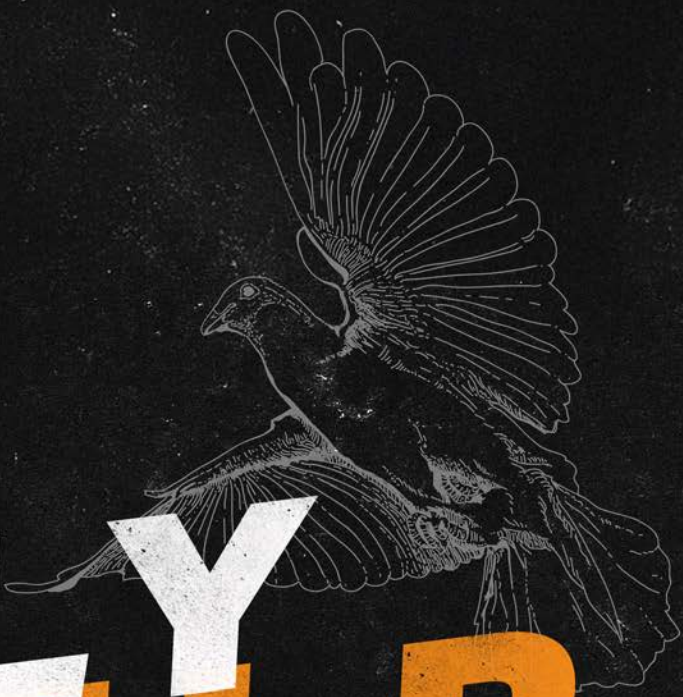




HOLY HELP

THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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The content of this book was adapted from the “Holy Help” sermon series by Tim Gilligan. Alyce Youngblood edited and Cleanline Creative designed this book.

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“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.”

JOHN 14:16-17



Our mission is to help people move from
where they are to where God wants them to be.



Meadowbrook
CHURCH

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1

THE HOLY SPIRIT



THE HOLY SPIRIT

Could you use some help?

There will always be things you cannot do—or, at least, things you cannot do *well* or cannot do *for long*—without some assistance.

At times, people can help you. Maybe you can help yourself. But human capacity is limited. Ultimately, the support and relief you most need is Holy Help: **the Holy Spirit**.

The Holy Spirit is, in many ways, the most mysterious individual of the Trinity. We'll spend time deepening our understanding of Him in the pages to come—starting with Jesus' own introduction of the Holy Spirit.

The Advantage

In John 14, we find Jesus after His crucifixion and resurrection, as He is preparing His disciples for His coming ascension. He tells them, “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” (verses 16-17).

It's difficult to imagine anything better than having Jesus Himself with you. But Jesus tells His disciples that it is “to their advantage” (John 16:7) that He goes away so a new Helper might come. At this point, Jesus could only be in one place at one time, but the Holy Spirit would always be with them *and* within them.

This same advantage—the promise of Holy Help, with us and in us—is available to us today.

The Shift That Changes Everything

Of course, before this scene in John 14, the Spirit of God was present in some form. Up until that point, the Holy Spirit had primarily, almost exclusively, helped certain individuals—such as prophets, priests, kings and writers of Scripture—in certain situations, actions or events. This help was essentially external, episodic and temporary, where God would anoint, strengthen, guide or inspire people.

So, in John 14, Jesus' words signal a radical shift to the disciples: After the work of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will come to stay. The Spirit of God will not only dwell *with* them, but *in* them. And this Holy Spirit will be experienced as a permanent, rather than temporary, presence.

Why is this so important?

Consider what the internal work of the Holy Spirit looks like. Scripture offers many examples. When Jesus speaks of this “Helper,” He uses the word *paraclete*, which roughly translates to “Comforter,” “Counselor,” “Intercessor,” “Advocate,” “Strengtheners” or “Standby.” The Holy Spirit brings salvation. He sanctifies, justifies, strengthens and guides us. He illuminates and deepens our relationship with God. He imparts wisdom. He produces the “fruit of the Spirit” in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). He builds character and holiness.

