



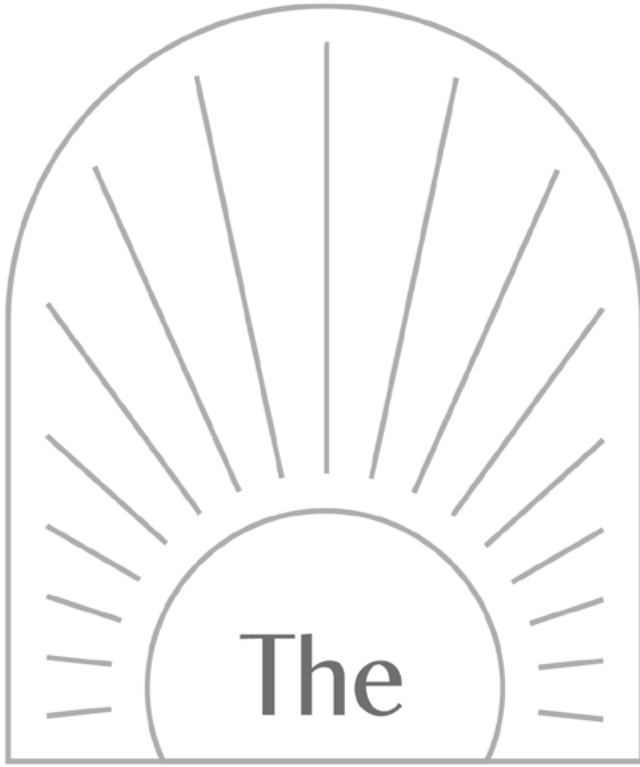
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The Empowered Life

*Practical Ways to Demonstrate
a Naturally Supernatural Lifestyle*

ALEX AND HANNAH ABSALOM



Empowered Life

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EXPONENTIAL¹

The Empowered Life: Practical Ways to Demonstrate a Naturally Supernatural Lifestyle
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Exponential is a growing movement of activists committed to the multiplication of healthy new churches. Exponential Resources spotlights actionable principles, ideas and solutions for the accelerated multiplication of healthy, reproducing faith communities. For more information, visit exponential.org.

Dandelion Resourcing was planted by seasoned missional practitioners and consultants Alex and Hannah Absalom to empower disciple-making leaders. Dandelion is here to help leaders raise up godly, Spirit-filled, mission-minded, multiplying disciples of Jesus. To find out more, visit dandelionresourcing.com.

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Introduction

“The greatest need today is for men and women who know Jesus Christ as Savior to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If we are not filled with the Holy Spirit, we are sinning against God.”

– Billy Graham

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is such an extraordinary thing to consider. Imagine this: God the all-powerful and everywhere-present creator and sustainer of the universe lets you and me invite Him to come and live inside of us!

Perhaps just as amazingly, He can fill you and me without overwhelming our freedom to choose how we want to respond to His Spirit as we go through the everyday experiences of life. How on earth does that work?

It is no surprise that for two thousand years followers of Jesus have wrestled with how to explain something that is so hugely mystical. It’s probably fair to say that all of us are a little bit heretical on this topic! That is not to let us off the hook of seeking to be deeply shaped by Scripture and the wisdom of other believers, but it is an acknowledgement that inevitably human language has its limitations.

In this book we want to share some of the insights that we have learned during our over twenty-five years of ministry. The goal is to help you grow in confidence to step further into a lifestyle that is intentionally empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Be Like a Dandelion

We are a married couple, originally from England, called as missionaries to the United States. Whether as newlywed church planters in London, megachurch leaders, or back to being planters, we have learned from a wide variety of thinkers, authors, and practitioners who see being empowered by the Spirit as foundational to making disciples of Jesus.

We also seek to be deeply shaped by Scripture and the wisdom of the Christian community. This means that we try not to leave our brains in a bucket by the door simply because someone says the Holy Spirit is present.

In 2015, we discerned that Jesus was leading us to take our local church leadership experience and serve the wider church at the intersection of disciple-making, being on mission, and living in naturally supernatural ways. As we prayed, Hannah had a vision of a dandelion, its seed head full and ripe, and the wind of the Spirit coming and spreading those seeds far and wide. Each seed would land in a unique spot and, whether it was a fertile field or just a crack in the concrete, the response would be the same. A root would go down, a stem and leaves would appear, and soon a sunshine-yellow flower would be visible. Then the key step: the petals would fall, the seeds would swell, and the wind would come again and blow the next generation onwards to new ground.

This is how the church is designed to be. Lightweight, flexible, with each believer encoded with the DNA of Spirit-filled disciple-making, so that the breath of the Spirit can blow each one to the spot where they are uniquely needed. While each seed is individual, we don't do this alone. We grow and mature in the context of a community, with the expectation that even pioneers will raise up many others around them.

Thus was born Dandelion Resourcing. The dandelion seed head is such an enticing image of how a Spirit-led believer can actively play their part in a church that becomes a movement.

Empowered: Moving with the Spirit

In 2022, the major focus for Exponential is to explore this idea of how each of us can more deeply walk in step with the Spirit. Our hard work for Jesus' kingdom is of no value if we operate out of our own plans and strive without paying attention to where the wind of the Spirit is wanting to lead us.

As speakers at Exponential for the past decade, we love the ideas and equipping that flow each year. But this theme—Empowered: Moving with the Spirit—makes us more excited and expectant than ever.

The vision to see Jesus-centered movements take root in the US and beyond is wonderful. But it is utterly impossible to see this come about without legions of believers who are obediently sensitive to the nudges and prompts of the Spirit.

In many ways, this is the foundational piece of all the Exponential themes. Whether you are in a church plant (however that looks) or an existing church, being Spirit-empowered is non-negotiable.

Naturally Supernatural

We think of this dynamic through the language of being “naturally supernatural.”

As we'll show in the next chapter, Jesus calls us to operate in supernatural ways. When we encounter the tough realities of life—the need for direction, relational struggles, sickness, wondering what our unique purpose could be—Jesus doesn't want His disciples to respond just like their atheist neighbors do.

Too many Christians ignore the supernatural empowering of the Holy Spirit that Jesus repeatedly urges us to embrace.

However, being Spirit empowered should not make us act strangely. Candidly, some people who love the more supernatural gifts of the Spirit just seem odd. Others operate in ways that at times seem

to violate the values of Jesus (such as kindness, gentleness, patience, love, and so on).

There is a great need for groundedness. The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit must be lived out in ways that somehow seem both deeply spiritual and simultaneously ever so natural. It is as if this was how things were designed to function in God's original creation design.

Thus, we must become naturally supernatural people. We are to show and tell the gospel, empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that the lost—as well as believers—can taste and see the goodness of God in the ups and downs of everyday life.

What You'll Discover

In this book you are going to glean insight and overviews into four key areas of the Spirit-empowered naturally supernatural life.

First, there is being filled with the Holy Spirit. You'll explore the difference between receiving the Holy Spirit at salvation and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Second comes hearing God's voice. This is about learning clear, sensible, biblical pathways into the prophetic gifts, balancing both faith and pastoral wisdom.

Third, the focus shifts to healing the sick. Jesus focused on this area as a way of demonstrating His compassion that so shapes everything about His kingly rule. Jesus explicitly expects every believer to be healers of the sick.

Fourth is the move into a naturally supernatural mission. Evangelism in the Bible is so often tied to demonstrations of the Spirit's power alongside clear proclamation. In Chapter 4, you'll see some examples of how to do this.

Throughout the book, the focus is on your taking what you learn and putting it into action. If you don't want to try out any of the practical ideas in this book, you might as well not bother reading any further. The whole goal is that you step into a lifestyle that is

naturally supernatural in every aspect, wherever you live, work, study, or play.

You will find ideas to jump-start that process, as well as pointers to moving forward after you've read the book.

Have fun! If some of these are newer areas for you, don't expect immediately to be an expert—that would be crazy! Just as gifts of the Spirit such as teaching, hospitality, and mercy take time to develop and mature, so do the more overtly (to our eyes) supernatural gifts as prophecy and healing. But we mustn't fall into such sacred-secular divides. Everything is to be Spirit-empowered, so we must go with that mindset.

CHAPTER 1

Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

“Be filled with the Spirit”

– Ephesians 5:18

This is Janine’s story:

The day I was first knowingly filled with the Holy Spirit, I had just finished a time of counseling and prayer ministry. As Jesus “cleared out” some of the junk from my past, it seemed as though God had healed up what needed to be healed for that current season, so that the only thing I hadn’t done was to receive a filling of the Holy Spirit.

Although I had grown up in the church, I was not familiar with what this “filling” would be like, but I was hungry for a deeper walk with the Lord. So when asked if this was something I would like prayer for, I eagerly said, “Yes, please!” The women praying for me told of several (dramatic sounding) things that might happen, but I had a sense that would not be my story. I was new to things pertaining to the Holy Spirit and somehow I knew the Lord would be gentle with me. The women laid hands on me, prayed for a while, and then I went home. Nothing extraordinary happened, although it felt like a good thing to have done.

Over the next few weeks, though, I gradually realized that things had indeed been changing in me. For instance, I’m not by nature someone who is overly friendly. I would always use self-

checkout in the grocery store in order to talk to fewer people! I couldn't understand wanting to hear about a stranger's day! All of the sudden, though, I found that I was quite literally a nicer person. Not only was I not trying to avoid people in public, but I was actually going out of my way to talk to them and genuinely caring about what they had to say.

I had never been a very emotional person, but now I found myself weeping during worship, amazed at the goodness of God. I was emboldened to pray with people—all of the time! It was as if the Holy Spirit was finally able to produce visible fruit in me. He was creating in me someone who was so much kinder, gentler, and more tender-hearted than I had ever been before.

While I'm certainly far from where I want to be, I am more aware of who I am called to be and feel more equipped to become that through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. For me, that filling of the Spirit changed everything.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the greatest and most wonderful thing that we can experience.¹ (Jürgen Moltmann)

From the heart of creation, as recorded in the opening words of Genesis 1, we see the Holy Spirit at work. There He brings order and peace out of chaos. You could say that He has been doing the same task in different forms ever since!

The Holy Spirit is fully divine and one person of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He carries the three defining marks of divinity, so thus we see that He is all powerful (Micah 3:8), everywhere present (Psalm 139:7), and all-knowing (1 Corinthians 2:10).

The Holy Spirit is a person. For instance, the Bible describes Him as someone who:

- Speaks (John 16:13)
- Sends (Acts 13:4)
- Chooses (Acts 20:28)
- Teaches (John 14:26)
- Gives gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8–10)

Likewise, the Spirit can be:

- Lied to (Acts 5:3)
- Tested (Acts 5:9)
- Resisted (Acts 7:51)
- Grieved (Ephesians 4:30)
- Blasphemed (Matthew 12:31)

The Bible talks of the Spirit as being like a “breath.” The Hebrew word *ruach* and the New Testament’s *pneuma* both reflect this understanding. He reveals to us the very breath of God. This implies an unparalleled intimacy, an invitational voice of direction, and our true source of life.

Another word used for the Holy Spirit is “paraclete,” meaning “one called alongside to help.” He is our comforter, encourager, advocate, intercessor, and general helper. How humble that God would do these serving tasks for us! Wow!

[The Spirit], then, does not replace an absent Jesus, but on the contrary renders him present in a new way.² (Hans Urs von Balthasar)

Paul's Primary View of the Spirit Is Experiential

Paul speaks as if the reception of the Spirit was something as definite and observable as, for example, an attack of influenza.³

(B. H. Streeter)

The way Paul describes things, the Holy Spirit is the primary agent of how we encounter God. For example:

- The Spirit enables us to experience the diverse richness, breadth, and depth of the Father's love for us.
- The Spirit equips us to represent Jesus in this world as missionary ambassadors of the kingdom.
- The Spirit empowers us to reveal God's goodness through healing, deliverance, prophecy, miracles, etc.
- The Spirit ennobles us so that we bear the fruit of His presence and increasingly look more like Jesus.

Some Western churches have a tendency to represent the Holy Spirit as being more like a kind of mystical holy gas, given that we might know our doctrine better and become a bit nicer to kittens and kids. This thinking owes more to *Star Wars* ("The Force is with you, Luke!") than the Bible. While the Spirit is indeed the Spirit of truth, who guides us into all the truth (John 16:13), the Spirit is presented throughout the New Testament, and particularly by Paul, as a Person who is to be experienced in tangible ways.

- "God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5).
- "The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:15–16).

- “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy” (1 Corinthians 14:1).
- To the “foolish Galatians”: “So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?” (Galatians 3:5).
- “Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

To be filled with the Spirit means that we will look and operate differently. Others observing us should be at least thinking, *What on earth happened to you?* The answer, of course, is that heaven has come to earth inside this very human body!

We need to re-center ourselves on a richer understanding of the work of the Spirit. He has not come simply to sit politely on the sidelines, occasionally giving us a gentle ripple of applause or brief boost of energy to help us achieve something of passing value or interest. No, the Spirit has come like a roaring wind, a raging fire, a rushing river, in order to overturn the works of the evil one and to make visible to all people in all places all manner of expressions of the kingly rule of Jesus!

Although in Paul's view the Spirit operates in and from a man's heart, we are not describing something hidden in the secret depths, a religion of mere inwardness and "closet piety." On the contrary, the Spirit is a power whose operation in the heart of a man cannot be concealed.⁴ (James Dunn)

Having the Holy Spirit or Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:13–14 makes clear that every disciple of Jesus receives the Holy Spirit at salvation: “When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.” Yet, the book of Acts speaks of people being saved who hadn’t yet heard of the Holy Spirit or been filled with Him.

For instance, in Acts 8:14–17 the apostles heard of Philip’s ministry in Samaria, where many people were becoming Christians. (Don’t forget that up to this time Jews and Samaritans were enemies.) Peter and John were sent to visit Samaria, where they prayed for the new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. “Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (v. 17). The Spirit must have done amazing and highly visible things there because Simon the sorcerer was so impressed that he wanted to pay Peter and John to gain the ability they had!

Acts 19:1–6 records Paul’s visit to the believers in Ephesus, where he discovered that they hadn’t yet heard of the Holy Spirit: “When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” In this passage the filling of the Spirit is also tied to water baptism, but not in a totally linear way. Notice also that when the Holy Spirit came, the gifts of tongues and prophecy often broke out.

At other times God pours out His Holy Spirit upon those who had already received the Spirit, in what can best be described as an additional measure.

Acts 4:31 describes the prayer meeting after Peter and John had spent a night in jail for preaching about Jesus. They and the (presumably large) group of disciples prayed together, asking for more boldness to share about Jesus: “After the disciples prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

Then in Acts 13:52 we follow Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. The Word of God was spreading throughout Galatia, but persecution was stirred up and they were forced to move on to the next town. However, those left behind in the town had this experience: “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

Paul reflects on these and other experiences through his instruction in Ephesians 5:18: “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.”

