

My Beloved **HOLY SPIRIT**

Experience the wonder of knowing and loving
the Spirit of God and discover the secrets
to being used by His power

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All Scriptures are from the
NKJ Version of the Bible

Dedication

*To Giannina Christine,
the woman I love*

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Dedication

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Introduction

This is a simple book written with a desire for you to come to know the person of the Holy Spirit. The first half goes into detail on how to develop different facets of a personal relationship with the Spirit of God; the second half expounds on how to manifest His power in ministering to others.

Jesus said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. 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). Jesus said that it was for our benefit that He would depart for only one reason: we were going to have the privilege of knowing the One whom He loved; we were going to experience the wonder of knowing the Holy Spirit.

I pray that this book will encourage you to discover an intimate relationship with the Spirit of God. And as you cultivate and nurture this inner relationship, you will come to know someone who loves you unconditionally. You will experience the beauty of His presence and the joy of being used by His power. He will reveal to you God’s purpose for your life; He will comfort you during times of need; He will guide you into all truth and give you victory over sin and temptation.

Your life will become an instrument in His hands as He empowers you to share the gospel, heal the sick and deliver the oppressed. But most importantly, the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of your heart to see the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. My desire in writing this book is for you to come to know the One who loves your soul, and for your life to display His splendor upon the earth.

Chapter One

Captivated by the Holy Spirit

I have found the One whom my soul loves

Song of Solomon 3:4

The Glory of His Presence

As we were traveling near the Andes Mountains in Argentina, suddenly the radiance of God's glory saturated the atmosphere inside the bus. The Spirit of God was manifesting His Presence in our midst, and at that moment, His unsurpassed beauty was unveiled right before my eyes.

Those around me were also overcome by the indescribable awareness of the nearness of God, and at once they raised their voices in prayer and adoration in unknown languages. As God's majesty began to embrace me, my soul was immediately captivated by the reality of His goodness and mercy towards me.

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I closed my eyes, and all my surroundings seemed to slowly fade away. I felt as if I was alone in the presence of God, and as I beheld His countenance, my one and only response was to worship Him from the depths of my heart. Nothing else in this world seemed to matter.

Like a rushing river, uninterrupted words of adoration towards Jesus Christ began to pour out of my innermost being. These words were not coming from my mind, for they were beyond my capacity to articulate; they were words full of wonder flowing from my spirit.

The personal revelation of the beauty of God's nature moved me to fully trust Him with my soul, and I made a decision to completely yield myself into His hands. At that instant, I felt His living presence coming into my chest, and His power began to flow down my arms and through my hands like an electric current.

God's Spirit moving within me made it difficult for me to breathe, and I began to gasp for air. Even my emotions were overtaken as I felt the burning of God's love being poured out upon my heart. It was a love so deep, so powerful and so pure that it surpassed anything I had ever experienced before in my life. It was a love that truly surpassed my understanding, a love that words cannot fully describe.

I was so overwhelmed by His love for me that I broke down, and I began to cry inconsolably. I felt completely undone, for I knew that I was unworthy to receive His love, and to this day my mind is still not capable of comprehending how He is able to love me this way.

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As my heart remained fully surrendered to the Spirit of God, He began to speak to me saying, "The decision that you made has come up to My presence like a sweet fragrance. From this day forward I will be with you, and I will never leave you; and you will be with Me, and you will never leave Me."

The Lord also made a promise to me. He said that the number of people who would receive the Holy Spirit through my life would be like the stars in the heavens and as the sand on the seashore. His presence was so powerful that I fell forward on the floor of the bus, feeling waves of God's power and love rushing through my body. At that moment, I completely lost consciousness.

The next thing I remember is hearing voices that seemed far away, the other young people were telling me to "get up in the name of Jesus." I stood to my feet, still weeping and shaking, and I noticed that my whole shirt was soaking wet with tears. We had arrived in the city of Mendoza, and I had been crying on the floor of the bus for over an hour without realizing it. My skin was burning, and my body continued to tremble. I could literally feel the Holy Spirit inside my body, and for the first time in my life, I felt completely whole.

As I walked back to the place where I was staying that night, I felt extremely light, and full of an unexplainable joy. It seemed as if I was walking on a cloud. I was surprised by the physical awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of me, but I was even more amazed when I realized that even though I was walking away from the bus, the Spirit of God was leaving with me.

I had a similar sensation several years later when my wife and I were taking our first baby home from the hospital the day

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after he was born. As I was driving home that afternoon, I kept looking at him in the back seat of the car, and I was so amazed that the doctors had allowed us to take home this beautiful baby!

Knowing that the Holy Spirit was living within me so overwhelmed me that, as I walked home that night, I stretched my arms wide open, looked up to heaven and just smiled. I felt as if the Lord was smiling back at me. There was a man standing on the side of the street looking at me as if I had lost my mind. I looked back at him and said, "Jesus is alive!" Jesus had never been so real to me, and my love for Him had never been so deep.

When I arrived at the home where I was staying, I walked into my room, and sat on the bed. The light was still on, and I simply whispered, "Holy Spirit." Suddenly the same brightness and glory that had filled the bus began to fill the room.

The Holy Spirit manifested Himself once again, but this time I became aware of the perfection of His holiness. I quickly fell on my knees in total awe and fear. I was so terrified that I thought I was going to die. But then I felt as if a mantle had been placed upon me; a great sense of peace came over my soul, and all the fear immediately disappeared.

As I remained on my knees, I did not want to move, because I did not want His tangible presence to leave. Then it happened again, but this time an even stronger and more intense power, like electricity, began flowing through my legs and arms. The energy was so powerful that I could even feel it in my bones, to the point that I thought they might shatter. For hours I just stayed there on my knees, and for hours He stayed

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there with me. On that night my relationship with the Holy Spirit began, and to this day, He has never left me.

The Holy Spirit had completely captivated my life with His holiness, goodness, and love. Jesus had submerged me in the Fire of His Spirit, and my life would never be the same again. I had found the Pearl of Great Price. I had found the Hidden Treasure. I had found the One whom my soul loves.

My Journey to Encountering the Holy Spirit

I was born in Argentina and was raised in a Christian home. I loved the Lord from a young age, and I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior at the age of eight. When I was thirteen years old my family moved to the United States. As I got older, I continued to read the Bible, and I believed in Jesus; but I began to feel like He was in heaven, and I was down here on earth, on my own. To follow someone who felt so distant to me became extremely difficult. I remember one day, while walking on my university campus, I looked up to heaven and simply asked God, "Where are you?"

A few months later, God revealed His Spirit to me. When I first encountered the Holy Spirit, I was twenty-two years old. I was about to graduate from Baylor University, and I had already been accepted to the University of Texas Medical School. I had gone to Argentina on an exchange program to finish the last semester of a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. My plan was to spend a few months enjoying the country where I was born, and then return to the United States to begin medical school.

I was used to going to church, so when I arrived in Argentina, I continued to attend church on Sundays. To my

surprise, however, I noticed something that I had never seen in church services before: people were passionate for God. They loved to worship the Lord. They would close their eyes, lift up their hands and sing to the Lord for hours. Tears would fall on some of their faces as they worshipped Jesus. At the end of the services, the pastor would call those who were sick to come to the front to receive prayer, and to my amazement, I saw the Lord heal many of them.

The services sometimes lasted more than four hours, yet when they were over, nobody wanted to leave the church. When I met the young people, I saw that they were completely in love with Jesus. They would get together to pray and would go out on the streets to share the gospel. As they prayed, I would even see some of them crying because of the compassion they felt for those who did not know the Lord.

I began to visit different churches, and to my surprise, the same passion for God was everywhere. Something supernatural was happening. When I was growing up in Argentina, the churches were small, and the evangelical Christians were few. Now the churches were full of people seeking and worshipping the Lord. I was completely intrigued by what I was witnessing, so I decided to find out the reason behind this spiritual awakening. I wanted to know why they were so desperate for God, and why, even though I was also a Christian, I didn't feel the same desire to love and serve the Lord.

I began to ask different people about the reason for their passion for Jesus, and two words kept coming up in every conversation: "Holy Spirit." Every one of them had experienced an encounter with the Spirit of God. During those days I felt as if a veil was taken off my eyes, and I realized that the Holy Spirit was the answer. The Holy Spirit was the one res-

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possible for this revival, and He was the one who had revealed Jesus Christ in such a deep and personal way to so many.

A desire to know the Holy Spirit was ignited within me, and I set my heart to study what the Bible taught about Him. I found out that Jesus did not perform any miracles during the first thirty years of His life. His supernatural ministry began after He encountered the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River: “It came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him” (Luke 3:21-22).

At this moment Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit: “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan” (Luke 4:1). The Holy Spirit was the One who empowered Jesus to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons (Luke 4:14,18).

I was amazed when I discovered that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we would be able to do the same works that Jesus did, in His name (John 14:12). I also saw that everyone who was used by the Lord throughout the Scriptures had also encountered the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 34:9, 1 Samuel 16:13, 2 Kings 2:9, Acts 2:4, Acts 9:17). I even found out that the Holy Spirit is the one who reveals God’s purpose for our lives, and that it is possible for us to have a personal relationship with the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 2 Corinthians 13:14).

My eyes were being opened to the importance and reality of the person of the Holy Spirit. My heart was filled with joy when I also learned that it was possible for me to meet Him personally.

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I began to draw closer to the Lord through repentance, for I saw in the Scriptures that to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must not only believe in Jesus, but we must also be willing to turn away from our sins. The Apostle Peter said, “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).

For three months I continued to pray, asking God to fill me with His Spirit; several people also prayed for me, yet I did not experience His presence. I persisted in seeking the Lord, for I had the assurance from the Scriptures that the Promise of the Holy Spirit was also made to me: “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

While on this spiritual journey, I decided to attend a youth conference in a nearby city. During this event, I saw many young people being touched by the power of God, but once again I did not experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

After the conference had finished, we were riding back home on a bus, and I began to speak with the young man sitting next to me about his experiences with the Holy Spirit. I mentioned to him that I was seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and he asked me if he could pray for me.

When we were praying together, the Spirit of God manifested Himself, filling my heart with His presence as I described at the beginning of this chapter. He also revealed His calling upon my life through a prophetic word. He called me to preach the gospel, to pray for the sick, and to take the Fire of the Holy Spirit to the nations.

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When I first traveled to Argentina on the university exchange program, I never expected to find myself in the midst of a revival; I never imagined that I would encounter the Holy Spirit in such a powerful way, and I had no idea that God would completely change the course of my life.

My desire had never been to preach or to be in ministry; I was on my way to becoming a medical doctor. But my heart was so overwhelmed by His love that in an instant and without hesitation, I chose to die to my own dreams to follow God's plan for my life. The day was May 25th, 1999.

If You Only Knew

One of the greatest needs of the human heart is to find a relationship with someone who loves us unconditionally and accepts us for who we are, in spite of our weaknesses. No human relationship is able to fully satisfy this longing, for we were created to have an intimate relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is the only person on earth in whom we can find this perfect love.

When Jesus walked on earth, there was a woman in Samaria who believed that she would fulfill this desire in her heart by marrying the right man. She had married and divorced five different men, and was living with the sixth one, still searching to fill this void in her life. In the midst of her emptiness and disillusionment, she met Jesus next to a water well.

Jesus spoke to her saying, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water. Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But

the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:10, 13-14).

Jesus was telling her that no man would ever be able to satisfy her need for unconditional love and acceptance. If she drank from that water, she would continue to thirst. Only if she asked Him for the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit, would she find a person who loved her completely and unconditionally.

Jesus was not giving her “good advice” on how to experience true fulfillment in her life; He was not offering her something to satisfy her thirst. Jesus was introducing her to *a person*, someone who would always love her and never leave her (John 14:16).

Upon hearing the words of Jesus, the woman did ask the Lord for the Holy Spirit: “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst” (John 4:15), and Jesus would not forget her. After He was raised from the dead, Jesus sent His disciples to share the gospel in Samaria (Acts 1:8), and I believe that after He ascended to heaven, she also encountered the One for whom her heart had been searching all along. We read in the Scriptures, “When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:14-17).

It was not a coincidence that this woman met Jesus; He was waiting for her next to the water well. He had seen her thirst, and wanted to introduce the Holy Spirit to her. It is also

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not a coincidence that you are reading this chapter. Jesus has seen your thirst and wants to introduce His Spirit to you. Jesus desires to give you the gift of God! His promise is also unto you! (Acts 2:39)

His invitation is still open today: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” The Scriptures go on to explain what Jesus meant by rivers of living water: “He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those who would believe in Him would receive” (John 7:37-39).

My desire is that through these pages you may not only receive knowledge about the reality of God’s Spirit and His power, but also that a sincere passion would be birthed in your heart, a passion to ask and seek the Lord for your own personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. And as God pours His Spirit upon your life, I pray that you may come to know the depths of His incomparable love for you.

Jesus demonstrated His love for you by dying on the cross for your sins: “God demonstrated His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). His love for you surpasses knowledge, for this reason, He not only desires for you to know this truth, but also to experience it: “The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:5).

Jesus says to you today, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you... Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:9,13)

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In the last days, God will pour out His Spirit upon all people (Joel 2:28). His promise is coming to pass right before our eyes. It is happening all over the world to people who have made a decision to surrender their hearts to Jesus Christ, seeking His presence and His will for their lives.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, and the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2). He is the Spirit of love and of power and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

He is the Spirit of life, grace and truth (Romans 8:2, Zechariah 12:10, John 16:13). He is the same Spirit whom God poured out upon Joshua, David, Elisha, Peter, Paul and even Jesus himself (Deut. 34:9, 1 Samuel 16:13, 2 Kings 2:9, Acts 2:4, Acts 9:17, Luke 3:22).

As you will see in the upcoming chapters, meeting the Holy Spirit is just the beginning of the most precious and intimate relationship that anyone could experience in this world. You will discover not only how to encounter the Holy Spirit, but also how to develop an inner relationship with the Spirit of God and how to be used by His power.

Even more wonderful than being filled with God's Spirit is getting to know His gentle personality, His tender voice, and His inexplicable ways. Nothing that this world has to offer compares to having the Holy Spirit as your counselor, teacher and friend. Jesus desires to introduce you to a person in whom you can trust, someone who will always love you and never leave you. And as you truly get to know the Holy Spirit, He will captivate your heart, and it will be impossible for you not to love Him, too.

Chapter Two

Encountering the Holy Spirit

*the love of God has been poured out
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit
who was given to us
Romans 5:5*

Encounters with the Holy Spirit Throughout the Scriptures

The secret behind every man and woman used powerfully by God throughout the Scriptures was that, at some point in their lives, they were anointed with the Holy Spirit. The main reason behind their achievements was something more than mere human effort or talent. It was something more than just their preparation and dedication. There was someone helping them, guiding them, encouraging them, and giving them

knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. That person was the Holy Spirit; He was the one who empowered imperfect lives to accomplish God's will on earth.

Joshua was a mighty warrior and conqueror who led Israel into the Promised Land. But the day he encountered the Holy Spirit, he was serving as Moses' assistant. There was something special about Joshua's heart; he loved being near the presence of God. The Bible tells us, "The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle" (Exodus 33:11).

The Lord also seemed to enjoy Joshua's company, for before Moses passed away, God instructed Moses to lay his hands on Joshua. We read in the Scriptures, "Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of Wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him" (Deut. 34:9). The Holy Spirit is the One who gave Joshua the courage and ability to overtake kings and kingdoms, making it possible for the people of Israel to have their own land.

David was just a young shepherd who tended his father's sheep near Bethlehem, but the Lord must have also seen something special about his heart. When God began to look for a king to rule over His people, He chose David. The Lord even said about him, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will" (Acts 13:22).

When the prophet Samuel was sent by the Lord to Bethlehem to anoint the next king, he first saw one of David's older brothers and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!" But the Lord spoke to Samuel saying, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused

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him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:6-7).

When Samuel saw David, the Lord spoke to him again saying, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!” (1 Samuel 16:12) “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 16:13). The Holy Spirit is the One who led and empowered David to become the greatest king in the history of Israel.

David described his experience with the Holy Spirit by writing, “Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me” (Psa. 42:7). When David strayed away from the Lord and fell into sin, he returned to God with all of his heart, seeking His forgiveness. He prayed, “Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psa. 51:11). He knew that his most precious treasure was not his kingdom, or his possessions, not even his health or his own family. He believed that his most valuable treasure was the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life.

The Lord raised the dead and performed remarkable miracles through Elisha. Even after Elisha’s death, a corpse would come back to life as it came into contact with his bones (2 Kings 13:21). But the day Elisha met the Holy Spirit, he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in an open field. The Lord spoke to the prophet Elijah saying, “Elisha . . . you shall anoint as prophet in your place” (1 Kings 19:16).

Elijah walked up to Elisha, threw his mantle upon him and walked away. Immediately, Elisha left everything and

became Elijah's servant for the next seven years (1 Kings 19:21). When Elijah said to him, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha did not hesitate when he answered, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me" (2 Kings 2:9). And after Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind into heaven, Elisha took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen, and he received the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit (2 Kings 2:13).

As Peter waited in the upper room, the words of Jesus probably continued to repeat in his mind: "Wait for the Promise of the Father; . . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witness" (Acts 1:4,8). Ten days had passed since Jesus spoke these words, and with the rest of the disciples, Peter continued to wait eagerly in prayer.

Peter knew that the same Spirit that had filled Jesus at the Jordan River was about to fill him also: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

The same Peter, who only a few days earlier had denied Jesus three times, was now filled with the Holy Spirit. He arose and preached the gospel in front of the same people who demanded that Jesus be crucified. The Holy Spirit moved in power, bringing conviction of sin, and on that day three thousands lives were saved.

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In the days that followed, a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing those who were sick and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and as the shadow of Peter passed over them, every single one of them was healed (Acts 5:15,16). It wasn't the shadow of Peter healing the sick, nor was it Peter himself. The One performing the miracles was the Spirit of God who had come upon Peter.

While traveling to the city of Damascus in a quest to find and incarcerate Christians, Saul of Tarsus encountered Jesus. He heard Christ's audible voice, fell to the ground from his horse and was dramatically converted to the Lord. Before the Lord used him to take the gospel to the gentiles, however, he waited for three days without being able to see, and without eating or drinking. Then a man named Ananias came and laid his hands on him, saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).

Paul later referred to this experience with the Holy Spirit when he wrote, "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5). Paul not only had an intellectual knowledge of the love of God, but he had also experienced the manifestation of the love of God being lavished upon his heart through the Holy Spirit. The revelation of God's love for him led him to deny himself to the point of even giving his own life for the cause of Christ.

Encounters with the Holy Spirit Throughout History

The amazing reality is that the Lord did not change once the Bible was completed. Throughout history, He continued to

visit and empower with the Holy Spirit those who sought after Him with all of their hearts. He has used men and women throughout the generations to accomplish His work, not by their own might or power, but by His Spirit (Zech. 4:6).

In the seventeenth century, a Franciscan monk shared the message of salvation through faith in Jesus with a young lady named Jeanne Guyon. That day, she encountered the Holy Spirit for the first time, and her life was forever transformed.

She described her experience by writing, "I experienced those words in the Canticles: 'Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you' (Song of Solomon 1:3). For I felt in my soul an anointing that healed all my wounds in a moment. I did not sleep at all that night, because your love, O God, flowed in me like delicious oil, and burned as a fire that was going to destroy all that was left of self in an instant. I was suddenly so altered that I and others could hardly recognize myself. I felt at this instant deeply wounded with the love of God - a wound so delightful that I desired it never might be healed."⁽¹⁾

Jeanne Guyon was only twenty years old when the Holy Spirit revealed His love to her heart. For the rest of her days, she fully surrendered her life to the Lord, leading thousands to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

A group of young men gathered to pray on January 1, 1739 in London, England. John Wesley was among them, and he shared their experience: "About three in the morning, as we were continuing steadfastly in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from the awe and amazement at the presence of His

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majesty, we broke out with one voice, ‘We praise You, O God; we acknowledge you to be the Lord.’” (2)

After John Wesley encountered the Holy Spirit, he began to preach with great authority, and thousands were overcome by the convicting power of the Spirit of God. He reported about his meetings, “Some sunk down, and there remained no strength in them, and others exceedingly trembled and quaked. Some were torn with a kind of convulsive motion in every part of their bodies.” (3) The Holy Spirit made John Wesley’s words like fire, bringing multitudes to the feet of Jesus and giving birth to the Methodist Church.

On the 10th of October, 1821, Charles Finney was born again. That same day, as he poured out his soul before God in prayer, he received a supernatural visitation of the Holy Spirit. He described his experience: “The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love. I wept aloud with joy and love, and literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings in my heart. The waves came over and over me, one after the other until I recall I cried out, ‘I will die if these waves continue to pass over me.’ I said, ‘Lord, I cannot bear any more,’ yet I had no fear of death.” (4)

During the nineteenth century the Holy Spirit used Charles Finney to bring revival to many major cities across the United States and England. He even described the move of the Spirit of God in one of his meetings by writing, “The congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and they cried for mercy. If I had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them down as fast as they fell.” (5)

On Thursday morning, September 29, 1904, Evan Roberts encountered the Holy Spirit at an evangelistic meeting after seeking a deeper experience with God for several years. He described his experience by writing, "When others prayed I felt a living force come into my bosom. It held my breath, and my legs shivered. The living force grew and grew, and I was almost bursting. My bosom was boiling. What boiled me was that verse, 'God commending His Love.' I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me, and the tears and perspiration flowed freely. I thought blood was gushing forth. For about two minutes it was fearful. I cried, 'Bend me! Bend me! Bend us!' After I was bent a wave of peace came over me, and I thought of the bending at the Judgment Day, and I was filled with compassion for those who would be bent on that day, and I wept. Henceforth the salvation of souls became the burden of my heart. From that time I was on fire with a desire to go through all Wales, and, if it were possible, I was willing to pay God for allowing me to go."⁽⁶⁾ The Lord allowed Evan to go, and the Holy Spirit swept through Wales in one of greatest revivals in human history.

In 1906, John G. Lake had asked the Lord for nine months to have an encounter with the Holy Spirit, and the Lord answered his deepest desire. He described his experience: "My soul was crying out to God in a yearning too deep for words, when suddenly it seemed to me, that I had passed under a shower of warm tropical rain, which was not falling upon me, but through me. My spirit, and soul and body under this influence soothed into such a deep still calm, as I had never known. My brain, which had always been so active, became perfectly still. An awe of the presence of God settled over me. I knew it was God. Some moments passed; I do not know how many. The Spirit said, 'I have heard your prayers, I have seen your tears. You are now baptized in the Holy Spirit.' Then

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currents of power began to rush through my being from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. The shocks of power increased in rapidity, and voltage. As these currents of power would pass through me, they seemed to come upon my head, rush through my body, and through my feet into the floor. Even at this late date, the awe of that hour rests upon my soul.”⁽⁷⁾

The Holy Spirit placed in the heart of John G. Lake an overwhelming compassion for those who were sick and suffering. The Lord used his life to bring revival in Africa and in the United States, where multitudes were saved and miraculously healed.

In 1921, during a Sunday morning church service in a small Methodist Church in Concordia, Missouri, the Holy Spirit captivated a young girl’s heart. In her own words she described her first encounter with the Holy Spirit: “I was standing beside Mama, and the hands of the church clock were pointed to five minutes before twelve o’clock. I can’t remember the minister’s name or even one word of his sermon, but something happened to me. As I stood there, I began shaking to the extent that I could no longer hold the hymnal, so I laid it on the pew and sobbed. I was feeling the weight of conviction, and I realized that I was a sinner. I did the only thing that I knew to do: I slipped out from where I was standing and walked to the front pew and sat down in the corner of the pew and wept. Oh, how I wept!”⁽⁸⁾

Her name was Kathryn Kuhlman. She was only fourteen years old when she experienced the Holy Spirit for the first time, and her heart was awakened to her need of a Savior. Her life became a yielded vessel through which the Lord revealed the reality of the Holy Spirit to her generation. When

she ministered, the Holy Spirit moved in the midst of the audience, miraculously healing thousands.

He is an All-consuming Fire

The Holy Spirit is not only able to touch our spirit, but also our emotions and even our physical bodies. His manifestation confounds all our previous perceptions of God. His reality opens our eyes to recognize God's nearness to us and His deep love for us. Through His presence we taste the goodness of God and His indescribable desire for us (James 4:5). God wants us to live by faith, and the Scriptures say that without faith is impossible to please God. But this does not mean that God does not want us to experience the power of His manifest presence.