The Holy Spirit comforts us, teaches us, reminds us, leads us, warns us, convicts us, corrects us and restores us. He is and can do anything and everything we would ever need! And He is not just with us; He is in 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.”

HEBREWS 13:5b–6a

A Holy Habit

More than once, Paul admonished the Church of Corinth that their struggles stemmed from not fully relying on the Holy Spirit. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “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?”

Similarly, today’s Christians can be forgetful or negligent of the internal work of the Holy Spirit. Believers’ task is to invite His help repeatedly, continually and without reservation.

Receiving Holy Help is not a one-time act. As Galatians 5:16 (AMPC) puts it, we are called to “walk *and* live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to *and* controlled *and* guided by the Spirit].”

Take *full* advantage of the advantage of the Holy Spirit—who is with you externally, internally and forever.



2

A FIRE FOR GOD



A FIRE FOR GOD

A dove (Luke 3:22).

A mighty wind (Acts 2:1-2).

Rivers of living water (John 7:38-39).

An anointing oil (1 Samuel 16:13).

Scripture provides many powerful symbols and metaphors for the Holy Spirit. One of the most consistent and compelling metaphors for this Holy Helper is **fire**.

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist proclaims that Jesus “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Just as in a water baptism, we are to be fully immersed in the power of the Holy Spirit when we choose to follow Christ.

This symbol of fire is packed with meaning. Fire is hard to ignore. It radiates with heat and light and energy. In both the Old and New Testament, we see examples of how God’s Spirit, like fire, purifies or illuminates. For instance, in Exodus, God’s very presence appears as a pillar of fire, leading the way through the wilderness by night.

Fire is also a way of describing and understanding **passion**—meaning, something that draws your focus and produces excitement and enthusiasm.

Certainly, you have passions in your life: hobbies, sports teams, close relationships. Likely, these passions are evident to others. And, as a Christian, you should have a passion for God.

Living with the help of the Holy Spirit nurtures this passion, much like stoking a fire.

Tending the Fire in Our Hearts

What does this fire—your passion for God—look like right now?

Is it blazing? Is it a strong, glowing flame? Or is it smoldering? Is it a smoking pile of embers? Has it perhaps even faded to nothing?

Every Christian needs to fuel the fire of their passion for God.

In Leviticus 6, we find instructions given to the priests who served in the Tabernacle, which at that point was the place for meeting and offering sacrifices to God. It says, “And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning ... A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out” (verses 12-13).

What does this passage mean for believers today?

First, Jesus is our “High Priest” (Hebrews 4:14), and Christians are to think of themselves as part of a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). Further, as God’s Spirit is now always available to us internally, the “altar” is within us as well.

In other words, we are the priests responsible for the altar of our hearts. And our job is to keep the fire burning. We are to add fresh wood to that fire *every day*, and it should never go out.

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out.

PROVERBS 26:20a

Forms of “Fresh Wood” for the Fire

There are several spiritual practices and postures that act like fresh wood, fueling the fire of our passion for God.

Here are some ways to stoke the fire in your heart on a regular, even daily, basis:

- **Pray.** James 5:16 tells us, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Fervency is key! Prayer is a means of talking to God and calling on the Lord. Don’t become too quiet or too “in your head” in your prayer life. Like the Psalmist, call to God in the evening, morning and afternoon (Psalm 55:16–17).
- **Practice gratitude.** Living with gratitude is like the secret sauce of the happy, healthy Christian life. Encouragingly, the fresh wood of gratitude is easy to gather. Just start looking around you and giving thanks for the goodness in your life and all that God has done for you.
- **Worship.** Embrace personal and corporate opportunities to experience God’s presence. Music is one of the most effective and moving forms of worship. It’s not just about singing songs or stoically following along; it’s about sensing and honoring the presence of an Almighty God.
- **Get in the Word.** Scripture itself describes God’s Word as “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). “‘Is not My word like a fire?’ says the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:29). We are fortunate today to have many tools to help us understand and apply His Word in our lives. Make a habit of reading, studying and memorizing Scripture.

