

Preface



RETHINKING EMPOWERMENT

*You will receive power
when the Holy Spirit has
come upon you; and you
shall be My witnesses both
in Jerusalem, and in all
Judea and Samaria, and
even to the remotest part
of the earth.*

Acts 1:8

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We are told, “Believers should live by the power of the Spirit.” This appeal is primarily based on the promise of Ezekiel 36:27, “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,” and Acts 1:8, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” With the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost believers are supposedly empowered to live the Christian life. If energized to walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, you must ask, What exactly does that mean? How is it worked out in the believer’s life?

This book asks the question, “Does the Spirit actually cause the believer’s obedience?” The usual response is in the affirmative, meaning the Spirit engineers obedience. Then a second question naturally arises, “Why are so many believers seemingly disobedient?” The responses typically go in one of two directions. Either the lack of obedience proves that the person is not a “true” believer, the Reformed or Lordship view, or it indicates that the person has lost his salvation, the Arminian view.

What if the Spirit’s ministry today is not the cause of obedience? What if the Spirit’s current ministry is only to influence the

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believer to obey God's Word by filling, leading, and teaching. If so, each believer must continually make conscious decisions to align his behavior with the Word of God as the Spirit prompts him. If this is so, Christian obedience becomes the result of personal choice, not of the Spirit's power.

Rather than an *empowering* ministry, the biblical pattern for the Christian life presented in the book is the *influencing* ministry of the Spirit. How you understand the Spirit's work in the life of the believer is critical in order to experience authentic Christian living.

Reminder

Please remember that you must distinguish God's empowerment and gifting for service and ministry from the Christian walk. This book addresses the spiritual myth that "special empowerment" is necessary to live the Christian life.