King David had an emotional response to God's presence. He wrote that in God's presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11). The Prophet Jeremiah described how God's power even manifested itself in his physical body as a burning fire shut up in his bones (Jeremiah 20:9).

There is something special about a father who not only tells his son that he loves him, but also demonstrates his love by embracing his son in his arms. There is also something precious about a husband who not only writes a love letter to his wife, but also holds her in his arms and whispers in her ear, telling her how beautiful she is to him. Likewise, our heavenly Father not only desires for us to know about His love for us, but He also desires to embrace us in His arms so that we may experience His love. Jesus not only wants us to read in the Scriptures about how special we are to Him, He also desires to

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speak directly to our hearts about the way He feels about each one of us.

The way that God embraces us with His love, comforts us with His peace, and speaks directly to us is through the Holy Spirit. He did not leave us orphans; He left his Spirit to be with us (John 14:18). This is the reason why the apostle Paul prayed fervently for us to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in our inner man. He knew that only by being filled with all the fullness of God would we be able to comprehend and know the width and length and depth and height of the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:16-19).

Before I began to minister, the Lord told me not only to share the gospel and pray for the sick, but also to take the Fire of the Holy Spirit to young people. Even though I did not feel qualified, in obedience to His calling I began to share about the Holy Spirit with the youth. To my surprise, they were the ones who desired His presence the most. Traveling to different nations around the world, many times I have stood in awe as I saw the Holy Spirit manifest His unconditional love in the hearts of thousands of young lives.

During a youth event in Popayan, Colombia, there were hundreds of young people who had come to the front seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As we began to worship the Lord together, I began to sense the presence of the Holy Spirit intensifying, and suddenly I began to feel waves of His power coming from behind me. I felt as if I was standing in a river and a strong current was going right through me. When I prayed in the name of Jesus for the Fire of the Holy Spirit to descend upon the young people, a wave of His power swept through the altar, and everyone fell to the floor trembling under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

As they encountered the Holy Spirit, many began to weep, some began to laugh, others shook, but most importantly, their hearts were captivated by the reality of the presence of God. For hours they stayed there as the Holy Spirit continued to minister to their lives.

At the end of a conference in Slovakia, I invited all the young people who wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit to come to the front. The young people were so desperate for God's presence that they ran to the front! As they reached the altar, the Holy Spirit touched them, and they fell without anybody praying for them. It seemed like there was a whirlwind of the Holy Spirit at the front of the auditorium!

I had the opportunity to minister in Argentina at an event during the weekend of Passover. It was wonderful to see hundreds saved, healed and delivered during the first two nights. Before going to the service on Resurrection Sunday, the Holy Spirit spoke to me saying, "A thousand will fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand." That night, when I prayed for the young people, everyone who was at the altar fell at the same time as they received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. A tremendous hunger for the presence of God was stirred in their hearts to the point that the ushers had to stop them because the young people were pressing to get on the platform.

One of the greatest privileges that the Lord has given me is to witness how the Holy Spirit is awakening a supernatural love and an unquenchable passion for Jesus in this generation. The reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit is what causes young people to love the Lord: "Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name *is* ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you" (Song of Solomon 1:3).

The Holy Spirit Desires to Reveal Himself to You

The infilling of the Holy Spirit leads us to a deeper relationship with God. The Scriptures declare, “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Encountering the Holy Spirit reveals to our hearts the depths of God’s love for us, and this revelation moves us to love God with all of our heart, mind and strength.

If we desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must first realize that the Holy Spirit is holy, and that our sins separate us from His glory. The Scriptures declare, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Without Jesus, we are not only separated from God here on earth, we will also be separated from God for eternity. But the good news is that Jesus has made a way for us to be united with God.

On the cross, Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, and for our transgressions He was stricken. He poured out His soul unto death, and the Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all. His soul became an offering for our sin (Isaiah 53). “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8).

His love for us was so great that He willingly suffered, shed His blood and died to pay the price for our sins. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). That is exactly what Jesus did for us, so that we may be able to have a personal relationship with God. Jesus Christ took the punishment for our sins and conquered death through His resurrection (1 Peter 2:24, Revelation 1:18). Only by believing that Jesus is the Son of God and receiving the forgiveness that He provided for us through His sacrifice, are

we able to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of eternal life.

For us to receive Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior we must come to Him through repentance. We must be willing to turn away from our sins, choosing to follow Jesus for the rest of our lives. Repentance is much more than simply asking God to forgive our sins. Repentance means making a conscious decision to forsake our sins. When Jesus was on earth, He came preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

The Lord demonstrated His love for us by giving His life as an offering for our sins (Romans 5:8). But now it is up to us to love Him back by turning away from our sins in order to seek a relationship with Him (John 14:15).

If you have never made this decision, I would like to encourage you to receive Jesus today. "Therefore as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart'" (Hebrews 3:7-8). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:8-9).

If you would like to receive the gift of eternal life right now, you may pray to the Lord from your heart: "Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God; I believe that You died on the cross for my sins; I believe that You were raised from the dead, and I believe that You are coming back soon. I make a decision to turn away from my sins. Come into my heart and fill me

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with Your Holy Spirit. From this day forward I will follow you and love you with all of my heart, mind, and strength. In Your name I pray, Amen.” If you believed and made this commitment from your heart, you were just born again. You have been transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). You received the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of eternal life (Ephesians 2:8).

During different events around the world, we have witnessed amazing miracles as Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gives sight to the blind, opens deaf ears, and heals all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. But the greatest of all miracles takes place when the Holy Spirit convicts someone of sin and reveals to a human heart the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The greatest of all miracles is when someone repents from their sins and receives Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

If you have received Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit now dwells within you. The Scriptures declare, “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). But we should not be satisfied only with *receiving* the seal of the Holy Spirit; we should also desire to be *filled* with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

Jesus came into this world seeking us so that we may be saved, but we must seek Him in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures declare, “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). For salvation, Jesus knocks at the door of our hearts, but to be filled with His Spirit, we must knock at the door of His

heart (Luke 11:9-13). I believe that many Christians haven't had a personal experience with the Holy Spirit because they haven't asked or sought to be filled with His presence. They either have never heard of such a possibility, or they believe that it is not important or necessary for their lives.

When the apostle Paul met twelve disciples in Ephesus, the first question that he asked them was, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). After being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, "and when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

King David knew the importance of experiencing God's presence in his life; therefore, he prayed, "O God, you are my God; early will I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh longs for you. In a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for you in the sanctuary, to see your power and your glory" (Psalm 63:1-3).

The prophet Isaiah also expressed his passion for the presence of the Spirit of God by writing, "With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early" (Is. 26:9). Through these Scriptures, we see that for us to encounter the Holy Spirit, we need to desire the Lord with our spirit, soul and even with our flesh. We need to pursue His presence with our whole beings, and as we seek Him with our whole hearts, God promises us that we will find Him: "You will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 4:29).

When we come to Jesus with open hearts, believing in Him, desperate for His presence, He will freely lavish His Spirit

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upon our lives. Rivers of His love, joy, and peace will spring forth from our innermost beings, saturating our souls with His abundance.

The Lord is waiting for us today with wide open arms, saying: “Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live” (Isaiah 55:1-3).

Chapter Three

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

show me Your way that I may know You

Exodus 33:13

Amazed by the Holy Spirit

After completing the exchange program in Argentina, I returned to the United States for my graduation from Baylor University. I decided to go back to the pastor of the Baptist church I attended in college and share my experience with him. I admired his love for the Lord, and I wanted to share with him how God had filled me with His Spirit, and what I had seen in the revival in Argentina.

We were sitting on the front pew of the church, and as I began to tell him about my encounter with the Holy Spirit, he simply looked at me, waiting patiently for me to finish. Then he said to me, “Andres, for a long time now I’ve had some questions about the Holy Spirit. Why don’t you come on Sunday morning and share your testimony with the whole congregation?” I was totally surprised by his request since I had never preached in a church, and I did not believe I was qualified or prepared. But the Lord had placed such a great passion in my heart to tell others about what I had seen, heard and experienced, that without really knowing what I was getting myself into, I agreed.

As I stood behind the pulpit for the first time to preach, I looked over the congregation, feeling extremely intimidated and unprepared. It was a hot Sunday morning inside a small historic church in Waco, Texas. The people were sitting very still on long wooden pews, just staring at me. I paused for only a second, but it seemed like an eternity. I could feel the silence, and I did not know how or where to begin. At that moment, however, I sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit behind me; He was so real that I even turned around to see if there was someone standing there.

I felt the assurance that He was not only *with* me, but that He was also *for* me. I sensed His approval, and I began to speak from my heart. As I shared my testimony and a few Scriptures about the Holy Spirit, I saw the eyes of some of the people in the congregation begin to fill with tears. It had nothing to do with the way I shared the message, for it was very simple; the Holy Spirit was the One moving upon their hearts, causing them not only to hear the Word, but also to feel the Word. The Holy Spirit not only enlightens our minds, but

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when He is present, we are cut to the heart (Acts 2:37). He has the ability to make God's Word come alive!

When I finished sharing about my experience with the Spirit of God, I asked for anyone who would like to be filled with the Holy Spirit to come to the front. I thought that no one would respond. I closed my eyes, and when I opened them, the entire congregation was at the front of the church. I was completely shocked! I had never prayed for people at an altar before, and I did not know what to do next.

I remembered how, in the churches in Argentina, I had seen the pastors place their hands on the foreheads of people as they prayed for them. So I thought to myself, "I will try that." As I stepped down from the platform, something that I wasn't expecting happened. It is difficult to describe with words, but I felt as if the weight of the glory of God descended upon the church.

I had sensed His presence throughout the service, but now the tangible power of the Spirit of God swept through that altar. And as I began to pray for the people, they began to fall backwards on the floor, even though there weren't any ushers behind them to catch them. Some wept out loud, others shook uncontrollably, and others simply lay motionless on the floor.

The Holy Spirit began to visit His people in a way I could never have imagined just a couple of hours earlier. It was so beautiful to behold, and even more wonderful to experience. The service lasted for hours, and that afternoon the people returned to the church and shared their testimonies. Many had been healed and delivered, and several also testified to encountering the Holy Spirit for the first time.

Getting to Know the Holy Spirit

As beautiful and exhilarating as experiences with the Holy Spirit can be, we should not be satisfied with just an encounter with His presence. Once we have found Him, our deepest desire should be to get to know Him. If we truly love Him, we should also seek to know His heart, His emotions, His dreams, His desires, and His nature. Knowing and loving God should be the motivation behind our relationship with the Spirit of God. We should not only seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but we should also desire to become His friend.

There are many powerful manifestations of the Spirit of God, but the Holy Spirit is not a power, a force, an energy, a language or a fire. One of the most profound revelations that we can ever receive is that the Holy Spirit is a person, and that we should relate to Him as one. Since He is a Spirit, He does not have a physical body, but He has all the attributes of a person.

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit has emotions. The apostle Paul talked about the love of the Spirit, and he also instructed us not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:30, Ephesians 4:30). The heart of the Holy Spirit is extremely sensitive and easily hurt. His emotions are also intense, more extreme than ours. He feels severe pain for the suffering, and He rejoices over a repentant heart. He is deeply saddened by injustices, and delights in those who love God.

He also has an extraordinary mind (Rom. 8:27). His mind has the fullness of wisdom, knowledge and understanding (Isaiah 11:2). He has His own will and the capacity to make decisions. He chooses which spiritual gifts to give us, and He is the one who chooses whom to set apart for the ministry (1

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Corinthians 12:11, Acts 13:2). He is able to bring to our remembrance all the things that Jesus taught (John 14:26). He has complete knowledge not only of what has happened in the past, but also of what will take place in the future (John 16:13).

Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit would be our Guide (John 16:13). There are many different doctrines and points of view today, but only the Holy Spirit can lead us into all truth. As we learn to be led by the Holy Spirit, He guides us in our daily decisions. He directs our steps by His word, and He does not allow iniquity to have dominion over us (Psalm 119:133). He is the only One who can lead us in the narrow path of holiness, causing us to keep God's statutes and judgments (Ezekiel 36:27).

Jesus also called Him our Comforter (John 16:7). In this world we will face trials, but we are not alone; the Holy Spirit is always with us to console, encourage and reassure us. In the darkest, loneliest and most difficult times of our lives, He is there to support us (Psa. 34:18). In His embrace we find true rest, and refuge. Even if our father or mother abandoned us, the Holy Spirit will never leave us (Psalm 27:10, John 14:6).

The Holy Spirit is also our personal Teacher (John 14:26). The Scriptures tell us, "No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). Only the Holy Spirit can make them known to us (1 Corinthians 2:13). We have the privilege to have as our teacher not only the One who inspired the Scriptures, but also the One who was present when the events written in the Scriptures took place. The anointing of the Spirit teaches us all things, not only the things concerning godliness, but also the things pertaining to life (1 John 2:27, 2 Peter 1:3). He desires to impart to us His wisdom and knowledge about spiritual matters, and also His wisdom

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about family, relationships, health, finances and everything that has to do with our daily lives.

The Holy Spirit is also our Helper (John 14:16). In our times of weakness He is there to strengthen us, and when we fall He is always there to pick us up. He is there to inspire us with His dreams, and to help us believe His promises. When we don't know how to pray, the Spirit of God helps us to pray according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26). When Jesus was in this world, He had a close relationship with His disciples. He was their guide, comforter, teacher and helper. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is the One who is now here on earth, and He desires to be to us who Jesus was to His disciples.

The Scripture tells us, "He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the children of Israel" (Psalm 103:7). The people of Israel knew about the works and manifestations of God. They saw the plagues that the Lord sent to Egypt to deliver them from slavery; they walked through dry ground as the Lord split the waters of the Red Sea; they ate the manna and drank the water that the Lord provided for them while in the desert; they witnessed the glory cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. But that didn't mean they knew God's heart. In a similar way, many of us today may have been filled with the Holy Spirit, and may have even experienced miracles in our own lives, but it does not necessarily mean that we know His ways.

Moses desired not only to see God's power and receive His blessings, he also longed to know Him intimately. He pleaded with the Lord, "If I have found grace in your sight, show me now your way, that I may know you" (Ex. 33:13). The Lord answered him, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14). The Lord revealed to him that only

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by abiding in His presence would he come to know His heart, dreams, and ways.

The people of Israel saw signs and wonders beyond what any person in history had ever witnessed, yet they still strayed away from the Lord and worshipped a golden calf. During the time that Jesus walked in this world, people saw and received amazing miracles, yet they still cried out, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

In a similar manner, many people today also experience the power and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, yet they still choose to turn their backs on the Lord. But as we come to know the depths of His heart and the majesty of His name, it becomes virtually impossible to stray away from His side. His tender nature and overwhelming love captivates our lives. We come to the realization that only He has words of eternal life, and that only in Him are we truly complete.

The Attributes of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God and one with the Father and Jesus, but they are distinct persons. They all have the same nature, but they express their personalities in different ways. There is a great deal written in the Scriptures about the character of God and the personality of Jesus Christ. But there is not much written specifically about the personality of the Holy Spirit.

So, as I began to draw closer to the Holy Spirit, I shared with Him that I not only wanted to experience His power, but that I also wanted to know Him. My prayer became, “Lord, I

count everything as loss that I may know Your Spirit, and the power of your resurrection, and the fellowship of your sufferings.” And the Holy Spirit whispered in my heart, “You will know Me by My fruit.” Suddenly, I realized that the fruit of the Spirit describes not only what He produces in our lives, but it also describes His actual personality. The Bible says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). All these attributes portray the personality of the Holy Spirit.

He is a Spirit full of love. His love is so deep that is beyond words to describe. He loves unconditionally. Beyond our understanding, He loves. When we fail, He continues to love. The hurting and the lost, He loves. Christians and non-believers, He loves. The rich and the poor, He loves. His love is patient, and His love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. His love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. His love never fails (1 Cor. 13).

His love is pure, and His love is vast. He loves even when He is rejected, and He continues to love even when He is not recognized. In secret and in silence, He continues to love. Before we knew Him, He loved us. His love motivates Him to lead people to Christ, to restore the brokenhearted and to heal the sick. His love is immeasurable, and His love is eternal. His love does not depend on our achievements or our merits. The Holy Spirit is love.

The Holy Spirit is a person full of joy. He rejoices over us when we long to love the Lord and when we choose to obey His commandments. He rejoices when we resist temptation

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and when we turn away from sin. The Scriptures declare, “The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17). In the presence of the Spirit there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures forevermore! (Psalm 16:11) This world will offer you happiness, but it is temporary and depends on your circumstances. Only the Holy Spirit can give you His joy, which is eternal and rises above your circumstances.

The Holy Spirit is not only loving and full of joy, He is also peaceful. He loves to dwell in quietness and stillness. His peace exceeds our understanding, and He gives rest to our souls. His peace guards our hearts and minds (Phil. 4:7). He is also patient. He does not grow weary as He waits for us to fully follow His ways, and He patiently continues to work in our lives even when we fall short of His glory. He is not disappointed with us in our weaknesses, but continues to tenderly draw us to Jesus.

Another beautiful facet of the Holy Spirit’s delicate nature is His kindness. He will never force His will upon anyone. He respects our decisions and softly corrects us when we are led astray. He is also gentle in all His ways; He speaks with a still small voice, bringing His truths to our hearts.

David, seeking the Spirit’s leading, wrote, “Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground” (Psalm 143:10). The Holy Spirit is a good Spirit. Everything He does is good, and perfect. The Holy Spirit is also faithful. He always keeps His promises; if He says something, He will surely perform it. He is loyal to His mission of glorifying Christ, and unchanging in all His ways. He always works in perfect harmony with the will of God, bringing His order and lordship to our lives.

Moving to His Dwelling Place

One of the best days of my life was the day I met my wife. I could not believe that a beautiful girl like her could exist on this planet! I loved her from the moment I saw her, and I knew she was the one whom the Lord had chosen for me. As wonderful as that day was, it was just the beginning of our relationship. The day after I met her, I had to return to the United States, while she stayed in Colombia. Because I wanted to get to know her, I began to pursue a relationship with her by writing letters to her.

Every morning I would get up and quickly run to the computer to see if she had written me back. Whenever I saw her name on the list of emails my heart would skip a beat! I would forget about all the other emails and go straight to hers. I would read every word slowly and carefully analyze every sentence, and when I was done, I would read it again! Through her letters I began to learn about her dreams, her desires, and her personality. And every day I fell more and more deeply in love with her.

As we grew closer to each other, I began to call her on the phone. We would share everything about our lives and also pray with each other. We would talk up to seven hours every day, and the hours seemed like minutes! I had fallen helplessly in love with her! After a few months, my desire to know her more was so great that I literally crossed an ocean just to be with her. She lived in a city called Cartagena de Indias, a colonial city on the Caribbean Sea. It is one of the most beautiful cities in Latin America. It was a perfect place for going out on romantic dates! We visited the historic side of town, ate in different restaurants, held hands as we walked on

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the beach, and had long conversations while sitting on the historic walls surrounding the city.

A few months later, at the historic center of Cartagena, I got down on one knee and asked her to marry me. The moment I heard her say, “Yes!” my heart was filled with joy! After getting married, she came to live with me in the United States. We began to know each other in a deeper way as we were together not only during good times, but also during difficult times. Our relationship grew stronger and more intimate as we learned to love each other despite our shortcomings and differences. By living with her, I got to know her heart more each day, and as time goes by, I discover more and more the precious gift that the Lord has given me.

In a similar way, we fall in love with the Holy Spirit when we encounter the beauty of His presence. We learn more about Him by reading the Scriptures. This is like receiving a love letter from the Lord to us. We talk to the Lord in our prayers, and He answers us. Praying is similar to talking on the phone with the Lord. We may go to church, but if we really want to know the Spirit of God, we need to move to the place where He lives and pursue a relationship with Him.

The Holy Spirit will not move to where we live; we must move to where He lives. When I got married, my wife came to live with me; she left everything: her family, her friends, her country, and even her career, so that we could be together. In the same way, we must be willing to leave everything to make the Lord, who is our refuge, even the Most High, our dwelling place (Psalm 91:9).

There are many people who know about the Spirit of God because they have studied the subject in the Scriptures and

theological books, but there is a great difference between knowing about the Holy Spirit and knowing the Holy Spirit. You may read the biography of a famous person, and you will come to know facts about his life; but you won't truly know his personality unless you live with him. You may memorize everything there is to know about his life, but if you ever meet him in person, he won't know who you are.

Similarly, we may learn about the Holy Spirit, but we won't really know Him until we choose to live where He lives. That's when we will truly understand what causes Him to smile and what truly grieves His heart. That's the place where we sense His heartbeat and begin to perceive life through His eyes. By abiding where He lives, His thoughts become our thoughts and His dreams become our desires. We get to partake of His joy and His sufferings. As we spend time abiding in His presence, beholding His beauty, and listening to His still small voice, we come to know His true nature.

When two young men began to follow Jesus, He turned to them and said, "What do you seek?" They answered Him, "Teacher, where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (John 1:37-39). If you are a follower of Jesus and you are seeking to know where His Spirit dwells, He is inviting you today to "Come and see." And even better than that, He is welcoming you to stay with Him as long as you like. As you read the next chapter, you will discover where the Holy Spirit dwells, how you can enter His dwelling place, and how you can remain in His presence.

Chapter Four

The Inner Life with the Holy Spirit

the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all

2 Corinthians 13:14

The Spirit Within

Jesus knew exactly on which day He was going to be crucified. He knew the suffering that He would have to endure, and He also knew that very soon He was going to be separated from His disciples, whom He deeply loved. Fully knowing that after being raised from the dead He would ascend to the Father, He gathered His closest friends and began to open His heart to them. He said some words that are extremely difficult to believe. He said, “I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away” (John 16:7).

The disciples were probably astonished at His words. I can imagine them asking themselves, “How can it be to our advantage that You go away? Jesus, you have words of life. Wherever you go, the sick are healed. Jesus, you are Emmanuel: God with us! Lord, whom are we going to follow when You leave? How can You say that it is to our advantage for You to go away from us?” Jesus soon explained, “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). Jesus was telling them that after He departed, He was going to send the Holy Spirit to their hearts, and the Spirit of God was going to be the One guiding them into all truth.

In the same conversation, Jesus said to His disciples, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16-18).

Jesus made it clear that those who are not His disciples cannot receive the Holy Spirit: “The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him” (John 14:17). The Scriptures declare, “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him” (1 Corinthians 2:14). But to Jesus it was of supreme importance for His disciples to come to understand and know the Holy Spirit.

In this conversation, Jesus also revealed a most fascinating mystery. The Holy Spirit will not only come to abide with us forever, He will come to dwell inside of us! Jesus was God *with* us; the Holy Spirit is God *in* us! This is “the

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mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but is now revealed to us His saints: which is Christ *in* us, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:26-27). The Creator of heaven and earth comes to literally dwell inside our bodies by His Spirit.

The moment we come to the Lord and receive Jesus into our hearts, choosing to turn away from our sins, something supernatural happens. We may not feel it at the moment, but at that instant the Spirit of the Lord comes to live inside of us. The Holy Spirit literally comes into our hearts, seals us and bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16).”

The Scriptures even declare, “But 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).” The Scriptures go on to say, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).”

Going into the Spirit

When we are saved, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, but if we want to know Him we must move into the Spirit. We not only need to have the Holy Spirit within us, it is essential for us to live in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). Not only should we seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but we should also desire to abide in the Spirit. The book of Revelation tells us that John was in the Spirit when the Lord revealed the things

that will take place in the future. John said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10).

The Scriptures tell us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). The temple described in the Old Testament was divided into three sections: the outer court, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. I believe that if we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, our bodies are the outer court, our soul is the Holy Place, and our spirit is the Holy of Holies. The manifest presence of God was found within the Holy of Holies, and today the manifest presence of the Spirit of God is found within our spirit.

We don’t have to go to Jerusalem to meet with God; we don’t have to climb any specific mountain to encounter His presence, because the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside our spirit. We don’t have to offer sacrifices to atone for our sins in order to enter into His presence (Hebrews 10:18); Jesus offered His soul and shed His blood as an offering for our sin (Isaiah 53:10).

No longer is just one person, once a year, allowed to enter the Holy of Holies (Leviticus 16:2, 19-20); we are able to enter anytime and any day (Ephesians 2:13-18). Because of the blood that Jesus shed on the cross, we are not only able to receive forgiveness for our sins, but we also have direct access to His presence (Heb. 10:19-22). The Scriptures tells us that when Jesus “cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last, the veil of the temple that separated us from the Holy of Holies was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:37-38).

