

What People Are Saying About *Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Warfare...*

As soon as I started reading *Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Warfare*, I felt like a child who has just received a favorite toy for his birthday. It kept me reading, on and on, one chapter after another—nonstop! I was blessed to be enlightened by so many powerful revelations about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. With a great gift for teaching, Tom Brown brings forth wonderful, liberating truths with a unique simplicity, so that anyone reading this book will be able to understand it and to benefit greatly from it. I highly recommend this book to all serious Christians and to anyone who desires to experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a life of victory over all the schemes of the enemy!

—Dr. Gordon-John Manchè

Senior Pastor, River of Love Christian Fellowship, Malta (EU)

CEO, Nations for Christ Ministries International

www.nationsforchrist.org

In *Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Warfare*, Tom Brown presents the Christian church with an important work. This book offers clear, easy to understand, and useable tools to break free, once and for all, from the traps of Satan. He offers real-life examples of people just like you, as well as biblical weapons to help you defeat the enemy. I highly recommend this significant contribution and fresh perspective to the global spiritual warfare library.

—Dr. Steven Swisher

President, Swisher Evangelistic Association, Inc.

Executive Director, Believers Stand United

Senior Pastor, Epiphany United Methodist Church

Cincinnati, Ohio

With tremendous spiritual experience and success, Tom Brown effectively entices readers to plug in to the power of the Holy Spirit in order to get the gifts flowing.

—Chas Stevenson

Pastor, Houston Faith Church, Houston, Texas

I have known Tom Brown for many years. I esteem him as a seasoned pastor, a man of God, an anointed teacher, and a good friend. That's why I am recommending his latest book, *Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Warfare*. I don't just routinely write recommendations for books; I have to like and value what the book is all about. With his writing, Tom gets me thinking and studying God's Word. He has spent considerable time studying and documenting these extremely important subjects, subjects that are often so sadly neglected in many of our modern churches. I particularly like his in-depth treatment of subjects like the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, and the benefits they bring. This book fills a gap in much of the teaching in today's church, as it brings desperately needed truths on these relevant and important New Testament subjects.

—Dr. Col Stringer

President, International Convention of Faith Ministries Australia
Robina, Queensland, Australia

Are spiritual gifts alive in the church today? Tom Brown answers with a resounding “Yes!” in his new book *Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Warfare*. Unfortunately, some theologians insist that spiritual gifts have ceased in modern times, but this book proves, both biblically and experientially, that the Holy Spirit is active and miraculously moving in the lives of those who believe. If you want to activate spiritual gifts in your life, you need to read this book.

—Daniel King
www.kingministries.com
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Unlike most books on the Holy Spirit, filled with the history of the Holy Spirit, *Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Warfare* takes you inside the mind of God, like an intriguing Tom Clancy novel. With deft clarity, you will learn, experience, and find new eagerness to walk and operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. This book will encourage newcomers to the faith to learn about the Holy Spirit, and will strengthen those who once walked closely with the Holy Spirit, to do so once again. An honest and accurate page-turner, filled with excellent revelation, this is a book that every Christian should add to his or her personal library.

—David Gonzalez
Pastor, author, televangelist, and theologian
David Gonzalez Ministries
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

SPIRITUAL
GIFTS *for*
SPIRITUAL
WARFARE

TOM BROWN



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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Boldface type in the Scripture quotations indicates the author's emphasis.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE

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PREFACE

SATAN FEARS THE HOLY SPIRIT

Captain Aaron Johnson¹ drove hundreds of miles to meet me at my church in El Paso, Texas. He was neatly dressed in full army khakis. The cross on his right collar signified that he was a chaplain. He came to see me for guidance and prayer, and he told me a fantastic story.

He grew up in the home of Southern Baptist parents, and although they attended church every Sunday, the reality of Christ and His teachings had not influenced his family. At the age of eight, he found pornography and was soon addicted to it. When he turned sixteen, however, he felt God calling him into the ministry. After high school, he attended a Southern Baptist Seminary and learned good basic theology. For the first time, his eyes were enlightened and he came to the knowledge of salvation. It was in seminary that he was born again and baptized.

