

Life in the Spirit Study Bible

Author's Preface

The vision, call and urgency from God for this study Bible came to me while serving as a missionary in Brazil. I realized how much Christian workers needed a Bible that would give them direction in their thinking and preaching. Thus, ten years ago I began writing the notes and articles for this work. Later, when I came back to the United States for a short period of time, I discovered a similar desire among both pastors and lay people for a study Bible with notes that have a Pentecostal emphasis.

During the past number of years I have written with an increasing assurance that the Holy Spirit is not confined to the pages of Scripture, but that He wants to act today as He did in Bible times. The Spirit has come to remain personally with God's people, and His abiding presence is to be manifested in righteousness and power (*Matthew 6:33; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 4:20; Hebrews 1:8*). In and through the church, God's Spirit desires to work in the same manner as He did in the earthly ministry of Jesus and continued to do in the apostolic church of the first century.

This study Bible is called the *NIV Life in the Spirit Study Bible*. It has been so named because it is founded on three fundamental convictions:


1. The original revelation of Christ and the apostles as recorded in the Bible is fully inspired by the Holy Spirit; along with the Old Testament, it is God's inerrant and infallible truth and the ultimate authority for the church of Christ today. All believers throughout history are dependent on the words and teachings of Biblical revelation for determining God's standard of truth and practice. In other words, we must view the New Testament message, standards and experience as God's preeminent pattern for the church, valid for all times.
2. It is the task of every generation of believers not only to accept the New Testament as God's inspired Word, but also to sincerely seek to reproduce in their personal lives and congregations the same faith, devotion and power demonstrated in and through the faithful members of the early church. I am persuaded that the full life in the Spirit as promised by Christ and experienced by New Testament believers is still available for God's people today (*John 10:10; 17:20; Acts 2:38–39; Ephesians 3:20–21; 4:11–13*). It is the divine inheritance of all God's children to receive the fullness of Christ in the original power of the Holy Spirit.
3. The church will fully experience the original kingdom power and life in the Holy Spirit only as it seeks with all its heart the righteousness and holiness set forth by God in the New Testament as his standard and will for all believers (*2 Corinthians 6:14–18*). Kingdom power and kingdom righteousness go together; they cannot be separated. Jesus states that we must seek both God's "*kingdom and his righteousness*" (*Matthew 6:33*). The apostle Paul states that God's kingdom consists of both "*power*" (*1 Corinthians 4:20*) and "*righteousness*" (*Romans 14:17*). Thus the way to the fullness of God's kingdom with all its redemptive power is found in sincere faith in and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and in a separation from all unrighteousness that offends both God and the Holy Spirit whom He has poured out (*Acts 2:17,38–40*).

In summary, the major purpose of this study Bible is to lead you, the reader, to an abiding faith in holy Scripture, and especially a deeper faith in the New Testament's apostolic message that will lead you to a greater expectancy for a New Testament experience made possible by the fullness of Christ living in the church (*Ephesians 4:13*) and by the fullness of the Holy Spirit living in the believer (*Acts 2:4; 4:31*). We sincerely hope

and pray that all readers will earnestly seek the New Testament church's devotion to God, its longing for the nearness of the risen Christ, its unshakable trust in and love for God's Word, its zeal for truth and righteousness, its mutual care for other believers, its compassion for the lost, its dedication to a life of fervent prayer, its passion for holiness, its fullness in the Spirit, its manifestation of spiritual gifts, its urgency to preach the gospel to all nations, and its hope for the imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I gratefully acknowledge that I owe a great debt to those who served on the Editorial Committee for this study Bible. Their evaluations and suggestions have been invaluable. They gave of themselves and sacrificially took time from their own tasks to help in this work. What will be accomplished in God's kingdom through this work is in no small measure due to their help in the Lord. Also, I have benefited from the learning and labor of godly writers past and present who have produced a vast amount of literature and commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. I have thankfully entered into their research and expertise and have reaped where they have sown.

Throughout these years of labor I have felt a profound sense of weakness and unworthiness to expound on God's holy Word. Many times I have been driven to my knees in need of special grace and help. I can testify that God, who is rich in mercy and whose grace is sufficient, has sustained me by His Spirit. Through all the long days and hours His Word has spoken to my heart. My desire for a full manifestation of Biblical Christianity has deepened and developed into an intense longing that is surpassed only by my longing for that day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior. With thanks to God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—for the privilege of laboring in the Scriptures, I send forth this work unto Him who loves us and gave Himself for us so that we may have life and have it to the full (*John 10:10*).



Donald C. Stamps
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Note: The author's and editor's royalties from the *NIV Life in the Spirit Study Bible* will go entirely to missions for the translating and printing of additional copies of the *NIV Life in the Spirit Study Bible* in foreign languages.

On November 7, 1991, after a year-long struggle with cancer, Donald C. Stamps went to be with his Lord and Savior (*Philippians 1:21,23*). Though he did not live to see the complete *NIV Life in the Spirit Study Bible* published, he did persevere to finish writing the notes. We gratefully acknowledge that his vision, his love for God and the Word, his zeal for truth and righteousness, and his persevering faith enabled God to use him in a crucial way for the realization of this Study Bible. Thus we dedicate in his memory this edition of God's Word to the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom, righteousness and truth throughout the world.