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The Holy of Holies is the “Promised Land” for our generation. It’s a place flowing with the Holy Spirit’s love and peace. It’s a place flowing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It’s a place flowing with revelation and truth. It’s a place flowing with the dreams of heaven for our lives. It is a place flowing with the very life and power of God. It’s the place where the Holy Spirit restores our souls and writes His laws upon our hearts.

The Lord delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. They were free the moment they crossed the Red Sea, but they still lived in a desert for the rest of their lives, wishing they could return to Egypt. Similarly, many Christians have been delivered from slavery to sin by crossing through the red sea of Jesus’ blood, but they still live in a spiritual desert. They never come to know the depths of God’s heart, never receive God’s plan for their lives, and always live in a constant struggle with sin.

But there was a generation that was willing to cross over the Jordan River to enter the Promise Land. They had to fight great battles and overcome many obstacles, but they fulfilled God’s destiny for their lives. The Lord is calling our generation to cross the Jordan River, which represents the “River of His Spirit” and to enter into the Secret Place of the Most High. In this place we will enjoy the fullness of God’s glory and abundance in our lives.

Before ministering at a miracle crusade in New York City, I invited my wife to come and share a few words with the congregation. To my surprise, when I handed her the microphone, she began to weep in front of those in attendance! When I looked at her, I sensed the Holy Spirit upon her life, and the Lord began to speak through her, saying, “The price has

already been paid. My blood has already been shed. Why are you not coming into My presence? Why are you staying outside of My inner court?" Everyone in the place could feel the words flowing like a torrent from the heart of God. Unexpectedly, people began weeping all over the room.

The glory of God filled the room, and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit was piercing hearts with His words. I believe that even today, His greatest desire is for us to abide in the place where He dwells. Jesus prayed, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me" (John 17:24).

This was King David's greatest request. He wrote, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4). When David spoke of the house of the Lord and of His courts, he was not speaking about a temple made with human hands. He was referring to entering the presence of the Lord. He knew that was where the Lord would captivate him with His beauty and the Holy Spirit would reveal to him the mysteries of His heart.

David did not just desire to encounter His glory one time; every day he yearned to make the Spirit's secret place his own personal habitation. He cried out, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere" (Psalm 84:1-2, 10).

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The greatest honor we can attain in this life is to be drawn by the Spirit into His courts. The Scriptures declare, "Blessed is the man you choose, and cause to approach you, that he may dwell in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, of your holy temple" (Psalm 65:4). We can desire with all of our heart to dwell in His presence, but ultimately, God is the one who draws us into His inner chambers. The cry of our hearts should be, "Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you. I am dark, but lovely" (Song of Solomon 1:4-5).

When you feel the Lord drawing you, run after Him! He will guide you into His inner courts, satisfying your soul with His goodness and bringing joy and gladness to your heart. You will realize that for anyone who truly knows Him, it is impossible not to love Him. And you will come to know that even though you are not perfect, you are still lovely in His eyes.

Jesus is the door; enter by Him and you will be saved, and you will go in and out and find rest. (John 10:9) Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise (Psa. 100:4). With a heart full of gratitude, worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Dedicate your life to abiding in His presence with the sole desire to know Him and to be known by Him. Become a friend of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to reveal His emotions to your heart. Let Him become your teacher, comforter, helper and guide. Know Him and be known by Him.

We are mere earthen vessels that have an amazing treasure inside; and that treasure is the Holy Spirit. "We have a

treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

During the first couple of months of my wife’s first pregnancy, it was impossible to tell, just by looking at her, that she was expecting. But when we went to our first visit with the doctor, she allowed us to listen to the baby’s heartbeat. It is hard to describe the joy and amazement we felt the first time we heard his little heart beating loud and clear.

That same day she had her first ultrasound, and we were able to see our baby for the first time! He had little arms and legs, and he was moving around! There was another person with a unique will and personality living within her. Just because we couldn’t see him or hear him without the doctor’s instruments, it didn’t mean he was not there. It is the same way with the Holy Spirit. There is a real Person living inside every believer’s heart; and just because we cannot always hear Him or see Him or feel Him, it does not mean that He is not there.

Communion with the Holy Spirit

There are different dimensions of the Christian life. One of them is the outer Christian life, which involves our relationships, our moral conduct and our service to the Lord. There is also an intellectual aspect of Christianity in which we grow in our knowledge of the Scriptures, theology and doctrine. Both of these facets of our Christian experience are extremely important, and they are usually the ones that are most emphasized in our churches.

We need to be morally correct in our society; it is important for us to apply godly principles to our relationships

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and family life. We should know what we believe, based on the Scripture, so that we aren't led astray by any false doctrines that come along. But these should not be the main aspects of our relationship with God. The most important dimension of our Christian walk should always be our inner life with the Holy Spirit.

Our communion with the Holy Spirit in our inner man is where the secret to knowing God and living a victorious Christian life lies (2 Corinthians 13:14). Most people try to satisfy their desires and find fulfillment in their lives by outward activities. But Jesus said that out of our innermost being would flow rivers of living water (John 7:38). As we grow in our friendship with the Holy Spirit, He will satisfy all of our needs. The Bible tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and everything else will be added unto us (Mat. 6:33).

The problem is that most people don't know where the kingdom of God is located. Jesus told us not to look for it here or there, for He said that the kingdom of God is within us (Luke 17:21). When we choose to repent from our sins and believe in the gospel, the kingdom of God is no longer just at the reach of our hand. The kingdom of God, which is righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, comes inside of us (Rom. 14:17, Luke 17:21).

According to the Scriptures, we are made up of spirit, soul and body: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Our body is our physical being, which has contact with the material world. Our soul includes our will,

emotions, memory and intellect, which make up our personality. Our spirit is the place where we have fellowship with God.

It helps us to better understand our communion with the Spirit when we realize that the spirit and soul are separate parts of our beings. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12). When we receive Jesus by faith, the Holy Spirit comes to abide in our spirit. The Scriptures declare, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16). Our spirit is found in our innermost being, covered by the soul, and in turn, the body envelops the soul.

Decisions are made in the soul; the normal tendency of our soul is to turn outwardly to experience and to be led by our five physical senses: our sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. But if we desire to have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, we need to learn to turn our souls inwardly towards our spirit, for that is the place where He abides.

This realization totally changes the way most people see Christianity. Most people believe that God is in heaven, which is a place a thousand miles away from them. They believe that they will only meet Him personally and talk face to face with Him after they die. Most people think that Christianity is about praying to a faraway God, following His commandments, and gaining knowledge of the Scriptures.

Yes, there is a place called heaven, where we will meet God face to face after we die; we ought to follow His commandments, and we should pray and know the Scriptures. But there is an awakening that takes place in our souls when we realize that we are able to have an inner relationship with God,

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who not only loves us, but who has also come to literally dwell inside our bodies through His Spirit.

This journey begins in prayer and worship. As we seek the Lord through prayer, and as we come before Him with gratitude and praise in our hearts, the Holy Spirit within us will begin to draw us into His presence. That is why we tend to close our eyes when we worship the Lord. The outer world begins to fade away, and we become aware of His presence within. This stage of worship and prayer may involve words, and it may also involve actions, such as lifting up our hands, walking around or kneeling down. We are still in the outer courts, but we can sense His presence.

Most people stop when they run out of things to say to the Lord, but we may continue to seek Him with our emotions. We find that our words and actions are not enough to express our deepest longings; that's when we begin to desire Him with our emotions, which are also a part of our soul. It is possible to seek Him with our love. The Holy Spirit is not only a Person, He is God; His greatest desire is for us to love Him.

The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind and all of our strength (Mark 12:30). Jesus said that if we love Him, He would manifest Himself to us (John 14:21). We demonstrate our love for the Lord by obeying His commandments, but we can also pour our love on Him by embracing His Spirit within us. We should not only love the Lord with our mind and strength, but also with our heart. As we begin to cry out in our hearts, desiring to draw closer, to know Him, to have fellowship with Him, and to abide in His presence, He leads us into the Holy Place. The Holy Spirit will begin to flow out from our inner being, breaking out of our

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spirit, and flooding our soul. As we continue to love and desire Him, His manifest presence will continue to permeate our souls with His overwhelming peace and love.

As we abide in His love (John 15:9), the Holy Spirit brings us into silence. Deeper than words and emotions is complete stillness and silence, a position where we are totally surrendered and yielded to the Spirit of God. The Lord tells us, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). He also says to us, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). Here is where the deepest intimacy with the Holy Spirit is reached. We no longer just talk to Him and express our love for Him. He now talks to us and expresses His love for us. We are so full of His presence that words become meaningless. This place of silence is the place where we feel His embrace, and we know that He is our God. We have entered the Holy of Holies: the place where the Spirit of God dwells.

The Spirit is no longer just within us, but now we are also in the Spirit. This is a place where His truth and revelation illuminate our hearts. There is a great difference between having the Spirit within us and being in the Spirit (Rev. 1:10). There is a great difference between being filled with the Holy Spirit and abiding in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

This is the state that King David referred to when he wrote, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). There are amazing promises to those who choose to make the Lord their refuge. The Lord will cover us with His presence, bringing deliverance from the enemy and protection from disease: "Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall

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you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling” (Psalm 91:9).

These promises are not for everyone, but only for those who dwell in the Secret Place. The enemy cannot touch us in this place. His lies, his deception, and his oppression cannot reach that place. The enemy cannot bring depression and self-condemnation upon us there: “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge” (Ps. 91:4).

Not only does the Lord protect us from the enemy in the Secret Place, He also protects us from the schemes and words of men: “You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (Psalm 31:20).

In this place the Holy Spirit also gives us freedom from fear: “You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday” (Psa. 91:5-6). We also receive authority to destroy the works of the enemy: “You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot” (Psa. 91:13).

But most importantly, for those who desire to know Him and to make the Most High their dwelling place, the Lord promises, “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation” (Psa. 91:14-16).

Jesus also referred to this condition of the soul when He declared, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). A branch on its own will wither and die. Just as a branch cannot have life without the vine, we cannot receive life, and have life more abundantly, without abiding in Him. The Scriptures clearly declare that the Spirit is the one who gives life, and we cannot receive this life without abiding in Christ (2 Cor. 3:6).

Jesus also tells us that this is the secret to having a fruitful Christian life. If we come and abide in Him, the Spirit will give spiritual life; out of that life and virtue, fruit will grow. The fruit of the Spirit will begin to manifest itself in our life, and the fruit of our ministry will grow as we continually abide in Him. As we abide in Christ, we will "walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

The Lord revealed this mystery to Mary of Bethany. She discovered the importance of simply waiting in the presence of Jesus and listening to His voice. When Jesus was visiting at her house, Martha was busy serving the Lord; and when she saw that her sister, Mary, was not helping, but was instead sitting at the feet of Jesus, she complained to the Lord. Jesus replied to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

This answer is truly amazing, but serving the Lord is not what is required. Most people are worried and troubled about many things; but one thing is needed, and that is simply waiting in His presence and listening to His voice. The Lord did not save us so that we would simply become His servants; He saved

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us so that we may be able to have a personal relationship with Him.

In waiting is also where the Lord restores our souls and strengthens us. The Scriptures declare, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40:31).

Elijah, running away from Jezebel, and greatly discouraged and depressed, found himself in a cave at Mt. Horeb. The Lord spoke to Elijah: "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord. And when the Lord passed by, a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him" (1 Kings 19:11-13).

Elijah heard this voice, and hid himself by wrapping his mantle around his face. He drew himself inwardly by covering himself with his mantle. As he covered his face, the Lord began to speak to him with a still, small voice.

Many people look for the Lord in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit: the fire, the earthquake or the wind; those are all by-products of the passing of the Holy Spirit, but that's not where He's found. There is great power and wonder in the manifestations of the Spirit of the Lord, but if we want to find Him, we will find Him in His still small voice. The earthquake,

the wind and fire can all be attributed to energy or power, but a voice can only be attributed to a person.

When we hear a voice, it is because there is a real person speaking to us. When we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, we realize that He is much more than just the manifestation of power; He is someone who's drawing us to have a relationship with Him. Only as we discover the importance of hiding ourselves in His presence we will begin to hear His still, small voice.

Jesus cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34). God's greatest desire was to gather His children under His "wings," but they were not interested. And the Scriptures tell us that when He drew near to Jerusalem, He wept over it because they did not know the time of their visitation. He came to His own and His own did not receive Him (John 1:11).

The Jews were His chosen people, yet they constantly refused to receive His visitation. Today, all those who have placed their faith in Jesus have become His chosen people. Yet many of His own children today still reject His visitation; many of us are not willing to hide under His wings. And I believe that many times, when the Lord looks at His children today, He still weeps. He comes to His own through His Spirit, and His own still do not receive Him.

Kathryn Kuhlman said this was her favorite Scripture: "Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings" (Psa. 17:8). This was her secret to knowing and loving the Holy Spirit, and this should also become our cry and

desire: "Lord, hide me under the shadow of Your wings. Keep me as the apple of your eye."

Oneness with the Holy Spirit

Gravity is the natural force of attraction exerted by a celestial body, such as earth, upon objects at or near its surface, tending to draw them toward the center of the body. It is also defined as the natural force of attraction between any two bodies, which is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them.⁽⁹⁾ The further two objects are from each other, the less the force of attraction between them. The closer two objects are to each other, the greater the force of attraction between them.

The Holy Spirit exerts a similar force, drawing our souls towards our innermost being. The closer we draw to Him, the more powerful this force of attraction becomes. The Scriptures declare, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). The further we are from the Lord, the more difficult it becomes to abide in His presence; but as we continually return to Him, His attraction will become almost constant upon our souls. We begin to experience how the Spirit, whom the Lord has made to dwell in us, yearns for us jealously (James 4:5). The inner life with the Holy Spirit seems like inactivity to the natural eye, but that is the only place where true spiritual progress is made.

I believe as the Holy Spirit abides in us, and we continue to abide in Him, we will become one with the Spirit of God. The Scriptures declare, "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1Cor. 6:17). When we become one with the Spirit of God, His thoughts become our thoughts; His emotions

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become our emotions; His dreams become our dreams; His desires become our desires, and His actions become our actions. The Father was not only in Jesus, but Jesus also abided in the Father; Jesus said, “I and My Father are one” (John 17:21, John 10:31). Our motivation for abiding in His Spirit should not only be to know Him personally, but also to be joined with Him, ultimately becoming one spirit with the Lord.

Chapter Five

Sanctified by the Holy Spirit

*that the offering of the Gentiles might be
acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit
Romans 15:16*

This is the Will of God

When I first began to learn about the Holy Spirit during my time in Argentina, a great desire to be filled with His presence was awakened in my heart. At every service I attended, I would be the first to run to the altars. The Holy Spirit would touch everyone, but nothing would happen to me. Many people also laid hands on me and prayed for me, but still I was not filled with the Holy Spirit. Before I encountered the

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Holy Spirit for the first time, the Lord wrote a word before my eyes: Sanctification.

The verse that the Lord used to speak to me was: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). So I began to kneel by my bed, confessing all my sins, one by one, past and present. I made a definite decision to repent from my sins. God heard my cry, and he was giving me one of the keys to His presence. The outpouring of God’s Spirit is always preceded by true repentance (Acts 2:38).

Before the Lord said that He was going to pour out His Spirit upon all people (Joel 2:28), He said, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning” (Joel 2:12). The Holy Spirit not only desires to be our closest friend, He also desires to sanctify our lives in order to present us as an acceptable offering to the Lord, holy and without blemish (Romans 15:16, Eph. 5:27).

The Holy Spirit desires what is best for us, and he knows that only as we walk in the way of holiness are we able to live in complete spiritual freedom and authority. In order for us to begin to understand our sanctification, we must first receive the revelation of our justification. Justification is the fact that we become completely righteous in the eyes of God through the blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of sin and reveals Jesus Christ to us, so that we may receive Him as our personal Savior.

When we choose to repent from our sins and freely receive the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus Christ, the Scriptures declare that we are justified. Justification is a one-time event when all of our sins are forgiven and we are

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declared just before God. It is just as if we had never sinned. Because Jesus took our place on the cross, satisfying the demands of the law, we are cleared of all charges held against us, and we are declared righteous in the eyes of God. Justification is immediate and is by faith. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom.5:1).

Our righteousness is a gift from God that we are able to receive through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Rom. 5:17, Phil. 3:9). “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). This righteousness is imputed to our lives apart from works (Rom. 4:6).

The Holy Spirit not only convicts us of sin, but once we receive Jesus, He convicts us of the fact that we stand righteous before God. Jesus said, “And when He (the Holy Spirit) has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness” (John 16:8). Only the Holy Spirit can give us the assurance that we stand holy and blameless before the Lord.

Once we receive the revelation about our identity in the eyes of the Lord, we must also begin to seek to be righteous (Matt. 6:33) and to pursue righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11). There has to be a desire in our hearts not only to know that God sees us as righteous, but also a desire to be holy, just as God is holy. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

The Holy Spirit empowers us to overcome sin and temptation, and He is the One who sanctifies our lives. The apostle Paul declared, “That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the

offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:16). The Scriptures also declare, “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13).

It is also written that we are “[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2). Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit leads us to walk in the narrow path of holiness and transforms our nature into the nature of Christ. Our justification determines our *standing* before God; our sanctification determines our *state* before God. Our justification is accomplished through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross; our sanctification is accomplished through the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 6:11).

Our sanctification is important because the Lord commands us to be holy. The Scriptures declare, “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15-16). The Scriptures even go on to say, “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). But the main reason for us to pursue holiness is that our eyes will be opened to behold the Lord. Jesus promised us, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8).

The root of all the problems of humanity is sin. Many times we focus on fixing the problems in our lives, instead of dealing with the cause of the problem, which is our sin. The devil cannot touch our family, our health, or our finances when we walk in holiness. Jesus said, “The devil has no hold on me” (John 14:30). The enemy could not touch Jesus, because Jesus walked in perfect holiness. As we choose to seek His righteousness, we will also begin to walk in true freedom.

Walking in the Spirit

Sanctification begins with genuine repentance and continues in our daily lives as we are led by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures declare, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Holiness does not consist only in obeying God’s commandments; it also consists of following a Person. Holiness is following the Holy Spirit and His still, small voice.

It is crucial to have an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, because when we do, He will speak to us, guiding us in His ways. He will direct us in where we should go, in what we should look at, and even in what we should say. He may whisper in our hearts, gently correcting our steps, or He may speak to us through the Scriptures, washing us with the water of the word (Eph 5:26). The Scriptures declare, “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Is. 30:21).

Most phones today have a GPS, which stands for Global Positioning System. It is a truly amazing tool. Whenever we don’t know the way to a place, we can simply enter the address, and the GPS will lead us straight to the location we intend to visit. As we begin to drive, it speaks to us, telling us which road to take, and when and where to turn. Even though we may never have been down those roads before, if we choose to obey the directions, the GPS will lead us on the shortest route to the location of where we want to go.

Sometimes the instructions don’t seem to make sense, and we think that we know a better route. Whenever we choose not to follow the instructions, and we take a wrong turn,

a message appears on the GPS, saying: “Recalculating route.” Then the GPS finds a new route and begins to give us new instructions on how to reach the intended location. Eventually, whenever we choose to follow the GPS’s direction, we reach the final destination (although usually much later than if we had followed its directions from the beginning).

The Lord left with us a spiritual GPS, which stands for God’s Positioning Spirit! He desires to guide us through places and circumstances we may never have gone through before. He desires to lead us toward the destiny and dream that God has prepared for us. But even when it doesn’t make sense, we must be willing to listen to His voice, submit to His leading and follow His ways. The longer we choose not to submit to the Holy Spirit, the longer it will take us to reach God’s destination for our lives. Regardless of how lost we may be at the moment, the Holy Spirit always knows the way to get us back to God’s perfect will for our lives. And when we make a mistake, He will always “recalculate” a route for us.

God’s perfect will for our lives is a road called holiness, and we are only able to walk on this road as we are led by the Spirit of God. Holiness is not an event that happens once in a lifetime; instead, it’s a narrow road to be carefully followed. Jesus spoke of a wide road that is easy to find and a narrow road that is difficult and found by only a few (Matthew 7:13-14). Many people choose the wide road; but the end of that way is destruction. Jesus said that the narrow road leads us to eternal life.

The Scriptures declare, “A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness” (Isaiah 35:8). If we walk in that way, the Lord promises us that we will not get lost; the enemy will not be able to harm our lives, and

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we will obtain joy and gladness (Is. 35:8-10). There is a road that leads to the fulfillment of God's promises for our lives and eternal life. It is a narrow road called holiness, and only the Holy Spirit can open our eyes to find it.

We should desire not only to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to abide in the Spirit, but also to walk in the Spirit. When we recognize and discern the Spirit's leading, and we choose to obey His guidance in our daily lives, we will experience the joy and freedom that comes from walking in His presence: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). It is extremely important for us to understand that to walk *in* the Spirit is to walk *behind* the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads; we simply follow.

The apostle Paul not only knew that God is good and that God is love; he also knew that God is holy. Paul's desire to please the Lord gave him a tremendous zeal to keep God's law. Paul greatly delighted in keeping God's commandments. He wrote, "For in my inner being I delight in God's law" (Romans 7: 22). However, Paul also said that the more he tried to fulfill this law, there was a second law, the law of sin and death, warring in his members, causing him to continually break the Law of God that he loved. He experienced the deep inner struggle that every believer who desires to please the Lord will also find in himself or herself.

There is a battle between the Spirit and the desires of our flesh. Paul described this inner struggle when he wrote, "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I

am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:19, 22-24)

Paul struggled to keep the Law through his own strength, until the Lord revealed to him a third law, the law of the Spirit of Life. There is a stronger and more powerful force than the desires of our flesh, and that's the power of the Spirit to draw us to obedience to the Law of God. We don't have to live under the law of sin and death if we choose to live under the law of the Spirit of Life. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

In order for us to live under the law of the Spirit of life, we must choose to walk in the Spirit. Paul wrote, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). The secret to overcoming the power of sin is to walk in the Spirit.

To walk in the Spirit is to live our daily lives in agreement with His desires and His ways: “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3). It means that we should not only long for the Holy Spirit to be our friend, but also our guide. Throughout the seventh chapter of the book of Romans, we find the description of the inner struggle between the flesh and the Spirit; but throughout the eighth chapter, the apostle Paul gives us the revelation of what it means to walk in the Spirit.

To walk in the Spirit is to walk free from guilt. The Scriptures declare, “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. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death”

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(Rom. 8:1-2). There is a big difference between conviction and condemnation. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit revealing our sin to us, but at the same time He shows us that there is hope and a way out of our sin: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

On the other hand, condemnation is the work of the enemy, accusing us of our sins and telling us that there is neither hope nor a way out of our sin. This is one of the enemy's main weapons he uses to destroy the calling and dreams of many Christians. He brings a sense of guilt, shame, and hopelessness upon their lives, leading many to despair and to turn away from the Lord.

To be able to walk in the Spirit, we need to have the assurance that once we confess our sins, the Lord not only forgives our sins, He also forgets our sins! The Lord declares, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). The Lord also promises, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12).

To walk in the Spirit is also to have the assurance that Christ has already defeated sin on the cross. The Scriptures declare, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4).

To walk in the Spirit is to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. The Scriptures declare, "For those who live

according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6-7). We should constantly pay attention to our thoughts, and if we desire to walk in the Spirit, we must make it a priority to meditate on things above: “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). It is possible to control our thoughts by choosing what we watch and what we hear.

To walk in the Spirit is to crucify the desires of our flesh. The Scriptures declare, “For 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” (Rom. 8:13). God created us with a free will, and we must make daily decisions to deny the desires of our flesh in order to continually walk in His presence. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). Every day we need to choose which is more important to us, satisfying the desires of our flesh, or walking in His presence.

To walk in the Spirit is to be convinced that nothing, or no one, can separate us from the love of God. The Scriptures declare, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). The revelation of God’s eternal and unconditional love for us motivates us to walk with Him, and when we make mistakes, we have the assurance that He will always welcome us back home (Luke 11:15-32).

Continually Cleansed by the Blood of Jesus

As we walk in the Spirit, there has to be a constant desire in our hearts to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Our cry should always be the same as King David's, "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psa. 139:23). We should always ask the Holy Spirit to search our emotions, our thoughts, our attitudes, our past, our present, our decisions, the words that we speak, the music that we hear, and the things that we look at, to see if there is anything in us that is displeasing to Him. We must desire for the Holy Spirit to reveal to us if we have gone astray in any way.

