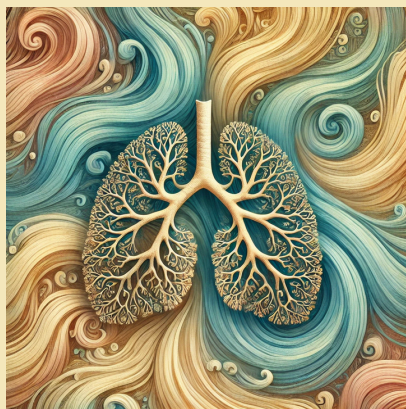


The Christ Breath



Rediscovering
the Power of Breath
In Christian Faith

“... he breathed on them and said,
“Receive the Holy Breath.”
John 20:22

Darren L. Hagood

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*The Christ Breath: Rediscovering the Power of
Breath in Christian Faith*

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To Irene Hagood, you were commissioned to search for the “true church.” Granny, I think we are finally finding it.

Disclaimer

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Introduction

My mother came to Christian faith later in life, and as with everything she did, she embraced it with great passion. She devoured every book she could find, joined every discipleship class available, and eventually became a teacher herself. Early on, she was struck by the absence of teaching about the Holy Spirit in our faith tradition. Captivated by the Spirit's presence in the scriptures, she believed it was an essential teaching for our churches. So, she studied it deeply and shared what she learned.

I was only six or seven at the time, too young to fully grasp her lessons, but I remember when she created one of her first email accounts. Her handle was "holypneuma."

I recognized the word "holy" from Sunday services, but I had to ask, "What is puh-neh-ooma, Mom?"

"Spirit," she said. "Holy pneuma means Holy Spirit."

Whether in her classes or everyday life, my mother was consumed by one question: What does it mean for someone's life to be changed by the Spirit? What are the signs that the Holy Spirit is present in someone's heart? These questions stayed with her, and in time, they passed down to me.

Under the teachings of both my parents, I read many scriptures, memorized chapters of the Bible, got baptized, and eventually earned

an undergraduate degree in Biblical Text and a Master of Divinity. But even with all this knowledge and experience, I still found myself wondering—where was the Spirit in my own life? I had never spoken in tongues like the Apostles, never received visions like Peter, never cast out demons or healed the sick. I was left asking: What is this Spirit, really?

Yes, I had been baptized, but the Holy Ghost didn't seem to "fall on me." Or at least, I didn't feel it. I assumed I had the Spirit because I followed the prescribed steps — getting baptized, praying, studying scripture — but deep down, I questioned it.

I remember one day when I was around 15 or 16. My family had left me home alone,

and I decided to go straight to the source. In my bedroom, I cried out to God, “Please speak to me! Let me know you are real. I believe—I really do—but can you give me some confirmation that I’m not imagining this? Please, God!”

Silence.

I pounded my fist on the floor. “Please, God! I want to follow you. I will follow you even if you do not answer me—but please, just answer!”

More silence.

I cried and eventually reasoned that perhaps God had a special journey for me—one

where I was meant to follow even without hearing a word. Even if I never felt anything.

Don't get me wrong—I had experienced many signs of God in my life. My heart had been transformed from holding grudges to offering deep forgiveness. I overcame addiction through the power of confession. And through Christ's love, I learned to be a servant, especially to those in the worst conditions. All of this, I attribute to the Spirit's work in me. But still, I longed for a deeper knowing—a direct, undeniable encounter with the Holy Spirit, something even remotely close to the experiences I read about in scripture.

This book is the product of that longing. After decades of journeying as a lay Christian,

Bible student, seminary student, minister and eventually a breathwork coach and wellness organization owner, I believe God has finally answered my prayers in a way I never expected. Through breathwork, I found a path to the Holy Spirit—a path that has brought healing, transformation, and peace to my life.

Moreover through my time as a coach I witnessed hundreds of people release anxiety, stress and trauma simply by breathing. Many of these people without any prompting from me described their experience as emotionally, physically and even spiritually healing. Witnessing these healing experiences as a facilitator along with my own personal experience as a practitioner created the

foundation for this book. My hope and prayer is that the teachings and practices here will be as beneficial to you as they have been to me.

In this book, you will find my meanderings on the relationship between the Spirit and Breath. Some thoughts are unfinished. Some claims could be clarified or strengthened. But the thrust of my work lies not in the words or claims, but in the practice. If you practice what is in this book, especially in part two, then a new way of experiencing God's Spirit will open for you.

Part 1

The Power of The Christ Breath

Chapter 1

Rediscovering the Breath of Life

As we left the church, we saw a woman sitting outside under the shaded area with tables. We would have missed her completely if not for the fact that half of her face was blue—badly swollen, bulging, like she'd been beaten. Yet it wasn't bruised or bloody, just blue. She didn't seem to be in pain, just sitting there with a quiet air of shame.

I thought to myself, *Didn't we just finish a Bible class about the power of the Holy Spirit?* About how the apostles healed the lame, cast out demons, made the blind see?

“We should be able to help her!” I said to my sisters.

“But how?” they asked.

“Well, it says all you have to do is believe... to have faith,” I replied.

“Yeah... you're on your own with that one,” they said, stepping back.

But I had faith. So I said, “I’m going to do it!” I turned toward the woman, ready to take action, only to hear my mother’s voice freeze me in place: “Do what?”

“I’m... I’m... going to heal that lady... Mom?” I stammered.

My mother's face flushed with embarrassment.

“Darren, you can't do that.”

“But... Jesus did, and the Bible says...”

“Darren, YOU can't do that,” she insisted, her tone shutting the whole thing down. I can't remember her exact reasoning, but it was a mix of how rude and embarrassing it would be along with a vague sense of how impossible it was to heal someone like that. She didn't say it directly, but I could feel it.

So we walked away. We left the church, and I was left confused.

I have to obey my parents like Jesus says. I have to be honest and a person of integrity like Jesus says. I have to tithe and be

a responsible big brother like Jesus says. I can do all that, but when it comes to Jesus giving his followers “power and authority to drive out demons and cure diseases” (Luke 9:1), I can’t?

I wasn’t mad at my mom. If anything, I was partially relieved because, let’s be honest, I was deathly nervous. *What if it didn’t work? What if I prayed with all the faith I could muster, and nothing happened? What does “really believing” even feel like?* There were countless times I’d prayed with what I thought was genuine faith, and nothing happened.

I couldn’t articulate it back then, but this was the struggle. *How do I leave a Bible class where we’re told God can do anything—that*

through faith I can do “all things through Christ”—but in real life, that power seems far away, almost unreachable?

The only way I could make sense of it was through the vague notion, often implied by my family and common in our faith tradition, that the Spirit just doesn't work the way it did back then. Maybe something had changed, and for some reason, God wasn't letting the Spirit operate in the same way today. This belief wasn't unique to my family—it was a widely held view among many Christians I knew. They reasoned that while the Spirit's power was clearly evident in the early church, through miracles, healings, and direct divine intervention, those miraculous workings were

reserved for that particular time, to establish the church.

But I never quite bought into that. In part because I knew Christian parents who kicked their kids out of the house for “living in sin.” If the Spirit was not at work in the same way as the early church then how could we be held to the same moral standards as the early church? Weren’t their children also in need of the same Spirit to help them live right? Somehow the Spirit that supposedly no longer heals is still here to help us live holy lives. I wasn’t convinced. Something wasn’t adding up.

Years later, I still wrestled with this tension, especially in my own life. I remember telling my parents, just before I got married,

about the struggle I was having to maintain purity. I'd made it through my early years without giving in to temptation, but as I started dating and the months wore on, the pressure built. I remember coming home one summer and telling my parents, "I can't do this anymore. I'm marrying my girlfriend as soon as I get back to school. This desire is just too strong."

My parents shot back, "But son, the fruit of the Spirit is self-control!"

I replied, "I know, but that fruit ain't showing up right now!"

Am I alone in this? This chasm between what we read in scripture and what we actually

experience? I share an example about teenage hormones to be authentic (those of us who influenced by Christian purity culture know this struggle all too well). I also hope it brings about a few laughs—but what about the dire spiritual circumstances? When Jesus calls us to leave our former lives for a more abundant life among God’s people, and those same churches become brutally divided over politics and propaganda? When our scriptures promise us peace beyond understanding, yet our church families are overwhelmed with stress, anxiety, and depression?

Is the Spirit Here Now, or Not?

These questions have haunted me for the better part of my life. I longed to experience what I

was reading about in scripture—not just physical miracles, but the inner, social miracles too: real forgiveness, loving my enemies, embodying the fruits of the Spirit. Who wouldn't want that? Imagine what it would do for families, marriages, and churches if we could live out love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

But what I came to realize is that the answer had been right under my nose all along—literally. And it's not complicated or wrapped in theological jargon. It's simple... almost too simple.

It's breathing.

This book is an exploration of that truth —not just for physical miracles (though they do happen), but for a new understanding of the Holy Spirit and how it bears fruit in our lives. My proposal is that “the Holy Spirit” can be understood as “the Christ Breath.” I call it the Christ Breath because Christ reveals to us that the Holy Breath is always available—that the very air we breathe is endowed with God’s life, with God’s Spirit. This is the same Holy Breath that created all things, as the Gospel of John tells us: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3). Christ breathed life into the world, and in John 20, he breathes new life into his disciples.

This is why I call it the Christ Breath. Christ's breath is not simply oxygen—it's the breath of the one who authored the cosmos, breathed life into earth's atmosphere, and now breathes this new life into us.

The breath and the Spirit are one and the same. But the key is whether we awaken to this truth. It's through intentional practice, through understanding, that we open ourselves to receive the Holy Breath, the very presence of God that is always with us.

Have you ever felt distant from the Holy Spirit, unsure of how to experience its promised power? What if the answer is right under your nose?

This book will show you that living in the Christ Breath opens a new dimension of Christian spirituality. Through the Christ Breath, we find not only healing and transformation but a way to live in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, every single day.

Next Chapter Preview:

In Chapter 2, we'll dive deeper into this understanding of the Christ Breath and start to uncover how breath is more than just a biological function—it's the key to living in alignment with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2

Breathing Life Into Faith

It was a family barbecue. Maybe Memorial Day or the Fourth of July—I don't really remember. What I do remember is my dad saying, "Sit down and focus on your breathing."

I was furious. Didn't he know I was in the middle of an epic hide-and-seek game with my cousins? This was supposed to be my year! For once, I was about to win. My older cousins had always been faster and stronger, but today... today was my day. But nope, here I was, sitting down and "focusing on my breathing." All because I ran into the house to grab my inhaler.

Mom usually carried it in her purse, and whenever I needed it, she would give it to me without a second thought. But today, Dad was home. I knew I should've waited until the game was over.

“If you keep relying on that inhaler, it'll make your lungs weak,” he said. “I told you this.”

“But Dad, I can't breathe,” I wheezed, feeling the tightness in my chest.

“Go sit in the living room and focus on your breathing,” he insisted.

Dad wasn't playing around. He had asthma growing up, so he knew the drill. But instead of letting me rely on my inhaler, he wanted me to learn how to control my

breathing—to do the inner work. I hated it then, but looking back, I realize how much that shaped me. To this day, I credit my dad for the fact that I'm asthma-free. More than that, I credit him for helping me develop an intimate relationship with my breath.

The Science and Spirit of Christian Breathwork

I share this story because Christian spirituality, in many ways, is like my lungs. It thrives when we center on the inner work—when we sit down and focus on our breathing. And I mean this quite literally.

This inner work of breathing, otherwise known as Breathwork, is deeply connected to

how God designed our bodies. During my time as an active pastor, our church secretary, Diana, introduced me to a book called *Breath: The Science of a Lost Art* by James Nestor. I hadn't heard of it, but she thought it might resonate with my own breathwork journey—and she was right.

Nestor's research explores how breathing impacts the body, from the negative effects of mouth breathing to the powerful benefits of nasal breathing and specific breath patterns. What intrigued me most, though, was his discovery of how breath influences our mental and emotional states.

Nestor found that when our bodies sense a threat, the brain triggers the fight-or-

flight response, causing us to take short, shallow breaths. This short breathing can be helpful in real danger as it sends energy through the body and helps us to be vigilant. However, Nestor points out that many of us breathe this way even when we're not in harm's way, leading to chronic stress. Remarkably, shallow breathing can trick the body into staying in an anxious state, even when no threat exists. *We act and respond from a resting state of fear.*

Moreover, when we are in this stressful state for too long, our minds continue to search for the threat. And with no threat to be found, the mind starts creating stressors or seeing threats where there are none. Imagine the

harm that happens when our breathing causes us to create stress in our families, friendships, and even our churches. Some of us know all too well how peaceful moments became tense, not because of something that happened, but because of the stress people brought with them.

On the flip side, Nestor's research demonstrates that intentional, slow breathing can bring about calm and focus. Deep breathing, especially into the diaphragm, tells the nervous system that we are safe, allowing peace to flow even in chaotic situations. There are nerves on the diaphragm that expand from deep breathing, causing us to shift to what is called the parasympathetic state. This shift—from shallow, stressed breathing to slow, deep

breathing—can change our internal state regardless of what's happening around us. In the same way that shallow breathing creates stress and anxiety, deep breathing can cultivate peace and calm, even under duress.

Nestor's findings confirmed what I had been discovering in my own practice. What he calls diaphragmatic breathing is a central aspect of what I refer to as the Christ Breath. This way of breathing invites us to anchor ourselves in spiritual qualities derived from our identity in God, rather than in fear. The Christ Breath creates space for love, joy, and peace, even when the world around us is in turmoil.

I will talk more extensively about the Christ Breath in the coming chapters, but allow

me to briefly establish its biblical connection with diaphragmatic breathing.

Breath and Spirit

Before I can show the biblical connection between the diaphragmatic breath and the Christ Breath, it is important to first establish the connection between Breath and the Spirit.

We often talk about spirituality and the Holy Spirit, but many Christians don't realize that the word "Spirit" is rooted in the Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek word *pneuma*, both of which also mean "breath" or "wind." So, when I talk about doing the inner work, I'm talking about learning our own breath—

exercising it, expanding it, holding it, and using it to become who God has called us to be.

