

# 21 Days of Empowerment

A Guide for Moving  
with the Spirit

Larry Walkemeyer

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with the Spirit

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# EXPONENTIAL<sup>1</sup>

*21 Days of Empowerment*

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# Introduction

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

— Acts 1:8

Is Acts 1:8 true for you, today? In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised us an empowered life and ministry. If Jesus said it, we know it's true. *But how true is it for you, today?*

Would you like to dramatically increase your empowerment level? Would you like to “move with the Spirit” more in your daily life? This is the Spirit's invitation over the next *21 Days of Empowerment*.

The new on/off/dimmer switch to our kitchen lights is a daily reminder of my empowerment level. If I turn it on, power begins to flow to it. All the power needed to flood our kitchen with light is available. However, I control the dimmer switch and determine how much power will flow to the lights and how bright the room will be.

Likewise, the Spirit's power is available and ready. Our confession of Christ has turned his power on in our lives. But *how* empowered we live, is up to us.

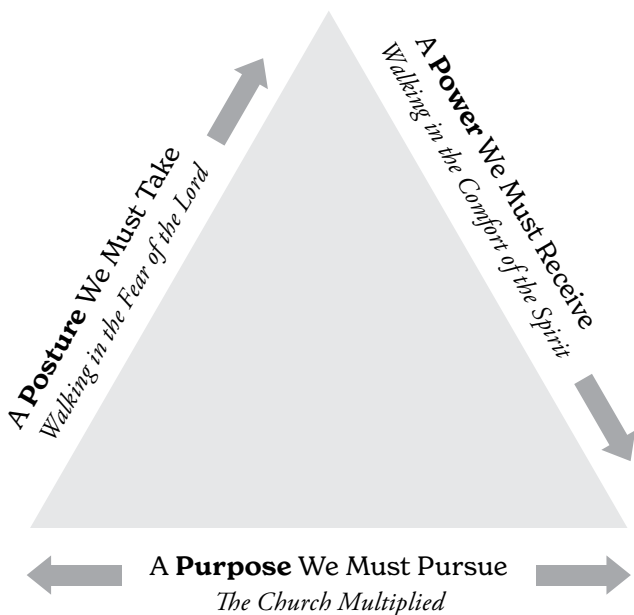
These 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting will reveal how to receive and release the empowerment of God at a whole new level. Your experience, however, will depend on your investment.

These 21 Days of Devotion are constructed around the “power triangle” we find in Acts 9:31.

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (Acts 9:31, ESV)

This often-overlooked verse is a key to understanding how Christianity spread so rapidly. It reveals three essentials for Acts 1:8 kind of empowerment.

- There is a *posture* we must take: walking in the fear of the Lord
- There is a *power* we must receive: the comfort of the Holy Spirit
- There is a *purpose* we must pursue: the church multiplied



## **The Empowered Triangle**

*Acts 9:31*

*"And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied."*

The “up-side” of the triangle is what we give to God: our faith, reverence, dependence, and obedience.

The “down-side” of the triangle is what we receive from God: his presence, comfort, guidance, and power.

The “horizontal-side” of the triangle is how we minister for God: through pouring ourselves into others for the sake of multiplying disciples, leaders, and churches.



Each week focuses on one of these three themes and aids us in understanding, praying, and applying these themes to our lives.

At Exponential we are “multiplication activists.” We believe God’s empowerment is primarily for the purpose of fulfilling your destiny, seeing disciples and churches multiplied, and Jesus’ name being glorified.

We pray these 21 Days will significantly empower you for these purposes.

## How to Use This Devotional

1. Dedicate these 21 Days to God as a sacred time in your life.
2. Ask for God’s direction for what you will fast from these 21 Days. What you fast should be significant enough to remind you several times daily to seek God’s increased power in your life and ministry.
3. Set apart a time daily to slowly read through the devotional. (Each devotional should take about five to seven minutes to read the passages and devotional thoughts.)
4. Each devotional includes:
  - Title: fitting the theme for the week
  - Scripture Passage: reading provides larger context
  - The Focus Verse: helps center your heart
  - The Meditation: from the focus Scripture to repeat throughout your day
  - Empowering Truths: a brief devotional to help you understand and apply the passage

- A Power Truth: to help you focus and shape your thinking throughout the day
  - Our Prayer: a prayer to God to prompt your own time of prayer
5. Share your devotion with someone that day. Look for ways to apply the truth for the day. (These two practices dramatically increase retention and impact of your devotion time.)

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## Day 1: Power Walking

The Passage: Galatians 5:13–26

The Focus: “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16, NLT)

The Meditation: “Walk by the Spirit.”

Empowering Truths: For many years, my wife, Deb, and I have power walked together. Power walking is when you focus on your stride, your speed, your form, and your breathing to maximize the “power” in your “walk.”

Galatians 5 teaches us about spiritual “power walking.” The Lord points out actions and attitudes that will drain our spiritual power and contrasts them with what will increase our power. The Spirit empowers us to analyze our lives and adjust our “walks.”

Researchers have recently found that each person’s walking gait is unique—and it can serve not only as an identifier but also as an indicator of mood and health. The way you walk is like a fingerprint—it’s like a unique signature of yourself.<sup>1</sup> No one else walks just like you.

Scripture uses the word “walk” to describe your daily attitude, values, decisions, disciplines, and actions. Your “walk” is the unique totality of your life as lived out hour by hour. No one else walks just like you.

The early church “walked” in the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31), and this positioned them for the empowerment of the Spirit. Their deep reverence for the daily lordship of Jesus invited the fullness of the Spirit. Galatians 5:16 invites us into walking by the Spirit so we are kept from walking in our flesh.

“Fast Walking” is essential in power walking. You walk faster than your usual pace and typical comfort zone. You “fast walk” because you want to advance your physical health.

Likewise, in the spiritual realm, the advancement of your life, ministry, and church requires fasting and prayer. Fasting takes you out of your usual pace and typical comfort zone so you can focus more attention to the Spirit. We know from Acts 13:1–3 and other Scriptures that fasting was a vital part of the empowerment and direction of the early church.

Fasting is emptying yourself of something that makes more room for the fullness of the Spirit. It is denying your flesh something it craves to feel more intensely the desire of your spirit. Fasting opens up space to listen for the Spirit’s voice.

During these 21 Days of Empowerment, give up something that changes the way you walk through your

days so that you can walk in greater fear and awe of the Lord.

Let's pray that people can recognize Jesus through us by the way we walk!

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**Power Truth:** My daily behaviors and habits position me for more or less Spirit-empowerment.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive me in those places I have been walking by my flesh instead of by your Spirit. I want my healthy fear of you to cause me to “walk” in life-giving, joy-inducing, power-producing ways. I choose to fast, to give up something significant, so I can make more room for you in my life. Use these 21 Days to adjust my walk to your will.

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## Day 2: Redefining Awesome

The Passage: Psalm 68

The Focus: “Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the heavens. You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!” (Psalm 68:34, 35)

The Meditation: “You, God, are awesome. . . . You give us power and strength.”

Empowering Truths: “Our God is awful.”

It is fascinating how the meaning of words can dramatically change over time. “Nice” used to mean “foolish or silly,” while “silly” originally meant “blessed.”<sup>2</sup> Our “awful” God used to mean “worthy of awe.” No longer. I don’t suggest you teach your kids to call God “awful.”

One word that means basically the same but became impotent through dilution of meaning is “awesome.” It used to be used for sites like the Grand Canyon, the



Milky Way, the northern lights. Today it's used for pizza, lattes, your new shoes, or your favorite hamburger.

God's picture should be in your dictionary beside the word "awesome." "Awesome" is what Moses saw on Mt. Sinai, what Elijah saw when he was whisked away, what Isaiah saw in the temple, or what Peter saw on the Mount of Transfiguration.