As the Holy Spirit searches our souls, He convicts us, showing us the condition of our hearts before God. It is then our responsibility to confess our sins and make a decision to turn away from them, so the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from all of our sins and unrighteousness (1 John 1:7-9). The Scriptures declare, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th. 5:23). The Holy Spirit will only fill the areas of our lives that we completely submit to Him through repentance.

King David's desire was for the Lord to show him if he ever went astray. When he committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11), the Lord sent Nathan, the prophet, to confront him about his sin.

The Holy Spirit convicted David, and he chose to repent; we can see the depths of his repentance as he prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my

iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit” (Psa. 51:1-12).

Jesus gave us the perfect illustration of our need for sanctification. At the Feast of the Passover, He had gathered with His disciples to share this celebration with them. After supper He rose up, girded himself with a towel, and one by one, He proceeded to wash His disciples’ feet. When it was Simon Peter’s turn, he said to the Lord, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Peter replied back to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean” (John 13:8-10).

Jesus told Peter that he was clean, but He also told Peter that his feet needed to be washed. Why the feet? In those days, people wore sandals, and the streets were covered with dust, so their feet were constantly getting dirty during their daily walk. The custom was for a host to provide water for his guests, so they could wash their feet when they entered his home. He

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might provide a servant to wash the feet of the guests, or even wash their feet himself.

Through His actions, the Lord was not only exemplifying for us how we should serve one another in humility, He was also giving us a picture of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Jesus gave a firm response to Peter when he would not allow the Lord to wash his feet. Jesus said that if Peter was not willing to be cleansed by Him, he could have no part with Him. Being continually cleansed by the Lord is a requirement if we expect to be a part of His mission on earth.

Our feet get dirty on our daily spiritual walk. We were completely cleansed by the blood of Jesus at the time of our salvation, but the things of this world may still contaminate us during our daily lives. Everywhere we go, we are constantly exposed to the world, so we need to be constantly washed. If our desire is to be one with the Lord and to be a part of what He is doing in the world today, it is crucial that we allow the Holy Spirit to continually sanctify our lives. Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:11-12). Just as we need daily provision for our physical needs, we also need daily cleansing from our sins.

The Holy Spirit is not only the One who convicts us of sin, guides us in the way of righteousness, and gives us the power to overcome the desires of our flesh, He is also the One who transforms our desires. He is able to change them to the point where we despise the things that we used to enjoy, and we delight in the things that He loves. The Lord promises us, "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezek.

36:27). He does this by writing His laws upon our hearts: “Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

The Fire of the Holy Spirit

The Scriptures relate how the Israelites constantly strayed away from the Lord to worship different idols. The Lord would do amazing wonders for them, but still they turned away from Him. The Lord, in His abounding mercy and love, continually raised up prophets to draw them back to Himself. During the time of the prophet Elijah, God’s people would worship the Lord, but they would also worship Baal and Asherah. Because of their unfaithfulness, there was a drought in the land for three and half years. The Lord desired to reveal Himself to His people once again, so He sent the prophet Elijah and instructed him to gather all the people of Israel on top of Mount Carmel.

Elijah first confronted the people of Israel with a decision; He said to them, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). Before the Lord pours out the life-giving Rain of His Spirit and His sanctifying fire upon our lives, He also confronts us with a question: How long are we going to continually fluctuate between the world and the Lord? If Jesus is our Lord, we must follow Him only. If we desire His Holy fire to consume our hearts, we must first fully surrender our lives to Jesus Christ.

Elijah proceeded to challenge the prophets of Baal and

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Asherah. Each side prepared a sacrifice without setting a fire. They then called upon their gods, and Elijah called upon the Lord. The God who answered by fire would be the true God. The Prophets of Baal prepared their sacrifice, called on the name of their gods, leaped, cried out, prophesied and even cut themselves, but nothing happened. There was no answer; there was no fire.

When Elijah's turn came, he first repaired the altar of the Lord, which was broken down (1 Kings 18:30). He took the twelve stones, which represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and brought them together. For the fire of the Holy Spirit to fall there must be unity. The Scriptures tell us that on the Day of Pentecost, the fire of the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples: "They were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). If we desire the fire of the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts, we must be willing to forgive others. Jesus said, "Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

Then Elijah cut a bull in pieces and prepared it as a sin offering for himself and the people (Ex. 29:36). Today we don't need to offer animals as sin offerings, because Jesus Christ became our sin offering when He gave His life for us on the cross. The Lord asks of us, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1). The Scriptures even declare, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise" (Ps. 51:17). We must be willing to offer our spirit, soul and body as a living sacrifice if we desire the Lord to consume our lives with His fire.

Before Elijah asked God for the fire, he did something extremely profound. He commanded the people to pour four pots of water upon the sacrifice. He commanded them to do it again and again. This water represents repentance. John the Baptist said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Mat. 3:11).

The Lord will not send His fire upon an unholy sacrifice. If we want God to submerge us in the fire of His Spirit, we first need to repent of our sins. Repentance is a decision that involves our emotions. The Scriptures declare, “My sorrow is continually before me, for I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin” (Psalm 38:18). Repentance not only involves the confession of our sins, but also the forsaking of our sins. “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Prov. 28:13). True repentance leads to a change in our actions. John the Baptist called us not only to repent, but also to “bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:8).

Elijah waited for the time of the evening sacrifice and prayed, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that you are the Lord God, and that you have turned their hearts back to you again.” Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!” (1 Kings 18:36-39).

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When we come to God through Jesus Christ, truly repenting of our sins, the fire of His Spirit will come upon our lives. His Holy fire will purify us and transform us. His Spirit will give us the power to overcome temptation. It's the baptism of fire that the Lord desires to send to our lives today. Jesus said, "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Luke 12:49)

Fire is defined as a rapid, persistent chemical change accompanied by a flame that releases heat and light.⁽¹⁰⁾ Similarly, when the fire of the Holy Spirit is poured out in our lives, it burns rapidly and persistently, consuming all our impurities. His flame will also accompany us, so that we may shine the light of Jesus in this world (Matthew 5:14).

The Scriptures declare, "So the Light of Israel will be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame; It will burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day" (Is. 10:17). Thorns represent the curse that comes upon our lives because of our sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord said that the curse would manifest on the land as thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:18). As the Lord pours out his Holy fire upon our lives, the effects of the curse of sin on our lives are also removed.

The word "fire" is not used just as a metaphor to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When God pours His fire upon our souls, it's an actual experience that touches our emotions and even our physical bodies: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

There are many different manifestations of God's consuming fire. I've seen many fall to the ground, some feel heat, others tremble, some weep, and a few even scream when touched by God's holy fire. But God's fire is much more than

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just an emotional or physical response to the nearness of His presence; it also brings about eternal transformations in our lives as the Holy Spirit brands His laws upon our hearts and reveals His fervent love for us (2 Corinthians 3:3, Romans 5:5).

The fire of the Holy Spirit also purifies and illuminates the hidden chambers of our soul, generating a profound inward life with God. This experience with the fire of God ignites a living flame of passion in our hearts for Jesus, and a deep compassion for the lost. The fire of His love compels us to walk in holiness and lay down our lives for the cause of the gospel.

Chapter Six

The Language of the Holy Spirit

*and it shall come to pass afterward
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
your young men shall see visions
Joel 2:28*

Hearing and Knowing His Voice

Since I was born in Argentina, I grew up speaking Spanish. When my family moved to the United States, I began to attend school even though I did not know a single word of

English. The first day I felt completely lost. Day after day, I sat in a classroom, not understanding a word that the teacher or any of the students were saying. It is hard to explain how it happened, but with time I began to understand English.

Nobody taught me the language; simply by being in a place where only English was spoken, I slowly began to understand the words that were spoken in the class. I am still learning English, but through my experience, I realized that the best way to learn a language is to live among people who speak it.

I believe that it takes a similar process to learn the language of the Holy Spirit. He does not speak to us like a regular person would speak to us. He speaks to us in a different “language,” and as we live in the Spirit and develop a close relationship with Him, we will learn to discern His voice. The most important language that anyone can learn in this world is the language of the Holy Spirit. For only by hearing His voice can we understand God’s heart, His purpose for our lives, and our own identity. His desire is to communicate with each one of us. He desires to lead each one of His children. Jesus said that His sheep hear and know His voice, and they follow Him (John 10:4, 27).

You may not believe me at first, but there are a thousand voices trying to speak to you at this very moment, in the place where you are right now. You may not hear them, but they are there. In order to hear them, all you need is the right receptor. If you get a radio and tune it to different stations, you will begin to hear hundreds of different voices. We must realize that to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, the right receptor is not our physical ears, but our inner spirit. The Scriptures reveal: “The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord” (Proverbs 20:27).

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The Holy Spirit will not usually speak to us in an audible voice; He will usually speak to our spirit. And if we “tune” our spirit to the Spirit of God, we will be able to hear His voice (1 Kings 19:12). This is also another quality that makes the Holy Spirit a person and not just an energy or a power; He is able to speak. The Scriptures declare, “He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2:7).

The Holy Spirit will speak to us as we read the Bible. Suddenly, He will make a scripture come alive to us. The words seem to become three-dimensional, and a text that was written hundreds of years ago begins to speak to us today. The written Word becomes the spoken Word, bringing direction, correction, comfort and revelation to our lives.

The Spirit of God also speaks to us through inner peace. When we are in certain situations or having to make decisions in our lives, and we desire to be led by the Holy Spirit, we must check our spirit to see if we sense peace. The Word of God declares, “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (Colossians 3:15). We allow the Holy Spirit to govern our lives by following His peace.

The Holy Spirit will also speak to our spirits with a still small voice (1 Kings 19:12). When the Lord called me into the ministry, the first thing I thought was that I needed to prepare. Since I was used to studying at the university in order to get ready for exams, I thought that I needed to do the same thing to get ready for ministry.

So I went to a Christian bookstore and began to choose several thick commentaries and theology books that I believed I would need to read in order to get prepared for ministry. As I held the books in front of me, they began to pile up to the point

where I could barely see over the tops of them, and I could barely walk since they were so heavy. As I was going towards the cash register, I felt the Holy Spirit smile and heard Him say, "You look like David trying to wear Saul's armor." I quickly went back and replaced all the books on the shelves. I soon realized that the amount of knowledge we have is not what moves the Holy Spirit to work through our lives.

The Holy Spirit not only speaks concerning God's plans on earth, but He also desires to lead us in our own personal lives. During a time when I was experiencing overwhelming demands and pressures in the ministry, I told my wife that it was impossible for me to make everyone happy. At that moment the Holy Spirit spoke to me saying, "The only person that you need to make happy is your wife." He was guiding me, so that I would know what my priorities in life should be.

The Holy Spirit may also speak to us through an audible voice. After encountering the Holy Spirit in Argentina, I was at a youth service, and I went up to the front when the altar call was made. As I was standing there with my eyes closed, I heard an audible voice in my right ear that said, "Take the fire of the Holy Spirit to your land of origin." I quickly opened my eyes to see who was speaking to me, but there was nobody there. The Holy Spirit was confirming His calling upon my life.

Several years later He spoke to me again in an audible voice. I had some time before going to minister at an event, so I decided to lie down for a while to rest. Without realizing it, I was soon fast asleep. I heard the most gentle and loving voice telling me, "Andres, arise." I thought that my wife was speaking to me, but when I looked next to me, there was nobody there. When I looked at a clock and saw the time, it was the exact time that I needed to leave for the meeting.

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The Holy Spirit may also use another person to speak to us through a prophetic word. “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men” (1 Corinthians 14:3). This is a supernatural gift of the Spirit, where He uses someone else’s voice to speak to us.

During a church service that I was attending, the minister asked the congregation to pray for one another. At that time, I was going through a difficult time because I was struggling to fulfill God’s calling upon my life. As the person next to me began to pray for me, the Holy Spirit spoke to me through her, saying, “You are not only my son; you are also my warrior. You are not only my voice; you are also my heart.”

The Holy Spirit also speaks to us through dreams and visions: “For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction” (Job 33: 14-16). He spoke through dreams and visions to His servants in the Scriptures, and He still desires to speak to His children through dreams and visions.

We spent ten days filming several television episodes all over the land of Israel; we had to work nonstop from sunrise to sunset, having to deal with all kinds of challenges. For the last shot, I was sharing a message on Mount Zion, and behind me was a square cement block. When we completed the take, I was totally exhausted, so I decided to lie back on top of the block. At that moment the Lord gave me a vision, wherein I saw myself lying on top of an altar, and I heard the Holy Spirit say, “Your sacrifice has been holy and acceptable to me.”

It is a privilege to be able to witness how the Lord pours out His Spirit upon thousands of lives around the world; but nothing compares to seeing the Holy Spirit visit our own children. The Promise of the Holy Spirit includes our children: “For the promise is to you and to your children...” (Acts 2:39). When I returned home from my trip to Israel, I prayed for my six-year-old son as he was lying in bed, before he went to sleep. I placed my hand on his forehead and prayed for the Lord to bless his life. When I finished praying, he told me that he had seen a vision.

He shared with me how the Holy Spirit took him to the time and place when the prophet Samuel anointed King David. He told me that he didn’t just see it happen; he was actually standing there as the event took place. He was even wearing the same clothes that the people wore at that time. He described to me the sandals that he was wearing and the clothing that everyone else was wearing. He said that David was kneeling down, Samuel was standing in front of him, and all David’s brothers were standing around them. David was a young man, his clothes were worn out, and he had a string tied around his head. As Samuel took the horn and anointed David with oil, he declared a blessing over his life. When his brothers saw this, they were visibly upset, and one of them even turned around and walked away.

When I finished praying, I removed my hand from my son’s forehead. He then told me that I removed my hand at the exact moment when, in his vision, the prophet Samuel had tilted the horn back and stopped pouring oil on David’s head. I believe that on that night, the Lord anointed my son just like He anointed King David. The Lord promised, “I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions...” (Acts 2:17). I

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will be forever grateful to the Holy Spirit for visiting my son at such a young age and in such a special way.

There are also many other ways in which the Holy Spirit desires to communicate with us. He may speak to us through the preaching of God's Word. Listening to a sermon, how many times have we felt: "That's just for me, the preacher must know what is going on in my life!" That feeling is actually the Holy Spirit speaking to us. When we came to know Jesus, maybe we heard a message, or read a book, or perhaps someone shared the gospel with us personally, but it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through that message, convicting us and revealing Jesus to our hearts. Flesh and blood cannot reveal to us the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Only our Father who is in heaven can make this truth known to us by His Spirit (Matthew 16:17).

The closer we walk to the Holy Spirit, and as we learn to tune our spirit to His voice, the more we realize that He has a great desire to speak to us. He may speak to us through nature, a circumstance, a sign, a song, or even a stranger. Once, He even spoke through a donkey! (Num. 22:28) We just have to have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to us (Revelation 2:29). As we begin to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, in an unexplainable way we begin to discern His voice and get acquainted with His language.

It is extremely important to know that the Holy Spirit will never speak to condemn or to accuse. He speaks to correct, to convict, to instruct, to guide, to encourage, to comfort, and to edify (2 Corinthians 14:3, John 16:8, 13). He desires to reveal to us who we are in Christ and how much the Lord loves us. He will always speak the truth in love. His voice brings hope and makes a way where there seems to be no way.

One of the most important reasons for us to get to know the Holy Spirit's language is that only He can reveal God's vision and dream for our lives. The Scriptures tell us that He will speak to us about our future: "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13).

There is a well-known statement that says: "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." This is true, but the question is, how do I come to know that plan? All over the world, people ask themselves, "Why was I created? Why am I here? What is my calling? What is my purpose?" The Scriptures declare: "'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2: 9-10). God has a purpose for those who love Him, a purpose that no one has ever seen or heard. God has already prepared it for us, but only if we are able to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, will we come to know it.

When God pours out His Spirit, He promises to speak to us through prophecies, dreams and visions (Joel 2:28). This is one of the manifestations that I love most about the outpouring of God's Spirit. During an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, many are called into the ministry and many are given specific instructions by the Lord about their futures. When He pours out His Spirit, not only are lives transformed and healed, but God also speaks to His children.

Everything I'm doing today is because of what the Holy Spirit spoke to me while I was at the revival in Argentina.

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When He speaks to us, we know without a doubt our purpose in life and the mission that God has for us. We are no longer like a ship in the midst of a storm, being tossed in any direction that the wind blows. We know not only how God feels about us, but also His specific dream or vision for our lives.

Dreaming with God

For God's dream to come to pass in our lives, there is a process that we need to go through. Joshua encountered the Holy Spirit when Moses laid his hands on him: "Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him" (Deut. 34:9). Joshua loved to abide in the presence of the Lord. He loved to stay with the Lord and listen to His voice: "So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle" (Ex. 33:11).

But when Moses passed away, Joshua found himself mourning Moses' death and uncertain about his own future. But Joshua had one thing in his favor. He had learned the language of the Spirit, and in the midst of his confusion and pain, he heard the Lord speak to him: "Moses, my servant is dead" (Joshua 1:2). He was telling Joshua to stop looking back, and that it was time to begin to look ahead.

Many people constantly dwell on tragedies that have taken place many years ago in their lives. If we want God's vision for our life to come to pass, we must let go of the past, setting the eyes of our spirit upon God's promises and dreams for our lives. The apostle Paul wrote, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting

those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13).

The Lord gave Joshua the vision for his life. He said, “Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory” (Josh. 1:2-4).

The Lord did not give Joshua and the people of Israel the strategy right away. He still had not revealed to them that, in order to conquer Jericho, they would have to walk around the city before the walls would come down. The Lord had only given him the first step -- cross over the Jordan -- and after that He would direct their steps. The Scriptures state, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way” (Psalm 27:33).

Before having the strategy, we need to take hold of the spiritual vision. Strategies will not work if we don’t have a spiritual dream. Many people look for strategies because they see them work for someone else, but they themselves have never received the dream from the Lord. Therefore, they don’t see the same results in their own lives. God gives dreams, and as we step in faith towards those dreams, He reveals the strategy and orders our steps.

The Lord then gives Joshua keys for this dream and vision to be fulfilled. One thing is to receive the vision and another is to see it come to pass. First, he encourages Joshua

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and gives him a great promise: “I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:5-6,9).

Fear is the first enemy that comes against us as we decide to obey God’s plan for our lives. That’s why so many times through the Scriptures, the Lord tells us to not be afraid. The assurance that the Lord is with us is critical to overcoming fear and fulfilling His mission for our lives. Jesus promised us: “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Hebrews 13:5-6 reassures us: “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ ‘So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go” (Josh. 1:7). Once the Lord speaks to us, we must not turn from the mission that He has given us. Jesus said, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). We are not allowed to look to the left or right. We must have our eyes set on the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus sent out seventy of His disciples to preach, heal and deliver, and He told them something that at first seems very strange: “Do not greet anyone along the way” (Luke 10:4). The Lord knew that there were going to be many distractions on the way to fulfilling His calling upon our lives. Jesus was telling us

not to get sidetracked by people along the road. If the Lord calls us for a mission, we cannot depart from His calling.

-Confess

The Lord proceeded to tell Joshua, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth" (Josh. 1:8). The Lord is revealing to Joshua the power of our confession. The Scriptures declare, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). We have the power to bless or to curse with our words. God gives us the spiritual vision, but then we need declare it with our mouths.

We are the prophets of our own lives. The words that we speak have the power to create negative or positive results. "Thus says the Lord, The Holy One of Israel, 'Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; and concerning the work of My hands, you command Me'" (Is. 45:11). The Lord encourages us to ask him about the things that are to come. When He reveals them to us, we are to declare them in faith, and He will bring them to pass.

The same principle was at work when the world was created. The Bible says that God predestined us; He chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). We are God's dream. But when God looked upon the earth, He saw that it was without form, void, and covered with darkness (Gen. 1:2). This is similar to the way many people's lives are today: without form, void, and covered with darkness. Just as the Lord had a wonderful plan for the world, He also has a wonderful dream for everyone who loves Him.

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The Spirit of the Lord was moving upon the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit was moving upon that emptiness, upon that darkness and shapelessness, but nothing was happening. As the Spirit of the Lord was hovering over the face of the waters, God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). Suddenly there was light, and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:4). Out of the darkness came something good; God created light.

While the earth was in chaos, God dreamed about us, then as the Spirit moved, God spoke, and then He saw. In like manner, God also works in our lives through the Holy Spirit. In the midst of our emptiness and confusion, the Holy Spirit moves upon our lives, revealing God's dreams and promises, but then we must speak or declare them.

Jesus said, "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says" (Mark 11:23). As we begin to declare what we see with the eyes of our spirit instead of confessing the reality that we see with our physical eyes, God's dream will begin to come to pass in our lives. We will also see that His plans and desires for us are good (Jeremiah 29:11).

Regardless of where we are in our lives at the moment, we have to confess God's promises for our lives. Our words will be in agreement with His words and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and He will bring them to pass.

If your family is not serving the Lord, instead of speaking negatively about them, start seeing them with the eyes of faith and declare, "My whole household will be saved!" (Acts 16:31) We ought to see and declare God's dream: "As for me

and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15). If you are having financial difficulties, as you meditate on God’s Word, see and confess His promise, “My God shall supply all of my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

If we are struggling with sickness and disease, the Lord wants us to see ourselves in health, and He desires for His Word not to depart from our mouths: “By His stripes I am healed” (Is. 53:5). We may feel physically or emotionally weak, yet the Lord tells us, “Let the weak say I am strong” (Joel 3:10). That is seeing in the Spirit. That is the language of the Holy Spirit, a language of promises, dreams and visions.

-Meditate

The Lord not only told Joshua to speak what was written in the Book of the Law, He also told him to meditate on it. “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night” (Josh. 1:8). The Lord was giving Joshua another powerful spiritual secret.

If we want to be prosperous in all our ways and have good success, we must meditate on God’s Word and on His promises. King David wrote, “I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways” (Psa. 119:15). God’s words to us are seeds. “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). For that seed, promise, or dream to germinate and produce fruit, we must not only hear the Word but also meditate on it day and night.

The Lord had a special promise for Abram: “The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.

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Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Genesis 15:1,5). God spoke an amazing dream to Abraham's heart, but there was a problem: Abraham did not have a child, and his wife was already advanced in age.

Abraham chose to believe God in spite of his circumstances. Every time he went outside at night and looked up at the stars, he meditated on the words the Lord had spoken. Every time he walked on the dusty roads during the day, he meditated on God's promise. He meditated upon it day and night. The Scriptures declare, "He believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Abraham heard the Lord, meditated on His promise and confessed it, and God brought the dream to pass, giving Abraham a child. Today the descendants of Abraham are like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore in number. Even Christians are considered descendants of Abraham and heirs of the promise (Galatians 3:6-9).

-Act

The Lord went on to tell Joshua not only to meditate on the Book of the Law, but also "to do according to all that is written in it" (Josh. 1:8). We must obey and do what the Lord has commanded us. Joshua did not stay put after receiving the vision, simply meditating on it; he arose and crossed over the Jordan River. He had to go into battle in order for the vision to come to pass; only then were the Israelites able to take over the Promised Land and see the fulfillment of God's prophetic word.

It's not enough just to hear, speak and meditate on God's word. We must also be doers of the word. "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Before Jesus left this earth, He got together with the disciples and told them, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (Acts 1:8). After Jesus shared with them about this power, He gave the disciples a vision. He said to them, "You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

There were only 120 people waiting in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, but He said that those few would be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Even without the ability to travel in cars and airplanes, and without television or the Internet, they were going to share the gospel all over the world! When the Lord gives a vision, it is usually so great that it is humanly impossible to accomplish. The disciples did not only receive the vision from the Lord, they also acted upon that vision. They did not stay in that upper room: "They went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20).

Because the disciples received God's dream for their lives and stepped out in obedience, today we have the privilege of calling ourselves Christians. Today, although we may be thousands of miles away from Jerusalem, we have received the gospel, and we have the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Our sins have been forgiven, and we have direct access to God. We are able to have fellowship with our Creator because those few disciples not only received the power of the Holy Spirit, but they also dedicated the rest of their lives to seeing the vision come to pass.

The Holy Spirit Illuminates our Eyes

Jesus taught these principles to His disciples. Looking at a field that, in the natural, was not ready for harvest, He said, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35) Jesus was teaching us how to see and what to say. Jesus was showing us the difference between seeing and confessing the natural, and seeing and confessing the supernatural. He was showing us what we *tend* to confess when we look at the field: “We still have to wait four months for the harvest.” He was teaching us what we should see and what we *should* confess when we look at the field: “They are already white for harvest!”

