more sober minded. It didn’t make us attract people’s attention; it made us forget about ourselves and focus entirely on the Lord in praise and worship. I am not criticizing what other people experience in their churches. I am just saying that the greatest encounters I ever had with the Holy Spirit were precious and life changing, not strange or frightening.

I don’t remember a time when I entered the sanctuary that I didn’t weep. And I wasn’t the only one who had that experience. Nearly everyone who attended a service wept at some point because of the overwhelming sense of God’s presence and love. It reminds me of what it says in the Bible about when we are finally with the Lord and He will dry every tear (Revelation 21:4). In His presence we shed tears of joy, happiness, gratefulness, repentance, freedom, and relief. His love does that to us.

This was definitely a move of God.

A move of God like that is poured out for a specific time. It was already in progress when I received the Lord, and I was swept up into it in the best sense of the word. Those of us who, years later, were led by the Spirit of God to move to other towns, cities, states, and countries in order to start new churches, ministries, or lives remember it well. And we always seek to find that same outpouring of His presence again.

Whenever we see one another at different places in the world, we talk about those miraculous days at the church during the Jesus Movement. And we all look for the same manifestation of the Holy Spirit wherever we are. Once you experience His powerful presence, you always long for it. You never forget.

Before the Jesus Movement happened, many of us felt that we had to be a certain type of person in order to go to church. We had to *be* good, *look* good, and *act* right. That eliminated most of us right away. That's why so many of us never went to church. We didn't fit in. And we didn't want to. But with the Jesus Movement, we felt we could go to church the way we were and be accepted, even though God was not going to leave us that way for long.

The Jesus Movement was unique in comparison with anything I have seen since. The air seemed to crackle like electricity because it was so alive in the Spirit. It was undeniable. God sparked something life changing in each of us. We felt it. We knew it. And it never left us.

I had met my husband, Michael, on a record session a couple years before I became a believer, but we didn't date then. After I came to know the Lord, we met again at this church and married about a year later. We were there for 23 years before God led us and our teenage children to another state. From then on it was always in our heart to capture that experience again—to walk into a church and sense the Holy Spirit's presence.

It is possible to walk into a church anywhere in the world and sense whether the Holy Spirit is alive and moving there, or whether there is a denial of His presence or rejection of His existence in any powerful form. Some people serve a Savior who saves, but they minimize the gift of His Holy Spirit—a gift He expressly gives to dwell in us. People crowd to a place where they feel the Holy Spirit is allowed to flow; they reject the church, and even God's Word, when they don't find either of them coming alive to them. That's because the church and the Bible can only truly come alive by the Holy Spirit breathing life into them. If the Holy Spirit is restricted by unbelief, disbelief, apathy, or a lack of receptivity, His presence will not manifest itself in power.

A church can become prideful in either its denial of the Holy Spirit or in an effusive display of Him. But when the Holy Spirit is invited to work in people—meaning He is not restrained by our fear, doubt, control, or pride—He doesn't make people weird; He makes them peace filled. They become weird when the pride of human flesh dominates instead of the humility of a repentant heart. When you are in the presence of the Holy Spirit, your eyes are drawn in awestruck reverence toward God and Jesus, His Son, and not toward yourself or other people.

I have been in churches that ignore the Holy Spirit, or treat Him as though He is a decoration they can put up and take down at will. And I have been in churches that wear Him like a badge of honor on display for all to see. I don't see the case for either extreme in the Bible. We don't decide what the Spirit of God does in our lives or how He manifests Himself. We *invite* Him to do what He *wants*. But we cannot let the fear that the Holy Spirit won't do what *we* want cause us to shut Him out of our lives. Nor can we force Him into a mold of our own making that causes Him to resemble *us* rather than allowing Him to mold *us* into *His* image.

This book is not about what happens in church—except that the church you attend can influence your concept of being led by the Holy Spirit. Yet you can go to a church that barely acknowledges the Holy Spirit and still have a dynamic sense of His leading in your life if you invite Him to fill you with Himself. I know many who do.

Too many of God's people feel they can live without the Holy Spirit's influence in their life. We have a tendency to think we know best. We say, "What do *I* want to do today?" and not "What does *God* want me to do today?" Adam and Eve started that trend, and we follow along after their example. We think we can do our own thing and live without the leading of the Spirit of God, when in truth we can do nothing without His revelation, guidance, and power. We can perhaps accomplish some things on our own without acknowledging Him, but nothing great and lasting. And certainly nothing beyond our own limitations. Our lives will always be restricted without His presence and operation in them.