The Greek verb that we translate as “to be filled” is technically a present, passive, imperative command. In other words, it is ongoing (present tense), done to us by God (passive), and an imperative (we are to seek out and welcome this ongoing filling). Thus it could be translated this way: “Keep on allowing yourself to be filled with the Spirit.”

Jesus seems to confirm this understanding with His instruction in Luke 11:13: “So if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

By way of summary, the Bible seems to teach that while every Christian has the Holy Spirit, not every Christian is filled with as much Holy Spirit as is possible. And God wants us to be filled up with the Holy Spirit.

Being Filled: There's Always Room for More!

Some might object to this theology by using the example of a cup. *Surely, the thinking goes, once a cup is full, there's not any room for more? Likewise, once we're filled with the Spirit at salvation, then there's no room for any more of the Spirit.*

However, the problem here is that the cup is a poor analogy. Instead, followers of Jesus are more like balloons! You can blow just a few breaths into a balloon and you'd be accurate in saying that the

balloon is filled with your breath. However, you can then blow again and add more breath, and keep on repeating the process for a long time, because due to the balloon's flexibility there is so much more growth to be had.

In Mark 2 Jesus talks about the coming of His kingdom being like new wine, but it needs to be contained in new wineskins. While this image is very reasonably used to think about our structures and forms of church life, it could also be a reference to our personal flexibility with the new life that God wants to bring in and through us by His Spirit.

Of course, the balloon analogy has its limitations. (If you pump too much air into a balloon, then it explodes!) But there is another way that it does prove helpful. Like the neck of a balloon, we leak God's Spirit! As we serve others, heal the sick, share about Jesus, teach from the Bible, and so on, we find ourselves giving out and in need of refreshment and fresh filling. So even just to maintain our current levels of Spirit-presence in us, we need to keep on being filled with Him.

As we follow Jesus into new experiences, places, and conversations, we need more of the Holy Spirit. As we grow and mature, we need more fruits, gifts, and anointing of the Spirit.

How much more does the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask, including to folks who don't have perfect theology! Note also that when Jesus said this, it was to people who weren't at that point saved. Theologian John Stott describes this principle as our having "one baptism with many fillings."

To deny the ongoing filling of the Spirit is to deny the teachings of the early church fathers, to overlook what has happened in every revival throughout the centuries, and to ignore the experiences of tens of millions of Christians around the world today.

*There is blood in my fingertips, but it's always crying out to my heart, "Send more, send more." There are nutrients in the leaves on the tree, but they're always saying to the roots, "Send more, send more."*⁵
(Andrew Murray)

How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

We're going to suggest a simple five-step process, inspired by Luke 11:5–13. You don't have to do it exactly like this, since really all you need to pray is, "Come, Holy Spirit!" However, oftentimes it's helpful to unpack things a little, especially if you want to identify an area where you or the person you're praying with has become stuck.

1. *Eagerly desire.* "The one who seeks finds." Would you like more of the Spirit? This is important because you receive by faith.
2. *Ask God.* "How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Don't put God in a box! Often we can only imagine him doing "this" much—the amount that fits in that box. Ask, "Am I missing out on something, God?" Ask to experience everything God has for us as believers.
3. *Cooperate.* "To the one who knocks, the door will be opened." In practice this means we pray and ask, confess sin, spend time in worship, invite the laying on of hands from other believers, and so on.
4. *Believe.* He is not tricking us with snakes and scorpions! Believe that He is a good Father who truly wants the best for you, including filling you with His empowering presence.
5. *Persevere.* "Because of your shameless audacity . . ." You didn't develop your closest relationships in one day. It takes time—a lifetime—to grow into our fullness in Christ.

When do we pray for people to be filled?

- Anytime! Let's lay hands on others to ask for more of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Don't offer the Holy Spirit in cautious and stingy ways! There is always more with God!
- As someone comes to faith in Christ.
- Immediately after someone is baptized.
- At a time of commissioning, whether a big or small role, long or short term.
- After spiritual battle to bring refreshing and renewal.
- Unexpectedly! In the New Testament, the believers had unexpected times of Spirit-filling as they followed Jesus into the mission field.

Activation Exercise

1. Take some time by yourself and ask God to fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit.
2. Ask someone else to pray for you to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit.
3. Look for an opportunity to pray for someone else to be filled (afresh) with the Holy Spirit (e.g., in a weekend service, group, or individual conversation).

Simply record what happens and what your experience was in each situation. Don't measure it by external manifestations or even feelings. There are no expectations of you beyond asking God for more of His Spirit!

CHAPTER 2

Moving with the Spirit: Hearing God's Voice

"My sheep listen to my voice."

– John 10:27

Recently we were contacted by a friend of a friend who is doing amazing missionary work in a developing nation. He wanted to ask about the possibility of translating some of our resources and giving them to local pastors. This led to a fascinating video conversation about the ways in which the kingdom is advancing where he is located.

At the end of our call, we prayed for each other. Immediately, in my mind's eye, I saw him as a movie producer who had been working on art house films but now had been approached out of the blue by a Hollywood studio about producing a blockbuster. I sensed the Lord was saying that (using the movie analogy) he could do the movie but not to lay down his values and style that had made the art house productions so successful. I felt the interpretation was that he had been, or would be, approached by a much larger organization or denomination or similar, and that he could take the opportunity, but he needed to be clear about his non-negotiable values and priorities.

After I shared, he just sat very still and silently, which first made me wonder if Zoom had frozen, and then, when he blinked, whether

or not anything I'd shared had been from God! Then I realized the reason for his silence was that he was weeping.

After a minute he began to share that the day before he'd been approached by a very large Christian organization in his country who wanted him to take on a large project for them. He felt conflicted because, while it would bring in much needed income and opportunities, there were some cultural and values differences he didn't know whether to address. He and his wife were praying about whether or not to say yes . . . and along came this prophetic word from someone who had zero idea about what was going on.

Your Story

Stop and bring to mind a time when you felt God was possibly speaking to you, you acted in faith on what you perceived, and something amazing (to a greater or lesser degree) occurred. An obvious example would be suddenly thinking of a friend for no natural reason, you reaching out to say you were praying for them that day, and then them telling you that the timing was perfect because of something going on in their life that you didn't know about.

For instance, recently a friend came to mind during my quiet time, so I sent a text, and before I knew it, they were texting about a major health issue in their life.

As followers of Jesus, we all know the importance of seeking God's direction in every situation. This is dependent upon hearing God's voice. However, many of us don't really understand how this happens, or how to ensure that things stay healthy, biblical, and fruitful.

Why Does God Communicate with Us?

The Bible is extremely clear: God loves to speak with us! The essence of our walk with God is that it's all about the relationship between us and Him.

We are children with our loving Father, brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus, and the ones filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul beautifully summarized this in Ephesians 1:17, where he prayed, “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”

The idea of hearing God’s voice is not arrogance, heresy, or foolishness, but rather a core realization that this is essential to our lives as disciples of Jesus. Here are some reasons why:

- We were designed for a relationship with God, including easy conversation and to and fro with Him. For instance, in Eden Adam and Eve had that as a daily experience. For us today, the thought of that easy closeness is part of the future hope of heaven. However, through what Jesus has done for us, that future kingdom life is breaking into the present day. “The time has come, the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15, ESV).
- The essence of a disciple is that they hear what Jesus is saying and put it into action. We are to be the wise one who “hears these words of mine and puts them into practice” (Matthew 7:24). It is therefore imperative that we learn how to hear what Jesus is saying to us! While the Bible is the universal Word of God for all people at all times and in all places, we are designed to hear from God in all the unique situations and personal choices of life as well. As we’ll describe shortly, this includes hearing from God through Scripture, but it’s more than that too.
- In John 10:27 Jesus declared, “My sheep know my voice.” If this is the standard that our Lord sets, then this is what we must aim for! If this is not yet our experience, the right response is not to lower our biblically set expectations, but rather to see how we might grow into this calling that He has placed in front of us. There’s a familiarity with God’s voice that should be present in

the life of a believer, as we increasingly conform to Christlikeness in our words, thoughts, and deeds. This growing overlap between Jesus' words and our desires should so shape us that there will be times when what we simply thought was our desire actually turned out to be His voice.

- Hearing God's voice is not all about Him assigning us tasks! Sometimes what He says will indeed be deep and serious, but many times it will be just a passing thing, almost in a conversational tone. Then there will be other occasions when it's simply Him saying something kind and loving, or even an encouraging word that might be quite playful in tone. God invented fun and joy, so sometimes He just enjoys our company!

Examples of Living like This

Usually God's voice is not a loud booming roar from the outside, but it's a still small voice from the inside. The more we learn to yield to this voice, the more that will become our normal reaction so that our actions can increasingly line up with His will.

- Example of Jesus: "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (John 5:19).
- Example of the early church: In the book of Acts, every chapter (except for Acts 17) has revelatory experience recorded.
- Example of church history: Across the past two thousand years and in every nation, believers have experienced God's voice in their lives, learning to rely upon hearing from God as they mature in Christ.

We desperately need to hear from Jesus. Even more so, our lost friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors do. This fallen world is experiencing a dire famine of the voice of God. As we'll talk about in a later chapter in this book, we have seen on hundreds of occasions

the power of speaking prophetically into the lives of the lost, with tremendous Jesus-honoring outcomes.

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy” (1 Corinthians 14:1). Moving into hearing God’s voice and developing the prophetic gifts is like a muscle—the more you exercise it, the more it grows.

How Does God Talk to Us?

The mechanics of exactly how God speaks to us is a cause of much fascination, especially when the prophetic gifts are less developed in an individual or a church community.

Let’s take a moment to be honest and say that all this has the potential to feel a bit over-mystical and even strange! If this is a new area for you, it’s okay to acknowledge that fear of others can cause us to hold back from pursuing God and His voice.

In some quarters, for a person to declare that they can hear God speak provokes a response that reflects deep misunderstanding, even mockery. “Okay then, Joan of Arc, what’s God saying to me now?” Or as Hungarian-American psychiatrist and academic Thomas Szasz wrote in a meme beloved of anti-religion keyboard warriors, “If you talk to God, you are praying; if God talks to you, you have schizophrenia.”⁶

To combat these fears and false narratives, we need to ensure that we handle the prophetic gifts in ways that as far as possible reduce any tendency to unnecessary strangeness. By breaking down the prophetic process into three parts—revelation, interpretation, and application—we create a pathway to do just that.

- *Revelation.* It is immensely helpful to describe some of the ways God communicates with us, especially when we use language that is as plainly descriptive as possible.
- *Interpretation.* We need to create healthy and robust pathways for evaluation, including being diligent in trying to acknowledge

what is probably our own wishful thinking, rather than insisting that everything we say could only be from God.

- *Application.* The next steps are all important, so showing people how to move forward in faith-filled yet common-sense ways is hugely reassuring.

In the remainder of this chapter, we are going to look at some of the ways that God brings revelation of His love, thoughts, and will into our lives. We'll also give you a place to go to receive full biblical and practical input on how to weigh and then apply prophetic revelation.

Don't Forget the Why

God is speaking all the time, and (because He is God and thus infinitely creative and powerful) He can do so through anything and everything. Clearly, we will want a process to distinguish between His thoughts and ours, but before we hit interpretation we must first learn how to “tune in” to what He is revealing.

When we first step into prophesying, we can become so caught up in the excitement of actually receiving revelation (“I see a rainbow!”) that we mislay the purpose of prophecy and short-circuit the process.

Bear in mind that the goal is to gain a sense of what God is saying, so simply sharing, “I see a rainbow” isn't particularly helpful (unless the Lord tells you to share only that, which can happen but shouldn't be our default). We need to wait in God's presence and ask Him what the rainbow means (e.g., Is that rainbow a sign of God's blessing, or is He about to release a flood of judgment, or is Jesus about to show the person where to dig for a pot of gold?!). We do this so that the hearer is not left puzzled as to what on earth is going on.

So as you step further into receiving and sharing revelation, keep in mind that the recipient is most interested in why God is speaking to them (or to use the example above, why He is speaking about rainbows). This will then give them something specific to consider prayerfully.

Revelation

We can divide how God communicates with us into four big pots:

- The Bible
- Seeing stuff
- Hearing stuff
- Knowing stuff

Those may not be very mystical terms, but they do well as a broad foundation! However, we realize that you'll want more detail than that, so here are ten of the main ways we have found God releases revelation to people today.

The Bible. Do you ever have that experience when you feel like a phrase, verse, or story from the Bible really stands out to you? You might have read it many times before, but this time it's as if it has been written just for you—right here, right now?

We've both had times too numerous to mention when the text might as well have been printed with a Holy Spirit highlighter all around that section! It is as if the words are not to be held captive by print, but somehow they are living and active and speaking personally.

When wanting to encounter God, a classic spiritual discipline is to read the Bible with a heart that is hungry and open to hear from Him. Sometimes it might not take long; other times the reading may go on for many chapters. But down the ages Christians have found Scripture to be a powerful way of hearing from God.

Often we have found that when we are praying for others God will bring to mind a specific verse, character, or story from the Bible that we can share. That will become a springboard to the other person's experiencing encouragement, strengthening, or comfort from God. It is more than simply saying, "Here's a nice verse," because something more profound occurs—it is as if that verse unlocks something for them.

We put the Bible at the number-one spot on this list of how God reveals Himself to us because that is the place it holds. The rest of the list is only in a general order, but Scripture is the primary way He speaks. However, it is not the only way.

Brain Seeing. One of the most common ways beyond the Bible that people experience God's revelation is through "seeing" things in their mind's eye. In the spirit of trying to describe it simply, it is when you "see" little movies or images on the inside, as Jesus talks to your brain.

Let's try a quick experiment now to illustrate what we mean. Simply close your eyes and picture the front of your home (or a friend's home).

Did something come to mind? The best way to describe the mechanics of what just took place is that you saw your home in your imagination, or your mind's eye. (By the way, when people say imagination, that doesn't always mean "something made up." Rather, it is a way of describing the internal visually creative aspect of your thinking and feeling.) Another way of describing it is as the part of your brain where you daydream. (Hopefully not a faculty that you are using right now!)

This is a place where God can give you pictures and visions in your mind. After all, your imagination is no more an aspect of your sinful nature than your thinking is—both are part of God's good creation, and He wants to redeem all aspects of your humanity. So really this is part of the fruit of having an increasingly sanctified imagination. Jesus seems to model this when He "sees" Nathaniel sitting under the fig tree before Philip called him (John 1:48–50).

For Alex, this is one of the most common ways he receives revelation. He "sees" stuff all the time, and he finds it so helpful in discerning what God is saying. Sometimes this revelation comes simply as a static image, other times it is like a video clip playing, and other times it is specific words (a bit like the news ticker at the bottom of the screen on news or sports channels!).

Brain Hearing. A related way of God revealing Himself is when people “hear” words on the inside, in their mind. Focusing on the mechanics for a moment: be quiet for three seconds (do that now!), and then see if you can say your name in your head and hear it. In a similar way, that is how people often hear God’s voice too. (Obviously, that wasn’t being prophetic—we’re simply trying to show how this type of internal hearing sounds to you.)

