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1

EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT'S PROMISE

The Holy Spirit is not merely a nice addendum to the Christian faith. He is at the heart and core of it. He is not merely a force or an influence. He is the third Person of the Trinity, God Himself.

If there is anything you and I must understand if we are going to live what is commonly called the victorious Christian life, it is the Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, my task in this book is to try to address in as biblical and practical a way as possible the issues surrounding this most important Person.

So we've got a huge task to undertake in these pages, for several reasons.

First, because my subject is the eternal God Himself, in the Person of God the Holy Spirit. So I've got a huge subject, and the most I can hope to do is help you understand and experience the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in a way you never have before. I could never reach the end of the subject.

Second, I'm overwhelmed by the importance of what we're going to study together. If everything in life emanates from the knowledge of God, then it's safe to say that everything in the Christian life emanates from the knowledge of the Holy Spirit.

Think about it. When He left this earth to go back to heaven, Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to do and to be all that we would ever need to live victorious Christian lives. The age we live in—the church age—was inaugurated by the Spirit's arrival at Pentecost. And when the Holy Spirit's presence is removed from this world, we're going with Him!

Let me give you some idea of the importance of the Holy Spirit's work, beginning right at the beginning. If there were no Holy Spirit, there would be no creation. If there were no Holy Spirit, there would be no human race because we would not have the principle of life operating within us.

Without the operation of the Holy Spirit, there would have been no Virgin Birth, because Jesus was born of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. There would have been no victory over Satan in the wilderness for Jesus, because it was the Spirit of God who led Him there to be tempted of the Devil.

Again, if there were no Holy Spirit, there would be no Christians, no Bible, no one to restrain sin in our world, and no expectation of the return of Christ. Without the Holy Spirit, there would be nothing.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

So the Holy Spirit is absolutely central to the Christian life. And yet, because of the mystery surrounding this third Person of the triune God, a great deal of confusion has been connected with the work of the Holy Spirit. This has led to a lot of misappropriation, as well as a lot of gross *under*appropriation, of His power and gifts.

Usually, the Holy Spirit is approached from one of two extremes. Either we know very little about Him or we try to make Him into a celebrity, someone we all think we know but don't really know at all. Neither is desirable, but we cannot let a lack of familiarity in some

circles or excesses in others keep us from pursuing the knowledge of the Holy Spirit. The fact is, His role is the indispensable factor in determining whether you win or lose spiritually, whether you are a failure or a success as a Christian.

So I want to begin our study by looking at one of the foundational New Testament passages for understanding the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. I'm talking about Jesus' Upper Room Discourse, which He delivered on the night of the Last Supper and His betrayal. It was here He promised His followers that God the Father would send them "another Helper" (John 14:16).

This was not one of the greatest moments in the lives of the disciples. This was what you would call a spiritual downtime. Everything was going wrong. Judas had shown himself to be a traitor and had just left the room on his way to betray Christ. One of the Twelve was a Benedict Arnold.

What's more, Peter had just been told that within the next twenty-four hours he was going to publicly deny Christ (John 13:38). And the Jews wanted to get rid of Christ and all His followers. So the disciples had reason to be afraid.

Then came the worst blow. Jesus told them, "I am going to go away to prepare a place for you. You can't come to Me until I come for you. I am not going to tell you when I will come for you, but trust Me" (see John 14:1-3).

Thomas reacted right away. "Jesus, You have got to be kidding. We put all of our eggs in Your basket, and now You tell us You have to leave us. Jesus, we had enough problems trying to make it with You here. How in the world do You expect us to make it if You leave us?" (see v. 5).

So this was the tension-charged, late-night environment in the upper room of a second-story flat in Jerusalem, when Jesus introduced His disciples to the ministry of the third Person of the Trinity:

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world can-

not receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. (John 14:16–17)

THE SPIRIT'S PERSON

Jesus assured His followers that even though He would leave, they would not be left alone. There would be another divine Person who would take His place in their midst. This Person would be with them as Jesus had been with them for comfort, strength, and guidance, but this Person would also be *in* them. Jesus wanted the disciples to know He was going to send them a Somebody, not a something.

