

*F I R E*  
&  
*W I N D*

STAN JANTZ



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## **Fire and Wind**

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## *Introduction*

**M**y name is Stan, and I have ignored the Holy Spirit for too long.

It's not like I've *purposefully* ignored or shunned him. Throughout my life, I have simply forgotten about the Holy Spirit; I just haven't thought about him all that much on a personal level. God the Father has been my focus, along with Jesus and the Bible. I guess you could say I'm one of those Christians who live as if the three members of the Trinity are the Father, Son, and Holy Bible.

Here's how it worked for me. I believed in God at an early age and accepted Jesus as my Savior by the time I was seven years old. As I grew up, nurtured by godly parents and a series of pastors who were skilled at teaching the Bible, I matured in my faith. I did my best to read and study the Bible while following the command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30 NIV).

Eventually Jesus became my one true spiritual passion, and how can he not be? Being saved is all about Jesus. As for the

Holy Spirit, I knew he was there, but I didn't know what to do with him. So he just sat quietly in my heart and soul (while I directed my mind and strength to God and Jesus), waiting patiently for me to give him a little nod—you know, one of those glances where you look at someone and give them that slight upward thrust of your chin—just to let him know that I knew he was there. Sadly, I didn't do all that much nodding in the Holy Spirit's direction.

So why did I write this book about the Holy Spirit? If the subject of the book has been sitting in the corner of my spiritual life, without me giving him so much as a glance, why do this now? Because I discovered something that changed my life. Actually, two somethings. One was definitely the Holy Spirit, but there was something else that prompted me to change the way I looked at this whole matter.

Not long ago I was at the point where my spiritual life was stagnant and predictable. I thought about the reason Jesus came to earth—"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10 ESV)—and I concluded that my life wasn't all that abundant. Oh, I was doing fine in other areas, but spiritually I was feeling flat. Uninspired. And I figured that maybe the Holy Spirit was the key to this life I was missing. I can't tell you why he entered my mind, but something changed, like a light being turned on in a dark room.

So I said to the Holy Spirit, "It's time I got to know you better. I know *about* you, but I don't really *know* you." And the Holy Spirit said, "I'm ready if you are. Let's do something together."

Okay, so I didn't actually hear audible words, but I heard *his voice* speaking to me in my soul, telling me I've been missing something deeply meaningful, something that would

change my life dramatically the moment I was willing and ready to experience the Holy Spirit as more than a doctrinal reality or principle or thought. If I was willing to hear him, the Holy Spirit was ready to speak. I didn't come to this conclusion on my own. The devotional writer A.W. Tozer helped me with this comment: "Of all the voices God uses to speak to us, the Spirit is the clearest and loudest."<sup>1</sup> I wanted to hear God's voice loud and clear, so that was the first reason I turned my mind—and eventually my heart, soul, and strength—to the Holy Spirit.

## THE BOX IN THE ATTIC

There was a second factor that changed the way I looked at the Holy Spirit, and it wasn't all that spiritual. In fact, it was quite material. It was a cardboard box. Not just any box, but one filled with books that belonged to my father. My mother kept the box after my father died. I didn't know about it until my mother passed away and I collected her belongings, including this nondescript box containing about a dozen of my father's favorite books.

Even then, when it came into my possession, I put the box in the attic with the idea that I would look through it "some-day." That day came a year ago when I stumbled across the box on a Saturday morning while doing some spring cleaning. I decided to look inside.

Besides being old, the books were alike in that they carried a single theme. They were all about the Holy Spirit. And because the books were old, they were written by authors who aren't exactly at the top of today's best-seller lists—Andrew Murray, D.L. Moody, A.B. Simpson, R.A. Torrey, A.W. Tozer.

As I pulled the books out of the box one by one, their titles immediately told me what they were about: *Experiencing the Holy Spirit*; *Secret Power*; *The Holy Spirit: Power from on High*; *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*; and *The Pursuit of God*.

