



LEARNING TO MINISTER IN
THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

livestream

IVAN FILBY

Foreword by J. D. Walt

Praise for *Livestream*

With a rare combination of boldness, wisdom, humility, and grace, Dr. Filby reminds us that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us and is always ready to work in and through us. You won't find trite formulas here but an invitation to a lifelong journey of learning how to listen to the Spirit's voice, discern where he is moving, and exercise your faith in the adventure of livestreaming with him.

—**Bishop Keith Cowart**

Free Methodist Church (USA)

Livestream is a wonderful teaching tool for walking a miraculous lifestyle with the Holy Spirit. This will be a great addition to encourage others to live in expectation and readiness to follow the Spirit's leading for an exciting adventure with him!

—**Alan Bushell**

Director for Youth with a Mission

Saint Augustine, FL (USA)

Livestream will inspire, challenge, and stir up faith and a hunger for ministering in and with the Holy Spirit. It's about being available and responding to God's leading to step out in faith by exercising spiritual gifts. Dr. Filby's amazing testimonies and guided reflections instill confidence and motivates us to venture further into a life of faith adventures.

—**Dr. Jeannie Trudel**

President of Christian Heritage College

Brisbane, Australia

There is an undeniable winsomeness to Ivan Filby. He is everything you don't expect in a scholar and university president. The Holy Spirit flows from his being and floods these pages. Be healed. Be encouraged. Be equipped.

—**Rev. Shane L. Bishop**

Sr. Pastor of Christ Church
2010 Distinguished Evangelist of the
United Methodist Church
Fairview Heights, IL (USA)

Livestream by Ivan Filby is an honest, easy to read, practical book that is rooted in Scripture. It is packed with life-giving stories that reveal the power of the Holy Spirit's gifts at work in the lives of ordinary people. I highly recommend it.

—**John Townley**

National Leader of the
Free Methodist Church in the UK & Ireland
Bristol, England, UK

In this book, Dr. Ivan Filby presents a uniquely dynamic yet down-to-earth journey with the Holy Spirit. With the unreserved sharing of his encounters with the Holy Spirit, Dr. Filby invites us to join him to experience a livestreaming of how God accompanies him in a miraculous way, enabling us to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit whenever and wherever we are in need. This book is an essential tool to increase our spiritual sensitivity and a must-read for every Christian!

—**Andrew Yuen**

Founder and General Secretary
of the Media Evangelism Ltd. & Creation TV
Hong Kong

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Seedbed

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ONE

livestreaming

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

—Luke 11:11–13

I walked from my seat to the microphone at the front of the church.

“I keep getting this impression there’s someone here whose hands keep getting hot and cold and are very painful. I’ve no idea what the condition is, but I think God wants to heal you.”

I looked out at the Parkview Free Methodist Church's congregation to see who might respond.

"That's me," came a booming voice from behind. "I think that's me."

I turned around. Dennis, the bass player, continued, "I have Raynaud's syndrome. My hands are cold, and my fingers are very white, sometimes blueish. They are either numb or painful, one or the other. I've lost feeling in my toes, too, and they hurt if it's cold outside."

"Can we pray for you?" I asked.

Pastor John Glennon joined me at the front of the sanctuary. We laid hands on Dennis.

"Father, in the name of Jesus, I take authority over Raynaud's syndrome. We command it to leave. Father, let warmth and feeling come back into Dennis's fingers and toes."

I asked Dennis to let me know if he experienced any change. Two days later, he sent me a text.

"This is Dennis. I wanted to let you know I have experienced healing from Raynaud's syndrome in the past couple of days. I'll give you more details when I see you."

I couldn't wait. I asked for more details then and there.

"The numbness has nearly all disappeared, and I've regained feeling in my toes. Also, warmth has mostly returned to my extremities."

Dennis sent me another update three days later. "Feet okay. Gone is the numbness I felt every morning. My fingers are a

bit cold but are pink in color in that I have blood flow. They would go white during an episode and difficult to warm up. Not so now, thankfully.”

I asked Dennis for an update three years later, as I was writing his story. He texted: “I continue to do well, thank the Lord. No problems with hands at all.”

When I set out on the twenty-minute drive from the president’s house at Greenville University to Parkview Free Methodist Church in Vandalia, Illinois, on Sunday, November 5, 2017, I had no idea God was about to heal Dennis. It wasn’t until the Holy Spirit livestreamed the impression that he wanted to heal a person with painful hands that I knew anything about it at all. This was a Holy Spirit-initiated ministry opportunity from start to finish. When I initiate ministry, not much happens. However, when the Holy Spirit takes the lead, all things are possible when we follow along.