We will probably never see the awesomeness of God in one of those ways, but we can encounter the awesomeness of God through faith. And it is essential that we do so. Why? Because the revelation of his awesomeness opens us up for the impartation of his power.

To "walk in the fear of the Lord" is a daily recognition of the grandeur, majesty, wisdom, glory, authority, and greatness of our God. It is to be freshly overwhelmed by God's beauty and his "otherness"—his divinity contrasted to our humanity.

As Psalm 68:34–35 declares, his "power is in the heavens" beyond our comprehension. He breathed out trillions of stars and named each one as they formed. He is the star-breathing God. Yet this awesome God "gives power and strength to his people."

The early church lived with a sense of awe of God. They probably didn't know the theological words, "transcendent" (infinitely above us as humans) or "immanence" (personally with us). Yet this is the powerful balance in which they walked. He wasn't their "good buddy in the sky," yet he was "the friend who sticks closer than a brother."

We think and live differently when we are overwhelmed by his awesomeness and amazed by his nearness. May these 21 Days expand the size of God in our minds.

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**Power Truth:** Living in daily awe of God positions us for the daily power of God.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, you define awesome. You are infinitely above who I can imagine you to be. Forgive me when I do not revere you as such. Forgive me when I diminish you due to unbelief, self-centeredness, familiarity, or religion. Open my eyes daily to your mind-blowing majesty and your heartwarming personalness.

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## **Day 3: The One-Seat Throne**

**The Passage:** Deuteronomy 10:12–22

**The Focus:** “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12–13)

**The Meditation:** “Walk in obedience to him . . . for your own good.”

**Empowering Truths:** Bumper sticker theology is becoming less common but is still a real thing. Most of their declarations need more explanation. One of my least favorites is: “God is my copilot.” When I see it, I always think, *If that’s true, shouldn’t you switch seats?*

In fact, it suggests that the cockpit of your life is built for two—God and you. But the truth is there is only one set of controls in the plane of your life, and you decide

daily who will sit in the pilot's seat. Likewise, the throne of your life is built for one and only one.

Walking in the fear of the Lord means we are actually scared of steering. We "walk in obedience to him" because he alone knows what is best for us. "Observing the Lord's commands" is "for your own good" (Deuteronomy 10:13).

This wholehearted, whole-souled obedience is what positions us for the flow of God's power and goodness into and through our lives. Isaiah makes the issue clear: "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

One of the frightening and defining stories of the early church is recorded in Acts 5. Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property and decided to give some of the money to God's work. That was all good, except, they conspired to lie to the church by claiming they had given it all when actually they had kept back a portion for themselves. They thought of it as a win/win approach, but it ended up a dead/dead approach. They both dropped dead, and great fear gripped the church.

Their serious sin was thinking they could lie to God and to his church claiming to be "all in" when actually they were in it for their own egos, comfort, and reputation. They thought they could "share the throne" with God. Instead they discovered it's a one-seat throne.

The sad truth is we each have a little Ananias and Sapphira in us. We want to look better than we actually are. Obedience applies not only to our outward actions

but our inward motives. How often do we lie to God and his church and portray ourselves as being “all in” when actually we are still on the throne? We will take God’s advice and direction sometimes, as long as we don’t have to give up the steering wheel. We sing, “I surrender all” when we should sing “I surrender some.”

We are transformed by daily saying, “Jesus, take the wheel,” or, “Spirit, empower me to obey,” or “Father, yours alone is the throne.”

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**Power Truth:** Surrender evidenced by obedience positions us for empowerment.

**Our Prayer:** Jesus, you are my Savior, and you are my Lord, the daily leader of my life. Forgive me when I want to sit on the throne and direct my own life. Your total obedience to your Father is the example I want to live by. I trust you that my full obedience is for my own good and for the advancement of your kingdom through me.

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## **Day 4: Our Submission Mission**

**The Passage:** Colossians 1:3–14

**The Focus:** “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.” (Colossians 1:9–11, NASB)

**The Meditation:** “Fill you with the knowledge of his will . . . so that you may . . . [bear] fruit.”

**Empowering Truths:** Discipleship has sometimes been defined as “hearing and obeying God.” That definition captures much of the essence of discipleship. We choose which voice in life we are going to listen to, and then we follow where it leads.



Everyone has a voice in their head telling them what “success” looks like. That voice is usually a toxic combination of our upbringing, our culture, our flesh, the devil, our education, and even unhealthy American church culture. Can you hear the Spirit through the cacophony of voices?

In today’s scripture Paul prays for the believers at Colossae (and for us) to be filled with “knowledge of God’s will” by the power of the Spirit, *so that* we might “please him in every way,” *so that* we might “bear fruit.” This is God’s definition of success.

Success is submission to God’s mission. It is carefully hearing and faithfully obeying.

We need to fear God to hear God. When the early Christians were walking in the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31), they were listening for his voice and were submitted to its authority. They were on mission with God, making disciples and multiplying the church.

They were following Jesus’ example—his posture of “submission to the mission” led him to the garden where he prayed, “Father, if it’s possible may this cup of suffering be taken away; nevertheless, I want your will more than my will” (my paraphrase). In the eyes of the world, he was a failure. In the eyes of his Father, he had completed his mission.

The Spirit reveals the will of God to those willing to do his will . . . to those who live in submission to his mission. His mission is usually not the popular or

applauded path. Instead it calls us to die to our own will, to pursue God's will instead.

For the last forty years the church has primarily used the scoreboard of size to measure success. Could it be that we have missed the mission of multiplication that the Lord was actually calling us to—the mission to make disciples who make disciples and plant churches that plant churches? Have we been listening to the wrong applause?

As disciples of Jesus we must long to truly “hear and obey” so we live with a daily submission to his multiplication mission.

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**Power Truth:** I am empowered by the Spirit as I live willing to do God's will regardless of what it looks like to others.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, I receive Paul's prayer for me. Fill me with the knowledge of your will. Empower me to please you in every way. Bear much kingdom fruit through my life. Strengthen me with your power so that I might stay on mission with you regardless of the sacrifice it involves. I want to live every day in “submission to your mission.”

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## Week 1: Walking in the Fear of the Lord

### **Day 5: Up!**

**The Passage:** Ephesians 6:10–20

**The Focus:** “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. . . . And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (Ephesians 6:10, 18)

**The Meditation:** “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

**Empowering Truths:** When my daughter was around two years of age, her favorite word was “Up!” She would lift her chubby little arms, look way up to my face, and say, “Up!” Her raised arms were a sign of dependency usually with an air of urgency mixed in.

She wanted “Up!” when she was tired, when she couldn’t see due to her size, when she was scared, or when she just wanted to be snuggled.

Her “Up!” request would bring her into a new position with me—into my arms or onto my shoulders. No longer was she walking on her own power but now

she was connected with my power. She was as strong as her father.

Prayer is the way we say, “Up!” to God. When we lift our hands or get on our knees or raise our voice or focus our thoughts on God, we are admitting our weakness and his power. We are saying, “I need strength, vision, courage, protection, and love, and *you* are the one who can help.”

Paul starts the “armor of God” teaching with a command for us to be strong, to be connected with God’s “mighty power.” He ends the teaching with the provision for connection: prayer (Ephesians 6:18).

He states its importance in an *all*-encompassing manner. He writes, “*all* occasions” with “*all* kinds of prayers” at “*all* times” for “*all* God’s people.” He doesn’t want you to miss the point that prayer must be woven into all your life, all your days, all your emotions, all of your needs, all of your battles, all of your temptations, and all of your ministry efforts.

The hard reality is that demons are on the attack daily, and they don’t get tired.

