

THE  
*Baptism*  
IN THE  
HOLY  
SPIRIT

*John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

*Luke 3:16*



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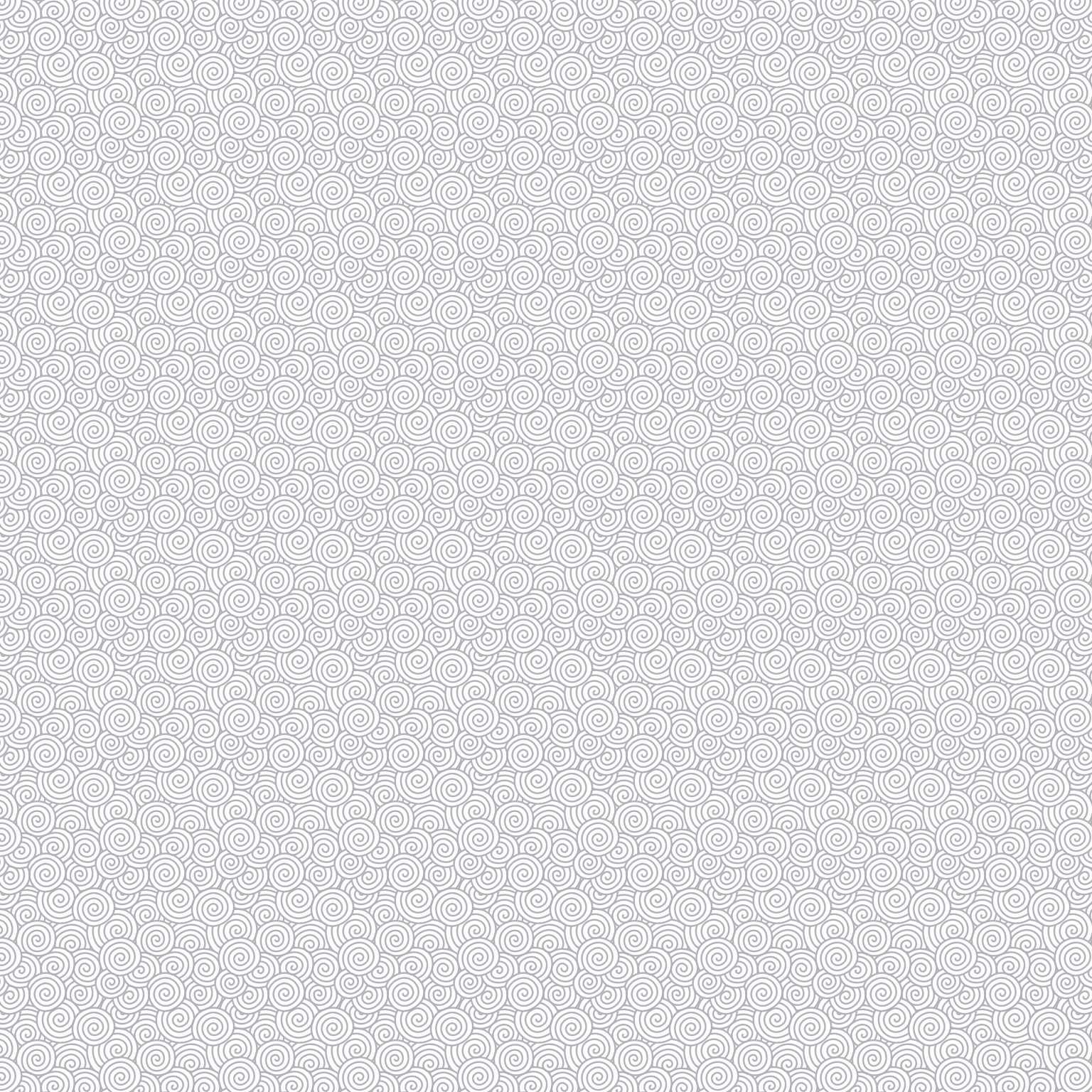
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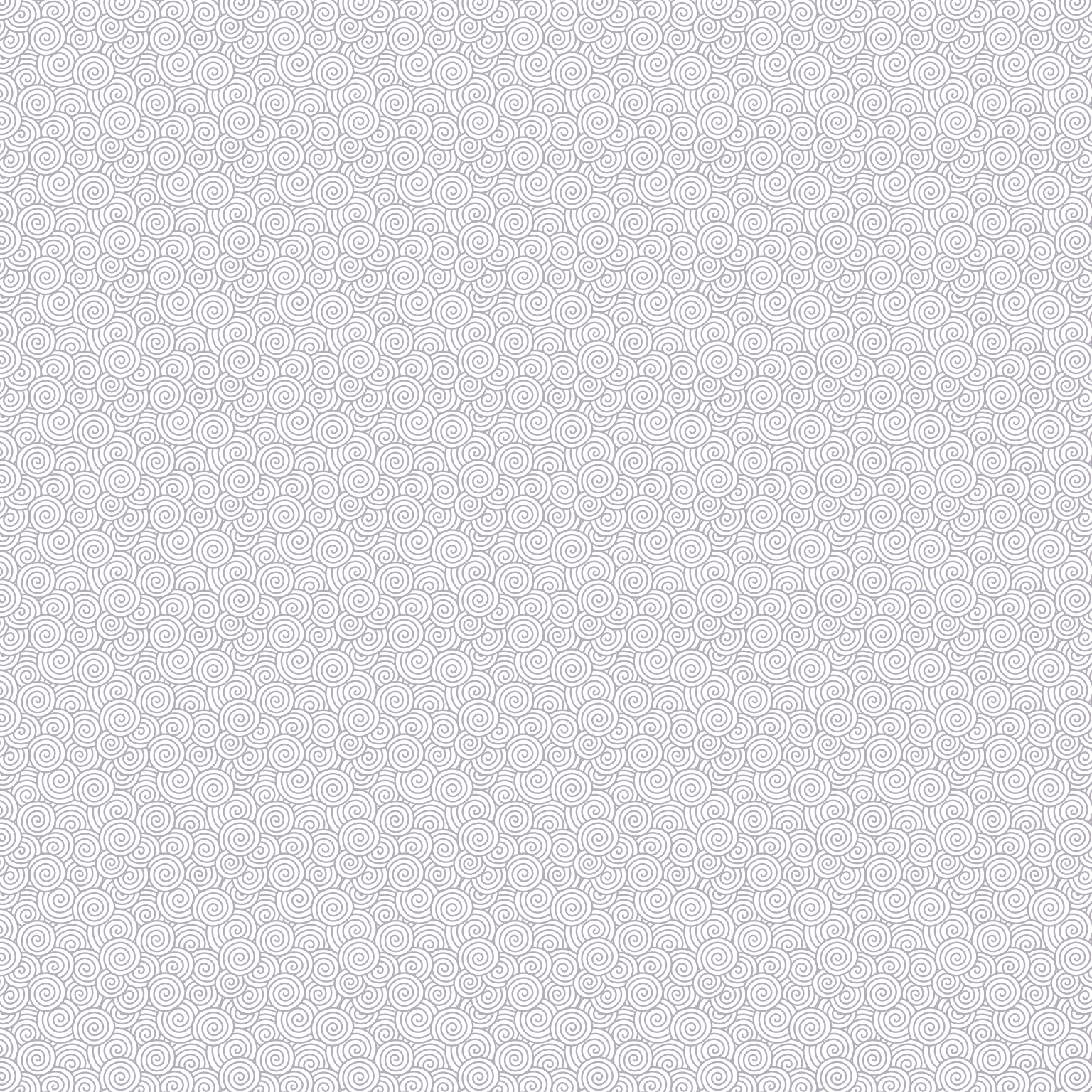
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## **Introduction**

*This booklet is an invitation.*

As you read it, you will learn some important things about the Holy Spirit, but the details and explanations are not the main point. God has called you to play an important role in the unfolding of His Story. It's a role you cannot fulfill in your own strength and ability, so God has a plan to empower you Himself. While you work your way through this booklet, listen for God's personal invitation to experience His presence and power in a fresh way. Just respond with a simple faith, and you will receive exactly what you need from Him.



