FIRST CHAPTER READER SAMPLE

Anointed for Impact

Cultivating a Spirit-Filled Life

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CHAPTER 1

Called Into a Spirit-Filled Life

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CHAPTER 1

Called Into a Spirit-Filled Life

I grew up in church. My parents were pastors, and the Bible was part of my life from an early age. I listened to sermons, learned Scripture, and watched ministers speak about what God was doing. I heard accounts of healing and saw people step forward to serve with a confidence I admired. For a long time, I thought of that kind of ministry as something other people did.

I wanted God to use me, but I kept waiting. Perhaps a door would open. Perhaps someone would call on me. Perhaps I would eventually feel ready. I associated the anointing with the people who already had a title, a position, or an opportunity to stand before a congregation. I could recognize their calling more easily than I could respond to my own.

I want to speak to the believer who understands that hesitation. You love the Lord, and you want your life to matter to Him. Yet when an opportunity to pray, encourage, or share the gospel comes, you begin to wonder whether you are the person who should respond. Someone else could do it more confidently, you think. Perhaps you should wait a little longer.

I came to understand that I could offer God my willingness while I was still learning. I could begin with the person before me and the next act of obedience. I wanted to move from watching other people serve to responding to the Holy Spirit myself. That desire brought me back to questions I needed to face: What is the anointing? What has God given His people? How do we learn to walk with Him faithfully?

Those questions belong together. We need the Holy Spirit when we pray for the sick, speak the gospel, or minister to someone carrying fear. We also need Him in our homes, our decisions, and our relationships. A life available to God reaches beyond public ministry into the places where our character is being formed.

We will consider the anointing through Scripture and the practices that help us remain responsive to God. Begin with an open heart. You

can bring Him both your hunger and your questions. There is room to learn, to receive correction, and to grow in courage as you follow Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is the source

Throughout this book, I use the word anointing to describe the Holy Spirit's supernatural empowerment for the work God calls His people to do. He enables us to bear witness to Jesus, minister to others, and respond to His purposes with a strength that reaches beyond our own. The glory belongs to Him. We are vessels through whom He works.

Scripture uses the language of anointing in several settings. In the Old Testament, anointing with oil marked people being set apart for service. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus declares the fulfillment of a passage concerning His Spirit-anointed mission. In First John, believers are reminded of the anointing they have received as they face deception. Each passage deserves to be heard in its own setting. Together, they direct us toward God's initiative, truth, and purposes.

The Holy Spirit teaches, guides, empowers, and can be grieved. Jesus speaks of Him as the Helper in John 14:15–27. He promises His disciples the Spirit's abiding presence and connects their love for Him with obedience. Jesus assures frightened disciples facing His departure that they will have the help they need to continue in His ways.

> 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another
> Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
>
> 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive,
> because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him;
> for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.
>
> *— John 14:16–17 (KJV)*

The Spirit's presence is deeply personal. We approach Him with reverence, listen to the truth He brings, and yield our decisions to God. A person seeking the anointing must also be willing to be taught. We must not seek His power in public while deliberately refusing His correction in private.

Consider the difference this makes in prayer. We can bring our needs boldly to the Lord while also opening our hearts to His direction. We can ask Him to move in a meeting and ask Him to deal with our motives

before that meeting begins. We can desire gifts that help others and remain willing to serve when our contribution is quiet and unseen.

Begin here: recognize the source. Your confidence can rest in the Holy Spirit's ability to accomplish God's purpose. Bring Him your willingness, your weakness, and your need for wisdom. Ask Him to make you attentive to the work He wants to do in you as well as through you.

David: called and set apart by God

First Samuel 16 gives us a clear picture of anointing for a particular calling. The Lord sends Samuel to Jesse's household because He has chosen a king from among Jesse's sons. Samuel initially takes notice of Eliab, but God corrects the prophet's judgment. Human appearance cannot determine God's choice. The Lord sees the heart.

> 7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.
>
> *— 1 Samuel 16:7 (KJV)*

David is brought in from tending the sheep. At God's direction, Samuel anoints him with oil in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him (1 Samuel 16:1–13). God chooses, Samuel obeys, and David receives the anointing for the responsibility before him. The account belongs to the history of Israel's kingship. David's appointment is specific; we should understand that before making an application to our own lives.

> 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.
>
> *— 1 Samuel 16:13 (KJV)*

The application begins with humility. We can become impressed by the qualities people can easily see: confidence, appearance, skill, and the ability to command attention. Those qualities may be useful, but they cannot establish a person's readiness to serve God. The Lord knows the

heart beneath them. He knows what we love, what we fear, and what we are unwilling to surrender.

