

5

KEY FIVE: SUPERNATURAL POWER

How do I experience the Holy Spirit's power?

On every hand, a lack of something is being felt and expressed by God's people. Their Christian experience is not what they expected it would be. Instead of expected victory, it is oft-recurring, dreaded defeat; instead of soul satisfaction, it is soul hunger ... Is this life of constant disappointment the normal life of the Bible Christian? To these sad questionings, the Divine Word answers with an emphatic "No." —John MacNeil (1854-1896)¹

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. (Acts 1:8)

RICHARD'S SUPERCHARGE

Years ago, I was discipling a young man by the name of Richard. He came out of a very broken and dysfunctional background but quickly proved to be one of the most intense, committed followers of Jesus I have ever worked with. In fact, he is one of the only people I have ever told, *I think you might be spending too much time in the word and prayer.*

¹ John MacNeil, *The Spirit-Filled Life* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1896), 19.

Some days he would be in prayer and Bible study for over six hours, causing his grades in college to slip and his performance at work to falter (he cut back to three to four).

At some point, Richard was turned on to the subject of this chapter—the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. He wasn't having much success in sharing the gospel with others. No one was getting saved, so I told him God had a solution. I showed him some relevant Scriptures, and I also encouraged him to read books on the Holy Spirit written by Christians from days gone by. This study led him to the following conclusion—he was not ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, *You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you (Acts 1:8)*, and Richard knew he needed it.

Richard devoted an entire hour every day just to pray for this blessing, and to make a long story short, he got it. He called me up one day, sounding a little dazed and confused. *Something strange happened to me*, he said. *I was praying, and all of a sudden, this overwhelming sense of joy came over me ... I can't really describe it, but it was awesome. Then I started saying this Bible verse over and over again. What happened to me?*

I asked him, *What Bible verse was it that you were repeating?* With great consternation in his voice he said, *You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you ... You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you ... You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.* I just laughed and said something like, *You do the math, Richard. It looks like God answered your prayer.*

Richard's own testimony is that his success in evangelism took a marked upswing from that day. People were now coming to Jesus when he shared the gospel. The

message of the gospel didn't change, but the effect it had on those who heard certainly did. That was almost ten years ago. He is happily serving the Lord today and regularly recommending that Christians take another look at their Bibles and listen to what the old schoolers had to say about the empowering of the Holy Spirit.²

WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT

The old schoolers used different terminology when they talked about it—some called it “the anointing,” others “the empowering,” still others preferred terms like “the fullness” or “the second blessing.” Whatever term they chose, the basic idea was the same—*there is something more that needs to happen to every believer AFTER salvation if they ever hope to be effective for God.* Whatever you want to call it—fullness, Holy Spirit baptism, anointing, enduement, etc.—it is a supernatural shot of power that makes normal believers like you and me an awesome force for God. (For a great introduction to this subject, see the book *They Found the Secret* by former Wheaton College President V. Raymond Edman [1900-1967].³)

Many very earnest Christians today don't seem all that concerned that they don't have any power in their game. They have embraced a deficient, twenty-first-century version of Bible-believing Christianity. They think it is

² Update on Richard: Since the first edition of this book, he completed a degree in Christian Leadership, became a founding elder of our church (The Refuge Fellowship), and landed his dream job in law enforcement. He also married a wonderful, godly young lady, and recently had his first son.

³ V. Raymond Edman, *They Found the Secret* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960).

normal to work hard for the Lord without ever seeing anything supernatural. They labor and toil, but don't expect much to happen when they share the gospel, teach, serve, or pray. This "no-results Christianity" is propagated in many of our churches today through little slogans and jingles, like *God has called us to faithfulness, not fruitfulness*.