*There should be no discrepancy between the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures—who can be seen in power throughout—and His presence in our lives today.*

When I sensed the leading of the Holy Spirit to write this book, it was confirmed by two other Christian leaders who have had godly input into my life. In fact, they actually mentioned it to me before I had a chance to say anything about my thoughts on it to them. That was confirmation enough for me.

At first the idea of writing a book about the Holy Spirit seemed overwhelming, because I knew that a 50-volume encyclopedia could not contain all there is to know about the Holy Spirit of God, or even come close to telling of Him and His works. But as I began writing, it was no longer overwhelming. It became clear that it was completely impossible. Yet, knowing the Bible assures me nothing is impossible with God, I have prayed fervently that God would enable me to write this book according to His will. I have sought nothing less than the leading of His Spirit every day throughout.

Because I had the title of this book right away, I knew it was to be written from this one perspective—that of the *Holy Spirit's leading* in our lives. There are countless aspects of the Holy Spirit I am not writing about because I want to focus on how He leads us—you and me—personally. My greatest desire is that you, the reader, will come to know Him better, love Him more, and grow in that knowledge and love every day. It has long been on my heart that when we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, good things happen. And the reverse of this is also true. That is, far too many bad things happen needlessly in our lives because we did *not* follow the leading of the Lord.

When we listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit, He draws us to places of safety and blessing. When we ignore His leading—or never seek it in the first place—we put ourselves in vulnerable and dangerous positions where we can be drawn off the path God has for us and out from under His umbrella of protection. How many bad things have happened to us because we did not follow the leading of the Lord, whether because we never sought it or because we didn't heed what He had been whispering to our soul?

This doesn't mean life is perfect when we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. We live in an imperfect world with imperfect, often misled, and sometimes evil-serving people who are not only *not* following the Holy Spirit, but they mock God, speak evil of Him, or deny His existence and persecute His people. We have a spiritual enemy who wants to destroy our lives, and he finds far too many people to do his bidding. Life is not perfect when you are led by God's Spirit, but the good news is you will always have the ultimate victory.

When we receive Jesus, we then have the Spirit of the Creator of the universe with us at every moment, leading us through, above, and beyond all that is imperfect in our lives. This knowledge is the ultimate confidence builder. Not confidence in ourselves—for we who have not lost touch with reality are well aware of our own limitations—but confidence in God, who is *with* us by the power of His Holy Spirit *in* us. How can we not ultimately win?

Don't allow other people or dead traditions dictate your response to the Spirit of God. Forget about all of the strange, confusing, off-putting, and suspicious things you have heard concerning certain people and their experiences with the Holy Spirit, and simply read what the Bible says about Him. Let go of all fear and prejudice based on something a few of His children have said or done. Your preconceived ideas as to who the Holy Spirit is, and how He might manifest Himself in your life, will color your openness to Him. Let God speak to you from His Word. Hear what *He* is saying.

I strongly sense—and I am sure you and most serious believers do as well—that a greater move of the Holy Spirit is about to break forth such as we have not seen before in our lifetime. And we want to be ready to serve God in any way we can when that happens. In order to do that, we must hear God's voice speaking to our heart, soul, and spirit day by day through His Word, in prayer, and in our praise and worship of Him. We must be led by His Holy Spirit and not try to find our way without Him.

God wants to lead you to places you cannot get to without Him, and He does that by the power of His Spirit. He can bring you into the realm of the miraculous—not as a show, but as a demonstration

of His love and compassion for the lost, hurting, or needy—and who doesn't want or need that? He can take you to the world of the invisible, which is greater and more real than the visible. He does all this by getting you to depend on Him, be led by Him, and enabled by Him. When you clearly recognize His voice speaking to your heart, your life will never be the same.

And you won't want it to be.





## Led to Receive

God has more for you than you can imagine. But if you don't know who God is in every aspect of Him, you will not be able to receive all He has for you.

First of all, you must know that God is one God. But there are three distinct, eternal, coexistent persons in the Godhead:

*God*, who is the Creator of all things

*Jesus*, who is God's Son—and also God

The *Holy Spirit*, who is God's Spirit—and also God

God, His Son, and His Spirit are inseparable. They are always together in one another, yet separate (John 14:10-11). Three separate persons, yet one God.