The greater reality is that you can walk in victory over them through the power of prayer. Consequently, this is why a primary point of spiritual attack is against your prayer life. If the “spiritual forces of evil” can keep you from praying, they can keep you from victory.

So don’t be surprised that you get too busy to pray, too tired to pray, too bored to pray, too mad to pray, too sad to pray, too cynical to pray, too discouraged to pray,

and so on. You must mount a counterattack in those times. You must refuse to allow the evil one to rob the greatest privilege afforded to humans—the power to speak to the living God and know he’s listening. He is “Abba, Father,” and we can say, “Up!” anytime to him!

As Samuel Chadwick, the nineteenth-century Wesleyan preacher powerfully stated:

Satan dreads nothing but prayer. His one concern is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.

---

**Power Truth:** We connect with God’s power when we weave prayer into all our lives.

**Our Prayer:** Father, it’s astounding that you give us mortals the ability to speak to you directly through Christ. Thank you for this powerful privilege. Forgive me for letting prayer become commonplace. Help me live dependent upon you as evidenced through continual prayer. Empower my life and ministry as I meet *all* situations with prayer.

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## **Day 6: Pouring Out Power**

**The Passage:** 2 Thessalonians 1:3–12

**The Focus:** “With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”  
(2 Thessalonians 1:11–12)

**The Meditation:** “By his power he may bring to fruition . . . every deed prompted by faith.”

**Empowering Truths:** Our faith gives God a container to fill with his power.

In our Focus Scripture today, Paul connects the dots for us. The New Living Translation renders 2 Thessalonians 1:11b: “May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.” Paul says your faith prompts you to do “good things” for God, and the only way you will accomplish them is



through God's power. We must, by faith, keep giving God something to work with, something to fill with his power.

For the New Testament church, walking in the fear of the Lord meant living in white-hot faith in the Lord (Acts 9:31). They took radical actions of faith because they believed God would act supernaturally on their behalf. Their steps of faith provided a container for God to fill.

In 2 Kings 4 the widow of a prophet is broke, and the debt collector is at the door to haul her two sons into slavery to pay her husband's debt. Elisha comes to the rescue. The miracle, however, will require faith on the widow's part. All she has is a small jar with a little oil in it. But Elisha commands her to gather empty jars from neighbors. It seems ridiculous to borrow empty jars when you can't even fill the jar you have. But faith gives God a container to fill.

As the widow begins to pour out what little oil she has, it keeps flowing, and flowing, and flowing. It flows until it fills up every empty jar they can find. The miracle provides for her family, pays her debts, and probably blesses her neighbors too.

When was the last time you let your faith initiate an action that was beyond your ability to accomplish unless God intervened?

When our church made a monumental shift from addition (just growing bigger) to multiplication (giving people away to plant), it was a tough decision for our board. The turning point of those deliberations came

when the chairman of the board wrote in big letters on a 3 × 5 card: “When will we dare to try something for God, that if God doesn’t show up, it will certainly fail?” Then he stuck it on the corkboard of the board room. Then we voted unanimously to daringly pursue church planting . . . by faith. Twenty-two years and thirty church plants later, that card is still posted there.

What is God calling you to that will require real faith to pursue? God’s power shows up when we begin to pour out . . . by faith.

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**Power Truth:** Our faith in God’s provision empowers us to take bold action for the kingdom.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, increase my faith. Forgive my self-sufficiency. Forgive me for praying like your power is not available. Empower me to take action that requires faith so that you can display your power on behalf of the mission. I pray this “so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in me.”

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## Day 7: Fanning Your Flame

The Passage: 2 Timothy 1:6–14

The Focus: “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.” (2 Timothy 1:6–8)

The Meditation: “Fan into flame the gift of God. . . . For the Spirit . . . gives us power.”

Empowering Truths: “Bellows” is a word we seldom use today. But it was once an essential term because “bellows” were the only means to “fan a flame” hot enough to smelt iron ore and get usable iron out of it.

In 2 Timothy Paul uses this word picture to instruct Timothy on how to pursue God’s ministry for his life. Paul says, “Timothy, the gift of God is in you . . . the embers are glowing. But you are responsible for fanning

the embers into a flame that unleashes the power of God's gift through you."

While commentators aren't exactly certain of what gift is being spoken of (evangelism, preaching, teaching, pastoring, prophecy, or unknown), what we do know is it needed to be nurtured. We know it was only useful if burning brightly, if flaming up!

We must give passionate attention to whatever gift or calling God has given us. Enthusiasm comes from two root words: "en" meaning "in" and "theos" meaning "God." When we are truly "in God," there is an enthusiastic passion for the mission of God.

Timothy seems to have been facing opposition or doubt or difficulty or exhaustion or complacency, which was inducing a timidity in him. These challenges can quench our flame. But Paul states clearly, "Timidity is not the spirit God gives us. Power, love, and discipline come from the Spirit and overcome fear."

Walking in the fear of the Lord means a daily renewal of our zeal for what his priorities are. As we daily determine to be passionate for God, for his gifts, and for his mission, then we position ourselves to receive his ongoing empowerment. God gives the flame and feeds the flame, but we must fan the flame!

My freshman year in college, I titled my first journal *Pyroo*, a Greek word meaning "to be set on fire," because this was my prayer to God. It is the Greek word used to describe the feet of Jesus in Revelation 1:15. His feet were on fire! This is still my plea for myself and every

Christ follower. We are good news messengers with fire in our feet!

As a teen I learned a short, life-changing chorus: “To be used of God, to speak, to sing, to pray. To be used of God to show someone the way. I long so much to feel the touch of his consuming fire. To be used of God is my desire.” I’m still singing it.

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**Power Truth:** Fan the flame of your gifts because God’s power flows to passionate people.

**Our Prayer:** Spirit of God, you are the flame that will burn as bright as I allow you. Forgive me for trying to be the flame. Forgive me for neglecting to fan your flame in my life. You are worthy of every drop of my passion. Deliver me from every challenge that seeks to quench my flame. Give me power, love, and discipline. “Give me oil in my lamp. . . . Keep me burning, burning, burning . . . till the break of day!”

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Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

## Day 8: The Final Promise

The Passage: Acts 1:1–11

The Focus: “He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.’” (Acts 1:7–9)

The Meditation: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”

Empowering Truths: Uncertainty is a power drain. When you know for certain the game is over in sixty minutes, you can go hard every minute. But imagine a game without a clock and with no defined length. The uncertainty of how long you have played and how long you still must play will drain you.

This is the uncertain reality the disciples face. Their very last question to Jesus is a timing question: “Is your



kingdom coming now?”(1:6). How long do we have to play? Instead of giving them a certain date, Jesus promised them his presence through his Spirit, and the power to face whatever and whenever for as long as it takes.

In fact, after Christ ascends, the angel answers their question with a question, “Why are you all still standing here?” As if to say, “I think I heard Jesus say, ‘It’s go time!’” Then the angel continued his answer with a certainty that will compel them and an uncertainty that will confound them: “He is definitely coming back. For real. But he’s not saying when.”

Through life I have found myself asking God a lot of timing questions: “How long until I get married, get a ministry, get a bigger ministry, have a kid, buy a house, make a name for myself, get a real sabbatical, write a real book, overcome this one big sin, have a truly powerful prayer life? . . . Lord, is it now!?”

And the Lord answers, “You shall receive power when my Spirit is upon you.” This is the power of his Spirit with me. He is with me on the journey, and his presence and promise change everything. It’s his final and best promise.

Do you remember being a kid on a road trip and repeatedly, ad nauseum, piping up from the back seat, “Are we there yet?” But if my best friend was with us and we were playing in the backseat, the question was hardly ever asked. I once heard it said, “If you are riding with the one you really love, you no longer have to ask, ‘Are we there yet?’”

