

GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

PURSUING GOD'S
HOLINESS EVERY DAY



Herb Vander Lugt



introduction

Guided by the Spirit

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What exactly does it mean to be guided by the Spirit? Will I know if I am or am not being guided? These are questions that all people who want to follow Jesus and live as a member of God's family ask at one time or another. It is easy to feel left out or left behind when we hear stories about the Spirit nudging, prompting, or leading other people to do specific

things. Are they just closer to the Lord? What is it that we are missing if, when, we don't feel that same leading?

Herb Vander Lugt has explored what Scripture has to say about being filled with and led by the Spirit and shares his thoughts in the following pages. We hope what follows will give you a deeper understanding of who the Spirit is, how the Spirit works, and what it means to be led by the Spirit as we seek to follow Christ.

Our Daily Bread Ministries

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one

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Every follower of Jesus Christ should want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But what does that mean? Some see it as an experience marked by speaking in tongues or interpreting them.▀ Others describe it as feeling the Spirit take them over or as being overcome with great joy. Still others talk of being “slain” in the Spirit or perhaps having the ability to prophesy.

But other Christians say they have never had any of these experiences. Many believe that Christians can be filled with the Holy Spirit as they live their day-to-day lives. To them, Richard Wurmbrand (1909–2001), who was repeatedly tortured in a communist prison camp, exemplifies the power of a Spirit-filled life. He told of singing for joy in a cell despite being perpetually cold, sick, and hungry.

➤ In the New Testament, the term “**tongues**” (tais glössais) refers to several different things: (1) recognized languages spoken by people in different cultures; (2) a supernatural utterance provided on the day of Pentecost to evangelize the different ethnic groups present; or (3) a spiritual gift in the first century that could be interpreted for edification in the church or was used in private prayer language to help in intercession.

➤ **Pentecost** simply means “fiftieth” in Greek. It is the celebration of the Feast of Weeks in the Jewish calendar, and occurs 50 days after Passover. The Feast of Weeks indicates the end of the grain harvest.

According to the Bible, the privilege for every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit began at Pentecost[➤] (ACTS 2:1–13). As the disciples prayed together, they suddenly heard the sound of rushing wind, saw tongue-like flames, and spoke in languages they had never learned. Three thousand people in Jerusalem turned to Jesus that day. Filled with courage and power, the apostles went around telling others about Christ and performing miracles. Despite persecution, as time went on these Spirit-filled Christians presented such a powerful testimony that even their enemies spoke of them as people who had “turned the world upside down” (ACTS 17:6).

We would all like to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but most of us don’t experience the same victory, joy, or power that seemed to accompany the presence of the Holy Spirit for these early followers of Jesus. So this leads us to ask, “How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?”

Before we discuss what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to know who the Holy Spirit is. Some insist that the Holy Spirit is an influence—a power or source of God-given spiritual energy. Others see Him as ghostlike, entering or leaving us at will. Still others picture Him as a kind of cosmic magician, elusive and vague, who drops mysteriously into our lives to make spiritual things happen and then leaves just as quickly as He came.

The Bible makes it clear, however, that the Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. He is a person who lives within every Christian.

He Is a Personal Being

The Scriptures give us five clear evidences that the Holy Spirit is a personal being, not a mystic force or strange power.

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as “He.” Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “He.” He promised His disciples: “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He [the Holy Spirit] may abide with you forever” (JOHN 14:16).

The Holy Spirit has intelligence. He knows the “deep things of God” and reveals them to us (1 CORINTHIANS 2:10–11). Only a personal being has this kind of intelligence.

The Holy Spirit makes decisions. He gives gifts to the Lord’s people, “distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 CORINTHIANS 12:11).

The Holy Spirit has emotions. He feels love (ROMANS 15:30) and grief (EPHESIANS 4:30). A mere “influence” cannot feel emotions.

