

Do You Have Dynamic Holy Spirit Power?

If you've ever been to church or Sunday school or read the Bible, you're familiar with the miracles Jesus did while He was on earth. We know that not everything He did is recorded in the Word, but the Gospels make it clear that His ministry included such amazing feats as raising the dead, healing the sick, delivering people from demons and multiplying food. Have you ever wondered how He did those things? Yes, He was God, but what was the secret behind His supernatural abilities? Was it His divinity? What was the source of His power?

You Need the Holy Spirit

The Gospels tell us that Jesus had the Holy Spirit without limit and that He returned from the temptation in the wilderness full of the Spirit's power (see Luke 4:14). The Holy Spirit was His secret!

In today's culture, it's virtually impossible to survive without Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi connects us to the world around us through messaging, emails and social media. It's our access to the worldwide system of information through sites such as Google and Wikipedia. It has become almost as important as electricity or air conditioning. In a somewhat analogous way, the Holy Spirit was Jesus' connection, providing access to His Father, to His assignments and to the power of heaven. Jesus did only what He saw His Father do first, and He could see that only because of the Holy Spirit (see John 5:19).

Here's a question I've asked my kids: "If you had to go back in time several thousand years and could bring only one thing with you, what would it be?" They've said everything from a gun or knife to a car or plane. Once you play out all the scenarios, you realize what a difficult decision it would be.

If you brought a car, you would eventually run out of gas. If you brought a gun, you'd run out of bullets. A book of ancient languages may be of some help, but who knows?

When Jesus came to earth, He basically left the most sophisticated society, the kingdom of God, and traveled into time with only one tool from that eternal realm to help Him navigate this world's craziness. That tool was His relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was all Jesus brought with Him. With the Spirit's help, He had to fulfill every prophecy. He had to live a perfect, sinless life. He couldn't afford to make even one mistake. What a challenge! Still today, the Holy Spirit is Christians' only hope of fulfilling all the things we are created to do. We need Him not only to demonstrate God's supernatural power but also to love those around us the way Jesus wants us to. We need the Spirit to live in obedience to God's Word, resist temptations to sin and even keep our mouths shut when we want to lash out. *It's impossible to be a true disciple of Jesus without a deep relationship with the Holy Spirit.*

Make-It-Happen Power

Jesus knew firsthand the power associated with the Holy Spirit. I'm not talking about atomic power or even explosions on the sun. I'm talking about universe-creating power. When God said, "Let there be," He demonstrated a make-it-happen kind of power (see Genesis 1).

All that power dwelled in Jesus, ready to be unleashed with just a word. It was limitless power, able to heal the sick, drive out devils and calm storms. It was the same power that raised the dead body of Jesus back to life. In the Greek, it is called *dunamis* power. It's where we get the word "dynamite."

The Holy Spirit was given to Jesus so He could accomplish

every assignment given Him. For us to truly be Christ's followers and demonstrate the same works He did—and even greater works—we must be empowered by the same Spirit (see John 14:12). It is impossible for us to walk in the same anointing Jesus had without it. This is why Jesus insisted that the disciples not leave Jerusalem until they had received the promised Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4). Only after the Spirit came upon them would they receive *dunamis* power to take the gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NLT).

Most Christians would love to walk in the power Jesus operated in, but we often fail to acknowledge the source of His power: His intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. I believe Jesus was in a constant dialogue with the Spirit, completely trusting the Spirit's voice and leadership. Thankfully, we have the ability to know the Holy Spirit as He did. All we have to do is ask, and the Father will give us this gift just as He gave it to Jesus (Luke 11:13). It is truly impossible to be a Christ-follower without it.

Run to Win

In some ways, Christianity is like a relay race. We're a team, we're in it to win, and we still have a ways to go. Jesus was our leadoff runner. And man, did He sprint! In 33 short years He radically changed history, and before He ascended to heaven, He carried out His Father's plan by passing the baton to His disciples. They passed it to their generation. And each generation since has handed it off to the next.

The baton represents Jesus' mission. What is that mission? Speaking of Himself, Jesus made this clear: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10, NKJV). When He first called the disciples from their fishing nets and their tax-collecting tables, He didn't say, “Follow Me, and I'm going to make you successful and fulfill your lifelong dreams.” He said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19b). He was passionate about

saving people.

And now it's our turn. It's time to make the exchange.

Much of the real Jesus way is about watching how He lived, then taking the baton from Him and running our race. Are we securely grasping that mission? Or are we dropping the baton? If we want to carry on what Jesus started, there are three parts of the relay we must get right.