I know this may sound foreign, but as I will show below, breathwork has biblical roots, even if it's been lost or hidden over the years.

Consider the creation of the first human in Genesis. God grabs the soil and “breathes into his nostrils the breath of life.” That’s how we came to be. And it’s significant that the very first act that animated us was God’s breath. Later, as humanity strays from God’s design, God declares, “My breath will not remain in humans forever,” showing how deeply connected our lives are to the breath of God.

These texts, along with countless others we'll explore, reveal a profound truth: God's Spirit and our lives are tied to the very air we breathe. Ancient cultures, including Jewish traditions, believed the air was infused with a divine life force—something more than just oxygen keeping us alive. They believed the air itself carried a special, life-giving quality from the divine. The breath itself was, and is, our connection to God.

The Breath of God

Remember Genesis 1:2, “The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” Some translations say “Spirit,” others say “wind,” but again, remember it can also mean “breath”? The same breath that would later animate Adam was

about to breathe all of creation into existence. This isn't just a poetic thought; it's the foundational idea that God's breath carries life—new life, in fact.

One of the most fascinating discoveries I've come across is that many scholars believe the divine name, YHWH, isn't meant to be pronounced with words but with breath itself. YH is the sound of the inhale, and WH the sound of the exhale. In other words, our very act of breathing is infused with the name of God. Every breath we take—whether we know it or not—is a form of calling out to and connecting with God.

When I first realized this, it blew my mind. Every breath is a divine connection.

We're not just inhaling air; we're inhaling the presence of God. Our whole existence begins with that first breath as a baby and ends with that last breath when we die. Even when Jesus was on the cross, he cried out, "Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit," or "Breath," just before he "breathed his last."

So, breath and life—they're intertwined. It's so simple, yet so powerful.

Nestor and the Fruit of the Spirit

When we take this biblical understanding of the Breath and apply it to Nestor's explanation of diaphragmatic breathing, what emerges is a fresh understanding of scriptures on the Spirit.

Keeping Nestor's findings in mind, consider Paul's famous passage in Galatians 5, but this time, instead of translating *pneuma* as "the Spirit," I will translate it as "the Breath":

"I say be guided by the Breath and you won't carry out your selfish desires. A person's selfish desires are set against the Breath, and the Breath is set against one's selfish desire... The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious, since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good, idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that... But the fruit of the

Breath is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

I will revisit this passage in greater depth in our final chapter, but for now, simply notice how many “selfish desires” are ultimately the responses of humans under threat or, in short, humans in fear. Paul mentions “hate, fighting, losing your temper... conflict.” These are all fight-or-flight responses from a body whose mind is convinced that it is in danger. Poor breathing habits impact one’s self-control, sexual appetite, and more. What Paul lists as selfish desires are mostly, if not entirely, byproducts of shallow breathing.

On the other hand, notice what Paul mentions as products of the Breath. One of the clearest indicators is “peace!” But as I will show you, “peace” is not the only fruit that comes by way of the Breath. When practiced with proper intention, many, if not all, of the fruits of the Spirit begin to grow in one’s life as a byproduct of this deep breathing.

Breathing Through Crisis

I came to fully realize the power of breath during the pandemic. As lead minister of a church in Southern California, I did my best to navigate the challenges of virtual worship, socially distanced Bible studies, and Zoom meetings. But the weight on my shoulders

wasn't just from the pandemic. It was also from witnessing the murder of George Floyd, the protests, the political unrest, and the racial tension in our country. I couldn't sleep at night. My body was tense. I felt like I was always on edge.

That's when I stumbled across a YouTube video featuring a man from the Netherlands. He talked about climbing a mountain in shorts, in the dead of winter, because he could control his body temperature through breathwork. He explained how he had learned to manage his grief, after losing his wife, through focused breathing. His story hit me hard.

If breath could help him through grief and depression, maybe it could help me with my stress.

That night, I tried one of his short 11-minute breathing exercises. I didn't know what to expect. The first round went by, and I felt okay, nothing major. Then the second round brought a little light-headedness, and my hands began to tingle. By the third round, I felt this deep sense of peace wash over me. Before the video was even finished, I fell into the deepest, most restful sleep I'd had in years.

I woke up the next morning feeling... different. That constant undercurrent of anxiety had lessened. The tension in my shoulders had

eased. The world outside hadn't changed, but something inside me had.

The Peace That Surpasses Understanding

It's hard to explain the transformation that happened that night. It wasn't just about having better sleep. It was something deeper, something that felt like what the Bible calls "the peace that surpasses understanding." In just a few breaths, I felt more at peace than I had in months, if not years. The world was still in chaos, but I was finally at rest.

As someone with both an academic and pastoral background, I knew I had to dig

deeper. I began researching the physiological effects of breath on the body and comparing them with the biblical understanding of the Spirit. And what I found was mind-blowing.

Breathing, when done with intention and focus, has the power to shift not just our physical bodies but also our spiritual and emotional well-being. It's more than just a biological function—it's a spiritual practice. When done with spiritual intention, our regular breathing has the capacity to transform our hearts and minds. This transformative breathwork practice, rooted in Christian spirituality, is what I like to call the **Christ Breath**.

Next Chapter Preview:

In Chapter 3, we'll start to unpack what it means to breathe with intention and how Jesus breathed life into his disciples. We'll also explore how this understanding of the Christ Breath can transform the way we live out our faith.

Chapter 3

Receiving the Christ Breath

When Christians hear me say, “Breath and Spirit are the same word in the Bible,” the reactions usually split into two camps. On one hand, some are curious and fascinated, especially when I show them passages in Greek and Hebrew, explaining how *ruach* and *pneuma* mean both Spirit and breath. It’s like a lightbulb goes off for them, but often it remains a kind of “interesting fact”—something novel to tuck away without fundamentally shifting their faith or practice.

Then there's the other group—the ones who resist. “You can't just equate the Spirit of God with breath,” they argue. They reason: God's Spirit is holy, set apart. How can something as common as breathing be holy? This group holds fast to the idea that the Spirit must be more than our breath. In their view, breathing is something everyone does, but the Holy Spirit is special, reserved for believers.

I get where both reactions are coming from, but I think both groups are missing the full picture. To address both responses, let's take a look at one of the most striking passages in the New Testament.

Jesus Breathes on the Disciples

“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Breath’” (John 20:19-22).

This passage is fascinating for several reasons. First, John is the only Gospel where the apostles receive the Holy Spirit while Jesus is physically present with them. In the book of Acts, we read about the Holy Spirit descending

as a great wind after Jesus' ascension. But in John's Gospel, Jesus breathes on his disciples, giving them the Holy Spirit while still with them. This is a crucial moment where Jesus formally passes on his mission to the apostles.

But what really strikes me is the way Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit—by breathing on them. Think about that. John's Gospel doesn't say he gave them a special prayer or laid hands on them. It says, "he breathed on them."

As I will show below, Jesus' interaction with the apostles shows that the Holy Spirit is, in fact, the Holy Breath. The same breath that gives us life, the same breath that carries us through each day, is infused with God's Spirit.

The air we breathe carries the potential to connect us with the divine in every moment.

In the Beginning Was the Breath

To fully understand this moment in John, we need to go back to how the Gospel begins. John 1:1 starts with a clear homage to Genesis: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Just like Genesis 1:1 begins with “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,” John echoes this phrase to show that Jesus, the Word, was there from the start—actively participating in creation. Therefore when we read about Jesus, especially in John’s Gospel, we are not simply reading about a human but

the Divine Word that created all things acting through a human incarnation.

Thus, the breath of God that hovered over the waters in Genesis, the breath that animated Adam, is the same breath that Jesus now shares with his disciples. Jesus, **the incarnate Word**, is breathing life into the apostles, just as God breathed life into Adam. This breath—this Holy Breath—is the source of all life, and Jesus is passing it on to his followers.

The significance of Jesus breathing on the disciples is twofold. First, it shows that the Holy Spirit isn't something distant or otherworldly. It's as close as our breath. Second, it points to the idea that receiving the

Holy Spirit is not necessarily about special rituals (though they are important!)—it’s about recognizing that God’s Spirit is present in the very air we breathe - that’s if we will receive it!

What Does Holy Breathing Look Like?

You might be thinking, “Okay, so breath and Spirit are connected. But I’ve been breathing my whole life, and I’ve never felt anything holy about it.”

That’s a fair point. The act of breathing itself doesn’t automatically create spiritual transformation. Just as Jesus intentionally breathed on his disciples, there’s an intentionality to what I call “holy breathing” or

Christ Breath. It's not just about inhaling and exhaling; it's about breathing with awareness, with spiritual intention.

When Jesus breathed on his disciples, it wasn't just an ordinary breath. He was bringing awareness to something powerful—something holy inherently in the breath. In my experience, when God's children engage in intentional breathwork, we open ourselves up to receiving that same power in new ways.

Holy breathing is not just the physical act of drawing in air; it's about focusing our attention on the presence of God - the life of the Spirit - in each breath. It's about allowing the breath to connect us more deeply with the

divine, grounding us in God's presence and transforming our inner life.

A Breath Set Apart

In the biblical sense, the word “holy” simply means “set apart for a special purpose.” When we engage in holy breathing, we’re setting apart our breath for spiritual purposes. We’re using our breath as a way to align ourselves with God’s Spirit, to open ourselves to transformation.

One might ask—what differentiates holy breathing from the shallow breathing that James Nestor spoke about? Is not the breath present in both? Well, yes, but it’s a bit more

intricate than it seems. Remember, shallow breathing has its place. It activates our fight-or-flight mode to protect us, sending a great degree of energy throughout the body. This protection is good—God designed us for it. However, the question is whether this activation of the body is rooted and guided by our identity in God's Spirit or rooted in the fear that comes from identifying with the physical world.

I will touch on this more in later chapters, but the more we practice holy breathing, the more we come to a sense that God is the true source of our life. Not our parents, not society, not the media, and not even those we love. We did not come from

them or even primarily for them. We came from and for God. To live and operate from this understanding is to anchor our identity in God's Spirit, in God's Breath, as the true source of our life.

When we forget this fundamental truth and begin to draw our identity from temporary sources—like parents, jobs, nations, media, lovers, and so on—we shift from anchoring our identity in the eternal God to anchoring it in the ever-changing, temporary, material, and social world. Identifying with a temporary world only leads to fear, and a body controlled by fear struggles to become a vessel for the Holy Breath. As scripture reminds us, “perfect love casts out fear,” so when we are operating

from fear, it becomes more challenging to hear the voice and feel the presence of God.

This is why breathwork has the potential to be so transformative. It's not just about relaxation or stress relief—though those are important benefits. It's about using the breath as a spiritual tool, a way to invite the Holy Spirit to move in us, through us, and around us. When we approach breathing with this kind of intention, we begin to experience the fruits of the Spirit in new ways. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control—all of these can be cultivated through intentional breathwork as we allow the Holy Breath to fill us and transform us from

the inside out.

The Practice of Holy Breathing

So what does this actually look like in practice?

The first step is simply to become aware of your breath. In your daily life, take moments to pause and notice your breathing. Is it shallow or deep? Fast or slow? Are you breathing from your chest or from your diaphragm?

Once you become aware of your breath, start to recognize God's presence into your breathing. With each inhale, imagine drawing in the Holy Spirit. With each exhale, imagine releasing whatever is holding you back—fear, anxiety, anger, or stress.

It's a simple practice, but it has the potential to change your life. Just as Jesus breathed on his disciples and filled them with the Holy Spirit, you can invite the Holy Breath to fill you with new life and new energy every day.

Next Chapter Preview:

In Chapter 4, we'll dive deeper into the practice of holy breathing, exploring specific breathwork techniques that can help us connect more deeply with the Holy Spirit and cultivate the fruits of the Spirit in our daily lives.

Part 2
Practicing the
Christ Breath

Chapter 4

Beginning with the Breath: Gentle Breathing Practices

In the Christian tradition, the breath has always been sacred. From the moment God breathed life into Adam to Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit upon His disciples, we understand breath not merely as a biological function but a spiritual force. In this chapter, we will explore the transformative power of gentle breathing practices, laying a foundation for a deeper journey into what I call the "Holy Breath."

Our first practice is one that we developed in collaboration with the University of California, Irvine's nursing school. This

breathing series was initially created for mothers-to-be, guiding them to release stress and tension before sleep. However, the gentle rhythm of breath, combined with intentional stillness and reflection, can serve anyone who desires peace, calm, and connection with the divine.

Gentle Breathing Series: Rest and Reflect

This series involves four rounds of breathing, designed to release stress from the body while cultivating a deeper awareness of the breath. Each round emphasizes the exhale being longer than the inhale, which signals the body to move into a state of calm and restoration. You can

play a guided audio session by clicking [here](#) and going to "[Gentle Breathing Meditations.](#)" You can also click the title of this chapter.

For those reading along, we begin with the following pattern:

Round 1:

Inhale for 3 seconds.

Exhale for 5 seconds.

Repeat for 15 breaths.

Round 2:

Inhale for 4 seconds.

Exhale for 7 seconds.

Repeat for 13 breaths.

Round 3:

Inhale for 5 seconds.

Exhale for 9 seconds.

Repeat for 10 breaths.

The fourth round is simply a repeat of round three.

Round 4:

Inhale for 5 seconds.

Exhale for 9 seconds.

Repeat for 10 breaths.

Post-Breathing Stillness

After completing the breathing rounds, we allow for a minute of stillness (you can always extend this time). This is a time to sit quietly, letting the body and mind rest in the peace created by the practice. For some, this stillness is where they first experience the Holy Breath—a deep, calming presence within that goes beyond just relaxation. It is in these moments that we can begin to feel God's sustaining presence in the very air we breathe.

Reflection on Gratitude: Aligning with the Spirit

We conclude the practice with a guided reflection on gratitude. While the series we

developed with UC Irvine is secular, in my own spiritual practice, this reflection is deeply rooted in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, which teaches us to "give thanks in all circumstances."

Gratitude is more than a positive thought or polite expression; it is a spiritual practice, a way to align our hearts and minds with the Holy Spirit.