A Real Person

How do we know the Holy Spirit is a Person instead of just a force or an “it”? Because He bears all the attributes of personality: intellect, emotion, and will.

The Spirit’s intellect is demonstrated by the fact that there are things He knows with His mind (Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 2:10–11). His emotions or feelings are seen in the fact that He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). His will is seen in the fact that He acts with intentionality or purpose (1 Corinthians 12:11). Only persons intend to do things.

In addition, the Bible uses personal pronouns for the Holy Spirit. Jesus referred to the Spirit as “He” (John 15:26; 16:13). The Spirit refers to Himself in the first person and also speaks His thoughts intelligibly to others, something only a person can do (Acts 13:2).

When God saves us, then, He calls us into a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. In fact, God wants us to enter into intimate communion with the Spirit’s Person (John 14:17). It is for this reason we are not to sin against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31; Acts 5:3).

One of our fundamental problems is that we look for the wrong thing first when it comes to the Holy Spirit. People talk about their need

for Holy Ghost power. Now make no mistake about it, we do need Holy Ghost power. But only after we have met Holy Ghost *Person*.

When you start dealing with the Holy Spirit as a power first, then you are always looking for the power and you may just miss the Person. But you cannot deal with a person without dealing with relationships.

What many Christians want are power surges to live the Christian life. They want a boost to take them to the next spiritual level. Many people come to church on Sunday morning looking for a Holy Ghost “oomph” to get them rolling and carry them through the week. They leave church all fired up.

But if you leave with momentary Holy Ghost power without a relationship with the Holy Ghost as a Person, as God, you will wind up with a Holy Ghost deficit in your spiritual life. The Holy Spirit is a Person we can know and relate to, not just a force or power to be used.

A Divine Person

The Holy Spirit is God, the third member of the Trinity. The word *trinity* refers to the reality that God is one in essence, yet plural in personality. There is one God composed of three distinct Persons. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit, yet each is equally and fully God.

In theological terms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are *homoousios*, “of the same essence or substance,” not *homoiousios*, “of like or similar essence or substance.” That extra Greek letter *i* in the second term makes a world of difference!

While the doctrine of the Trinity is a paradox and difficult to understand, it is not a contradiction, because the doctrine says that God is different in essence (one) than He is in person (three). Now since essence is different from person, there is no contradiction. This is a simple distinction that is hard to grasp with our finite minds.

For that reason, no picture of the Trinity is really adequate. But the one that helps me is to picture it as a pretzel. The way a pretzel

interlocks, often you will see three holes in it. One hole represents the Father, one represents the Son, and one the Spirit. They are distinct holes, but they intertwine to make one pretzel. Don't try to figure it out. Just enjoy it while you chew on it!

The thing I want you to see here is that the Holy Spirit is God. This truth is in abundant evidence in Scripture. He possesses the attributes of deity. The Spirit is omniscient or all-knowing (Isaiah 40:13; 1 Corinthians 2:2), omnipresent or in all places at once (Psalm 139:7), and omnipotent or all-powerful (Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30).

The Spirit is also equally associated with the other members of the Trinity in the writing of Scripture (Isaiah 6:9; cf. Acts 28:25; Jeremiah 31:31–34; cf. Hebrews 10:15–17). To lie to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God (Acts 5:3–4). Matthew 28:19 is especially crucial here because the singular “name” is used with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So to talk about a relationship with the Holy Spirit is at the same time to talk about a relationship with the Father and the Son. Yet, because the Spirit is a distinct Person in the Godhead with a distinct ministry, we also benefit from His unique ministry.

A Unique Person

Jesus called this Helper “the Spirit of truth” in John 14:17. In verse 26, Jesus called Him “the Holy Spirit.” There is a lot in that second name.

The Spirit is holy because He is God, totally separate from all that is unlike who and what God is. This title also focuses attention on His primary work in the life of believers: to progressively conform us to the image of Christ, the process we call sanctification (1 Peter 3:15).

The Holy Spirit is spirit because He is nonmaterial, intangible, and invisible. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for *spirit* mean “wind, breath.” The Holy Spirit is the very breath or wind of God. And like the wind, He wields great power even though He is invis-



ible. So you can't relate to Him simply by trying to use your five senses.