As I thumbed through these volumes, I discovered that my father had underlined them extensively. In red ink. Several passages grabbed my attention. Even more, they stirred my heart.

For a healthy Christian life, it is indispensable that we be fully conscious that we have received the Holy Spirit to dwell in us (Andrew Murray).<sup>2</sup>

I believe that, although Christian men and women have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, He is not dwelling within them in power. In other words, God has a great many sons and daughters without power (D.L. Moody).<sup>3</sup>

Some of us are shivering and wondering why the Holy Spirit does not fill us. We have plenty coming in, but we do not give it out. Give out the blessing you have; start larger plans for service and blessing. You will soon find that the Holy Ghost is before you, and that He will present you with blessings for goodness and will give you all that He can trust you to give away to others (A.B. Simpson).<sup>4</sup>

If we think of the Holy Spirit, as so many do, as merely a power or influence, our constant thought will be, *How can I get more of the Holy Spirit*, but if we think of Him in the biblical way as a divine

person, our thought will rather be, *How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?* (R.A. Torrey).<sup>5</sup>

There must be surrender to the Spirit of God, for His work is to show us the Father and the Son. If we cooperate with Him in loving obedience, God will manifest Himself to us, and that manifestation will be the difference between a nominal Christian life and a life radiant with the light of His face (A.W. Tozer).<sup>6</sup>

As I read such words, a desire suddenly stirred within my being. You could say my spirit was quickened. Instantly I had a desire not just to know about the Holy Spirit, but to know him like my father did. Like Murray, Moody, Simpson, Torrey, and Tozer knew the Holy Spirit.

## SOMETHING STRANGE

There was something strange about my encounter with the Holy Spirit and my father's box of books. I had never been a Holy Spirit person. No one ever said, "Stan is charismatic." And until I opened that cardboard box, I didn't know my father had such an overriding interest in the Holy Spirit. It wasn't as much confusing as it was so different from anything I had previously experienced in my Christian life.

I suppose if the box had contained books by so-called "health and wealth" (prosperity) preachers, I would have dismissed them and wondered where my father had gone off the rails. But these were books by people who didn't fit the stereotype of today's typical charismatic writers. They lived and wrote in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the

early twentieth century. They were and are respected writers on the Christian life. Murray, Moody, Simpson, Torrey, and Tozer were missionaries, evangelists, pastors, educators, and—of course—writers. And they all wrote deeply and profoundly on the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. (A minibiography of each of these five writers is included at the end of this book.)

Over the next several months I read all the books in my father's box, plus many more about the Holy Spirit that were new to me. I searched the Scriptures for verses about the Holy Spirit. Most were familiar, but because I was reading them in a new light, they took on fresh meaning. In addition to reading, I prayed—only now I included the Holy Spirit in my prayers. I knew he could speak to me through the Word of God, but now he also spoke to me through prayer. I could hear his voice.

Before you conclude that I am some superspiritual person oozing with Holy Spirit goodness, eager to tell you all I know, it's time to reveal my true self: I am nobody special. Sometimes when I think about my failings and inadequacies, I feel like stopping this project and continuing on my spiritual journey in private. But that's not what the Spirit of God is asking me to do.

I believe the things I am learning and experiencing are not for me only, but for others like me who grew up in a church tradition that kept the Holy Spirit under wraps, in a corner, or completely outside the building.

I hope this book is also useful for those in the Pentecostal and charismatic tradition who already embrace the Holy Spirit, but perhaps are looking for a more meaningful experience with him.

And if I may be so bold, I pray that those who have rarely,

if ever, gone to church but are curious about this supernatural side of the Christian life that seems a little strange, but at the same time uniquely compelling, may find this book intriguing.

Truthfully, I'm probably only a little farther along on this new journey than you are. I'm not a wise teacher of the Holy Spirit. At best, I am a witness to the Holy Spirit's power and presence—his fire and wind. And I am willing and eager to continue to grow in this dimension of the Christian life that is so often overlooked and sometimes overemphasized. I hope that's enough for you to know in order to continue reading.