Over the last forty years, I’ve followed the Holy Spirit into literally hundreds of these faith adventures, and I’ve included a few of them in this book. Although I have changed a person’s name here and there to preserve their privacy, all the stories are true. While these real encounters will encourage every reader, I’ve selected these stories with three groups of people in mind. First, I meet many people who hunger for a more profound experience with the Holy Spirit but just don’t know where to begin. If this is you, I hope this book will give you the confidence to step out. Next, some of you have experienced the

Holy Spirit working through you occasionally, but you've not yet learned to flow in the gifts naturally. I hope I can encourage you too. Finally, there will be readers who are used regularly by the Holy Spirit. You'll find plenty of stories in this book that resonate with your own experience and whet your appetite for more. Most important, I hope the book inspires you to mentor others. I meet countless folk eager to begin their adventure with the Holy Spirit. I meet far fewer mentors. I pray that this book encourages you to start or continue to mentor those you meet.

I should say at the outset that I still have much to learn. Compared to some, I'm still a novice. Compared to others, I'm like a Jedi Master of the Spirit. Regardless of our level of maturity or need for development, our responsibility is to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, grow in our use of spiritual gifts, and pass along what we have learned to others. There is always much more to learn, and still people we can mentor. We grow best when we humbly learn from those more experienced than us and serve those following behind.

Charisma

I find it remarkable that I didn't hear much about the Holy Spirit during my first two years as a Jesus follower, especially when the apostle Paul goes to some length to instruct the church in the appropriate use of spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul wrote: "Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and

sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.” Paul listed nine of the Holy Spirit’s gifts later in this chapter:

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (vv. 7–11)

The Greek word Paul uses for “gift” is *charisma*, from which we get the term “charismatic gifts.” *Charis* means “grace” while *charisma* means “grace-gifts.” In more common vernacular, charisma, or charismatic gifts, are Holy Spirit–empowered gifts enabling a Jesus follower to share in God’s work for the good of others. The emphasis on grace is important. We cannot earn these gifts; Father God freely gives them to us for the benefit of others. They are not a sign of maturity but, rather, availability.

I’ve often heard folk talk about the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. While it is true that Paul listed nine in his letter to the Corinthian church, he added six more—serving, teaching,

encouraging, giving, leading, and mercy—in his letter to Jesus followers in Rome:

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Rom. 12:6–8)

Between these two passages, Paul listed fifteen charismatic gifts. I know people who are very passionate about which gifts should be included or omitted from this list. I don't find these arguments helpful. After all, the Holy Spirit's gifts are not like some holy Cub Scout badges we try to collect, showing how smart or good we are. The gifts don't even give us a set of stripes advancing us through the ranks from a spiritual private to a corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, or captain. Instead, the gifts enable us to serve others in a way that we never could without the Holy Spirit's empowerment. I'd rather spend my time pursuing the Holy Spirit than fighting over a definitive list. Where's the fun in that?

What Paul Didn't Say

The context of Paul's letter is vital. Corinth was a pagan city, full of immorality, idolatry, and divisiveness. Paul was not

writing to a church that had no exposure to the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he wrote to a church that did not use the gifts for the common good (see 1 Corinthians 12:8). The Corinthians were immature in their use of spiritual gifts. From Paul's letter, we can glean that the Corinthians likely used spiritual gifts in a free-for-all, no-holds-barred, anything-goes approach. They were not ignorant about the Holy Spirit's gifts *per se*; they were uninformed about how to use the gifts well.

The Corinthian church faced many serious issues that Paul addressed in his letter to the Corinthian church: sexual immorality, a lack of love among Jesus followers, a lack of order when celebrating Communion, and a lack of wisdom using these spiritual gifts. Interestingly, Paul never doubted that these gifts are from the Holy Spirit, and that's important. Given the Corinthian church's immature use of spiritual gifts, not to mention the church's moral failings, he might have questioned the validity of gifts or told the church to quit livestreaming until their lives were more ordered. I can imagine Paul writing: "Now listen up, you Corinthians. You are no longer allowed to speak in tongues or prophesy until you get your lives in order. You're a disgrace to us all. You need to grow up. Stop using spiritual gifts until you learn to use them responsibly. That's an order!"

I find it intriguing that Paul didn't take this approach. Instead, he wrote: "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy" (1 Cor. 14:1).

What Paul Did Say

Instead of discouraging the use of spiritual gifts, he encouraged the Corinthians to desire them even more. Why? Because a mature use of the Holy Spirit's gifts is vital for the healthy growth of any church. We should not be surprised to learn that most churches multiplying worldwide are very open to the use of spiritual gifts. Paul knew that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were not the real problem in the Corinthian church. Instead, immaturity, immorality, and the lack of proper teaching were at the root of the church's problems.