Let that truth search you before you apply it to another person. When you ask for the anointing, are you willing for God to examine your desire for recognition? Are you willing to receive correction? Can you rejoice when He works through someone else? The desire to be used by God should lead us toward greater honesty in His presence.

David's story also keeps our calling connected to God's purpose. Anointing brings responsibility. The question becomes, "Lord, how would You have me serve?" Carrying responsibility may require preparation, patience, and faithfulness with what is already before us. The people affected by our work matter to God.

You do not need to force your life into David's story to receive its challenge. Begin with the responsibility God has actually placed before you. Attend to your household, your commitments, and the people entrusted to your care. Let prayer make you more faithful in those places. A desire for greater usefulness should deepen your willingness to obey today.

Jesus reveals the purpose of anointing

Our clearest picture of Spirit-anointed ministry is Jesus Christ. Luke 4:14–21 describes Him returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and teaching in the synagogues. In Nazareth, He reads from Isaiah about the Spirit of the Lord resting upon the Anointed One. The mission includes good news for the poor, freedom for captives, sight for the blind, and release for the oppressed. Jesus then identifies that Scripture as fulfilled in their hearing.

> 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me
> to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the
> brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and
> recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are
> bruised,
>
> 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.
>
> *— Luke 4:18–19 (KJV)*

This is a declaration about who Jesus is and what He has come to do. He is the promised Messiah. We follow Him as His disciples and bear

witness to His saving work. His unique identity remains central even as His ministry teaches us to depend on the Holy Spirit.

Notice the people named in the passage. The poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed have burdens, questions, and needs. When we speak about anointing, we must keep them before us. The gospel speaks to them, and the compassion of Christ reaches toward them. Spiritual power serves the purposes of the Savior who came to bring good news.

This should affect the way we prepare for ministry. Pray for the people you will meet. Ask God to help you listen carefully. Consider whether someone needs encouragement, practical help, an explanation of the gospel, or an opportunity to receive prayer. Come ready to serve rather than assuming you already understand everything about the person before you.

The same concern belongs in everyday life. A family member may need your patient attention. A neighbor may need help. Someone carrying fear may be willing to pray with you. Dependence on the Spirit teaches us to notice these opportunities and respond with compassion. We can ask Him for wisdom and boldness as we do.

I believe the Holy Spirit still works in power. We should pray for healing, believe God for deliverance, and expect the gospel to transform lives. As we minister, we remain dependent on Him and give Jesus the glory. Our task is to love people, speak the truth, and pray in faith. We must keep caring when the answer differs from what we hoped to see.

Let the ministry of Jesus shape your hunger for the anointing. Ask for a heart that can be moved by another person’s need. Ask for courage to speak about Him. Ask for the humility to recognize that the person receiving ministry matters more than your desire to appear powerful.

Power to be His witnesses

In Acts 1, the risen Jesus prepares His apostles for the work ahead. They are to wait in Jerusalem for the Father’s promise. When they ask about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, Jesus directs them away from determining the Father’s timetable and toward their assignment. The Holy Spirit will come upon them, and they will be empowered to bear witness to Him (Acts 1:4–8).

> 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
>
> *— Acts 1:8 (KJV)*

This gives power a clear purpose. They will testify about Jesus, beginning in Jerusalem and reaching beyond familiar boundaries. They need the Spirit because the mission is larger than their resources and experience. Their dependence is part of their obedience to the One who sends them.

Acts 2 records the outpouring at Pentecost. The gathered believers are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues as He enables them. Peter explains what is happening by turning to Scripture and proclaiming Jesus. Here we see the Spirit's supernatural work alongside the preaching of the gospel and the response of those who hear it.

Continue reading beyond the opening scene. Acts 2:42–47 describes believers devoted to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, shared meals, and prayer. Needs are met through generosity. God's work becomes visible in the life of a community as well as in extraordinary signs. They continue learning, praying, gathering, and caring for one another.

This shared life helps us see why spiritual discipline belongs in a discussion of the anointing. A powerful encounter with God calls for a continuing response. The question is how we will live after the meeting has ended. Will we remain teachable? Will we join others in prayer? Will we give attention to the Word and to the needs around us?

A later prayer meeting in Acts 4:23–31 deepens the picture. After Peter and John report the threats made against them, the believers pray together. They ask for courage to speak God's message and for His healing power to be displayed in Jesus' name. The account ends with a renewed filling of the Spirit and bold proclamation. The church continues to depend on God under pressure.

As I began to respond instead of waiting to feel completely ready, the responsibility became personal. I had to consider the opportunities already in front of me. Reading about the early church challenged me to bring my own willingness before God and take His call seriously.