When we intentionally bring to mind things we are grateful for—even in the smallest ways—we open ourselves to the flow of the Holy Breath. Research shows that even 3 minutes of gratitude-focused breathing can have profound effects on our immune system and mental resilience. In this practice, we can see how the ancient spiritual wisdom of Paul

intersects with modern science. Gratitude doesn't just change our minds; it changes our physical health, increases our resilience, and deepens our connection to God.

As you move through this gentle breathing series, consider what you're grateful for today. Give thanks for the breath itself. Give thanks for the stillness. This is not a mere mental exercise; it is a practice of aligning yourself with the divine presence that sustains us.

This is the first step toward deeper breathwork practices—a gentle entry into the profound journey of discovering how the Holy Breath can transform us. The peace you feel in these moments is not just relaxation—it is a

connection to the Spirit that goes beyond what the world can give.

Post-Practice Reflection

After completing this gentle breathing series, take 5 to 10 minutes to sit in stillness and reflect. Use the following journaling prompts to deepen your experience:

- How did my body feel during each round of breathing? Did I notice any changes in tension, relaxation, or energy?
- What emotions or thoughts came up as I focused on my breath? How did I engage with them?

- During the time of gratitude what came up for me? How did/does gratitude feel in my body?
- How can I bring the peace I experienced into my daily life, especially during moments of stress or uncertainty?

By taking time to journal and reflect, you allow the lessons of the practice to integrate more fully into your spiritual life. The breath is not just a tool for relaxation; it is a means of connecting more deeply with the Holy Spirit. Let this reflection be a reminder to return to your breath throughout the day, knowing that each breath carries with it the presence of God.

Word of Encouragement

Be patient with yourself as you engage in this practice. It's okay if you don't feel an immediate connection or if your mind wanders. The key is to stay consistent and approach each session with an open heart. Over time, your breath will become a powerful anchor, grounding you in the Holy Breath and filling you with peace and resilience.

Chapter 5

The Spaciousness of Holy Breath

Word of Caution

Before you begin, if you have any heart conditions or epilepsy, please consult with your doctor before practicing this technique. The practice may cause sensations such as tingling in the hands and feet, lightheadedness, body temperature changes, and stiffness in the hands. These are natural byproducts of your body becoming full of oxygen, and with continued practice, your body will adapt to this level of oxygenation. If you experience excessive stiffness in the hands, this may mean

you are forcing the exhale rather than releasing it gently. Remember: the exhale should feel like a sigh of relief, not a blowing out of air. Relax and let the air release naturally.

Before You Begin

Please read this chapter in its entirety before practicing and follow along with the audio version so you can be guided step by step through the practice. You can find the audio version by clicking [“The Breath of Truth Meditation”](#) here at this link or by clicking the title of this chapter.

In this practice, we will explore a quicker-paced diaphragmatic breathing

technique that I call “Conscious Cleansing Breaths.” This breath has many purposes but for this chapter it will assist us in experiencing “spaciousness” within ourselves. The “spaciousness” can be described in many ways: a feeling of inner stillness, the ceasing of mind-chattering, a feeling similar to lightheadedness paired with a deep sense of being present.

The “spaciousness” allows us to be more present with reality as well as with God’s Spirit as it reveals insights for our life. This is a more advanced technique compared to what we covered in Chapter 4. If you're just starting out, feel free to revisit the gentler breathing techniques in that chapter to ensure you're

comfortable with foundational practices before moving forward.

For this practice, you'll focus on a powerful inhale through the nose and a sigh of relief out through the mouth. We'll be practicing three rounds of 48 breaths, with a breath hold in between each round. The breath holds will help you access the quiet space within, where the mind can pause and allow you to rest in the present moment.

Here's the breakdown:

Round 1: 48 breaths (powerful inhale through the nose, sigh of relief through the mouth)

Breath Hold: 30 seconds or as long as is

comfortable

Inhale and Hold: 15 seconds

(After each “inhale and hold,” return to natural breathing for a moment)

Round 2: 48 breaths

Breath Hold: 45 seconds or as long as is comfortable

Inhale and Hold: 15 seconds

Round 3: 48 breaths

Breath Hold: 1 minute or as long as is comfortable

Inhale and Hold: 15 seconds

As you move through these rounds, notice how your body feels. You may experience tingling, lightheadedness, or a change in body temperature—these are normal sensations that arise as the body adjusts to being filled with oxygen. After the breath hold, your body will return to its natural balance.

During the breath holds, you may begin to feel a spaciousness within yourself, a quieting of the mind. It is in this space that we get a taste of being fully present in the now—a powerful moment of connection with the Holy Breath. This sense of “now-ness” allows us to present with the truth of whatever is with us in each moment.

As Jesus said in the Gospel of John:

"But when It, the Spirit of truth, comes, It will guide you into all the truth... It will glorify me because it is from me that the Spirit will receive what It will make known to you."

John 16:13-14

One of the meanings of the word "truth" here in the Greek is to "see reality as it is." One of the things about long term stress is it puts our minds and bodies in a sometimes hyper vigilant state. As shared in the earlier chapters, this state is there to protect us from threats but when out of balance our minds will begin to see threats where there are none. Thus, we are no longer in reality but in our stressed bodies distorted sense of reality.

Through this Breathwork experience, the breathless state offers a glimpse into what it means to be in accord with reality—seeing it as it is, unfiltered by our thoughts, worries, or distractions. When Jesus says “the Spirit of Truth” this is of course also “the Breath of Truth” - a way of breathing that allows us or “guides us” back to perceiving reality as it is. The "spaciousness" allows us to rest in the truth that comes not from overthinking but from being fully present in the Holy Breath.

Connecting to the Broader Context

As you engage with this more advanced practice, remember the foundations laid in

Chapter 4. You've already learned to slow your breath, to extend the exhale longer than the inhale, creating a state of calm and stillness. Now, as you incorporate these faster breaths and breath holds, recognize how the practices build upon each other.

Both practices, slow and fast, teach us to rely on the Holy Breath. Whether we're breathing in tranquility or experiencing the invigorating spaciousness during breath holds, we're training ourselves to connect with the deeper truths of God's presence in every moment.

If stress arises during your day—whether it's an argument or a tense situation—return to the lessons learned here. Before

reacting, take a moment to breathe, to find your center in the Holy Breath, and then respond with love, peace, and self-control. As Paul says in Galatians:

"But the fruit of the Holy Breath is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Galatians 5:22-23

The more you practice, the more these qualities will naturally emerge in your life, helping you live more in line with the Spirit of truth.

Post-Practice Reflection

After completing this breathing session, take 5 to 10 minutes to sit in stillness and reflect. You

can use the following journaling prompts to deepen your experience:

- What did I notice during the breath holds? Did I experience a sense of spaciousness or stillness?
- How did my body feel before, during, and after the practice?
- What thoughts or emotions arose for me, and how did I relate to them?
- How can I bring the sense of spaciousness I felt into my daily life, especially when I'm faced with challenges or stress?

By journaling and reflecting, you'll begin to integrate the lessons from the practice into your spiritual life. The Holy Breath, as we've

seen, is more than just a physical act—it's a doorway into deeper spiritual connection, truth, and the fruit of the Spirit. Let this practice be a reminder to return to your breath throughout your day, knowing that every breath brings you closer to the truth of who you are in Christ.

Word of Encouragement

Take your time with this practice. It's okay if you don't hold your breath for as long as suggested, especially at first. The key is to relax and trust the process. With consistent practice, your body and mind will grow stronger, and you'll be able to hold your breath for longer

periods as your connection to the Holy Breath
deepens.

Chapter 6

The Deepest Breath - **Advanced Practice**

A Word of Caution

Before beginning this in-depth breathwork practice, it's important to note that this is the most intense session outlined in the book. It is specifically designed for those who are ready to explore deeper spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of breathwork. If you have any heart conditions, epilepsy, or other serious medical concerns, please consult your doctor before engaging in this practice. You may also experience tingling in your hands and feet, changes in body temperature, lightheadedness,

or stiffness in your hands as your body becomes full of oxygen. These sensations are natural and will stabilize with time, but if you experience excessive stiffness in your hands, it's likely that you are forcing the exhale rather than allowing it to be a release. The exhales should feel like a sigh or letting go, not a forceful blow.

Important Note

Please read the entire chapter before beginning and follow along with the required audio guide to ensure you're properly supported throughout this practice. You can play the guided audio session by clicking [“The Deepest](#)

[Breath Meditation](#)” here at this link or by clicking the title of this chapter.

This breathwork session lasts for approximately one hour so please allot time not only for the session but also for reflection and integration afterwards. I would suggest setting aside three hours in total.

For the first 20 minutes, you will engage in rhythmic breathing that will take you into a profound state of relaxation and heightened awareness. This is followed by 5 minutes of stillness, where you will simply rest and allow the effects of the breath to settle. Finally, the session will conclude with a guided meditation and reflection on gratitude, forgiveness and unconditional love.

This practice is one where many people feel the "divine life force energy" in a more intense and tangible way. The prolonged, deep breathing allows for a stronger connection with the Holy Breath, and thus, a deeper and felt connection with God.

How to Practice

Breathing

You will begin by breathing deeply in a continuous fashion for 20 minutes. You can either inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth for a more spiritual and psychological experience, or inhale and exhale through the mouth for a more physical release. I usually advise breathing through the mouth

for the first session because this allows the most oxygen to enter the body. Whatever the case it's your choice so choose the style that aligns best with your body and your intentions for this session.

In this practice, you'll inhale a powerful breath through the nose or mouth, and then release it with a sigh through the mouth. The exhale should always be a release, not a forced blow—just let go. The breathing will be at a more accelerated pace than normal breathing. As you engage in continuous deep breathing, your mind and body will build up to a time of deep relaxation, allowing a profound sense of stillness to emerge.

In this state, the Holy Breath allows for the release of stress, anxiety, and trauma. For some, this release may come in the form of tears, frustration, shouts, or even laughter. There is no need to force anything; allow the breath and the Spirit to work in whatever way is needed for you.

Remember this session should only be practiced with the audio.

Stillness

After the breathing sequence, you will enter a 5-minute period of deep stillness. This is the time when the body and mind can integrate the effects of the breathwork. Sit or lie in complete stillness and simply observe what is happening

within. This stillness helps to anchor the spaciousness created by the breath and allows for even deeper relaxation.

Guided Meditation and Reflection

The session will end with a guided reflection focusing on gratitude, forgiveness, and unconditional love. These themes will help you to further integrate the emotional and spiritual work done during the breathwork. As mentioned before, while breathwork can provide immense healing, it is important not to force any experience. Allow the Spirit to guide you, bringing to the surface whatever needs to be released or healed.

Connecting with the Divine Life Force

This practice offers one of the most profound experiences of connecting with God through the Holy Breath. Through this deep, continuous breathing, many people have reported feeling the divine life force energy flowing more intensely. This energy is what connects us to God in more direct and powerful ways. As you breathe, let yourself trust that this connection is deepening, that the Holy Breath is working through you, even in ways that may be beyond your immediate understanding.

The Power of Release

For many years, our work with breath practices has allowed people to release long-held stress, anxiety, and trauma. We've seen individuals with chronic physical pain healed through these practices, and those suffering from emotional blockages or long-term anxiety set free. This breathwork is an invitation to enter into a state of spiritual healing—one where you let go and let God.

As Paul writes in Romans 8:26-27:

"In the same way, the Breath helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Holy Breath intercedes for us through wordless groans. And the One who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Breath, because the Holy Breath intercedes for

God's people in accordance with the will of
God."

In this breathwork practice, you are giving the Holy Breath room to intercede for you in ways that may transcend your conscious mind, allowing the Spirit to release the burdens you may have buried or ignored. As these wordless groans emerge—whether in the form of physical sensations, emotions, or deeper spiritual realizations—trust that the Holy Breath is guiding you into healing and wholeness.

Forgiveness and Healing

I recall a church leader who was told by his doctor that his physical ailment—a hole in his heart—was a symptom of his spiritual condition. Holding onto unforgiveness was literally impacting his health. His heart was being damaged, not by the person he refused to forgive, but by the unforgiveness itself. As Jesus teaches, “If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14). All forgiveness is, in a sense, self-forgiveness, and the Holy Breath can facilitate this process of releasing what we hold onto so tightly.

This practice helps pave the way for such deep release. But as always, do not force

any specific experience—let the Holy Breath pray for you and provide what is needed.

Final Notes

This is an advanced practice. It is essential to follow the required audio guide for the session, as this breathwork can be very intense. Do not attempt to engage in this practice without fully reading and understanding the instructions or without the audio guidance.

If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned earlier (tingling, stiffness, lightheadedness), rest assured that these are normal and are part of your body adjusting to the influx of oxygen. The more you practice, the

more your body will become accustomed to the process. However, always listen to your body and ease back if you feel overwhelmed.

Remember, the exhale should always feel like a release, not a forced action. Simply let go.

This advanced breathwork session is a powerful tool for those looking to dive deep into spiritual, emotional, and physical healing. Approach it with care, trust in the process, and allow the Holy Breath to guide you every step of the way.

Chapter 7

The Laughing Breath

A Word of Caution

Please consult a doctor before trying this practice if you have any heart conditions, epilepsy, or other serious medical issues. This practice may cause tingling in the hands and feet, lightheadedness, temperature changes, or stiffness in the hands. These sensations are normal and a byproduct of your body being full of oxygen. Relaxing during the exhales, rather than forcing the air out, can help minimize any discomfort. **Before you begin, make sure to read the entire chapter and listen to the accompanying audio to be guided**

properly through the practice. You can play the guided audio session by clicking [“The Laughing Breath”](#) here at this link or clicking the title of this chapter.

Introduction to the Laughing Breath

This final breathwork experience is, for some, the most challenging—not because of its intensity but because of how awkward or strange it can feel to try. It’s called the **laughing breath**. The technique is similar to Chapter 5, however this time you will take in 48 deep breaths, and then after the 48th breath you will follow it with 7 laughing breaths. These breaths are inhales followed by gentle giggles. And then after the 7th breath you will take a big

breath in, you will hold it for a moment and then on the exhale, you will laugh—a big, long, deep belly laugh straight from your gut. The breath holds for this session are replaced with long joyous laughter. You will do this for 3 rounds.