Jesus was training His disciples to see with the eyes of their spirit, and not with their natural eyes. He was teaching them to believe for what’s available in the Spirit, rather than for what’s available in the natural. He was teaching them, as He wants to teach us today, not to confess the circumstances that surround us, but to confess what we see in the Spirit. He wants us not to see our cities with hopelessness, but to see that they are ready for harvest: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

The Lord not only desires for us to see the harvest, he also desires for us to see the good plans and dreams He has for our lives and family. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11). God wants us to think His thoughts of good and not evil. He desires for us to see ourselves living healthy, successful lives: “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as

your soul prospers” (3 John 1:2). He desires for us to be victorious and prosperous in everything we do (Josh. 1:8).

Let us open our eyes and see what the Spirit sees. Let’s open our eyes and look in the Spirit and see our families saved. Let’s see our children serving the Lord. Let’s see ourselves living in health and God’s abounding provision in our lives. Let’s see our lives full of His joy and peace. Let’s see our nations transformed by the gospel. Let’s see revival in every city and the young people worshipping the Lord. Let’s see with the eyes of our hearts the outpouring of God’s Spirit upon all flesh, and soon we will see His promise come to pass: “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Eph. 1:17-19). This prayer is for the Lord to give us the Holy Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, so that our spiritual eyes may be opened.

When the eyes of our understanding are enlightened, we are not only able to know Him, but we are also able to see His calling upon our lives. He desires for the eyes of our understanding to be opened, not only so that we can know His purpose for our lives, but also so we can see what our inheritance is in Christ. Our inheritance as sons and daughters of God is eternal life, forgiveness of sins, healing for our bodies, and provision for all our needs.

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As we walk and commune with the Holy Spirit, our spirit will begin to learn His language. He will lead us in His ways, comfort us in times of need, guide us into the truth, and reveal His nature and our identity to us. He will also allow us to see His vision for our lives, and as we meditate on His dream, confess its reality, and act in obedience to His instructions, we will see it come to pass.

Chapter Seven

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

*you shall receive power when
the Holy Spirit has come upon you
Acts 1:8*

No Greater Power

When I was invited to minister in Pakistan, I really did not know what to expect. I was going to share the gospel in a country that was ninety-eight percent Muslim, and I was traveling by myself. When I arrived, I was escorted everywhere by a man with a double-barreled shotgun. I had arrived during Ramadan, and I could even hear over a loudspeaker the Muslim calls to prayer from the hotel room. Since I was not familiar with the culture or language, I felt like I was in a completely different world.

The next day, when we arrived at the place where the services were being held, thousands of people were already waiting to hear the gospel. Before going up to minister, the pastor told me that there was armed security all over the field. I had never preached in a place like this before; yet my heart was full of confidence because I knew the Holy Spirit was on my side.

As I began to share about the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, I could feel the Holy Spirit come not only upon me, but also upon the whole crowd of people. Even though I had traveled alone, I was not alone, for the Holy Spirit was with me. As He convicted people of sin and revealed Jesus to them, thousands responded and received Jesus into their hearts.

As we began to worship Jesus, the whole atmosphere was charged with His power, and miracles began to take place all over the open field. The Holy Spirit began to descend in power upon those in need of healing, and hundreds came to testify of all kinds of different miracles that had taken place in their lives. We saw the Lord open the eyes of the blind, open deaf ears, heal the paralyzed, remove tumors, restore eyesight, remove pain, deliver from demonic oppression and so much more! There were lines of people waiting to testify about what the Lord had done in their lives.

When I made an altar call for the young men who wanted the power of the Holy Spirit and wanted to become witnesses for Christ, hundreds ran to the front. The power of the Holy Spirit intensified even more. As I prayed for the fire of the Holy Spirit to fall, it felt as if waves of His glory swept through the altar, causing hundreds of young men to fall, overcome by the Holy Spirit.

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I stood in awe as I watched the Holy Spirit reveal Jesus, heal and transform so many lives. We invited all those who wanted to be baptized in water to come the next morning. That day, we spent hours baptizing hundreds of lives. People even continued to be healed, delivered and filled with the Holy Spirit as they were baptized in water!

There is no greater power in the world than the power of the Holy Spirit. His power is supernatural, creative and life-giving. When the Spirit of God manifests His power, the reality of the kingdom of God is revealed on earth as it is in heaven. The holiness of God invades the atmosphere and His goodness is unveiled. His power convicts us of sin and reveals Jesus to our hearts.

When His power is present, the oppressed are set free, the sick are healed, and creative miracles begin to take place. His is the only power that is able to destroy cancer, heal AIDS, give sight to the blind, and even give life to the dead. His power also brings emotional healing, as well as deliverance from addictions. When His power is present in its fullness, all things are possible. The Scriptures declare, "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (1 Corinthians 4:20).

Power in the Life of Jesus

The power of the Holy Spirit was the power that worked supernaturally through the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus lived His life on earth as a man, even though He was fully God (Philippians 2:5-8). All the miracles that He performed during His earthly ministry were done by the power of the Spirit. The Scriptures reveal, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and

healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

The healing virtue of the Holy Spirit flowed out from His body, touching all those who were sick and oppressed: “The whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all” (Luke 6:19). He would simply walk down the street, and as people touched Him in faith, power would flow out of His body, bringing complete healing to the sick.

When a woman who had been sick for twelve years touched the hem of His garment and was immediately healed, Jesus said, “Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me” (Luke 8:46). That power was more than just energy, for it had knowledge of the needs of every person that touched Jesus. That power is the manifestation of the person of the Holy Spirit.

Before Jesus was taken up to heaven, He gave instructions to His disciples, telling them, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). He was assuring His disciples that the same power that worked through His life was going to move through theirs also! He was telling them that when He went away, He would leave the power of the Holy Spirit to each one of them.

Power in the Life of Peter

That same power began working in His disciples as His promise to them was fulfilled. The disciples waited in Jerusalem, and on the day of the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit

came upon their lives. They began to speak in other tongues, and they looked as if they were drunk.

Peter began to preach, and thousands were converted in one day. People would line up the sick on the side of the streets of Jerusalem, and Peter didn't even have to touch them; he simply walked by, and everyone was healed: "They brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:15-16).

It was not Peter healing the sick, nor was it his shadow healing the sick. It was the power of the Holy Spirit upon Peter that brought healing to the multitudes. The same power that was upon Jesus was now manifesting itself through the life of Peter.

Power in the Life of Paul

The Apostle Paul was not present on the day of Pentecost, yet even he ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. He wrote to the church in Corinth, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Even though Paul had a deep knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, he purposely determined in his heart not to persuade others through his own wisdom, but through the demonstration of the Spirit's power. He wanted the faith of those he taught to be based upon the power of God.

Whenever new instructors began to teach different doctrines to the church in Corinth, Paul wrote to them saying, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power" (1 Cor. 4:19). Paul said he would go to them, not to listen to their words, but to see if their words were being confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Writing to the church in Thessalonica, Paul also said, "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). Writing to the church in Rome, he also explained that he ministered "in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19). He even went on to advise Timothy to stay away from those who "have a form of godliness but deny its power" (2 Tim. 3:5).

The Price

It is amazing to know that this same power that worked through Jesus, Peter, Paul and the other disciples is available to every believer today. The moment we receive Christ in our heart, the Holy Spirit comes into our heart and seals us and abides in us. That's why when we worship the Lord, or when we read the Word or pray, we sense His presence. The

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presence of God gives testimony to the fact that we are His children.

To understand His power, we must differentiate between the presence and the power of the Spirit. The presence refers to the person of the Holy Spirit. The power is the manifestation of this Person. We have communion with the presence of the Holy Spirit, but we minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Every believer has the presence of the Holy Spirit in his or her life, but not every believer has the power of the Spirit upon his or her life. Every believer freely receives the presence of the Spirit at the time of his or her salvation, but not every believer has His power. His presence is a free gift, but to receive His power, there is a price that must be paid.

The power of the Holy Spirit becomes a reality in our lives, not when He comes *inside* us, but when He comes *upon* us. His presence becomes real to us when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, but to experience His power working through our lives, the Holy Spirit must come upon us. Jesus said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Inside every believer there are two persons, therefore, there are two wills: the will of the Holy Spirit, and our own will. For the Spirit of the Lord to come upon us, we must die to our own wills. We must be willing to say, "Not my will, but Your will be done." We must daily choose, not our desires, but His desires. For our lives to be endued with His power, we must follow His dreams and not our own dreams.

Kathryn Kuhlman once said, "You want to know the price; I'll tell you the price; it will cost you everything." It is just

that simple. It will cost you everything. God desires, in these last days, for His church and His children to start operating in the power of God. If we want revival to invade our cities, and signs and wonders to take place so that people may believe in Jesus, we don't need human wisdom and persuasive words; instead, as Paul said, we need the demonstration of the Spirit and power.

The Lord desires to manifest His power through each one of us. The cost is everything. The secret is death to self. Kathryn Kuhlman also said, "I die a thousand deaths every time I come up to minister."

Kathryn Kuhlman said that she knew the exact moment and place she died to herself. She said, "I had to make a decision. I had to choose between the man that I loved and the God that I loved." Kathryn Kuhlman had made a terrible mistake by marrying a man who had left his wife in order to be with her. Kathryn Kuhlman recognized her mistake, and chose the God that she loved. As she was ministering one day, a lady came up to her and said, "Aren't you that Kathryn Kuhlman who got divorced, and also destroyed a man's home and family?" Kathryn Kuhlman looked at her and said, "No, that woman is dead."

Before the power of the Holy Spirit manifested itself through the life of Paul, he also had made the decision to die to himself. He wrote, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is

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from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Phil. 3:7-10).

Paul was willing to be conformed to the death of Christ and know the fellowship of His suffering, so that he might know Christ and the power that raised Him from the dead. Paul summarized this attitude when he said, “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31).

Jesus revealed the cost of becoming His disciple when He said: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). He also said, “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.” This is entirely different from what the world says. Jesus said that if we want to find our life, we must lose it. If we want to be His disciples and minister in His power, we must deny ourselves. We need to die to ourselves.

Every person who has been used by the Lord at some point in their life has had to make the decision to die to himself or herself. When we make the decision to die to ourselves, that’s when the Holy Spirit begins a supernatural work inside of us called “brokenness.”

Only through brokenness is our will conformed to His will. This process takes place in our lives whenever He takes us through a desert. A desert is a dry place where there is no life. It’s a place where the enemy tempts us, and where our own identity in Christ and calling is tested. Paul had to spend three years in the desert before he began his ministry (Gal. 1:15-18). Moses had to spend 40 years in a desert (Acts 7:3). At first, he

tried to deliver the people of Israel in his own strength, even to the point of murdering a man.

As a result, the Lord had to send Moses to the desert for forty years before He was able to use him. After having been broken in the desert, God transformed a murderer into a humble servant. Likewise, David spent many years in the desert while fleeing from Saul; John the Baptist grew up in the desert.

The Bible tells us that after Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, He was also led by the Spirit to the Judean desert: “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Luke 4:1). The Holy Spirit will not only lead us to mountaintop experiences, He will also lead us through deserts.

There are no shortcuts in the ways of the Lord. If Jesus had to go through the desert, how much more will we also need to go through this experience? For forty days Jesus fasted in the desert, where Satan tempted Him. Before He heard the voice of the Father telling Him what to do, Jesus heard the voice of the enemy trying to destroy His identity and mission.

In the desert we must learn to discern between the voice of the enemy and the voice of the Holy Spirit. Only those who learn to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit are able to come out of the desert. The enemy will try to keep you in the desert through his accusations and lies. On the other hand, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). The Holy Spirit will speak to us that we are “the elect of God, holy and beloved” (Colossians 3:12).

After Jesus had overcome every temptation, He came out of the desert in the power of the Holy Spirit: “Then Jesus

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returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region” (Luke 4:14). Jesus was now not only filled with the Spirit, but now the Spirit was also upon Him. Only then did He stand up in the synagogue and declare, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).

The Lord only makes the healing rivers of His Spirit flow from a desert: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water” (Isaiah 35:5-7).

During times of difficulty and suffering, we can either complain against God, or we can take advantage of such moments to draw closer to the Lord. We can choose to “dig” in the desert for living waters to flow out of our hearts. Usually, the severity of the desert that we cross determines the depth of our relationship with God.

After encountering the Holy Spirit and receiving the call to the ministry, something began happening with me that I was not able to understand at the time. The Holy Spirit led me to a spiritual desert. I thought that I was outside of God’s will for my life, for I could not see any of His promises come to pass. I was tempted to give up on the call that the Lord had given me.

One night, I knelt by my bed crying and praying, and I almost made the decision to quit the ministry. The next morning, I received an email from one of my cousins in Argentina to whom I hadn't spoken in a long time. She wrote to me saying, "I had a dream with you and Jesus last night. This is what Jesus wants to tell you: 'Andres, when a young boy came to Me with his five loaves of bread and two fishes, and he gave them to Me, I believed him. The same way when you came to Me, and you gave me your life; I believed you. In the same way I took those loaves and fishes, and I broke them to bless many, I take your life, and I break it to bless many.'"

Brokenness is the only way to die to self. Our soul is broken so that the fragrance and life of the Spirit may be released through our lives. Jesus declared, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:24-25). The shell of the seed, when it falls to the ground, must be broken for the life that is in the seed to come forth and bear fruit. We must be willing to say, "Lord, I'm willing to die so that Your will and Your dream may be fulfilled in my life. I want Your desires, not my own, to be done in my life."

The principle of brokenness is similar to the way an atomic bomb works. An atom, so small that it can't even be seen with the naked eye, is the catalyst to so much power that an entire city can be destroyed with a single bomb. This nuclear reaction is called atomic fission. The nucleus of a uranium atom is bombarded by a neutron, which causes the atom to become imbalanced and break apart. The splitting of the nucleus of the atom releases energy and causes more neutrons to break away; these neutrons, in turn, strike other uranium

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atoms and begin a chain reaction that releases tremendous amounts of energy.

The power of the Holy Spirit that is released by the breaking of our soul is greater than any power released by an atomic bomb. The atomic bomb releases a destructive power, but the power of the Spirit is a life-giving power. The power of the Holy Spirit does not destroy a city, but transforms it. When our soul is broken before the Lord, the power of the Spirit is released, touching other lives and causing a chain reaction called revival.

Jesus revealed this mystery to Paul: "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9). When we are broken, the power of Christ rests upon us.

Speaking about Jesus, the Scriptures declare, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Is. 53:10). The word bruise in Hebrew means to crumble; to beat to pieces; to break (in pieces); contrite; to crush; to destroy; to humble; to oppress; to smite. God is a good God. God is a God of love. He desires to bless us, to prosper us, and He desires for us to live in health. He wants the best for His children. How could it please God to crush Jesus? God knew that when Jesus was broken, there would be a power released upon this earth that would bring salvation to billions of human beings, saving them from total and utter eternal suffering. The message of the cross is the power of God to us who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18).

God looked ahead and saw the power that would be released through the cross, power that would bring salvation to our souls, healing to the sick, deliverance to the captives, and

healing to the brokenhearted all over the world. Jesus was also able to see lives transformed by this power: “For the joy that was set before him He endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2).

God’s love for this world is so great that He was not only pleased with breaking Jesus, He continues to break those who are willing to pay the price to manifest His power upon the earth. That’s why we must understand the seriousness of fully surrendering our lives to Jesus. Only when we feel the depth of His love for us and the depth of His love for the world, can we truly pray, “Lord, here am I. Send me. If You want to crush me, you may crush me. If You want to break my will, You may break my will. Here is my life, use it for Your glory.”

When we find ourselves in difficult times, that’s when we tend to break, and that’s when most of us decide to seek the Lord. The real problem occurs when things start going well for us, when we find ourselves with no apparent needs, and when we feel the Lord is blessing our family, health, and job or ministry. This is when we must be even more aware of our need to remain broken and humble before the Lord. This is one of the greatest mistakes people make, seeking the Lord only when they have a need.

If we want to continue to experience God’s kingdom in our lives, even after He blesses us, we must remain poor in spirit. Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). Even in times of health and prosperity, we can choose to remain broken before the Lord through fasting and prayer. By denying ourselves through fasting, our physical bodies are broken; at the same time, fasting brings brokenness to our hearts, which in turn releases His power through our lives.

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The apostle Paul said that being hard-pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, and delivered to death was what caused the power of Jesus to be manifested in his mortal flesh: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:7-11).

The treasure is the presence of the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. In order for the fragrance of this treasure to be manifested in our mortal bodies, transforming the atmosphere around us, the earthen vessel must be broken (Mark 14:3, John 12:3). Paul explained this principle when he wrote, “So then death is working in us, but life in you” (2 Corinthians 4:12). When we choose to die daily to our wills, the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon us, bringing life and healing to those in need. Only then we will be able to say, “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place” (2 Corinthians 2:14). The price is everything, but it is worth it.

Chapter Eight

The Power of the Holy Spirit to Preach the Gospel

*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because He has anointed me
to preach the gospel to the poor
Luke 4:18*

The Gospel

When I was invited to minister at a maximum-security prison in Texas, I did not know what the Holy Spirit was going to do, since I had never been inside a prison. After going through a security check and several iron gates, I found myself surrounded by tall double walls that were topped with barbed

wire. I began to feel a little uncertain about this opportunity to share the gospel. I was going to speak about Jesus to hundreds of the most serious offenders in the state of Texas, and I did not know how they were going to react. But I had the assurance that the Holy Spirit had gone through those prison gates with me.

I stood by the door of the chapel, and as the inmates walked in, I looked into their eyes one by one. I could see pain, hate, despair, anger, shame, rejection and hopelessness. I could see guilt. At the same time, the Spirit of God began to fill my heart with an overwhelming sense of love and compassion. This is why Jesus had come, to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

Hundreds of inmates, all dressed in white, filled the chapel to hear the word of God. As we sang worship songs, I began to feel the anointing of the Holy Spirit come upon my life, and I knew God was about to do something powerful. After sharing the good news of the kingdom of God, I made an altar call to those who wanted to repent of their sins, trust in Jesus for their salvation, and set their hearts to seek first His kingdom and its righteousness. Most of the inmates immediately responded by kneeling at the altar and down the middle aisle.

I only had thirty minutes to minister to them, so I had planned to end the service after making this altar call. But when I saw the response, my heart was moved with compassion, and I began to pray for those who had come to the front.

As I began to pray for the prisoners, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and many of them began to fall under His power. As I looked at my watch, I realized that my time had

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run out, and I had only prayed for the front row. All the way down the middle aisle there were prisoners waiting to receive prayer. I could sense their desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but I didn't have enough time to pray for all of them. So I said, "All of you who want to receive the fire of the Holy Spirit, lift up your hands." All of them lifted up their hands, and when I said, "Fire!" all of them fell under the power of the Holy Spirit down the middle aisle.

When I turned around to give the microphone to the chaplain so he could end the service, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon my life with so much power that I was not able to stand, and I fell backwards on top of all the inmates. I was trying to get up but was not able to stand. As I lay on the floor with all the inmates, I heard the Holy Spirit speak to my heart, "You are just like them, for there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23-24).

The Bible is very clear, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). The Scriptures reveal to us that to a Holy God there is no difference; we are all sinners. We are all guilty, and because of our sin, we are separated from God for eternity, "for the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

This is why the gospel is the most important message in the world, because only through faith in Jesus can we be saved: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:8-9).

Only Jesus Christ took upon Himself the penalty for our sins through His death on the cross: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Salvation is found in Christ alone: "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). We can freely receive the gift of eternal life and the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus Christ.

I once heard a short story that helped me to better understand the gospel. There was a town that had a law stating that the penalty for committing murder was death. There was a judge in this town who strived to always keep the law. Whether he agreed with the law or not, he tried to be just in every case that came before him. Many had been found guilty of murder in his court, and he had sentenced them all to death, thereby fulfilling the law of capital punishment.

This judge had a son whom he loved deeply. One day, the son appeared before his father in court, having been charged with murder. The judge had the power and authority to condemn his son to death, showing justice. He also had the power and authority to forgive his son and release him, showing mercy. The judge had an extremely difficult decision to make.

God had to make the same decision with our lives. He created us and loves us deeply. More than we will ever know! Yet we have all sinned, and the law states that the punishment for our sin is death. God found himself in the same dilemma as the judge; He could manifest His love and mercy, and simply forgive our sins. But if this had been His choice, He would not have been just. On the other hand, He could have made the "right" decision and condemned us to death, fulfilling the law

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and all justice. Just as the son of the judge was guilty and deserving of death, we also are guilty and deserving of death.

The judge in the story solved his dilemma by saying, "I will give my own life to pay for the crime that my son committed." The father decided to take the place of his son. That is the same decision that Jesus made for us. He paid with His own life the debt that we owed. On the cross, He not only manifested His love for us, He also fulfilled all justice.

The son of the judge still had to choose whether to accept the forgiveness that his father offered him and walk away free, or to reject the mercy offered to him and receive the punishment for his own mistake. In the same way, Jesus has already paid in full for our freedom, but we still have to choose whether to receive His free gift of forgiveness and eternal life, or receive the punishment for own sins: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). If the son of the judge had chosen to walk away free, he probably would have lived the rest of his life to please his father. In a similar manner, when we receive the gift of God and realize the price that Jesus paid in order for us to be free, we should desire to live the rest of our lives to please Him.

When my son was around three years old, he went through a period when he did not want to obey me. It came to a point where I did not know how to teach him to follow the rules. On one occasion, after he had disobeyed me again, I placed him in time-out in his room. Afterwards, he simply walked out as if nothing had ever happened. I took him back to his room, but this time he got upset and walked out again. I took him back to the room by force, and he became extremely

angry. He tried to walk out of the room again, but I stood in front of the door. By this time I was getting upset, too.

When he saw me standing in front of the door, he began to punch my leg with his fists. I couldn't believe it! Now I was extremely upset and was about to give him a spanking, when I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, "Let him hit you." So I sat on the floor in front of the door, and I told my son, "Hit me." He was so upset that he began to punch me pretty hard for a three year-old. He kept hitting me repeatedly for a long time. Then the blows became slower and slower as he got tired. It came to a point where he was so worn out that he simply stopped.

He stood in front of me with his arms down, breathing fast and looking into my eyes. I simply embraced him and told him that I loved him. And we both cried together. I don't know how to explain what happened at that moment; but something took place in the heart of my son. I guess he understood how much I loved him; I don't know. But one thing I know, he changed. His heart became gentle and loving. Never again did I have to struggle with him to obey, and his love for me became something special.

The Lord did something similar with us. He set rules for us to obey, because He loves us and desires what's best for us. But we continually rebelled against His rules. To demonstrate His love for us, He came down to our level and said to us, "Hit me." And we did. He was beaten beyond recognition: "His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14). He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Yet, He still looks into our eyes, embraces us and says to us, "I love you."

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When our eyes are open to this truth, something happens to our hearts. I don't know how to explain it, but we change. We desire to obey Him, and our love for Him becomes something special.

Power for the Mission

The main purpose for which God empowers us with His Spirit is to share His good news with the world. Jesus told His disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This was the last thing Jesus told His followers before He ascended to the Father. They were not supposed to go and share the good news and minister to others until they were endued with power from on high.

Jesus made this very clear to His disciples by stating, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The power of the Holy Spirit is a necessity if we want to be effective witnesses of Christ.

After being raised from the dead, Jesus came to His disciples as they were assembled in a room with the door shut. Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22). Not only were they receiving the same Spirit that Jesus had received, they were also receiving the same mission that He had received from the Father.

As disciples of Jesus, our calling is to do, in His name, the same works that He did. Jesus said to us, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12). As His disciples, Jesus also fills us with His Spirit and sends us out with the same mission that He received from our Father.

He explained this mission at the beginning of His ministry as He read from the book of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).

This was the mandate upon the life of Jesus, and this is the mandate that He has entrusted to each one of His disciples. Jesus began by declaring that He was not only filled with the Holy Spirit, but now the Holy Spirit was upon Him in power. Then he proclaimed that His priority was to preach good news to the poor. Then He was commissioned to heal the broken hearted, to set the captives free, and to bring healing to the sick.

The most important reason that God anoints each one of us is so that we might share the gospel with others. Deliverance, healing of the heart, and healing of the body are all temporary, but receiving forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus Christ is eternal. Jesus promises to all those who believe in Him, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28). And the Bible even goes on to say, “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11).