It is probably worth pointing out that this doesn’t tend to be a “volume set to max” kind of experience! A bit like the “brain seeing” section above, there is a choice to be made to pay attention, and then a decision about whether or not these particular words are from God. (See two chapters on for more on interpretation.)

Nevertheless, it is into our imagination and mind’s ear that Jesus will often drop words.

If you are feeling a little anxious at this point—“Gosh, this all sounds a bit flaky”—then let’s do a quick theological check.

Do you ever experience tempting thoughts that you know will lead you into sin? And do you ever hear self-condemning words in your mind? Assuming the answer is yes, where do you think those thoughts originate?

We would all agree that those words are not going to be from Jesus. And while some might be self-induced, we also would likely say that the enemy tempts us to sin and speaks lies to us.

So here’s the theological question: Why do we have more confidence in the enemy’s ability to speak to us than we do the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the creator of everything, conqueror of death, defeater of Satan, and the ultimate lover of your soul?

Jesus loves you so much, and of course He can speak words of life into you directly!

This “brain hearing” could also be described as a still, small, internal voice. These are sanctified thoughts, which reveal God’s heart for a person, community, or situation. An Old Testament example

of this comes in Ezekiel 14:1–2, when Ezekiel has the elders sitting around him and he hears God's voice internally.

There is also a very common crossover between brain seeing and brain hearing here. (Don't forget, these are simply our descriptor labels to try to break down something complex and mysterious into everyday language, so the different categories often flow together.)

You might well find that God draws your attention to something external, which is physically around you, and He speaks to you through that thing. This is especially common when praying for others. For instance, a detail of their clothing or a word on their T-shirt might especially stand out, or something that you can see in the room seems to be filled with extra resonance, and you sense on the inside Jesus speaking to you, using that external stimulus as a jumping-off point.

As an aside, if this happens to you for someone else, it's not compulsory to explain exactly how you got to the word from Jesus! Sometimes it is helpful; other times you will lose them in the weeds. You are not doing eighth-grade math problems where you need to show your working! One of the ways to discern what to share is to recognize what is shorthand that only makes sense to you, which Jesus is using to walk you to where He can give you what He actually wants to share with that person.

Near the end of this chapter we will give you a prophetic activation exercise that will build upon what we have shared in these early sections on revelation.

Gut Knowing. There is a form of prophetic revelation that can best be described as the experience of simply “knowing” something about a person or situation, often without any rational evidence. Generally, this “gut knowing” is not related to what you know from regular observation of them. It is not a logical inference. For instance, spotting animal hairs on a woman's coat doesn't mean we start “prophesying” that she must be a cat-lady!

This is not about cognitive formulating of pieces of information into a story, but rather the sanctified intuition that arises from the Holy Spirit. God can often give us a sense about something—it's difficult to explain exactly how, but you somehow “know” information that you didn't receive in any way involving your five senses.

A clear biblical example of this comes in Acts 5:3–4, when Peter prophetically knew about Ananias and Sapphira lying to the church. He didn't know that information other than by a revelation from the Holy Spirit.

One time we were in our small group and talking with people as they arrived, including one lady who was smiling and chatting away. Suddenly I “knew” that she'd had a huge argument at work that day, and then in my mind's eye I could see her standing there having a big finger-wagging and voice-raising falling out. I also sensed that she was really conflicted about what to do next. So during the evening when the time came for prayer, and giving her lots of opt-outs (“This might well just be me”/ “I wonder if . . .”—after all, from all externalities this revelation seemed incorrect), I very gently described what I'd felt, and she immediately burst into violent tears. Amidst the sobs she shared that she had indeed had a huge argument with her chairman that day, was really upset about it, realized that she had some repenting to do in order to move forward, but was (understandably) annoyed with him as well. As the group ministered to her, it was a powerful example of Jesus bringing revelation in order to bring comfort and wisdom to someone. Don't forget, in spite of the positive tone of the prophetic gifts, they can indeed bring tears and strong emotions, as Jesus wants to minister to those deep places in us.

We have both had numerous times when we've just known something that seems almost counter-intuitive. Sometimes this can have to do with a person's motives, or perhaps a direction that the Lord wants us to take, or the spiritual realities of a situation (we will

cover lots on this in our book on deliverance and spiritual warfare), or even a sin that is being hidden.

Of course, what you do with that revelation and interpretation is another thing altogether! That is what we will cover in the chapter on application.

Feelings. God created us to benefit from emotions, and at times we can “catch” what God is saying through them. In other words, if we learn to pay attention to subtle changes, Jesus can speak to us through our emotions.

For instance, have you ever met someone who seems to carry a deep sadness (in spite of how their face looks)? Or walked into a home that almost enraps you with a divine peace? Or perhaps made a decision and felt a current reality-defying confidence that this is the correct pathway for you to take? Those might well be indicators from God about something He wants you to know.

As we go through life, we naturally have emotional responses to people and places. Jesus can elevate those feelings to a higher level, whereby the Spirit of God is actively communicating to us. Again, this can be described as sanctified emotions. We can learn to recognize that not all emotions come from within us but are externally driven by God. This then becomes a clue about something to which our attention should be drawn, and we then discern what sort of response is needed.

Speaking personally, for us a good example of this comes as we make decisions. We often ask God for direction, and the way He chooses to steer us will on occasion be through our feelings, rather than simply speaking to our logic. It is interesting that many evangelicals seem fearful of relying on emotions in any significant way, as if somehow feelings are inherently less redeemable than our minds. Not only is this dualistic worldview unbiblical, it will also result in our missing out on some of God's revelation coming to or through us.

Paul tells us in Colossians 3:15 to “let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” The word for “rule” could be translated as “referee” or “direct.” In other words, as we lean into a decision, we are to look for the presence—or absence—of the peace of Jesus as an indicator that we are headed in the right direction. That is not a mind-assessed thing, but rather a situation where we are to pay attention to redeemed emotions.

Bodies. God seems to enjoy reminding us that He made our bodies, and that He can speak through them to us as well. 2 Chronicles 5 records the consecration of the temple built by Solomon, and at the climax of the ceremony and worship we read:

The trumpeters and singers joined together to praise and thank the LORD with one voice. They raised their voices, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise to the LORD: “For He is good; His loving devotion endures forever.” Then the temple, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud so that the priests could not stand there to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. (vv. 13–14)

What an incredible experience! We have seen and experienced milder versions of this, when the presence of God is so heavy on an individual that they cannot stand in the presence of God. He is revealing His weighty glory and goodness and inviting them into a special time of closeness and encounter with Him.

Another way God can reveal His will through our bodies comes when we have sudden unexpected aches and pain that reveal what’s going on in someone else’s body. This tends to be a revelation that is given to people to share publicly, so that those who have that condition can grow in faith for healing. We explore this topic in far more detail in our book *Operating In Words of Knowledge and Wisdom*.

Dreams. Have you ever had a dream that you believe was from God? A dream life is a significant area of spiritual action and growth. For some this is a common thing to experience, while for others it's just an occasional or even rare thing.

We have friends who ended up married (happily!) after one of them had a dream where Jesus revealed who He wanted them to marry! Another friend had the same dream three nights in a row, where each time he was riding his motorcycle and had a serious crash that killed him. After that third occurrence, another friend approached him and said that the night before she had a dream about him, where he was riding his motorbike and a fatal crash occurred. That very day our friend put his bike up for sale and never rode it again!

It is important to notice from Scripture that God loves to speak through dreams. The Bible records approximately 320 dreams from God, so that definitely counts as a pattern of which we are to be aware!

In the Muslim-majority nations, especially those that are most hostile to Christians, one of the main ways people are currently coming to faith is through dreams where Jesus appears and speaks directly to them. We have heard countless stories of this taking place, and each one is both beautiful and awe-inspiring.

As Westerners we tend to look down on dreams as something a bit weak or second rate, but actually they are a significant way for God to minister to, speak to, and impact us. As we've noted earlier on similar themes, if we recognize nightmares come from the enemy, why not be happy asserting that some dreams come from the Lord?

Job 33:14–18 speaks clearly to this matter:

For God does speak—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from

wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword.

It seems to be that sometimes God has to wait until we are asleep before He can get a word in edgewise! For others, it is during sleep that there is enough quiet and openness to allow Him to work on hearts and attitudes. While our bodies may be resting, our spirits are very much awake and engaged with the spiritual realm.

Of course, not all dreams come from God. As we noted, some are from evil spirits, and many are simply our internal systems processing an excess of late-night cheese, wine, and movies! When we do recognize a dream is from God, the key remains the interpretation. (The Bible shows wicked people receiving dreams from God—so simply receiving one doesn't make you prophetic!) We'll talk about this more in the chapter on interpretation, where you'll find a special section to give you some guidelines on the interpretation of dreams.

Creation. The Creator can be found in His creation! Romans 1 reminds us that His creation is designed to inspire and stir us to encounter Him. In fact, according to Paul, God's invisible qualities are so clearly displayed in creation that we are without excuse for at least making some sort of reverent response to His revelation.

Probably you'll have heard lost friends say things like, "Being outdoors and hiking/gardening/surfing/running is my church." To them that sounds all spiritual and meaningful, even if we know it is more akin to worshiping the creation but not the Creator.

Nevertheless, it is a jumping-off place. We have all had those moments where we stand breath-taken by a sunset in a beautiful spot. That can be a place that not only stirs us to worship, but it also an environment that is more conducive to hearing God's voice.

Creation is a place where we can experience God speaking to us, often through some of the pathways mentioned earlier.

Seeing and Hearing. As you grow in the prophetic, one of the ways that God might bring revelation to you is externally through

your eyeballs and ears. An external vision is where you can see superimposed words or images put over what you are seeing naturally. The best way we can describe this is that it is kind of like the augmented reality you might find on a cool phone app! For instance, we have often “seen” words externally projected over a person, which might describe something going on in their life or reveal something about them.

In the Bible, Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1–14) is an example of an external vision, while Acts 16:9 records when Paul had a similar experience: “During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’”

Similarly, God can reveal Himself through external sounds. One of our craziest experiences of this came when Alex was preaching on revival, specifically comparing it to the Holy Spirit coming as a heavy rain that brings refreshing. As he said those words, suddenly the sound of heavy rain hammering down on the church roof filled the building. It was so unexpected that someone put their head outside . . . and it was a cloudless night! What was even stranger was that not everyone heard the sound—to some it was deafening, while others had no idea what the rest of us were talking about!

This sort of external hearing of sounds appears in the Bible, such as when Elijah hears the sound of heavy rain (1 Kings 18:41), or David’s army is commanded to attack only after they hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees (2 Samuel 5:24).

Other times people might hear the voice of God audibly and externally. Generally, this seems to come to people when the revelation is something significant and weighty (think more of a calling scenario), but of course we don’t want to restrict Him to that. Biblical examples include the Ten Commandments being given, the baptism of Jesus, and the call of Samuel (in that latter case, the voice seems only to have been audible to him).

Finally, sometimes people see Jesus come to them in physical form. Hannah had that experience as a child at the age of five, and it was a profound influence on her throughout her childhood. While it is not an everyday sort of thing, it does happen, and of course it is a humbling and richly significant encounter.

Anything! We have given you a list that we have tried to reverse engineer, but of course God is endlessly creative. He loves to speak and communicate, and you might know of testimonies that are unbelievable aside from your trust of that person.

Some other ways that we could talk about include:

- *Movies and TV shows.* Lots of people have seen parables and deeper meanings in these visual stories that they know are the Holy Spirit talking to them.
- *Music.* Perhaps related to God speaking to our emotions as well as our minds, God indeed speaks through music and song. (For instance, we have heard testimony of Foreigner's classic love song "I Want to Know What Love Is" being the pivotal moment in someone coming to faith in Christ!)
- *Smell.* We have smelled the fragrance of Jesus on a number of occasions (which speaks to us of God's reassuring presence and hand upon a particular direction), while there is also a distinctive demonic smell (which, by the way, is as putrid-egg yucky as you might expect!)
- *Angels.* Of course, their very name means "messenger," and there are stories throughout the Bible and Christian history of angels bringing messages from God. We know a number of people who have experienced this today, including angels intervening to rescue them from dangerous situations.
- *Actions.* Sometimes God leads us to do certain actions that carry prophetic weight (e.g., symbolically "cutting" a person free from masonic insignia), perhaps revealing something that God is doing

in the spiritual. For a biblical example, check out Agabus binding Paul's hands with his belt to signify his upcoming imprisonment (Acts 21:10–14)

In summary, there are lots of ways to sense what God is communicating to us. Some are more common, and the earlier bullet points above pick up on this. Nevertheless, invite and be open to God speaking to you in creative ways. He loves that sort of challenge!

We have friends who, while pastoring a church, found that the big highway billboard near their church building continually spoke to their church's situation over a period of several years. Sometimes the advertisements simply encouraged, other times they provoked or even warned, but they were able to list an incredible range of correlations between the two. Strange, but fun, and how very like Jesus to do something so ingenious and personal!

How Do I Know It's God?

Obviously, this is a complex area. It is the issue of interpretation and then application and is more than we have room to cover properly here. However, a few pointers are:

- Any authentic prophetic word will honor the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Ultimately it will point to Jesus, building faith in Him.
- Prophecy must always line up with the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God for all people at all times and in all places. The prophetic word is for a specific person(s) at a specific time in a specific place. It is a “now” insight that carries nothing like the same authority as Scripture.
- If someone thinks they have a word from God that is in conflict with what the Bible teaches, then they are wrong and haven't heard from Jesus! Of course, we must be careful not to use this principle to weaponize our own particular theology, but nevertheless this principle is highly important.

- Revelation from God is more wise, more healing, more loving and more amazing than your thoughts. This will often cause a reaction within you, such as conviction, faith, calling, awe, or peace.
- When embraced, a prophetic word from God carries within it the grace to see it come about. For instance, if you sense God calling you into a new venture, then there will also be stirred within a faith that all the “what abouts” can be legitimately answered.
- Revelation from the Lord is usually light and gentle, easily cut off by any exertion of self (our thoughts or our will), so be careful to choose to honor God’s stream of life over and above your self-effort.

Activation Exercise

If you want to step into hearing God’s voice, try this challenging exercise:

Seven times in the next two weeks you are to seek to prophesy over someone. Record the name, place, what happened, and the response.

TIPS:

- Whenever you’re praying for someone, don’t solely pray, but also ask God for a prophetic word for them. (If you’re not with them, text it to them).
- If you need help, ask God to highlight something using a visual clue around you, or from a Scripture, or simply close your eyes and pause in His presence as you lift that person before Him.
- The reason we’ve asked you to do this seven times in a fortnight is that this will force you to stretch yourself over an intense period of time. This is what will help you to try things out and grow!