I know what you might be thinking: laughing without a joke or something funny happening feels uncomfortable. For many people, it's awkward to laugh on command. But the research shows that whether our laughter is real or forced, the body releases dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins—all of which help lower stress.

Why Laughter Matters

Believe it or not, stress is one of the leading causes of most illnesses. When the body remains in a constant state of stress due to work, relationships, fear-inducing information from the news, social media, or television, our cortisol levels rise and trigger the fight-or-flight response. While we aren't meant to stay in this mode for long, many of us find ourselves in it for hours every day.

The laughing breath naturally releases stress from our bodies, positioning us for greater healing and elevating our mood. The amazing thing is that the body can't tell the difference between real and fake laughter. Even if the laughter feels forced, the body interprets

it as genuine, triggering a cascade of healing signals throughout the body. Incredible, right?

Connecting Laughter to Christian Joy

Again, this isn't just science and biology. It's deeply rooted in Christian practice. James tells us, "Count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2). That's hard to do if we think joy is something we must pretend to have when life is hard. But what if, through the Holy Breath, we could combine our intention of laughter with our breathing and allow that intention to create joy within us, joy beyond our circumstances?

Consider also when Paul writes in Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). Paul wrote that from prison! How was he able to have joy even there?

Remember, joy is a fruit of the Holy Breath. From my experience, this joy can be stabilized in good times and in hard times if we allow the Holy Breath, combined with the Holy Laugh, to lead us. This practice is important because when we are stressed, research shows we engage in the worst thinking.

Personal Reflection
Breathwork in Stressful Moments

I remember a time when I was financially struggling, and a friend asked me to pick him up from the airport. I arrived early, parked, and turned off the car. It was an electric car that we got to save on gas. When my friend arrived and I went to start the car, it wouldn't start. Despite showing over 50% charge, it was dead. Panic started to rise, but because of my breath practice, I immediately began deep breathing to relax.

After troubleshooting and finding no solutions, I let my friend know what happened and asked my wife to pick us up. As I waited, embarrassment crept in. I started thinking, "I told him I'd pick him up, and now I can't even

do that." Financial worries also began surfacing as I thought about the cost of a tow truck.

But just as the panic was about to take over, I started practicing the laughing breath. I'm sure people nearby thought I was crazy, but I didn't care—I needed the Holy Breath to carry me through. Sure enough, all the panic and embarrassment left. Instead of thoughts of self-blame or complaining about the car, I found myself thinking, "I'm doing my best. My friend knows I love him, and I'm doing my best, so I can relax and be present." Then a surprising thought emerged: "I'm curious as to how God is working this together for my good."

The Power of Joyful Thinking

See, the Holy Breath doesn't just make us feel better—it helps us think better. When combined with spiritual intention, we can meet challenges with curiosity rather than complaint.

A police officer eventually came by, called someone to give me a jump, and the car worked just fine. But the real miracle was being able to maintain my joy and peace, turning what could have been a day of frustration into a wonderful time with my friend.

Proverbs tells us, "Wisdom laughs in the face of calamity" (Proverbs 1:26). When we practice the laughing breath, we join in that wisdom, trusting that even in the face of life's

unexpected moments, we can find joy, peace,
and presence.

Creating a Safe Space for Laughter

In our group sessions, we often practice this laughter together, and what many people experience is gratitude for a safe space to laugh and to laugh big. It's strange, but many of us don't feel safe simply being joyous. At some point, we've been taught that laughing without restraint became unacceptable. What I love about this practice is how it reminds us that we don't need a comedian or a funny social media post to make us laugh. The Holy Breath, combined with an intention of joy, is all we need.

Practice Details: The Laughing Breath

For this practice, follow the audio guide and complete three rounds of 40 breaths. There are no breath holds between rounds, just laughter after each 40th breath, followed by a moment to reset before starting the next round.

Remember, this might feel strange at first, but give it a try and see what happens. The joy that follows may surprise you.

Chapter 8

Integrating Breathwork Into Daily Life

Now that you've explored different breathwork practices, it's important to consider how to integrate these into your daily life. Most of the practices—except the most advanced breathwork—can be used daily to support your spiritual and emotional growth. I recommend doing the advanced practice no more than once or twice a month, as it tends to bring up deep spiritual, mental, and emotional experiences that require time to process and journal afterward.

Daily Breathwork Practices

For the other practices, you can use them 2-3 times a day, depending on what serves you best:

- **Faster, short breathwork** is ideal for energizing yourself in the morning.
- **Gentle breathwork combined with gratitude** is perfect after work or before bed to release the day's stress.
- **Laughing breath** is great at lunchtime or after work to lift your spirits.

Aligning Breathwork with Intention

The key is to align your breathwork with your intention. Personally, I've found seasons where

I practice in the morning, at lunch, and before bed so that my entire day is filled with the Holy Breath. You don't always have to journal, but I it would helpful to write down what the Holy Breath is speaking—especially before bed or once a week—to track your spiritual journey.

Finding What Works for You

Take this time to discern what your needs are and how you can allow the Holy Breath to support you in your everyday life. Allow your practice to be a space for growth, joy, healing, and deeper connection with God.

Part 3
Scripture and
The Christ Breath

Chapter 9

For the Bible Nerds: An Invitation to Explore

Why Experience Matters

My hope is that, by now, you have not only read the book up until this point but also tried the practices. I emphasize this because what I am about to share makes more sense if you've experienced the breathwork yourself. Trying to grasp it purely in a mental sense is difficult. I did not come to this through theory and reading but from a deep desire for inner peace. It was only *after* my experience that the Breath-Spirit connection came alive.

Experience coming before theoretical connection reminds me of the time Jesus sat with Nicodemus and spoke about the kingdom of heaven. Nicodemus couldn't quite grasp what Jesus was saying. In response, Jesus said, "We testify about what we have *seen* and *heard*" (John 3:11)

Jesus spoke *from* experience rather than about spiritual or mental concepts. In light of this, Nicodemus wrestled to understand Jesus' words about being 'born of the Spirit' because these were not simply spiritual concepts to be grasped with the intellect but spiritual practices understood from experience.

Breathwork invites us to move beyond mental comprehension and into embodied

experience. Through breathwork, we get a taste of what it means to move from understanding with the mind to a sense of inner-knowing through the Spirit.

In a similar way, what I write here is not based on articles or theories (though I have two Bible degrees), but rather on my experience in breathwork and my time leading hundreds of others through it.

My Journey

From Bible Nerd to Breathwork Coach

I grew up as the child of pastors. My Sundays were spent going to church in the morning, attending discipleship classes in the afternoon, and returning for evening worship. During the

week, there was another Bible study and additional discipleship training. I gravitated toward these experiences so much that I spent time memorizing whole chapters of the Bible. That passion took me to Bible college, seminary, and eventually to pastoring for many years.

All of this to say: I am truthfully and unashamedly a Bible nerd, but I am also a breathwork coach and the co-owner of a wellness organization that provides breathwork, sound healing, and guided meditations.

An Invitation to Explore

So these following chapters are not necessarily scholarly works, but they are informed by training and experience. I write them for my fellow Bible nerds who are open to exploring Christianity through a different lens. I use my experience, my studies, and my time as a breathwork practitioner and learner to illuminate new ways of reading and understanding scripture.

If this speaks to you, I hope you will try it and see what the Spirit—or rather, the Christ Breath—has in store for your life.

The Experience Makes It Real

Again, I emphasize that it's essential to practice the breathwork before diving into the scriptural reflection. Jesus' words to Nicodemus cannot be overstated: "We speak of what we *know*, and we testify to what we have *seen*..." (John 3:11). If possible, allow yourself to know and see by way of the practice and then return to this final section.

Into the Deep

What follows is an integration of my own journey with breathwork, my study of the Bible, and the theological insights I've gained along the way. While these reflections are rooted in scripture and theology, they are also deeply grounded in my own lived experience of

leading breathwork for hundreds of others. I encourage you to approach the material with both an open mind and a willingness to try these practices. Only then can you truly “see and hear” what the Christ Breath may have in store for your spiritual journey.

Chapter 10

Breath and Spirit: A Deeper Exploration

As I write this chapter, I am 13 days into a fruit-only cleanse. I've not only been eating fruit but also watermelon rinds, lemon peels, and apple cores. I'm weird like this, but only because something inside me looks at a watermelon rind and says, "I wonder if there are any benefits to eating this?" or stares at the apple core on my drive to work and thinks, "What would happen if I just eat this instead of throwing it away?"

Often, I discover odd little things, like the fact that 90 million of the 100 million probiotic bacteria in apples are found in the core. So, we throw away 90% of what's could actually benefit us. Crazy, right?

This kind of exploration led me to breathwork, and one of the first people I shared it with was my dear friend David.

Introducing David to Breathwork

David and I had been friends for over a decade, and we could always talk about anything. So, when I started learning about breathwork, David was one of the first to try it with me. We rented a car, drove up into the mountains, and after settling in, I played the now-infamous

breathwork video.

It's always interesting leading someone through their first breathwork session. I try to do the practice with them while keeping one eye open to make sure they're alright. David was fully immersed, inhaling powerfully, exhaling smoothly. After three rounds of thirty breaths, with breath holds in between, David described feeling tingles, light-headedness, and what he called an "electrical current" flowing through his body. It was transformative.

Spirit or Breath? A Theological Discussion

David and I are both Bible nerds—he went on to get a PhD in theology—so we immediately began geeking out over what this experience

could mean. We practiced breathwork separately and together, each time exploring different techniques: some for energy, some for prayer and some for relaxation.

I eventually became a certified breathwork instructor, and David graciously let me make mistakes on him during my early sessions. But through all of this, we kept exploring the connection between breath and the Spirit.

Challenging the Connection

“Spirit and breath have to be synonymous, David,” I said. “We experienced peace— isn’t that a fruit of the Spirit? Or should I say, a fruit of the Breath?”

David, though intrigued, was hesitant. He saw the similarities but insisted there was still something more to the Spirit—something that included breath but was beyond it. This hesitation was echoed by my PhD advisor, who similarly challenged me: “You cannot collapse the Holy Spirit into mere breath. There must be a distinction!”

Between David and my advisor, I found myself in a tension that forced me to dive deeper into scripture. My gut told me the connection between breath and Spirit was real, but I needed to back it up with more than just feelings. And it was around this time that I started practicing breathwork with others—

answers began to emerge through those sessions.

My First Breathwork Client

One of my first breathwork clients was a woman going through a significant life transition. She was carrying a lot of grief and anxiety, and we worked together through several breathwork sessions. She found that the practice helped her let go of what she couldn't control, leaving each session feeling renewed, even though her circumstances hadn't changed.

I vividly remember one session where, after our usual breathing rounds, she entered a deep state of stillness. As she lay there, she

started to pray—sometimes with words, other times with groans. She was caught up in something profound. As we ended the session, she rose and said, “Wow, that felt like a baptism...”

Reflection on the Holy Breath

Her description stayed with me. I hadn't led her in a traditional worship or prayer session, but she experienced something sacred nonetheless. Or, as I interpreted it, she had experienced the Holy Breath. It felt like a confirmation that I was on the right track, but I knew I needed to dig deeper into scripture. Could this experience be consistent with the

early Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit—or Christ Breath, as I now call it?

The Baptism of the Holy Breath

When searching the scriptures for a connection between breath and baptism, I immediately thought of John the Baptist. Every Gospel makes it clear that John was Jesus’ forerunner, preparing the way for his ministry. John’s message included a powerful statement:

“I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

(Luke 3:16)

John's statement is crucial because it highlights that a key part of Jesus' mission was to baptize people in the Holy Spirit—or, as we've been discussing, the Holy Breath. The Gospel of John reinforces this when Jesus promises the disciples that he will send the Holy Breath as their comforter.

A Gap in Luke's Gospel?

In Luke's Gospel, however, there's an apparent gap. John announces that Jesus will baptize people in the Holy Breath, but throughout the entire Gospel, Jesus never actually does so. It's only in the Book of Acts, Luke's sequel, that we finally see this baptism unfold:

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a powerful wind, and it filled the entire house... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”
(Acts 2:1-4)

The Pentecost scene is electrifying. The disciples are baptized in the Holy Breath, fully immersed in God’s life-giving presence. The imagery of wind and fire here signals the purifying, transformative power of breath. Just as John the Baptist predicted, Jesus’ followers

were fully baptized—not in water, but in the Holy Breath.

After reading this story anew, I couldn't help but wonder: are there modern experiences of being fully immersed in breath that mirror this? Is there any research on breathwork that supports this notion of a "baptism in breath"?

Holotropic Breathwork: A Modern Parallel

During my studies, I came across the work of Stanislav Grof, who developed **Holotropic Breathwork** as a way to achieve spiritual and emotional healing through deep, continuous breathing. In Grof's sessions, participants

would breathe for extended periods, often accompanied by music and a trained facilitator. The key is for the participant to stay in the breathing process and allow whatever emerges from the breath to rise up freely. Grof writes:

“Participants in Holotropic Breathwork sessions need to have the freedom to fully express whatever is emerging in their sessions. We have regularly heard loud crying and screaming, as well as baby talk, gibberish, talking in tongues...”

I must admit, when I first learned of people speaking in tongues from simply breathing, I was excited. “Pentecost!” I thought. But how could I distinguish tongues from gibberish? How could I know that this

was truly the Holy Breath and not just someone babbling or, perhaps worse, some other spirit? Then I asked, “What differentiated Pentecost from other tongues we read about in Scripture?” The answer? “Foreign languages!” Right?

Did Grof document people speaking in languages they had not learned? Sure enough, he did:

“There are breathers who do not make a single sound throughout the entire session, while others cry loudly... talk in tongues and foreign languages they do not know...”

In one profound breathwork session Grof recounts:

“We encouraged [the participant] to allow the sounds to come out in whatever form they took, without censoring or judging them, even if they made no sense to her. Gradually... her words became clear but in a language that we did not recognize... she had absolutely no idea what language she was using in her chant. Carlos, an Argentinean Freudian psychoanalyst from Buenos Aires and a member in the workshop, recognized that Gladys had chanted perfectly in the Sephardic language, which he happened to know. This language, also called Ladino, is a Judeo-Spaniolic hybrid, a combination of medieval Spanish and Hebrew. By strange coincidence, Carlos, who was Jewish, had studied the Sephardic language for many years as his personal hobby. Gladys was not Jewish

and knew neither Hebrew nor Spanish; she had never heard of Ladino and did not know that it existed.”