## **Who is the Holy Spirit?**

Depending on your background, you may or may not have a clear biblical understanding of who the Holy Spirit is. Some people have misguided ideas about the Holy Spirit, and these ideas can sometimes cause anxiety. In this section, we want to explore what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit in order to alleviate any such concerns and provide a strong foundation for understanding God's plan for empowering our lives.

## The Holy Spirit is a Person

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” ~ John 14:26–27*

In this passage, Jesus is teaching us about the Holy Spirit. Notice the way Jesus uses the pronoun “He.” This helps us understand something very important: The Holy Spirit is not an “it.” The Holy Spirit is a person. He is not “The Force” from Star Wars. He is not simply power from God at work in the world. The Holy Spirit teaches (John 14:26). He speaks (John 15:26; Romans 8:16). He helps (Romans 8:26–27). He searches (1 Corinthians 2:10). He knows (1 Corinthians 2:11). He forbids (Acts 16:6–7). He grieves (Ephesians 4:30). These are all very personal attributes.

*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
~ Romans 15:13*

This point becomes self-evident in the passage above. If the Holy Spirit is an impersonal power, then Romans 15:13 becomes redundant. Replace “Holy Spirit” with “power” and you get: “that you may abound in hope by the power of the **power**.” If the Holy Spirit is not a person, then this verse and others like it don’t make much sense.

## The Holy Spirit is God

*But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” ~ Acts 5:3–4*

In verse three, notice that Peter says Ananias has lied to the Holy Spirit. Then, in verse four, he says Ananias has lied to God. This is because the Holy Spirit is God!

Two very important characteristics of God are His omnipresence and omniscience. These big words mean that God is fully present in every place (omnipresence) and knows everything there is to know (omniscience). Only God has these characteristics. In the following passages, we see these attributes describing the Holy Spirit.

*Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?  
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;  
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.  
~ Psalm 139:7–8*

*But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ~ 1 Corinthians 2:10*

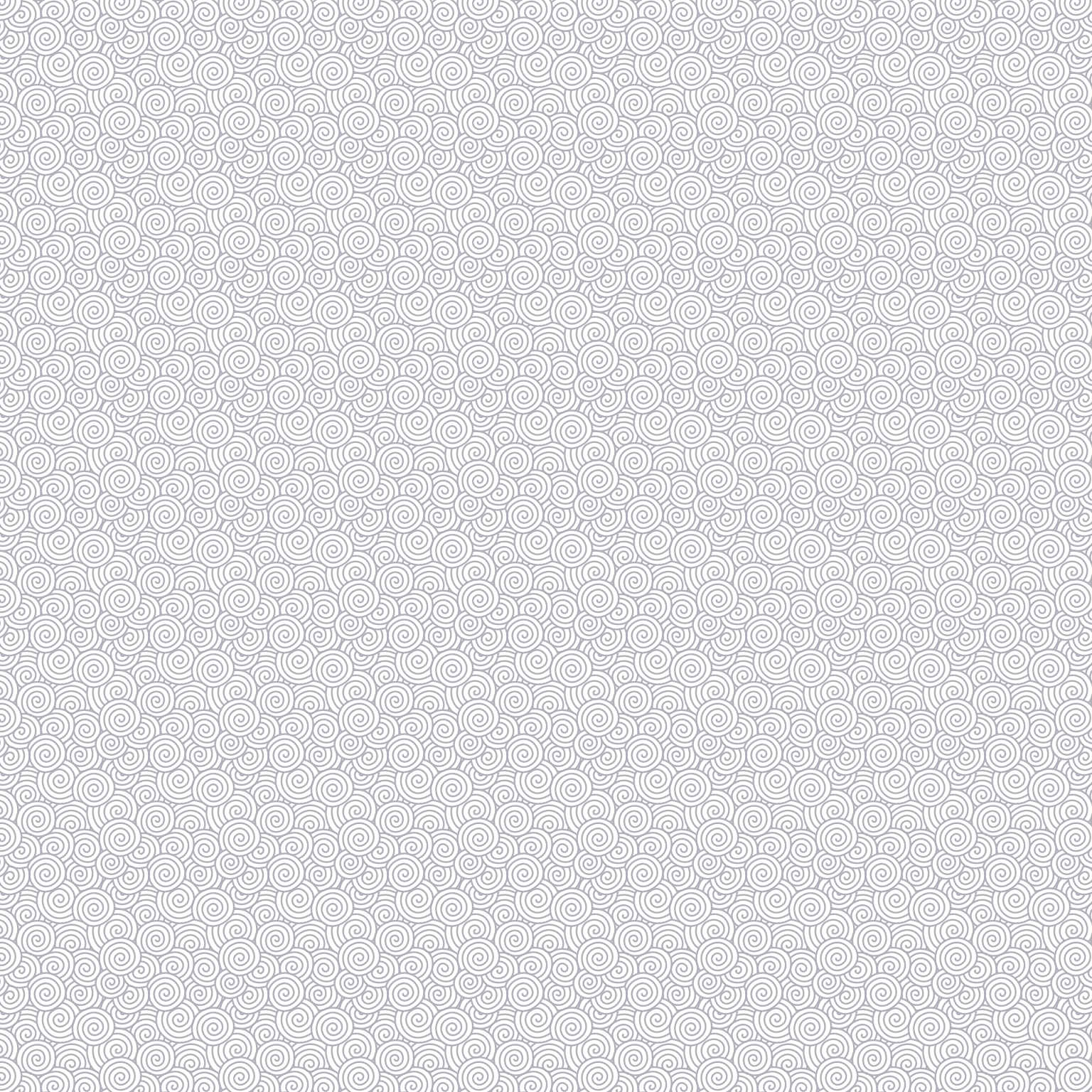
## The Holy Spirit is a Helper

In John 14:26, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the “Helper.” This word is sometimes translated “Comforter.” Literally, the word means “the One called alongside to help.” This truth really points us towards the rest of this teaching. In the next section, we will discuss the purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This wonderful purpose is all tied up in the reality that the Holy Spirit is the Helper. He is the personal presence of God who wants to come alongside each of us to help us be and do all God has destined us for.

## Prayer

Please take a moment to respond to what God is saying by praying the following prayer from your heart:

*“Holy Spirit, today I am learning more about who You are. I’m grateful to discover that You are a person. I know I need You personally in my life each day. I know You are God, just like the Father is God and Jesus is God. I’m amazed that You want to come alongside me and help me to be and do all that the Father has destined for me. I invite You to come alongside me now to help me in a new and fresh way. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*



## **The Purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

Baptism means “to be immersed.” The Baptism in the Holy Spirit means to be immersed (or submerged) in the Holy Spirit. Have you ever taken a dry dish sponge and immersed it in water? What happens to the sponge? It is filled with the water! This is what we mean when we talk about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the last section, we learned that the Holy Spirit is a person, is God and is a Helper. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurs when a believer in Jesus is immersed in the very personal presence of God—the Holy Spirit. This experience results in the believer being filled with God! And why does the Holy Spirit want to fill us? Because He wants to help us. He is the Helper!

## God’s Story: Creation, Redemption, New Creation

The Bible is a big book that might seem intimidating at first. It is helpful to understand the Bible as a story—*His* Story. Though the Bible certainly contains information about what we should believe (doctrine) and how we should behave (morals), and these are very important, the Bible is not first and foremost a book of doctrine and morals. It is primarily a story—a story of God and His good Creation, a story of how God’s plan for His good Creation has been temporarily derailed because of mankind’s decision to go their own way (sin), a story of God choosing for Himself a special people (Israel) from within Creation who would be carriers of His promise to once again bring blessing to all the earth, a story of God Himself (Jesus) entering the story to take upon Himself the brokenness of a fallen world and opening a door through His death and resurrection for New Creation to take place.

That’s how the story ends—with a New Creation.

*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, **for the former things have passed away.**” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, **I make all things new.**” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”*  
~ Revelation 21:1–5 (emphasis added)

In the end, God gets exactly what He set out to get at the very beginning: a Creation filled with people made in His image, filled with His Spirit, exercising His authority and reflecting His glory for all to see. Notice in the passage above how this happens: old things pass away and God makes everything new. This hasn’t happened yet in all of Creation, but it will happen when Jesus returns and the victory He has fully won is fully implemented.