God has always existed and will always exist. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were together at creation. When He created man, God said, "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness" (Genesis 1:26, emphasis added). Man is created in the image of God.

God is not created. He *is*. He always has been. And He always will be. Jesus, God's Son, is not created or made. He was *begotten* by Father God.

The Holy Spirit is not created or made either. He *proceeds from* God.

Regarding these three manifestations of our one God, we must recognize their distinctions but not separate them from one another. They are equally important. If we ignore any one of these three aspects of God, it is to our own detriment. We will never understand all that God wants us to know about Him without having full knowledge of each representation of Him. You will spend a lifetime coming to new levels of understanding about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and still never exhaust all there is to learn.

My goal is not to divide God into parts in order to focus on one part more than another. There is one God, and He does not divide Himself up in order to accomplish something. But I do want you to better understand one aspect of who He is because I believe He is the least known and the most neglected in our personal lives.

Before we go any further, let's get one thing straight. Yes, God is everywhere. And He is seen in countless ways in the earth He created. But the *power* of His presence is only personally revealed to those who believe He exists and choose to have a relationship with Him on His terms. He rewards them with many things, the greatest of which is His presence.

When I hear people strive to disprove God's existence—against all evidence to the contrary—it would be laughable to me if it weren't so pathetic. For some, their unbelief has hardened their heart to the point that even if God appeared in person and they fell prostrate before Him in fear and trembling due to the unbearable magnitude of His presence, they would still reject Him.

I feel sorry for the enemies of God. I am sad they will never witness God's life-altering beauty, or experience His transforming love, or know the completeness of His presence, or understand the security, confidence, and joy to be experienced by following the leading

of His Spirit in their lives. They will never be empowered to move beyond their own limitations, nor will they be moved by the magnitude and fullness of His communion with them. They will continue to be severely lacking while believing they lack nothing.

There are people who say they believe in God but not in Jesus. These people will never know the salvation, liberation, healing, and redemption He has for them in every part of their life. I have heard people say, “I could never believe in a God who sends anyone to hell,” as if we get to choose the type of God we want to believe in. Can you imagine a designer God who gets a makeover into *our* image—whatever that is at the moment? What a scary thought! Besides, God doesn’t *send* people to hell. That’s the place they end up when they don’t believe and live the way they must in order to avoid it.

It’s true that there are unbelievers who are good people, who act more Christian than some Christians. And it doesn’t seem fair that they will end up in hell for eternity while some horrible person, who has done evil for his entire lifetime, can receive Jesus at the end of his life and wind up in heaven with believers who have devoted their entire life to the Lord. But, again, we don’t have a God we can design for our own purposes. He is God and we are not.

Others believe in God and Jesus but deny the existence and power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, without God’s Spirit working in their life, they can never be shaped into the beautiful image of Christ. They will never experience Him accomplishing something in and through them that is far greater than anything they could ever do on their own. Denying the Holy Spirit will always limit what God can do in their life.

I am certain you want to know all there is to understand about following the leading of the Holy Spirit or you would not be reading this book. The first step is to make certain your relationship with God is established the way He wants it to be. Even if you have already begun a relationship with God, read on to see how it can grow deeper. There are four blessings God wants you to receive right now:

- the relationship with God you need

- the gift of His Holy Spirit you cannot live without
- the freedom and wholeness He has for you
- the inheritance He has prepared for you as His son or daughter

## **Led to Receive the Relationship with God You Have Always Needed**

We need air to breathe, food to eat, and water to drink. God doesn't need anything. He is "all-sufficient." He doesn't need us; we need Him. But He loves us. Love is not just something God does. It is one of His attributes. An attribute of God is who God really *is*. God doesn't just *have* love, He *is* love. Because He loves us, He made it possible for us to have a relationship with Him forever.

In order to establish that relationship, there are five things God wants from you.

*God wants you to know Him.* He wants you to understand who He is. He wants you to walk closely with Him. And He made the way for you to do that by sending Jesus, His Son, to earth to take upon Himself all you had coming to you—which are the deserved consequences for all your sins. In exchange, Jesus gave you all He has coming to Him—the greatest of which is life with Him now and eternally with God. He said, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). He took the fall for you. He was the only one who could.