Grof’s findings felt like confirmation that a "baptism of breath" could lead to spiritual transformation, similar to what happened on Pentecost. I should mention that while Grof believes in God he wasn’t Christian. Nevertheless, the experiences documented in his sessions paralleled the biblical story in significant ways. Reading his work reinforced my belief that the Christ Breath, when practiced intentionally, could lead to deep spiritual experiences regardless of one’s theological commitments. Again, Christ’s breath is not simply the breath of an individual

human. It is the breath from the one by whom all things were made. It is the breath that created and sustains the cosmos. It is the breath we all breathe.

Further Reflection of Grof's Work

Stories like Grof's that made me reconsider what Christ meant when He said in Matthew:

“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the [Holy Breath] will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the [Holy Breath] will not be forgiven” (Matthew 12:31-32).

It is not necessarily about explicit allegiance to the name of Jesus. Whether one explicitly professes or not can be forgiven. I mean, we only need to consider all the misrepresentations of Jesus out there! Surely God must have grace as we all navigate and grow through misunderstandings. However, if we deny the Christ Breath, if we reject or do not acknowledge its sacredness, it is like wanting to live but refusing to breathe. It is not that God will not forgive us; rather, we are denying the very breath of life!

Matt: A Christ-Like Outsider

One of the most bewildering experiences I had as a young believer occurred during my high

school years when I took a summer class with my friend, let's call him Matt. Everyone knew me as the outspoken Christian, but during that summer, I found myself distracted by older women and started making fun of Matt to impress them.

Matt, though agnostic, along with his family embodied the servant-hearted nature that Jesus spoke of. He took care of me, ensuring I had transportation, food, and even help with homework. I, the professed Christian, was failing to live out the values I claimed to uphold. This left me questioning: how could a non-Christian do Christian things better than me?

Years later, my dad echoed this sentiment. He shared about a time early in marriage with my mom. They were going through a rough patch and he found himself finding solace with one of his good friends. This friend was not Christian and yet this friend somehow learned and embodied being a good husband. My Dad was shocked, asking, "How does my non-Christian friend better at this marriage thing than me?" These moments challenged my understanding of Christ and the Holy Breath. How could people outside the Christian faith, people like Matt and my dad's friend, embody values that seemed so clearly rooted in the teachings of Jesus, without being explicitly Christian?

Christ-Like Actions Beyond Christian Identity

The scriptures speak to this paradox. The apostles encountered someone casting out demons in Jesus' name and tried to stop him, saying, "He's not one of us." Jesus' response was surprising: "If they're not against us, they're for us" (Mark 9:39-40). Jesus also praised outsiders for their faith, such as the Roman centurion (likely a man of a different religion and faith) whose trust in Jesus' ability to heal surpassed that of anyone in Israel (Matthew 8:10). And Jesus himself said to his followers, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold" (John 10:16). All of these passages point to the reality that the Spirit of God, or the

Christ Breath, moves beyond the boundaries we create.

This idea is not confined to the New Testament. In the Old Testament, we see this truth echoed in the story of **Melchizedek**, a mysterious figure who was not part of the covenant people of Israel, yet was acknowledged as a "priest of God Most High." After Abraham's victory in a battle, it wasn't Abraham—the chosen one—who gave the blessing, but Melchizedek who blessed Abraham (Genesis 14:18-20):

"Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of

heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.' Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything."

Abram was not only blessed by Melchizedek but then proceeds to tithe to him for this priestly blessing. The book of Hebrews brings this point home when the author writes,

4 Just think how great [Melchizedek] was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! 5 Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. 6 This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi,

yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. (Hebrews 7:4-7)

Here Hebrews explicitly tells us not only that Melchizedek was not of Israel but that he was greater than Abraham! Going so far to even say in the same chapter that Melchizedek was “resembling the Son of God” (Hebrews 7:3).

Melchizedek’s role as a priest and his blessing of Abraham demonstrates that God’s Spirit moves outside the bounds of what we consider to be God’s people. Melchizedek, a priest outside of Israel, was still a servant of the Most High. This encounter suggests that God’s

blessing and wisdom are not confined to those within the covenant line or “the fold.”

Similarly, **Moses** himself sought refuge with Jethro, a Midianite priest. When Moses fled Egypt, it was in Jethro’s household that he found safety, family, and wisdom. Jethro was the one who advised Moses on how to lead Israel more effectively, introducing him to the concept of delegating leadership (Exodus 18:13-24). Here again, we see God working through someone who was outside the Israelite covenant. Jethro, though a Midianite, offered crucial spiritual wisdom to Moses, who was leading God’s chosen people.

We see this same dynamic in the story of the **wise men** who came to bless Jesus at his

birth. It's a good chance that these magi were neither Jews nor Christians. Their way of finding Jesus was by following the stars—a practice most Christians today would consider strange or even outside the boundaries of their faith. Yet, it was the wise men whom God used to honor and bless the Christ child, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Furthermore, God spoke to them directly in a dream, warning them not to return to Herod (Matthew 2:12). The Spirit was at work in and through these wise men, even though they were not a part of “the fold.”

Christ Breath Beyond Boundaries

This raises a critical question: if someone outside the Christian fold can embody Christ's

teachings and live in harmony with the Christ Breath, what does this mean for our understanding of the Holy Spirit? Melchizedek blessed Abraham, Jethro counseled Moses, and the wise men blessed the Christ child—none were part of Israel, yet all were somehow vessels of God's Spirit. This tension is at the heart of what my friend David and my advisor were wrestling with. They wanted to maintain that the Holy Spirit, or Christ Breath, is something uniquely Christian, tied to the person of Jesus Christ. For them, the Holy Breath had to be more than just a universal spiritual force. It was something that only Christians, or those who explicitly called upon Jesus, could access (at least in its fullness). They feared that collapsing the Holy Breath

into a more universal concept would diminish the distinctiveness of Christ.

I understand their concern. Many Christians hold to a sense of ultimate difference in the person of Christ, believing that Jesus is the only God in human form, and therefore, the Spirit that comes through him must be distinct from what other religions or spiritual practices experience. In their view, breath could be beneficial for health and spiritual insight, but it could not provide the same level of connection to God as the Holy Spirit.

While I respect this sentiment, I'd like to offer something to consider—an invitation, rather than a winning argument. Christianity,

especially in the West, has had a long relationship with empire—from the Roman Empire to the English monarchy. For centuries, Christianity was at the top of the religious and cultural hierarchy, and this has shaped our subconscious spiritual outlook. There's unspoken beliefs, deeply ingrained in our tradition, first, that there must be a “number one” or supreme faith tradition and, second, “we are that number one.” Everyone else is, at best, second.

This attitude, while perhaps well-intentioned, can sometimes make it difficult to see how God might work through and with people or traditions outside the Christian fold. But when we look at scripture, we see a God

who is far more expansive than our categories. Again, Jesus himself said, “I have other sheep that are not of this fold” (John 10:16), and Paul reminds us in Romans that the Gentiles already had the law of God written on their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). These passages encourage us to reflect on how the fullness God’s Spirit, or the Christ Breath, is not confined to the walls of the church or the boundaries of a specific religious tradition.

And considering the violence that “being number one” has done to the world—through colonialism, religious wars, and exclusionary practices—this mindset stands in stark contrast to the God of love represented in Jesus. The Holy Breath becomes a point of focus and

hope, not just for what it produces in our bodies but because so many cultures and religions have their own ways of describing this breath and how breathing allows them to commune with the Most High God.

Realizing this, we come to understand that the Christ Breath is already at work in places long before we encounter them. Just as every culture has its own words for water, sky, fruits, and vegetables, they also have ways of expressing their experience of the divine breath. They may name it differently, but the experience itself may be a reflection of the Holy Breath. God's love is that big.

To be clear, there is darkness and ignorance in the world. Jesus sent his apostles

into the world to spread God's love for a reason —not from a place of superiority or to declare everyone else wrong or lesser, but as points of inspiration. We are called to exist in the world lovingly, joyfully, peacefully, bearing the fruit of the Holy Breath. And whenever people desire such fruit for their own lives, they can learn from us. But as scripture suggests, when they are bearing fruit that we can grow in and be blessed by—perhaps we too can learn from them.

This isn't about watering down our faith or diminishing the distinctiveness of Christ. Rather, it's about expanding our awareness of how the Christ Breath moves throughout creation, inviting us into a deeper, more

inclusive understanding of God’s work in the world. Remember Paul was quoting *non-Christ following* philosophers when he said in Acts, “in God we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). We *all* are in and from the one God. We can hold to our faith in Christ while also recognizing that God’s Spirit is active beyond our boundaries—working in ways that may surprise us, but always drawing people toward love, joy, peace, and wholeness.

Christ Breath: A Universal Invitation

This brings us back to Matt. He wasn’t a Christian, yet he was living out the servant-hearted nature of Christ better than I was at the time. Now, I can’t confirm if Matt’s servant-

nature was due to any special breathing (I wish I could!). But I share this because I believe the Christ Breath points to the universal connection that God has with all who seek to embody the fruit of the Spirit, regardless of their background or religious identity.

My point here isn't that Matt engaged in specific breathwork practices (although he definitely took a lot of big sighs dealing with me). Rather, my point is that somehow he was embodying Christ while being "out of the fold."

What if the Holy Breath isn't something exclusive to Christians, but rather, something that can flow through anyone who aligns with the proverbial "spirit" of Christ over the "letter"?

I believe this to be true. The Christ Breath, like the air we breathe, is accessible to everyone. It moves through the world, animating life and connecting us to the divine. When Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Breath,” he was passing on more than just a religious experience—he was passing on a way of being, a way of living that transcends religious boundaries.

In Matt’s case, he may not have identified as Christian, but his actions towards me were in harmony with the Christ Breath. He lived out the teachings of Jesus in ways that I, at the time, struggled to. This doesn’t mean that Matt was a "secret Christian" or that he needed to be converted. It means that the

Christ Breath is bigger than our religious categories. It means that anyone who lives in alignment with the teachings of Jesus—whether they realize it or not—may be tapping into the Christ Breath.

The Fruits of the Christ Breath

As we look at scripture, we see that the defining feature of the Holy Spirit, or Christ Breath, isn't whether someone calls Jesus "Lord," but whether their life bears the fruits of the Spirit. Paul's famous passage in Galatians lists these fruits as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). These are the signs

of someone living in harmony with the Holy Breath, regardless of their religious identity.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul addresses this same issue when he chastises the Corinthian church for their divisions and immorality. Despite being filled with spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues and performing miracles, the Corinthians were failing to live in love. Paul reminds them that without love, their spiritual gifts are meaningless:

“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal... If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing”

(1 Corinthians 13:1-2).

In other words, the presence of the Holy Breath in someone's life is not measured by their religious creed or supernatural gifts. It is measured by the fruits their life produces. Does their life reflect the way of Christ, a way of love and peace?

What Makes the Breath Holy?

David and my advisor might still ask, "What makes this the Holy Breath? What makes a style of breathing the Breath of Jesus?" This is a crucial question.

The answer, for me, lies in what the Christ Breath produces. As I've learned through years of breathwork practice, there is a

type of breathing that not only enhances health and well-being but also transforms us spiritually. This transformation is the hallmark of the Christ Breath. It's not about whether someone identifies as Christian; it's about whether their life is being shaped by the way and indeed the Breath of Christ.

The Christ Breath is holy when it produces Christ-likeness in us—when it moves us toward love, peace, patience, and all the fruits of the Spirit. It is holy because it aligns us with the divine, connecting us to God and each other in a way that transforms our hearts and minds.

Embracing the Christ Breath Today

The connections between ancient scripture and modern breathwork are profound. As I've shown, the experience of being filled with the Holy Breath at Pentecost is not just a historical event—it is a living reality that we can experience today. The Christ Breath is accessible to anyone who seeks to live in alignment with the way of Christ. It is a universal invitation, available to all who are open to the transforming power of God's Spirit.

As we continue exploring these themes, I invite you to keep an open heart and mind. The Christ Breath is not confined to our religious categories. It is the very breath of life, moving through all of creation, inviting us to live in harmony with God and one another.

Chapter 11

By the Breath Alone

The Reformation and Martin Luther's Impact

One of the defining moments in the modern Western world was when a German priest and theologian named Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg Castle Church. Luther argued that salvation did not require the purchase of Catholic indulgences; instead, it was by divine grace received through faith that people were saved. This act sparked wars, bloodshed, and the formation of Protestantism, as nations split from the Roman Catholic

Church, fundamentally reshaping religious and political landscapes.

Luther's actions were pivotal not only in the development of nation-states but also in shaping how many read and continue to read the Bible. Today, many Christians still interpret the Bible as centered around the question of whether we are saved by works or by grace through faith. Terms like *sola fide* (by faith alone) and *sola gratia* (by grace alone) remain ingrained in the theology of certain denominations. While Luther addressed the specific issue of indulgences in the 16th century, this debate is often applied retroactively to texts like Paul's letter to the Galatians, written almost 1500 years earlier.

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

In Galatians, Paul writes:

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?”

(Galatians 3:1-5).

This text seems to support Luther’s argument that we are saved by faith—specifically faith in the gospel—rather than by adhering to Jewish laws and customs. In Paul’s context, this meant rejecting the view that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Luther’s interpretation freed many Christians from “works-righteousness” and external religious practices, yet it also obscured the deeper point of this passage.

The Holy Breath as the Agent of Transformation

When we look closer, through the lens of the Holy Breath, the emphasis is not solely on faith

but on what faith grants access to—the Holy Breath itself:

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the [Holy Breath] by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the [Holy Breath], are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain— if it really was in vain? So again I ask, does God give you his [Holy Breath] and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?”

(Galatians 3:1-5).

Here, faith is crucial, but it is not the goal. Rather, faith or belief opens us to receive the Holy Breath, which is the true agent of transformation. Paul's argument isn't just about being justified by faith but about being made new by the Holy Breath.