The Holy Spirit is active. He does things only a being with personality can do. Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit speaks (REVELATION 2:7), intercedes for us in prayer (ROMANS 8:26), teaches (JOHN 14:26), leads (ROMANS 8:14), appoints (ACTS 20:28), and empowers (ACTS 1:8).

He Is God

The Holy Spirit is also referred to in the Bible as God. He is the third person of the eternal Trinity, one with the Father and with the Son. The Holy Spirit appears as equal with the Father and the Son in the command for baptism and in some of the New Testament prayers (MATTHEW 28:19; 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14).

In addition, the apostle Peter said that the Holy Spirit was God. In Acts 5, when Ananias lied about giving to the church, Peter told him, “you have lied to the Holy Spirit” and “not to men but to God” (vv. 3–4). And Paul called the Holy Spirit “Lord” (2 CORINTHIANS 3:17–18).

The Holy Spirit possesses qualities that belong only to God: eternality (HEBREWS 9:14), the ability to be everywhere at the same time (PSALM 139:7–10), sovereign power (MATTHEW 6:13; DANIEL 4:17, 34–35), and the knowledge of “the things of God” (1 CORINTHIANS 2:10–12). The Bible plainly teaches that the Holy Spirit, who lives within every Christian, is a person and that He is God.



two

“Filled” with the Spirit

The filling of the Holy Spirit can be described as the influence the Spirit exercises over us when we yield ourselves to Him. The Spirit of God, who has given us new life and has taken up residence within us, wants to fill our lives with His goodness and power. He wants us to let Him take control of our lives. Even so, He does not use His power as God to overwhelm us; rather, He fills us only as we submit to Him.

In this sense, then, being filled with the Spirit means we have placed ourselves under His influence and control. We have yielded to Him, letting Him direct our lives. We often speak of something that so fills a person's mind that it strangely influences everything he thinks and does. We can be filled with anger, fear, sorrow, pride, love, anxiety, and other feelings and emotions. The Bible uses the word *filled* in the same

way (SEE LUKE 6:11; ACTS 5:17; 13:45). To be filled with something means to be under its control.

This truth is stated clearly in Ephesians 5:18: “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”²¹ Paul used this analogy because a person who gets drunk places himself under the influence or control of the alcohol. Similarly, a Christian who submits to the indwelling Holy Spirit puts herself under His influence or control. Both the person who consumes enough alcohol to get drunk and the Christian who yields to the Holy Spirit have placed themselves under the control of something or someone else.

21 The word translated **“filled”** in Ephesians 5:18 is in the passive voice in Greek, which simply means that God does the filling and we are the recipients of this filling. The command in this verse is not to work to be filled by the Spirit but to surrender to the filling of the Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, people who heard the apostles speak in languages they had never learned accused them of being drunk. In the pagan ceremonies of Paul’s day, worshipers did sometimes get drunk as part of their religious experience. The analogy, therefore, had some background in Paul’s thinking. If we think about it, a group of Spirit-filled Christians singing with great enthusiasm may have had a superficial resemblance to a band of pagan worshipers drunk with wine, singing to their gods. But the similarity is on the surface only. People who

are drunk with wine suffer impaired judgment. They say and do things they normally wouldn't do and often can't remember what they did.

On the other hand, a person filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore under His control enjoys improved judgment, acts in a responsible manner, and rejoices in the memory of what he says and does under the control of the Holy Spirit.

We are greatly influenced by whatever fills us. If we are filled with anger, we will be influenced to such an extent that we will say and do things we may later regret. People filled with anger against God may become so controlled by hatred that they become defiant and rebellious. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be so influenced by, controlled by, or permeated by Him that we will reflect God's moral character and be strengthened by His power.

Who Can Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?

The filling of the Holy Spirit should be the desire of every Christian. But we may have the mistaken idea that it is reserved only for privileged, spiritually sensitive, special people. Thankfully, the filling of the Holy Spirit is for everyone, with two important prerequisites.