Now I'm not talking about Casper the friendly ghost. I mean the invisible reality of almighty God. So the Holy Spirit is not simply a power. Trying to explain an invisible reality is difficult, because it's like trying to explain electricity.

You know electricity is there. You know it is powerful. You know you need it. You know you can benefit from it. But trying to explain electricity can be tough. The same is true about the Holy Spirit, but Jesus made clear in John 14:17 that the Holy Spirit is knowable. We who know Christ can know the Holy Spirit.

Why doesn't the world know the Holy Spirit (v. 17)?

For the same reason you cannot pick up radio stations if you don't have a radio. It has nothing to do with whether or not radio waves are going through the air. It has everything to do with not having anything with which to receive the signals.

The world does not have a spiritual receiver. But Jesus Christ has implanted a receiver within those who know Him that picks up heaven's signals so the believer can tune in to the heavenlies, to the very voice of God. So in the midst of discouragement, fear, loneliness, insecurity, or even sin, a believer can tune in to the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, to talk about the Holy Spirit is not to talk about a doctrinal formula that is unrelated to day-to-day living. The Holy Spirit is part of day-to-day living because He is a Person who lives within us.

THE SPIRIT'S ENABLING

A second truth about the Holy Spirit we find in the text is this: The Spirit is the Helper, the Enabler. When He indwells the believer, He enables that believer to be and to do what God wants that person to be and to do.

Jesus was about to tell the disciples something very crucial: "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This blanket statement of inability without divine enabling made what Jesus was saying in

John 14 even more critical. There would be no effective ministry or life that pleased the Lord by mere human effort.

Many of us have discovered that. No matter how many times we say to ourselves, “I’m going to do it this time,” we find that we really are unable to be what God wants us to be on our own.

If you have discovered your own spiritual insufficiency, you are a good candidate for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If you have not discovered that yet, you are a good candidate for spiritual disaster.

An Internal Helper

Because the disciples’ need was complete, Jesus promised them that “another Helper” would come after He left (John 14:16). The Greek word for “helper” is *paraclete*, translated differently in various Bible versions because it is a pregnant term. Some versions translate it “counselor.”

One version translates it “advocate,” because the word literally means “one called alongside to help,” that is, to enable.

Jesus knew that after His resurrection, the disciples would need supernatural power to pull off what He wanted them to do. And He knew where they were going to get that power: from the enabling, internal presence of the Holy Spirit. Now this is very important because whenever the disciples needed help, Jesus was always there.

When they were lonely and needed a friend, Jesus was a faithful friend. When they were discouraged and needed encouragement, Jesus was there to encourage them and give them joy. When they were defeated and needed to be picked up, Jesus was there to pick them up. When they were afraid out on the sea and wondering how they were going to make it, Jesus could walk on the water and calm their fear.

Whatever these men needed, Jesus was there to provide. So when they heard that Jesus was leaving, the question on the floor was “Who is going to help us?” That is, “Jesus, if we are going to keep on, who is going to help us when we are down and encourage us when we are discouraged? Who is going to strengthen us when we

are weak? Who is going to lead us when we are confused? You did all that for us.”

One of my tasks when I first met my wife, Lois, was to let her know that if she had me, she did not need her father any more. One thing that I could always do was talk. I was a rapper par excellence. I said a lot of things I could not back up, but the person I was talking to never knew it because I could camouflage all that with my rap.

Basically, I told Lois that everything provided to her by her father would be obsolete when she came to me. The best he could provide for her belonged to the Ice Age compared to what I would provide if she came over to me.

Guess what? She came over to me. So to some degree, my rap worked. Now, in our more than twenty-five years of marriage I have fallen short of my guarantees from time to time, but that’s not part of this discussion.

A Helper Like Jesus

Jesus’ task on this night was to convince His fearful, confused followers that the Helper He was sending was just like Him, only this Helper would be able to do even more for them.

So Jesus told them, “I am going to leave you now. But I am going to send you Someone who is always going to be there for you. No matter what your problem, no matter what your circumstance, no matter what your trial, frustration, or irritation may be, no matter what you come up against, this Helper will be with you.”

We call this the indwelling ministry of the Spirit of God. When a believing sinner comes to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in that person’s life and becomes his Helper.