The Centrality of the Holy Breath

Let's explore how the Holy Breath is central to Paul's message in Galatians. Rather than focusing solely on theological debates about grace and faith, we should recognize that Paul's emphasis is on the Holy Breath's role in transforming the believer's life. Faith is the doorway, but the Holy Breath is the force that shapes us into Christ-likeness.

The Point of Galatians

To understand Galatians, we must work backward from Paul's conclusion:

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation”

(Galatians 6:15).

Paul was responding to those who insisted that circumcision was required to belong to God's people. His opponents argued that, in addition to having faith in Christ, circumcision was necessary to be fully included in God's covenant family. But Paul sharply disagrees, insisting that what matters is the

transformation of our lives brought about by the Holy Breath.

Paul's rebuttal is clear: circumcision or following Jewish customs cannot produce the inner transformation that marks someone as a child of God. Instead,

“Through the Holy Breath we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope” (Galatians 5:5).

Paul's central claim is that the Holy Breath, not external practices, creates the new life that God desires for us—a life Paul describes as a form of rebirth.

Reborn through Breath

The experience of rebirth is not just a theological concept, but an inner realization that God is the true origin of our existence.

As Paul writes in Galatians 4:

“God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child” (Galatians 4:6-7).

Here, "Father" signifies the ultimate source of life. Similar to Jesus breathing on the apostles, we see here that the revelation of being divine children is not based in knowledge, scripture memorization, or teaching but in the experience of God sending “the [Holy Breath] of his Son into our hearts.”

The Holy Breath brings an inner recognition that we come *through* our parents but *from* God. Our life story doesn't begin with our earthly lineage; it begins in God.

I recall a recent session where we took a group through a more advanced Breathwork experience. After the intense breathing and the time of stillness, we went into the guided meditation on unconditional love. While remembering such a moment of pure love, one participant shared,

“the memory that came up for me was a dream I had long ago where I was playing hide and seek with Jesus. I had not thought about this in a while. But in this dream I felt so loved by

God... by Jesus... I lost my father when I was young but I realized that the reason it did not scar me is because God showed me very early that He is my Father... I call him Abba, my Father."

Again, unprompted this participant's experience of the session brought her to a time where she connected with God as her source. After the Breathwork session, she herself whether knowingly or unknowingly referred to Paul's words:

"God sent the [Holy Breath] of his Son into our hearts, the [Holy Breath] who calls out, '*Abba, Father.*'"

Paul is not alone in this understanding of the Breath, John's Gospel also echoes this truth:

“To those who believed in [Jesus'] name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God”

(John 1:12-13).

Rebirth is not merely a theological idea; it's an experience that can come by way of the Christ Breath that reorients us to the truth that our ultimate source of life and purpose is God.

Progressive Revelation through Daily Breathwork

While the experience of rebirth through the Christ Breath is profound, not everyone will

have such a sudden transformation. This is why daily breathwork practice is crucial—because as we practice becoming more intimate with the Holy Breath each day, we can progressively grow in this same awareness.

Consider the breath holds from the breathwork practices earlier in the book. These holds allow a certain “spaciousness” within our hearts and minds. It is this “spaciousness”—this place without thought—that draws us out of the narratives of our lives. For a brief moment, we come out of our personal history. We are no longer our names, careers, wounds, and traumas, nor are we our anxieties and worries about the future. For a brief moment, we are free from it all. And it’s in this space of

freedom that we taste our true identity as children of God.

In this space, you can choose to be anything. You do not have to make your choices based on your family, your past, or society's expectations. You can recreate yourself—you can be born again. Moreover, the meditations show us that we can tap into higher spiritual feelings of gratitude, forgiveness, and unconditional love at any moment. We do not have to wait for someone to give us these; the Holy Breath can generate them within us!

These higher emotions give us the power to recreate ourselves—selves created not from fear but from gratitude, not from bitterness but

from forgiveness, not from rejection but from the unconditional love of God. Through breathwork, we align ourselves with the divine, allowing the Holy Breath to work within us and transform us into the new creation Paul speaks of.

Miracles and Rebirth

Returning to Paul, we see that another sign of the Holy Breath's presence is miracles. Paul asks:

“Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?”
(Galatians 3:5).

Paul does not explicitly list the types of miracles the Holy Breath produces. However, as Holotropic Breathwork has shown, one byproduct is the experience of speaking in tongues. In my own sessions, people have reported healing from back pain, migraines and even relief from fibromyalgia, as well as overcoming anxiety. Thus, it should suffice to say that the Holy Breath allows people to experience meaningful healings physically, mentally, and emotionally. These experiences, for Paul, serve as confirmation of God at work.

When Paul contrasts this with circumcision or performing works of the law, he is pointing to the tangible experience of healing and renewal that comes by way of the

Holy Breath. These experiences serve as markers of God's presence, validating the work of the Spirit in transforming lives.

A Complement to Traditional Theology

While I am exploring these experiences through the lens of the Holy Breath, I do not seek to dismiss the traditional interpretation. Instead, I believe breathwork complements it. The profound sense of being reborn, of experiencing God through the Holy Breath, enhances our understanding of faith and salvation. The spiritual transformation that breathwork initiates echoes what many Christians have long known through their faith: that life in the Holy Breath leads to inner

renewal. Rather than viewing breathwork as opposed to traditional theology, I see it as a powerful way to deepen our relationship with God.

Rebirth Necessitates the Fruit of the Holy Breath

While being reborn through breath is a life-changing experience, I want to echo the traditional interpretation that the ultimate sign of rebirth through the Holy Breath is not merely ecstatic spiritual experiences, but the fruits these experiences produce in our lives. Paul says:

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law”

(Galatians 5:22-23).

These are the marks of a life transformed by the Holy Breath. When we are aligned with God’s Spirit, we naturally begin to bear these fruits—not through effort or willpower, but as a natural consequence of being filled with the Holy Breath. It’s akin to how a tree doesn’t “try” to bear fruit; it simply does so as long as it’s rooted in good soil and nourished by water and sunlight. In the same way, when we are rooted in God’s Breath, our

lives will naturally grow in love, joy, peace, and the other fruits Paul lists.

Paul emphasizes that this is the true test of whether we are living in alignment with the Holy Breath. It's not about following religious laws or customs, nor is it about performing miracles or experiencing spiritual ecstasy. The true test is whether our lives are marked by these virtues. Rebirth in the Holy Breath is a transformation that fundamentally changes who we are and how we live. It produces in us a way of being that mirrors the character of Christ.

This is why Paul concludes his letter to the Galatians by reiterating that external markers—like circumcision or religious

observance—mean nothing compared to the new creation the Holy Breath produces in us. The sign of true rebirth is a life transformed by love, patience, kindness, and self-control, and this transformation is initiated and sustained by the Holy Breath alone.

Final Thoughts:

Living from the Holy Breath

At the heart of all this is a simple but profound truth: the Christ Breath, the Holy Breath, is the source of life, the power that animates and transforms us. When we align ourselves with this breath, we are reborn—not just once, but continually. Each breath is an opportunity to reconnect with God, to remember our divine

origin, and to live out the fruits of the Spirit in our daily lives.

This is what it means to be a child of God. Not simply to believe in God, but to live from the Holy Breath, allowing it to guide, heal, and transform us from within.

As we move forward, I encourage you to continue exploring this sacred connection between breath and spirit. Let the Holy Breath fill you, and watch as it reshapes your life in ways you never thought possible.

Chapter 12

One Humanity

For many years, I served as a pastor, leading a church and striving to embody the teachings of Christ. It was a deeply fulfilling role, but it also exposed me to the complexities of truly living out Christ's love—especially when faced with conflict or division. One particular experience profoundly reshaped my understanding of oneness and unity, and it happened through my connection with a man living on the church property, we'll call him Liam.

A Clash of Values: Prioritizing

"The Least of These"

When I first began my role, I brought a strong emphasis on justice and love for "the least of these," as Jesus taught in Matthew 25. The church had long understood salvation as faith in Jesus and practicing biblical principles, but there was little focus on how those practices should be linked to justice, compassion, and love for the poor, the sick, and the marginalized. Despite Jesus' clear words that how we treat the poor is how we treat him, this wasn't a central teaching for many of the elders, some of whom had been Christians for over 40 to 50 years. This became a building tension in my time there, and Liam—who lived in extremely difficult circumstances—became the focal point of that tension.

The Tension Mounts: Confronting the Police

“He says you NEVER show up for him! You ONLY show up when THEY call!”

I found myself standing in front of armed police officers, my voice rising with frustration. They were there to arrest my friend Liam.

“That’s not true, sir,” one officer replied. “We come to everyone who calls us. We don’t give preferential treatment.”

“Right, to everyone who calls,” I countered. “But what about people like Liam, who don’t have access to a phone? You’re not serving him because he doesn’t have the means to call. You’re only serving those who do.”

The officers had arrived while I was talking with Liam, who was in a heightened state of panic. Liam was mentally unstable, and as soon as the officers approached with guns at their sides, his fear took over. His anger escalated, and though the officers were simply trying to give him a citation for allegedly assaulting a woman, he couldn't hear them—he was too consumed by fear and confusion.

I was scared during this encounter. I had always been taught to be respectful to everyone, especially those who serve our community. Nothing in me wanted to be in conflict. But Liam was my friend, and in that moment, I felt he was being misunderstood. The officers were yelling at him about a

citation, but as soon as he saw them, he began panicking and couldn't hear a word they said. I had to get him to calm down, to relax enough to hear that he had the option to receive a citation rather than be arrested.

Earlier that day, Liam had been upset at a restaurant across the street and ran back to our church property, where he had been staying during the pandemic. He yelled and cursed at people nearby, including our property manager and her husband, who were so frightened they hid inside the church until he was gone. I wasn't on duty that day, but I felt responsible to check on him, given how much I had advocated for him within the church community.

As the police handed Liam his citation and left, Liam began packing up his things to leave the church grounds—a bittersweet moment for me. The church leadership had been pressuring me for some time to ask Liam to leave, but I struggled with the decision. As a follower of Christ, I knew that my call was to prioritize “the least of these,” as Jesus taught, yet this often put me at odds with the leadership’s more pragmatic concerns.

The elders had expressed concerns about safety, particularly for the property manager and her family, but there were also financial and image-related issues at play. Our church rented out part of the parking lot to the bakery where Liam had gotten into trouble,

and some of the elders worried that his presence would affect the church's reputation. On top of that, several of the elders admitted that they didn't feel equipped or spiritually mature enough to deal with someone like Liam, and fear played a role in their hesitancy. This all added to the pressure I felt to ask Liam to leave.

Weeks went by, and when I finally shared the events of that day with the board of elders, I could see disapproval on their faces—particularly from the lead elder. He seemed shocked at the way I had spoken to the police. “How dare you speak to the cops like that?” his expression said. But none of them understood what I felt for Liam. None of them knew that,

though I was scared when I confronted the officers, it was a fear I had overcome for the sake of a deeper connection.

Liam wasn't just a homeless man who showed up on our church steps—he was my friend. Over time, we had shared stories about life, music, and family. He told me about his experience as a veteran, his wounds from being stabbed and shot, and how he had lost his father at a young age. One story that struck me was his claim of Haitian ancestry, which resonated with me because of my wife's heritage. Liam had become more than someone in need—he was someone I cared for deeply.

The elders didn't understand this bond. And it wasn't their fault. I mean, how could

they? They didn't have a relationship with Liam like I did.

“You're not equipped to handle this,” one elder said. And I knew they were right in a way. But I responded, “Loving those experiencing the worst of society is supposed to be our thing. It's the Christian thing.”

One elder admitted, “You invite people into your home. You build relationships with them. But we... I mean... let me speak for myself—I'm not spiritually mature enough to do that.” Another elder pressed the need to involve police or mental health services more consistently. There was logic in what they were saying—concerns about safety for the staff and church members, especially given that we

rented the parking lot to a nearby bakery where Liam had caused trouble. But this felt different. Liam had never acted aggressively toward me, even when others were afraid of him. He wasn't a danger; he was just struggling. And given everything he'd been through, his struggles made sense.

In the end, I relented. "If you want to call the cops or mental health services, that's fine," I said, "but I won't do it. All I ask is that you get to know Liam first. Make sure you're doing what's best for him, not just for our comfort." The lead elder's response was swift: "We don't have to do that."

A fire lit inside me. "You don't give a damn about poor people!" I shouted. "If this

were your daughter, you'd never hand her over to strangers without making sure she was safe. YOU DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT POOR PEOPLE!"

The elder slammed his hand on the table. "Leave my daughter out of this!" he yelled.

In that moment, I felt justified. I was the pastor who loved "the outsider" enough to risk my job, my reputation, and even my safety. It felt like I was standing in solidarity with the marginalized, like Jesus who defended the oppressed and called out the religious elite. I thought I was doing the "Jesus thing"—speaking truth to power.

But as I returned to my Breathwork practice, remorse set in, and it wouldn't leave. I kept trying to convince myself that I had done the right thing, that I had followed in the footsteps of Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers. I sided with the poor and the "least of these" over the powerful. And yet, the Breath would not let me rest. It wouldn't allow me to settle with the idea that I was entirely in the right.

Divine Insight Through Breathwork:

Realizing Oneness

Through my time of breathing, the insights that emerged were clear: my words had come from a place of division, not unity.

What I've come to understand through Breathwork is that we are all one—not just in some abstract theological sense, but in a lived, experiential way. Paul writes in Ephesians: “There is one body and one Breath, just as you were called to one hope... one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

He goes on to say: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Breath through the bond of peace.”

One of the most powerful experiences that Breathwork offers is the overwhelming sensation of unconditional love. Sometimes

this love is for specific individuals in our lives, but during my practice, I felt it for everyone. It wasn't just a sentimental feeling but a deep knowing—a love that desired to hold all things and people with kindness and gentleness, as if they were all extensions of myself. Friends, family, enemies, you name it. They were just Darren by a different name, or perhaps I was them disguised as Darren. We were one.