- **Spend time with others who are “on fire.”** People can be adders, subtractors, multipliers and dividers. As Christians, we are to have friends of all types—and, among these friends, we *must* be in proximity to people who also carry a passion for God. We are better together!

1 Thessalonians 5:19 urges, “Do not quench the Spirit.” We quench that fire—our passion for God—when we do not live in obedience to the Holy Spirit. When we do not listen to Him or seek Him. When we are not led by Him. When we become overly concerned with ourselves. When we become mechanical in our faith, going through the motions. When we forget or fail to add the “kindling” of prayer, gratitude, worship, Bible-reading and fellowship.

To live with Holy Help is to “fan into flame the gift of God” (2 Timothy 1:6, NIV) and keep our passion for Him ablaze.



3

SET YOUR MIND



SET YOUR MIND

During His life and ministry on earth, Jesus—God’s Word incarnate (John 1:14)—was in bodily form. The disciples who followed Him could literally see Him, eat with Him, listen to Him and touch Him. Then, with Jesus’ ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, God’s presence moved **from the seen to the unseen**.

For disciples then and now, this requires another shift: to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

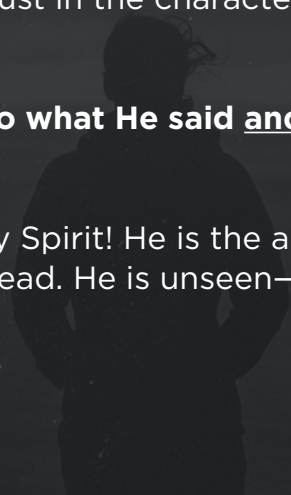
Jesus knew this shift would be difficult. He pointed out how people withheld their belief unless they witnessed something with their own eyes (John 4:48). He foretold that the world would struggle to receive the Holy Spirit, “because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.” “But you know Him,” He reassured His disciples, “for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16–17).

Walking by Faith

For Christians, walking in faith means living like Romans 4:21: “fully convinced that what [God] had promised He was also able to perform.” Faith is a relentless, settled, absolute trust in the character, nature, power, faithfulness and goodness of God.

God is powerful enough to do what He said and trustworthy enough to keep His word.

All of this is vested in the Holy Spirit! He is the agent of action and the presence of the Eternal Godhead. He is unseen—and He lives in you.



Flesh vs. Spirit

As the Holy Spirit's presence is unseen, Christians must increase their awareness of Him. Paul writes, "Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5, ESV)

However, the Spirit has some competition: **the flesh**—the human, sinful nature, which we will contend with as long as we are on this earth. It might feel easy, even natural, to focus on the flesh. But "to set the mind on the flesh is death," according to Paul, and "to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:6, ESV). Scripture cautions about these opposing influences repeatedly, saying that the flesh and the Spirit are "contrary to one another" (Galatians 5:17).

You can try to manage this conflict by training or taming the flesh. But this results in legalism—a system of rules and laws, and, ultimately, the shame of finding yourself unable to abide by them.

It is better to overcome the inner conflict with the flesh by setting your mind on the things of the Spirit. Mercifully, this also means embracing confession, repentance and restoration when you mess up or fall short—a key to the "life and peace" that comes with the Holy Spirit's help.

Remember that what you feed grows and what you starve dies. So be intentional with your concentration and your attention.

Fill your mind with the things of the Spirit.

Let us occupy ourselves entirely in knowing God.