First, to experience the filling of the Holy Spirit, a person must be a Christian—he or she must be born again. This new birth is given by the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus told Nicodemus he had to be born again, He referred to that experience as being “born

of the Spirit” (JOHN 3:6). He later told His disciples, “It is the Spirit who gives life” (6:63). When the Spirit gives this new life, He also enters into the new Christian to live within him or her permanently—to indwell us. Paul tells us in Romans 8:9 that anyone who does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit is not a Christian. Even though the indwelling of the Spirit is not the same as the filling of the Spirit, only someone who is indwelt can be filled. So the first prerequisite to being Spirit-filled is to be a Christian.



To experience the filling of the Holy Spirit, a person must be a Christian—he or she must be born again.

Second, the filling of the Holy Spirit is only for those Christians who want to be filled. Although He dwells within all Christians, He does not fill them just because He is present. To be obedient to the command to be filled with the Spirit (EPHESIANS 5:18), a person must want the Spirit’s filling and then be willing to yield to His control.

How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?

Paul commanded the believers at Ephesus—and every Christian—to be “filled with the Spirit.” This clause could be literally translated, “Let the Holy Spirit keep filling you,” or “Keep letting the Holy Spirit fill you.” But just how do we obey this command?

We know what it means to be filled with excitement or happiness. Those emotions so permeate our thoughts and feelings that they dominate us. When Paul told us to be filled with the Spirit, he was telling us to let Him so fill us that everything we think and do is influenced or controlled by Him.

But the crucial question is still “How?” God’s part is clear: He will fill us. But what is our part? Here are some practical aspects to consider. We must be (1) Christ-centered, (2) reading Scripture, (3) submissive, and (4) confident.

Be Christ-Centered

The first essential for being Spirit-filled is to center our lives on Jesus Christ. He must be the focal point of our thoughts and aspirations. In all we do, we must be conscious of following His example and doing His will. Jesus said, “He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (JOHN 16:14).

In a good marriage, the wife or husband enjoys seeing the other receive honor. Similarly, the Holy Spirit derives great pleasure from seeing us cooperate with Him in glorifying



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Christ. He Himself wants to remain hidden so that nothing diverts our gaze from Jesus. Whenever we focus our attention on Christ, the Holy Spirit is in close partnership with us. The Spirit is pleased when we glorify the Lord. We can do this by:

- Making Jesus our example (JOHN 13:15; PHILIPPIANS 2:5–8; 1 PETER 2:21–24).
- Longing to know Jesus better, so that we may be more like Him (PHILIPPIANS 3:10–14).
- Not fearing death because we look forward to being with Jesus (2 CORINTHIANS 5:8; PHILIPPIANS 1:21–23; 2 TIMOTHY 4:6–8).
- Finding comfort in Christ’s intercession for us (HEBREWS 4:14–16).
- Purifying ourselves from sin as we live in expectation of Jesus’s return (1 JOHN 3:2–3).
- Looking forward to Christ’s rule over the earth (ISAIAH 2:1–4; JEREMIAH 23:5–6; REVELATION 20:1–4).

The Holy Spirit keeps Himself out of the limelight so that Christ may be honored. He is pleased when we praise and adore the Lord Jesus. He views us as partners with Him in glorifying Christ. Being Jesus-centered, therefore, is essential to being filled with the Spirit.

Read Scripture

Just before Paul gave the command not to get drunk but to be filled with the Spirit, he wrote, “Therefore

do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (EPHESIANS 5:17).

The importance of the Bible in the Spirit-filled life was demonstrated by Jesus in His encounter with Satan at the beginning of His public ministry. Luke told us that Jesus was “filled with the Holy Spirit” when He entered the wilderness for testing (LUKE 4:1–2). In response to each of Satan’s temptations, our Lord answered by quoting Scripture—specifically Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:13, and 6:16.

Jesus’s familiarity with the Bible was vital to His being “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Paul made this connection in Colossians 3:16, which says: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” The last part of this verse is almost identical to Ephesians 5:19–20 where Paul described the characteristics of a Spirit-filled Christian. Letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly is an essential in letting the Holy Spirit keep filling us.