Ideally you and I would have a conversation over coffee so we could share impressions and thoughts about the Holy Spirit. We can't do that, but we can still have a connection. If you have put your faith in God, believing by faith that Jesus saved you, the Holy Spirit is in your life just as surely as he is in mine. That means we have a special spiritual bond that transcends physical space and time.

If you aren't yet a Christian, we still have something in common. As you will discover, even though the Holy Spirit may not be in you, he is not far from you. I believe with all my heart that you have picked up this book because the Holy Spirit is drawing you to something wonderful and supernatural and life-changing through your inner being: your thoughts, your will, and your heart.

As you read this book, I encourage you to set a goal for yourself. As I once did, you might be tempted to set this kind of goal: "to get more of the Holy Spirit in my life." But I recommend you set a more appropriate goal, like this one suggested by R.A. Torrey: "to give more of myself to the Holy Spirit."

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If your goal is to give more of yourself to the Holy Spirit, it will be important to know how he interacts with you every day, every hour, every moment. I will share what I have learned from Scripture, from others (including the authors of those books in my father's box), and from my experience. We'll start at the beginning, when as a Christian you first encounter the Holy Spirit, and then we'll progress on a spiritual journey through several chapters—or stages of your life—with the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 1 we will address who the Holy Spirit is, including his relationship to God the Father and Jesus the Son. Consider this a kind of orientation so you have a basic understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the eternal, spiritual world and why he matters in your life here on earth. We will address some misconceptions people have about the Holy Spirit, and we will consider the one big thing he does.

In chapter 2 you will discover how you can experience the supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit every day, every hour, every moment of your life.

In chapter 3 we will talk about what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, a supernatural experience that depends on your willingness to surrender to his control. You will find out what it means to walk in the Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Chapter 4 is all about the supernatural understanding the Holy Spirit gives you, especially when it comes to deciphering and applying the spiritual truths and principles found in God's written Word, the Bible. But it doesn't stop there. You will also discover how the Holy Spirit helps you in your conversations, whether they are with other people or with God.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are detailed in chapter 5. You will find that every Christian has at least one gift distributed by the Holy Spirit to be used in service for God and his church.

Chapter 6 gets to the heart of what it means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. You may be surprised to learn that the expression of this power is different from what you think or what other people may have told you.

Finally, in chapter 7 we will get down in the trenches and dig into the depths of understanding how the Holy Spirit helps you when you experience brokenness and pain.

My prayer for you is the same as the one the apostle Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus:

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV).*

## **ONE MORE THING BEFORE WE GET STARTED**

Actually, two more things: fire and wind. After all, these two “elements” form the title of this book. I didn't give the book this title because I am some superspiritual charismatic person with special insights and powers. This is the title

because fire and wind comprise two of the core descriptions the Bible uses to give us insights into the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Fire is one of the most powerful elements in the natural world. In ancient times fire was an object of superstition and awe. Even today, long after science has harnessed fire for practical use, a raging inferno can leave us awestruck.

God has always acknowledged fire as a symbol of his transcendent glory. Where the Holy Spirit is concerned, fire represents the power God gives us and uses for his purposes. Just as science transforms the power of fire and electricity into useful energy, God transforms us into people he can use through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Wind gives us a dynamic picture of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Just as the air we breathe brings us life, the Holy Spirit gives us the very breath of life for our spirit, soul, and body. In Genesis 2:7 we learn that God formed man from the dust and breathed into him the breath of life. In the Gospel of John, Jesus explains it this way:

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (3:8 NIV).

Fire and wind. Let these striking and beautiful images guide your heart, soul, mind, and strength as you begin your journey into the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

His symbols are flame and wind... Fire and tornado are his twin eagles. The spirit swoops into our dull, flat earthbound philosophies as a wind-driven fire that keeps our faith from being dead and our confessions from being lifeless (Calvin Miller).<sup>7</sup>