Not so very long ago, fruitlessness—*working hard with little to show for it*—was seen as a problem to be solved, a malady that called for a cure. The greatest Christians in history, like D.L. Moody, Amy Carmichael, Charles Spurgeon, Charles Finney, John Hyde, Jonathan Goforth, A.T. Pierson, Andrew Murray, etc., all believed that if a person doesn't have power in their game, they should press in until they get it.

When Christ commissioned his apostles to go and preach, he told them to abide at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. This power, as everyone knows, was the baptism of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost. This was an indispensable qualification for success in their ministry ... so that their words were made sharp in the hearts of God's enemies, quick and powerful, like a two-edged sword. This is an indispensable qualification of a successful ministry.
—Charles Finney (1792-1875)⁴

Contrary to what so many Christians think today, the old schoolers believed that Christianity was not a one-shot deal—Christians do not get everything they need on the day they are born again. THERE IS MORE!! They believed that absolutely every true Christian needs to understand that they

⁴ Charles Finney, *Memoirs of Charles G. Finney* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1876), 55.

can be empowered by the Holy Spirit, *clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49)*.

It seems clear from the Scriptures that it is still the duty and privilege of believers to receive the Holy Spirit by a conscious, definite act of appropriating faith, just as they received Jesus Christ. –A.J. Gordon (1836-1895)⁵

Unfortunately, the idea of an empowering work of the Holy Spirit after salvation has been totally lost in many circles. The view that has won the day—the one-stage, one-shot version of Christianity—is now taught in evangelical churches as if no one ever believed otherwise. The testimonies of people like A.J. Gordon, D.L. Moody, and A.W. Tozer have not only been kept from the average Christian in the pews, even pastors and college professors today are largely unaware of what was taught about the Holy Spirit in previous generations. Anyone interested can do the research—the greatest names in the tradition all promoted the idea that *there is more*.

The transition away from a “second work” (or whatever you want to call it) began near the end of the 1800s. D.L. Moody complained of this trend as he saw evangelical teachers promoting the alternative, one-shot version of Christianity. Moody knew that it would lead to powerlessness in the church and would stymie God’s cause on earth.

Oh, why will they split hairs? Why don’t they see that this is just the one thing that they themselves need? They are good teachers, they are wonderful teachers, and I am so

⁵ Adoniram Judson Gordon, *The Ministry of the Spirit* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), 84.

*glad to have them here; but why will they not see that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is just the one touch that they themselves need?*⁶

Is it a coincidence that as the idea of a truly supernatural empowering of the Holy Spirit disappeared from God's church, so did the sweeping power our forebears knew? Read their biographies and see how the same power that came like a flood at Pentecost visited Christians in the 1700s, 1800s, and early 1900s. *And when they had prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken (Acts 4:31).*

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

As a hungry young Christian, I became obsessed with the following question. *Among the awesome old schoolers, which ones believed in some sort of additional work of the Holy Spirit, a second work after salvation?* As I examined the historical evidence, the real question became, *What old schooler didn't believe in some sort of post-conversion experience of the Holy Spirit?* I found that almost everybody who was anybody in that awesome era between 1700 and 1910 believed some version of this.

This idea of an infusion of divine power may sound strange to many twenty-first-century ears, but this wasn't some fringe doctrine taught by a few eccentric "odd ducks." These were some of the most powerful men and women who ever walked the earth. They founded many of our great denominations, ministries, colleges, and seminaries.

I know from experience that this may be the one point in this book where I will get the most pushback from pastors

⁶ R.A. Torrey, *Why God Used D.L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1923), 56.

and theologians today. So before looking to the biblical evidence, I will get a little more backing from the historical big guns. I will quote some of the greatest, most powerful Christians to walk the earth since the days of the apostles. I will even dip into the twentieth century and appeal to some more recognizable names, like A.W. Tozer, and Martin Lloyd-Jones (perhaps the greatest preacher of his day).⁷ The point is simply this—I THINK WE ARE MISSING SOMETHING MASSIVE HERE! Next-gen, please examine the evidence for yourself!