## Finding Our Place in the Story

The story we find in the Bible is one that invites us to discover our place within the story and even to play an important role in moving it forward to its

conclusion. We are now living our lives in the in-between. Through Jesus’ finished work on the Cross and through His resurrection, the victory over sin, evil and the brokenness of Creation has already been completely accomplished. The full implementation of that victory has not yet been fully realized and will not be until Jesus returns and there is a new heaven and a new earth. So our place in the story is in between Jesus’ finished work and the entire appropriation of all that He has provided.

## New Creation Now!

So, between the “already” and the “not yet,” what is God’s plan? How does He plan to move His Story forward toward its conclusion? The answer: God is causing the old things to pass away and making all things new *now* in and *through* His people. God wants to take your life and show the world in and through you what His final New Creation will look like.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; **old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***  
~ 2 Corinthians 5:17 (emphasis added)

What a great plan! Rather than being part of a waiting game, where we all just sit around and wait for heaven, God wants to go ahead and bring heaven here now, in and through your life. Within your own life and in the environments you live in each day, are there old things that need to pass away? Are there places where New Creation needs to happen, where Christ’s victory on the cross needs to be enforced? Of course! God’s plan is for His final New Creation to be anticipated in and through your life in the here and now.

But how can people like us become agents of New Creation? In ourselves, we certainly don’t have the power to effect that kind of transformation. Only God can make all things new. This is why we need to be immersed into God’s Holy Spirit—we need His help! We need God to come alongside us to help us do what we could never do apart from Him. We need Him to more fully appropriate what Jesus has provided for us within our own lives, and we need His power to work through us to bring that transformation into the world.

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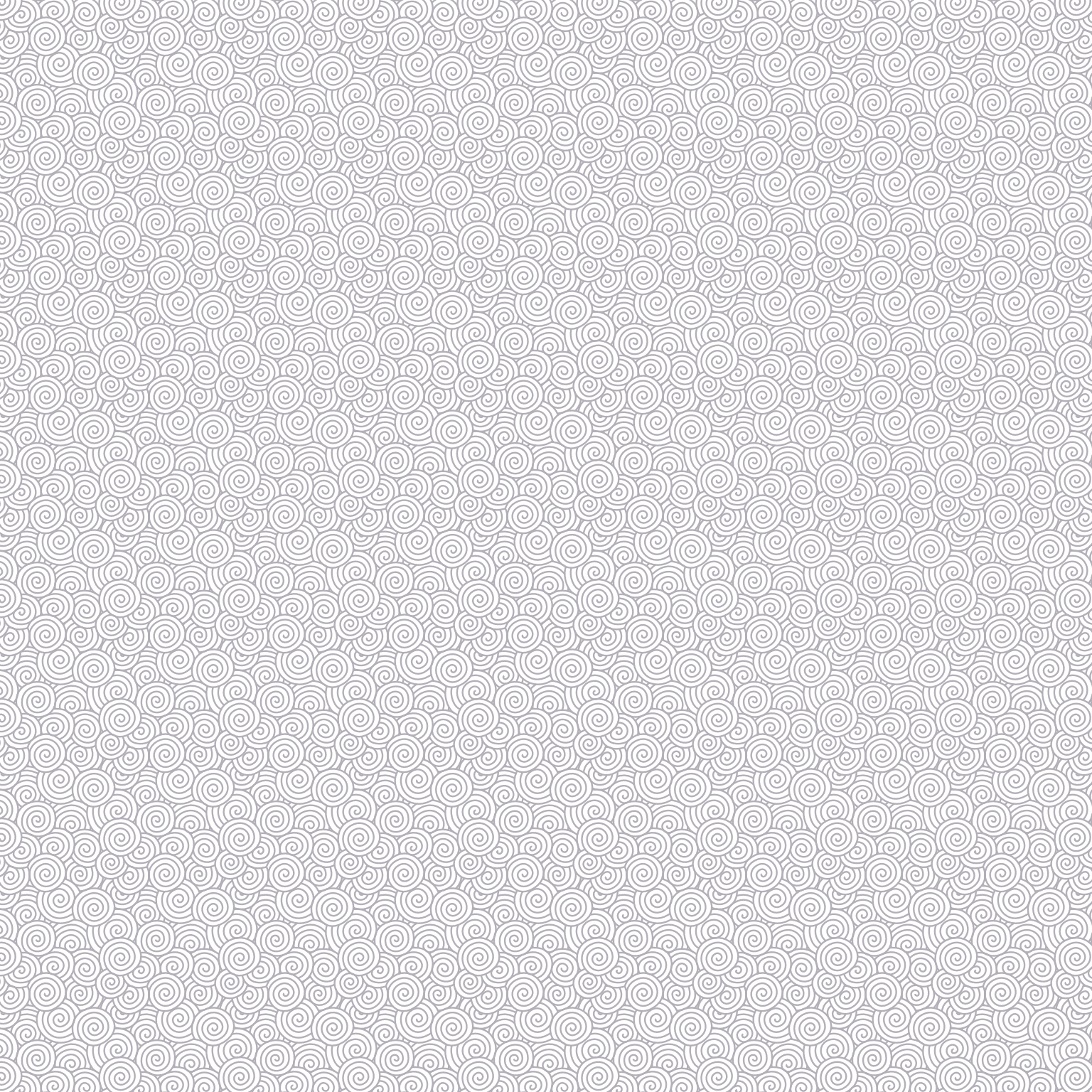
## Prayer

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Please take a moment to respond to what God is saying by praying the following prayer from your heart:

*“Jesus, I am so thankful to learn that You have a plan to fix this broken world, to make the old things pass away and to make all things new. I want to experience that more fully in my own life. I want to become a vessel through whom You can bring New Creation to others and to the world. I know that I cannot bring about this kind of change in my own strength. Jesus, would you immerse me in Your Holy Spirit? I want to be filled with You, transformed by You and empowered by You in exactly the way You want me to be. I trust You for this today and open my heart to all You want to do in and through me. In Your name. Amen.”*



## **The Experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

You might very likely be wondering what to expect when you experience the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. What will it be like? What will happen? A brief overview of what the Bible has to say about this experience will be helpful as you seek the fullness of His empowering work in your life. In this section, we will discuss the language and terms Scripture uses when discussing this experience as well as how the Holy Spirit's work in our conversion relates to His empowering work in our lives. We also will take a look at some important pictures from the Old Testament that will help us better understand this wonderful lifestyle of fullness.

## Terminology

When speaking of the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Bible doesn't always use the same terms. This might seem confusing at first, but it is actually helpful, because each of the phrases referring to this experience give us a particular insight about it. The three primary terms used are:

### *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*

(Matthew 3:10–11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:4–5; Acts 11:15–17; 1 Corinthians 12:13–14)

### *The Filling of the Holy Spirit*

(Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8–10, 31; Acts 9:17–18; Acts 13:8–10, 49–52; Ephesians 5:18–21)

### *The Promise of the Father*

(Matthew 10:19–20; Luke 11:12–13; John 14:15–17, 26–27; John 15:26–27; Acts 2:32–33)

Earlier we said that Baptism refers to immersion. The first term—“Baptism in the Holy Spirit”—gives us a picture of this experience as being dipped or immersed into the Holy Spirit. “Being filled with the Spirit” indicates the effect this experience has on us internally. When we are immersed, we are filled. We see this most clearly in Acts 2:4 when the Holy Spirit comes upon the 120 believers meeting in the Upper Room. What is the result? “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). The third unique phrase that describes this experience—“the Promise of the Father”—reveals the unique relational aspect of this experience. God is our Father. He is a good Father who gives good gifts to His children. We can trust Him to give us exactly what we need.