If we want to be Spirit-filled Christians, we must be in the Bible. We must read it, study it, reflect on it, and let it correct us. Scripture has been given to make us complete, well-equipped Christians. We cannot be Spirit-filled without it.

Be Submissive

A third essential for a Spirit-filled life is to submit to God. Paul indicated this attitude of submission by

the language he used when he wrote Ephesians 5:18. We must continuously allow the Holy Spirit to fill us. We can do this only when we possess a submissive attitude toward Him. The analogy Paul used of being drunk carries the idea of submission. Paul wrote: “Do not get drunk with wine . . . but keep letting the Holy Spirit fill you” (literal translation). A person who keeps letting the Holy Spirit fill him will consciously, continuously, and voluntarily place himself under God’s influence or control. That person doesn’t lose self-control; in fact, he or she exercises far more self-control than a person who does not possess the Holy Spirit. When a Christian submits to God, the Holy Spirit frees him from the ownership of the sinful habits and drives that once controlled him, and gives him the self-control and courage to leave that way of living behind.

This attitude of submission is also present in Colossians 3:15–4:10, a passage that parallels Ephesians 5:18–6:9. When Paul told the believers in Colosse to place themselves under the rule of Christ’s peace and to give Christ’s words a dominant place in their lives (COLOSSIANS 3:16), he urged them to have a submissive attitude. We place ourselves under God’s control when we do these things.

The result of letting the Holy Spirit continually fill us and allowing the peace of Christ and His words to have dominance in our lives is joy, mutual encouragement, praise, and gratitude. Also essential is the confession of our sins so that we will experience God’s fellowship and cleansing (1 JOHN 1:9). The

outcome is that others will see the expression of our love for God as we become better citizens, marriage partners, co-workers, and representatives of Christ (EPHESIANS 5:2–33; 1 PETER 2:11–3:17).

Be Confident

A fourth key aspect of being filled with the Spirit is to be confident. When we have based our lives on Jesus Christ, when we are in the Bible and it is in us, and when we have submitted to the Holy Spirit's leading, we are doing our part. And we can be absolutely certain that God has done His part. He has responded to us by filling us with His Spirit. We don't need to wonder if we are sufficiently spiritual to be filled with the Spirit. We don't need to compare ourselves with other believers. We don't need to keep looking for a spectacular sign from heaven. We don't need to wait for a great feeling of excitement to sweep over us.

Rather, if we are doing our part, we can know with absolute certainty that God is doing His part. And this confidence will help us live in the assurance that we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

If we live with a defeatist attitude, it may be that we sense we are losing the battle with sin. Our lack of confidence shows a failure to trust in the Lord's provision for us and in His power to keep His part of the bargain.

Consider the apostle Paul. Although he was acutely aware of the ongoing battle with his flesh, he exuded confidence. With heart-wrenching honesty,

he described the war between his old nature (the “law of sin”) and his new nature (the “law of my mind”).[➤] But he went on to point out that the way of victory is through “Jesus Christ our Lord.” He then said,

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (ROMANS 8:1–4).

➤ Paul described his **intense spiritual battle** in Romans 7. In verse 23 he referred to the “law of sin” that warred against his mind. This battle caused him to cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (V. 24).

This walking “in the Spirit” occurs when we are filled with the Spirit. It includes the four essentials we’ve just looked at in a blend of divine and human activity to overcome sin. The walk in the Spirit is a walk of confidence in God.[➤]

The fourth essential in a Spirit-filled life, is confidence. When we have done our part by repenting of all known sin, confessing it, and replacing it with obedience to Christ, we can be certain that God has done His part in forgiving us and in giving us the

power for spiritual victory. We can move forward with hearts filled with confidence and the knowledge that we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

➤ ***Confidence produces spiritual victory because of***

- *A continual awareness of the Spirit's presence (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20).*
- *A conscious dependence on the Spirit's power (EPHESIANS 5:18).*
- *An acceptance of the Spirit's help in fulfilling the law of God (ROMANS 8:4).*
- *A deliberate "putting off" of the flesh (EPHESIANS 4:22).*
- *A willful rejection of sin (ROMANS 6:1–2).*
- *A determined pursuit of what is right (EPHESIANS 4:24).*

How Can I Tell When I'm Spirit-Filled?