Moody and More—Today D.L. Moody is primarily remembered as the founder of the historic Moody Bible Institute, but he was one of the most influential Christians of all time. If you break down the numbers, he averaged approximately 70 converts every single day over the course of his 40 years of ministry. Sound impossible? It was. It was supernatural, and he pointed to his post-conversion empowering with the Holy Spirit as the explanation. He said, *I would not go back to where I was before that blessed experience if you were to give me the whole world.*⁸ Now we will turn to some other major kingdom players. Some of these names may not be well known today, but these saints turned the world upside down.

R.A. Torrey (1856-1928)—Moody's friend and protégé Torrey was a noted theologian and respected leader of the evangelical movement. Author of dozens of classics, the following is a quote from *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*.

⁷ See Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable: Power and Renewal in the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1985).

⁸ William R. Moody, *The Life of D.L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1900), 149.

It is clear then that one may be a believer, maybe a regenerate man, and yet not have the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In other words, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is something distinct from and beyond His regenerating work. ... If a man has experienced the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, he is a saved man, but he is not fitted for service until, in addition to this, he has received the baptism with the Holy Spirit.⁹

Andrew Murray (1828-1917)—A South African Dutch Reformed Pastor, Murray was a world-renowned Christian leader and remains one of the most influential devotional writers of all time. His works, like *Humility* and *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, remain in wide circulation. He states the following in his book *The Full Blessing of Pentecost*:

(I)t is my desire to bring to the children of God the message that there is a twofold Christian life. The one is that in which we experience something of the operations of the Holy Spirit ... but we do not yet receive Him as the Pentecostal Spirit, as the personal indwelling Guest. ... On the other hand, there is a more abundant life in which the indwelling just referred to is known, and the full joy and power of redemption are facts of personal experience.¹⁰

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)—Spurgeon was the most influential pastor in the English-speaking world in his day and is one of the greatest preachers of all time. Called the “Prince of Preachers,” Spurgeon pastored the world-famous

⁹ R. A. Torrey, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1895), 18.

¹⁰ Andrew Murray, *The Full Blessing of Pentecost: The one thing needful* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1908), 8-9.

Metropolitan Tabernacle in London for 38 years. In a sermon titled, *The Indwelling and Outflowing of the Holy Spirit*, he says,

You see, there is a distinct promise to the children of God that their heavenly Father will give them the Holy Spirit if they ask for His power, and that promise is made to be exceedingly strong by the instances joined to it. But He says, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" ... He has herein bound Himself by no ordinary pledge. He has used a simile which would bring dishonor on His own name, and that of the very grossest kind, if He did not give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Oh, then, let us ask Him at once, with all of our hearts ... especially those of you that are the children of God—to you is this promise especially made. Ask God to make you all that the Spirit of God can make you, not only a satisfied believer who has drunk for himself but a useful believer who overflows the neighborhood with blessing.¹¹

Charles Finney (1792-1875)—Powerfully used of God in The Second Great Awakening, it is estimated that he led hundreds of thousands of souls to Christ. Historian Mark Noll says, “Finney should be ranked with Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, and Andrew Carnegie ... as one of the most important public figures in nineteenth-century America.”¹² He is best known today for his classic titled *Lectures on Revival*, and in this work Finney speaks

¹¹ Delivered on May 20, 1882, at The Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

¹² Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 176.

repeatedly of the empowering of the Holy Spirit. He sees it as the indispensable prerequisite for effective ministry.