Though Aaron had learned about salvation at the school, he knew nothing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit or of real spiritual warfare. Certainly, Satan was mentioned but he had not learned how to use the gifts of the Spirit against his archenemy. In fact, he

1. Fictional name

had often heard that certain spiritual gifts were no longer operating in the lives of believers. Additionally, the gifts that *did* exist were often described secularly rather than biblically. He had no practical understanding of spiritual warfare and how the gifts of the Spirit could be used to win battles against Satan.

During his time in seminary, Aaron met his wife. She wanted to be a missionary; they were a good match. They got married a year after Aaron was saved. Eventually, he became a chaplain and fathered two children. Things seemed to be going fine until he was deployed to Afghanistan. It was there that he again became hooked on pornography and his personality began to change.

After Aaron returned home, his wife immediately became aware that her husband had changed for the worse. He experienced frequent bursts of anger and had difficulty controlling his temper. After years of enduring her husband's fits of rage, Aaron's wife lost patience and filed for a divorce.

Alone and bewildered, Aaron seriously considered suicide. Only his fear of God kept him from this selfish and desperate act. Still, he was tortured by his thoughts. Why had he changed so drastically? How could he get rid of his anger and his addiction to pornography? Aaron knew of nothing strong enough to break the bondages of pornography, anger, suicidal thoughts, and his controlling personality.

When none of the Baptist ministers he consulted were able to help him, Aaron turned to a couple of Pentecostal chaplains. Without confessing his addiction, he told the chaplains about his anger, controlling personality, and about his wife filing for divorce. As the Pentecostal chaplains began to pray for him, one of them stated, "You are into pornography and have opened a door for other demons to come into your life. Not only you, but your son also is into pornography. There is a generational curse of pornography in your family."

When Aaron heard this, he recognized the truth. He had not confessed his addiction to pornography that started in his childhood. But God already knew this and had revealed it to the chaplain, not to expose and humiliate Aaron but to free him. Aaron confessed that it was true.

The chaplains begin to pray deliverance over him and, immediately, an evil spirit caused great pain in his stomach. Aaron said it was the worse physical pain he had ever experienced. As soon as the spirit came out of him, the pain stopped; but a second spirit did the same, causing even more pain than the first. Just when he thought he could take no more, a third evil spirit manifested and the pain increased. Soon, a fourth spirit manifested itself and the pain became almost unbearable. Finally, a fifth and final spirit spoke to Aaron in a voice that sounded like a woman, saying, "I am the one in control here. I do not want to go." Nevertheless, it left. Finally, he was completely delivered.

Aaron told me that since his deliverance six months prior, he had not had a desire to look at pornography and his feelings of anger were gone. During the previous week, he had been filled with the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues for the first time.

He said, "I have read two of your books on spiritual warfare, and I'm new to all this, but I am convinced that I was truly delivered. I just want to make sure there is no demon remaining in me. I feel a little dazed by all this. Do you think I am free?"

I told him that I did not discern any spirits still within him but that his feelings of confusion may stem more from the aftermath of war. Using his military background to create an analogy, I told him, "The allies drove out the enemy from the city, but the city still has residual damage. The victory did not quickly fix all the damages of the enemy. So it is with you, Aaron. You now must rebuild your life with the Word of God and through the power of the Spirit."

Now that he had personally experienced spiritual warfare, Aaron needed to know the gifts of the Spirit, so that he could use them as weapons against Satan. I encouraged him to use his new knowledge to help others be freed from Satan's power.

That is what this book is about. This book contains what I would have taught Aaron if I'd had the time. It is about your weapons of warfare. In my previous books, I have focused on knowing the enemy, which is essential, since any good soldier must understand his opponent. However, he must also know of all the weapons that are available. In this volume, I will focus on your Friend and Helper, the Holy Spirit, and the weapons He has given you to use against Satan. These weapons are called the gifts of the Spirit.

One thing I have learned over three decades of casting out demons is this: Satan fears the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was everything to Jesus. He said, "*I drive out demons by the Spirit of God*" (Matthew 12:28). Jesus did not drive out demons by virtue of His deity. If He had, there would be no hope for us to drive out Satan from our lives and the lives of our loved ones. Instead, Jesus depended on the power of the Spirit to accomplish His powerful exorcism ministry, and He made this same power available to you. You have the same gifts that Jesus used!