*When you receive Jesus, the relationship with God you have always needed is established, whether or not you fully recognize that He is what you've needed all along.*

*God wants you to receive His Holy Spirit.* When you receive Jesus, He sends the Holy Spirit to live in you. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Then God can communicate to you not only through His Word, but also through His Holy Spirit in you. God

wants you to follow His Spirit every day so He can lead you where you need to go and enable you to do what He has for you to do.

*Once you receive Jesus, He gives you the Holy Spirit as a gift to dwell in you in order to help you live the life God has for you.*

*God wants you to love Him.* God loves you far more than you know. And He knows what is best for you. He says that what's best for you is to love Him above all else. He loved you enough to send Jesus to die for you so you could be spared eternal separation from Him and endless suffering as a result. Jesus demonstrated His love toward us all "in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Understanding the depth of His love for you can only inspire you to love Him more.

*Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the two greatest demonstrations of God's love for you, and His best gifts to you as well.*

*God wants you to obey Him.* He wants you to live *His* way. In fact, His laws and commandments were established for your benefit. He asks that you demonstrate your love for Him by obeying Him in every aspect of your life. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). How much clearer can it be? Once you receive Jesus and the Holy Spirit dwells in you, you have the means by which you can obey Him in all things.

*The Holy Spirit enables you to live God's way when you seek and follow His leading every day.*

*God wants you to give your life to Him completely.* When you receive Jesus, He must become Lord of your life. If He is not, then your relationship with Him is weak. If you are more concerned with what other people think than with what God thinks, you are not sold out to God. If you only care about what *you* want and not what *God* wants, your life will never be all it can be. When you hold on to your life by trying to maintain complete control over it, you will lose it. But when you give your life to the Lord and put it under His control, you will find the life God has for you. "Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

*Giving God control over your life is an act of your will, but the Holy Spirit in you helps you to actually carry it out.*

*Think of what you long for more than anything else in your life.* Trust that God will give you something even greater.

*Think of the most painful thing you have ever experienced.* Believe that Jesus will not only heal that hurt, but He will bring restoration to that area of your life.

*Think of the greatest emptiness you've known.* Understand that the Holy Spirit will not only fill that empty place, but He will also give you a sense of fulfillment in your life.

*Think of everything you need right now.* Praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for having already provided for that need and giving you the gift that will meet it.



## PRAYER POWER

Lord, help me to know You more. Enable me to fully understand my relationship with You through Jesus, Your Son. Help me, Jesus, to comprehend all You accomplished for me on the cross. Thank You for Your suffering and death that have saved me from the consequences of my own wrong thoughts and actions. I am eternally grateful that after You were crucified, You rose from the dead to prove that You are who You say You are and that Your words and promises are without fail. No one else has ever done that for me. Only You.

As You knock on the door of my heart, teach me to hear Your voice and open that door, not only initially by receiving You into my life, but daily as You want me to submit my life to You. I declare that You are Lord over every aspect of my being, both now and for the rest of my days here on earth until I go to be with You forever. You are what I have longed for without even knowing it. Thank You for continuing to help me see who You really are. Thank You for forgiving me of all my sins

and giving me a new beginning in my life. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for helping me to live the right way, so I can show my love for the Lord by living in obedience to His commands.

In Jesus' name I pray.



## WORD POWER

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

REVELATION 3:20

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

ACTS 4:12

### Led to Receive the Promise of God's Spirit in You

Every person who receives Jesus has the Holy Spirit in his life. Anyone who says he does not have the Holy Spirit has not received Jesus. The Bible says “no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). It also says, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His” (Romans 8:9). So don't think you do not have the Holy Spirit working in your life. He drew you to God in the first place. When you trusted in Jesus, you were “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).

*When we receive Jesus, He gives us the Holy Spirit of God to dwell in us. We don't have Jesus living with us in the flesh, but we do have His Spirit living in us now.*

One of my nephews received Jesus into his heart at an early age, and not long afterward he caught a stomach flu. When he kept throwing up, he said to his mom, “I think Jesus wants to get out.” I love that story. His mom, of course, explained to him that this was not the

case. But sometimes I wonder if too many people believe something like that, as if Jesus comes and goes according to how good they are at the moment or how He “feels” about them. But the seal of our being born-again is the Holy Spirit in us. He is the proof. It is a done deal. He doesn’t ever leave.