Here we are bound to believe that we shall receive it when we pray for it. You have no right to put an if and say, "Lord, if it be Thy will, give us Thy Holy Spirit." This is to insult God. To put an if into God's promise, where God has put none, is tantamount to charging God with being insincere."¹³

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)—Chambers' book *My Utmost for His Highest* is without question one of the most influential books in evangelicalism over the last 100 years. When he experienced the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the effect on his ministry was so immediate that it shook him to the core. He believed the following:

*When a man experiences salvation, the note of testimony is what Jesus has done for him; when he is baptized with the Holy Ghost, he becomes a witness, which means much more than a testifier to blessing received. ... The baptism of the Holy Ghost is Jesus putting the final seal on His work in you, His seal on your regenerated and entirely sanctified soul, and is your inauguration into service for Him.*¹⁴

A.T. Pierson (1837-1911)—Pierson was one of the primary promoters of the Student Volunteer Movement and a key leader of the influential Keswick Convention. It is also worth noting that he was unanimously elected to take the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle when the great Charles

¹³ Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 73.

¹⁴ Oswald Chambers, *He Shall Glorify Me* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1941).

Spurgeon's health was failing. Author of many influential books, Pierson clearly argues for a "double aspect" to the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life: First,

... opening of the heart ... to His blessed incoming, and then giving up to His possession and power, service, and control the whole being He indwells."¹⁵

Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895)—Baptist Minister and world-renowned evangelical leader, best known today as the founder of Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Gordon argues for an empowering work of the Holy Spirit after salvation and holds that this must be taken by a distinct act of faith:

*The baptism in the Holy Ghost was given once for all on the day of Pentecost ... It does not follow therefore that every believer has received this baptism ... It seems clear from Scripture that it is still the duty and privilege of believers to receive the Holy Spirit by an act of appropriating faith.*¹⁶

*And since the only avenue through which God can come in is faith, it seems clear that we must receive Him by faith, if at all. Stephen was a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Full of the Holy Ghost because he was full of faith.*¹⁷

A.B. Simpson (1843-1919)—Founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination and what is today

¹⁵ A.T. Pierson, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1895), 100.

¹⁶ A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of The Spirit* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), 67-68.

¹⁷ A.J. Gordon, "The Holy Spirit," In *Watchword and Truth*, vol. 20 no. 6 (June 1898), 165.

Nyack College. Simpson authored dozens of books and was influential in the early development of the Pentecostal movement and the theology of denominations like The Assemblies of God and Church of The Foursquare Gospel. In a sermon titled “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit,” he stated,

The sinner does not come first to the Holy Spirit, but to Christ. Our first business is to receive Jesus and then to receive the Holy Ghost.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)—Tozer represents a slightly later era, but in some respects was among the last of a dying breed—an influential evangelical leader who pushed Christians to go deeper with the Holy Spirit. Known as a twentieth-century prophet to the evangelical church, Tozer was a pastor with the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination for over four decades and remains one of the most respected devotional writers of the last century. The following is taken from his book titled *The Counselor*:

I can be dogmatic about this on the basis of deep study. No one was ever filled with the Holy Spirit who didn't know that he had been so filled! Furthermore, none of the persons in the Bible and none that I can find in Church history or biography was ever filled with the Holy Spirit who didn't know when he was filled.¹⁸

Martin Lloyd-Jones (1899-1980)—Pastor of the Westminster Chapel and considered by many to be one of the greatest preachers in church history. He wrote a book on his understanding of the second work of the Holy Spirit

¹⁸ A.W. Tozer, *The Counselor*, revised ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1993), 67.

called *Joy Unspeakable* (which had a profound impact on my life when I was a young Christian). The following is from a sermon titled “Diagnosing the Need.”

(Y)ou must be confident that God has this power as much today as He did one hundred years ago and two hundred years ago. And so you must begin to seek the power, you must begin to pray for the power, you must begin to plead and yearn for the power.¹⁹

TIME WILL FAIL ME

Above, we touched on just a handful of the most powerful people in Christian history, but if we dig further into the annals and name missionaries, evangelists, pastors, revivalists, and authors, this chapter could go into the hundreds of pages. Legendary missionaries like John Hyde, Jonathan Goforth, and Amy Carmichael, and powerful revivalists like Evan Roberts and Duncan Campbell all argued for the necessity of a deeper work of the Holy Spirit—a baptism, an anointing, an infilling. The evidence is simply overwhelming.