BROTHER LAWRENCE

A New Best Friend

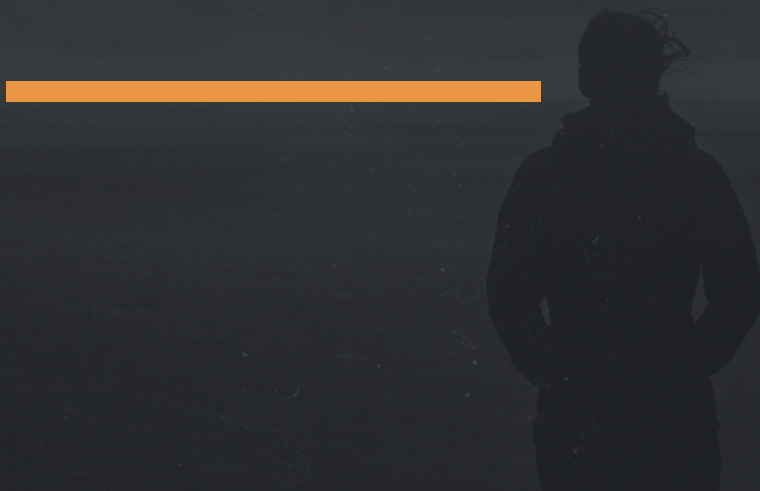
In 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul is concluding a letter to the Church of Corinth. He has been sharing much-needed correction and instruction, but also great affection and encouragement. The Message summarizes his closing thoughts like this: “The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you.”

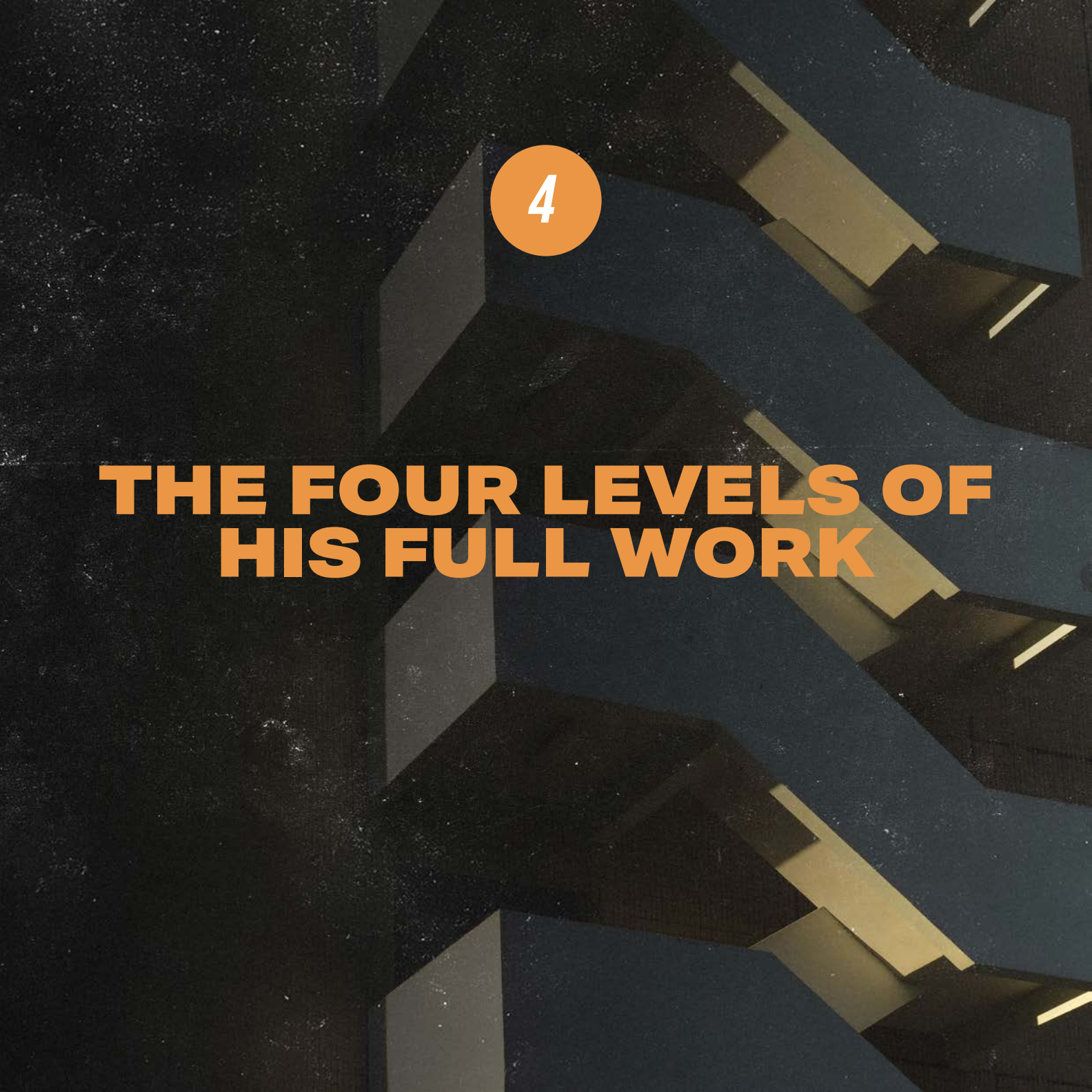
The intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit. What a helpful picture of living according to the Spirit! Think about how close friends behave. Likely, they do everything together! They go everywhere together.