Next Steps

To learn more about growing in the prophetic gifts, we invite you to pick up our book *Hearing the Voice of God* ([amazon.com/dp/1951420004](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1951420004)). It's packed full of biblical teaching, practical application, activation exercises, and proven principles for living this out in practice.

CHAPTER 3

Empowered to Heal the Sick

“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”

– Luke 10:9

In the early days of developing a culture of prayer for healing at our former church in Ohio, we began offering opportunities to receive healing prayer during most of the weekend worship services. One Sunday a young woman, who was back home from Miami visiting her parents, came forward and shared that she had stage 4 ovarian cancer. Her doctors had told her that they had run out of options for treatment and could now only offer pain relief and temporary fixes, rather than a cure.

Several of us gathered around and began prayer ministry, crying out to the Lord for complete healing. During that time, the young woman experienced the peace and presence of Jesus come upon her and she left feeling refreshed and more deeply aware of His love. Over the next few days she felt increasingly energized. At her next doctor’s appointment, confusion reigned over the absence of symptoms. It turned out that the cancer had completely disappeared from her body!

The doctors assumed this must be a strange remission, so they followed her for many months, until eventually she was declared to be fully healthy. In her medical notes, the doctor recorded, “This is a miracle, for which I have no medical explanation.”

Several years later, when our family moved on from Ohio to California, we received a lovely card from this young woman's parents. They shared that their daughter remained fully healthy, was completely cancer-free, and that she was marrying her fiancé the following month. They concluded with the simple words: "Our daughter has her life back, and we are all so incredibly grateful to God."

Why Did Jesus Heal?

Jesus came to definitively reveal the nature of the Father to us. In John 5:19 He says, "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." And in John 14:9, Jesus tells Philip, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

If Jesus reveals the nature of God the Father, and Jesus regularly heals, then clearly healing is part of the Father's nature and will. We have a loving heavenly Father who hates sickness more than we do and who loves to see healing released into every part of His children's lives.

For Jesus, healing was a core part of His message and His ministry. When John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah, notice how Jesus wanted His ministry to be assessed:

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor." (Luke 7:21–22)

Healing is central to Jesus' understanding of His identity and calling. While not everything works out in our fallen world (after all, John

was in prison and would shortly be unjustly executed), all disciples of Jesus should see healing the sick as central to our lives as well.

In addition, we see that Jesus healed (and drove out demons, did miracles, and so on) in order to fulfill Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. For instance, Isaiah 35:5–6 says of the coming Messiah, “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.” The religious leaders knew this and it concerned them that the people were reading the miracles as authentication of his credentials (e.g., John 11:45–48; Matthew 21:9–11). While demonstrating His being the Messiah was not the only reason Jesus healed, nevertheless it was part of what He was revealing.

When unpacking healing, the language that Jesus most often used was that of the breaking in of the kingdom of God into our present-day world. The concept of the kingdom refers to God’s dynamic and active rule in and through our lives, which transforms everything as the original “good” creation intent of God is restored, often through gracious partnership with the people of God.

It’s interesting that Jesus did not really teach directly about healing. Instead, He taught about the kingdom of God and healed everyone who came to Him. For instance, in the Lord’s Prayer this principle is seen when we are taught to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10) The breathtaking kingly rule of God is no longer purely our future hope, because eternity is bubbling over into our lives today through the glorious life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus!

Put another way, Jesus clearly believed that all the beautiful things we long for in heaven can start to be experienced today. The fullness of life He promised in John 10:10 is not just a future hope, but it’s a present-day one as well.

Jesus' very name, which means "God saves," reveals so much about His identity and the purpose of His ministry. Since biblical thought is holistic, salvation through Jesus means that He comes to save us in every sphere of existence. He is redeeming the whole of creation—most importantly our spirits, but also our minds, emotions, and physical bodies.

At the cross we discover that salvation impacts every aspect of our humanity. This means that healings are not just proof of Jesus' message; they are also elements of His actual message. Healings don't merely demonstrate that Jesus can save us, but rather they are in themselves salvation (God's redemption of everything) breaking into the here and now.

Of course, Jesus' role as our Savior is about far more than physical healing, because humanity's greatest need is for our sins to be forgiven and our relationship with God to be fully restored. Yet what Jesus offers is not some disembodied escape from the physical world. He is interested in saving the whole you: spirit, mind, emotions, and body.

But What If . . .

At this point our minds tend to jump straight to thinking about all the "What ifs." What if healing doesn't take place? What if they think it's their fault? What if the family members don't see their prayers answered? What if the illness is long term? What if they end up dying from that sickness? What if they don't have enough faith? What if they aren't healed and walk away from Jesus?

Those are all legitimate questions, which we address at length in our book *Healing the Sick*. However, it's vital not to build our theology upon our fears and failures. Doing so requires us to subordinate Scripture to our experiences, which is never going to produce a gospel-centered worldview. Instead, we must intentionally start with a clear-eyed understanding of God's character and actions in relation to sickness and healing.

Here is the big idea: Jesus consistently and persistently healed the sick. And for Him, it wasn't simply a kind thing to do, but rather it was a central aspect of His message.

Jesus' Attitude Toward Sickness

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly made clear that sickness is an enemy of God and His people. There is not a single incidence of Him adopting a stoical attitude toward illness. He never viewed sickness as something that people needed to endure without complaint or a request to God for healing.

In Matthew 8:16–17, Jesus drove out the demonic spirits “with a word” and “healed all the sick.” Matthew then comments, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.’”

Unlike some dreadful theologies today, we never catch Jesus saying something like, “Well, this sickness might be tough, but it's doing wonders for your character, so the Father says leave it in place for a little while longer.” Likewise, He never responded to a request for healing by saying, “I wish I could help, but it's not yet your time for healing. The Father wants you to stick it out for a few more months.”

Instead, Jesus always treated sickness as deeply and personally offensive, a violation of His good creation, and something He fiercely opposed. It is interesting that every person who came to Jesus seeking to be made well experienced a complete healing. Jesus never turned anyone down or away.

In Mark 1:41 we read, “A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’” In the culture of the time, leprosy was viewed as something that made a person not just sick but also ritually unclean, so lepers were excluded from the temple (the place of worship) and the village (the place of community).

Jesus' response is fascinating. He was completely indignant that anyone could for even one moment think that He was not willing to bring healing and cleansing! He didn't need to go away and ponder the case, because healing was His default answer.

"Of course, I want you whole!" is the repeated message in the Gospels. In this case, He therefore touched the man and said, "I am willing. Be clean." Notice that by laying His hand on the leper, Jesus was not made unclean; instead, the unclean was made clean at His touch. Thus, the man received not just his healing but also a restoration into the places of worship and of community (which is why he was sent to visit the priest to have his cleansing confirmed). Such is the transformative power of Jesus!

All this leads us to conclude that health and healing are the ordinary response of a loving Father to His children. Jesus went out of His way to reveal the fullness of this truth. We have a Father who loves each one of us so dearly and deeply, so it's never a burden, distraction, or frustration to Him when we request healing, whether for others or ourselves.

Sickness Is Not from God

It is surprising how many believers assert that sickness comes from God. With all the disease and illness around us, it is easy to believe this error. However, sickness entered God's perfect world through humanity's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

While pinning the source of sickness onto God might, at first glance, seem more pastorally flexible when healing does not take place, if we dig a little deeper we'll realize that it creates more problems than it solves. By saying that God sends sickness, what sort of Father do we think God is? What kind of Savior would that make Jesus?

Following the death of his young adult daughter, theologian Ben Witherington was drawn afresh to Matthew 7:9–11. There Jesus teaches that if a human parent wouldn't give their child something

bad, only something good, how much more does our Father in heaven give only good things to us? He reflected upon this in a *Christianity Today* article titled “God Wants to Heal Us: Jesus Is Not the Author of Sickness and Death—including My Daughter’s”:

That may seem obvious to some, but I was reassured in a new way that God didn’t give my daughter a pulmonary embolism. He is not some selfish deity that “needed another angel in heaven,” as one person told me at the visitation before Christy’s funeral. God is working all things for the good of those who love him. But he is not the author of disease, decay, death, suffering, sin, and sorrow. He is love and the author of life—life abundant and he even promises everlasting life. His plans for us are for good and not for harm, Scripture teaches.”⁷

If Jesus’ ministry is defined by the breaking in of the kingdom of God, and we know that in Genesis before the fall and in our future eternity there is no sickness, why do we ascribe sickness on earth to an act of God’s will? Jesus defeated death (and sickness) on the cross and through His resurrection, so why would He partner with those things on earth by sending them to individuals? We must do better than this in our thinking and theology, ceasing to paint God as akin to a Greek deity who capriciously sends bad things into our lives.

Of course, we must also not swing in the other direction and pretend that all sicknesses are no longer in existence (a model that some cults take on). Today we live in the tension of the “now” and the “not yet” of the kingdom, where sometimes we will see the sick healed and other times we won’t see that occur.

A Couple of Quick Practical Tips

Before we dive into a simple model for healing the sick, here are a few, very practical tips:

- Other than when just praying a quick prayer, we find it best to minister in pairs. When one of you is praying, the other can be listening to the Lord, and when they pray it gives you a chance to observe what the Spirit is doing.
- When in pairs, try to ensure that at least one of the people praying is the same sex as the person being prayed for, as that creates a safer space.
- As the one praying, you should always keep your eyes open, so you can observe what is going on in that person who is receiving prayer. You will learn to identify when the Spirit is moving upon a person. It can be helpful to gently speak that observation out loud, as it hugely builds faith.
- Sometimes the presence of God will fall so strongly on a person that they begin to wobble around or even look like falling over, so by having your eyes open you can make sure that they stay safe and at ease.
- Another tip is to have a box of Kleenex on hand. Deep emotions can be tied to illness, which often result in tears being shed. Additionally, tears can also be one of the signs that the Holy Spirit is at work.

Five-Step Model

The five-step model that you will learn here has its origins in the ministry of John Wimber, who led the Vineyard denomination through massive growth. Back in the 1980s and 1990s, Wimber traveled extensively, modeling how to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. In particular, he was very effective at training people in how to heal the sick. The conferences he led combined intimate worship, practical biblical teaching, and highly accessible ministry times. Wimber wrote several excellent books, notably *Power Healing*.

Having played with this process for several decades, we have developed some of the language and added in our own insights and

experiences. We would encourage you to engage with each of the steps, not as an unbreakable formula (because it's not about a system) but rather as a proven and useful framework designed to help you better join in with what Jesus is doing in a specific individual.

The five steps are:

1. Listen: Identify the real issue.
2. Discern: How should I pray?
3. Pray: Share the Father's heart.
4. Review: What's going on?
5. Clarify: How to move forward.

Listen: Identify the Real Issue

On many occasions, before Jesus actually performed a healing, He asked the person, "What do you want me to do for you?"

When someone is in need of healing, we can do the same! Simply start with a smile and gently ask, "What would you like prayer for?"

Do not assume that you know! We have had people hobble up on crutches, stirring us to be ready to pray for a leg healing, when they're seeking prayer for something entirely different.

As the person seeking healing shares, your task is to listen simultaneously in two parallel realms: one is the natural, the other is the supernatural. You must pay close attention to what the person is saying and give even closer attention to what God is saying. As Francis MacNutt puts it, "Give one ear to the person and your best ear to God."⁸

You might need to ask a few follow-up questions, either if things aren't clear, or if you need more detail ("Where exactly does it hurt?"). The Spirit might lead you to ask questions around the depth and length of the issue, and maybe about what else was going on in their life at the time this issue arose.

Emotional intelligence. The "listen" stage also sets the tone for the experience that the person who is seeking prayer will have. Be

welcoming and reassuring, since they might feel anxious about either their need (especially if it is private or embarrassing) or what will happen in the prayer time. You need to model a kind and honoring posture toward them as an individual so that a safe and sacred space is created for those few minutes. Don't forget that the number-one goal is for that person to experience the Father's loving heart for them, regardless of whether or not they receive healing in that moment.

When someone has a major illness, you might find that they ask for some specific interim things, such as for the pain to diminish, the ability to hold their child again, or a good night's sleep. These are excellent things to pray for, since they can be measured quickly and immediately and make a meaningful difference in their life. You can always ask if it's okay to pray for the big miracle (complete healing) as well if that's not mentioned. But these smaller steps along the way can build faith when someone has become worn down and discouraged.

Be aware that some people love to launch into a full medical history, with a blow-by-blow account of every procedure, appointment, and setback. That is not necessary and in our experience is usually unhelpful (and dull!). It rarely builds faith and instead can feed into a tendency that some people have to gather as much sympathy as possible, rather than look to the Lord.

If you find yourself with someone like that, you might need to cut across them by saying something like, "Let me just interrupt you, because I want to honor your time, and also because I'm aware others are waiting for prayer (if that's true). What we've found in praying for healing is that we need to lift our focus off the actual problem and place our gaze on Jesus, because He is far greater than any disease, situation, or human doctor. He is the One who can make us whole and healthy! So I think we should spend our time in prayer, but before we move into that, could you just tell me where exactly the pain is on your body?" (Or insert another very specific question, if you genuinely need to know that information; otherwise, move into prayer!)

Build faith. Make sure that all your words build faith in the person who has sought prayer. If they seem worn down, disappointed, or low in faith, you might want to share a thirty-second teaching that sparks the gift of faith, preferably anchored in Scripture. And if you have seen (or heard about) someone with a similar condition being healed, definitely share that.

An example might be, “As we move to pray, I want to remind us that in the Gospels we see that Jesus loves to heal those who are battling an illness. So I have great confidence lifting you before Him today, because Jesus’ heart toward you is so good and full of love. He hates this sickness more than you or I do, and He is far greater than this illness that the enemy is throwing at you. The Bible says that it’s by Jesus’ wounds we are healed, so we are going to ask God to enforce that victory over sickness in your life today in a fresh way. Does that sound good?”

Discern: “How Should I Pray?”

This second step isn’t one that the person being prayed for will be particularly aware of, since this has already begun in you during the “listen” stage and will continue on into the actual praying. For you, though, it is vital. In essence you are asking the Lord, “What sort of situation is this? And what sort of prayer or response is needed?” Put another way, you are discerning both what to pray for, as well as how to pray for it. This is because how you pray for a simple head cold will be different to healing an emotional wound, which in turn is distinct from a situation where demonic activity needs to be addressed. Alternatively, someone might ask for prayer for a stomach ulcer, when the underlying issue is actually stress from a difficult work environment.

The way into this discerning is to ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is going on and why. Gifts of the Spirit at work might include words of knowledge, words of wisdom, prophetic insight, discerning of spirits, tongues, or intercession. We write about each

of these in other books in the Naturally Supernatural series, but for now, don't forget that these are gifts that the Spirit can release to any believer at any time. They are gifts, not rewards or prizes, so don't be intimidated—you can ask for what you need at any time!

The bottom line is that throughout this stage, you are trying to hear Jesus on what is the ultimate cause of the problem that this person is facing. Why is it happening to the one asking for prayer? Bear in mind that sickness can originate from a mixture of natural and supernatural means.