The Holy Spirit was present and active at creation when the earth was without form “and the *Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*” (Genesis 1:1-2, emphasis added). He is powerfully evident throughout the Bible clear up to very nearly the end, where “the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’” (Revelation 22:17).

Jesus, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), asked John the Baptist to baptize Him in water, not because He needed to repent for His sins, since He was sinless, but because He knew the Holy Spirit would come upon Him, and *He had to have empowerment in order to move into His coming ministry*. When Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens opened up, and He saw “*the Spirit of God descending like a dove* and alighting upon Him” (Matthew 3:16, emphasis added).

*If Jesus needed to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to do what He had to do, how much more do we?*

Before Jesus was crucified, He said to His disciples, “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7). *The Holy Spirit was promised*. After His resurrection and before He ascended into heaven, Jesus said to them, “*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*” (Acts 1:8, emphasis added). There is a direct correlation between the Holy Spirit and power.

*If Jesus’ disciples and followers needed an outpouring of His Spirit upon them in order to be empowered to do what God was calling them to do, how much more do we?*

The Holy Spirit could not come to dwell in people until Jesus died for us and went to the Father. That’s because Jesus had to pay for our sins by His death and resurrection so we could be declared righteous. The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in an unsanctified place. But we are made



pure by the righteousness of Jesus when we receive Him. Therefore, the Holy Spirit can dwell in us.

Does this mean no one had the Holy Spirit before Jesus' death and resurrection? The Holy Spirit was obviously at work throughout the Old Testament, but it was in connection with God empowering certain people to do specific things. The Holy Spirit came upon such godly spiritual leaders as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and David, and they were led by Him. He worked in sovereign, God-ordained ways in the lives of other faithful people as well in order to carry out important things God wanted them to do or say. But the Holy Spirit was not sent to indwell all believers the way He does in believers since the time Jesus ascended into heaven.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God departed from those who were disobedient to Him. Saul was a good example of that. He disobeyed God, and so "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Samuel 16:14). But with Jesus came the Holy Spirit, who resides *in* us, who never leaves us or forsakes us.

Even though the Holy Spirit is in us and does not leave us, we are able to grieve Him and quench His work in us. We grieve Him by our sin. We quench His work in us by ignoring Him, neglecting to acknowledge His presence in us, or refusing to follow His leading. That's why we must daily respond to His presence in us and not just when we become desperate for it.

Jesus talked about the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. He was responding to Pharisees who had blasphemed the Holy Spirit by saying that what Jesus did when He healed a demon-possessed, blind, and mute man was the work of the devil. Jesus saw this as a willful rejection of the obvious work of the Holy Spirit, so He said to them, "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but *whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him*, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:32, emphasis added).

If you are ever concerned about whether you have committed the

unpardonable sin—which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—then you surely have not. Anyone who has received Jesus and has the Holy Spirit in them is not going to reject their Helper, Guide, Comforter, and the source of everything good in their lives. Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit would have to be so sold out to the devil, and his heart so hardened against God, that he is completely given over to the enemy's camp and wouldn't care whether he had blasphemed Him. Anyone who has opened his or her heart to Jesus, who has the Holy Spirit in them, would never reject Him. It would be unthinkable.

There are some who think there is no unpardonable sin. They believe that even blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is forgivable because Jesus was only talking to the Pharisees. There is a danger in explaining away the Bible this way—saying this passage was only for the Pharisees, that passage was only for the disciples, this other passage was just for the Romans—because soon the Bible is just a history book. If Jesus—who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)—said there is an unforgivable sin, then we must take Him at His word.

If you have received Jesus, the Holy Spirit is working in your life. But Jesus said, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13). If we already have the Holy Spirit, why do we have to ask for Him? The reason is that there is a deeper outpouring of His Spirit that God wants you to have, and He wants you to ask Him for it.

The Bible says “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). This means to *keep on being filled*. The Holy Spirit doesn't wear out, wear off, or wear down, but God wants you to seek a greater infilling of His Spirit initially, and then seek Him for a fresh filling of His Spirit whenever you want it. And you will need it because *the Holy Spirit in you is God's movement on earth*. He fills you with all that He is so you can be His hand extended. Wherever you go you take Him with you. The more you welcome Him, the more you will receive from Him, the more you will be led by Him, and the more you and the world around you will be touched by Him.