Paul's letter was probably the first time the Corinthian church had heard any instructions on the mature and orderly use of spiritual gifts so that everyone could benefit. Helpfully, Paul gave the Corinthian church extensive advice to help them use spiritual gifts well. We do well to keep these in mind:

- Don't be ignorant about spiritual gifts. (1 Cor. 12:1)
- There are different types of gifts and ministries, and all of them are needed for the church to function well. (12:7–11)
- God gives different spiritual gifts as he deems fit. (12:11)
- Spiritual gifts are intended for the common good, not to make you look good. (12:7, 21–25)
- Speaking in tongues might be talking in human or angelic languages. (13:1)

- Unless our motivation is love, using spiritual gifts gains us nothing. (13:1–3)
- Even the most gifted of us only see or know part of the picture. Stay humble. (13:9–11)
- If anyone speaks a public message in tongues, they should also pray for the interpretation so everyone can benefit. (13:13)
- Eagerly desire spiritual gifts; they help build the church. (14:1)
- Speaking in tongues is speaking mysteries by the Spirit. Only God understands it. (14:2)
- Those who speak in tongues don't talk to people but talk to God. (14:2)
- The person who prophesies speaks to people for their encouragement, strengthening, and comfort. (14:3)
- Prophecy is a better gift for public worship. (14:5)
- Be eager to use spiritual gifts that build up other people. (14:12)
- When a person prays in tongues, their spirit prays, but their mind has no idea what's going on. (14:14)
- It's beneficial to pray both in tongues and your natural human language. (14:15)
- It's great to speak in tongues, but in church, it is preferable to speak words that others can understand so they can be strengthened. (14:19)

- When the church comes together, everyone has a part to play. (14:26)
- Up to three people may prophesy at one time, and others must carefully weigh what is said. (14:29)
- You are responsible for using spiritual gifts in an orderly way. (14:32–33)
- Be eager to prophesy. (14:39)
- Don't forbid speaking in tongues. (14:39)
- Do everything in an orderly way to build up other people's faith. (14:40)

Not everyone takes advice well. Some people are know-it-alls who don't seek anyone's help. Sadly, church history has had far too many such men and women. Thankfully, the Corinthians were not among them. How do we know? Paul writes to them again in 2 Corinthians and doesn't see the need to bring up the issue again. The Corinthians appear to have taken correction well. We would do well to emulate the Corinthian church, not in their sensuality, but in their willingness to put things right.

Livestreaming

I recently heard speaker and author J. D. Walt differentiate between downloading and livestreaming in the Christian life. He likened downloading to preparing a sermon. A sermon is researched, rehearsed, and delivered at a set time and place.

A person preparing a talk or sermon knows what they want to say and (hopefully) how to bring the address to a close. Livestreaming is the exact opposite. It is spontaneous, unrehearsed, and can happen anywhere and at any time of the Holy Spirit's choosing.

I find livestreaming a helpful metaphor, and I'll use it throughout the book to capture the sense of risk and excitement of allowing the Holy Spirit to move in and through us. We simply have no idea what the Holy Spirit will do next. When we stream the Holy Spirit's love and power, we live a life full of jaw-dropping, head-scratching, mind-boggling surprises.

Throughout the book, you'll find livestreaming stories interwoven with thoughtful reflection. This interlacing of real stories with insight replicates how livestreaming works in practice. Allowing the Holy Spirit to livestream through us is always an act of faith and often leads us into new experiences. As we reflect upon our livestreaming experiences, our questions naturally lead us to pray for insight, search Scripture for wisdom, and learn from others as we seek to make sense of what the Lord has done. In turn, when we pray and study, it's like we are holding up our hand, asking the Holy Spirit to "pick me, pick me" when he wants to livestream again. And so on!

The tremendous privilege we have as Jesus followers is that we get to help one another along on our journeys of faith. Spiritual gifts, used well, are tools in God's arsenal that he uses

Bob prayed for several weeks before he had his first livestream. It will happen because God loves you and wants to use you. It's a promise, not from me, but from the good, good Father.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. When you hear the words *Father God*, what do you imagine God is like? What words would you use to describe God? Are you able to differentiate God's qualities from your own father's?
2. What was the best gift your earthly dad ever gave to you? In the light of this, reflect on Jesus' saying, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).
3. Think back over your life. Can you spot times when the Holy Spirit has livestreamed through you to bless others?
4. Why do you think Paul gave so many instructions on the use of spiritual gifts?

I heartily commend *Livestream* to anyone who desires to be used more powerfully in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You won't find trite formulas here but an invitation to a lifelong journey of learning how to listen to the Spirit's voice, discern where he is moving, and exercise your faith in the adventure of livestreaming with him.

KEITH COWART, BISHOP

Free Methodist Church, USA

Livestream is a wonderful teaching tool for walking a miraculous lifestyle with the Holy Spirit. This will be a great addition to encourage others to live in expectation and readiness to follow the Spirit's leading for an exciting adventure with him!

ALAN BUSHELL

Director for Youth with a Mission, Saint Augustine, FL

Livestream will inspire, challenge, and stir up faith and a hunger for ministering in and with the Holy Spirit. Dr. Filby's amazing testimonies and guided reflections instill confidence and motivates us to venture further into a life of faith adventures.

DR. JEANNIE TRUDEL

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IVAN FILBY has had a distinguished career in higher education, including serving as the twelfth president of Greenville University in Illinois. Prior to moving to the United States in 2005, Ivan taught business studies at Trinity College Dublin for sixteen years. Ivan holds a PhD in management from Aston University, a master of arts in evangelism studies from Cliff College, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Ivan has taught people how to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit on five continents for more than thirty years. He is married to Kathie and they have two grown children.



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