Now I need to explain something critical here. If you are a believer, the best help you have for whatever problem you face is inside you, not outside you.

See, if you had a problem and Jesus Christ were physically here, who would you go to with your problem, Jesus or your pastor? Don’t

come to me, because I am going to be over there with Jesus too! I don't think there is any debate that if Jesus were here on earth and told us we could come to Him, we would go to Him first.

Well, Jesus is not here in person, but He has left you and me another Helper who is just like Him. If you are a believer, this Helper is closer to you than anybody else could ever be, because He is within you.

One fundamental reason many Christians don't get the help they need when they are afraid or lonely or needing encouragement or whatever is that they go to the wrong person first. In case you didn't know this, let me underline it. Your pastor is not the Holy Spirit. Your Christian counselor or therapist is not the Holy Spirit, and if you are more dependent on these people than you are on the Holy Spirit, you are settling for second-class help.

The Holy Spirit is in you, and that's why no matter what help you may seek, if the priority is being placed on outside helpers rather than the Person inside you, you are never going to realize the full power of God in your life.

You say, "But wait a minute. I don't want the third member of the Trinity. I want Jesus." Again, the text helps us because in John 14:16, the Greek word Jesus used for "another" is *allos*, which means "another of the same kind." He did not use *heteros*, which means "another of a different kind."

Jesus' choice of words emphasizes the unique work of the Spirit in continuing what He had begun while on earth without any loss of character, quality, power, or intimacy. Jesus could promise this because the Spirit is of equal divine essence with Jesus Himself.

In other words, Jesus was telling the disciples, "The Holy Spirit will be all to you that I was to you. You are not getting any less of Me. In fact, you are getting exactly what I would give you if I were here." So to appeal to the indwelling Spirit is to appeal to the same level of help you would get if you were standing before Jesus Christ in the flesh.

You do not get less when you get the Holy Spirit. You get all of God, for He is the third Person of the Trinity.



Because many of us have not cultivated a relationship with the Holy Spirit, we are not finding the power to do what God has commanded us to do.

That's because we are not seeking the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, we wind up running all over the place to get help or counseling from a secondary source.

Now counseling has its place. Spirit-led people have been called to assist Christians to move forward. But they have never been called to replace the Holy Spirit in you. That is why, if your relationship with the Spirit is not cultivated, you will not have all the power you could have to deal with your need.

Without the assistance of this third member of the Trinity, trying to solve problems is like rubbing Ben-Gay[®] on a broken leg. It may feel good, but it doesn't help the problem at all. Many believers go to church Sunday after Sunday for a Ben-Gay rub. Going to church by itself can only make a wound feel good. It can't fix the bone, the broken spirit.

You need another kind of Helper who is just like Jesus. Someone who will be with you Monday at work, Tuesday at home, Wednesday in the neighborhood, and so on through the week. You need Someone who will be with you wherever you go. You have that Someone in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

An Ever-Present Helper

The Spirit is not only our Helper, He is our ever-present Helper. It's very important to understand what's going on here because Jesus said later that night, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you" (John 16:7).

Do you realize that if Jesus Christ were on earth today, we would actually be worse off as His people? If Jesus Christ were on earth today in His bodily presence, we would be a defeated, decimated people.

Why? Why did Jesus tell His disciples it was better for them that He leave and the Holy Spirit come? Because when Jesus was here on earth, He encased His deity in His humanity. Philippians 2:5-8

Jesus to meet the needs of all saints everywhere—whether it's in south Dallas or South Korea—He had to leave so that He could send the Holy Spirit, who is not limited to time and space and can go home with all of us simultaneously.

Since the Spirit is in you, He is wherever you happen to be, going wherever you happen to go. All of God that you ever want to have, if you come to Christ, is in you. You are never at any point in a situation where you have less access to Jesus Christ than the next Christian.

Why then are some Christians perpetually defeated? It is not because they have less of the Holy Spirit than victorious Christians. Jesus said in verse 26 of John 14, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

Please notice the work of the Trinity in verse 26. The Father, in the name of the Son, sends the Holy Spirit. So we have the whole Trinity involved in the sending of the Spirit. If Christians are defeated, it is because the Holy Spirit has less of them.