Only the Holy Spirit can drive out demonic spirits. No human power can defeat Satan; since he is a lawless spirit, only the good Spirit can defeat him. You do not need to be totally good to win, but you do need to depend on the virtue of the Holy Spirit to help you. And the Spirit will give you gifts to defeat Satan.

Before I begin teaching about gifts of the Spirit, you must be aware of how Satan will try to defeat you. First, he will try to deceive you. But with the wisdom and knowledge that God gives, you can uncover his deceptions. Second, he will try to discourage you. Satan will throw every test and trial your way to convince you to give up. But through the power of the Spirit, you can overcome

every obstacle. Third, he will try to tempt you. He will entice you with various temptations to get you hooked to his bondages. He wants to make you a slave. But through the Holy Spirit working within you, you avoid sin by saying no to temptation.

Another reason I have written this book is to show you that you are not alone. You have a Helper who will help you defeat Satan. Don't be alarmed by the enemy's wiles. No matter what Satan has been bombarding you with, there is a greater Spirit within you.

We know that Satan is "*the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient*" (Ephesians 2:2). Yet the Holy Spirit is the new Ruler for the Christian soul, and He is the greater Spirit within us that overcomes Satan by working in those who are obedient to Christ. You need to know of all the weapons God has given you to overcome Satan. "*Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world*" (1 John 4:4 ASV). The first pronoun "*he*" is not a reference to Christ or God the Father; here, John is referring to the Holy Spirit. Many believers know a lot about Christ and their Creator, but they give little thought to the Holy Spirit. This is why so many are defeated.

I hope you prayerfully read this book and allow the Holy Spirit to show you the weapons of your warfare. May God bless you as you embark on the fabulous study of discovering the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

HELPER

*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another
Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*

—John 14:16 (NKJV)

Helper”—this is the perfect job description of the Holy Spirit! He is there to help you. This implies that you *do* need help! We cannot live the kind of life God wants us to live without His divine help.

God did not simply forgive us our sins, write our names in heaven, and then say, “Try your best to live for Me.” No! He knows we are incapable of pleasing Him, no matter how hard we try; so He gave us a precious gift: the Holy Spirit. Just as we cannot save ourselves without Christ, we also cannot live a saved life without the Holy Spirit. What I mean by *a saved life* is the life God intends us to live as saved people—dead to sin, alive to God, and victorious in this life. (See Romans 6:11.) God does not want us to continue living as we did before salvation, and salvation alone cannot empower us to live the supernatural life. We need the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us so that we—His children—can live supernaturally. God does not want us to live natural, normal lives. He wants us to live above normal, above the natural. And this is possible through the Holy Spirit.

As a Helper, the Holy Spirit will contribute strength and means, by which we can win battles; He renders us assistance and cooperates effectively with us. He does not work alone but with us.

This is very different from Christ's work of redemption. Christ did not need our help in taking away the sins of the world; He did not need our help in moving the stone away from the tomb at His resurrection; rather, He did it all Himself!²

Unlike Christ, who alone accomplished redemption for us on the cross and through His resurrection, the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work with us and through us. He never works alone. He joins with us to defeat Satan.

For example, if you need help lifting a couch and a friend comes to assist you, you would not leave the room and wait for him to move the couch alone; rather, you would take one end and your friend would take the other and, together, you would move the couch. This is how the Holy Spirit helps us. He contributes something supernatural to our efforts so that we can accomplish divine work, receive victory, and become the person God intends for us to be. But He won't do this work alone; He needs our cooperation.

This is why we need more teaching on the Holy Spirit. We need to know our role and function in collaboration and cooperation with His work. Many times, the Spirit is hampered by our lack of discernment and cooperation. This book will teach you how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so that God's perfect will is accomplished in your life.

Three Areas of Help

There are three primary areas in which the Holy Spirit helps us. These three areas are like trees—they branch out in many

2. In Christ's earthly ministry, He helped people through His teachings and miracles. However, in His substitutionary death on the cross, He suffered alone. Man contributed nothing positive to Christ's redemptive death and resurrection.

different directions. Basically, the Holy Spirit makes you smarter, stronger, and better.