*“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” - Luke 11:13*

## Indwelling and Filling

There is an important distinction between the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit and the *filling* of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels, we see a definite progression of the Holy Spirit's work. Prior to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus says to the disciples regarding the Holy Spirit: “... but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” - John 14:17

After Jesus' death and resurrection, we find the following:

*And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” - John 20:22*

After the disciples had this experience of receiving the Holy Spirit, Jesus gave them the following instruction just prior to His ascension into heaven:

*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” - Acts 1:8*

These three passages together give us a very clear picture of the various ways God's people experience the Holy Spirit. Prior to Jesus' death, the Holy Spirit was *with* His people but not *in* His people. Jesus promised His disciples that, at some point in the future, the Holy Spirit would indwell them. This promise was fulfilled after the resurrection. But this experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is distinct from what Jesus promised in Acts 1:8 regarding the Holy Spirit's empowering work, which was fulfilled in Acts 2:4 and elsewhere.

## Old Testament Picture of this Reality

### The Tabernacle and the Temple

God's people, Israel, built a place in which God would dwell with them. At first, when they moved often from place to place, they built a portable dwelling place for God called the Tabernacle. Later, during the reign of King Solomon, they built a more permanent structure for worshipping God called the Temple. In both the Temple and the Tabernacle, there was an innermost room called the Most Holy Place. In this room, they kept a very special article of furniture called the Ark of the Covenant. Inside the Ark were stored a variety of items that reminded Israel of God's goodness, faithfulness and miraculous power at work in their lives. On top of the Ark was fashioned a place called the Mercy Seat.

*You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat . . . - Exodus 25:21–22*

Here we see that God dwelt within the Tabernacle (or Temple), in the innermost room, upon the Mercy Seat. This gives us a picture of the present reality that, by the Holy Spirit, Christ comes to live inside us when we accept Him. The Holy Spirit indwells us. But the Lord dwelling within the innermost room of the Tabernacle is quite different from what occurred in 2 Chronicles 5 when Solomon dedicated the Temple:

*... indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying:*

*“For He is good, for His mercy endures forever,”*

*that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God. ~ 2 Chronicles 5:13–14*

In this case, the presence of God filled the entire house. Notice here and in Acts 2, emphasis is placed on the unity of those gathered. In each case, God “filled” the Temple. In the Old Testament, God filled a Temple made by human hands. In the New Testament, God fills His people. When God indwells us by His Spirit, we have the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit fills us, He has us.

### **Exodus as a Picture**

Exodus, the second book in the Bible, tells the story of how God miraculously rescued His people, Israel, from slavery in Egypt. He sent a deliverer, Moses, to lead them out of Egypt. When Israel was trapped between Pharaoh’s army and the impassible Red Sea, God parted the sea. Israel walked across on dry land. When the Egyptian army followed, they were destroyed in the waters. God then led Israel to Mount Sinai, where He gave them His Law, the Ten Commandments.

From that point forward, God’s people celebrated these events each year with two feasts. In the first feast, Passover, they celebrated how God delivered them from Egypt. In the second feast, Pentecost (The Feast of Weeks), they celebrated how God gave them His Law on Mount Sinai. These events took place fifty days apart, so these feasts were held fifty days apart. In fact, the word “Pentecost” refers to the fifty days.

This story also gives us a great picture of God’s work in our lives through the Holy Spirit. When we first believe in Jesus, He saves us, delivering us from our slavery to sin. When Jesus first instituted Communion, He did this during Passover. Each time we take the bread and wine, which point toward Jesus’ broken body and shed blood, we remember how God sent us a deliverer, too. So, in a very real way, each time God’s people celebrated Passover, not only were they looking back to how God delivered them from slavery, they also were prophetically looking forward to the day when God would ultimately rescue all mankind from slavery to sin through the promised Messiah, Jesus. The Feast of Pentecost, which commemorated the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, works in a similar way. Pentecost not only looked back, it looked forward prophetically! But to what? In the book of Jeremiah we find a clear expression of this prophetic longing:

*“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” ~ Jeremiah 31:31–34*

Each year, as Israel would celebrate the giving of the Law at Pentecost, they were prophetically looking forward to the day when God would write His Law upon the hearts of His people. They looked for the day when God would transform the human heart, empowering people to live a life they could never live by following outward rules. And when was this fulfilled? In the second chapter of Acts, when God’s people were Baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost!

Both within the Temple imagery and the picture of God writing His Law upon our hearts, we see the filling of the Spirit as being all about transforming us from the inside out, empowering us to be and do what we could never be and do otherwise. Every believer needs to experience the reality of God Himself saturating their being with His presence and empowering them to live a life of obedience and power.

### **The Red Sea and the Jordan**

We also see this reality pictured through the stories of God's people crossing the Red Sea as God rescued them from Egypt and then crossing the Jordan River to take possession of their inheritance in the Promised Land. For hundreds of years, God's people had been enslaved in Egypt. Through a series of miraculous displays of God's power, Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt. As they fled Egypt, they found themselves trapped between Pharaoh's armies and the Red Sea. God parted the sea, and Israel walked across on dry land. As the Egyptian army pursued, the waters closed in and Israel's enemies were defeated. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul clarifies that, for Israel, this passing through the Red Sea is a Baptism.

*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ~ 1 Corinthians 10:1–2*

So Israel's deliverance out of Egypt is a picture of Salvation—God delivering us out of our bondage to sin. Likewise, the crossing of the Red Sea is a picture of water baptism. After this deliverance, Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, after which, they entered into the Promised Land to possess all God had promised. But how did they enter? They crossed the Jordan River through a similar display of God's power. What does this give us a picture of? It gives us a picture of a second baptism, distinct from the first. Whereas the first baptism represents deliverance *out of something*, the second baptism pictures an empowerment and release *into something*: the inheritance God has promised. So, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers us to possess all God has for us.

### **The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Salvation**

When we are first saved, the Holy Spirit comes to live in, or indwell, our hearts. This is not the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct experience from Salvation. The order and timing of these experiences can be confusing. Let's take a look at this in the book of Acts. We already saw how the same disciples who received the Holy Spirit in John 21, were Baptized in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Here we not only see the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as being a distinct work from Salvation, we see that it also appears to be subsequent. First we experience Salvation, in which the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within our hearts. Later we experience the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, in which we are empowered by the Spirit in a new and fresh way. But is this always the case?

In Acts 10, we find a fascinating story about Peter preaching the Good News about Jesus to the household of a man named Cornelius who had never heard this message before and needed to be saved. Look at what happened while Peter was still speaking the message:

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. ~ Acts 10:44–46*

This wonderful story can really throw a wrench into the system of anyone who wants to make too much of a formula out of things. Here, the Holy Spirit falls upon this group, and they appear to get everything at once! They hear the message about Jesus, and as soon as God sees the response of faith in their hearts, they not only receive the indwelling of the Spirit, but they also are filled at the same time! In comparing and contrasting Acts 2 with Acts 10, we come to the conclusion that although the indwelling and filling works of the Holy Spirit are distinct works, the timing can sometimes be concurrent. In either case, saving faith resulting in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite to the infilling of the Holy Spirit. No one can be filled without being saved, but there's apparently no reason to not experience both at once, and some still do!

### **A Lifestyle of Fullness**

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an introduction into a lifestyle of fullness. God wants to pour Himself into you and, through you, into the world. As you serve others in the power He provides, He doesn't ever want you to run out of steam. Because He is infinite, His supply of power is endless, ever replenishing.

*On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. ~ John 7:37–39*

What a beautiful picture! Jesus promises we can experience the Holy Spirit in our lives as a river of living water that is constantly flowing out of the deepest place within our hearts. When we live a lifestyle of fullness, we experience the

Spirit as a river, not just a reservoir. This is clearly demonstrated in Acts 2 and Acts 4. In Acts 2, the disciples received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This amazing experience resulted in more than 3,000 people accepting Jesus for the first time! In Acts 4, that same group of disciples began to face increasing opposition. Do you know what they needed? They needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit afresh! So, they gathered together again to pray and asked God to fill them with great boldness and power. Look at the result:

*And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. - Acts 4:31*

The same is true in our lives. We don't need to experience God's fullness in our lives only once. We need the fullness of the Holy Spirit each day. We need to live a lifestyle of fullness. This is exactly what Paul teaches us in his letter to the Ephesians:

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit. - Ephesians 5:18*

Now of course Paul did not write this letter in English. He wrote it in Greek, the common language of the day for that region of the world. Translating some verbs from Greek to English is a bit tricky, because in Greek, they have much more precise ways of communicating action. The verb translated "be filled," if precisely translated into English, actually sounds a bit awkward. It would read "... but be continually being filled with the Spirit." Do you see what Paul is encouraging? He is encouraging us to live a lifestyle of fullness.