You can't live well without the Holy Spirit. You could have been a straight-A student, employee of the month for an entire year, never have robbed even one bank, and never murdered anyone, but if you don't have the Holy Spirit living in you in power because you have never invited Him to do so, then you don't have access to all God has for you. And you cannot get that on your own by being good.

The Holy Spirit-led life is the only life that makes sense. It is the only way to fulfill your highest purpose and receive all God has for you. But you cannot be *led* by the Spirit unless you are *filled* with the Spirit. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, He becomes your Guide and Counselor. Without the Holy Spirit's guidance and counsel you will not be able to achieve the amazing and powerful life of high purpose God has for you. A Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life is a life of power.

*The Holy Spirit works through you in ways that make it possible for you to do things you could not do on your own.*

We cannot think of the Holy Spirit as an accessory to our life. He *is* our life. We are dependent on *Him* working through us in order to live the life He wants us to live. The reason God desires that you be led by His Spirit is because He wants to take you to places you will never arrive at without Him.

You need Jesus in order to have a deep relationship with God. You need the Holy Spirit to become all you were created to be and do all you were called to do. It's a decision you must make to receive *all* that the Holy Spirit has for you. He is a gentleman. He will never impose Himself on you. He never violates your will. He waits to be invited to work powerfully in your life.



## PRAYER POWER

Lord, I ask You for a great outpouring of Your Holy Spirit in me. Enable me “to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge” so that I “may be filled with all the fullness” of You (Ephesians 3:19). I don't ever want to take lightly the fact that

You have sent Your Spirit to dwell in me, to guide and help me live the life You have for me. Teach me the deep things You want me to know from Your Word. Help me to hear the leading of Your Spirit telling me the way to walk. Give me understanding about all You want to do in and through me.

Thank You, God, that You are always with me. I long to know You better every day, so I ask for a fresh and ever-increasing flow of Your Spirit. I pray that You, Holy Spirit, will be at home in my heart. Keep me from allowing anything into it that would quench or grieve You. I don't ever want to hinder Your work in my life. I invite You to move powerfully through me, for I know that Your Spirit in me is how You touch the world around me. Keep me ever mindful of that as I go about my day and I am around other people. I want to always be sensitive to Your leading.

In Jesus' name I pray.



## WORD POWER

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

1 JOHN 4:13

Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

ACTS 2:38

## Led to Receive the Freedom and Wholeness God Has for You

Jesus said He came to give you a more abundant life (John 10:10). That doesn't mean a life of year-round, five-star, first-class vacations. It doesn't mean a six-car garage, a diamond-studded coffee table, enough clothes to never wear the same thing twice, and money to burn. It

means an abundance of whatever you need in order to live the life of purpose God has for you. One of the things you need is to be a whole person. In order to do that, you must claim the freedom in Christ He has waiting for you.

*The Holy Spirit will always lead you to liberation from anything that separates you from God and keeps you from becoming all He made you to be.*

While Jesus forgave us of all our sins of the past when we received Him, there are still habits of thought, emotion, and action that need to be submitted to the cleansing work of His Holy Spirit. And we are still capable of sin and suffering the consequences. But God has given us a way to be free of all that. It's called being in His presence.

I want you to remember the following 16 words for the rest of your life and act accordingly. "The Lord is the Spirit; and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*" (2 Corinthians 3:17, emphasis added). Say those 16 words out loud as many times as you need to in order to feel that truth sink deeply into your soul and memory.

*The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of liberation, and just being in His presence brings freedom.*

The Bible tells us that when God was present, people were often prostrate. They could not stand before Him. The light was too bright for them to look at; His presence too powerful for them to bear. In fact, they could be consumed in His presence. Because we cannot bear God's presence either, He gives us His Holy Spirit to be with us. In the presence of the Holy Spirit we are warmed and energized in His light and fire and not burned up by it. The more time you spend in His presence, the freer you become.

Jesus is the Deliverer who came to set us free. And the Holy Spirit continues to lead us into ever-increasing freedom and liberation in Christ—that is, freedom from the enemy of our soul, from the lure of the world, and from our own dangerous and self-destructive thoughts, habits, and actions. The enemy wants to keep us in bondage, but Jesus has already set us free from his control. Jesus said, "The ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11). He is defeated in your life now. The only way he can have any influence is by getting you to believe his lies.