It is a fact that the greatest, most powerful saints who ever walked the planet believed that Christians should seek a deeper work of the Holy Spirit after salvation. They do tend to differ on some of the details, but they agree on this—THERE IS MORE, AND YOU CAN HAVE IT! But all this historical evidence, as compelling as it may be, is not the main concern for any good Bible-believing Christian. The real question is this—*Is this idea supported by Scripture?* And the answer is, *Absolutely*.

¹⁹ Martin Lloyd-Jones, from his sermon “Diagnosing the Need.” You can listen to this sermon at www.mljtrust.org.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

The real reason this whole chapter sounds so strange to many twenty-first-century Christians has to do with the way we have been trained to read our Bibles. When enough people in authority say the same thing over and over and over again, their opinion becomes the norm. And an accepted norm or belief will control how any text (even the Bible) is read and interpreted. The fact is that we often have a belief set in stone in our minds before we really study it out for ourselves.

What I am talking about is something that scholars call a *construal*—it's like a lens that determines beforehand what we can or cannot see in a text. The hard truth is that when it comes to the Holy Spirit and many other issues (like prayer, the demonic, and even the character of God), our reading of the Bible is often predetermined. As one of my seminary professors once sarcastically quipped,

*Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
Most of them brought there by you and by me.*

I know this is a troubling idea, but it happens all the time. It takes a real work of God to break us free from our construals once we have developed them. Pretend you are picking up the Bible for the first time and look again at the biblical text with fresh eyes. Then it is easy to see why people like Moody, Torrey, and Tozer believed as they did. The notion that the Holy Spirit gives believers a supercharge, a shot of spiritual power after salvation, is really a quite natural reading of the biblical text.

In the book of Luke, for instance, Jesus tells His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes and gives them power. *Remain in the city until you are clothed with*

power from on high (Luke 24:49). This is exactly what we find them doing in the early chapters of *Acts*—120 of them, gathered together, waiting ... praying, and waiting. What are they waiting for? Were they waiting for *salvation*? No. Were they waiting on some *new revelation*? No. Just what were they waiting for? There is only one answer given by the Bible itself, straight from the mouth of Jesus—*POWER*.

Wait in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.

The Bible doesn't say this just once. Before Jesus's ascension, He told them again that the Holy Spirit was going to give them *POWER!* Power for what? Very specifically, power to speak God's message.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

When the Holy Spirit finally does show up, what happens? One thing is perfectly clear—Jesus's followers receive *POWER*. This little army gets a supercharge from heaven, and from that moment they proceed to turn the world on its head. (This also lines up with the pattern in Jesus's life. He did no miracles until the Holy Spirit came upon Him after His baptism.)

Before receiving this supercharge, the apostles already knew and believed the gospel message. But Jesus tells them that they are not yet ready to give it out to the world. Only when the Spirit comes upon them in power could they proclaim the message effectively. Once the Spirit does come *like a mighty rushing wind*, thousands pour into the kingdom (read all about it in *Acts 2*). Suddenly they have a touch from God that yields amazing results.

The apostle Peter then explains to the gathering crowds what is happening. He refers to the Old Testament book of *Joel* and explains that God is fulfilling an ancient prophecy—to raise a supercharged army of prophets, filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaiming God’s word:

It will be that in the last days, God declares, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. Even on my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out My Spirit; and they will prophesy. (Acts 2:17-18)

From this point on, whenever anyone gets saved in the book of *Acts*, the Christian leaders are quick to make sure that they receive their own personal supercharge.

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-15)

If we stick to what the Bible says, we can be absolutely certain that the apostles received power to proclaim the gospel message on the day of Pentecost. Theologians can read all sorts of other things into the passage if they want to, but the text itself emphasizes power—prophetic power. Then wherever they went, they passed this power on to anyone and everyone who received the message of salvation. This is why it makes perfect sense that so many of the greats of our tradition, the old schoolers, emphasized this idea.