Through these Breathwork experiences, passages like Ephesians shifted from being mere words on a page to becoming a profound reality. Liam wasn't just another person who lived on the streets; he was me. A different expression of me, shaped by different

circumstances, but still me. Is this not what Christ pointed to in Matthew 25 when he said:

“Then [the Son of Man] will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ (Matthew 25:41-45)

The Son of Man did not judge them merely for failing to help a fellow human; rather, Christ identified so profoundly with the hungry, thirsty, stranger, sick, and imprisoned that he was them. To not help them was to not help Jesus himself. This is the awareness that Holy Breathing brings to light. Liam was not just a friend; Liam was me. And just as I couldn't abandon myself, I couldn't abandon him.

Yet, it was not only Liam. The Breath showed me that the elder was also me. How could I yell at myself? How could I shame myself? The divisions I had drawn between us

were illusions, created by my own ego and my own sense of righteousness.

Breathwork has taught me to not only feel the oneness of humanity but to live and speak from it—not just in moments of peace, but even in the heat of conflict. It expands our capacity for empathy and allows us to move from a place of love, rather than anger or fear. When we understand that we are all interconnected, every interaction becomes an opportunity to extend grace and compassion.

This truth is particularly relevant in today's world, where divisions run deep—politically, religiously, and racially. Imagine what could happen if we didn't just believe in our oneness but lived from it. If we didn't just

talk about being one body in Christ, but actually experienced that oneness through his Breath.

But even with these revelations, I still made mistakes that day. Breathwork is not a magic cure; it doesn't make us perfect. Like Peter, who denied Jesus, or Paul, who struggled with his own harshness, we are all still human. Breathwork helps remove the blockages and brings us closer to God, but it's up to us to live out the lessons it offers.

As we approach the conclusion of this journey, remember that the Holy Breath calls us to live from love, oneness, and compassion. But knowing this truth is not enough—it must be integrated into our actions, our

relationships, and our daily lives. The path forward is about walking in step with this Breath of life and allowing it to guide every moment of our existence.

Conclusion

The Path Forward

As we bring these reflections to a close, I encourage you to continue engaging with the Holy Breath—not just through reading and contemplation, but through daily breathwork practice. We have explored the power of breathwork to open us to the presence of God and to transform us from within. But these experiences are not meant to be one-time events; they are meant to shape how we live, day by day.

In my own practice, I have found that breathwork has allowed me to be present with God in the midst of challenges. It has helped

me navigate major life transitions, and rather than complaining or giving in to frustration, I breathe through the challenge to cultivate resilience—or faithfulness, if we are talking about the fruit of the Breath!

Over time, I have been able to let go of so much unforgiveness and anger, not just in significant moments but in my daily life as well. Breathwork creates a tenderness within you, and as you practice, you begin to notice subtle shifts in your breathing—especially when external stressors try to pull you into fight-or-flight mode. Over time, my awareness has grown, and I can now sense more and more of these shifts as they are happening, rather than afterward. I'm not suggesting this practice will

make you perfect, but it is a profound resource for growing more and more into the image of Christ.

Just as Paul encouraged the Galatians to walk by the Spirit, I encourage you to walk by the Holy Breath. Let it guide you into deeper love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit. As you continue to practice breathwork, you may not experience dramatic visions like those described by others in Holotropic Breathwork, but you will undoubtedly experience the subtle, quiet transformations that come with being filled by the Holy Breath. You will find more spaciousness in your life, more freedom from the stories that have held

you captive, and a greater alignment with your true identity as a child of God.

In the end, the path of the Holy Breath is one of ongoing rebirth and renewal. It is a path that leads us back to our true selves—our divine origin in God—and empowers us to live out that identity in the world. May you continue to breathe deeply and walk this path with openness, grace, and courage, knowing that the Holy Breath is always with you, guiding you into the fullness of life.

About the Author

Darren Lavell Hagood is a breathwork coach, spiritual guide, and co-owner of HealYourLovePeriod (HYL.), a wellness organization that combines breathwork, sound healing, and guided meditations to help people heal from anxiety, stress, and trauma. With a passion for exploring the intersection of spirituality and mental health, Darren has led numerous individuals through breathwork practices that foster deep emotional and spiritual transformation.

A dedicated student of Christian theology, Darren holds both a Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Text and a Master of Divinity. His exploration into the Holy Spirit led him to discover the profound connection between breath and spirit, which inspired this book.

Darren resides in Bordentown, New Jersey, with his wife and business partner, Gloria. Together, they continue to lead workshops and create spaces for healing and spiritual growth, all while deepening their commitment to

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Endnotes

Chapter 1: Rediscovering the Breath of Life

1. **"Jesus giving his followers 'power and authority to drive out demons and cure diseases' (Luke 9:1)."**

Luke 9:1 (NIV): "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases."

2. **"The Spirit just doesn't work the way it did back then."**

This view is often associated with cessationism, a theological stance that holds the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased with the apostolic age.

3. **"But son, the fruit of the Spirit is self-control!"**

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

4. **"Imagine what it would do for families, marriages, and churches if we could live out love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."**

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

5. **"The same Holy Breath that created all things, as the Gospel of John tells us: 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' (John 1:3)."**

John 1:3 (NIV): "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

6. **"Christ breathed life into the world, and in John 20, he breathes new life into his disciples."**

John 20:22 (NIV): "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

7. **"The breath and the Spirit are one and the same."**

The Greek word for spirit, "pneuma," also means "breath" or "wind," highlighting the close relationship between the Spirit and breath in biblical language.

Chapter 2: Breathing Life Into Faith

- 1. Spirit is rooted in the Hebrew word ruach and the Greek word pneuma, both of which also mean 'breath' or 'wind.'**

In Hebrew, "ruach" can mean breath, wind, or spirit, and in Greek, "pneuma" similarly translates to breath or spirit, revealing the deep connection between breath and the Spirit of God in both languages (Genesis 2:7, NIV).

- 2. "God grabs the soil and 'breathes into his nostrils the breath of life.'"**

Genesis 2:7 (NIV): "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

- 3. "'My breath will not remain in humans forever.'"**

Genesis 6:3 (NIV): "Then the LORD said,

'My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.'

4. **"The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."**

Genesis 1:2 (NIV): "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

5. **"Some translations say 'Spirit,' others say 'wind,' but again, remember it can also mean 'breath'?"**

The Hebrew word "ruach" in Genesis 1:2 can be translated as spirit, wind, or breath, depending on the context (Genesis 1:2, NIV).

6. **"One of the most fascinating discoveries I've come across is that many scholars believe the divine name, YHWH, isn't meant to be pronounced with words but with**

breath itself."

Some scholars suggest that the divine name YHWH aligns with the sounds of breathing, where "YH" corresponds to the inhale and "WH" to the exhale. This spiritual interpretation is explored in Chapter 11 of *The Tao of Liberation*. See Boff, Leonardo, and Mark Hathaway. *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation*. Orbis Books, 2009, Kindle ed., location 7394.

7. **"Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit."**

Luke 23:46 (NIV): "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."

8. **"The peace that surpasses understanding."**

Philippians 4:7 (NIV): "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

9. Connection of breath and Spirit with modern understanding

James Nestor's exploration of diaphragmatic breathing highlights how deep breathing impacts mental, emotional, and physical well-being. His research into nasal breathing and its calming effects relates to Christian spirituality and practices of breathwork. See Nestor, James. *Breath: The Science of a Lost Art*. Riverhead Books, 2020, Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.

10. Wim Hof and Breathwork

Wim Hof, also known as "The Iceman," is renowned for his breathwork techniques that allow him to withstand extreme temperatures and manage physical and mental stress. His method combines controlled breathing exercises, cold exposure, and meditation, which he has

demonstrated through various feats, such as climbing mountains in shorts and withstanding subzero conditions. The method has been used by many to reduce stress, anxiety, and improve overall well-being. For more on Wim Hof's approach, see: Hof, Wim. *The Wim Hof Method: Activate Your Full Human Potential*. Sounds True, 2020.

Chapter 3: Receiving the Christ Breath

- 1. "When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Breath.'"**

John 20:22 (NIV): "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" The act of Jesus breathing on his disciples is unique

to John's Gospel and highlights the direct transmission of the Holy Spirit.

2. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."**

John 1:1 (NIV): This verse connects the creation story of Genesis with the presence of Jesus, or the Word, in the beginning of creation, underscoring his divine role in bringing life into the world.

3. **"The breath of God that hovered over the waters in Genesis..."**

Genesis 1:2 (NIV): "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." The Hebrew word "ruach" in this passage can also be translated as "breath."

4. **"God breathed life into Adam."**

Genesis 2:7 (NIV): "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

5. **"The word 'holy' simply means 'set apart for a special purpose.'"**

In both Hebrew ("qadosh") and Greek ("hagios"), the term "holy" refers to something that is set apart for divine purposes, signifying its sacred and special nature.

6. **"Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control..."**

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-

control." These are the virtues produced in a life transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 4: Beginning with the Breath: Gentle Breathing Practices

1. "From the moment God breathed life into Adam..."

Genesis 2:7 (NIV): "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

2. "Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit upon His disciples..."

John 20:22 (NIV): "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

3. **"This breathing series was initially created for mothers-to-be..."**

This practice, developed with the University of California, Irvine's nursing school, focuses on breathwork to reduce stress and promote relaxation in expecting mothers, though it has broader applications for all seeking calm and peace.

4. **"Post-breathing stillness...where they first experience the Holy Breath..."**

Stillness following intentional breathwork can be transformative, allowing one to be present with the Holy Spirit. This practice reflects moments of divine presence, as described in scripture, such as the

*"still, small voice" that spoke to
Elijah in 1 Kings 19:12.*

5. **"1 Thessalonians 5:18, which teaches us to 'give thanks in all circumstances.'"**

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV): "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

6. **"Research shows that even 3 minutes of gratitude-focused breathing..."**

Studies have shown that gratitude and mindfulness practices, including breathwork, can reduce stress and boost immune function. The integration of gratitude into breathing exercises enhances both spiritual and physical well-being.

7. **"Gratitude doesn't just change our minds; it changes our physical health..."**

Modern research highlights the link between gratitude and improved physical health, including better heart function, lower blood pressure, and increased emotional resilience.

Chapter 5: The Spaciousness of Holy Breath

1. **"The practice may cause sensations such as tingling in the hands and feet, lightheadedness, body temperature changes, and stiffness in the hands."**

These are natural physical sensations that occur when the body adjusts to increased oxygen levels during intentional breathwork.

2. **"Jesus said in the Gospel of John: 'But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth... He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.' John 16:13-14."**

John 16:13-14 (NIV): "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you."

3. **"As Paul says in Galatians: 'But the fruit of the Holy Breath is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.' Galatians 5:22-23."**

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

4. **"The key is to relax and trust the process. With consistent practice, your body and mind will grow stronger..."**

Consistent breathwork practice allows the body and mind to adapt, deepening the connection to the Holy Breath and cultivating spiritual growth over time.

Chapter 6: The Deepest Breath - Advanced Practice

1. **"You may also experience tingling in your hands and feet, changes in body temperature,**

lightheadedness, or stiffness in your hands as your body becomes full of oxygen."

These sensations are common physical responses to heightened oxygen levels during deep breathwork. Over time, as your body adapts to this practice, these sensations will become less pronounced.

2. **"Through this deep, continuous breathing, many people have reported feeling the divine life force energy flowing more intensely."**

The concept of "divine life force energy" refers to the experience many have of feeling a deeper, spiritual connection through breathwork, particularly in

practices that focus on continuous, rhythmic breathing.

3. **"As Paul writes in Romans 8:26-27: 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Holy Breath intercedes for us through wordless groans. And the One who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Holy Breath intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.'"**

Romans 8:26-27 (NIV): "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit

intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

4. **"As Jesus teaches, 'If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you' (Matthew 6:14)."**

Matthew 6:14 (NIV): "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

5. **"In this breathwork practice, you are giving the Holy Breath room to intercede for you in ways that may transcend your conscious mind."**

In advanced breathwork, many practitioners experience emotional release and spiritual insight, which can manifest in a variety of physical and emotional ways. This concept reflects the idea that breathwork facilitates deeper spiritual

connection, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in the individual's life.

6. **"Holding onto unforgiveness was literally impacting his health. His heart was being damaged, not by the person he refused to forgive, but by the unforgiveness itself."**

This anecdote highlights the known psychological and physiological impacts of unforgiveness, including chronic stress, anxiety, and other health issues that can arise from holding onto resentment.

Chapter 7: The Laughing Breath

1. **"The body releases dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins—all of which help lower stress."**

Dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins are neurotransmitters

that play a key role in regulating mood, stress, and emotional well-being. Laughter naturally triggers the release of these chemicals, which contribute to feelings of happiness and relaxation.

2. **"Stress is one of the leading causes of most illnesses."**

Chronic stress has been widely recognized as a contributing factor to various health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases, anxiety disorders, and immune system suppression.

3. **"James tells us, 'Count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds' (James 1:2)."**

James 1:2 (NIV): "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds."

4. **"Paul writes in Philippians, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!' (Philippians 4:4)."**

Philippians 4:4 (NIV): "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

5. **"Proverbs tells us, 'Wisdom laughs in the face of calamity' (Proverbs 1:26)."**

Proverbs 1:26 (NIV): "I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you; I will mock when calamity overtakes you." This verse metaphorically personifies wisdom, emphasizing the contrast between wisdom and the folly of ignoring it.

6. **"The Holy Breath doesn't just make us feel better—it helps us think better."**

This reflects the psychological benefits of breathwork, which can help reframe stressful situations and promote more positive and constructive thinking.

7. **"In our group sessions, we often practice this laughter together, and what many people experience is gratitude for a safe space to laugh and to laugh big."**

Group breathwork and laughter practices have been shown to foster community and emotional release, creating a safe space for participants to express joy and relieve tension.

Chapter 8: Integrating Breathwork Into Daily Life

1. **"Most of the practices—except the most advanced breathwork—can**

be used daily to support your spiritual and emotional growth."

Daily breathwork practices have been shown to enhance mindfulness, reduce stress, and improve emotional regulation. Regular practice helps in building resilience and maintaining emotional balance.