### What Should I Expect when the Holy Spirit Fills Me?

The Book of Acts tells us the story of the work of the Holy Spirit during the first years of the Church's history. Throughout the story, there are many instances of Jesus' followers being filled with the Spirit. As you might expect, when finite people get filled up to overflowing with an infinite God, all kinds of things can happen. Here are some examples:

- Sound of a rushing wind (Acts 2)
- Tongues of fire (Acts 2)
- The gift of tongues (Acts 2, Acts 10, Acts 19)
- Behavior easily mistaken for drunkenness (Acts 2)
- Boldness and effectiveness in preaching (Acts 2, Acts 4, etc. )

- A building being shaken (Acts 4)
- Care for the poor and needy (Acts 4)
- Regaining of sight (Saul: Acts 9)
- Expulsion of demons (Acts 13:9)
- Joy (Acts 13:52)
- Prophecy (Acts 19)

As you read through Acts, you will soon discover that there is no formula for exactly what to expect; however, some common themes do emerge. First, regardless of the disciples' experience, their experience results in the expansion of God's kingdom, the spreading of the Good News about Jesus. In other words, the filling of the Spirit always results in old things passing away (spiritual blindness, demonic oppression, sickness, etc.) and new things emerging (faith, freedom, healing, etc.). When the Holy Spirit is at work, New Creation is the order of the day!

Secondly, although there is a wide range of ways people experience the filling of the Holy Spirit (see the list above), it is in every case a very definite experience. You never find anyone wondering, "Did anything really happen?" There is always some way in which the work of the Holy Spirit becomes apparent, obvious and definite. There is always some manifestation associated with the Holy Spirit's empowering work, even if it is not outwardly visible. It is a clear experience from the perspective of the one receiving.

The most common manifestation is the gift of tongues. We will talk more about this gift ahead (see Appendix A). However, for now it is important to notice that this manifestation of God's power is not only common in the story we find in Acts, it is also common throughout Church history in the lives of those who have entered into this lifestyle of fullness. Also, the gift of tongues is not *always* the experience of those who receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

As you enter into this lifestyle of fullness, it is important that you simply open up your heart to receive *everything* God wants to give you *however* He wants to give it. He knows better than you exactly what you are facing and what you need. He is the one who immerses us in the Holy Spirit. He is best able to define what our experience needs to be.

Each experience in Acts seems custom-designed by God for that specific person or group of people. The transformation in lifestyle and the empowerment for ministry seem to be consistent themes that transcend other very present and real components of the experience. The power to witness in Acts 2 transcends

the rushing wind or tongues of fire. The wind and fire *accompanied* the outpouring of the Holy Spirit but were not the result or goal. We must distinguish between those experiences which accompany the move of God at times from the transformation that results from and is the goal of His movement.

### The Gifts of the Spirit

One of the key ways we experience God’s empowering work is through the Gifts of the Spirit. A spiritual gift is an ability given to a believer by the Holy Spirit. A spiritual gift is not the same as a talent or a skill. When someone is functioning in a spiritual gift, they are doing that which they could not do apart from the Holy Spirit’s power. The amazing thing about gifts is that they are free! They can’t be earned; they can only be received. Gifts from the Holy Spirit are expressions of God’s wonderful grace in and through our lives. Though spiritual gifts are certainly discussed in other passages, 1 Corinthians 12–14 and Romans 12 contain the most thorough treatment on this topic, and it would be of great benefit for you to read those passages. (For a listing of all the Gifts of the Spirit mentioned in these two passages, with a description of each gift, see Appendix B.)

### The Fruit of the Spirit

Though God’s goal in our lives certainly includes a desire to express His power through our lives (the Gifts of the Spirit), He is also committed to transforming our character. This transformation of character is referred to as the Fruit of the Spirit.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*  
- Galatians 5:22–26

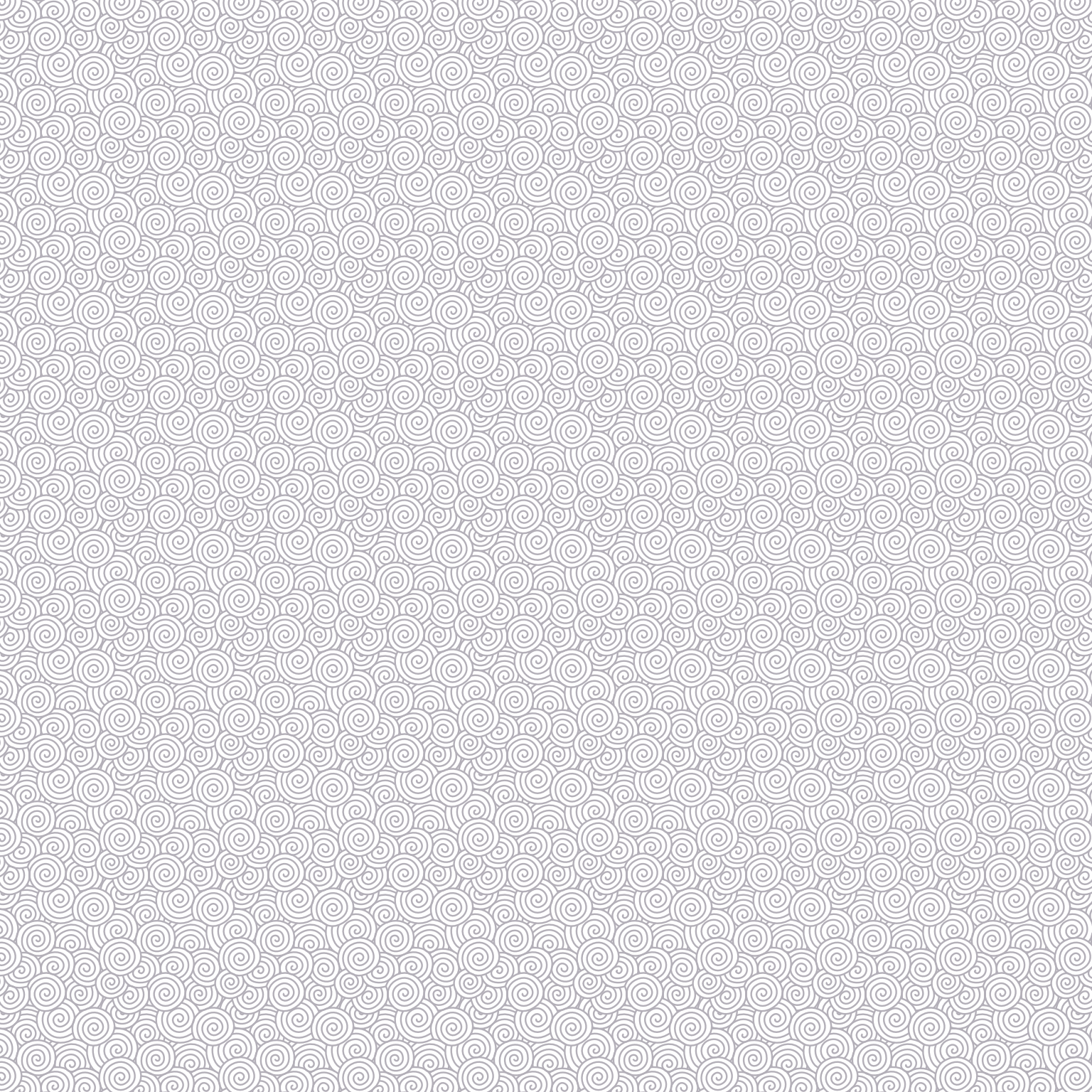
As we are pursuing a lifestyle of fullness in the Holy Spirit, our expectation should be that the Holy Spirit is going to make us more and more like Jesus. This transformation in general terms might best be described as a move from self-centeredness to selflessness. It is a transformation that results in the setting aside of selfish interests and desires and leaves us prioritizing God and others. As we are transformed by the Holy Spirit’s power, our lives become

characterized by love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In other words, we become more and more like Jesus! Now this kind of fruit does not grow simply by human effort or will. This kind of fruit grows naturally within the context of a Spirit-filled lifestyle. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can produce this fruit within us. So, as we are pursuing His fullness, one of the primary things we look for as evidence of His empowering work is this transformation of character—we are looking for the Fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives.