He Will Make You Smarter

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

(Isaiah 11:2)

Notice the four areas in which the Holy Spirit works: (1) “wisdom,” (2) “understanding,” (3) “counsel,” and (4) “knowledge.” This is the primary help the Holy Spirit provides. If a person grows in wisdom, he or she will have a more successful marriage and family; a more profitable business, career, and ministry; a better social and civic life; and so much more. Look at the benefits of wisdom: “Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor” (Proverbs 3:16). Wisdom carries with her long life, riches, and honor. When you get wisdom, you get the rest. It’s like a story of a little boy named Johnny who sits on Santa Claus’s lap. Santa asks him the usual question: “Johnny, what would you like for Christmas?” Johnny thinks for a moment about what he wants, then he surprises Santa, saying, “I want, uh, uh...I want you, Santa.” The boy realized that if he gets Santa, he inherits the North Pole and all the elves that work for him. He knows that Santa has all the gifts. If he gets the giver of the gifts, he gets *all* the gifts.

This is wisdom. When you get wisdom, along with it, you get long life, wealth, and honor. Solomon even said that wisdom “yields better returns than gold” (Proverbs 3:14). Many people are looking for high returns on their investments. Well, wisdom gives the best returns, interest, and dividends.

Where do we get this true wisdom? Human intelligence is part of it; but alone, it cannot help us make wise choices. This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. He gives us a wisdom that we were not given at birth. He makes us smarter than we are naturally. He provides us with additional brain power.

People have commented on how smart I am. Someone will say, "I bet you were in the top ten percent of your class." The truth is, I was in the part of the class that made the top ten percent possible. There was nothing exceptional about me in school. Yet God has given me supernatural wisdom that has enabled me to build a large church, negotiate business deals, write books, be my own webmaster of a huge Internet site, and produce television programs aired on top networks. Furthermore, God gave me the honor of leading a successful initiative in my city to push back a radical gay agenda. I could accomplish this only with the "*favor with God and men*" (Luke 2:52). Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons worked with me to pass the ordinance. Why would these religious groups want to work with a crazy charismatic like myself? Wisdom. God-given wisdom enabled me to go beyond my human intelligence and gain favor within my community. This wisdom is not something one can boast in, because it comes from God.

Solomon also understood the source of his wisdom. When two women claimed to be the mother of his child, he, without the help of DNA samples, was skillful in what he decided. Knowing the true mother would do anything to save her child, Solomon said, "*Cut the living child in two and give half to one [mother] and half to the other*" (1 Kings 3:25). Immediately the true mother said, "*Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!*" (verse 26). The other woman thought that this was a fair proposal. (See verse 26.) Solomon, in that instant, knew who the mother was, and he gave the baby to the woman who was willing to lose the child in order to save its life. "*When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king*

in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice" (1 Kings 3:28). The people recognized the true source of Solomon's wisdom—"wisdom from God" (verse 28).

Solomon was born no smarter a person than the average man, but when he prayed and asked for wisdom, he received supernatural wisdom to exceptionally govern God's people.

How about you? Do you think you would benefit from God-given wisdom? Of course you would! And I will try to help you understand how to receive the wisdom that the Holy Spirit wants to impart to you.

He Will Make You Stronger

Isaiah called this ability the "*Spirit of...power*" (Isaiah 11:2). Power is the Word of God. Power is supernatural ability. You need this ability to share the Word, to be a good spouse, to love your enemies, to be victorious, and to do anything God calls you to do. The good news is that you do not have to rely on your strength to do this. The Holy Spirit has come to empower you to be stronger than you can imagine.

We all have natural abilities, but those abilities can take us only so far; when we have the Holy Spirit, we have greater and even supernatural abilities. We will need these supernatural abilities to overcome our supernatural enemy—Satan. Our natural strength will be no match for Satan's supernatural power, so the Holy Spirit gives us supernatural power over Satan's power.

In *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the hero, Indiana Jones, was confronted with an enemy skilled in the use of a huge machete. The enemy smirked as he showed his precision with the weapon. Even though Indiana Jones also had a machete, it was clear that he was outmatched by his opponent. Then Indiana Jones smiled. Why wasn't he worried? To everyone's surprise, Indiana Jones pulled out

a revolver and shot the enemy. In that scenario, a gun trumps a machete.