Some of us experience pain and suffering because of bad things that happened to us through no fault of our own and were entirely out of our control. Jesus has total healing and restoration for all that. But some of us suffer from problems that are our own fault. And none of us can live with the guilt we carry in ourselves over the ways we have strayed from God's intention for our lives. Guilt destroys us. Our shoulders weren't built to carry it. Too often we don't *feel* that we have any guilt, but sometimes we do whether we recognize it or not. The apostle Paul said, "My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent" (1 Corinthians 4:4 NIV).

Paul also said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, *but according to the Spirit*" (Romans 8:1, emphasis added). When you are led by the Holy Spirit, He will guide you away from guilt and condemnation and the enemy's lies and toward confession, repentance, and a renewed heart before Him.

Often the pain in our lives comes from a lack of intimacy with God. And the only way we can experience that intimacy is to be in close communication with Him. You must be able to find a place that is quiet and private every day. Believe me, I know how hard that can be, especially in certain seasons of your life, but try. Go before the Lord and release every worry, care, person, fear, obligation, or concern from your mind into His hands. Name them specifically. As you sit in His presence, focus on His goodness and love, and welcome the comfort of His Holy Spirit in you. Let Him set you free of whatever keeps you from the abundant joy He has for you.

Ask God to help you get free of negative circumstances and negative people. Moses had to pitch his tent far outside the camp of the "stiff-neck people" in order to be able to hear from God (Exodus 33:7). You might have to do that too. If you have negative or faithless people around you who are bringing you down, do what you can to get away from them so you can talk to and hear from God.

When you are taking time to be in the Lord's presence, sometimes your pain or discomfort—physically, mentally, or emotionally—is so

great that it's hard to concentrate. If that happens, bring every obstacle you can think of before Him and ask Him to take them away. *When* He does, thank Him for that. *Until* He does, thank Him that He is your Deliverer and the Healer of your soul. Ask Him to liberate you from all your cares and bring you the peace that only He can.

Because the Holy Spirit of God is in you, it means you are never alone. You are never hopeless. You are never powerless. Because He is *in* you and *with* you wherever you go, He is never distant. His Spirit is as close as your own heartbeat. Whenever you need to have a greater sense of His presence, get quiet before Him and pray. You can get free of anything that is not God's will for your life. If you have not gotten free of whatever binds you, keep seeking His presence. It may be you haven't gotten free *yet*, but you will.

Once you are free of something, ask the Holy Spirit to help you *stay* free. Paul said, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). He was talking about not trying to be justified by what we do, but rather whom we know—Jesus. We have to stand fast in all that Christ has done to free us and not allow anything to take away that liberty.

God wants you to be more like Him. That's why the Holy Spirit will always be leading you toward becoming more whole. You must be filled afresh with the fullness of His Holy Spirit so He can permeate you with all that He is.



## PRAYER POWER

Lord, I thank You for the abundant life You have provided. I need an abundance of all that You are. I want to receive the wholeness You have for me. Thank You for leading me toward greater freedom from everything that keeps me from becoming all You created me to be. Thank You, Holy Spirit, that You are the Spirit of liberation, and wherever You are there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17). Liberate me from anything *in* me

or *around* me that is not Your will for my life. Set me free from every evil work. Enable me to stand strong against falling back into any kind of bondage or error again. Help me to resist being pulled into a way of life that is not up to Your standards.

Fill me afresh with Your love, peace, and power today. Make me whole from the inside out. Cleanse my heart from anything that is not of You. Burn away all darkness by the brightness of Your light in me. Thank You, Jesus, for setting me free. Thank You for filling me with Your Holy Spirit. Thank You that Your power is greater than anything I face. Speak to me, Holy Spirit, and tell me what I need to know. Give me a greater sense of Your presence. Quiet my mind, heal every negative emotion, speak to my heart, and crowd out of me the things that are not of You.

In Jesus' name I pray.



## WORD POWER

We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:9-10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

JOHN 10:10

## Led to Receive the Inheritance Laid Up for You as God's Child

Your Father God has an inheritance for you as His child that is far greater than that any earthly parent could ever provide. You and I are



“heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). Being a joint heir with Christ means that whatever God has given to His Son, Jesus, He will give to you and me as well. As an “heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:7), you have an inheritance from your Father that Jesus made possible for you to receive. Your secure assurance of this inheritance is the Holy Spirit dwelling in you.