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We readily recognize the need for the Holy Spirit's power to pray for the sick or to minister deliverance, since there has to be a physical manifestation of the miracle. But since we don't see a physical manifestation of the miracle of salvation, many of us fail to realize that we need His power just as much if we want to be effective witnesses for Christ.

There is a tremendous difference between sharing the gospel under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and sharing the same gospel without the power of the Holy Spirit. When we share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, it is accompanied by conviction of sins, repentance, and the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

After Jesus ascended to heaven on a cloud, the Bible tells us that the disciples waited for the promise of the Father: "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). The Holy Spirit had come in great power!

As people gathered to see what all the commotion was, Peter stood up and preached the gospel for just a few minutes. The same people that crucified the Lord a few weeks earlier were now cut to the heart, and they cried out, "What must we do to be saved?" Peter responded, "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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar

off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). On that day three thousand were saved.

If Peter had shared the same message, in the same exact way, to the same people, just one day before being endued with power from on high, not one person would have responded to his message. The Holy Spirit is the One who cut them to their hearts and showed them the severity of their sins.

Only the Holy Spirit can convict people of sin, and true salvation always involves repentance from sins (Acts 20:21, 1 John 1:6). Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit, said, "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin" (John 16:7-8). We cannot convince others of their sin through our words, actions or arguments. It is our responsibility to preach "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21), and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the reality and seriousness of sin.

The message of repentance, when preached without the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon our lives, will bring condemnation upon others, but under His anointing our words bring conviction, revelation and life. The gospel preached with the power of the Holy Spirit leads people not only to believe in Jesus, but also to make a change in their lives.

The Scriptures declare, "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). We should share the message of repentance when we are endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, will the Holy Spirit use our words to bring conviction and life.

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The enemy accuses us of our sins, bringing condemnation upon our lives; on the other hand, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and reveals God's salvation to our hearts. Condemnation will show us the fact that we have sinned, but it will also tell us that there is no forgiveness for us. It brings guilt and shame upon us. The Holy Spirit does not bring condemnation, but He does bring conviction upon our lives. He reveals to us the fact that we have sinned, and at the same time, He reveals to us God's goodness and the forgiveness offered to us through faith in Jesus.

A few days ago, my son and I went to play soccer on a small field behind our home. Other kids from the neighborhood sometimes come out to play, and we always have an amazing time. As the sun was going down and there wasn't much light left, we decided to end the game. I began talking to one of the teenagers that had been playing with us. At one point in our conversation, I asked him if he had ever received Jesus into his heart. His answer was quick and direct, "No, never."

In a very simple way, I began to share how Jesus loved him so much that He had paid for his sins by dying on the cross. In a moment, and to my total amazement, he began to weep in the middle of the soccer field. The Holy Spirit had convicted him, and he was not able to hold back his tears.

I asked him if he would like to receive Jesus at that moment, and although he was so overwhelmed that he was barely able to speak, he replied, "Yes." We knelt down together on the soccer field, and he prayed to receive Jesus and forgiveness for his sins. He remained on his knees, crying, for over fifteen minutes in the middle of a soccer field. Only the Holy Spirit is able to touch someone's heart so deeply. We

should long not only to share the gospel; we should also desire to share that good news under the power of the Holy Spirit.

While praying for people at the altar after one of our ministry's events, I looked up and saw a mother forcefully dragging her son by his arm to the front for prayer. I could tell the young man did not even want to be there, much less receive prayer. I asked him if I could talk to him alone, and when we stepped to the side, he shared with me that he used to follow the Lord, but now he was living in sin. I shared the gospel with him for several minutes, but I could tell he did not want to return to the Lord. Just as I was about to give up and go pray for other people, I literally felt the Holy Spirit descend upon both of us at the same time.

As the Holy Spirit came down, it was as if someone had stabbed the young man in the heart, and he fell forward screaming, "I need to change!" He began to weep and roll on the floor screaming, "I need to change, I need to change." I couldn't believe my eyes! The same young man, who had been acting so indifferently towards what I was telling him, was suddenly crying out for God's forgiveness. Long after the service was over, and I was leaving the church, he was still on the floor at the altar, weeping over his sin.

Another young man wrote me a letter to share his experience with the Lord at one of the youth events: "That night changed my life forever. I got filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in different tongues. I cried all night, thinking about the hateful things I had done to people. You've really helped bring me to the Lord, and I thank you so much for that. I pray that God will richly bless you. This all happened in January; and now it is July, and I have read the New Testament a couple times, and I don't miss church. I quit drinking,

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smoking, doing drugs and having sex. I stopped being a racist. I joined a group called True Love Waits, and I'm trying to be a witness. I have lost a majority of my family and friends, but I couldn't be happier. Christ Jesus fills me with true and unwavering love—a love so powerful that He died for our sins.”

The Spirit of God Only Glorifies Jesus

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit not only convicts us of sin, He is the one who also testifies of Jesus. He shows us our problem, but He also reveals to us the only solution. Jesus promised, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (John 15:26). I believe the Holy Spirit's greatest desire is to testify of Jesus to the world. He longs to share with everyone Christ's love, goodness, compassion, and sacrifice on the cross.

When I stand to preach the gospel, I know that in my own power, I am not able to convince or convert a single person. But I also know that as I begin to share the gospel, the Holy Spirit works with me, convicting people of sin and testifying of Jesus to people's hearts.

This is one of the main reasons I love the Holy Spirit so much. The Holy Spirit does not speak about any other person; He only testifies of Jesus, and He only glorifies Jesus. Jesus went on to say concerning the Holy Spirit, “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit is a Person, but He does not talk about Himself. He leads us to Jesus, and Jesus leads us to the Father.

The work of the Holy Spirit is similar to a strong spotlight. We don't look directly at a spotlight; we look to see upon whom the spotlight is shining. In a similar manner, the Holy Spirit does not glorify Himself or any minister; the Holy Spirit only glorifies Jesus. The stronger His power rests upon our lives, the stronger the beam of light will be that shines upon Jesus, and the easier it will be for man to see Jesus for who He really is: "The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Only after the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at the Jordan River was John the Baptist able to make this statement. Before that, he only knew Jesus as one of his cousins.

When the Holy Spirit placed His spotlight on Jesus, John saw that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior of the world. John the Baptist said, "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:31-34).

In a similar manner, people may see Jesus as a prophet, a good man, a good teacher, a historic figure, but when the Holy Spirit manifests His power, we are able to see Jesus for He who truly is: the Son of God. The Holy Spirit is the one who testifies of Jesus, and He is the only one who can reveal His identity to our hearts.

The Scriptures declare, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the

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gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). We can talk about Jesus to people for days, argue with them, explain the Scriptures to them, and even try to prove to them the deity of Christ, but without the power of the Holy Spirit, they will continue to be blinded. As we share the gospel, the Holy Spirit works alongside us, bringing the revelation of Christ to people’s hearts.

The message is extremely simple: Repent from your sins and believe in Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. It is so simple that a young child can receive it, but so deep that some of the most intelligent people who ever lived have not been able to understand it and believe it. Receiving the gospel is much more than just receiving information; it has to do with receiving a revelation. We can give information, but only the Holy Spirit is able to give revelation. That is the main reason we need the power of the Holy Spirit when we share the gospel.

The Lord may have used a pastor or a friend to bring us to the knowledge of Christ, but ultimately, the Holy Spirit was the One who revealed Jesus to our hearts. Jesus asked His disciples on one occasion, “Who do men say that the Son of Man is?” They answered in various ways, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Then Jesus asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon, Son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:13-17).

In our ministry, we have seen the Holy Spirit reveal Jesus to thousands in different events around the world. But He not only loves to reveal Jesus through the preaching of the Word in conferences and crusades, He also loves to testify of Jesus

during our daily lives. As my wife and I were riding in the back of a taxi in Cartagena, Colombia, I began to share the gospel with the taxi driver. I could only see his eyes looking at me through his rearview mirror. Suddenly, I began to see tears streaming down his face. I was amazed that a grown man would begin to cry this way, so I asked him if he had ever heard the gospel before. He replied, "Never like this."

When we arrived at our destination, I asked the driver if he would like to receive Jesus; he quickly answered that he would. After praying for him to receive salvation, I placed my hand on his shoulder and prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He immediately fell sideways onto the passenger's seat of the taxi, and he remained down there for a long time. Not knowing what else to do, we simply placed the money to pay for our trip next to him, and left him lying there under the power of the Holy Spirit.

According to the Bible there are only two possible places for us to go after we die. We will either spend eternity in heaven or in hell. There are an amazing number of scriptures about heaven in the Bible. The most beautiful reality in heaven is that Jesus himself will be there: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Revelation 7:9-10)

The Bible also says that in heaven there will be no more suffering: "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be

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with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:3-4).

The Bible speaks very clearly about heaven, but the Bible also speaks very clearly about hell. Hell will be a place of constant torment, pain and suffering, and it will also be eternal. The Bible clearly states that in hell there will be an eternal fire that will inflict tremendous suffering. The Bible declares that those who have not believed in Jesus and who have not repented from their sins “[will be cast] into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:42, 25:41).

Jesus warned us about the seriousness of our sin when He declared, “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched” (Mark 9:43).

The assurance that Jesus has forgiven us and rescued us from eternal condemnation should bring great joy to our hearts. Jesus told His disciples, “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

The Holy Spirit is also the only one who can give us that assurance. The Spirit of God is the one who sealed our hearts when we first believed (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30). And the Holy Spirit is the one who “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”” (Galatians 4:6)

Compassion for the Lost

To be effective witnesses of the gospel, we not only need the power of the Holy Spirit, we must also have compassion for those who are lost. We must not only love God, we must also love people the way He loves them. Only the Holy Spirit can instill in our hearts this type of love. He allows us to feel the heart of God beating with love for those who are lost and hurting, and it is this love that compels us to share the gospel with others. This revelation breaks our hearts and places a passion in our lives to go into the world and share the gospel. Just as the power that the Holy Spirit places upon us is supernatural, the passion that He places in our hearts to reach the lost is also supernatural.

Only someone who is a father or a mother can understand such love for his or her children. I would easily give my life for my children. My son and I sometimes play soccer together behind our home. Since most of the time it is just the two of us, I usually have to play goalie. I don't like to play goalie, and I only play goalie when I play with him. One day we were playing, and he missed a shot, so I had to go chase the ball behind the goal.

As I was going to get the ball, the Holy Spirit asked me a question, "Could you love everyone the way you love your son?" That is the type of love that the Lord desires for us to have for the world. That is the love that He had for the world: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The Holy Spirit is also the One who gives us boldness to share our faith. The Bible tells us that after thousands were

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saved and healings began to take place, a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. The disciples gathered again, "and when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). After the Holy Spirit had given them boldness, not just thousands, but multitudes began to be saved! (Acts 5:14).

There are over six billion people on this earth. Around four billion do not believe in Jesus, and over two billion of them have never even heard His name. God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). The love of God for those who are lost is so deep that, if we ever truly experienced it, we would spend the rest of our lives making the great commission our great mission.

The American Civil War was fought from 1861 to 1865 between the United States (the "Union" or the "North") and several Southern slave states that had declared their secession and formed the Confederate States of America (the "Confederacy" or the "South"). One of the main reasons for the war was that the Southern states wanted to preserve slavery, while the Northern states desired to abolish it. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued an order called the Emancipation Proclamation. It proclaimed all those enslaved in Confederate territory to be forever free.

The Proclamation could not be enforced in areas still under rebellion, but as the army took control of Confederate regions, the slaves in those regions were set free. Between twenty thousand and fifty thousand former slaves were immediately emancipated in regions where rebellion had already been subdued, and over three million more were emancipated

as the Union army advanced.⁽¹¹⁾ Even though the President of the United States had already signed the document, millions of people continued to live in slavery until the Union army reached them with the good news.

As a boy of nine in Virginia, Booker T. Washington remembered the day the Union army reached his plantation in early 1865: “As the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring, and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom.... Some man who seemed to be a stranger (a United States officer, I presume) made a little speech and then read a rather long paper—the Emancipation Proclamation, I think. After the reading we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks.”⁽¹²⁾

Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). Two thousand years ago, there was another document signed, not by the President of the United States, but by the God of the universe. It was signed not with ink, but with the blood of Jesus Christ. It is called the New Covenant. It proclaims that those who are enslaved to sin are to be forever free. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:32,36).

Our responsibility is to advance upon the world just as the Union army advanced through the Southern states, and proclaim freedom to the captives (Isaiah 61:1). We are simply carriers of good news. It is not our responsibility to convince,

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convert or convict anyone. We are simply soldiers in the army of the Lord, taking over enemy territory by proclaiming, "It is finished! Jesus paid it all, you are free!"

Amazingly, as the Union army reached some plantations with the good news, some of the slaves were so used to living in slavery that they chose to remain slaves. In a similar manner, there are people who hear the gospel, but because they enjoy their sinful lifestyle, they choose to continue to live as slaves to sin. Even more tragic, history tells us that there were plantations deep in the South that never received the good news, and many lived the rest of their lives in slavery, not knowing that they had been set free.

Similarly, there are over two billion people on earth right now who have never heard that Jesus Christ paid the price for their freedom and salvation. If Union soldiers were willing to lay down their lives to proclaim freedom from physical slavery, which is temporary, how much more we should be willing to lay down our lives to proclaim freedom from spiritual slavery, which is eternal?

Chapter Nine

The Power of the Holy Spirit to Heal the Brokenhearted

*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted
Luke 4:18*

Beauty for Ashes

After sharing the gospel at a local church in Texas, I was ministering and praying for the different needs among the people. There was a young girl standing at the front, and as I came closer to pray for her, I noticed that she was sobbing. When I asked her why she was crying, she pulled up her shirtsleeves, and she showed me the scars on her wrists where she had cut herself. And she said to me, “I don’t want to live anymore.”

My heart was moved to see such a young person who had lost her desire to live, and I asked her whom she needed to forgive. She answered me that she needed to forgive her father. That night she made a decision to forgive him, and as we prayed, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon her, and she fell on the floor, trembling and weeping uncontrollably. I continued to minister to the rest of the people who were at the altar, and as I was leaving the church over an hour later, I turned around to look at the front, and she was still on the floor, crying.

About two hours later, as I was driving back home, I received a phone call from the pastor of the church. He shared with me how the Holy Spirit had restored and healed the heart of that young girl. The pastor also told me that when she returned home, as she was getting ready for bed, she saw that the scars on her wrists had completely disappeared!

One of the most amazing manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit is when He heals the brokenhearted. His power is able to reach the depths of our hearts, bringing restoration to our souls. This is truly a miracle, for through medicine a broken body may be healed, but never a broken heart. If we think that the human body is complex, our souls are much more intricate.

Our souls not only consist of our present state through our emotions, but also our past through our memories, and our future through our dreams. The pain is usually found in our memories, affecting our present emotions and ability to make decisions. This limits our ability to dream and to accomplish the purposes that God has prepared for us. Due to different circumstances and events, our souls can be wounded, bringing extreme suffering and limiting our potential. Only Jesus,

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through the power of the Holy Spirit, can heal our hearts and remove the scars that the wounds have left behind.

The Holy Spirit did not come upon Jesus just to empower Him to bring good news. The Holy Spirit also anointed Him to bring healing to those who were wounded and hurting in their souls. The Scriptures tell us about a Pharisee who invited Jesus for dinner at his house. A woman, who was known as a sinner, entered the room and knelt behind Jesus, weeping at His feet. She began to wash His feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair. She kissed His feet and anointed them with fragrant oil (Luke 7:38). She was not only in great need of forgiveness; she was also in great emotional anguish. A sinful lifestyle usually leads to deep emotional wounds. King David prayed, "Lord, be merciful and gracious to me, heal my inner self, for I have sinned against You" (Psalm 41:4).

As this woman humbled herself at the feet of Jesus, repenting from her sins and worshipping Him, something supernatural was taking place. The Holy Spirit, who was upon Jesus, was descending upon her life, bringing healing and restoration to her heart. Jesus even said to her, "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (Luke 7:48, 50).

The woman not only received forgiveness of her sins, she also received peace. Something supernatural had happened in her soul. Her suffering had turned into peace. Only the Holy Spirit is able to transform pain into peace, depression into joy, and fear into freedom. The purpose of the anointing of the Holy Spirit is also "to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:2-3).

Not only do the consequences of sin lead to wounds in our hearts, but pain may also come as a result of abuse, rejection, abandonment, betrayal, injustices, tragedies, and even words spoken against us. King David wrote, “Their insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair” (Psalm 69:20). Jesus even said, “It is impossible that no offenses should come” (Luke 17:1) and, “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33). The loss of a loved one, or a broken relationship, also deeply affects our lives: “By sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken” (Prov. 15:13).

Our emotions, and sometimes even our physical bodies, develop symptoms because of these wounds. These wounds may not necessarily manifest themselves as pain, but they may surface as anger, hatred and bitterness. The Bible tells us, “Let no root of bitterness springing up trouble you” (Hebrews 12:15). On other occasions, the pain may manifest itself as anxiety, depression and fear. The Scriptures declare, “Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression” (Proverbs 12:25). The pain may even lead to substance abuse, addictions, lust and rebellion; but the root cause is an open wound in the heart.

The causes of some physical illnesses may also have spiritual roots. The Scriptures declare, “A broken spirit dries the bones” (Proverbs 17:22). There is a misconception that “time heals all wounds,” but in reality only Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can restore a broken heart.

A radio station asked me to participate in a program in which a young lady was going to share her testimony. I was supposed to call in at the end of the program to share a word with the audience. As I sat in my home listening to her testimony, I was truly amazed. She shared that as a young girl she was physically and verbally abused by her mother.

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The rejection that she experienced led to a deep bitterness in her heart, to the point that she did not feel any love towards her own mother. As she continued to grow up, she began to seek something that would fill her heart and replace the love that she needed from her mother. She also began to feel rejection towards God for allowing her to experience this undeserved rejection.

She even shared that when someone came to tell her about the Lord, she answered him, "As God rejected me, I am also going to reject Him." Her need for affection in the midst of her loneliness led her to an addiction to alcohol. She even began to experiment with drugs to fill the emptiness in her heart. Since she did not find the answer in drugs and alcohol, she began to seek love through many different relationships. When none of those relationships worked out, she began to feel even more rejection. This led to a strong desire to commit suicide.

During this time, another person came to share with her about the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. This time she became intrigued to see if God really did exist. When she went home, she did a search on the Internet about the Holy Spirit and found a video in which I was sharing the gospel. As she watched the video, she said that she felt as if I was speaking directly to her, and without really knowing the magnitude of her decision, at the end of the video she prayed with me to receive Jesus. She was so overwhelmed by the feeling that I was speaking directly to her, that she did another search; she found out that the next day I was going to be speaking at a city only three hours away from her.

She decided to attend the service, and she responded to the altar call. To her surprise, as people began to receive prayer,

they began to fall under the power of the Holy Spirit. In her unbelief, she thought they were falling because I had paid them. So she expected that when I prayed for her, nothing would happen. She went on to share with the radio audience that I had asked her if she was seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit. After saying, “Yes,” she did not remember anything else until she stood up again, crying and saying, “What happened?”

She ended her testimony by sharing how that was the most beautiful day in her life, because her heart had been restored and filled with the Holy Spirit. She was able to forgive her mother, and she had received freedom from her addictions. As she walked out of the church, she said that she felt like she was walking on clouds! Her life was completely transformed, her relationship with her mother restored, and she had now been faithfully serving the Lord for over four years.

After her testimony, it was a great privilege for me to share with the radio audience how the Lord came to this world to seek us, and how even if our mother and father reject us, the Lord will receive us (Psalm 27:10). The Lord is waiting for us with wide-open arms. As we return to Him, the Holy Spirit will not only heal our hearts, but will also bring restoration to our relationships. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Malachi 4:6).

On another occasion, I was asked to pray at a hospital for a woman who had just lost her son. I prayed for her three times, and every time she fell under the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord gave her a different vision of her son in heaven. In one of her visions, she even saw her son embracing Jesus. All of these experiences were real to her, and what she felt was so beautiful that she desired to remain in heaven. The

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Holy Spirit wanted to give her the assurance that her son was in a better place, and these visions brought deep comfort to her heart. The Holy Spirit not only heals, He also “comforts those who mourn” (Isaiah 61:2, John 14:16).

Full Restoration

The Lord deeply cares about those who are suffering. The Scriptures tell us, “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart” (Psalm 34:18). He is closest to us in the times of our greatest pain. His deep compassion draws Him to those who are suffering. He is not indifferent to our condition. He feels our pain, and He is able to identify with us, for He also experienced great agony. Speaking about Jesus, the Scriptures tell us, “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him” (Isaiah 53:3).

He was despised and rejected so that we may be accepted in Him. He experienced grief so that we may be comforted. On the cross, He was punished so that our souls may be healed. The Scriptures tell us, “The chastisement for our peace was upon Him” (Isaiah 53:5). So great was His desire to restore our hearts that He was willing to go through the cross; He did this so that our sins might be forgiven, so that we might receive His peace, and so that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

To experience His restoration we must humble ourselves and recognize our own faults. We must realize that we have also mistreated others and that Jesus was crucified for our

offenses. The Scriptures tell us that He “was delivered up because of our offenses” (Romans 4:25). The Word of God even goes on to say, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

To receive His healing, it is extremely important to also forgive those who are responsible for the pain in our lives. The Scriptures make it clear to us, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:30-32). Just as Jesus forgave us, even though we did not deserve His forgiveness, we must also forgive others, even though they may not deserve our forgiveness. Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).

The Scriptures also declare, “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Colossians 3:12-13).

Jesus also declared the importance of forgiving others: “If you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25-26). When Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to

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you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22).

As I minister around the world, I have noticed that it is difficult for some people to experience God’s presence. When I ask them if there is someone they need to forgive, most of the time it is an affirmative answer. And when I ask them whom they need to forgive, it is usually someone who is close to them -- their father, mother, or a close friend or relative. The wrongful words and actions of those whom we love have greater influence upon our lives. As people choose to forgive, I have witnessed many times the Lord pouring out His Spirit, bringing complete restoration to their hearts.

As we humble ourselves before the Lord, choosing to turn away from our sins and forgiving those who have sinned against us, Jesus will pour His Spirit upon our hearts, bringing complete healing: “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:25-26).

The Lord pours His love upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and perfect love casts out fear (Romans 5:5, 1 John 4:18). This is truly a supernatural experience. The Lord not only cleanses our hearts, but His Spirit also does surgery in our souls through His love. As the Spirit of God moves upon our hearts, bitterness, anger, guilt, shame, depression, and pain leave our souls, and He imparts His love, joy, peace and freedom.

A young man once shared with me that as a child, he had received so much rejection from other kids in school that it had left a deep wound in his heart. He told me that as the Holy Spirit ministered to him, he received a vision in which he saw a

little bird trying to fly with a broken wing. As the bird tried to take off, it would fall again and hurt itself even more. The young man knew that this little bird represented him. He then saw Jesus pick up the bird, and as He held it in His hands, the broken wing was healed. Jesus then opened His hands and the bird freely flew away. Tears ran down the young man's face as he shared this story with me, for his heart was now restored and free.

The Scriptures also share the story of a man who was suffering with leprosy, and because of his disease, his family and society also rejected him. He was forced to live alone outside of the city. When he found out that Jesus was in the city, he entered the city and humbled himself before Jesus by kneeling down before Him. The man also worshipped Him and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." The Bible tells us that Jesus was moved with compassion, and "He put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately the leprosy left him" (Luke 5:12-13).

As Jesus touched this man, the Spirit of the Lord that was upon Jesus came upon this man in power, bringing not only physical healing, but also emotional healing. After being rejected for so long, Jesus showed him that he was beloved and accepted. As we draw near to Jesus, seeking Him in humility, He will also touch our lives through His Spirit. His touch will heal and restore our souls. Jesus did not reject the man as everyone else had. In the same way, the Lord will never reject us when we approach Him in humility. Jesus said, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).

Peter believed that his love for the Lord was greater than the love of the other disciples. He believed that his love was so strong that he would be willing to give his life for the Lord.

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When Jesus told His disciples that they were all going to stumble because of Him, Peter said to the Lord, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be” (Mark 14:29). Even after Jesus replied that before the rooster crowed twice, Peter would deny Him three times, Peter answered Him saying, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” Peter was telling the Lord that he loved Him more than he loved his own life. He believed that his love for the Lord was unconditional.