We can relate this to spiritual warfare. The devil has power and we have power. But he is much stronger and skilled at using his power than we are, in the natural. But when God gives us spiritual weapons that trump Satan's weapons, we can defeat him, once and for all!

Let me give you an example in the Bible. Samson was an Israelite. There are pictures that depict him as a bodybuilder. Still, no bodybuilder can tear apart a lion with his bare hands. How was he able to do this? *"The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat"* (Judges 14:6). Samson's big muscles did not account for his supernatural feat of tearing apart a lion with his bare hands. The Bible says he was able to do this because *"the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power."* Without the Spirit, you still have strength to do certain things; however, *with* the Holy Spirit, you can do supernatural things!

One of the most exciting and beneficial spiritual gift is the gift of healing.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit.

(1 Corinthians 12:7–9)

The first two gifts—wisdom and knowledge—are primary. They relate to what we discussed previously about making you smarter. However, the fourth gift on the list is the gift of healing. Now, no human has the ability to heal another person. But with

the power of the Holy Spirit, you, like Samson, can do something extraordinary—heal others!

I can vouch for the healing gift in my life. I have seen scores of people healed simply through my touch and simple prayer. Some look at me and others with this gift as though we are out of touch with reality. They scoff at the thought of someone healing another through the laying on of hands. I understand people's skepticism, because, in the natural, no one has this power. But the Holy Spirit has come to impart this gift to God's people.

People will come to me and say, "C'mon, Bishop. Be honest. You have never really seen anyone healed through your prayers." But I can honestly say that yes, I have.

One Sunday in particular stands out in my memory. An injured police officer came up to me with his walker. I laid hands on him and spoke a word of faith—"You can walk in Jesus' name." Then he handed me the walker and started to walk on his own. I am not a skeptic, but I marvel at the power of God. The people in church were jumping up and down as they saw this miracle with their own eyes. The officer was weeping with joy as he was truly healed.

The next person in line was on crutches. I laid hands on him, and said, "Well, you saw what God did with the first man. How about you? Do you think you need the crutches?" Joyfully and without hesitation, he handed me the crutches and walked and ran without any sign of injury. The congregation was beside themselves with joy as they saw two miracles, one after the other.

I am an eyewitness of these two healings. It is one thing to argue about one person walking without crutches or a walker, but two miracles, back-to-back? I will be the first to tell you that I cannot heal anyone in my own power. Thankfully, I am not living in my own power but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this book, I want you to discover the gifts the Holy Spirit wants to give you, and I will teach you how to pray for, expect, and activate those gifts.

He Will Make You Better

Do you desire to be a better person? Would you like to be more loving and caring for others? How about being patient and kind? Maybe you just want to be a good person. Well, this is what the Holy Spirit will do for you. He will make you a better person. You will be more excellent, more suitable, and more favorable, surpassing your past character. The Holy Spirit will make you into an improved you. He improves your life. The Bible calls this improvement “holiness.” The Spirit is called holy for a reason. Holiness is the opposite of sin. When the Spirit comes into a person’s life, He makes him or her holy. Isaiah called Him the “*Spirit of the...fear of the LORD*” (Isaiah 11:2). Fear of the Lord inspires us to live holy lives.

Every saved Christian struggles with sin, be they addictions, habits, or compulsions. Many Christians struggle with gluttony, alcohol, pornography, anger, jealousy, greed, and other vices. These sins are difficult to remove from a person’s life, and many wonder if and when they will be able to overcome these depravities. On your own, you can’t, but, with the sanctifying work of the Spirit, you can.

After suffering from a hangover, former President George W. Bush quit drinking—cold turkey. Despite being a heavy drinker throughout most of his life, he put an abrupt end to his drinking days. How was this possible? Bush credits God in giving him the strength to overcome his drinking problem. It was the Holy Spirit within George Bush’s life that sanctified him from his unhealthy habit.

Experts insist that recovering alcoholics need therapy. While I am happy for those who have stopped drinking through the help of

therapy, there is another Helper who can make people stop drinking. He is the Holy Spirit and He gives us the power to live holy.