Watch the Rhythm

Before the start of a relay race, each receiving runner makes a mark on the track, usually with tape. When the incoming runner's foot hits that mark, the receiver explodes forward while reaching back with an open hand. The timing must be perfect, and if he's not watching, he won't know when to wrap his fingers around the baton.

What is the receiving runner watching for? He's calculating the other runner's speed, evaluating the rhythm of those churning legs. It's all about rhythm, and the rhythm of Jesus is *seek and save ... seek and save ... seek and save*. One leg is seek, the other is save, and the two never stop. We're watching Him, watching His mission. Jesus is after every man, woman and child who is lost. And that is His rhythm.

Seek and save ... seek and save ... seek and save. Jesus is doing this all over the world, and He wants to do it through you. The apostle Paul said it this way: "God, who brought us back to himself through Christ ... has given us this task of reconciling people to him ... we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'" (2 Cor. 5:18b–20, NLT). Throughout the Gospels Jesus seeks and saves one person after another. The rhythm is clear.

Seek and save ... seek and save.

As much as the disciples were around Jesus, they still couldn't see His rhythm. They tried to send people away that He wanted to minister to! I think we often miss it, too.

We get caught up in our own lives, in our activities at church and the world of Christianity, and we miss the heart of the *real* Jesus. He wants to rescue people.

If we intend to take hold of that baton and run with it, we have to watch Jesus running in His beautiful, rhythmic stride. He is getting closer and closer, about to reach that mark we put down.

Receive the Baton

And then the moment comes! You burst ahead, gaining speed. You're stride for stride now, in sync with Jesus. Your arm is stretched back, your hand is open and you're ready to receive the baton. There it is! It's time to take hold of it!

The baton represents three things we are receiving from Jesus—His mission, His authority and His Spirit. They are all being passed to us.

We've already discussed His mission, but Jesus is also delegating His authority. One day, Jesus called together His 12 disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and heal all diseases. Then He sent them out to tell everyone about the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (see Luke 9:1–2). In the same way, Jesus delegates authority to us as believers. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18b–19a, NIV). And later, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21b). Jesus hands us the authority, but we have to receive the baton and run with it. When we get a revelation of the authority that Jesus is placing in our hands, we will begin to do supernatural works.

In addition to receiving Jesus' mission and authority, we

receive His Spirit. This is the most important gift we receive from Him.

Jesus said to us, "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12b). As He ascended to heaven, He lifted His hands and blessed His disciples, telling them to go and reach the world. He passed down His Spirit, the Spirit of God. He told His disciples, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised [the Holy Spirit]" (Acts 1:4b, NLT). Just as the Holy Spirit fell on those who had gathered after Jesus' ascension, the Spirit falls on believers today and is available to every one of us for empowerment.

You have the baton. It's time to run!

Run!

Like athletes competing in the Olympics, we have a moment in time to run. Jesus has already run His leg of the race. Other generations have run before us, fighting the good fight and finishing the race. Now it's our turn.

Will we stay on our feet? Will we keep hold of the baton? Will we run with all our might, completing what Jesus started?

Some of us are running casually, as if the race is a jog in the park. Some of us are fiddling with the baton instead of securing it in our hands. Many believers are running with untied shoelaces, and some don't make it to the finish line. The untied laces can be habits we don't shake, too many hobbies, vices we don't deal with. Don't let this be you. Tie your shoelaces. Deal with the things that would distract you, tempt you or take you out of the race.

Others of us wear out. Let's face it. The Christian life is usually less of a sprint and more of a marathon. You may end up running with the baton of Jesus for decades. Passion and

enthusiasm are great, but you will also need endurance. I've seen many start like a flash, sprinting with everything they have, only to drop out of the race a few months later. Long-distance running requires a pace that can be sustained for a long time.

To make it all the way to the finish, you must remain energized. Stay rooted in the Word of God and in your relationship with Jesus. And cling to the Holy Spirit. This will give you a fresh wind to finish the race. "Remain in me, and I will remain in you," Jesus said. "For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me" (John 15:4, NLT).

The race is on. Cross that finish line, and receive the prize, as the apostle Paul encourages us, "Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!" (1 Cor. 9:24).

Jonathan Stockstill is the senior pastor of Bethany Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since 2011, he has opened five new church campuses across Louisiana, started Bethany College and partnered with the Surge Project to plant 3,400 new churches around the globe. He is married to Angie Stockstill, and they have four children.