After denying Jesus three times that very night, Peter was so disappointed and hurt that he chose to go back to fishing. Jesus had called him to be a fisher of men, but because of his failure, he decided to go back to his old profession. Many people truly believe that they love the Lord deeply, and when they fail the Lord in some aspect of their lives, they believe that the Lord is disappointed with them. The resulting pain and frustration many times leads them back into their old lifestyle.

The Lord not only demonstrated His amazing love and mercy for Peter by dying for him on the cross, He even went back to the shores of the Sea of Galilee to look for Peter again. At the same location where Jesus had first called Peter to follow Him, Jesus returned to call him again. The Lord is willing to forgive us seventy times seven, and even after we fail Him, He continues to pursue us.

Peter felt so much guilt and shame that, when he realized the Lord was at the shore waiting for him, “he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea” (John 21:7). Just as Adam and Eve covered themselves after failing the Lord, Peter also covered himself in order to approach the Lord. That is the reaction that most people have in the presence of God; they feel unworthy because of their past failures, and they try to hide themselves from His presence. But

the Lord continues to seek after us and do everything He can to remove that which is separating us from a relationship with Him. He was even willing to shed His own blood so that our sins, shame and guilt would be taken away from us. So great is His love for us!

That morning, Jesus prepared breakfast for His disciples, and He sat with them next to a fire. I am sure that Peter was thinking that the last time he sat next to a fire, he had denied Jesus. Jesus was taking him to the place of his pain to restore His heart. In a similar manner, the Holy Spirit will often deal with our past failures and regrets to restore our present relationship with God and to confirm His purpose for our lives.

The Lord asked Peter three different questions. To really understand the questions that Jesus asked Peter, and the responses that Peter gave Him, we must realize that there are two Greek words for love: *agape* and *philia*. *Agape* is true unconditional love. This love is selfless; it gives and expects nothing in return. *Philia* means affectionate regard or friendship.

First, Jesus asked him, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” Peter had said earlier that, even if all the other disciples denied Jesus, he would never fail Him. Peter believed that his love was so deep that he would even die for the Lord. He was implying that his love was greater than that of the others. So the first question that Jesus asked Peter was if his love for Him was *agape*, and greater than the love of the others. Peter responded that he did love Jesus; however, Jesus knew that Peter’s love was not *agape*, but merely *philia*.

After denying the Lord three times, Peter had come to the conclusion that his love for the Lord was only that of a friend, and not the unconditional type of love that Jesus had

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demonstrated by dying on the cross for him. Even though Peter felt unworthy, Jesus still confirmed his calling and the purpose for his life. He said to Peter, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15).

Jesus asked Peter again if he loved Him with an agape type of love, but this time Jesus did not compare it to that of the other disciples. Peter answered the Lord again, saying that He knew that his love was *philia* and not agape. Jesus once again confirmed His calling upon Peter's life by telling him, "Tend my sheep" (John 21:16).

The third time that Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, the Lord used the word *philia* instead of agape. Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him like a friend. Jesus kept lowering the standard with every question. First, He asked if Peter loved Him not only unconditionally, but also more than the rest. He went on to ask Peter if he loved Him unconditionally. And He ended up asking Peter if he loved Him like a friend. This time Peter was grieved, and once again he answered saying, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17). This time Peter really said yes to the question that Jesus was asking. He admitted that his love for the Lord was *philia*.

Peter revealed that he was grieved and deeply disappointed with himself, yet Jesus confirmed his calling once again by telling Peter to feed His sheep (John 21:17). But now Jesus also says something amazing; he tells Peter, "When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish. This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God" (John 21:18-19).

Jesus prophesied to Peter that he was going to demonstrate the greatest type of love for the Lord: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his

friends” (Juan 15:13). In other words, Jesus was telling Peter that his love for the Lord would be much more than *philia*; his love for the Lord would truly become *agape*.

Then Jesus spoke the same words to Peter that he had spoken to him in that same location a few years earlier, “Follow Me.” The Lord had restored Peter’s heart, and Peter once again chose to leave his fishing boat to follow Jesus. After the day of Pentecost, Peter became a fisher of men, and he took care of the Lord’s sheep. Multitudes came to Jesus throughout Peter’s life, and multitudes were healed as he walked down the streets of Jerusalem. He became one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. He even died crucified upside down, since he felt undeserving to die the same way as Jesus.

As we have seen, the Holy Spirit will speak to us to bring restoration to our hearts and our relationship with the Lord. He will never speak to condemn us, but he will speak “edification and exhortation and comfort to men” (1 Corinthians 14:3). He will reveal to us the mercy and love that Jesus has for us. He will always encourage us to fulfill God’s calling upon our lives. He will never give up on us, and just as Jesus pursued and restored Peter, when we fail, the Holy Spirit will pursue us to bring correction and restoration.

The Lord did not just want to restore the heart of Peter; He also wanted to use the life of Peter to bring healing to others. Jesus said to him, “When you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:32). In a similar manner, the Holy Spirit not only longs to heal our broken hearts, He also desires to anoint our lives to bring healing to others through His power. The Holy Spirit desires to send us to heal the brokenhearted, for as the Father sent Jesus, He sends us also! (Luke 4:18, John 20:21)

The Power of the Holy Spirit to Heal the Brokenhearted

When a doctor performs surgery, he first uses the scalpel to make an incision, in order to reach the area that needs to be healed. Instead of a scalpel, however, the Holy Spirit uses a sword. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God: “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). He has a sharp two-edged sword: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

One edge of His sword is truth and the other is grace: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). He cuts by convicting us of sin and confronting us with the reality of our need to repent and to forgive others; at the same time, He shows us grace by accepting us and healing our wounds. He is both the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Grace (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13, Zechariah 12:10, Hebrews 10:29).

Chapter Ten

The Power of the Holy Spirit to Deliver the Oppressed

*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because He has anointed me to proclaim
liberty to the captives, to set at liberty
those who are oppressed
Luke 4:18*

True Freedom

It was close to midnight in Puerto Rico as the pastor and I left the church service. It had been a glorious night; people had been saved, healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. We had experienced a powerful manifestation of the kingdom of God,

and our hearts were full of joy. When we walked outside, we saw an ambulance about a block away from the church. The street was dark, and it was drizzling, but we could still see the lights of the ambulance. Concerned about the situation, we decided to walk over to see what had happened.

As we approached the scene, a woman came running up to us, and she insisted that she needed to talk to me. She told me that she was at the service with her daughter, but when the altar call was given, they decided not to respond. As they left the church, her son came to meet them, and they had gotten into a fight in which her daughter's foot was badly injured. The ambulance we saw had come to take her to the hospital.

With tears in her eyes, the woman said that she wanted to surrender her life to Jesus. I held both of her hands and led her in a prayer to receive Jesus. To my amazement, when she said, "Amen," she began to violently shake, and she fell down on the pavement; her body began to twist and turn, and she began to growl.

When I looked in her eyes, they were full of evil and hate. I knew that it was a demonic spirit manifesting itself in her, so I said, "In the name of Jesus come out of her!" The evil spirit spoke to me in a thick voice and said, "No!" In the name of Jesus, I bound the evil spirit. When the woman came back to her senses, I asked her if there were any specific sins that she needed to confess to the Lord, and if there was someone whom she needed to forgive. She confessed that she was using illegal drugs, and that she needed to forgive her father. That night, she made a decision to forgive her father and renounce drugs. When we prayed again, the evil spirit tried to manifest itself once again. But this time when I commanded him to leave, she nodded and began to cough and vomit as the evil spirit left her.

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She was delivered, and when we prayed for her to be filled with the Holy Spirit, she fell under the power of God again. But this time, we could see overwhelming peace in her face. When she got up, she was totally free. Her father had just arrived to see what had happened; she embraced him, and they cried together.

As we were turning to leave, the paramedics, who saw everything that had happened, asked me to go into the ambulance to pray for the young girl also. I went inside the ambulance and told her that the Lord was giving her a second opportunity. With tears in her eyes, she decided to receive Jesus into her heart. Then I prayed for her foot to be healed, and she told me that all of the pain had left her foot. The next day was Sunday, and at the morning service, the first two to come up to the altar were the woman and her daughter.

The Anointing Destroys the Yoke

The anointing of the Holy Spirit brings freedom to those who are oppressed: “It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil” (Isaiah 10:27). Only the power of the Holy Spirit can set us free from addictions, curses and demonic oppression. And only through His power are we able to minister deliverance to others. The Word of God says, “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

There is a real spiritual battle over our souls. The Scriptures explain, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the

rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). People are not our enemies; our enemy is the devil. The Word of God also warns us to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Our enemy’s purpose is clearly described in the Scriptures. Jesus said, “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). Anything that has to do with killing, stealing and destroying does not come from God. Our God is good, and His desire is to bless His children.

The enemy is the one who wants to steal our joy and peace; His will is to kill God’s dreams and purposes for our lives. Ultimately, his desire is to destroy our families, health and eternal souls. We must never get confused: God is good, the devil is bad. The Scriptures declare, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

Jesus did not come only to save and heal, He also came to destroy the works of the devil: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). The ministry of Jesus was not only characterized by the healing of the sick, but also by the deliverance that He brought to those who were suffering from spiritual oppression: “They brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them” (Matthew 4:24).

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The Scriptures go on to say, “They brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick” (Matthew 8:16). Jesus declared, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me ... to proclaim liberty to the captives ... to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18).

The way that Jesus was able to destroy the works of the enemy was by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures explain, “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

Jesus himself declared, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). Evil spirits only leave by the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit is much greater than the power of any evil spirit. When the kingdom of God manifests itself, evil spirits have to flee. Even a legion of demons cannot stand against the authority of Jesus and the power of the Spirit of God (Mark 5:1-20).

When Jesus began His ministry, after teaching on the Sabbath, “there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out saying, ‘Let us alone!’” (Mark 1:23-24). The enemy wants to be left alone. He desires to do his work without being exposed. But Jesus publicly rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” “And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him” (Mark 1:25-26). Jesus did not leave the spirit alone; He confronted him, and cast him out. The enemy desires for us to believe that the causes of our emotional distress and psychological problems are caused *only* by the tragedies that we

faced in our past, and the offenses that we received from others. But the Lord wants to open our eyes to see the reality of demonic oppression behind some mental disorders.

The Reality of the Spiritual World

According to the Word of God, evil spirits may influence people's thoughts and emotions. The Word of God speaks about the spirit of fear: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). The evil spirit uses fear to paralyze our dreams. Fear is the root cause of most mental disorders. The spirit of fear will cause a chemical imbalance in our brains that brings about depression, anxiety and different torments upon our lives: "Fear involves torment" (1 John 4:18).

Not every mental disorder is caused by an evil spirit, but we cannot ignore the fact that the enemy also attacks our minds. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with faith instead of fear. He is the Spirit of faith (2 Corinthians 4:13). He will fill us with His love, giving us a sound mind, and His perfect love will cast out fear (1 John 4:18). The Holy Spirit fills our minds with revelation, knowledge, understanding and wisdom (Daniel 5:12, Isaiah 11:2, Ephesians 1:17).

The Scriptures also declare that the anointing of the Holy Spirit will give us "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3). The spirit of heaviness desires to cover our minds with a cloud of darkness and despair. This spirit takes away our hope, our desire to live, and our freedom to enjoy life.

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On the other hand, God longs to cover us with His mantle of praise, pouring upon our hearts His Spirit of Joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6). The apostle Paul prayed, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). True freedom from fear, depression and anxiety, and the restoration of joy, peace and hope, only comes by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Evil spirits also desire to destroy our physical bodies. The Scriptures tell us the story: “There was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up” (Luke 13:11). Not every disease is caused by an evil spirit, but we must accept the fact that, according to the Scriptures, there are evil spirits who come to bring sickness upon people’s lives. Jesus delivered this woman from the evil spirit, and “immediately she was made straight, and glorified God” (Luke 13:13). This is an amazing story of how the spiritual realm can affect the physical realm. Doctors would never have diagnosed the problem as being caused by an evil spirit, yet Jesus reveals to us that many times a spiritual deliverance is needed in order for someone to be physically healed.

On another occasion, Jesus healed a young boy, who was deaf and mute, by confronting an evil spirit. The gospel of Mark shares, “He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!’” The spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him” (Mark 9:25-27). The young boy fell under the power of the Holy Spirit, and people thought that he was dead. “But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose” (Mark 9:27).

After Jesus ascended into heaven, His disciples continued to do the works that He did, including bringing deliverance to those who were bound by evil spirits. The apostle Paul commanded a spirit of divination that possessed a young girl to come out of her by saying, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour” (Acts 16:18).

Even today the Lord desires to deliver lives that are suffering and being tormented by demonic spirits. In Hungary, as I was praying for different needs in the lives of people after a service, a family asked me to pray for a young girl who was completely deaf. When I placed my hands over her ears and commanded the deaf spirit to leave her in the name of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon her, and she fell down on the floor of the church. She began to twist and turn on the floor until there was a release, and then she became completely still. When she stood up again she could hear perfectly through both of her ears.

When I ministered in Cuba, a young man stood outside the church listening to the message. He suddenly began to shake under the power of the Holy Spirit, then he left. The next day, as we were walking with the pastors in the town square, he came to us and asked us about what it was that he had felt the day before. He said that it was the first time in his life that he had felt peace. We shared the gospel with him, and repenting from his sins, he decided to receive Jesus into his heart. But as we prayed for him, he began to writhe on the ground and growl in a loud voice like an animal. When we commanded the evil spirits to leave, he vomited several times. When he arose, he was completely transformed and full of joy. The Lord had not only saved him, but had also delivered him from homosexuality.

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After a youth service in Colombia, a young man also manifested an evil spirit by screaming and acting like an animal. Someone tried to approach him, but the young man pushed him away with so much force that he fell several feet backwards. The young man was so aggressive that no one dared to come near him. I commanded the evil spirit to leave in the name of Jesus, and when the spirit left, it entered a young lady that was also at the service. She began to act in a very similar manner, and as we ministered to her, we found out that she was in a promiscuous relationship with the young man that had just been delivered. They both repented from their sins and surrendered their lives to Jesus. Both were fully delivered and filled with the Holy Spirit on that same night.

Legal Rights

To walk in total freedom, we must understand that the spiritual world is based on legal rights. Your body is similar to your home. You determine who will enter there. I can knock on the door of your home, but it's up to you whether to let me in. You have the legal rights to your home, and you determine to whom you give the rights to enter. Jesus says to us, "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). When we pray to receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He literally comes into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. As we surrender the different areas of our lives to the Lord through repentance, He fills those "rooms" with His Spirit.

The enemy also knocks at the door of our hearts through different temptations, and it is up to us not to let him in: "Sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you

should rule over it” (Genesis 4:7). When people willfully sin, they are giving the enemy legal rights to influence their lives, but when we choose to walk in holiness, the enemy has no legal rights to our lives: “Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26-27).

It is important to live holy lives, so that we may be able to walk in spiritual freedom. The Scriptures declare, “A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there” (Isaiah 35:8-9). Jesus even declared that the enemy had no hold on Him, for He lived in perfect holiness (John 14:30). In order for us to be free, we must specifically confess and repent from our sins. Through repentance, we give God the legal rights that we had yielded to the enemy.

Our eyes and ears are also gates to our souls. We must be careful regarding what we watch and listen to if we want our lives to remain filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness” (Luke 11:34).

The enemy also has access to people’s lives due to lack of forgiveness. The apostle Paul wrote, “Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:10-11). In order to walk in freedom, it is vital for us to do what Jesus said: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who

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curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Luke 6:27-28).

People also give legal rights to evil spirits, and allow those spirits to influence their lives, by getting involved in the occult. Those who practice witchcraft, soothsaying or sorcery, and those who conjure spells, are opening their lives to demonic spirits. People who consult mediums and those who call up the dead are also opening their hearts to evil spirits (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, 2 Kings 21:6, 2 Chronicles 33:6).

Even if people are innocently seeking help with good intentions, the enemy will still take advantage of the authority that he has been given to ultimately bring destruction to their lives. People who have been involved in the occult, but who desire to live in freedom, must renounce these practices and make Jesus the Lord and Savior of their lives.

The enemy also has legal rights to kill, steal and destroy lives that practice idolatry. When people bow down before an idol, they are actually giving the demon that operates through that idol authority over their lives (Deuteronomy 32:16-17, Revelation 9:20). According to the Scriptures, these demonic spirits bring poverty, perversion, and mental illness (Jeremiah 50:36-38). Many people today bow down before statues, saints and virgins, not realizing that God said, “You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 26:1).

The Scriptures is very clear when it says, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Those who have been involved

in false religions or idolatry should also renounce these practices, and as they make Jesus their Lord and Savior, the enemy will lose his legal rights to their lives.

When Jesus taught us to pray, he gave us the keys to spiritual freedom. He taught us that we should say, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Jesus taught us to first deal with the root of the problem. First, we ought to repent specifically from our sins, and we ought to also forgive others. Then Jesus taught us to continue to pray for our deliverance by saying, "Deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13). Once the enemy loses his legal rights upon our lives, we must command him in the name of Jesus to leave.

The Scripture tells us, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We can resist the devil, but if we don't first submit to God, the devil will not flee from us. We can also submit to God, but if we don't resist the devil, he will not flee from us. We must do both: submit our wills to the will of God *and* reject the enemy. We submit to God by repenting from our sins and forgiving others. We resist the devil by commanding him in the name of Jesus to leave. Jesus said, "These signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17).

People were lined up at the altar, waiting to receive prayer to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As soft worship music was playing in the background, I was praying and laying hands on each one of them. It was truly beautiful to see the peace that overcame all the people as they fell under the anointing and were filled with the Spirit of God.

There was a very powerful, yet gentle, presence of the Lord in our midst. At times like these, when He manifests His

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kingdom and glory, there is no place on earth I would rather be. However, when I approached a woman in the line to pray for her, she violently screamed. She opened her eyes, and as she continued to scream, she looked straight into my eyes with extreme hatred. I could truly see evil in her eyes.

As I prayed for her, she fell on the floor and continued to scream aggressively. The evil spirit began to speak, saying that he had a right to be there because of a tattoo that she had on her back. In the name of Jesus, I broke the curse that was upon her because of that tattoo, and as I commanded the evil spirit to come out of her, she began to cough and vomit on the floor. She then experienced a release, and she began to cry out of joy.

The woman stood up, and with tears in her eyes, she embraced me, saying that she was free. Then she lifted up her hands and began to thank the Lord for her freedom. It was amazing to see the change in her face. Her eyes changed from being full of anger and hatred to being full of joy and gratitude. The next day, she returned to the service and told me that she had slept well for the first time in many years, and she felt completely free. Several months later, she sent me her testimony:

“I am originally from Panama, and I am fifty-three years old. I was born to divorced parents, and growing up my mother verbally abused me constantly. Since I felt rejected by my mother, I felt compelled to get married when I was seventeen years old in order to leave my home. My marriage failed, and I got involved in prostitution. By the age of twenty, I was practicing witchcraft and santeria, which is the worship of saints. I dedicated my home to satanic rites, and I began to expand this business that I believed was to help others. I began

to visit cemeteries to invoke the spirits of the dead. I had and read many books about santeria. In my spiritual blindness, I was filling my life with demons, and I did not know it. I visited other witchdoctors, but my life and relationships continued to get worse. Men continued to abuse me and humiliate me. I had no emotional, or financial stability in my life. In my desperation I made a pact between good and evil by tattooing a saint on my back thinking that this would protect me. I also tried to commit suicide and murder my own children and mother several times, but was not successful.”

In the midst of her despair, Jesus came to her rescue. She continued to write, “Some Christian friends invited me to church and there the process to my deliverance began. The devil would appear to me trying to drive me mad, but the Lord in his infinite love took my hand and did not let me go. During this time, I attended a crusade, and the Lord used the evangelist Andres Bisonni to set me completely free. I thank the Lord that today I enjoy all the promises and blessings that He has given me. Since He came into my life, now I smile, I have peace, and I am happy. Jesus has completely filled my life.”

Compassion for the Hurting

The emphasis in ministering deliverance should never be on the evil spirits, but in bringing freedom to real people who have been under utter torment and tremendous suffering. We must realize that demonic oppression is real even today, and that it is bringing great suffering to many lives. Jesus was willing to cross the Sea of Galilee just to bring freedom to one man that was under great torment. The Scriptures tell us, “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones” (Mark 5:5).

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Imagine the tremendous psychological and physical suffering that demons were inflicting upon this man. In a similar manner, today there are people all over the world who are experiencing incredible mental, emotional and spiritual anguish. After Jesus delivered this man from a legion of demons, the Scriptures tells us that the people “came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15). The mind of this man was restored after he was delivered from demons.

Jesus loves people, and that is the reason He sends us in the power of His Spirit to bring freedom to those who are being tortured by demonic spirits. Jesus gave His disciples “power and authority over all demons” (Luke 9:1). He even promised them, “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19). The power comes when the Holy Spirit not only fills us, but also manifests Himself upon us. Our authority only comes in the name of Jesus because of His triumph over all powers and principalities on the cross (Colossians 2:15).

Chapter Eleven

The Power of the Holy Spirit to Heal the Sick

*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because He has anointed me
to proclaim recovery of sight to the blind
Luke 4:18*

Miracles

For the first twenty-two years of my life, I never heard that God still heals the sick today, and I never saw even one miracle take place. My desire was to help the suffering through medicine; praying for the sick had never even crossed my mind, even though I had read the Bible from cover to cover.

When I found myself in the midst of the revival in Argentina, I attended a church service where an evangelist was praying for the sick. I had never seen anything like it before. I was intrigued, since my desire was to study medicine. I began to see and hear testimony after testimony of people who were healed during the meeting that night.

As I stood at the back of the church, tears began to run down my face. Overcome with emotion, I thought: "This is the God that I have heard about and read about all of my life. This is the God that I believe in. This is the God of Israel. This is the God who revealed himself through Jesus Christ. This is the God who dwells in the midst of His people, manifesting His glory. He hasn't changed." As I stood at a distance, a deep desire began to burn in my heart to draw closer to God, and to know Him more.

This journey led me to realize that the secret for miracles to take place is the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no greater power in the universe than the power of the Spirit of God. There is no sickness that He cannot heal. There is no brokenness that He cannot restore. When the Holy Spirit manifests His power, miracles happen. For the power of the Holy Spirit, there is nothing impossible.

Every miracle that took place through the person of Jesus was because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon His life. Jesus did not perform any miracles until the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him. Though He was God, Jesus lived in this world as a man (Philippians 2:5-8). Jesus is the example for us to follow, and all the miracles that the Holy Spirit did through His life, He desires to do through ours also (John 14:12).

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Peter believed in Jesus, and even though Peter had failed Him on repeated occasions, he still decided to follow the Lord. After being endued with the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and preached before thousands. The Holy Spirit had taken away his fear and filled him with boldness. Peter also began to do the works of Jesus. The Scriptures declare, “They brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.” (Acts 5:15-16) It was not the shadow of Peter that healed the sick. It was the power of the Holy Spirit upon Peter that healed every single sick person that came near him.

It is easy to believe that Jesus healed all that came to Him, because He is God; however, the Scriptures tell us that the Lord also healed all through Peter, who was human, just like you and me. The same power that rested upon Jesus and Peter can also rest upon our lives. The same miracles that took place through their lives can also take place through our lives. The Holy Spirit hasn’t changed. He still loves people, and He longs to heal those who are suffering.

The Goodness of God

In order to be used by the Holy Spirit in bringing healing to the sick, we must have the assurance in our hearts that God is good and merciful. The Scriptures declare, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 107:1). Not only we must know that He is good, we must also experience His goodness. The Scriptures tell us, “Oh,

taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” (Psalm 34:8) For us to experience the depths of His goodness, we need to be exposed to God’s glory (Exodus 33:19).

When Solomon consecrated the temple, the children of Israel experienced His goodness. The Scriptures tell us, “When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever’” (2 Chronicles 7:3). The Lord is extremely good.

Once we experience His goodness, never again would we even dare believe that diseases come from Him; never again we would even consider sickness to be a part of His will for our lives. We will pray with a new boldness and assurance against every type of illness. He is a good Father, and He desires to give good gifts to His children. Jesus said, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11)

God’s Perfect Will

God doesn’t only desire to heal some people, His will is to heal all those who ask Him for healing. His perfect will is revealed through the life of Jesus. If we want to know what God is like, we must look at Jesus. Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus healed every single person that came to Him. The Scriptures declare, “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirit with a word, and

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healed all who were sick” (Matthew 8:16). The Scriptures even go on to declare, “And great multitudes followed Him and He healed them all” (Matthew 12:15).