Alcoholics Anonymous encourages recovering alcoholics to admit that they are powerless to stop drinking on their own. It teaches them to focus on a “higher power.” Well, the higher power has a name: the Holy Spirit. When you focus on His power, you discover that you have more strength than you had on your own. The Holy Spirit will help you to live a better life.

What This Book Will Do for You

It is my intention to help you yield to the Holy Spirit, so that you can live the full life in the Spirit. The first thing this book will show you is the importance of experiencing baptism in the Holy Spirit. Without this Spirit baptism, you will be limited as to how much the Holy Spirit can help you. Second, it will teach you how to receive the Holy Spirit in your life. Third, this book will point out the various ways in which the Holy Spirit can work in your life. Fourth, this volume will teach you how to recognize and activate the various gifts in your life.

How This Book Is Arranged

This book is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the importance of the baptism in the Spirit and why a Christian must experience it after his or her conversion. Without receiving the baptism in the Spirit, you will not be given the full range of the gifts of the Spirit. Thus, I have devoted an entire section to Spirit baptism, in order to help you understand the importance of this gift.

The second section discusses the nine gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. The book concludes with a section on the fruits of the Spirit, which must accompany the gifts.

Get ready to experience the move of the Holy Spirit.

PART 1

BAPTISM IN THE
HOLY SPIRIT

ONE

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

—Acts 2:1–4

The greatest event in human history is not the birth of Christ or His death or His resurrection—the greatest event in history is Pentecost. Oh, I am not downplaying the work of Christ, because without His work, the Holy Spirit could not come. My point is that the work of Christ was intended to make possible the work of the Holy Spirit. After Christ accomplished everything He was sent to do, God sent the Spirit. “Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified” (John 7:39).

God brought redemption through His Son so that He could bring power to His children. If redemption itself were the sole purpose of God’s plan, then we would simply be forgiven sinners still bound by sin. We would simply be normal, forgiven people. But God’s intent was to radically change us, and He does this in our

lives through the work of the Spirit. With the Holy Spirit, and His gifts at work in our lives, we can live in the supernatural. Satan lives in the supernatural, so we need the supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit to live as God wants us to live—overcoming sin!

The Forgotten God

Francis Chan calls the Holy Spirit “the forgotten God.” Maybe this is too strong of a statement, but he makes a great point. Too often, the church knows much about God and His Son Jesus, but little thought is given to the third person of the Trinity. He is nearly forgotten.

It is not just the contemporary church that neglects the Holy Spirit, but past tradition also shows a real neglect of the Holy Spirit. For example, in the famous Apostles’ Creed, much attention is given to God the Creator and even more attention to the Son, yet the creed lends only a few short words to the Spirit: “*Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*,” or “I believe in the Holy Spirit,” and “*Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto*,” or “Our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit.” There is no explanation of His work or ministry, or who or what He is.

It is not just our apostolic fathers who neglected the Holy Spirit but also the church in general throughout the history of Christendom. Consider the Christian holidays. Everyone makes a big deal about celebrating Christ’s birth at Christmas, and rightly so. Then there is Good Friday and Easter, during which we celebrate His sacrifice and our redemption. Churches are packed during these holidays. But fifty days later, few Christians give any special thoughts about Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost, unfortunately, has become the stepchild of Christian holidays. We know it’s there but we pay it little attention. No wonder the church seems powerless. Pentecost is the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world in the same sense that Christ came into the world. God

the Father, Christ the Son, and the Spirit have always existed. The Spirit was present and active in the lives of Old Testament saints but He was limited in His work. Pentecost marks the beginning of His full ministry.

Pentecost should carry the same weight as other Christian holidays among Christians. It should be recognized and celebrated with gift giving, because the Spirit also gives gifts. Without Pentecost, Christmas, Easter, the incarnation, and the resurrection all lose their true meaning and significance.

The Missing Ingredient

I invented a delicious tortilla soup recipe. It was ranked the number one tortilla soup on Google for seven years straight. It has since been surpassed by other soup recipes but, in my humble opinion, it is still the best recipe. Many have made my soup. When my mother tried making it for the first time, she called me, and said, “Tom, something is wrong with the soup. It doesn’t taste like yours.”

“Well, you are missing an ingredient,” I said. “Let’s go over it again. You put in the tomatoes and cilantro, right?”