Sometimes you have no idea what is going on! It's okay to be honest about that. If helpful, admit you're not sure ("I don't know why you have this disease"), but proclaim that the Lord does, so you're going to bring that person to Him and see what He wants to do. Don't forget to include your prayer partner in this stage—you should be asking them what they're sensing from God. That is one of the benefits of praying in teams of two or more people.

Be wary of falling into the trap of making assumptions about what is going on. This occurs when we forget that the same condition can be caused by different things, and thus will require different responses. For instance, you might have successfully prayed two weeks ago for a lady with a stiff shoulder, but don't assume that the stiff shoulder in front of you today is identical in its origins.

Our core dependency is upon Jesus. We must not simply repeat what worked last time, as that is placing our faith in previous experiences, rather than in the Spirit of God at work right now. We are to operate out of His current presence, not out of our past memory.

Different types of prayer. In *The Essential Guide to Healing*, Randy Clark summarizes what he's found to be the most common causes of illness, which in turn will impact the type of prayer that needs to be offered.⁹ Our experience would support that these are helpful categories through which different situations can be processed:

- *Natural causes.* Ranging from accidental injuries, to a cold caught from a colleague, and even extending to a major illness directly caused by known environmental factors. Here the prayer is likely a straightforward pursuit of healing.
- *Psychosomatic issues.* An illness caused at least in part by mental or emotional factors. Often you will find that the presenting illness will only leave once the person has dealt with the underlying issue. Examples of how to do this include repentance (if personal sin is in some way involved), forgiveness (whether of someone else or of themselves; this is a very common issue), submission of their past experiences to Christ, or perhaps a deliberate breaking of whatever has caused bondage in their mind or emotions.
- *Lifestyle issues.* When someone ignores sound wisdom on how to treat their body (think of things as diet, rest, exercise, smoking, use of drugs, etc.), sickness can follow. If that is the case, then there will probably need to be confession and repentance, and perhaps a renunciation of where that particular thing has become an idol in their life.
- *Demonic affliction.* As the Gospels make clear, there can be a link between illness and enemy oppression. This will require the afflicting spirit(s) to be commanded to leave. When dealing with an issue, it is often helpful to go back to what comic books call “the origin story”—namely the narratives and experiences that opened the way for the enemy to bring oppression. It is in those root places that we ask Jesus to first bring cleansing and healing. Thereafter, the physical healing will often come far more easily. We will address this in greater detail in our future book in the Naturally Supernatural series on deliverance.
- *Generational curses.* The Scriptures have much to say about how blessings and curses can be passed down through the generations (the classic text being Deuteronomy 28). If the person seeking prayer talks about repeated patterns of sickness in a family or of curses being spoken over them, then that needs to be renounced and its hold over the family broken.

It's not a magic formula. Having given you some categories and suggested some different ways to pray, we want to urge you not to become hung up on the micro details of what to do and how to pray! The more you focus on obeying a formula, the less space you will have to spot what the Father is doing in the here and now.

Jesus said, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” (John 5:19) This is a vital principle when obeying His command to heal the sick.

We need to pay close attention to what God is up to in a specific person or situation, and then join in accordingly. As you move forward, you will find that while principles and patterns emerge, every person's need is unique!

Pray: Share the Father's Heart

When we pray with someone, our top aim is for that person to leave having experienced more of the Father's heart for them. That means they feel valued, encouraged, and loved, even if there was great challenge in the moment and a spiritual battle took place.

Often those in long-term or major illness feel left out, overlooked, confused, or simply deeply discouraged. In such situations, the tone and texture of what and how we pray is often equally as important as our actual words. It might be that the Father's top agenda for them that day is that they know afresh how loved they are by Him, regardless of whether or not a physical healing takes place.

Of course, having said all that, we still want their healing, and so most of what we pray is focused on that taking place!

Help the recipient to receive prayer. When we have gone through the (usually brief) “listen” phase with the person, and as we move into “pray,” we might want to prepare the person to “receive” prayer. Some things we might do include:

- Encourage them to take a posture of receiving from God. We might say, “Some people find it helpful to close their eyes so they don’t get distracted, and sometimes folks will hold out their hands as a sign of openness to Jesus. But just do what feels comfortable and helpful for you. There are no rules about any of this!” And, of course, these steps are not necessary or required—we just try to be attentive to the prompts of the Holy Spirit in these things.
- Request permission to place a hand on them (see note below).
- Ask them to let us know during the process if they sense anything from God and say that we might stop and ask them what they are perceiving as we go along. This both prepares them for what’s coming, and also helps them to pay better attention to those little nudges from the Spirit.
- Let them know at points that there might be a minute or two when we’re silent and listening to God for them, so they should keep engaged with Jesus in the quiet. At a very practical level, we find that leaving our hand on the person while we are doing this acts as a non-verbal indicator that we’re not done yet!
- Invite them to relax and simply enjoy God’s loving presence.

Laying on of hands. Importantly, we’ll always ask if it’s okay to gently place a hand on their shoulder, or on a specific place on their body that relates to their healing (e.g., their wrist for carpal tunnel syndrome, or the part of the back where they indicate there’s pain). We might say, “Would you be comfortable with me gently placing a hand on your shoulder [or where the pain is in your back, etc.] as we pray?”

However, as with any physical touch, you must always be wise and sensitive. If the person is of the opposite sex, be very cautious. For instance, we make clear to eager young men that, even though they of course have the purest of motives, just because a sweet young woman wants to experience more of Jesus in her heart, they still should *never* put their hand there on her body!

As an aside, we strongly encourage you not to pray solo with a member of the opposite sex, as much as anything for the sake of appearance. At a practical level, if one of us is alone (say during a response time after a sermon) and sees someone of the opposite sex still waiting for prayer, we'll grab another team member of that sex to join us in praying. We've even said to the person waiting, "I'm just going to find another member of the team, as we like to pray in pairs," and they are always totally fine with that.

It's also important to remember that where people have experienced abuse or inappropriate touch in their past, they might find the laying on of hands to be a distraction or unhelpful, which is one reason we ask permission first. You must always honor their request and never indicate disapproval or doubt at their choice.

Nevertheless, the laying on of hands is both biblical and powerful and is a helpful thing to do in most cases.

Build faith. We mentioned this at the end of the section on "listen," but often we might begin our praying by verbalizing some faith-building declarations. A few examples might be, "Thank You, Jesus, that You love to heal the sick!" or, "We thank You for Your presence here," or, "Thank You that you love Taylor so much, and that your heart toward him is so wonderful and kind."

Tongues. If you have the gift of tongues, then this can be a good time to quietly exercise it (almost under your breath), as you seek to attune yourself to what the Father is doing and saying. We find that praying in the Spirit in this way helps us to discern God better and is a helpful tool if there is any spiritual warfare going on. It is like our spiritual antennae go higher, we re-tune into Him, and then oftentimes breakthrough comes. But if you don't yet have this gift, don't worry, praying in English or another human language also works really well as you tune into the Spirit.

Pray short but sweet prayers. As a general rule, prayer for healing does not need to be an epic speech that does two laps of the planet and covers every possible nuance or potential outcome. When we

pray, we are not legally obliged to list all the terms and conditions around what is taking place!

Other times you might need to spend longer—perhaps five or ten minutes for something weightier—as you discern the heart of the Father for this person and situation, and then pray accordingly. We find the need for additional time to be especially true for issues that are tied either to the demonic or to emotional healing.

However long you spend, seek to command sickness to leave. Exercise a humble but godly authority as a child of God. Speak in a manner that leaves the person feeling loved and built up in faith.

We might pray something like, “Father, please come on this person and release Your healing power.” “Holy Spirit, come!” or, “Lord Jesus, please come and touch his body and bring complete healing.” Or, “Arm, be healed in Jesus’ name!” or, “Headache, be gone!” or, “Cancer, we curse you in Jesus’ mighty name!”

Then we wait and watch.

By the way, when you pray, speak in your normal voice. Don’t switch into some strange religious tone. And you don’t need to shout. Use your voice like you would in any regular conversation.

Physical manifestations. As we pause, we pay attention to what the Spirit is doing. As part of this waiting, sometimes there might be physical manifestations of the Spirit’s presence, especially if you are spending a little longer in prayer. However, please note that this is *not* a universal rule. (As a rough guide, we find this takes place in some observable way in perhaps up to half of all people.)

If it does occur, there might be fluttering of their eyelids, tears (gentle or violent), smiling or even laughter, heat in the part of the body that needs healing, change in skin color or tone, physical trembling or even rocking, physical relaxation of the body as the peace of God falls, or simply a more peaceful look on their face. Sometimes you might notice a troubled look as you say something, which you need to note.

Having listed those examples, we should warn you that some of those will be from the Lord, some from the flesh, and occasionally some will be from the enemy. The flesh aspect isn't necessarily sinful—usually it is born out of a desperation and desire for more of God or for His healing. Very occasionally you might discern that a person is seeking attention by acting strangely, but that doesn't automatically mean you need to call that out.

We should not be surprised by a demonic manifestation, since when the light comes the darkness has to flee! But those signs act as indicators for us about how we are to pray. Things you might see could include grimacing or snarling as Jesus is mentioned or His presence invoked, or the sense that prayer for healing is being rejected by the person or something in the person. Again, the spiritual gift of discerning of spirits is very useful here, so quietly ask Jesus for His insight if something seems off to you. (“Lord Jesus, would you reveal now the spiritual source of what is going on here?”)

If there is something demonic that seems to manifest, or you sense its presence, or if the person says they wonder if that's the case, don't freak out! The simple way to deal with it is to command it to be gone in Jesus' name. You are simply exercising the same authority that you do when you minister healing. If it makes a noise, just tell it to be silent. If it still hangs around, you can tell it to be quiet and still in Jesus' name and then calmly seek help from someone more experienced in these things.

The other comment about physical manifestations is that we are not to chase them. Never evaluate the success or otherwise of a time of prayer ministry by them. And absolutely never suggest or hint to a person that they need to act in a certain way in order to demonstrate that they are encountering God.

Prophetic sensitivity. When we are healing the sick, it's common for the prophetic gifts to flow as well. Even if you don't think of yourself as particularly gifted in this way, the Spirit might come upon you with specific guidance for that moment. Often this might feel

like it appeared out of the blue, and you'll kind of know that it didn't originate in you.

For instance, the Holy Spirit might release specific instructions about how to pray or insight into what the root cause is that lies behind the illness. There could be a word of knowledge (information that you otherwise couldn't possibly know by yourself) or a word of wisdom (perhaps direction on how to pray to unlock a situation). You might sense that the person needs to repent of something, offer forgiveness, or renounce something where the enemy has a foothold. Other times you might be stirred to pray in a certain way, even with a specific action accompanying it (such as symbolically cutting off ties to an unhealthy part of their family line).

Your task is to go with what Jesus is saying and asking you to do. We'll be honest here— this can often be (very) nerve-wracking! However, we've also found that if we simply ignore that prompting, then that anointing may lift and we'll have missed the moment to partner with God.

As always with prophetic gifts, share any words with sensitivity and love, recognizing that you might be wrong. Never speak them out as definitive. Always invite the person to weigh it for themselves.

We might say something like, "Max, as we're praying, I am sensing that the Lord might be saying this to you," or, "I'm wondering if some of what is going on here in this illness is coming from the enemy. Does that resonate in any way with you?" or, "You mentioned earlier that others in your family suffer from similar conditions, and I wonder how you'd feel about renouncing and breaking off any curse that in the past might have been placed upon your family."

As you read these examples, bear in mind that the problem with writing these things down is that they can sound kind of strange out of context! The key is to keep humbly attentive to what you sense is the Spirit's leading, and to then follow Him in obedience and faith.

Don't counsel. Finally, resist the temptation to turn prayer ministry into a counseling or advice session, and certainly don't

preach! Yes, those are indeed legitimate gifts that should be appropriately exercised within the church, but this is not that time. This can be hard to control when you can see how they ought to be living, but please exercise the fruit of the Spirit that is self-control.

Be especially careful not to assign to God what are actually just your thoughts, sanctified or not. Bear in mind that it might be appropriate/possible to share one or two of your thoughts in step five, “clarify,” and we’ll explain how to do that when we get there.

Generally . . . For as long as God is touching the person, continue working with Him. Give thanks whenever you see any progress. Sometimes the Lord will give you plenty to pray out loud, other times it is more a ministry of presence that you are offering, and on other occasions it will be a brief prayer and then you’re done. Again, this is something that you can only discern in the situation. (Yet another reason to pray in pairs!)

When Do You Stop Praying?

- When the person being prayed for lets you know they’ve finished praying.
- The Spirit tells you to stop. Usually this means the person is also finished, but sometimes they might still be in prayer and you leave them in the care of the Spirit to enjoy God’s presence.
- You run out of things to say and pray! That happens and it’s okay.

Review: What’s Going On?

After praying for healing with a person, we will pause to ask them what’s going on. The reason we ask is because, even though we have the gifts of the Spirit, we’re not mind readers! Also, it builds a sense of shared responsibility for the process.

The aim of “review” is to find out more about what the Father is doing in this situation. Often the person will feel something before you see it, which is why it’s important for them to tell you.

We find it works best to pivot into this dialogue in a gentle way, so that it almost flows naturally from the praying and waiting on God. By way of a very granular practical tip, we don't do a big "Amen" ending to the prayer before this, so that the person is more likely to stay in a place of engagement with God.

Often Christians don't like to do this stage! After all, we're actually asking for proof of what we're praying, which feels highly risky. In that moment, we think to ourselves, *What if nothing has gone on? Does that make me a failure? How do I defend God's reputation?* And so the easy option is simply to say "Amen" and move on from the prayer, without stopping to check in and review with the person who is receiving the prayer.

Jesus did this! And what a great encouragement that is! In Mark 8:22–26, Jesus is called upon to heal a blind man who lived in Bethsaida. After initially praying,

Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" [The man] looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Following Jesus' modeling, if what we are praying for is a physical condition that can be tested, then we suggest that the person does so there and then. Usually that person will pause and look at us like we are slightly crazy! So we then reassure them that we are praying to see results, and encourage them to test the condition.

It's so fun to watch someone test out their previously frozen shoulder/unbendable back/broken bone, etc., and see their eyes come out on stalks as they realize that they can now do things that a minute previously they couldn't even attempt. God is so good!

Healing can come in stages. Sometimes we find that the person is partially healed at this testing stage. In that case, we will encourage them that they have experienced some healing and suggest that we

pray some more for complete healing. People often won't have a grid for healing that takes place in stages, so we find it helpful to reassure them that this is perfectly normal and often occurs.

We then go back to stage three ("pray") and see what happens. Alternatively, with conditions that can't be tested there and then, the person might have sensed something from God that really helps in lasering in on our prayers. This might be insight into the root cause of the condition, even greater clarity about the exact diagnosis, or perhaps a picture about what Jesus is doing in them. As they share this, it can feel completely appropriate to pray again for their healing, as you respond to this revelation. For example, we have had people tell us that while praying they have been reminded of a situation from their past, and wonder if it might be connected to their presenting issue, which of course is a huge indicator for how you are to pray next.