Make the Holy Spirit your new “best friend.” Keep close to Him.

You can turn to the Holy Spirit with total trust and ask, “What should I do?” “How should I handle this?” “Can you please help me?” Then listen! Pay attention. Maybe you’ve heard people speak of the Holy Spirit’s voice as promptings, nudges or convictions. They describe His guidance as having peace or having hold-ups about something. Get to know that voice intimately.

This is what it means to walk by faith: walking through life alongside the Holy Spirit, in intimate friendship and with full attention.





4

THE FOUR LEVELS OF HIS FULL WORK

THE FOUR LEVELS OF HIS FULL WORK

The help offered by the Holy Spirit is multifaceted. Jesus mentions some of the Holy Spirit's many roles in John 14:26, which The Amplified Bible fills in in detail: "But the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you."

These names and attributes point to the personal, individual and inward nature of the Holy Spirit's ministry. The fullness of this work is the culmination of **four distinct yet sequentially linked experiences: being Spirit-born, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led and Spirit-formed.**

1. Spirit-Born

Being Spirit-born refers to the initial help we receive from the Holy Spirit: When someone makes the decision to receive salvation through Jesus Christ—to be "born again"—*the Holy Spirit gives birth to the spiritual life.*

In Titus 3:5, we read, "He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and *new life through the Holy Spirit*" (NLT, emphasis added).

Becoming Spirit-born is about eternity. It is about heaven. It is about **God making all things new and all things right.** And it is a prerequisite for experiencing all of the other work of the Holy Spirit.

2. Spirit-Filled

Once you are born again, you become a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). You are a dwelling place, to be filled with the Spirit.

When Paul writes of being “filled with the spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), it implies an ongoing act: to be filled with the Spirit, be *being* filled and *keep being* filled.

This experience is vital—indeed, it is commanded of Christians—and it is to be maintained daily. (Remember the “fuel for the fire” we covered earlier? This is where those routines and disciplines come into play.)

Still, being Spirit-filled is *not* the pinnacle experience. There’s more.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

ROMANS 8:14

3. Spirit-Led

Throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul confronts a group of believers who have given into impatience, pride, immorality and strife. We learn from Paul’s words to these “brothers and sisters” that even Spirit-born, Spirit-filled people can make a mess of things and live out of balance—if they are not also Spirit-led.

If you aren’t being led by the Spirit, you’ll be led by *something*: by the flesh, media, peers and so on. Who or what you follow has widespread impact on your decisions, perspectives, behaviors and clarity.

The Holy Spirit can be trusted to lead.

Make being Spirit-led your absolute, constant priority. Develop a conversational relationship with Him, in which you walk and live in Spirit-responsiveness, allowing Him to guide you.

4. Spirit-Formed

Being Spirit-formed is the process of sanctification. The result is having a Christ-like nature. This is the ultimate goal of the Christian life and an ongoing process.

Galatians 4:19 gives us this destination: “until Christ is formed in you”—or, from another angle, “until Christ is fully developed in your lives” (NLT) or “until Christ’s life becomes visible in your lives” (MSG).

In essence, when you are Spirit-formed, the character, personality and qualities of Christ become evident in your life. These are the fruit of the Spirit, and “the work which His presence within accomplishes” (Galatians 5:22, AMPC).

Being Spirit-born is a *must*.

Being Spirit-filled is a *command*.