As a kid on a road trip without a clear concept of time and distance, trips seemed really long. It was all about the destination. On the Mount of Olives Jesus said, “The destination is certain, but you have a mission to accomplish along the way. For this, you will need the power of my Spirit.”

The daily reception of the Spirit’s power is the only way to journey through life and to be the effective witness Jesus has commissioned you to be. Enjoy this promise, this person of the Spirit of Jesus. He is your certainty and strength. Employ this promise to be bold for Jesus whether you are in your Jerusalem or the ends of the earth.

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**Power Truth:** The presence and power of the Spirit give us certainty and boldness in life.

**Our Prayer:** Jesus, forgive me when I am locked into questions of timing and you are focusing me on your presence. Forgive me for not enjoying you more on this journey of my life. Thank you for your personal presence with me. I receive your fresh and full power today to communicate your presence to my world. Focus me on my destiny *today* more than my destination *tomorrow*.

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Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

## Day 9: Fire-Works

The Passage: Acts 2:1–11

The Focus: “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 2:2–4)

The Meditation: “Tongues of fire . . . came to rest on each of them.”

Empowering Truths: I’ve often tried to envision the scene described in Acts 2. Imagine it with me: the roaring sound of a mighty wind without a whisper of air moving. A levitating bonfire in the middle of the large hall but with no heat or smoke. Then the bonfire splits into 120 individual flames that float across the area stopping just above every disciple’s head. Young, old, man, woman, apostles, new disciples, best educated, illiterate, most

righteous, least righteous . . . everyone gets a flame. Yet not one singed hair.

Next, the sound of up to 120 different foreign languages from various tribes and nations miraculously fills the air. A large crowd begins to gather, since by this time they are probably on or near the southern stair entrance to the temple. Individuals in the multi-ethnic throng cry out, “I hear my language. They are praising God and Jesus his Messiah in my dialect. How can this be?”

Then Peter stands on the temple stairs and begins to preach in Greek. In the message he explains the fire on every head this way, “God said he would pour out his Spirit on *all* people. This is it!” By the end of the day you see three thousand new followers of Jesus baptized in the numerous *mikvoth*—the ritual baths on the south side of the temple.

This is what happens when 120 believers are filled with the Spirit and catch on fire. So the empowerment question of the day is: Are you living with “fire on your head”? Are you seeing the “fire on the heads” of the people you lead?

The same Spirit of Acts 2 is accessible for all who believe today. There is not a special class of Christian. No chosen gender, nationality, or economic group. You can be as pure as Mary or as sinful as Saul and still receive the same “fire-works” of the Spirit. The Spirit’s fire is available by grace through faith.

We saw what the “fire-works” looked like on the day of Pentecost, but what about the next fifty days or five hundred days? For that picture we just keep reading Acts 2.

There we see radical devotion, joy, fellowship, worship, generosity, miracles, compassion, home meetings, public gatherings, food (lots of food), community service and community favor, and souls getting saved.

These are the “fire-works” we are looking for. Yet in the American church we train people to hand out bulletins while Jesus trained people to cast out demons. We fail to see the powerful spiritual potential in the lives of “ordinary” people when they get “fire on their head.”

Though we may not see it as they did on Pentecost, we can live “under the fire” daily! Lukewarm won’t work any longer. We must become earnest for the spiritual flame that will light the fire in others.

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**Power Truth:** The same Spirit of Pentecost is available to every believer who will dare to believe and live under the “fire.”

**Our Prayer:** Holy Spirit, fire of the Lord, rest upon my life. Forgive me for underestimating what you can do through me. Ignite me with fresh passion for your mission. Quicken my faith to believe you for more supernatural manifestations of your truth and power through me and through other believers. I refuse to settle for less than your “fire-works” For Jesus’ sake!

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Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

## Day 10: Sitting High

The Passage: Ephesians 1:18–21; 2:4–7

The Focus: Ephesians 1:20b–21 “He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion.” (Ephesians 1:20b–21)

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”  
(Ephesians 2:6)

The Meditation: “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms.”

Empowering Truths: Remember that the Bible was written without chapter breaks. The chapter breaks were added in AD 1227. Occasionally, chapter breaks inadvertently obscure a truth. I believe that can happen in Ephesians 1 and 2. That chapter break can significantly impact our spiritual self-image and spiritual authority.

In Ephesians 1 we are told where Christ is seated now. He is at the right hand of God in heavenly realms. He



is positioned in authority, far above all rule, power, and dominion both now and forevermore. In Ephesians 2 it declares where *we* as Christ-followers are seated now. We are seated “with him in the heavenly realms.”

Too often we think of this “sitting” in geographical terms rather than spiritual terms. We think of Jesus on a throne in a place that’s high above the earth somewhere, like a Star Wars type of location. But we must think in spiritual images, in terms of spiritual authority.

There is a seating chart in the spiritual realm. At banquets or events people are seated according to their notoriety or authority. So the King sits on the platform, the princes at the front tables, the governors at the middle tables, and the clerks and interns at the back tables. Spiritually, King Jesus is seated at the head of the head table on the platform. Seat #1, with no one close to him.

Except . . . Jesus pulls up an empty chair next to him and says, “This is where I want my friend (insert your name here) to sit. Oh, and by the way, whatever the say to do, do it! They have authority because they’re seated with me.” When we are “in Christ Jesus” we are seated “with Christ Jesus.”

Do we pray like we are seated on earth and trying to get our prayers all the way to heaven? Or do we pray like we are sitting next to Christ in the heavenly realm? In today’s passage Paul says he’s praying that our eyes would be enlightened so we could know “his incomparably great power for us who believe.”

I tend to diminish my spiritual authority because of my keen awareness of my sin and shortcomings. I sit in the shadows of condemnation, instead of in the spotlight of grace. I am often beaten down because I am not receiving the seat reserved for me.

I have an acquaintance/friend who is a famous musician. I happened to be in Seattle when he was doing a concert, and I thought I might attend. Then I looked at the ticket prices. It would cost me an arm and leg for the nosebleed section. Several months later, I relayed this to my musician friend. He responded, “Are you kidding me? I would have had you in the front row for free! All you had to say is you were with me!”

Likewise, you are “in Christ!” Take your reserved seat in the spiritual realm! Be free. Receive his authority and exercise it!

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**Power Truth:** Being seated with Christ gives you power to take authority in spiritual realms.

**Our Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I exalt you as the risen one, exalted and seated far above all authority. I am humbled and in awe that when I am in you, you seat me there with you. Forgive me when I allow condemnation to block the beauty of being “in you.” Open the eyes of my heart to your spiritual power in me. Help me pray as if I am seated next to you.

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Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

## **Day 11: Expecting the Supernatural**

**The Passage:** 1 Corinthians 2:1–16

**The Focus:** “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.” (1 Corinthians 2:4–5)

**The Meditation:** “My message . . . [was] with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power.”

**Empowering Truths:** One of the most probing ministry questions I have been asked was by a humble, fruitful Christian leader I admire greatly. After a discussion about the attractional ministry model we were using, he inquired, “If the Holy Spirit suddenly left your ministry, what would change? What could no longer be done because the Holy Spirit was gone?”

I had to admit I could still preach engaging, relevant messages, have an excellent band that rocked the house, have a social networking plan that connected people to

one another, and provide stellar programming for the entire family. Sadly, I had to face the truth that I wasn't expecting the supernatural because I could do okay with the natural.

The apostle Paul in today's passage has this same concern. He's saying, "I didn't want your faith to rest on persuasive words like the popular orators in our culture employ. I wanted you to taste the power of God! So I came with wise teaching and supernatural ministry." This was Paul's ministry pattern, "by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God . . . I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).