When you call a major law firm with a real estate problem, it doesn't matter that some of the lawyers in that firm specialize in tax cases, others in civil cases, and still others in criminal cases. What matters is that they also have lawyers who are experts in real estate law.

So your call gets transferred to the right expert, and your real estate problem gets taken care of. You may only be dealing with one person in that firm, but you have the power and influence of the entire firm behind you.

There is a law firm in glory called the Godhead. There are three on staff—God, God, and God. Each one has a sphere of responsibility. The Father oversees the plan. The Son delivers the plan. The Holy Ghost implements the plan in your life. When you call you get the right Expert, and your need gets handled.

THE SPIRIT'S PURPOSE

Here's a third truth I want you to see about the work of the Holy Spirit:

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. (John 16:13–14)

Glorifying Christ

The Holy Spirit has one overarching goal. If you want to sum up what the Holy Spirit is about, He is about glorifying Christ. What do I mean by glorifying Christ? The Spirit advertises Christ. He puts Jesus Christ on display.

The Spirit does not put Himself on display. He does not even speak on His own initiative. His job is to glorify Christ. So whenever you have anything that transcends the priority of Jesus Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit's doing. Anytime there is an emphasis on the Spirit that supersedes the centrality and priority of Jesus Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit doing it.

The Holy Spirit is not here to advertise Himself. His goal is to advertise Christ, to make us God's advertising agency by working in our hearts in such a way that our lives magnify the Person of Christ. The Spirit is busy making Jesus preeminent.

No Glory, No Help

In fact, 1 John 4:2–3 says anything that diminishes Jesus Christ's glory is "the spirit of the antichrist." He is to be preeminent. Now this is very important because this means if your passion is not to glorify Christ, then you are not going to get help from the Holy Spirit.

You see this in 1 Corinthians 6:18–20 in a passage where Paul is talking about sexual immorality:

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in

you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.

The Holy Spirit is in you that you may glorify God in everything you say and do. That's why Jesus said, "He [the Spirit] shall glorify Me" (John 16:14). So if you want the help of the Holy Spirit in whatever you are facing, then your priority in life must be to glorify, to advertise Jesus Christ.

THE SPIRIT'S BENEFITS

When you read John 16:7, where Jesus told His disciples, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you," you know you're in for something good. Jesus doesn't make promises lightly.

In my wallet, I have an Advantage Club card from the airline I use when I travel. Every month, the airline writes me a personal letter to let me know the benefits I have as an Advantage member.

You see, over the last ten years I have established a very intimate relationship with this airline. It has been very close to my pocketbook, because over the last ten years I have flown more than a million miles. In the eyes of this airline, that makes me a preferred customer.

Because I am an Advantage cardholder, I get certain rights and privileges the occasional flyer does not have. Advantage members are invited to board first, so I get to go on the plane earlier. I also get certain ticketing benefits. I don't have to stand in certain lines because I have an Advantage Club card.

But the part I like best is that if there are empty seats in first class, one is made available to me even though I have not purchased a first-class ticket. Why? Because I have made a commitment to fly this airline consistently. I have a relationship with this company, and therefore certain benefits accrue to me when it comes to flying.

Jesus says that, because of your relationship to Him, He is going to make you an Advantage cardholder. He is going to enroll you in

the “Holy Ghost Club.” If you will keep flying Jesus, He will make sure you stay in the club and accrue the Spirit’s benefits.

A lot of people have joined the Advantage Club program with this airline, but a lot of others have not, even though it is available to them. Any Christian can join the Holy Ghost Club when it comes to taking full advantage of the benefits He offers. But a lot of Christians don’t, even though the Advantage card is available.

Let’s talk about a few of the Spirit’s benefits.

Guidance

First of all, Jesus said the Spirit will “guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). Isn’t guidance something you need? Are there decisions you need to make that you wish somebody would advise you on? Don’t you wish there was somebody who understood your situation perfectly and could guide you? You have that Person in the Holy Spirit. Now for the apostles Jesus was talking to, this promise of guidance had a special application because the Holy Spirit guided several of them in the writing of Scripture. The reason the Bible has no errors in it is that the Spirit guided men like Peter in recording “all the truth.”