“Yes.”

“Did you remember the chipotle peppers?”

“Of course, I remembered those. That’s the secret to the recipe.”

“Well,” I continued, “I assume you put in the onions?”

My mom squealed. “Oh! I can’t believe I forgot the onions! That is one of the main ingredients.”

She forgot one of the obvious ingredients, making her soup taste bad. This is what has happened to many Christians. They look somewhat like Christ, but they know something is missing

in their lives. And I can tell you that the missing ingredient is the Holy Spirit. Oh, many people acknowledge His existence, but they have never had Him truly enter their lives in a dramatic fashion as we have seen on the day of Pentecost.

My Experience

I grew up in an Assemblies of God church, which is the largest Pentecostal denomination. You would have assumed that I was really acquainted with the power of the Holy Spirit, but I was not. Oh, I heard speaking in tongues and saw some ministers pray for the sick, but I never experienced the Holy Spirit.

It wasn't until I was a senior in high school that I first experienced Him. I attended a Sunday night service at the church when the senior pastor was out of town. The associate pastor took his place behind the pulpit and taught about Peter walking on the water. He told us that with the Holy Spirit, you can do what is humanly impossible, which is what every minister needs. Ministers of the gospel cannot fulfill the call of God unless they receive the Holy Spirit. Just then, he paused. The expression on his face was a bit distant but attentive. God was speaking to him. Then he spoke: "God has shown me that there are two young men in this service that He has called into the ministry. And you two need to come forward and commit your lives to the ministry. God will give you the power you need to be successful."

The first man who went forward was a tall, slender man named Timmy. I thought to myself, *Yes, Timmy will make a good minister.* After he went forward, no one else walked down the aisle. The minister would not accept this. He said, "Look, God is never wrong. He told me that there are two men, not one, whom He has called into the ministry. Hurry, come forward."

Still, no one went forward. I thought, *Who is rebelling by not going forward?* Just then, the minister said, "I knew it was you."

Then he pointed to me. Why would he assume it was me? As I looked around, I noticed that I had stood up. I don't remember standing; it was an unconscious response. Then I walked forward, still bewildered at what had happened.

As I stood next to Timmy, I scanned the front of the church. To my left, I saw Mrs. Hageman, the senior pastor's wife, playing the organ. While looking at her, I felt a gush of love and power flowing in me. Suddenly I fell to the ground and started sobbing uncontrollably. There on the floor, my face to the ground, I continued to pour out my tears on the red carpet. I am sure many people before me had stained the old carpet with tears; but for the first time, I was one of the sincere believers who had received a touch from God.

I was unaware of the time but later found out that I was on the floor for more than an hour. As I neared the end of my weeping, I plainly heard this Scripture in my head: *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:4 KJV). At that point, I realized that I was experiencing the baptism in the Spirit that Jesus had told His disciples about: *"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 1:4–5). This was it! I had experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Then the thought occurred to me that the proof I had of the Holy Spirit was not tears but speaking tongues. And with that simple revelation, I opened my mouth and spoke in tongues for the first time. It was simple. The language was not from my mind but from the Holy Spirit within me.

After praying in tongues for quite some time, I heard Timmy's voice—"Hey, Tom!"

Not realizing that Timmy had experienced what I had experienced, I turned my face to my right as my body still hugged the

carpet. Surprised that Timmy was on the floor with me, I replied, "Yea, Timmy?"

He said, "I can't get off the floor. I'm stuck. I'm just curious, can you get off the floor?"

I hadn't tried before then. I had been so caught up in what God was doing. So I tried to get up but couldn't. "No, Timmy. I can't get up. I feel like I am glued to the floor."

"Me, too. I just thought I was crazy; now I know it has happened to you, too."

So Timmy and I quietly rested while the Spirit of God worked in our lives. Before long, Timmy and I were released from the floor at the same time.

I cannot explain to you everything that happened to me that night. But I believe that as I committed my life to the ministry, God gave me my own Pentecost experience. Just as it happened with the early disciples, I, too, was filled with the Spirit. I believe this experience has given me supernatural abilities that I needed in order to pastor a successful church, write books, preach powerfully, heal the sick, and cast out demons. And you need this experience, too.