We wonder why God shows up in more supernatural ways across the ocean than he does across our neighborhood. Could it be that our desperation and expectation are different here? Could it be that we have other alternatives so the supernatural is a "last resort" instead of a "first response?"

I remember traveling to a remote location in the Dominican Republic to host an evangelistic dinner for what we thought would be twenty people. We had food for twenty, but eighty showed up. The closest store was an hour away. So we did the only thing we could do: we prayed over the food to ask the Lord to multiply it. Over the next twenty minutes all eighty came through the line, and the beans and rice never ran out until all were fed. After the miraculous meal we preached the gospel, and most of those folks became believers that evening.

In Matthew 9:27–31, Jesus is followed into a house by two blind men seeking healing. He asks them, “Do you believe I am able to do this?” They reply, “Yes, Lord!” Then Jesus says something we must not miss. “You will have what your faith expects” (TPT).

Our faith creates expectations. Oftentimes our expectations are based on natural cause and effect more than on supernatural intervention. This is one reason for such little prayer in the church. We are more dependent on our wise words or smart strategies than on God’s divine responsiveness to our prayers.

We must once again expect what only the Spirit can do. William Temple, the powerful Anglican priest, replied to his critics who regarded answered prayer as no more than coincidence, “When I pray, coincidences happen; when I don’t, they don’t.”<sup>3</sup>

If we would see the results Paul saw in his ministry, we must use his methods. We must expect a demonstration of the Spirit’s power as we preach the truth.

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**Power Truth:** When our expectations are for God to do what only God can do, then we will see more of what God wants done.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive me for conducting ministry like I can make it happen on my own. Forgive me for

having expectations based on persuasive words rather than on the power of your Spirit. Launch me into the adventure of supernatural expectations. Empower me to lead like you are still doing miracles of conviction, salvation, deliverance, healing, reconciliation, calling, and more . . . because you are!

Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

**Day 12: GPS**

**The Passage:** Romans 8:1–17; Acts 13:1–4

**The Focus:** “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.” (Acts 13:2)

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” (Romans 8:14)

**The Meditation:** “The Holy Spirit said . . .”

**Empowering Truths:** In the 1980s I had a job delivering the *Seattle Times* to homes that had been missed by their delivery boy. I would call in for addresses and then search a *Thomas Brothers Map Book* for the address and figure out how I could get there. Today I can hardly read a map. Instead I tell Siri where I want to go, and she directs me there turn by turn.

The New Testament church was “walking in . . . the help of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:31). One of these “helps” was the Spirit’s guidance, what I call GPS: “God’s



Positioning Spirit.” In Acts 13 we see one manifestation of the Spirit’s leading. As the Antioch church fasted and prayed, they received the direction for their next turn, which was sending Barnabas and Saul to go plant churches.

Does your GPS still work? Those who are experiencing gospel multiplication movements around the globe will tell you unequivocally, “Absolutely!” Then they will tell you multiple stories of “God’s Positioning Spirit” functioning to lead them to open doors, supernatural connections, and unimagined opportunities.

At the same time, we realize the power of the Spirit to direct us is often unused or abused. Weird stuff can happen when you claim you are feeling or hearing God speak to you. Consequently, most believers have little expectation for the Spirit to speak. Yet the same Spirit that spoke to the Antioch church and is speaking to the global church is speaking to you today. If we set aside time to seek him, tune in and listen expectantly, then we may be surprised at what we hear.

Our phone’s GPS is more easily heard and provides more details than God’s Positioning System. For example, in Acts 8:26 God tells Philip, “Go south to the desert road.” That’s it. But it was enough. As Philip obeyed, he just started traveling south. Then he met the Ethiopian eunuch along the way, shared the gospel, baptized him, and the good news spread in Ethiopia.

Often the Spirit’s leading is a nudge, a prompting that leaves you wondering, *Was that my imagination or*

*the Spirit's whisper?* I've learned to lean into those times. When you just start traveling south like Philip did, good things happen along the way.

Fasting, prayer, solitude, worship, quietness, Scripture meditation, anointed preaching—these tune the ears of my heart to the Spirit's voice.

Often the Spirit's voice will call us to do something that our natural mind instinctually rejects. The Spirit clearly called my wife and me to a tiny church in urban Long Beach when I had a generous offer to be lead pastor at a large suburban church. I almost missed the Spirit's direction due to my selfish desires. Today the suburban church is gone, and the Long Beach church has grown and planted dozens of churches.

Think about it: The Antioch church sought the Spirit . . . “The Holy Spirit said” . . . the Antioch church listened and obeyed . . . and a movement was started. May this be our story as well.

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**Power Truth:** The Spirit still speaks to those who expect, seek, and listen.

**Our Prayer:** Father, we want to be like Jesus who listened intently for your directions. Jesus, you taught us to pray daily for your leadership, and then you gave us your Spirit to guide us. Holy Spirit, we want to live attentively to your voice. Forgive us for forging ahead

on our own without bending our ear to hear if you are directing us differently. Empower us to listen for the glory of Jesus.

Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

## **Day 13: Doors**

**The Passage:** Colossians 4:2–6

**The Focus:** “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.”  
(Colossians 4:2–3)

**The Meditation:** “Pray . . . that God may open a door for our message.”

**Empowering Truths:** The church was trying to keep their doors open. They had no pastor, little money left, the neighborhood no longer looked like them, and no one had come to Christ in a long time. In a last-ditch effort, they called the remaining adults to a season of prayer, which culminated in an entire evening of prayer at the altar at the front of their small church.

As they earnestly cried out to God that he would keep their doors open and use them to win souls again, the

back doors suddenly opened. A large man came walking down the center aisle. He called out, “Is this a church?”

The prayer leader, unsure of the man’s motives, hesitantly replied, “Yes, it is.”

To which the man responded, “Can anyone here tell me how to become a Christian?”

Tony Cook, a truck driver who had been driving by, had suddenly felt compelled to pull his truck over and give his life to Christ. Tony received Christ and his conversion was the first of which would become several thousand salvation stories through that church. I know this story well because it happened just before I arrived at the church I lead.

Prayer opens doors. Paul asked the church at Colossae to devote themselves to prayer for the sake of opening doors for the gospel. Doors are the way to get through walls. Open doors are where the gospel moves past walls that have been erected by culture, sin, deception, pain, false religions, bondage.

It is interesting that in Acts 5, 12, and 16 you find prison doors being opened and the gospel flourishing each time it happens. In Acts 12:5 we find Peter securely locked in prison, “but the church was earnestly praying.” The next thing we read is angels are sent, doors are opened, and Peter is freed. What would have happened if the church had not been praying?

Prayer opens doors . . . doors that seem locked and impossible to open. In Ethiopia one of our churches

had been praying that doors would open in a very gospel-resistant village. Then the witch doctor of that village grew seriously ill and called for the Christians to come pray for him. He was healed and the entire village came to Christ. Global gospel movements have story after story of doors opening miraculously. They expect locked doors to open via prayer.

Sometimes open doors are disguised. Open doors do not mean absence of opposition. Significant open doors often come with much resistance. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 16:9 “A great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.”

Empowerment is a two-way street. We need God to supernaturally open doors of opportunity to take the message past the walls of resistance *and* we need power to proclaim the message courageously. Pray for, believe for, watch for open doors, and then move through them with boldness. Look for open doors of all sizes today.

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**Power Truth:** Earnest prayer can supernaturally open doors for the gospel.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive us when instead of focusing on you, we have bemoaned how our culture, our city, and our area seem to be closed to the gospel. Forgive us for not devoting ourselves to prayer, and for not believing

you use our prayers to open closed doors. Today we choose to believe your power can unlock hearts and open opportunities for salvation to come to others through us.