Being Spirit-led is *vital*.

Being Spirit-formed is *the process and the goal*.





5

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT

In the Book of Philippians, Paul is in a tough situation: He is writing from a prison in Rome, during one of many imprisonments he faced while helping to build the early Church and share the news of Jesus.

Even so, Paul addresses the believers in Philippi with gratitude, optimism and joy. How is this possible?

Paul knows and names the source of his confidence: “For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” he writes (Philippians 1:19). Or, as it’s interpreted in The Living Bible, “I am going to keep on being glad, for I know that as you pray for me, and **as the Holy Spirit helps me, this is all going to turn out for my good**” (emphasis added).

You have access to this same “supply of the Spirit.” He can help you with anything and everything. He can hold you together.

The Holy Spirit’s Resume

The Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity who is live and on location with us. You can think of Him as God’s “boots on the ground.”

But we also know He has been working alongside God from the beginning. Scriptures tells us the Holy Spirit was present at creation, acting as a “master craftsman” (Proverbs 8:30). His presence and power were also instrumental at Jesus’ resurrection (Romans 6:4).

When we have Holy Help from the Holy Spirit, we are tapping into the supply of the Creator and the Redeemer. **The Spirit carries out the promises of God—and, truly, for every problem there is a promise.**

No matter what is going on, you can trust that “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4), and that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

This is why you can be confident and joyful, even in the most confusing or challenging circumstances: because you know Who your help comes from and what He is capable of (Psalm 121:1-2).

When God is our strength, it is strength indeed; when our strength is our own, it is only weakness.

SAINT AUGUSTINE

You Are Not on Your Own

Even the strongest of Christians cannot overcome the world, the desires of the flesh or the work of the devil on their own. Thankfully, they don’t have to. We have help from the Holy Spirit.

Whether you’re just looking for your car keys or facing temptation, whether you’re healing from pain or, like Paul, literally sitting in prison—the Holy Spirit knows how to deliver you, how to sort things out and how to encourage you.

Build your knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit, and in turn, you will build your faith. Most importantly, know that this is an actual, powerful relationship—walking, living and relying on the Holy Spirit.

As we conclude this exploration of the Holy Help that is available to us, let's do just that. **Let's sit with what Scripture tells us about the Holy Spirit's power and presence:**

He is the Spirit of God—and the Spirit of truth, witness, conviction, power, holiness, light, adoption, help, liberty, wisdom, revelation, promise, love, meekness, a sound mind, grace, glory, prophecy, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

He is the breath of God and the Spirit of Christ.

He is a Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener and Standby.

He descends like a dove, baptizes with fire, comforts, teaches, reminds, guides, corrects, convicts, helps and strengthens.

He is with you, and He is in you.

6

**NEXT STEPS:
MORE HELP**

NEXT STEPS: MORE HELP

To learn more about the Holy Spirit and how to grow your intimate friendship with Him, here are a few recommendations:

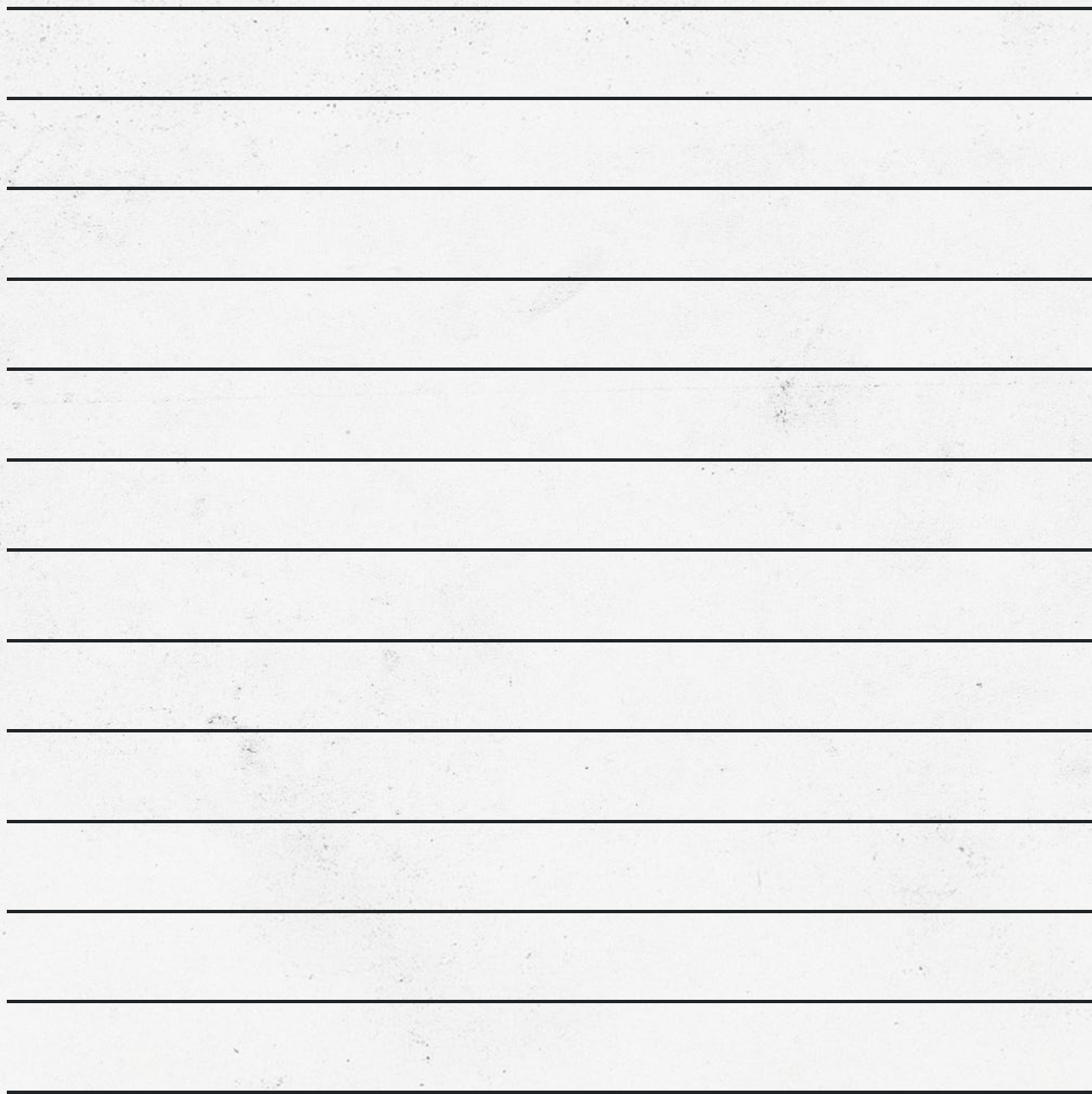
- **Watch the “Holy Help” sermon series.** This resource is adapted from a series of sermons Pastor Tim Gilligan delivered to Meadowbrook Church, and each of its five parts are available for you to view for free. You can go deeper into principles you’ve read in these pages with expanded teaching, stories and practical applications.
- **Read the Book of Romans.** Many Bible verses that shaped this resource come from the Book of Romans. Romans is the first of the epistles, or the teaching letters, in the New Testament. It’s written to Spirit-filled believers, instructing them about how to live. (Pastor Tim describes this Book as some of the highest, strongest treetops emerging from the landscape of Scripture.) You could read Romans in one hour—but take your time.
- **Read *The Practice of the Presence of God*.** This book by Brother Lawrence, a 17th-century friar, collects timeless teachings about what it means to have a daily, intimate relationship with the Spirit of God. It will equip you to think about even menial tasks and challenging circumstances as opportunities to “practice” His presence.
- **Learn more about praying in the Spirit.** If you’re curious about what this really means, Pastor Tim has offered an in-depth teaching about how to invite the Holy Spirit into your personal prayer life.



Most importantly, begin a conversational relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Even a simple, personal invitation for more Holy Help in your life is a great place to start. As Luke 11:11-13 says, “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Just ask—He is ready to respond.

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