Peter knew he wasn’t just writing words. He said, “No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21). When somebody tells you there are mistakes in the Bible because men wrote it, here is your answer.

The writers of Scripture were “borne” or “carried along” by the Holy Spirit as they wrote. The picture here is of a sailboat being moved according to the direction of a blowing wind. So they wrote what God wanted to record, not just what they wanted to write.

We aren’t writing inerrant Scripture, but we can enjoy the Spirit’s guidance today in the decisions of life. His guidance will always be tied to the truth, so we have an advantage because we have the completed revelation of God’s truth in the Bible. So if you’re seeking guidance from the Spirit, you can be sure it will align with Scripture and will glorify Christ.

to. Your responsibility is to study to show yourself approved, to hide the Word in your heart.

When you do that, the Holy Spirit is your built-in computer system to pick up the words and illustrations and everything you need to know. Then at the proper time, He can punch the button and the information will show up on your mental screen. He will bring to your remembrance the things you need to remember. That's a benefit of belonging to the Spirit's Advantage Club.

But you say, "Wait a minute. How come I don't seem to remember anything when I am in trouble? How come it does not seem to come back to me?"

Well, if you are a new Christian, you aren't going to have that much in your computer yet. Or if you're under sustained attack by Satan, the screen can get fuzzy.

But in either case, you can still be committed to glorifying Christ. And the bottom line is that this ministry of remembrance only comes to those to whom the Father wills to disclose it, and He only discloses it to those who are in concert with the Spirit on this matter of bringing glory to Christ.

So if you are not committed to glorifying Jesus Christ, your computer screen will come up blank. But if you are committed to Christ and cultivating a relationship with the Spirit, the data will be there when you need it.

Peace

Another benefit of the Holy Spirit is peace. "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you," Jesus said in John 14:27. Therefore, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Now remember the situation. Jesus is leaving. Judas has betrayed Him. The Jews want to kill Him—and the disciples are still going to have peace. The Holy Spirit is going to deliver it when He comes.

What's your situation today? Whatever it is, if you have the Holy Spirit you can have peace in the midst of it because He lives within

you. It's a peace that circumstances can't shatter.

It's unfortunate that many evangelicals approach these promises with a double standard, allowing certain of these works of the Spirit to apply only to the disciples while making others available to all Christians. Such a dichotomy is unwarranted. His benefits are available to all of us in accordance with God's sovereign will. The lack of the practical experience of these benefits is related to one simple fact—a poor relationship with the Spirit.

There are many more great benefits to being in the Holy Spirit's Advantage Club: things like assurance and security, which we'll talk about in upcoming chapters. They're all part of the Spirit's promise.

EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT'S PROMISE

The Holy Spirit is where it all begins. As I said at the beginning, everything in the Christian life starts with the Spirit. And since this book is all about *experiencing* the Holy Spirit in your life, let me suggest some ways to experience His Person, His enabling, His purpose, and His benefits:

1. Romans 8:9 says if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't belong to Christ. If you don't know whether the Holy Spirit is in you, perhaps it is because you haven't come to Christ for salvation. You can experience the Person of the Spirit right now. Admit to God that you're a sinner (Romans 3:23) and cannot save yourself, believe that Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins (Romans 5:8), and receive Him by faith as your only God and Savior (John 1:12: "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God"). When you do, the Holy Spirit will come to live within you, and He will never leave. Be sure to tell your pastor or a Christian friend about your decision.

2. Since it's true that we cannot do anything in the Christian life apart from the enabling power of the Spirit, all our self-efforts are doomed to failure. Examine your life. Is there some area of recurring failure, some place where you just can't seem to get it together? Submit that to the Holy Spirit today, and ask Him to enable you to do whatever it is you've been trying to do on your own.

3. The Spirit's purpose is to glorify Christ. Is that your purpose? One way to find out is to look at where you spend your time, abilities, and money, and ask yourself how many of these things have as their ultimate goal the exaltation of Christ in some way. The ones that don't may need to go. That's between you and the Holy Spirit.

4. Which benefit of the Holy Spirit do you need most in your life right now? If your life is lined up with His purposes as we've talked about above, be bold in asking Him to meet your need!