### Prayer

Please take a moment to respond to what God is saying by praying the following prayer from your heart:

*“Father, I am so thankful I can trust You to give me exactly what I need from You. I lay aside all my preconceived expectations about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and I ask You to do everything in me You desire in exactly the way You want. I desire to enter into a lifestyle of fullness, walking each day in the Gifts of Your Spirit and growing in the Fruit of the Spirit day by day. Fill this temple completely so that nothing else can stand. Write Your law upon my heart. I want to enter in and possess all You have provided for me in Christ. I trust You completely. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*



## **Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

Of course the main point of this booklet isn't to simply understand the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. God's plan is for you to experience His fullness—to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. But how? In this section, we take a very practical look at what the Bible has to say about receiving the fullness of the Spirit.

## Asking, Seeking and Knocking

The eleventh chapter of Luke gives us the key to receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives—it begins with a request. One of Jesus’ disciples has observed the Lord’s prayer life and asks Him to teach the disciples to pray.

*Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” ~ Luke 11:1*

The next 12 verses of Luke 11 are all in response to that request. Let’s take each section in turn. Jesus begins His response with what we commonly call “The Lord’s Prayer.” Churches have traditionally recited this prayer as a central part of their public worship, and there have certainly been countless believers who have regularly recited this prayer verbatim as part of their private devotional life. Jesus’ intentions with this prayer doubtless include those uses, but He also seems to be giving a model for content. As you pray, each phrase of this prayer can serve to provide a prayer emphasis or direction for more spontaneous and relational forms.

*So He said to them, “When you pray, say:*

*Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us day by day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins,  
For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.”  
~ Luke 11:2–4*

After giving the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus tells a story which emphasizes the importance of bold persistence in prayer:

*“Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you?’ I say to*

*you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.”  
~ Luke 11:5–8*

This story is followed by a passage on asking, seeking and knocking, which makes great sense in connection with the story when it is understood that the verb tense for each of these directives (ask, seek, knock) could more accurately be translated, “Ask and keep on asking . . . Seek and keep on seeking . . . Knock and keep on knocking.” The idea of bold persistence thus continues to be emphasized:

*“So I say to you, ask [and keep on asking], and it will be given to you; seek [and keep on seeking], and you will find; knock [and keep on knocking], and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”  
~ Luke 11:9–10*

This key passage about prayer really finds its focus in Luke 11:11–13. Jesus has just been encouraging His disciples to ask, seek and knock. And what is to be our confidence in this persistent and bold pursuit of God? The answer is that God is a good and trustworthy Father.

*“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”  
~ Luke 11:11–13*

After all of this wonderful teaching from Jesus on prayer, we finally find out what it is we are ultimately asking for—the Holy Spirit! How do we receive the Holy Spirit? We simply ask our good and trustworthy heavenly Father. And how do we ask? We ask with a boldness and persistence built upon our confidence in God’s faithfulness and promise!

## The Laying on of Hands

In the book of Acts, one common means of conferring and receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is through the laying on of hands:

*Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ~ Acts 8:14–17*

*And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ~ Acts 9:17*

*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. ~ Acts 19:5–7*

Though the laying on of hands is not part of every account of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts, it is common enough to warrant some explanation, and it is a common way that we minister the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at Gateway Church. In the Old Testament, we see the laying on of hands in the practice of setting apart people for their calling:

*“And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites . . . .” ~ Numbers 8:10*

*And the Lord said unto Moses, “Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.” ~ Numbers 27:18–19*

This act is more than symbolic however, for we see in the following passage that through the laying on of hands there was conferred a real spiritual empowerment:

*And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. ~ Deuteronomy 34:9*

In the New Testament, we see the laying on of hands as a key part of Jesus’ healing ministry:

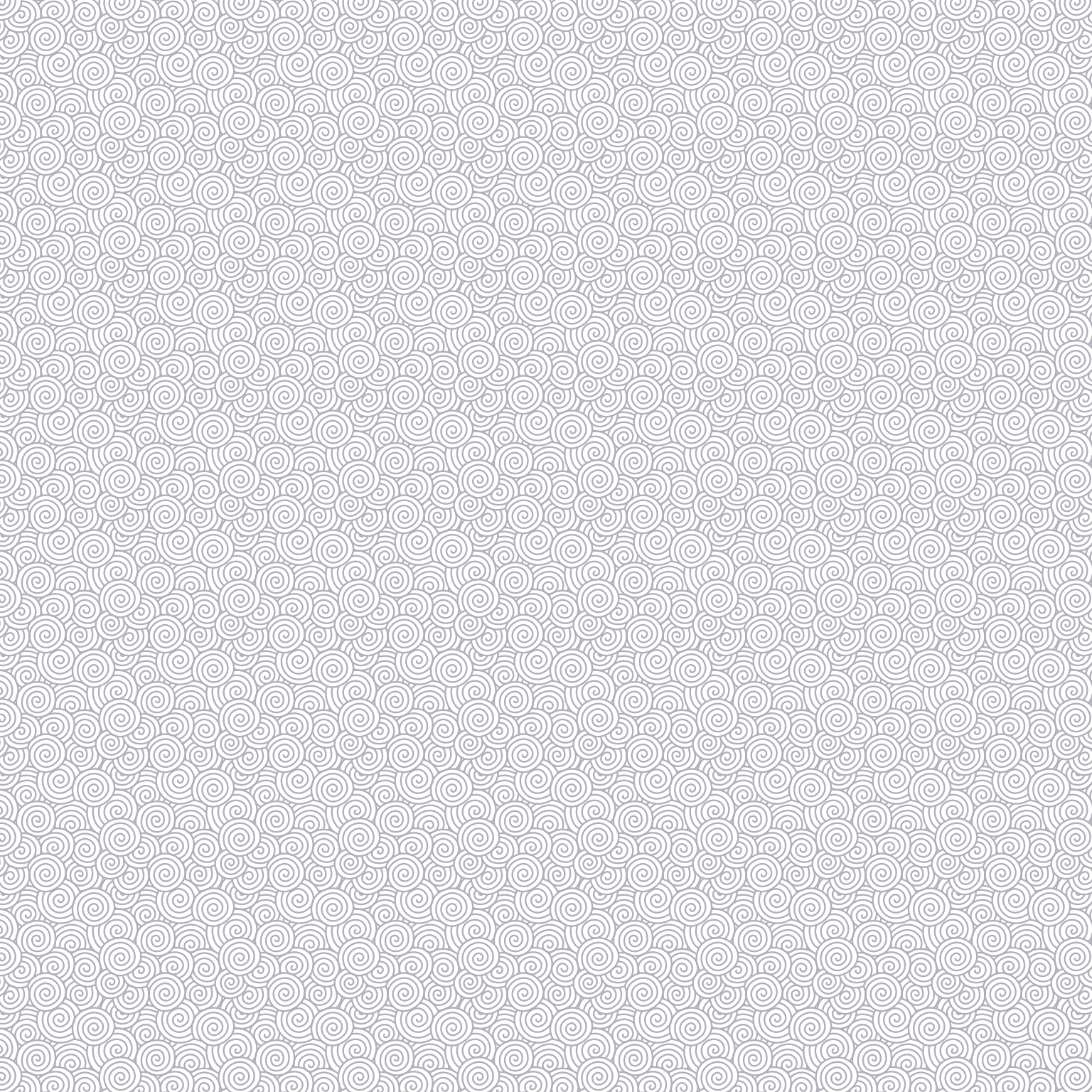
*When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. ~ Luke 4:40*

*While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.” ~ Matthew 9:18*

The laying on of hands also serves in the impartation of spiritual gifts:

*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ~ 1 Timothy 4:14*

While there are many more instances than cited here of the practice of the laying on of hands, suffice it to say that this is a common biblical practice through which blessings and power are conferred. As you seek God’s empowerment in your life and have opportunity, allow others to lay their hands upon your shoulder or upon the top of your head as they pray for you. It is no small thing that God would choose to invest His power through such a practice, allowing those who have freely received to freely give through such a simple means of grace.