This pausing to review will come more quickly when doing a quick prayer, or when offering healing to the lost outside of a church service. For instance, if we pray with a lost neighbor for healing, the actual praying time might only be fifteen to thirty seconds, so the "review" stage is quickly reached. But we always try to ask them what is going on, and if they can feel any difference.

Clarify: How to Move Forward

Once you have finished praying and reviewing, a good way to wrap things up is to help that person clarify their next steps. The depth of this will probably depend upon the length and weightiness of what you have been praying into.

As with the other stages of the five-step model, it is important to be attentive to the Spirit, and not simply trot out the same thing to each person. However, in the absence of particular direction from God, you'll find yourself returning to certain pieces of wisdom.

- If they've been healed: Encourage them to share the testimony that day. We might ask, "Who will be pleased to hear this and excited about what Jesus is doing in your life?"
- If they've been partially healed: Invite them to keep on thanking God and asking Him to complete the good work that He has begun in them. We have seen many instances where healing is a process that takes place over the hours that follow (and often overnight). Say something like, "As you go through the rest of your day, keep on thanking Jesus for what He's done, and ask Him to give you complete healing. This is a good thing to pray as you lie in bed tonight!"
- If there is a lifestyle issue: Ask that person what their specific next step is in making changes, and who will hold them accountable for that. (By the way, it is usually better for someone else to help them in this way, unless you are already especially close to them.)
- If there was an afflicting spirit: Make sure that person is aware it might try to return, and equip them in how to rebuke it in Jesus' name. Say something like, "Sometimes the enemy will try to return. If you sense something dark later on, simply say, 'Be gone in Jesus' name!' and begin to praise God for who He is and thank Him for what He's doing in you."
- If they were not healed: Warmly invite them to come back for prayer as many times as is necessary and to choose the path of persistent faith. Make sure they do not listen to the enemy's lies (e.g., they are not worthy, it's their fault, God doesn't care, they are a bother to others, etc.). Never blame them for a lack of faith, but be honest about the situation ("Healing is a mysterious thing, and sometimes we simply do not know why things don't happen as we would wish.") To help them keep believing and experiencing that Jesus is at work, encourage them to be active with a church group where they are known and loved.

A few other pointers:

- If the person believes that they've been healed and has been on medication for that condition, never tell them to stop taking it. Instead, they should go and seek advice from their medical professionals. Encourage them that this is also an opportunity to bear witness to what Jesus is doing!
- Sometimes the Holy Spirit will give you a specific prophetic direction, for instance asking the person to go and make peace with someone. Obviously share this with grace and humility (you might be wrong) and see how they respond. Likewise, they might hear some specific instruction from the Spirit as to next steps and want to process that with you. And it will amaze you how often the Spirit will speak separately to you and to them about the same thing!
- You might have some general counsel that is from you, rather than the Spirit. It's fine to share this, so long as you are not lecturing, being a bossy-boots, riding a hobby horse, or undoing all the good work of God by being judgmental or condemning. Rather than download all of your extraordinary wisdom in one go, perhaps focus instead on one nugget to offer: "Have you considered chatting with Sandy about this? I know they went through something similar, or," "We have a support group at church that might be perfect for you as you take your next steps," or, "Who would be a good choice to help you walk through the next stages of this wonderful work that God is doing in you?" Resist the temptation to reorganize their life for them.
- It might be helpful to encourage the person to go and do some specific Bible study on a topic related to their situation. You might ask the Lord for one or two passages to suggest as a starting point.
- Finally, you can't overvalue testimony! We as believers need to make it a way of life. It raises the level of faith in the wider church and community when the miraculous stories of God are recorded

and recounted. In the Old Testament, whenever Israel forgot what God had done, they fell into decline (see Psalm 78:40–43). In Revelation 12:11 we read that Christians will triumph over Satan “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” So please encourage anyone who is healed to tell others, and to be willing to write down their story, record a video on their phone, generally spread it to others. It really does make a difference!

Post-Praying. After you have finished praying for the sick, and you are no longer with the ones you prayed for, it’s wise to briefly pray together as team members (if in the context of a church service) or with another believer (if this happened in the normal run of life).

- Start by thanking God for what He has done, praising Him for His goodness, and for the honor of being used by Him to extend His kingdom.
- Ask Jesus to cleanse you from any residue of the enemy. This is especially important if any sort of deliverance took place, however low key.
- Ask for protection upon yourselves, your families, and your households, with no room for a counterattack from the enemy.
- Bless those you have prayed with, that they may walk closer with God as a result of the time of prayer, that any healings will last, and that those who weren’t healed will feel deeply loved and ready for more prayer in the future.
- End by asking God to seal the good work that He has done, and to build on it going forward.

Activation Exercise

This five-step model may sound a little complicated and only for those who are mature in their faith, but that’s not the case!

We have gone into great detail in all of the steps to try to equip you for a variety of different scenarios. However, don't worry if you can't remember it all or think you can't do it.

Remember: Jesus tells all of his followers to heal the sick. If we step out in obedience and remember that He who calls us is faithful, and that He is the One who will work through us, you'll be amazed at what Jesus will accomplish through you!

Now Do This . . .

Review the five-step model. Here are the headings again to help you:

1. Listen: Identify the real issue.
2. Discern: How should I pray?
3. Pray: Share the Father's heart.
4. Review: What's going on?
5. Clarify: How to move forward.

Consider:

- Which step comes to you most instinctively? Which one is the least natural for you?
- In your own words, write down the essence of each step. What is the key thing you need to remember?
- How can you become more proficient in each step? Consider a specific action that will help you embrace the strength of that stage in the process, especially if that is not something you would normally do.
- Write down the five-step model in a place where it will be handy (we'd suggest as a note on your phone), and bring it out when you have the opportunity to pray for healing in a church group

or service. Ideally you should memorize this as a template from which you can work.

- Remember that this is a helpful tool and not a law! However, until you have considerable experience and success in praying for healing, we would encourage you not to deviate too far from it.

Next Steps

To learn more about growing in the prophetic gifts, we invite you to pick up our book *Healing the Sick* ([amazon.com/dp/1951420020](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1951420020)). It's packed full of biblical teaching, practical application, activation exercises, and proven principles for living this out in practice.

CHAPTER 4

Becoming a Naturally Supernatural Missionary

“I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God.”

— Romans 15:18, 19

Early one evening as Hannah and I began a walk with Molly, our over-friendly Labrador, we ran into our friend Eric who lives on our street and is a successful businessman. As we chatted, Eric reminded us that he and his family were off to South Korea for a couple of weeks to visit his wife’s family out there and to show their teenagers some of their heritage.

I asked how he was feeling about the trip and he replied, “I’m excited... except for the flight. I’ve had really bad back pain for a while, to the extent that I’ve not really been able to sit down at work for about the past ten days. To be honest I’m not looking forward to a twelve-hour flight across the Pacific, and then two weeks of extensive travel in buses and cars.” He continued on, but by then I wasn’t listening all that well, as most of my attention was being taken up by the Holy Spirit asking me, “Are you going to pray for him?” And when I ignored the prompt, “Are you going to pray for him,” it

grew even more forceful. “Are you going to pray for him? ARE YOU GOING TO PRAY FOR HIM?”

“Okay . . . okay,” I internally muttered back to God, “but I don’t know where Eric is spiritually, so this is on You!”

As the conversation paused, I heard someone who sounded just like me say, “Eric, this will probably sound kind of strange, but as you know I’m a Christian and I’ve seen Jesus heal lots of people, and I think He’d like to heal your back. Would it be okay if I prayed quickly for you now?”

After a very long second of silence, where I pondered what I’d just blurted out, Eric replied, “I’d love that. Thank you.”

So there we stood, on the sidewalk of a busy street in Los Angeles, with Molly bouncing around next to us wanting her walk, and I prayed a thirty-second, non-religious language prayer for Eric’s back to be healed. “Thank You, Lord Jesus, that you love Eric, and that you want him and his family to have a great trip overseas. Would you please come and heal his back right now, so that he can enjoy his vacation and also know how much you love him? Amen!”

At the end Eric said he’d felt “something,” and looked moved by the experience. After a brief final few words, we went on with our walk.

The next morning I turned on my phone and was greeted with an early morning text from Eric. “Alex, my back feels better today. Thank you.”

Wow! I pondered how to reply, and settled for, “So pleased for you, Eric. God is good!”

And then back came the immediate response, “Sometimes I forget. Thank you for reminding me.”

Almost three weeks later I ran into Eric after his trip, and he could not wait to tell me how his back had been perfect on the flight out, all the time they were abroad, and then on the journey home. “I don’t know exactly what happened, but your prayer certainly worked!”

About a month later we hosted one of our parties for neighbors, and Eric texted to say he had family in town and to ask if they could come too. As people were gathering and the family came toward our front steps, I began to greet them. But before I could say anything, Eric interrupted my greeting as he pointed at me, looked at his family, and declared, “And this is the man who healed my back!”

In spite of the slightly flaky theology (which I let ride; his intentions were good), out of that experience Eric and I began reading the Bible together and his faith journey took a significant jump forward.

The Missionary Identity

- “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).
- “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).
- “Repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:47–48).
- “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)
- “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).

It seems abundantly clear that Jesus wants all of His followers to be intentional about making disciples wherever we find ourselves each day. (By way of reminder, to be a disciple means that you seek to hear and obey what Jesus is saying.) Thus, living on mission is not meant to be some sort of optional upgrade for the super saints but instead is an everyday activity for all ages at all stages of faith!

Jesus anchored His missionary calling in the reality of being the Son of God. Both this identity and His mission were repeatedly confirmed through the presence, fruit, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Because He was the Son of God come to earth, Jesus was a missionary.

Sonship means to Jesus not a dignity to be claimed, but a responsibility to be fulfilled.¹⁰ (R. H. Fuller)

As followers of Jesus, the greatest gift is that we have been brought back into the family of God as sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. However, to be secure in our identity in Christ yet not to turn outwards in mission demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the nature and call of Christ. Jesus has not invited us onto a cruise ship where the focus is on us and our unbridled desires!

In fact rather than a cruise liner, Jesus has specifically positioned every believer on board naval vessels that together make up a huge fleet. Some find themselves on aircraft carriers, others on speedboats, supply ships, or even minesweepers, but together each of us is playing our part toward a much greater agenda. There is a comprehensive victory to be enforced against the forces of darkness and evil in this world.

“Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10). The identity and destiny we discover in Christ always overlap, so to stop simply at receiving personal salvation is a deeply selfish decision. Instead, we are called to Christ in order to be sent by Christ (see Mark 1:17). The missionary life is tied to our identity in Christ.

The Holy Spirit and Mission

We must demonstrate the message that this King of Heaven has power to overcome evil and all its effects, just like the early church demonstrated this to its generation. We must operate in the power of God that releases those in bondage, that heals the brokenhearted, that frees people from the power of the enemy.¹¹ (Rob Reimer)

While we long to be more effective at living on mission, it becomes dispiriting when things don't turn out quite how we might hope, especially when friends, colleagues, neighbors, or family seem less spiritually open than we'd imagined. *We must try harder*, we tell ourselves, but it's so difficult to muster the energy or will to persevere, or even just to determine our specific next steps. But there is good news! Jesus does not expect us to live as missionaries in our own strength!

Anyone who is a disciple of Jesus is a missionary. To be a missionary means that we seek to make disciples in every situation of life each day. Both missionary work and disciple-making are only possible through the naturally supernatural presence and equipping of the Holy Spirit.

One of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to empower us to live as representatives of Christ wherever we live, work, study, or play. We are not meant to share our faith, extend the kingdom, or reveal the goodness of God solely by our own efforts or virtue. Instead, Jesus wants us to partner with the Spirit. "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).

In fact, this is a Trinitarian flow of resourcing, which knits us closer to God and makes us far more fruitful. As Jesus declared about the role of the Spirit, "He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to

the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you” (John 16:14–15). Very fortunately, it is the Spirit who brings each person to the place of conviction of sin and need for a Savior. Thank You, Jesus, that’s not our role!

Instead, our job is to love people well (see 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John 4) and then demonstrate and declare the kingdom of God. But even here we must do these things through the Spirit’s resourcing, since that is the template that Jesus gives to us. “When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1–2).

If, like us, you want to see more of your currently lost friends become disciple-making disciples of Jesus, then you must learn how to openly exercise the power and authority that Jesus gives through the Holy Spirit.

Not to do so diminishes God’s call over you. If you follow Jesus, then you are empowered by the Holy Spirit to go and make His disciples in the naturally supernatural power and authority that the crucified, risen, and ascended King Jesus gives to us. Trying to do mission without that absolute dependence will only lead to crushing frustration, exhausting striving, and little fruit that lasts.

For our family, including our young adult sons and their friends, living a naturally supernatural lifestyle has become a breakthrough learning in our call to go and make disciples of Jesus. As we’ll unpack shortly, the summary phrase for this lifestyle has become so simple: “Can I pray for you?”

The results have been transformative. We have seen so many lost people drawn closer to Christ, including a number coming straight to faith. In addition, many Christians have become better able to go with the gospel and grow far stronger in their walk with Jesus.

Ordinary People and the Ascension

*Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained people but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus.*¹² (D. Elton Trueblood)

The New Testament is absolutely clear that we are to do all of our missionary endeavors in the power of the Spirit. For instance, in Matthew 10:7–8 Jesus gave the following instructions: “As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.” Mark 6:12–13 shows the disciples putting this command into practice: “They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.”

Of course, to most of us these seem like extraordinary activities done by extraordinary people! Surely we couldn’t possibly be expected to live the same way today?!

When the enemy tempts us to think like this (and yes, it is a classic line of attack from the evil one to inhibit our disciple-making), it’s helpful to remember just how ordinary the first disciples were. They had an inadequate education, lacked status in their society, often demonstrated little religious zeal, and generally did not look like leaders when Jesus first put His hands on them. We see them squabble over their pecking order and future status, misunderstand much of what Jesus taught, fail to stay with their master in His hour of greatest need, betray or deny Him, and express doubts about their faith. They really were exceptionally unremarkable!

The thing that transformed them into world changers was the filling of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus had been crucified, raised, and had ascended into glory, the Spirit was poured out upon all His disciples, initially at Pentecost and then ever since.

Paul reflects upon this transformation in passages such as Ephesians 2:6: “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” This is not primarily talking about a future experience of heaven, but rather it’s an assertion that as we participate with Christ in His death, we are likewise united with Him in His resurrection and ascension into heavenly authority.