Does this mean that a believer who has not been empowered by the Holy Spirit does not have the Holy Spirit at all? No! Every believer has the Holy Spirit in certain respects—*He who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with*

Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). At the moment of salvation, we were born of the Spirit. It was the Spirit who was convincing us, cleansing us, changing us, and then taking up permanent residence inside of us.

He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

New believers usually have no clue that there even *is* a Holy Spirit, and they certainly don't know that they can receive a shot of supernatural power from Him!

All the biblical evidence argues that everyone who is born again has the Holy Spirit indwelling them. Still, they need another operation of the Holy Spirit to take place within them—His fullness/His empowering. They have not laid hold of the fact that the Holy Spirit can and will definitely work supernaturally in and through them if they let Him. So once again, let's be very clear on this—everyone who is born again has the Holy Spirit in one sense (even though they may be ignorant of it), but they have not yet laid hold of His power to proclaim (or should we say, His power has not yet laid hold of *them*).

Paul prays that believers would become aware of the supernatural power available to them, the power that raised Jesus from the dead. In a previous chapter, we mentioned the implications of this truth for living a life pleasing to God, but it also applies to the power God gives us to serve Him.

I pray that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened so that you would know ... the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who have faith, according to the working

of His mighty strength which He demonstrated in Christ when He raised Him up from the dead. (Eph. 1:18-20)

If we do not know that this power is available, we will not ask for it, and if we do not ask for it, we will not have it. *You do not have because you do not ask (James 4:4).*

SO HOW DO I GET IT—THE EMPOWERING?

Any Christian who is convinced that the empowering of the Holy Spirit is something they need will inevitably ask—*How do I lay hold of this for myself?* If you have read all the previous chapters of this book, you should be able to figure this out for yourself. We receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit the same way we lay hold of any of God’s blessings. But before getting any more specific, we should clear one thing up—the Holy Spirit is not an “it.”

It’s okay to use the word “it” to refer to the blessing of empowering, but we cannot use the word “it” to refer to the One who *is* the blessing. The Holy Spirit is not an “it.” He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity—*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*—and He doesn’t want you to think of Him as an “it” (any more than you want to be called an “it”). Going into detail on the Trinity is beyond the scope of this chapter, but just remember this. When we are talking about receiving the blessing of empowering, we are talking about a new experience of the Holy Spirit, and we always need to be careful to refer to Him as a “He” and not an “it.” He is as much a Person as Jesus is, and we would never call Jesus an “it.”

So back to the question. How do we receive the blessing of empowering, or “Him,” the Holy Spirit, in this way? There are many good (old) books and sermons out there on

the subject. For some helpful guidance, I would recommend A.W. Tozer's sermon, "How to be Filled with the Spirit," or R.A. Torrey's little book, *Baptism with the Holy Spirit*. The essence of it is really pretty simple. Just review what we have already gone over in the previous chapters of this book:

1. In Chapter 1, we covered the subject of salvation. Are you truly born again, trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus alone for your salvation? Have you embraced Jesus as Savior and yielded to Him as Lord of your life? If you have, you are then in a position to enjoy the rest of your inheritance—like power for service.
2. In Chapter 2, we talked about how important it is to become mighty in the Scriptures, that we grow up and learn to search the Bible for ourselves. Have you looked long and hard at what the Bible says about the empowering work of the Holy Spirit? Have you become convinced that the power of the Holy Spirit is something that every child of God is promised and that it will be given if you ask in faith?
3. Chapter 3 covered the importance of ridding our life of all known sin. To the best of your knowledge, are you walking in holiness, with *clean hands and a pure heart*? God has so many things He wants to give us, but if you recall, sin will short circuit these blessings. Ask yourself, *Are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?*
4. Chapter 4 was on the biblical teaching about prayer and faith. God has given us numerous promises to bless and benefit our lives. Our responsibility is to simply *believe and receive*. Just like we accepted God's gift of salvation through Jesus, we need to receive all His other blessings.