Week 2: A Power We Must Receive—  
The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

## **Day 14: Both Hands**

**The Passage:** Nehemiah 4:1–23

**The Focus:** “Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked.” (Nehemiah 4:17b–18)

**The Meditation:** “Did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other.”

**Empowering Truths:** I was a decent basketball player in my small Kansas high school. I was especially good on defense. But the most difficult player I ever had to guard was a short kid who was ambidextrous. He could dribble, shoot, and pass with right or left hand equally well. I had never tried to defeat someone who played excellently with both hands.

Nehemiah’s mission to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem was met with opposition, ridicule, lies, and death threats. Nehemiah’s solution was to teach his teammates to use “both hands.” I get the picture



of men with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. Nehemiah exhorted them to be both workers and warriors.

Churches and leaders tend to be one-handed. Some major in the “trowels” of strategy, systems, structure, programs, leadership, facilities, and excellence. Conversely, others focus on the “weapons” of prayer, intercession, spiritual warfare, faith, and the supernatural. Some are using their trowels and forgetting their swords. Others swing the sword but neglect their trowels. Building God’s wall requires both hands.

We can’t lean into empowerment without simultaneously facing the reality of spiritual opposition. This is what Paul teaches in Ephesians 6:10–11: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power . . . so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Any gains in our empowerment will be met with fresh attacks by the evil one.

This is one reason Jesus taught us to engage in spiritual warfare daily, “Deliver us from evil,” or as many translations read, “Deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13). As we are praying for God’s “kingdom to be built on earth as it is in heaven,” we are also praying, “Defeat the destroyer of your kingdom.” It is a “both-handed” prayer.

Using the Ephesians 6 imagery, in one hand we carry the sword, which is the Word of God. It has been pointed out that the sword is the only offensive piece of armor

listed. In the other hand we carry the shield of faith, our primary defensive piece of armor.

One vital practice is daily praying “the shield of faith” over your life and ministry (Ephesians 6:16). There is no question that the devil’s arrows carrying the fire of lies, doubt, exhaustion, accusations, condemnation, comparison, and envy are being shot in your direction daily. The question is whether you will meet those with prayers and declarations of faith!

“Watch” is a New Testament word we fail to give enough weight to. Over twenty-times the Scriptures command us to “watch” or “be alert” to the work of the evil one. Scripture is directing us to daily diligence against the one sneaking around to destroy us.

At the same time we must not live in fear. Instead, we must remember and declare to ourselves and to the devil: we are fighting *from* victory, not fighting *for* victory. “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). This is the “help of the Holy Spirit” that the New Testament church was “walking in” (Acts 9:31).

If we use both hands in ministry, we will soon raise both hands in victory!

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**Power Truth:** Our spiritual power will be contested, but as we build and fight, we will see the mission accomplished.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, open my eyes to the reality of my spiritual enemy. Empower me to “watch” for his strategies against me and my ministry. Help me actively build your kingdom as I also defend it . . . doing both with your authority. Today I raise the shield of faith over all aspects of my life, my relationships, and my ministry. Today I claim the power of your victory for me and declare the defeat of the evil one.

Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## **Day 15: Multiply and Conquer**

**The Passage:** Matthew 28:1–20

**The Focus:** “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18–20)

**The Meditation:** “All authority . . . has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples”

**Empowering Truths:** An electrical current needs a wire to run through. Its potential power is present, but it must be conducted from one place to another. Without this conduit, the electricity fails to accomplish the purpose for which it’s intended.

In the same way, the empowerment of the Spirit needs a conduit to run through. The “wire” is ordinary folks like us, who have no power on our own but have the ability

to channel great spiritual power. This power is not to give the wire goosebumps as it flows through but to produce something . . . such as light, heat, toast from a toaster, or a song through the radio.

In Jesus' final commission to his disciples in Matthew 28, we see this power unveiled and directed in three very specific ways: 1) power to go, 2) power to baptize, and 3) power to teach. Jesus commissions these disciples to be his conduit, to become a multiplying kingdom force.

The church has played fast and loose with this compelling commission. She has missed the three-year context of the command. Jesus deliberately chose twelve disciples who would learn, and then repeat his strategy. For three years the twelve were "being disciplined" for the purpose of "making disciples."

Thus, when Jesus gives them this discipleship command, the eleven disciples (since Judas flunked Discipleship 101) know exactly what to do. It had been modeled for them, taught to them, prayed into them, practiced by them, and they were ready to repeat the strategy. They aren't thinking, *How can we gather a crowd and keep them together?* They are thinking, *Who are my twelve?*

What we often miss in this Matthew 28 commission is the "power sandwich." Jesus begins by being very clear about the power they go in, "All authority is given to me in heaven and earth." Then he uses a little Greek word, *oun*, that carries a huge impact (*oun* means "therefore.")

Then there's the commission. But then Jesus closes with the other slice of power. "And be sure of this, I am with you always."

Follow me through this "if/then/therefore" logic: if Jesus has all authority/power (28:18) and if the disciples have Jesus with them (28:20), then they have all the power they need. "Therefore" they can go and do what Jesus did (28:19)!

One of the devil's key strategies is "divide and conquer." But Jesus' mission is based on the opposite strategy: "multiply and conquer." This is why he invested more than 75 percent of his time into the twelve disciples. He taught multiplication, not just addition.

May we receive afresh the authority and presence of Jesus for the purpose of multiplying disciples and conquering the darkness of sin.

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**Power Truth:** The power of Christ with us is the power to go and multiply disciples.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive me for not focusing on receiving your power and presence before I go out and try to do your work. Forgive me for forgetting you are actually with me in every kingdom effort. Forgive me for wanting to build your kingdom using a different method than you taught your disciples. Jesus, empower me to go,

to baptize, to teach, and most of all to multiply disciples who will do the same. In Jesus' name, amen!

Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## **Day 16: Make or Build?**

**The Passage:** Matthew 16:13–20

**The Focus:** “Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ . . . ‘And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’” (Matthew 16:16, 18, ESV)

**The Meditation:** “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

**Empowering Truths:** Perhaps our lack of power is partly because we are often trying to “build” instead of “make.” Our American church and personal scoreboards are broken. They are programmed to tally points around “bigger is better.” Numbers mean notoriety, “followers” mean fame, “likes” mean love. We are trying to “build” a platform, a following, a church . . . when Jesus has called us to “make” disciples.<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus tells his disciples, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of



men” (Matthew 4:19). He tells them what he will make them into. He keeps his promise. Then at the end of his ministry, he directs them what to go and do: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

But in between he makes them a promise about what *he* will do: “I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). Jesus seems to say, “If you make disciples, I will build my church.” We tend to say, “I will build my church and hopefully Jesus will make some disciples.”

In a very unscientific manner, I have asked pastors across the nation, “How much time do you think you spend in personal disciple making?” The answer is almost always under 10 percent. If I ask how much time they spend managing church programs, staff, or finances and preparing sermons, the answer is almost always over 80 percent. Are we following Jesus’ method of ministry? Are we focusing on addition when Jesus calls us to multiplication?

In Acts 6:7 we read: “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.” In Acts 9:31 we read, “The church . . . multiplied.” It is interesting that the disciples multiplied, and *then* the church multiplied. The order is important: disciples being made, disciples being mobilized, and then churches being started.

If we multiply churches without making disciples, we will have churches that entertain but don’t train. If we multiply disciples without making churches, we will have disciples who are disconnected from the body and,

therefore, deformed. But if we make disciples who make disciples who love the church, we will have churches who multiply disciples and churches.

Empowerment is primarily given to make disciples who will believe Jesus to build his church and will partner with him to do so.

We praise God for the empowerment to defeat temptation, preach powerfully, heal the sick, cast out demons, and draw crowds. However, the Spirit longs to empower you to be a Barnabas, who empowers a Paul, who empowers a Timothy, who empowers others. This is the most fruitful and effective kingdom empowerment.