2. **"I recommend doing the advanced practice no more than once or twice a month, as it tends to bring up deep spiritual, mental, and emotional experiences that require time to process and journal afterward."**

Intensive breathwork practices often lead to profound spiritual and emotional experiences that can take time to integrate, making them more suitable for occasional practice rather than daily routines.

3. **"Faster, short breathwork is ideal for energizing yourself in the morning."**

Short, fast-paced breathwork techniques, such as those that activate the sympathetic nervous system, can increase alertness and energy levels in the morning.

4. **"Gentle breathwork combined with gratitude is perfect after work or before bed to release the day's stress."**

Gentle breathwork combined with intentional gratitude practices activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and reducing cortisol levels, making it ideal for winding down at the end of the day.

5. **"Laughing breath is great at lunchtime or after work to lift your spirits."**

Laughter has been shown to release mood-enhancing chemicals like endorphins and dopamine, reducing stress and elevating mood.

Practicing laughing breath during the day can serve as an emotional reset.

6. **"The key is to align your breathwork with your intention."**

Mindfulness-based practices, including breathwork, are more effective when aligned with clear intentions, helping individuals stay present and grounded during the practice.

Chapter 9: For the Bible Nerds: An Invitation to Explore

1. **"Jesus said, 'We testify about what we have seen and heard.'"**

John 3:11. Jesus emphasizes the importance of personal experience and direct testimony over abstract intellectual understanding in His conversation with Nicodemus.

2. **"Nicodemus wrestled to understand Jesus' words about being 'born of the Spirit'..."**

John 3:1-10. Nicodemus struggles to comprehend Jesus' teaching about being 'born of the Spirit,' showing that spiritual practices often require experiential understanding rather than mere intellectual comprehension.

3. **"Breathwork invites us to move beyond mental comprehension and into embodied experience."**

Breathwork practices like those taught in this book help shift the focus from intellectual understanding of spiritual concepts to a deeper, lived experience of those truths.

4. **"Jesus told Nicodemus, 'We speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still, you do not accept our testimony.'"**

John 3:11. Jesus reinforces the importance of lived experience and direct testimony in understanding spiritual realities, a key principle in breathwork practice as well.

5. **"Allow yourself to explore, knowing that these insights are meant to complement, not replace, your existing faith practices."**

Breathwork, as presented in this book, is designed to complement

Christian spirituality by providing a practical tool for experiencing the Holy Spirit (or Christ Breath) more deeply. This approach invites openness to new ways of engaging with the Christian faith.

Chapter 10: Breath and Spirit: A Deeper Exploration

1. **"David described feeling tingles, light-headedness, and what he called an 'electrical current' flowing through his body."**

This description of breathwork effects is consistent with physiological responses observed in practices such as Holotropic Breathwork, where deep, continuous breathing induces heightened physical sensations and altered states of consciousness, as documented by Stanislav Grof. See Grof, Stanislav. *Holotropic Breathwork: A New Approach to Self-Exploration and Therapy*. SUNY Press, 2010.

2. **"Spirit and breath have to be synonymous, David. We experienced peace—isn't that a fruit of the Spirit? Or should I say, a fruit of the Breath?"**

Galatians 5:22-23. Paul lists peace as one of the fruits of the Spirit, linking the manifestation of the Spirit in a believer's life with emotional and spiritual well-being.

3. "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:16. John the Baptist predicts that Jesus will baptize not with water but with the Holy Spirit, marking a shift from physical to spiritual baptism. This prefigures the Pentecost event in Acts.

4. "It's only in the Book of Acts, Luke's sequel, that we finally see this baptism unfold."

Acts 2:1-4. The Holy Spirit descends on the apostles at Pentecost in a powerful display of wind and fire, fulfilling John's prophecy of baptism by the Holy Spirit.

5. "Holotropic Breathwork: A Modern Parallel."

Stanislav Grof's Holotropic Breathwork offers an experiential method for accessing deep states of consciousness, often leading participants to spiritual realizations and experiences that parallel those described in ancient Christian traditions. Grof documents that some participants speak in tongues or foreign languages unknown to them during sessions. See Grof, *Holotropic Breathwork: A New Approach to Self-Exploration and Therapy*, Kindle ed., p. 69.

6. "Matt embodied the servant-hearted nature that Jesus spoke of."

Matthew 25:40. Jesus teaches that acts of service, even to "the least of these," are acts of service to Him, suggesting that living in alignment with Christ's teachings is more about action than religious identity.

7. "The apostles encountered someone casting out demons in Jesus' name and tried to stop him, saying, 'He's not one of us.' Jesus' response was surprising."

Mark 9:39-40. When the apostles encountered someone casting out demons in Jesus' name, they tried to stop him. Jesus responded, "Do not stop him... for whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:39-40, NIV).

8. "I have other sheep that are not of this fold."

John 10:16. Jesus speaks of His "other sheep," indicating that His influence and mission extend beyond His immediate followers (John 10:16, NIV).

9. "Jesus said, 'Receive the Holy Breath.' He was passing on more than just a religious experience—He was passing on a way of being."

John 20:22. Jesus breathes on His disciples and imparts the Holy Spirit to them, a powerful moment of spiritual transmission that highlights the close connection between breath and Spirit in the New Testament.

10. "Melchizedek, a priest outside of Israel, was still a servant of the Most High."

Genesis 14:18-20. Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High, blesses Abram, and Abram gives him a tenth of everything after his victory (Genesis 14:18-20, NIV).

11. "Hebrews explicitly tells us... 'resembling the Son of God.'"

Hebrews 7:3-7. The author of Hebrews reflects on Melchizedek's greatness, highlighting that he was not of the Israelite priestly lineage yet still collected tithes from Abraham and was greater than him (Hebrews 7:3-7, NIV).

12. "Jethro was the one who advised Moses on how to lead Israel more effectively."

Exodus 18:13-24. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and a Midianite priest, advises Moses to delegate leadership to others to more effectively govern the people of Israel (Exodus 18:13-24, NIV).

13. "The wise men brought gifts to Jesus at His birth."

Matthew 2:1-12. The magi (wise men) bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor Jesus at His birth and are later warned in a dream not to return to Herod (Matthew 2:1-12, NIV).

14. "Paul reminded us in Romans that the Gentiles already had the law of God written on their hearts."

Romans 2:14-15. Paul writes that Gentiles, who do not have the law, can act in

accordance with God's law, which is written on their hearts (Romans 2:14-15, NIV).

15. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Galatians 5:22-23. Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit, which reflect a life transformed by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV).

16. "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

1 Corinthians 13:1-2. Paul emphasizes that without love, spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues are meaningless (1 Corinthians 13:1-2, NIV).

17. "What makes this the Holy Breath? What makes a style of breathing the Breath of Jesus?"

Acts 17:25. Paul teaches that God "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything," linking the breath of life to God's creative power (Acts 17:25, NIV).

18. "The Holy Breath is holy when it produces Christ-likeness in us."

John 15:5. Jesus teaches that abiding in Him produces fruit, suggesting that the Spirit's work within us is evidenced by a life that reflects Christ's character (John 15:5, NIV).

Chapter 11: By the Breath Alone

1. "Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg Castle Church."

This act on October 31, 1517, marked the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, which challenged various practices of the Roman Catholic Church, including the selling of indulgences. Luther's

critique reshaped Christian theology and the relationship between faith and works.

2. **"Luther's interpretation freed many Christians from 'works-righteousness' and external religious practices, yet it also obscured the deeper point of this passage."**

Luther's theology of sola fide—justification by faith alone—was revolutionary, but it also shifted the emphasis away from Paul's broader focus on the transformative work of the Holy Spirit (or Holy Breath) in the believer's life.

3. **"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified."**

Galatians 3:1-5. Paul writes to the Galatian church, challenging them for relying on Jewish customs, like circumcision, rather than faith in Christ. He emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is received through faith, not works of the law.

4. **"Faith is the doorway, but the Holy Breath is the force that shapes us into Christ-likeness."**

Romans 8:11. Paul writes that the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, gives life to our mortal bodies, highlighting the Spirit as the agent of transformation.

5. **"Through the Holy Breath we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope."**

Galatians 5:5. Paul emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, pointing to the Spirit as the

means through which believers experience righteousness and transformation.

6. "God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Galatians 4:6-7. Paul identifies the Spirit as the agent through which believers experience their identity as children of God, emphasizing the relational aspect of the Holy Breath.

7. "To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

John 1:12-13. This passage affirms that those who believe in Christ are born of God, emphasizing spiritual rebirth rather than natural lineage as the foundation of our identity.

8. "These holds allow a certain 'spaciousness' within our hearts and minds."

This reference to breath holds as creating "spaciousness" echoes the contemplative traditions of Christianity, where silence and stillness are used to encounter God's presence (Psalm 46:10).

9. "We come out of our personal history... and it's in this space of freedom that we taste our true identity as children of God."

Romans 8:15-16. Paul writes that believers are adopted as children of God, and the Spirit testifies with their spirit that they are God's children, emphasizing the inner experience of identity through the Spirit.

10. "The fruits of the Holy Breath can generate them within us!"

Galatians 5:22-23. The fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—are the natural byproducts of the Spirit's presence in a believer's life.

11. "Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?"

Galatians 3:5. Paul challenges the Galatians to remember that the miracles they experienced were the result of faith, not adherence to the law, pointing to the Holy Spirit as the source of these miraculous works.

12. "Holotropic Breathwork has shown, one byproduct is the

**experience of speaking in
tongues."**

Stanislav Grof's Holotropic Breathwork has been reported to induce profound spiritual experiences, sometimes akin to glossolalia (speaking in tongues), a phenomenon described in Acts 2:4 and 1 Corinthians 12:10.

**13. "Rebirth Necessitates the Fruit of
the Holy Breath."**

John 15:5. Jesus teaches that remaining in Him produces fruit, and similarly, Paul describes the evidence of the Spirit's presence as the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). These are the true marks of spiritual rebirth.

**14. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, forbearance, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,
and self-control."**

Galatians 5:22-23. Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit as evidence of a life

transformed by the Holy Spirit. These virtues are the outward signs of inner spiritual rebirth and transformation.

15. "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.

Galatians 6:15. Paul concludes his letter by emphasizing that external markers, like circumcision, are irrelevant compared to the inner transformation produced by the Holy Spirit.

16. "We are reborn—not just once, but continually."

Titus 3:5. Paul writes that God "saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit," highlighting the ongoing nature of spiritual rebirth through the Spirit.

Chapter 12: One Humanity

1. "The Least of These"

Matthew 25:40. Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40, NIV). In the broader context of Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus ties our treatment of the poor to our ultimate salvation, explaining that those who care for the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned will inherit eternal life, while those who neglect them will face judgment.

2. "One Body and One Breath"

Ephesians 4:4-6. Paul writes about the unity of believers, saying, "There is one body and one Spirit [or Breath], just as you were called to one hope... one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6, NIV).

3. "Be completely humble and gentle..."

Ephesians 4:2-3. Paul encourages believers to live in unity, writing, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit [or Breath] through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3, NIV).

4. "There is one body and one Breath..."

Ephesians 4:4-6. Paul speaks to the oneness of the Christian community and the unity of believers under one God (Ephesians 4:4-6, NIV).

5. "You invite people into your home..."

Matthew 25:35-36. Jesus calls for hospitality and care for others, stating, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me..." (Matthew 25:35-36, NIV). In the

context of Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus links these acts of mercy directly to salvation, showing that those who demonstrate care and compassion to the marginalized will inherit eternal life.

6. "Make sure you're doing what's best for him, not just for our comfort."

Proverbs 31:8-9. The call to defend and speak up for the marginalized is echoed in Proverbs: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8-9, NIV).

7. "You don't give a damn about poor people!"

James 2:5-6. James calls out the mistreatment of the poor, saying, "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith...? But you have dishonored the poor" (James 2:5-6, NIV). In

that moment, I felt in alignment with Jesus and scripture, defending the marginalized as I believed He would. Yet, the Breath was calling me deeper into love, showing me that true unity requires not only defending justice but also embodying love and compassion, even in moments of conflict. And let's not forget that James would probably tell me to tame my tongue too! (James 3:5-8).

8. "The Holy Breath calls us to live from love, oneness, and compassion."

Galatians 5:22-23. Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV).

Conclusion: The Path Forward

1. **"Breathwork has allowed me to be present with God in the midst of challenges."**

Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus invites those who are weary and burdened to come to Him for rest, a promise that is reflected in the peace and presence that breathwork cultivates.

2. **"I breathe through the challenge to cultivate resilience—or faithfulness, if we are talking about the fruit of the Breath!"**

Galatians 5:22-23. Paul lists faithfulness as one of the fruits of the Spirit, emphasizing how the Holy Breath can cultivate resilience and faith in the face of life's challenges.

3. **"I have been able to let go of so much unforgiveness and anger, not just in significant moments but in my daily life as well."**

Matthew 6:14-15. Jesus teaches that forgiveness is essential for spiritual well-being, and breathwork aids in releasing these emotional burdens in alignment with this teaching.

4. **"Paul encouraged the Galatians to walk by the Spirit."**

Galatians 5:16. Paul instructs the Galatians to "walk by the Spirit," which involves living in alignment with the Holy Breath and allowing it to guide one's actions and decisions.

5. **"You may not experience dramatic visions like those described by others in Holotropic Breathwork."**

Acts 2:17. Peter quotes the prophet Joel, saying that in the last days, people will see visions and dream dreams. While such experiences are possible, breathwork often brings about more subtle internal shifts rather than overt supernatural encounters.

6. **"You will find more spaciousness in your life, more freedom from the stories that have held you captive."**

John 8:32. Jesus teaches that knowing the truth will set people free, and breathwork helps to create the spaciousness necessary to discern truth from the stories that bind us.

7. **"The path of the Holy Breath is one of ongoing rebirth and renewal."**

Titus 3:5. Paul writes that we are saved through "rebirth and renewal by the

Holy Spirit,” affirming that the journey of spiritual transformation is continuous.

8. **"The Holy Breath is always with you, guiding you into the fullness of life."**

John 16:13. Jesus promises that the Spirit of truth will guide believers into all truth, indicating the ongoing role of the Holy Breath in guiding us into fullness of life.