Receive the challenge of these passages. Bring your fears to the Lord, and ask Him to strengthen your witness. Pray for people to encounter the

living Christ. Give yourself to the practices that help you remain attentive and available. The Spirit empowers a people who are being sent, and the people around you need the good news of Jesus.

Remain in the truth about Jesus

First John 2:18–27 addresses a church facing deception. John warns about those who deny the truth concerning the Father and the Son. Within that warning, he reminds believers of the anointing they have received from the Holy One and urges them to remain in what they have heard from the beginning.

Read those statements together. The anointing is discussed in connection with truth, deception, and abiding in Christ. John is protecting believers from being drawn away from Jesus. A claimed spiritual experience that undermines the truth about Him must not be accepted simply because it is impressive or unfamiliar.

John's language about the anointing teaching believers also belongs to that setting. His letter itself is teaching them. We should therefore be careful about using one sentence to dismiss all instruction, correction, or accountability. The passage directs believers toward the truth they have received and away from those attempting to deceive them.

Gifts and character serve the same Lord

The Spirit gives gifts for the good of others (1 Corinthians 12:7–11), and those gifts never replace love (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). As we seek His power, we must also welcome His work in our character and conduct.

> 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
>
> *— 1 Corinthians 12:7 (KJV)*

Begin from grace, and let grace teach you

Our life with God begins in grace. Ephesians 2:1–10 describes people made alive through God's mercy and saved by grace through faith. Good works flow from the new life He gives. We respond to His kindness as people who need Him, rather than presenting our spiritual achievements as the reason He should receive us.

Titus 2:11–14 describes grace as something that also trains us to turn from ungodliness and live with self-control, righteousness, and devotion to God. Grace has direction. It teaches us to leave behind what harms us and others, and it forms a people eager to do good. We will return to this passage when we consider holiness more fully.

Cultivation means a willing, continuing response

The Holy Spirit is God's gift, and spiritual discipline gives shape to our response. We set aside time for prayer because we want to seek the Lord. We read Scripture because we need truth. We worship because He is worthy. We obey because His direction deserves a response. These choices help us give sustained attention to the relationship and calling He has given us.

In First Timothy 4:6–16, Paul instructs a young minister to pursue godliness, attend to teaching, use his gift, and watch his life and doctrine. Timothy's growth requires deliberate attention. Paul does not suggest that spiritual gifting removes the need for preparation or faithful conduct.

We can apply that challenge without turning our practices into a way to purchase power. Acts 8:9–24 records Simon offering money to obtain authority associated with the giving of the Holy Spirit. Peter rebukes him and calls him to repentance. The immediate issue is Simon's corrupt desire to buy what God gives. The passage challenges any approach that treats spiritual authority as something we can acquire for our own advantage.

Examine what you expect from your disciplines. Do you come to prayer willing for God to redirect you? Do you read the Word to receive its correction as well as its encouragement? Are you seeking greater usefulness in love, or comparing your experiences with someone else's? Let these questions help you return your attention to the Lord.

In John 15:1–8, Jesus describes His disciples as branches that must remain in Him to bear fruit. This is a picture of continuing dependence. Prayer and obedience grow within that relationship. As you begin cultivating a disciplined life, keep returning to Christ. Receive His words, bring Him your needs, and respond to what He teaches you. Fruit grows as we draw our strength from Him.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

— John 15:4–5 (KJV)

Begin with a week of surrendered attention

Choose a regular time for prayer and Scripture during the coming week. Make it realistic enough to practice alongside your responsibilities. The time you spend in prayer does not measure God's willingness to meet you. Its purpose is to help you give Him your attention and establish a faithful beginning.

On the first two days, read First Samuel 16:1–13. Notice God's initiative and His concern for the heart. Ask Him to examine your motives. Write down one responsibility you can approach with greater faithfulness.

On the next two days, read Luke 4:14–21 and Acts 1:4–8. Consider the purpose of Spirit-empowered ministry. Pray for someone who needs the gospel, encouragement, or practical care. Ask for wisdom about a respectful next step.

On the remaining days, read John 15:1–8 and Galatians 5:16–25. Consider your dependence on Christ and the character the Spirit forms. Identify one response you can put into practice. Speak with a trusted believer about what you are learning, and ask that person to pray with you.

At the end of the week, review what you have written. Where did the Scriptures challenge you? What did you put into practice? Where do you need to begin again? Give thanks for God's help and carry one faithful habit into the next week.

Holy Spirit, I need Your help. Open my understanding as I read the Word of God. Search my motives, strengthen my faith, and lead me in obedience. Make me attentive to the people You place before me. Give me courage to speak about Jesus and compassion to serve. Form Your fruit in my life, and use the gifts You give for the good of others. I yield myself to You. May Jesus be glorified through my life. Amen.