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**Power Truth:** The empowerment of the Spirit is focused on the commission of Jesus: make disciples.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive me for neglecting what you focused on, for not prioritizing what was paramount to you. Forgive me for wanting your empowerment for many things but not the main thing. Fill me, Spirit, to follow Jesus in multiplying disciples. Jesus, as we make disciples, build your church all for your glory.

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Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## **Day 17: Your Astounding Potential**

**The Passage:** 2 Timothy 2:1–13

**The Focus:** “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:1–2, NASB)

**The Meditation:** “Entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.”

**Empowering Truths:** Ordinary folks have incredible kingdom potential when they minister Jesus’ way!

In today’s passage Paul is encouraging Timothy to major in multiplication, not addition. He seeks to catapult Timothy’s ministry effectiveness in an exponential way. If Timothy will teach others “truth and transmission,” then a movement will start. The truth is God’s Word. Transmission is teaching others to teach what they have been taught. When this happens to the fourth generation, multiplication is unleashed, and a movement may begin.

Most Christians understand addition fairly well. The results of addition or the lack of addition are proudly or painfully visible. But multiplication is less understood and less visible. It is not common in the American church. We seek power for addition more than multiplication.

How many of you believe, with the Spirit's empowerment, you can disciple one person a year for the next twenty years? Absolutely! You may be shocked to realize this means potentially one million disciples could come out of your ministry in twenty years!

How can this be? Spend a year making a disciple *and* equipping them to do the same the following year with someone else. Then if you both repeat the process during year two, there will be four. The next year if each of the four disciples disciple one disciple-maker, there will be eight. Repeat that pattern in year four, and there will be sixteen, and then thirty-two in year five.

Thirty-two disciples in five years . . . seems slow, time-consuming, unimpressive. But wait, the power of multiplication changes everything! Keep following this pattern and your disciple-making becomes 64; 128; 256; 512; 1,024; 2,048; 4,096; 8,192; 16,384; 32,768; 65,536; 131,072; 262,144; 524,288; and by year 20 it is 1,048,576!

Many of you may be arguing, "That's nice math theory, but try applying that to ministry reality." Very true. So let's say the theory is only actuated 1/500th or .002 percent in reality. Guess what? That would still result in over 2,000 people being discipled. Bigger than a megachurch.

When you use Jesus' method of multiplication with the empowerment of the Spirit, you can have amazing kingdom impact! Throw out your small-mindedness about what you can do for God!

Jesus is seeking to empower you to identify, invest in, and train a disciple who will become a disciple-maker. You can unleash an exponential chain of disciple-making.

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**Power Truth:** My kingdom impact is astounding when I major in training disciples to do multiplicative generational disciple-making.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive me for wanting fast results that lack multiplying impact. Help me to see by faith and logic the power of doing multiplication Jesus' way. Empower me to see whom you want me to multiply myself into. Empower me to patiently go deep with a few like you did.

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Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## **Day 18: Dying to Multiply**

**The Passage:** John 12:20–36

**The Focus:** “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me.” (John 12:24–26 NASB)

**The Meditation:** “If it dies, it bears much fruit.”

**Empowering Truths:** Most Christians live powerless lives because they are unwilling to die. The essential prerequisite to resurrection is death. No death, no resurrection.

The same can be said for the Spirit’s empowerment. His power flows to dead people. It is also true for multiplication. You must die to multiply.

In John 12 Jesus points first to his own death and resurrection. As the Son of God he will have to die to multiply sons and daughters of God. But Jesus



immediately connects this reality to the essentiality of the spiritual death of his followers (12:25). “Hating our lives” is absolutely countercultural. It strikes us as masochistic.

Yet Jesus uses this language to call us to follow him. He’s not beckoning us to a self-hate but a self-death; dying to selfish desires that destroy God’s destiny for our lives; a relinquishing of dreams centered in our ego instead of in his joy; a daily surrendering to hear and follow his lead.

My wife, Deb, is a master gardener who started the first community garden in the infamous city of Compton, California. She knows how to make seeds grow and multiply. Seeds must be planted and “die” to bring life.

For twenty years, fear, comfort, selfishness, pride, and misdirected dreams kept Deb from even driving into the adjacent city of Compton. Now she is “laying down her life” for this beautiful community. What changed? She will tell you she decided to be planted and die. This “surrender” is bringing great joy to her and to the neighborhood.

The apostle Paul had the most multiplicative ministry in the early church. This empowerment undoubtedly had its origin in his personal mantra found in Galatians 2:20: “For I have been crucified with Christ.” This is the empowered life Jesus calls each of us to in Luke 9:23: “Take up your cross daily,” meaning a “daily death to selfishness.”

Our daily death to what culture (even Christian culture) ascribes value to—fame, comfort, power, pleasure, money—is what positions us to multiply. It is

only when we are dead that we can freely give ourselves away to others without thinking, *What's in it for me?*

The Message paraphrases John 12:24 this way, “Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over.”

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**Power Truth:** We must “die” to multiply. Our daily surrender is essential to daily empowerment.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, I confess I don't want to become nothing so you can be everything. I don't want to fully decrease so you can fully increase through me. Forgive me. Empower me to follow your example and die so I can release the multiplicative power of your kingdom. I choose the power and beauty of surrender today and each day. Be multiplied through me.

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Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## Day 19: The Breath

The Passage: John 20:1–23

The Focus: “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (John 20:21–22)

The Meditation: “He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

Empowering Truths: Fear can paralyze us. It can short-circuit our lungs. The night of the resurrection the disciples are locked down by their fear. Their sorrow at the loss of their friend and leader, their fear of their enemies who crucified him, their doubts and questions about the confusing events, their anxieties about their future without Jesus—all conspire to steal their breath away.

Have you ever suffered an anxiety attack? Shortness of breath is one of the most frightening symptoms of these troubling episodes. The disciples are having a kind of anxiety attack and are unable to breathe deep. But then

Jesus shows up. Twice he repeats, “Peace be with you.” It is a statement directed to the bullseye of their fears.

Then Jesus re-commissions them. He reminds them of what he said to them when he first called them—  
“Follow me and I will send you out to fish for people”  
(Matthew 4:19).

Next, Jesus restates their identity: “You are sent ones.” In essence he declares, “Your purpose and mission are not dead but more alive than ever. You are sent to multiply yourself into others as I multiplied myself into you.”

But then Jesus takes a deep breath and breathes long and slow into their faces, a gentle breeze of air that carries the power of a rushing wind. His next statement gives the meaning and invitation of his action: “Receive the Holy Spirit.” His Spirit will be what defeats their fears, defines their identity, directs their mission, and determines their effectiveness.

You don’t breathe on someone from six feet away. You position your face in their personal space, near their face, and then exhale. It’s an intimate act of relationship. It is an action of “with-ness.” Jesus will disappear again in a moment, but he is leaving his breath with them. They are empowered because they carry his breath.

Jesus is reminding them of the first Adam, into whom God breathed to empower him to be “fruitful and multiply.” He is recalling Ezekiel’s valley of dry bones who received the breath of God and stood up as a mighty army of hope. He is foreshadowing the “sound of the

mighty wind,” which would blow into them in a few days on Pentecost.

Being sent on his mission is the high privilege of living. “Spirit breath” is the means to stay on mission. He never sends us without supporting us with all we need.

So breathe deeply . . . *exhale* your fear, your stress, your questions, your insecurities, your inadequacy, your selfishness, and then *inhale* deeply the breath of Jesus, the presence, peace, and power of his very Spirit . . . with you, in you, through you. Breathe deeply, today . . . all day. Many times a day, simply breathe in and pray, “Spirit, breathe in me.”