One result is that we can see God’s active rule released through us today. Thus a few verses later (v. 10) we read, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” As the gospel is all about grace, Jesus-glorifying good works can only happen through the empowering of the Spirit. The ascension is the place where the victory of the cross and resurrection are funneled into a release of glorification of Jesus and empowering of His people through the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, Our Spirit-Filled Example

The example of Jesus is helpful at this point (of course!). He is fully God and fully human—a unique combination. This was essential for His identity as Savior and Messiah, crucially expressed at the cross, where He utterly defeated sin, death, and the works of the evil one. Jesus is rightfully worshiped as divine. He is our God.

At the same time, Jesus also operated out of His humanity, most notably in how He ministered during His public ministry. We see Jesus healing the sick, delivering folks from demons, doing great miracles, and calling people to faith. If those activities took place solely out of His divine nature, we could admire them but we would have no expectation of repeating them.

Yet as we have already noted, Jesus repeatedly told His followers to do those very same activities. Surely that would be an act of great unkindness if He sent us out to do things that we could have no hope of obeying?

So how is Jesus our example in living on mission in the power of the Spirit? The key is to realize that Jesus' naturally supernatural activities were an expression of His being our Savior who is both completely divine and completely human.

An interesting text is Matthew 11:2–6, where we gain a glimpse into Jesus' self-understanding of the aspects of His call that He then passed on to His disciples:

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

When asked whether He was the Messiah, Jesus responded by describing the naturally supernatural actions that He was doing, rather than His upcoming journey to the cross. In His earthly ministry, Jesus brought God's heavenly rule to earth there and then, so that the things of eternity for which we naturally long no longer had to be purely a future dream and desire. He is the Savior who not only redeems us from our sins, but He also saves us from sickness, oppression, brokenness, and loss of identity and purpose.

Jesus' victory on the cross was once and for all, uniquely for Him to accomplish, and only possible through His divine-human nature. By contrast, most of Jesus' other activities are for His disciples to seek to imitate, since He did them through His Spirit-filled human nature. It is only because of Jesus' modeling and the Spirit's empowering that we can be commissioned to carry them on.

Peter, who had a ringside seat for three years, described it this way: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and

power, and . . . he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

All of the Gospels faithfully record the baptism of Jesus, drawing special attention to the coming of the Spirit upon Him:

John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” (John 1:32–33)

Luke tells us that following the successful overcoming of the devil during the temptations, “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14). Jesus then announced the beginning of His public ministry by going to the synagogue and selecting a messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61 about the coming of the Spirit-empowered Savior:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:18–21)

A chapter later we read, “The power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick” (Luke 5:17). Further into His ministry, Jesus comments, “If it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28).

It is out of this Spirit-empowering that Jesus launches into all of the remarkable naturally supernatural deeds that form part of His demonstration and declaration of the breaking in of the kingdom of God. For those who would be His disciples, this is the great and ultimate cause into which we are invited to invest everything, including carrying on this work of Spirit-empowered show and tell.

Jesus is the perfect model for His followers of how to operate in the power of the Spirit. Consequently, there are numerous times when He tells His followers to do those naturally supernatural deeds that reflect His Messiahship and bring more of His heavenly rule to earth today. Jesus issues those instructions not to frustrate or catch us out, but because He knows that, in partnership with the Holy Spirit, we can reasonably expect to operate in the power and authority of heaven throughout our everyday lives, just as He did.

Paul's Methodology for Evangelism

On repeated occasions, Paul talked about his methodology for proclaiming the Gospel. What is striking in his descriptions is how his focus is on the demonstration of signs and wonders. He does this to such an extent that he actively diminishes the importance of his words.

While he did talk, debate, and teach, nevertheless for Paul an effective sharing of the gospel included a clear demonstration of the Spirit's power. He sought to directly impact the lives of the lost through gifts such as healing, prophecy, miracles, and deliverance. In fact, going a step further, Paul seems to suggest that these supernatural miracles were more important than the words being spoken, which is so contrary to how most of us are taught in our churches today!

I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and wonders,

through the power of the Spirit of God. So, from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. (Romans 15:18–19)

Paul is telling us that he fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ because He included signs and wonders, and the power of the Spirit, alongside the words that he spoke.

When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 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 2:1–5)

At the center of Paul's life and message is the cross of Christ. Unarguably, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are the pivot around which the faith and theology of Paul are orientated. And in this passage, Paul makes clear that he wants people to experience the power of God that is released through what Christ achieved at the cross. (Implicitly Paul includes the resurrection and ascension in the summary phrase, "Christ and him crucified.")

"Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). When we think of sharing the gospel with the lost, we default to using words alone, possibly backed up with a few kind deeds. But Paul wants us to grasp that we also need to operate in the power of the Spirit, so that the lost experience the presence and power of the living God intersecting with their everyday lives.

Paul's approach to power evangelism was also shared by other New Testament authors. For instance, in Hebrews 2:3–4 we read, "This

salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” The writer to the Hebrews is first reminding these early churches how they came to faith. This was a combination of faithful sharing of the words of Jesus by some of His original disciples along with miraculous works. Both those elements (words and wonders) were then repeated by those new Christians as they in turn shared about Jesus.

A powerless evangelism is simply not in the framework of the authors of the New Testament.

The Lost Are Open to Spiritual Experiences

An Oxford University survey asked a randomly selected group of people in the UK, “Have you ever been aware of, or influenced by, a presence or power (whether you call it God or not) which is different from your everyday self?”¹³ Interestingly, in 1987 48 percent answered yes, while by the year 2000 over 76 percent answered yes. At the time of the surveys, only 6–8 percent of the British population were regular churchgoers. Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that the majority of people are having spiritual experiences, including those who aren’t committed to Christ.

This might be a new insight for believers. Christians have a tendency to assume that everyone outside of the church who isn’t part of another clear religious group must be a pretty militant atheist. However, this is usually an incorrect perspective.

Missional theologians refer to such folks as the “excluded middle.” This refers to the gap between secular atheism and Christian faith, where you hear pseudo-meaningful declarations such as, “I’m spiritual but not religious.” While some of the theology might be flaky, it’s still important to recognize that most people around the world believe in some sort of realm where there are spiritual forces at work.

In non-Western nations this might be seen in a practice such as the “red spirit houses” outside many homes in Thailand. There they put out offerings of food and red soda (it used to be blood!) to appease the spirits.

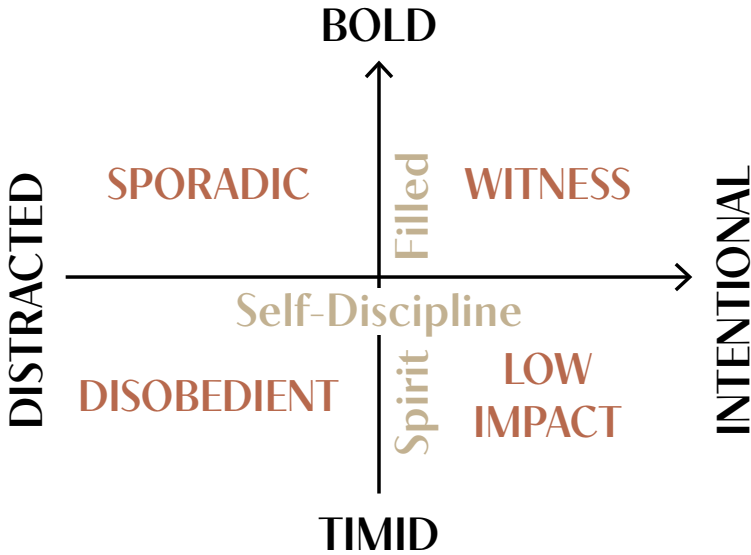
A more subtle version of this is seen here in the West when people talk about ghosts and evil spirits. We have had countless conversations with the unchurched where they talk about evil spirits visiting them at night or being located in a certain building. Part of the popularity of horror movies comes not just from the thrill of being made to scream by the skeleton tumbling out of the closet door that just opened, but also from a belief that the film is in some way revealing a realm that is not just fantasy.

For those of us in the West, unchurched friends in our increasingly post-Christian culture are picking and mixing their spiritual worldview. They’ll include fan-favorite elements from Christianity that (seem to) play nicely with their dabbling with decidedly non-Christian beliefs, to form syncretistic religious practices.

Our belief is that in order to reach this sort of world, we must deliberately choose to embrace a more fully biblical model for living on mission. We can’t solely reveal our faith through the exchange of ideas, but also must live it out in the power of the Spirit.

Bold Intentional Witness

For most people, stepping into living as a Spirit-empowered witness can feel like an enormously high mountain to scale, rather than the simple, very breathable lifestyle that Jesus intends it to be. Two shifts in perspective and approach will help you though—namely, from timidity to boldness, and from distraction to intentionality. This diagram we have created helps illustrate:



This chart has two lines. The vertical line shows the movement from being timid to being bold in sharing our faith, while the horizontal line illustrates the journey from being distracted to being intentional in our witness.

This in turn creates four quadrants. Our aim is to be in the top right, living as a bold intentional “witness” for Jesus. Where we are intentional but are more controlled by timidity, we end up in the lower right “low impact” area. Alternatively, others of us are bold but distracted, resulting in a “sporadic” witness. Finally, some live in the timid and distracted zone, which as a lifestyle is just plain old “disobedient” in nature.

From Timidity to Boldness

Most of us are not very bold when it comes to our witness for Jesus! We’re scared of what our friends, colleagues or family members might think or say about us. After all, who wants to be called a “Bible basher” or “religious zealot”?

However, boldness in witness is one of the main things for which the early Church prayed. A good example comes in Acts 4. After Peter and John had been arrested, and later released, for talking about Jesus, the believers gathered together to pray. Personally, we'd have been asking for protection, safety, and an end to the persecution (not bad things to pray, of course)! But read what they actually ask for.

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Acts 4:29–31)

In effect they prayed for more of the very thing that landed them in trouble in the first place! “Lord, make us more bold, by the power of your Spirit!”

If you find yourself hamstrung by timidity, the way out is to ask the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh. He loves to empower us for witness, so this is a prayer that we can have high confidence in praying.

The benefit of Spirit-filled boldness is that, as opposed to brashness or self-promotion, it looks and feels so full of grace and love. The Holy Spirit has way higher emotional intelligence than any of us, so we can be confident that He will help us represent Jesus in the most fruitful ways possible. And sometimes that will mean stepping outside of our own comfort zone—but not the Holy Spirit's comfort zone!

In *Christianity Today*, author Sara Billups writes about being afraid of sharing her faith in native Seattle. One time she'd been ghosted by a public radio producer after talking about her church involvement, and she'd seen others clearly draw back from her. She writes,

When I did mention my faith, I would do all I could to let people know that I'm a Christian but not that kind of Christian—one that fits an urbanite's 'straw man' stereotype of evangelicals. I wanted to be the sort of believer you could invite to your party.

Yet Billups also shares times when those seemingly far from God are delighted to hear her experiences, and thus open up about their spiritual journeys. She quotes Matthew 5:16, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." She continues:

Instead of speaking about our faith ironically or with a carefully chosen filter, let's speak with transparency and boldness. . . . Let's also speak with confidence about how God's goodness changes us and changes our communities. We're never going to reverse the tide of people leaving the church if we don't speak plainly about who we are as the church body and what motivates us to pursue Jesus. Yes, our lives might seem strange and even off-putting to some secular friends. But when we live honestly and openly, we become co-laborers with Christ and bear witness to the fact that it's not about us in the first place."¹⁴

From Distracted to Intentional

Alongside boldness, we must also develop intentionality in living as a witness for Jesus. Too many of us view evangelism as something we do only when asked, as if the responsibility to grow the church rests primarily upon the lost, not the saved!

The truth is that we can't just be reactive in sharing about Jesus, we must be proactive. A faithful witness doesn't just say, "If I'm directly asked, I'll answer a question about Jesus, but otherwise I'm not saying a thing." To operate like that is, candidly, being disobedient to the direct and clear commands of Christ.

We are not secret agents sent to live fully incognito, giving no clues as to our true allegiance! Rather, we are ambassadors for Christ. This means that we represent our sending authority in an open and transparent way. This does not mean we do so antagonistically! A good ambassador is wise and gracious, revealing why it's so much better to become a citizen of their country. We are to be spiritually obvious without being spiritually obnoxious!

The problem with all this is that we are so distracted. Whether it's becoming obsessed with our to-do list, binging the Netflix series, over-parenting our kids, looking for more things to purchase, being sucked into doing yet another unnecessary task for work, renovating our home, putting all our energy into travel and having fun experiences, or whatever else, it has never been easier to fill our time to the point of complete distraction.

To be a faithful witness takes intentionality. Evangelism is all about investing in relationships with our lost friends, but friendships need time. In a busy life, we must prioritize who (and what) we invest our limited energy in. This requires self-discipline.

What this looks like in practice is that we must be self-disciplined about what we put on our calendars. For most of us, if something makes it onto the calendar, it is far more likely to take place.

Here's how to do this: at the start of each month, you and your spouse/roommate/accountability partner need to sit down and look at the month ahead. Where will you likely have time and energy to invest into others? Who needs to be at the top of that list? Merge these two elements and reach out to those people with specific invitations.

The way to become an effective witness is to embrace Spirit-filled boldness and the self-disciplines of intentional living.

What Does Spirit-Empowered Evangelism Look Like?

The key to sharing our faith is that evangelism has to become a personal lifestyle. A great place to practice is in the passing

relationships of life. That might be the person you find yourself chatting to on a plane, the cashier in your regular grocery store, or a restaurant server with whom you have the opportunity to pray. Somehow these moments seem easier to embrace, probably because the consequences of failure or rejection seem less stark and impacting.

In our medium-to-longer-term relationships, of course, the dynamics are different. While we don't want to mess up these friendships, at the same time there are far more opportunities to go deeper and understand what makes that person tick. Out of that you will see moments where there is an openness to the blessing or help that Jesus can bring to them.

Doing This from Scratch

We have moved to different houses a bunch of times during our marriage, including immigrating to the United States and subsequently living in three very different states. This has meant that we have had to figure out how to build ongoing relationships in new environments where we represent Jesus positively and effectively. Here's an outline of how we try to operate:

1. *Pray.* On entering a new community, we pray for God to show us our People of Peace (people who are open to how Jesus looks in us). Prayer is always the foundation!
2. *Parties.* We throw "parties" (anything from a drink with one other, to dinner with a family or household, to a big gathering with scores of people in our yard or home). The goal is to see who is open and will spend time with us. We do this regularly since building relationships is the pathway to creating community. Think of these as seed-scattering moments, where you throw out lots of invitations and pay attention to who best responds.
3. *Time.* We hang out in what we sense is our primary place of mission. We make a specific point of being present and taking the time to interact. As we identify People of Peace, we intentionally

prioritize investing into them, such as through meals, texts, serving them (and them us), being a friend, having fun, etc.