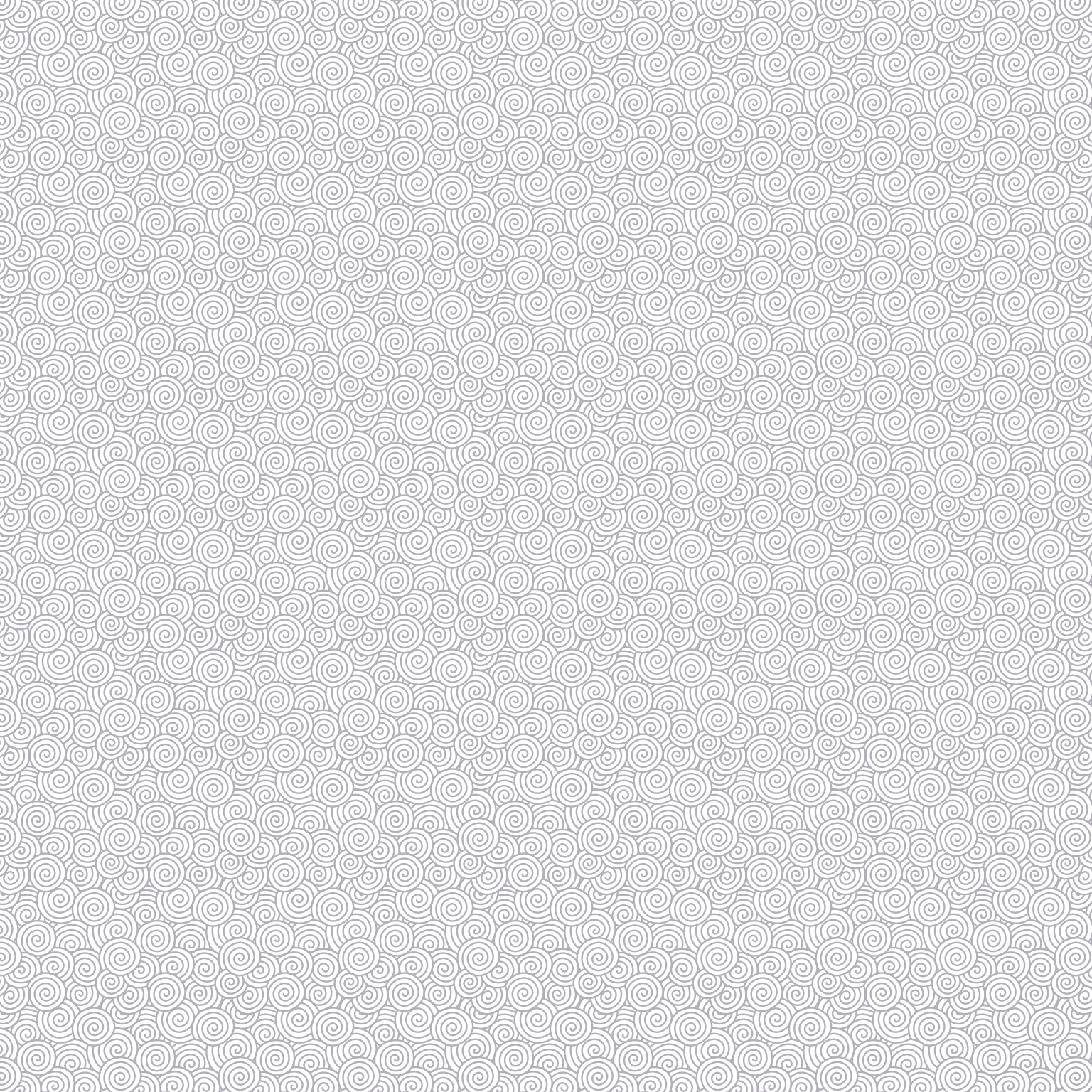
## **Conclusion**

In our study, we have learned that the Holy Spirit has been given to us to empower us to live the lives God has called us to live. In the Introduction, we stated that this booklet is an invitation for you to experience His presence and power in a fresh way. Throughout this study, there have been opportunities to respond and receive. Now, at the conclusion of this study, God is inviting you to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit afresh in your life.

**Prayer**

Though there is no formula, the following prayer is provided to help you as you purpose to seek all He has for your life:

*“Father, I trust in Your goodness and faithfulness. I know it is your desire and delight to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I confess my need of Your power and presence. Without You, I know I can do nothing. I open my heart fully to You in this moment. Fill me to overflowing with the Holy Spirit as I wait upon You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*



## Appendix A

## What about Tongues?

*“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” ~ Mark 16:17–18*

In Mark 16, Jesus promises that His followers will be empowered to bring deliverance to those in demonic bondage, to speak in a language they have never learned, to walk in divine protection and to heal the sick. Though for some it will be readily apparent that all of the items in this list have been widely misunderstood and misapplied at one time or another in various settings, perhaps no issue has been the topic of more confusion than the gift of tongues. In this section, we will take a look at what the Bible teaches regarding this powerful gift.

## What is the Gift of Tongues?

Simply put, tongues is the Holy Spirit-empowered ability to speak (or pray, or sing!) in a language one has not learned and does not understand. The word for tongues literally means language or languages.

## Tongues was the common experience of the early Church.

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ~ Acts 2:4*

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. ~ Acts 10:44–46*

*And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ~ Acts 19:6*

One great example of speaking in tongues regards the church in Corinth. Speaking in tongues was apparently so common in this congregation that Paul needed to give detailed instructions regarding the use of this gift (see 1 Corinthians 12 and 14).

## Will Tongues One Day Cease?

*Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:8–10*

In this passage on love, Paul is declaring that love will never fail. In all eternity, there will never be a time when love isn't a defining part of our life in God. To make this point, Paul contrasts love with three other things: prophecy, tongues and knowledge. Each of these will no longer be needed when that which is perfect has come, and so they will pass away. This speaks of how things will change when Jesus returns and there is a new heaven and a new earth. When Jesus (who is Perfection) returns, we will not prophesy “about” Him; we will experience Him in actuality. When Jesus returns, we will not need to have knowledge “about” Him; we will be face to face with Him. The same principle also applies to speaking in tongues. While we benefit now from being able to pray in a way that completely bypasses our limited perspective on things, when Jesus returns, our perspective will no longer be limited in the same way it is now. Thus, tongues will cease. Until Jesus returns then, we can and should expect a continuation of tongues as well as prophecy and knowledge.

There are church traditions that teach against tongues. If you have received teaching in the past against tongues and other supernatural ministries of the Holy Spirit, this can be a hindrance to receiving all God has for you. It is important to address this specifically in prayer. If this applies to you, please pray the following prayer from your heart:

## Prayer

*“Holy Spirit, I confess that I have, in the past, received and believed the teaching that You are no longer working in the Church today as you did in the early Church and that miracles, healings, prophecy and tongues passed away with the first apostles. I renounce this teaching. I now see and affirm that You never change and that You are still actively empowering Your people in these ways all over the earth. I open my heart to receive all that You want to do in and through me. In Jesus' name. Amen.”*

### What do I need to understand about this gift?

Here are some important points regarding this gift:

- When I speak in tongues, I am speaking to God (1 Corinthians 14:2).
- When I speak in tongues, my mind is unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14:14).
- Speaking in tongues builds me up (1 Corinthians 14:4).
- Tongues is one of many gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4–11).
- Tongues is not the greatest gift (1 Corinthians 14:5).
- Everyone is encouraged to receive this gift (1 Corinthians 14:5).
- Not everyone is gifted to speak in tongues publicly during church meetings (1 Corinthians 12:30).
- We must not forbid the use of this gift (1 Corinthians 14:39).