*The best part of your inheritance is that you will spend eternity with the Lord.* “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Romans 8:11). Usually someone dies in order for you to receive an inheritance. In this case, it was Jesus. And you receive this particular part of it when *you* die. Your inheritance is life eternally with Him.

But get this—you also inherit a mansion. Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*” (John 14:2-3, emphasis added). Jesus has prepared this mansion for you for all eternity when you leave this earth to be with Him. You can trust that this great inheritance is there for you. Praise God, anyone?

However, your inheritance from your Father God is not just in the next life, as if that wouldn’t really be enough to look forward to. It is in this life too. You have already received a great part of your inheritance with the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit. In fact, He is your guarantee that you will be in heaven one day. The Holy Spirit is God’s hand extended from heaven to you. And when it is time for you to go there, the Holy Spirit will make sure you arrive home in a timely manner. Just as He leads you here on earth, He will lead you into eternity.

God says the hairs on your head are all numbered and you are more valuable than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31). It’s safe to assume that God cares about every aspect of your life. And part of your inheritance is His provision, protection, deliverance, enablement, and so much more. (More of that in the chapters to come.) You have a destiny.

The word “predestined” means that there is an appointed destiny for anyone who receives Jesus. You are destined for great things. The Holy Spirit *in* you is the guarantee of that inheritance too.

Part of receiving an inheritance is that you have to know it's there in order to receive it. You can be sent letters about it (the Bible), but if you don't open them up and read them, you won't know what it is you have inherited. And you won't know what to do to possess it.

There is a lock on one of my suitcases that is difficult to unlock. First I have to dial in the right combination, but then I have to pull down on the latch extremely hard in order to open it. When I wasn't sure I had the right combination, I didn't pull it hard enough because I was afraid I would break the lock. But once I knew for certain I had the correct combination, I felt emboldened to pull on the latch as hard as I could, knowing the lock would open. But I would never have pulled on it that hard if I didn't know for sure I had the right combination.

There is a window in our house that is also hard to open. I have to turn the handle very hard in order to open it. If I wasn't sure it would open, I would never turn the handle with that much force. When we first moved into the house, I assumed the window latch was broken. But that's because I didn't turn it hard enough. So for months I never opened the window. One day someone showed me how hard I needed to turn it in order to open it, and I never had a problem with it again. I could have been enjoying fresh air all those months, but because I didn't know the truth, I never opened the window.

My point is that too often, because we don't understand the truth in our lives, we don't give enough effort toward opening up and possessing what is there for us. We aren't sure we have the right combination or enough strength to open the latch. We just have to know the truth about what is possible for us and what to do to make it happen in our lives. When you know what the truth is, and you know what the promise is, and you understand what your inheritance is, you can press in harder than you might normally do in order to receive what has already been provided for you.

God told His people that if they kept His commandments, and

loved Him, and walked in all His ways, holding fast to Him, then He would drive out all who opposed them and kept them from receiving all He had for them (Deuteronomy 11:22-23). He said, “Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours” (Deuteronomy 11:24). That means they would possess all that God promised. The same is true for you today. If you love and obey God, and follow the leading of His Spirit, you can possess the inheritance promised to you as God’s child.



## PRAYER POWER

Lord, I come before You and thank You for the inheritance You have given me as a child of Yours. Deepen my understanding of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Speak to me about the inheritance I have because of what Jesus has done. Thank You that I am a joint heir with Christ. Help me to understand all You have given me and how to possess it in my life. Show me all I need to unlock and see in Your Word. Reveal things I have not seen before and bring them alive in me in ways I have not seen. Holy Spirit, teach me what You want me to see. I come before You now and ask You to speak to my heart about whatever You want me to hear.

Thank You, God, that You are my heavenly Father and You have made it possible for me to be called Your child (1 John 3:1). Enable me to see what it means to be Your child and inherit all You have for me. Thank You, Jesus, for the mansion You have prepared for me in heaven. Thank You that Your promises are true and You always keep them perfectly. Reveal Yourself to me in ever-deepening ways. I seek to know You more each day. Help me to open up to all You have provided for my life.

In Jesus’ name I pray.



## WORD POWER

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

ROMANS 8:16-17