4. *Profound conversations.* We choose to go deeper in conversation with our friends and People of Peace. This means being willing to not just stay at the casual level (sports, weather, jobs, latest news, etc.), but to go into more meaningful areas (usually the underlying “why”). This in turn can lead to a spiritual conversation.
5. *Presence of God.* We want people to encounter the presence of Jesus. This occurs as we’re willing to talk about the spiritual realities of life and how they intersect with everyday things. For instance, this is when someone is wrestling over a stressful boss, a problem with their kids, a lack of resources, or ill health. Another opportunity is when something good happens, such as a new baby, a promotion, an exam is passed, or a clear blessing occurs. Our favorite question in those moments is, “Can I pray for you?” What we find is that our lost friends are amazed that someone will pray with them, so they receive it as an act of genuine love. What adds icing to that cake is when they see the prayer answered!
6. *Stand-alone Spiritual Event.* We also throw a few stand-alone spiritual events. These help us begin to see who is open spiritually. This might be inviting people to gather to pray about something (e.g., for kids at the start of the school year, for our nation during times of upheaval, for a particular family going through a tough time). It could be celebrating a Christian festival (Christmas, Easter, etc.) in a culturally meaningful way in your place of mission. Perhaps it would be inviting people to join you in serving and giving to the poor, where prayer is part of what goes on too.
7. *Ongoing Jesus-Centered Community.* We aim to start an ongoing Jesus-centered community with those who are open. Your mission field will determine what that looks like. For us a neighborhood missional community has often been a strong option. We also have found a lot of fruit from reading the Bible with lost yet open friends, especially by using the Discovery Bible Study method.

(Go to dandelionresourcing.com and search for “Discovery Bible Study.” We have a great free twelve-minute training video plus a list of resources.)

The Compliment Chair

On a recent Friday evening our family gathered some of our boys’ young adult friends and we went out to join with our community’s “First Friday.” We live right behind a major road, with tons of cafés, restaurants, craft beer breweries, boutiques, stores, a museum, two theaters, and so on (it’s a Los Angeles hipster heaven!). On the first Friday of each month, these places all stay open late, accompanied by various bands playing live in parking lots and art installations being formed before our eyes. Pop-up booths appear, selling everything from crafts to local honey to every political point of view imaginable. Crowds throng the street, and we wanted to join in the fun.

Placing a couple of pairs of chairs in front of a store, we invited people from the hordes of passersby to try out The Compliment Chair: “If you sit on one of those chairs, we will spend one minute saying encouraging things about you!” While a few seemed terrified and refused to look at us, others slowed down to banter, and some would go sit on a chair (or nominate their friend or family member to do so. “My boyfriend needs that!”).

In twos or threes our team would then compliment them in brief phrases. Initially from what we could see externally (“I love your shoes!” or, “You’ve got such a warm smile!”), then about what we saw spiritually (“You carry such a sense of joy” or, “I see that God wants you to know that He is with you and wants to bring hope to you”). In many cases this would lead us to having words of knowledge about people’s specific situations, and then prophesying about how God saw them. Where appropriate, we also were able to offer prayer for healing.

The response was fabulous—tears, hugs, people being so moved they were unable to know how to respond. Over the evening the

presence of God became so tangible that some would simply not want to leave. We had parents filming us, speaking life over their children (who, by the way, are particularly open to things of the Spirit), and couples finding renewed love (including one sweet couple celebrating their twenty-second wedding anniversary who allowed us to bless and prophesy over them.) We believe that such naturally supernatural ministry will change the atmosphere of our community, as well as impacting individuals.

The Compliment Chair is a simple, positive way to step into naturally supernatural evangelism. It is an easy ask to make, since it doesn't require someone to reveal where they are on their spiritual journey. It's also a lot of fun! In many ways we find the Compliment Chair to be one of easiest ways to share our faith.

If you want to try it out, we recommend that you find a location where there are a lot of people passing or hanging around, and where many will also be happy to linger. Examples include beer gardens (people relaxing with a drink are very open!), destination shopping areas, larger events in a park, or kids' sports tournaments (since there'll be a lot of families hanging around between games looking for something to do).

Try to recruit a mixed-age team. We have children as young as four years old! Take time to brief them in advance about the goal (that people encounter the encouraging goodness of God through your words), as well as how things will be organized practically.

With the team, role play how to greet people, invite them to sit down, introduce yourselves, and then begin (in the natural) complimenting them, before gradually shifting into the more overtly spiritual. Allow room for those who feel more uncertain simply to be a quiet prayer warrior in the place where you go.

Then pray together. This is very important! And when you walk to your spot where you'll be praying, again take time to pray there in that location.

After your time out on the street, it is very encouraging to gather together to debrief, share stories, and to pray for the Lord's seal over the good work that He has done and His cleansing of any junk or counterattack of the enemy that might try to come against you as a team.

Other Examples of Spirit-Empowered Evangelism

There are many ways to practice being a naturally supernatural missionary. Here are a few brief ideas:

- At a restaurant with the wait staff, ask, "We're about to pray over this meal. Is there anything we can pray for you for right now?"
- Alternatively, quietly ask Jesus if He has a word of knowledge that will encourage your server.
- The Miracle Question is a slightly bolder version of the Compliment Chair. It involves striking up a conversation with someone and, if they warm up to you, asking them something like this: "So sometimes I ask people this question, and it's really interesting seeing people's answers. Would it be okay if I asked you a question? If God could do any miracle in your life right now, what would it be and why?" It sounds better in real life! And you can have some great conversations with people. Often you will have the opportunity to follow up with, "Can I pray for you?"
- Set up a pop-up booth in a park/market/town center/ busy location. Decide what you want to offer. Free Prayer is one option. Another is the Healing Tent (where you offer to pray for the sick in Jesus' name). You will want to experiment with locations and options, since different communities respond better to different invitations.
- In one place we lived there was a large annual New Age fair literally at the end of our street. After praying against it for a couple of years, the thought struck us, *Why not go there and be a Jesus presence?* So we bought a spot and set up a gazebo, with a

huge sign that said “Psalm Reading”! A bunch of artists in the church had made beautiful bookmarks inspired by verses from Psalms, and we would pray over people and help them select the right phrase (verse) for them to take home. People loved it!

- Have a Treasure Hunt. Gather with your team in advance in worship and prayer. After a while, take some time to ask God for specific words of knowledge about people you’re going to be bumping into that day. This might involve physical appearance, items of clothing, something about them, etc. Go out in pairs into the community (again, a busy location or occasion is best) and see if you can spot the “treasure” in the people you encounter.

How Can We Move Forward in This Area?

1. *Prayer.* Start by praying for your People of Peace. Pray also for opportunities to share with them. Have times when you prayer-walk on your own or in groups.
2. *Practice.* Practice what you would say in different scenarios. For instance, when someone says they’re sick, say something like, “This might sound crazy, but I’ve seen Jesus heal people who are fighting illness. I also know that Jesus really loves you! Would it be okay if I prayed for your healing right now?”
3. *Partner.* Commit with at least one other person to hold each other mutually accountable to pray with people when the opportunity arises.

Activation Exercise

Ask the Lord for your next step in growing in Spirit-led evangelism. In the absence of a specific direction from Jesus, we suggest recruiting a few other believers and try out the Compliment Chair.

Next Steps

To learn more about growing in the lifestyle of the Spirit empowered evangelism, we invite you to look out for our new book *The Naturally Supernatural Missionary*. It's packed full of specific examples, inspiring stories, biblical teaching, practical application, activation exercises, and proven principles for living this out.

Learn More About Dandelion Resourcing

Thank you for taking the time to read this book! Our hope and prayer is that you now feel greater confidence in stepping into an Empowered Life.

As followers of Jesus, all of us are filled with the Holy Spirit, which means that we have all the resources of God’s heavenly realm available to us today. Thus, we can confidently pray, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done! Here on earth, as in heaven!” Of course, the gifts of the Spirit don’t just plo p into our laps fully formed. We must play our part in developing them and maturing in our use of them. As noted earlier in this book, this is where the intersection of the fruits of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit especially comes into play.

However, the key is not to stop now that you’ve finished this book! If you would like to see your investment of time, energy, and prayer produce a far greater return, then you will need to keep practicing and learning. And we are here to help you on your journey.

Access More Resources

As a couple our call from God is to equip the wider church with practical tools like this book. To help facilitate this, we lead the team at Dandelion Resourcing (dandelionresourcing.com).

At Dandelion we focus on three core areas:

- Disciple-making
- Living on mission
- Being naturally supernatural

We find that where all three of those circles of life overlap, a kingdom culture grows where the presence of heaven is made manifest here on earth. To help ground this journey, and with passionate believers like you in mind, we have developed a range of resources.

The Naturally Supernatural Course

A small-group study that will equip you to flourish in a Spirit-empowered lifestyle! Allow us to teach you via video in bite-sized chunks, with regular pauses for you to process and discuss in your group how this could actually work in practice. Alongside the video each participant has a course book, containing notes, key points, all Scriptures cited, and plenty of room for you to add your own notes. The Naturally Supernatural Course comes in 4 x 6 session blocks. The first two blocks release in March 2022. Go to naturallysupernaturalcourse.com to find out more!

Naturally Supernatural Coaching Cohort

If you are in church or ministry leadership, the best investment you can make in yourself is to join one of our Naturally Supernatural Coaching Cohorts, where over twelve months you will exponentially grow in your competency and confidence in living as a naturally supernatural kingdom leader!

Meeting as part of a small group twice a month on Zoom, we will pour into you a custom mix of theological, philosophical, and practical training. The focus throughout will be on personal application, so that you translate principles into action, build your own back catalog of stories and experiences, and become a leader in naturally supernatural living.

Topics covered include:

- Hearing the Voice of God
- Healing the Sick
- Building a Naturally Supernatural Theology
- Being Filled with the Holy Spirit
- Operating in Words of Knowledge and Wisdom
- Fighting to Win at Spiritual Warfare
- Discerning and Driving Out Demons
- Building a Culture of Healing
- Living a Miraculous Life of Faith
- Becoming a Naturally Supernatural Missionary
- Building a Prophetic Culture
- Raising Naturally Supernatural Kids, and more!

To find out more, go to dandelionresourcing.com/naturally-supernatural-cohort.

Customized Coaching

The best leaders always benefit from individual coaching, both to help them develop further and also to reach specific goals. We have decades of experience in equipping leaders like you to gain breakthroughs in disciple-making, living on mission, or naturally supernatural living.

Church Consultations

We also do a very limited amount of church consulting, where you and your team can benefit from the breadth of our experience and equipping. We will work with you to craft a boutique process, so that you see sustained culture shifts and growth.

Guest Preaching or Teaching

If you would like one or both of us to preach or teach at your church, special event, or conference, we would be honored to hear from you! It doesn't need to be on Naturally Supernatural topics—we have lived, written, and spoken extensively on discipleship, missional living, marriage, and parenting. Whether you're looking for something recorded on video or done live in person, please reach out to us with your needs.

Free Video Training

Every couple of weeks we release a short, highly applicable video training. We focus on our three core areas: disciple-making, living on mission, and being naturally supernatural. These are always free and we encourage folks to use them to train and equip others locally. They're also a great opportunity for you to hone your English accents as you listen to us chat!

If you drop your name and email in the sign-up box on dandelionresourcing.com, we'll shoot you an email each time a new video is released (and you can one-click unsubscribe at any time).

More Writing

This book is a taster for our The Naturally Supernatural series, where each book combines biblical theology, field-tested step-by-step teaching, and repeatable personal practices. Topics we will cover in the series include the prophetic gifts, healing, deliverance, building a kingdom theology, being filled with the Holy Spirit, living a miraculous life, and becoming a naturally supernatural missionary.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or suggestions about the content of this book, please feel free to be in touch with either of us at Dandelion Resourcing (dandelionresourcing.com).

We're also on social media:

- Instagram: alexabsalom ([instagram.com/alexabsalom](https://www.instagram.com/alexabsalom))
- Facebook: Dandelion Resourcing ([facebook.com/naturallysupernatural](https://www.facebook.com/naturallysupernatural))

Exponential 2022

If you're reading this in advance of March 2022, we will be very involved in the Exponential conference in Orlando. We'd love to connect with you in one or more of these options:

Our pre-conference session: "5 Critical Moves for a Spirit-Empowered Culture"

- Do you experience some sporadic activity of the Spirit, but desire to see this become an ongoing culture rather than occasional one-offs?
- Does your church struggle to be open to the gifts of the Spirit in everyday life?
- Are you in a ministry situation where not many people make disciples in naturally supernatural ways?
- Have you become frustrated by spiritual gifts rarely being turned outwards in mission?

Everyone is rethinking how churches will operate post-pandemic. We all want to be shaped both by Scripture and by the Spirit, yet many of us have few models of both operating in healthy harmony.

What would it look like to be a disciple-making church that is fully operating in the gifts and empowering of the Spirit? This is the church that Jesus longs for and the Bible describes. So why couldn't this happen in *your* local context?

At this pre-conference you will be walked through five essential decisions that will help you develop a sustainable and multipliable Spirit-empowered community. You will be given sound biblical

underpinnings, numerous field-tested strategies, and countless practical tips from our almost three decades of ministry.

There will be stories, space for your questions, activation exercises, and opportunities to receive prayer ministry (since we want to practice what we're teaching!).

During Exponential 2022 "Empowered in Practice", we will cover:

- *Empowered to prophesy.* The Spirit delights to equip us to hear and share God's heart of love for people everywhere we go. Come experience biblical, proven, and easy-to-transfer ways to grow in the prophetic gifts—and be stretched through the activation exercises we'll all be put through!
- *Empowered to heal.* Being empowered by the Spirit means that we bring healing and wholeness to the sick! Grow in confidence not only to offer prayer for healing, but also to help others step into it. Discover scriptural, practical, and validated ways to operate with love, compassion, and great faith.
- *Empowered to witness.* We Christians are sent to reach the lost in the power of the Spirit, yet so often we only present a powerless Gospel. This workshop will inspire you with proven, enjoyable, and multipliable ways to share your faith in ways that include demonstrations of the Spirit's power!
- *Empowered for the battle.* Do you realize that spiritual warfare is primarily meant to be offensive rather than defensive? Most of us need a mindset shift because the Empowered lifestyle is one that engages boldly yet wisely in spiritual warfare, prayer, and deliverance. Come learn proven practices for living this on mission!

The Empowered Minute Clinic Presented by Dandelion Resourcing

A brand-new venture for Exponential! A team of leaders will be available to help you process and/or pray about what you are sensing from the Spirit. The goal is to give conference participants a quick-touch space where they can pop in and receive a word of counsel or a moment of Spirit-infused prayer. We'd love to see you there!

Again, thank you for reading. We're praying that you have so much Jesus-honoring fruitfulness as you step further into a naturally supernatural lifestyle.

With love and blessings,

Alex and Hannah

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About the Authors

ALEX AND HANNAH ABSALOM have been in church leadership since 1994, serving in a wide range of settings from church plants to megachurches. Together they lead Dandelion Resourcing, which focuses on naturally supernatural discipleship and mission. Originally from England, they live in Long Beach, California, and have three cheeky but charming young adult sons.