God’s motivation to heal is His love and compassion towards those who are hurting. The Bible tells us, “When Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick” (Matthew 14:14). God hasn’t changed; He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:18). Just as Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the sick, He is moved with compassion when He sees the suffering today. He desired to heal all hundreds of years ago, and He desires to heal all today.

The New Covenant

The Lord’s desire to heal us is so great that on the cross He not only established a covenant with us for the forgiveness of our sins, but His body was also broken so that we may be physically healed. The Scriptures declare, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

On the cross, Jesus bore our sicknesses so that we would not have to bear them. The Scriptures tell us, “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:17). His covenant with us, through His blood, is for our complete salvation and restoration, which includes the healing of our bodies. This is an eternal covenant, making it valid even today. (Hebrews 13:20) When we pray for the sick, we need to have the assurance that God is good, His will is to heal all, and that

on the cross, Jesus established a covenant that provides for the healing of our diseases.

Faith

Jesus promised that if we believe, we will see the glory of God (John 11:40). In order for miracles to take place, our faith is also important. Jesus said, "This sign will follow those who believe; in my name they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17,18). If we want to see lives healed, we must believe that, in the name of Jesus, people are healed even today. Our faith should not be in our ability or our prayers. Jesus said, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

Miracles happen only in the name of Jesus. When the Holy Spirit worked through Peter to heal a crippled man, Peter made it clear by declaring, "Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole" (Acts 4:10).

On several occasions, Jesus also commended the faith of those who were receiving the miracle. On His way to Jerusalem, He passed through Jericho. On the way out, a blind beggar was sitting by the side of the road and began to call upon His name. When people told the man to be quiet, he shouted even louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:46-48). "Jesus sent for him, and then asked him, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The blind man said to Him, 'Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road" (Mark

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10:51-52). On this occasion, it was the faith of the blind man that activated the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures tell us, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matthew 9:35). In one of those villages, “The whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all” (Luke 6:19). Yet when Jesus entered another town, everyone was touching Him, but there was no power flowing out from Him, and there were no miracles. People could have said, “Jesus doesn’t heal anymore. He only healed in the other town. He has changed. The power of the Holy Spirit to heal was for yesterday, but not for today.” It was the same Jesus in two different locations, yet there were different manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, in the town where no one was being healed, there was a woman who had been suffering for twelve years and could not be healed by the physicians; she touched the hem of the garment of Jesus, and she was immediately healed. Jesus said, “Who touched Me?” When all denied it, Peter and those with Him said, “Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” But Jesus said, “Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me” (Luke 8:45-46).

Jesus said to the woman, “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace” (Luke 8:48). Her faith not only activated the power of the Holy Spirit, but it also pleased the Lord. The Scriptures tell us that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus rejoices when people, even without seeing the miracles He performed, still believe that He is able and willing to heal today.

On other occasions, it was simply the compassion of Jesus that brought about the miracle. When Jesus saw a man that had been ill for thirty-eight years, He asked him, "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6). The man did not give Him an affirmative answer, but instead gave Him an excuse for why he could not be healed. Nevertheless, Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:8-9). Later in the text, we find out that this man did not even know who Jesus was. The power of the Holy Spirit came upon this man simply because our God is merciful and compassionate.

As we were hearing testimonies from people who had received a physical healing at a crusade in a small town in New Mexico, an older man came to the platform, extremely upset. He took the microphone from my hand and began to address the crowd. In a loud voice he said, "I don't believe in anything you are doing here. But when I came here I was blind in this eye, and now I can see!"

Nobody had prayed for him, he had no faith, but simply by being in the atmosphere of the presence of the Holy Spirit, God in His mercy had healed him! I asked him if he believed now, and he said that he had no option but to believe. Then I asked him if he would like to receive Jesus into his heart; he said yes, and after he prayed to receive Jesus, he fell on the stage under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Power

Every circumstance is different, and every person is unique. There are no formulas for receiving a miracle, or for praying for the sick. But one thing is for certain: in order for miracles to take place, the power of the Holy Spirit must be

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present. In Luke 5:17 we read, “The power of the Lord was present to heal them.” This implies that sometimes the power of the Lord is not present to heal. God desires to heal, the covenant for our healing has been established, people can have all the faith in the world, and we can pray with all of our hearts; but if the power of the Holy Spirit is not present to heal, nothing will happen.

I believe this is the main reason why we don’t see everyone healed today when we pray. It is not because of their lack of faith; rather, it is because of the lack of power. There are different levels of intensity of the anointing, and we still haven’t reached the level that was upon Jesus. As we learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and fully surrender our lives to Him, I believe that we will see greater manifestations of His power. The Scriptures declare, “Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!” (1 Chronicles 16:11, Psalm 105:4). Our motivation for seeking His power should always be our compassion for those who are hurting, our desire to see the will of God established on earth, and for the name of Jesus to be glorified.

So many people were coming to the services in Cartagena, Colombia that we could no longer fit inside the church building. The pastor decided to move the meeting to the sidewalk outside the church, next to a very busy street. Cars, buses and motorcycles were passing by us very closely as we worshipped and shared the gospel.

As we began to pray, people began to fall under the power of the Holy Spirit onto the sidewalk, and many were healed, even though no one had laid hands on them. It was beautiful to see so many lives receive Jesus, and to hear so many testimonies of healing that night. A man testified that he was

sitting on his motorcycle by the side of the road, listening to the message. He had arthritis in his knee, but as we prayed, he heard a popping sound, and he was immediately healed. Jumping and rejoicing, he testified of what the Lord had done for him.

The Kingdom of God

Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Luke 11:2). The Lord did this because the will of God is not being done on earth as it is being done in heaven. When we see pain and suffering all around us, we need to realize that it is not the will of God. In heaven there is no suffering, no sorrow, no pain and no sickness (Revelation 21:4). That is the perfect will of God for us.

For the will of God to be done and established in our lives here on earth, His kingdom needs to come. The kingdom of God manifests itself on earth today through the power of the Holy Spirit: “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power” (1 Corinthians 4:20). The kingdom of God is the manifestation of the essence of heaven, and it is found in the Holy Spirit: “For the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

The message that Jesus came to bring us is truly good news. He said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Jesus is telling us that we can experience the reality and essence of heaven not only after we die, but also in our lives here on earth. We can experience righteousness, joy and peace (Romans 14:17). We can taste the powers of the age to come (Hebrews 6:5). We can behold his beauty and His glory (Psalm 27:4, 2

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Corinthians 3:18). Jesus not only came so that through faith in Him we would be able to experience heaven after we die; He also came to bring the kingdom of heaven to us! But if we truly want to experience the essence and power of heaven here on earth, there are two things we must do first: Repent, and believe in the gospel. When we choose to turn away from our sins and receive Jesus into our hearts, the kingdom of heaven comes within us: “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

If we want to see miracles, signs and wonders take place in our midst, we need the kingdom of God to come upon us. Jesus said, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). When people are delivered and healed, it is a sign that the kingdom of God is upon us.

We can pray and believe, but if the power of the Holy Spirit is not upon us, nothing will happen. God was good, God is good and God will always be good. When Jesus walked on earth, His will was to heal everyone who came to Him. His will today hasn’t changed; He still desires to heal everyone who comes to Him (Hebrews 13:8). His covenant with us through His blood includes our physical healing (Isaiah 53:5). But only as His kingdom is manifested in our midst through the power of the Holy Spirit do people actually receive supernatural healing.

Jesus told His disciples, “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). Yet if we want the kingdom of God not only to be within us, but also to come upon us, we must desire the presence of the Holy Spirit and to live in holiness more than anything else in this world. Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom

of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). As the presence of the Holy Spirit and living righteous lives becomes our priority, Jesus endues us with His power, and we become carriers of His kingdom. Jesus told His closest followers, “I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me” (Luke 22:29).

Once His power comes upon our lives, Jesus sends us out the same way He sent His disciples when He told them, “As you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:7-8). As we go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of darkness is destroyed, and the kingdom of His beloved Son is established. When we see His kingdom and power manifested through our lives, our prayer should always be: “Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever” (Matthew 6:13).

I am amazed every time we hear testimonies of what the Lord has done during the healing services that we hold all over the world. We have heard so many testimonies that it would be impossible to share all of them. Most of the miracles at our services take place during the time of worship. Some people have even testified of being healed as they were sitting down listening to the message. No one lays hands or specifically prays for each person. The Holy Spirit knows the exact need of every person at the services, and He ministers to each one specifically and individually. Many people describe a feeling like an electric current, or a burning heat, as the Holy Spirit comes upon them to heal them. Many times they also describe a trembling, and sometimes they even fall on the floor. Other times we have heard testimonies of the Holy Spirit giving people visions as they are healed.

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In one of our meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, a woman shared that as we were worshipping, she saw a vision of Jesus coming to her. She had a tumor in her abdomen, and when Jesus touched her, the tumor disappeared.

One of the most beautiful experiences I have ever had occurred as we ministered in the open air in Galilee, Israel. In the same region where Jesus performed so many miracles around two thousand years ago, we saw the Holy Spirit heal many lives from all kinds of different sicknesses and diseases. A woman testified that she saw a vision of Jesus coming down from a mountain, and He reached out His hand to her and healed her eyes. A man even testified that he was blind in one eye, and that as we worshipped the Lord, his eye was opened and now he was able to see perfectly. At the end of the service, we prayed for the children to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and as a wave of the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them, they fell on the floor. Most of them began to speak in other tongues. It was truly amazing to behold!

One of the most powerful manifestations I've seen of the Holy Spirit's power to heal took place as we ministered in Bogota, Colombia. The level of expectancy for the supernatural was so high that after sharing from the Scriptures for about fifteen minutes, the kingdom of God came upon us in power, and people began to receive healing in their bodies.

A woman testified that she had breast cancer, and that the tumor, which had been extremely hard, had disappeared. The Lord restored the sight of a man who, for fifteen years, could only see shadows, but now he was able to see colors perfectly. A woman was delivered from a spirit of suicide. A young boy received restoration of his eyesight. A man who had been deaf in one ear for twenty years was completely healed.

My Beloved Holy Spirit

When we invited those who wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit to come to the front, people were literally running to the altar! A wave of the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them, and hundreds were filled with the Holy Spirit.

We also witnessed many miracles during an event in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I was really impacted by the testimonies of a young girl who was about six years old, and her brother who was around eight years old. They were deaf since birth, and during the meeting they were able to hear for the first time.

Jesus is the healer, and He heals through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in us, and as we minister, He comes not only upon our lives, but also upon those in need of healing. There is truly nobody more precious on this earth than the Holy Spirit. As He comes upon our lives, His kingdom and power are manifested upon the earth. The Holy Spirit wants to empower us, so that His will might be done through our lives on earth, even as it is being done in heaven (Matthew 6:10).

Chapter Twelve

Transformed by the Holy Spirit

*but we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in
a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being
transformed into the same image from glory to
glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord*
2 Corinthians 3:18

The Image of God

Our greatest passion in life should be to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Our greatest privilege is to get to know His heart by spending time in His presence (Psalm 27:4, Philippians 3:10). Our main aspiration should be to become a disciple of Jesus, and our

greatest mission should be to make disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:19). As disciples of Jesus, we should do the works that He did and even greater (John 14:12). In His name, we ought to preach the gospel, heal the brokenhearted, set at liberty those who are oppressed and heal the sick (Luke 4:18).

Jesus said to His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22). Only through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in His name, are we able to do the works that Jesus sent us out to do.

As disciples of Jesus, we should not only aspire to do the same works that He did, we should also desire to be like Him. As His disciples, we should not only long to be carriers of His power, but also bearers of His image. When people look at our lives, they should see not only His power, but also His character and His very nature. The Holy Spirit is the only One who is able to transform our lives so that we may reflect the image of Jesus on this earth: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Scriptures declare that Jesus “is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). And according to Hebrews 1:3, Jesus is “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.” Jesus even said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Just as Jesus was the image of the Father, we ought to be the image of Jesus on earth. When people saw Jesus, they saw God; and when people see us, they ought to see Jesus. We should be “epistles of Christ written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

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The image of Christ is manifested through the fruit of the Spirit: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). This is the very essence and nature of Jesus.

The eyes of Jesus are full of love; when a young man came to him inquiring about how he might receive eternal life, Jesus “looking at him, loved him” (Mark 10:21). His heart is full of compassion: “When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Jesus is a person full of joy. When His disciples shared with Him the works that the Holy Spirit was doing through their lives, “Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit” (Luke 10:21). His inner peace was so deep that He was even able to sleep in the midst of a storm (Matthew 8:24). He is “gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29); when the children came to Him, “He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:16). He is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” (Joel 2:13).

Our longing should be for the fruit of the Spirit to be a reality in our lives. But it doesn’t take long for us to realize that there are aspects of our character that do not reflect the fullness of God’s image and nature. God made Adam and Eve in His image: “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27).

Adam and Eve bore the image of God upon the earth, but because of sin the image of God was distorted in their lives. Because of their disobedience, the desires of the flesh were

manifested in man: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Adam’s descendants were begotten in Adam’s image, not in God’s image: “And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth” (Genesis 5:3). We have been begotten in the image of Adam, and we bear the nature of Adam, but someday, we will bear the nature of Jesus: “As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Corinthians 15:49). The Scriptures also assure us, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29).

We cannot be conformed to the image of Jesus through our own efforts. We may strive to change, but we soon realize that it is not possible in our own strength. We may be able to change our actions, but we will never be able to change our nature. We may no longer steal, but in our hearts we may continue to harbor envy and jealousy. We may not murder, but we may continue to show hatred and outbursts of anger. We may not commit adultery, but we may still lust in our hearts. We may not bow down before idols, but we may still worship material possessions. We may do good works, but we may still have selfish ambitions.

Transformed by Beholding His Face

Through rules and regulations, religions may try to modify our behavior, but only the Spirit of the Lord is able to transform our nature and very essence. It is similar to the

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difference between a physical change and a chemical change. A physical change causes a transformation in the shape of an object, but its composition remains the same. The molecules are rearranged, but the internal structure is unaltered.

On the other hand, a chemical change not only transforms the shape of the material, but it also changes the material's composition by altering the actual structure of the molecules. For example, if we take scissors and cut a square piece of paper into a round piece of paper, the shape of the paper changes, but it continues to be paper. However, if we take a piece of paper and set it on fire, not only will the shape of the paper change, but also its composition. It will no longer be paper; it will be transformed into ashes. The very essence of the paper is changed.

Religions may change the way we live, but only the Holy Spirit can transform our very nature. Religion tries to change us from the outside in; the Holy Spirit transforms us from the inside out. As the Spirit of God transforms our nature, our behavior also changes. We begin to love what He loves and reject what He rejects. We begin to love people, and we begin to hate sin. We become merciful towards others, slow to anger, patient, and kind. Our hearts begin to feel compassion towards the hurting, and our souls reflect peace. Our actions manifest humility and gentleness, and our eyes are full of His love.

This transformation only takes place as we behold in our hearts the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures declare, "God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). As we turn our eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, we are transformed into His image. King David wrote, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my

heart said to You, ‘Your face, Lord, I will seek’” (Psalm 27:8). Because King David was determined to seek and behold the face of the Lord, his heart was transformed, and he became a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).

This process is similar to sitting close to a big fire. Without exerting any effort, the qualities of the fire begin to be imparted into our lives. Our skin suddenly begins to get warm, and it even begins to turn red. The closer we get to the fire, the greater the influence that it has on us. Similarly, when we draw closer to the Spirit of the Lord who dwells inside of us, and simply behold His glory, the qualities and nature of Jesus are supernaturally imparted into our lives.

The apostles James and John had such strong personalities that they were known as the Sons of Thunder. When Jesus was not received kindly in a village in Samaria, James and John said, “Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But Jesus rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them” (Luke 9:53-56). Since they did not know the Holy Spirit, they were ready to send judgment upon the Samaritans.

When we get to know the Holy Spirit, we know the purpose for which Jesus came: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). Jesus also said, “I did not come to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:47).

Later, James and John both experienced amazing transformations in their lives. John made some remarkable

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statements. He wrote, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). He even wrote: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). John, a man who was ready to command fire to destroy lives, was so transformed that he was now willing to lay down his life for others.

James actually did lay down his life for the Lord and his brethren: "King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword" (Acts 12:1-2). How did such a change in their lives come about? What caused the hearts of these men to be transformed to the point that they were willing to die because of their love for the Lord and others? Both of them had beheld the glory of the Lord. John wrote, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The Holy Spirit manifests the kingdom of God when He reveals the power and essence of heaven (1 Corinthians 4:20, Romans 14:17); the Holy Spirit manifests the glory of God when He reveals the nature of God Himself in the face of His Son Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14), and only His glory will reveal the splendor of the beauty and holiness of Jesus to our hearts (John 16:14).

The kingdom of God comes near to us through the power of the Spirit, but we must draw near to God to behold His glory. This was Jesus' prayer for us: "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me" (John 17:24). Jesus desires for us to dwell in the Secret Place in our

innermost being, where He is, so that we may behold His glory. Many people today may experience His kingdom and power through the Holy Spirit, but true transformation comes when we behold His face.

Please, Show Me Your Glory

Moses had seen the manifestation of the power of God through great signs and wonders. God had promised that His very presence would go with Moses wherever he went. Yet, Moses desired more. He not only wanted to know God's power and His ways (Psalm 103:7), he also wanted to see God's face. He said to the Lord, "Please, show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18). The Lord then gave Moses some instructions before he could behold God's glory. Likewise, we also must be willing to follow these instructions if we desire to see His face.

The Lord said to Moses, "So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain" (Exodus 34:2). We must first draw near to God (James 4:8). If we want His glory to descend, we must first ascend. King David wrote, "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face" (Psalm 24:3-6). The Lord is asking, "Who is going to be the person to enter His presence and abide in the Secret Place?"

The Lord compares entering His presence to ascending a mountain. Climbing a mountain is not an easy task; it takes much dedication and a great effort to be able to make it to the

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top. Similarly, abiding in the presence of God requires a great sacrifice. We need to invest our time, be willing to die to our desires, and overcome the worries of life in order to ascend the hill of the Lord. But once we are on top, everything changes. From the peak of a mountain, we are able to see further, and the way we see the world also changes. In a similar manner, in the presence of God, the Holy Spirit shows us things to come and reveals to us His perspective on life. Even where there seems to be no future, He gives us hope by revealing to us His dreams.

It is not necessary for us to climb an actual mountain to encounter God, since the glory of God is revealed in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:6). But we must lift up our souls, not to an idol, but to the Lord. The Scriptures declare that we must approach the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart. Jesus declared, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Only through the blood of Jesus are we able to approach God with clean hands and a pure heart (Hebrews 10:19). James 4:8 not only encourages us to draw near to God, but also to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.

Moses was the only one in his generation that went up the mountain. He said to the people, "You were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain" (Deuteronomy 5:5). In a similar manner, today many people are afraid of the manifestations of the fire of the Holy Spirit. They prefer not to draw near to the Lord; as a result, they miss the opportunity to behold His glory.

During the time of Jesus, there were several different groups of people who followed Him. There were the multitudes that followed Him because of His miracles, and

because He gave them something to eat (Matthew 19:2). There was a group of seventy men whom He called to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, to heal the sick and to deliver the oppressed (Luke 10:1-12). There was also the group of His twelve disciples, who walked closely with Him as He revealed to them the mysteries of the kingdom of God and prepared them to continue His ministry on earth (Luke 6:13). But out of the twelve, there was a group of three men who were His most intimate friends. These were the only three he took to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration, and to whom He revealed His glory: “He took Peter, John and James and went up on the mountain to pray” (Luke 9:28).

Jesus manifested the power of the kingdom of heaven to the multitudes, but He revealed His glory only to Peter, James and John. When they were on top of the mountain, the Scriptures declare, “As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening” (Luke 9:29). And there, the Bible tells us, “They saw His glory” (Luke 9:32). I believe the Lord chose these three men because they desired more than just to receive His blessings; they longed to know His heart and to be transformed into His image. The Bible speaks of a whole generation that will ascend the hill of the Lord. My hope is that our generation will be the one that seeks Him, the one that seeks His face (Psalm 24:6).

Once Moses ascended the mountain, he had to stand on a rock. The Lord instructed Moses, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock” (Exodus 33:21). It is not enough for us to simply draw near to God with pure hearts, we must also make a decision to stand on the rock, which represents Jesus Christ. (Psalm 89:26) Only through Jesus are we able to come to God. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

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God said that, if Moses followed His instructions and did the natural things, God would do the supernatural. He said to Moses, "So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:22-23). As we lift up our souls with clean hands and pure hearts to the Lord, choosing to stand on Christ Jesus, the Lord does the supernatural: He hides us in Christ, the Rock of our salvation (2 Samuel 22:47). Only as we are hidden in Christ are we able to behold God's glory.

Moses wanted to see the face of God, but he was only allowed to see His back. He was not able to behold the face of the Lord, because his sins had not been atoned for. Therefore, Moses was separated from the glory of God: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). For that reason, the Lord had to cover (that is, separate) Moses with His hand. But because of the sacrifice of Jesus, our sins have been atoned for, and we have a privilege that not even Moses experienced: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). The veil that separated us from fully beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus has been removed by His sacrifice on the cross (Mark 15:18).

As the glory of the Lord descended, Moses was only able to see the back of the Lord and hear His name: "Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting

the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.' So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped" (Exodus 34:5-8). The manifestation of God's glory not only transforms us, but it also awakens an indescribable awe in our hearts that moves us to worship Him for who He truly is.

After beholding the glory of God, the Scriptures tell us that the skin of the face of Moses shone (Exodus 34:30). But not only was the appearance of his face transformed, his heart was also transformed. Moses had been an aggressive man. When he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body (Exodus 2:12). Yet we later read about Moses: "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men who were on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). Moses' very nature had been transformed by being exposed to the glory of God.

The apostle Paul asks the following question, "But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?" (2 Corinthians 3:7-8) The ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives is able to exceed even the manifestation of God's glory that Moses experienced.

People exposed to ionizing radiation can suffer from damage to living tissue, mutations, radiation sickness, cancer and even death. After a nuclear accident, people in the surrounding region have to be evacuated to prevent casualties due to radiation. But if someone happens to go to the region where the nuclear accident took place, they would not be able to see or detect the radiation with their natural senses. Their

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body's cells could undergo a harmful mutation without them knowing it.

When we are exposed to the glory of God, there is also a transformation that takes place in our lives without us even realizing it. The Scriptures declare, "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone" (Exodus 34:29). Exposure to ionizing radiation causes harmful mutations in people, but exposure to God's glory causes a wonderful transformation in our lives.

There are three standard ways to limit exposure to ionizing radiation. The first one is limiting or minimizing the exposure time, in order to reduce the dose from the radiation source. The second one is increasing our distance from the radiation source, since radiation intensity decreases sharply with distance. The third way is to be shielded from the radiation. Barriers of lead, concrete, or water give effective protection from energetic particles such as gamma rays and neutrons.

In a similar manner, we limit our exposure to God's glory by not spending enough time in His presence, and by not drawing near to the Lord. Many times we are also shielded from the glory of God because of our sin, shame and guilt, preventing us from being able to experience the beauty of the Lord and the life in the light of His face (Proverbs 16:15).

As we decide to behold the glory of the Lord, we enter into a process by which the Holy Spirit transforms us from glory to glory into the image of Christ. But we will not be fully changed until Jesus returns for us. The Scriptures tell us that when Jesus returns, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The Scriptures give us the

assurance, “We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

After ministering at several services at an event in Toronto, I was so exhausted that I simply laid on my back on the floor at the altar in the front of the church. As I was resting with my eyes closed, I could feel the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit all around me. Suddenly, I began to see the Lord’s face. The depth of the love and gentleness in His eyes was indescribable, and as He looked at me, He smiled. I smiled back at Him, and tears filled my eyes. I felt the tears slowly roll down the sides of my face, filling my ears. He knew I understood His heart, and I knew for sure that He understood mine.

When the beauty of the person of Jesus Christ captivates our hearts, we begin to live for the moments when the Holy Spirit reveals a glimpse of His face to us again. We live for this promise: “Your eyes will see the King in His beauty” (Isaiah 33:17). Every day, we long for the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and we desire for our lives to be continually transformed into His image, until the day we look fully upon His face: “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Psa. 17:15).

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