### What is the benefit of speaking in tongues?

The benefits of speaking in tongues are numerous. This “prayer language” enables me to speak to God without the constraints of my limited perspective and understanding. When I pray in tongues, my understanding (or lack thereof) is irrelevant. I know when I’m praying in tongues that I am speaking to God in precise accordance with His will and that it results in strengthening me in my walk with God. The Gift of Tongues also has benefit and function in building up others. Sometimes when you’re in a group setting, you may feel prompted to speak aloud in tongues for the benefit of the group. The Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues is given for just this kind of function and should always accompany tongues which are spoken publicly. When tongues are spoken publicly and interpreted for all to understand, then those who hear are built up. If this kind of prompting occurs to you, please speak to the person leading your group and submit to their leadership regarding the appropriate time and way to utilize this gift in that particular setting.

### Will I be able to control it?

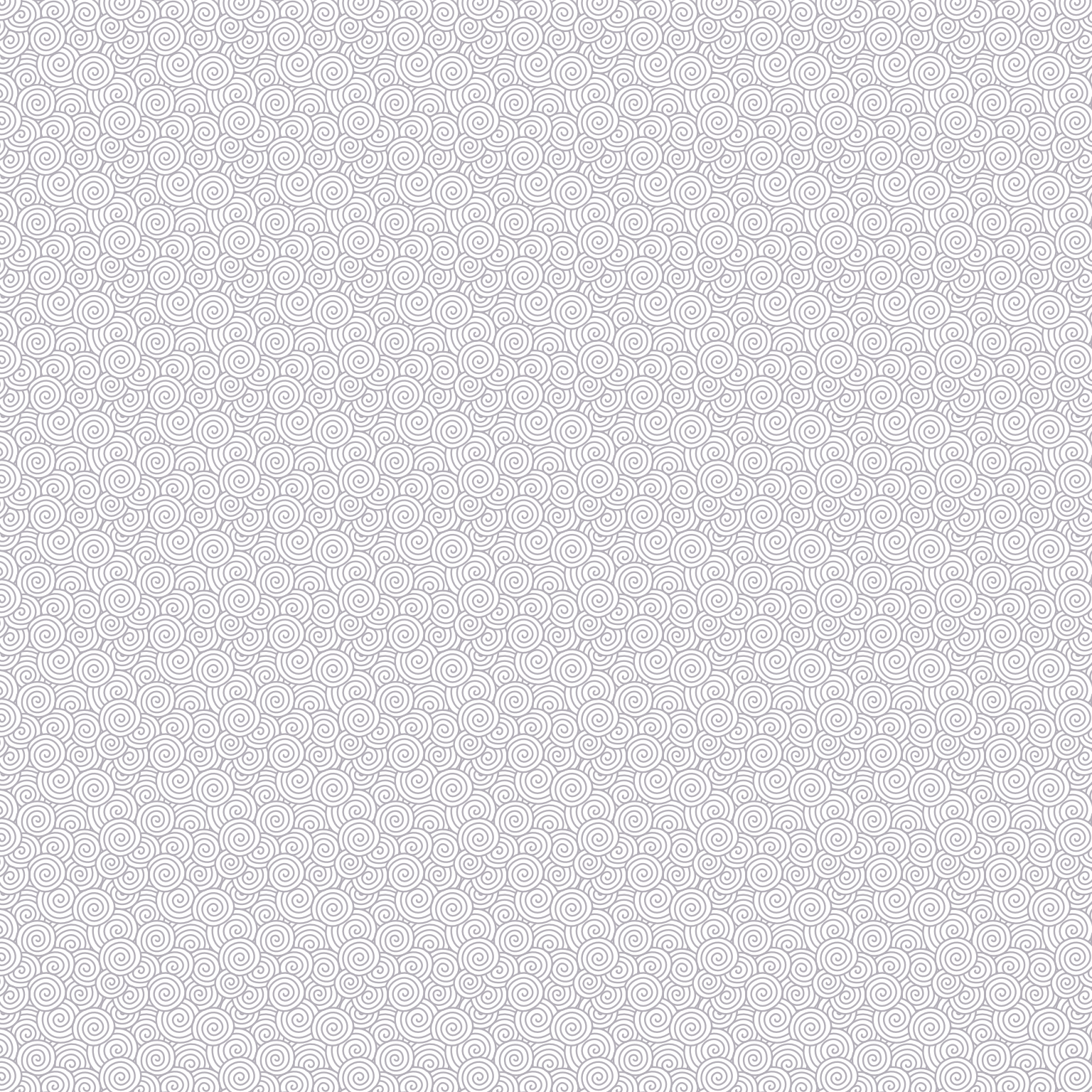
Some hesitate to receive this gift because of a fear that they will not be able to control it. There is no reason to be afraid! If a person were not to have any control over when and where they speak in tongues, all the time Paul spent in 1 Corinthians defining the parameters for the use of this gift would have been time wasted. When you receive this gift, you will be able to pray in tongues whenever you need to, whenever you want to, whenever you choose to. However, you should expect to experience times when you feel a strong

impression from the Holy Spirit that you need to “pray in the Spirit” in that moment. At Gateway Church, we encourage everyone to pursue this gift and use it every day.

### Prayer

Please take a moment to respond to what God is saying by praying the following prayer from your heart:

*“Jesus, I want to experience the fullness of the Spirit You promised I could receive from the Father. Right now, I choose to set aside any desire to define and control exactly what that must look like in my life. I trust in Your goodness and yield to Your trustworthiness. I choose to receive the fullness of Your Spirit. Any gift from Your hand I gladly receive. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”*



## Appendix B

## The Gifts of the Spirit

There are two main places in Scripture where the Gifts of the Spirit are listed (1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12). Nothing within the text indicates that Paul intended for either of these lists to be comprehensive, and the Holy Spirit is certainly able to empower us for service in all kind of ways; however, these two lists entail the most *common* ways we can expect God to use and empower us. A basic definition of each of these gifts will be very helpful in understanding the scriptural basis for your experience of God's power at work in your life. (The gift of prophecy is listed in both passages, but we only define it once.)

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11*

### The Word of Wisdom

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, granting God's perspective on a circumstance or situation and enabling a decision or response that reflects God's will in a greater way than would be possible if limited by human perspective alone.

### The Word of Knowledge

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, granting knowledge a believer would not otherwise have in regards to a circumstance or situation and enabling ministry to or response towards some key root issue or problem in a manner that brings God's solution.

### Faith

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, empowering a believer to trust in God, lay hold of God's provision and apply His provision within a specific situation in a manner which extends beyond their normal capacity relative to their spiritual growth.

### Gifts of Healings

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling one or more a variety of ways by which the Holy Spirit can

work to bring healing to brokenness, whether physical, mental, emotional or spiritual.

### The Working of Miracles

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to effect some change outside the usual order of natural cause and effect in order to further God's purposes and confirm His Word.

### Prophecy

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to receive and communicate a message from God (which may or may not be predictive) for others in order to encourage, build and bring comfort.

### The Discerning of Spirits

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to accurately determine the spiritual source behind words, behaviors, attitudes or circumstances in such a way that the community is empowered to partner with God and His purposes, resist evil and recognize those times when simple human brokenness is at work.

### Different Kinds of Tongues

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to speak to God, either privately or in the hearing of other believers (if accompanied by the Gift of Interpretation of Tongues), unhindered by limited human perspective and according to God's perfect will in a language they have never learned and do not understand.

### The Interpretation of Tongues

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to comprehend and communicate the content of publicly spoken tongues so that all who hear can understand and be built up.

### Administration

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to facilitate ministry through strategic organization and support. (This gift is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:27.)

*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. ~ Romans 12:6–8*

**Helps**

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, empowering a believer to help the Church through practical service and enabling the Church to function and move forward in God’s purpose with excellence. (This gift is also called Ministry or Service.)

**Teaching**

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to hear God speak through scriptural study and to communicate biblical truth to the church resulting in freedom, spiritual formation and obedience.

**Exhortation**

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling believers to recognize the unique ways God has designed, empowered and called others within the Body of Christ and gifting them to encourage others to become all God has purposed them to be.

**Giving**

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling believers to excel in the stewardship of resources and empowering them to give generously as the Holy Spirit directs for the advancement of the kingdom and the welfare of the Church.

**Leadership**

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to influence others and assume responsibility for vision and mission within the life of the Church.

**Mercy**

This is the grace of God given through a believer by the Holy Spirit for the Church, enabling a believer to empathize with the struggles and pain of others in such a way that they become a conduit of God’s healing and liberating mercy.







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