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**Power Truth:** The breath of the Spirit empowers us to live daily as “sent ones.”

**Our Prayer:** Lord, I confess I am often bound by my fears, questions, weakness, and apathy. Forgive me. Thank you for showing up time after time to breathe your Spirit into me. As I receive, I am empowered to be sent to my world like the Father sent you to ours. Animate this piece of clay to be fruitful and multiply. Awaken my dry bones to march with you! Fill my spirit’s lungs with your Spirit.

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Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## Day 20: Lakes or Rivers

The Passage: Ezekiel 47:1–12; John 7:37–39

The Focus: “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this he meant the Spirit.” (John 7:38–39)

The Meditation: “Rivers of living water will flow.”

Empowering Truths: Lakes are fun for boating, swimming, and wakeboarding. But they are weak. Lakes produce no power unless water is released and sent out from them . . . and technically that is a river. Rivers generate great power. As they flow, they turn turbines that produce energy.

Most pastors and churches are striving to build lakes. People flow into one place, around one pastor, give to one budget, building one vision. The goal becomes closing the proverbial “back door” and growing your lake.

But Ezekiel and Jesus seem to have a different, much more powerful vision, a river vision. Ezekiel sees a trickle flowing out of the temple that grows exponentially larger



the farther it goes. This water is pure and powerful. It turns salt water into fresh, and where this river flows “everything will live” (Ezekiel 47:9). This is a poignant picture of multiplication where people flow in, are equipped, and then flow back out to bring life where there is death.

Jesus never calls us to be lakes, but he promises we can be rivers. He says the Spirit will quench our own thirst, and then become a river flowing through us, bringing his life to others. Our responsibility is to 1) come to him, 2) drink from him, 3) believe in him, and 4) flow for him (John 7:37–39). His Spirit is to be the water and power of the entire process.

We can’t multiply what we don’t have. Therefore, we must drink. We can’t multiply what we don’t give. Therefore, we must flow. We are empowered *as* we become radically generous.

As leaders our focus must be on whom we can raise up and release, whom we can send, and who can flow through our ministries to bring the “water of life to the world.” This is the work of the Spirit, and the more we live in this place of faith and crazy generosity, the more we are empowered.

We can’t outgive God. We may feel that if we generously give we will run dry, but we are living in the paradoxical kingdom. Lakes dry up but spring-fed rivers keep flowing no matter how much they give.

For each of the past twenty-two years, our local church has “sent” up to 20 percent of our members out

the door. They have flowed into the neighboring areas to start new ministries and churches. Yet Jesus keeps the new people and the finances coming in to feed our “river church.”

1 Corinthians 10:4 speaks of this miracle when it tells us how the Israelites in the wilderness “drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” The spiritual picture is of a “rock spring” following them in the desert. Imagine that. They could freely give away water because the source was unending and traveled with them.

How is the Spirit calling you to move into the generosity of multiplication? Will you trust the spring of the Spirit?

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**Power Truth:** God empowers and multiplies when we generously give away our best.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, we are prone to a mindset of scarcity, that if we give, we have less. Forgive us. Deliver us from our fear and doubt. Forgive us for our pride that wants to gather people and resources to ourselves. Help us to drink deeply daily from your Spirit so we can generously flow to others. Deepen our trust. Multiply what we give. Thank you for being our “living spring” who is always with us.

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Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue—  
The Church Multiplied

## **Day 21: The More Empowered Life**

**The Passage:** Ephesians 3:14–21

**The Focus:** “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20–21)

**The Meditation:** “Immeasurably more . . . according to his power that is at work within us.”

**Empowering Truths:** “Immeasurably more!” Stop and say it aloud, “Immeasurably more.” That’s who God wants us to be and what he wants to do for us. He wants us to envision it. He wants us to ask for it.

Instead, we usually treat God like he’s small, distant, weak, uninterested, and stingy. Therefore, we ask for cups of water from a “Niagara Falls” God. We row our sailboats when the wind is gusting. We drive our Ferraris on the side streets in first gear. We hum to ourselves when an orchestra is in front of us.

Can we believe for “immeasurably more?” 21 Days of Empowerment is like a table of appetizers at Thanksgiving. But Paul’s Ephesians 3 prayer soars beyond into a spiritual *banquet* and asks that God will empower us to feast here and now.

His prayer is that we will understand and live in our true identity. We are the ones in whom Christ dwells (3:17). We are the ones infinitely loved (3:18–19). We are the ones the Spirit empowers (3:16, 18). We are “immeasurably more” loved than we believe.

Out of that empowered “being” flows our empowered “doing.” The one who lives in us is able to *do* “immeasurably more” than we ask or imagine (3:20). We can see “immeasurably more” impact and fruit for the kingdom through our lives. This power is not because of anything in us. Jesus chose common disciples so we might know each of us qualify to be used greatly by God.

The power we carry daily is the power of a person. I have always told our pastors, “Your ministry must be an overflow of your personal love relationship with Jesus.” Your relationship with Jesus is the source of power for ministry. It is “according to his power that is at work within us” (3:20). Our power rises from Spirit-dependence, not self-reliance.

It seems upside-down to “boast” about our dependence, our limitations, our weakness. Yet Paul says this is the key to power. “Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me” (2 Corinthians 12:9b).

This “weak guy” is the same guy who survived shipwrecks, escaped prison, was beaten almost to death five times, faced down emperors, shook off poisonous snakes, and the list goes on. Yet this Indiana Jones of the New Testament declares, “I will celebrate my weakness in order that more of Christ’s power will “take possession and inhabit” (3:20) my life.

Paul’s refusal to rely on his righteousness, intellect, education, stamina, eloquence, etc., positioned Paul to receive the power of the Spirit. Whatever we rely on instead of Christ dams up the flow of his power through us.

God wants to bring glory to himself through your weakness and through Spirit-dependent churches.

These churches that walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Spirit with the goal of multiplication (Acts 9:31) “will bring him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!” (Ephesians 3:21)

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**Power Truth:** “Immeasurably more” is available if you live empowered by the Spirit. Do you believe it?

**Our Prayer:** Lord, forgive me for downsizing my expectations to fit my reality and power, instead of “upsizing” my prayers to fit your desires and ability. Stir

my imagination, my faith, and my prayers to seek impact that brings more and more glory to you. Empower me to build your church through my life. I long for you to receive glory in the church throughout all generations.

# Notes

1. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/footstep-sensors-identify-people-by-gait/>, accessed November 2, 2021.
2. <https://ideas.ted.com/20-words-that-once-meant-something-very-different/>, accessed November 2, 2021.
3. David Watson, *Called & Committed* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1982), 83.



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## About the Author

**DR. LARRY WALKEMEYER** serves with his wife, Deb, as Strategic Catalyst for Multiplication for Free Methodist USA to encourage the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches nationally. He is part of the Executive Leadership Team of the Free Methodist USA. He is also Global Pastor for Light & Life Church, Long Beach, California, a multiplying, multi-ethnic church he and Deb have led for the past thirty years. During their tenure the church has grown dynamically and planted churches both nationally and globally.

As Director of Equipping and Spiritual Engagement for Exponential (the world's largest church-planting resource group), Larry seeks to influence the church of Jesus toward multiplication. Holding a doctorate in church leadership and as the author/coauthor of ten books, Larry speaks and consults frequently across the US.

Azusa Pacific University, from which Larry holds a Doctor of Ministry, has recognized Larry with the Centennial Award, naming him one of the most influential graduates in its history. Larry serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for Azusa Pacific University.

Larry and Dr. Deb Walkemeyer have been married since 1978. They write and speak frequently on marriage, ministry, and leadership. They have two amazing adult daughters. Larry enjoys biking, working out, snow skiing, waterskiing, boating, and traveling.