If you are truly saved, have clean hands and a pure heart, take the promises of God before the throne of grace and pray them until you know the blessing is yours.

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (Luke 11:13)

WRAPPING THINGS UP

We will close this chapter with one final historical account of a great old schooler we already mentioned—Oswald Chambers (1874-1917). Anyone who has been around the block in “born-again” Christianity knows his book, *My Utmost for His Highest*,²⁰ one of the most beloved devotionals of all time.

Chambers was pretty frustrated and unfruitful until he claimed the power of the Holy Spirit by faith (he liked to use the term *baptism of the Holy Spirit*). In a Christian meeting he was attending, he stood up in utter frustration and basically said, *Christianity is a sham, or I am missing something*. He actually said, *Either Christianity is a downright fraud, or I have not got hold of the right end of the stick*. Right then and there, he claimed the gift of the Holy Spirit by faith. The results were so dramatic that it scared him. He received POWER!

Then I was asked to speak at a meeting, and forty souls came out to the front. Did I praise God? No, I was terrified and left them to the workers, and went to Mr. Macgregor and told him what had happened, and he said: “Don’t you remember claiming the Holy Spirit as a gift

²⁰ Oswald Chamber, *My Utmost for His Highest* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1935).

*on the word of Jesus, and that He said, 'Ye shall receive power' ... ? This is the power from on high."*²¹

Now the only question is, have you received this gift of God? How will you know if you have? There is only one clear biblical answer—

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. (Acts 1:8)

POSTSCRIPT: PENTECOSTALISM²²

There was one group in the twentieth century that held on to the idea of a definite empowering work of the Holy Spirit after salvation—the *Pentecostals*. Knowing just a little bit about this movement goes a long way towards understanding why the doctrine of a second work of the Holy Spirit slowly disappeared from most Bible-believing churches after 1906.

Pentecostalism exploded onto the world scene in 1906 and has hundreds of millions of adherents today. The first generation of Pentecostalism gave rise to denominations like The Assemblies of God and The Foursquare Church.

Many great Christians (referred to in this book), like Oswald Chambers, A.T. Pierson, and A.B. Simpson, would

²¹ David McCasland, *Oswald Chambers, Abandoned to God: The Life Story of the Author of My Utmost for His Highest* (Nashville, TN: Discovery House, 1993), 83.

²² For a very helpful introduction to the rise of Pentecostalism, see Edith Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

not fully support Pentecostalism for one primary reason—its extreme emphasis on *glossolalia* (or tongues). Classic Pentecostal doctrine teaches that the second work of the Holy Spirit is *always* accompanied by the supernatural ability to speak in an unlearned language—tongues. Non-Pentecostal leaders like Chambers, Pierson, and others had no problem with the idea of a second work, but would not agree that tongues *always* accompanied it. Largely because of this disagreement over tongues, Pentecostalism broke from other born-again Christian groups and became its own entity.

Over time, the gap between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals grew because of the tongues issue (and for other reasons beyond the scope of our discussions, like scandal and doctrinal error). The Pentecostals continued to teach a second work—a *baptism of the Holy Spirit*—always evidenced by tongues. Non-Pentecostals moved further and further away from anything that smacked of Pentecostalism—including the idea of an empowering after salvation.

Eventually, the “one-shot” version of Christianity (“You get everything at salvation”) came to dominate in most non-Pentecostal churches. This remains the situation today. But make no mistake about it. There was a time when virtually all the great born-again leaders in the world believed in an empowering work of the Holy Spirit after salvation. The sad fact that few Christians today seem to be willing to face is this—when this doctrine disappeared from the non-Pentecostal churches, so did the sweeping power of God.