Some people say that the way we can know we are filled with the Holy Spirit is to speak in tongues or to "just feel it."

When Paul described the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit, he didn't mention tongues-speaking or feelings. But he did mention "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God" (EPHESIANS 5:19–21). He also listed nine fruits of the Spirit as evidence (SEE GALATIANS 5:22–23).

A person who is filled with the Holy Spirit will know it because of evidences in his life including

joyful fellowship, heartfelt praise, abundant gratitude, and God-honoring submission, and the fruit of the Spirit. Let's look briefly at each of these.

Joyful Fellowship. Paul described this joyful fellowship when he said that we speak “to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” The texts of these songs often take the form of mutual exhortation. Singing with God's people had its roots in Hebrew worship.■

♪ *Psalms 29, 33, 37, 40, 95, 96, and 100 are only a few of the songs in which the Israelites encouraged one another to **join together in praise, gratitude, and obedience.***

Heartfelt Praise. Another result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is heartfelt praise to God: “Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” The term “in your heart” is sometimes taken as referring to singing on the inside, singing that isn't expressed outwardly. But it likely means singing from a sincere heart, as expressed in Colossians 3:16, “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Abounding Gratitude. A third sign that someone is Spirit-filled is abounding gratitude: “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In his letters, Paul repeatedly gave thanks to God, and he encouraged his readers to follow his example (COLOSSIANS 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17 AND ELSEWHERE).

He told us to give thanks to God in everything and for everything.

God-Honoring Submission. A fourth way we can know we are filled with the Holy Spirit is reverent submission: “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” A Spirit-filled person is humble, gentle, and meek. He is not proud, aggressive, or self-assertive. His reverence for Christ is the source of his humility. As a servant of Christ, she possesses a servant’s spirit. Therefore, she does not find it difficult to submit to her fellow believers.

The Fruit of the Spirit. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul pointed out that a Spirit-filled person will exhibit nine qualities he called “the fruit of the Spirit.” He wrote, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law” (5:22–23). Let’s look at each one of these characteristics:

LOVE: An attitude that moves us to put God and others ahead of ourselves; a spirit that impels us to give, to serve, and to forgive.

JOY: A spirit of gladness rooted in our faith, expressed through song, and accompanied by an optimistic spirit.

PEACE: Inner serenity derived from God and based on the reality of our peace with God through Christ’s sacrifice.

LONGSUFFERING: Patience in the middle of difficult circumstances and in our relationships with difficult people.

KINDNESS: Treating others as we want them to treat us.

GOODNESS: Open, honest, pure, and generous behavior.

FAITHFULNESS: Trustworthiness and dependability in all our relationships.

GENTLENESS: A tenderness of spirit that enables us to lead others and discipline those we are in charge of with graciousness.

SELF-CONTROL: The quality that gives us control over our desires, especially those that relate to the body.

If the Holy Spirit is producing these qualities in your life, you are Spirit-filled. Paul's comment, "Against such there is no law," means that nothing in the Mosaic law or any other law opposes these virtues or is needed to restrain them. In fact, when a person's life is marked by the four evidences of Ephesians 5:18–21 and the fruit of Galatians 5:22–23, the demands of the law are being fulfilled. When they are present, they provide evidence that we are filled with the Holy Spirit.



three

The Mystery of the Spirit

Many people earnestly hold to conflicting beliefs regarding the question: “How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?” Let’s evaluate two of these ideas:

The Bible does not command us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Some Christian leaders do not emphasize the filling of the Holy Spirit. In fact, some even say that to talk about ourselves as being Spirit-filled is a form of spiritual pride. They acknowledge that in the book of Acts the apostles are sometimes described

as “filled with the Spirit” or “full of the Holy Spirit.” But they say that the Bible nowhere commands us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To support their claim, they say that Ephesians 5:18 is talking about the human spirit. But we have ample additional biblical evidence for the importance of a Spirit-filled life. ■

▶ *The terms **filled** and **full** of refer to the Holy Spirit in other passages (LUKE 1:15, 41,67; 4:1; ACTS 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9). And the contrast between being drunk with wine and filled with the Holy Spirit appears in Acts 2:13 as well as Ephesians 5:18.*

In Romans 8:1–11, we learn that freedom from the power of sin comes to those who walk “according to the Spirit.” Here the Spirit is referred to as the indwelling “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” (v. 9). In Galatians 5:16–26, Paul commanded us to “walk in the Spirit” and told us that such a life will produce the “fruit of the Spirit.”

So the teaching that every believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit does not stand or fall on our interpretation of Ephesians 5:18. However, we are convinced that this verse does command every Christian to let the Holy Spirit keep filling them.

We need to seek a second blessing. Many Christians believe that the filling of the Holy Spirit is a dramatic experience that takes place sometime after salvation. Some speak of it as “entire sanctification,” viewing it as a second work of grace in which the sin nature is removed and the Holy Spirit takes control. Others

refer to it as a baptism of the Spirit, claiming that it is usually accompanied by speaking in tongues.

The problem with this view is that the New Testament never tells us to seek or anticipate a dramatic, post-salvation experience. We are justified the moment we believe (ROMANS 5:1). We receive the new birth and the permanent in-dwelling Spirit at salvation (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19; 1 PETER 1:22–23). True, we may

have many wonderful experiences after salvation. We may even have an encounter with the Lord that revolutionizes our way of life. But we have no biblical basis for expecting a second work of grace or a baptism of power that brings instant holiness. Rather, Paul called on us to keep presenting our bodies “a living sacrifice” (ROMANS 12:1) and to permit the Holy Spirit to keep filling us.

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the act of the Holy Spirit by which He places a person into the church, the body of Christ. The first baptism of the Holy Spirit took place in the upper room at Pentecost when the church began (ACTS 2:1–13). Today it occurs when a person receives Jesus Christ as his



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or her Savior. Paul wrote, “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 CORINTHIANS 12:13).

Some Christians disagree. They maintain that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same as the filling of the Spirit. They say that it takes place at a point after salvation, and that it is accompanied by the sign of speaking in tongues. Those who hold this view say that their teaching is found in the book of Acts. But the phrase “baptized with the Holy Spirit” appears only twice in Acts (1:5; 11:16). In neither place are we told that it is something we should seek any time after salvation.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was first announced by John the Baptist (MATTHEW 3:11). And the Lord Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit before He ascended to heaven (ACTS 1:4–5). That promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, the day the church was born (ACTS 2:1–13, 32–33). When Peter preached later that day, some three thousand people believed (2:41–42). Then we are told: “The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (v. 47).

The book of Acts records three additional instances when the Holy Spirit descended on believers. They took place with three different groups: the Samaritan believers, whose religion and ancestry were part Jewish (ACTS 8:14–25); the Gentile family of Cornelius (10:44–48); and twelve people who had believed in Christ and received John’s baptism but knew nothing about what happened at Pentecost (19:1–7).



When a person trusts Christ today, he or she is placed into the church, the body of Christ, that very moment.

When Peter saw that the Holy Spirit had come upon the Gentiles, he remembered the Spirit-baptism promised by Christ. He wrote, “Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (ACTS 11:16–17). By giving visible signs in these three instances, the Holy Spirit confirmed the

fact that Jesus Christ was building His church. These signs were given during the transition from the Jewish beginnings of the church to the full inclusion of the Gentiles.

When the transition was over, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was no longer accompanied by visible signs. When a person trusts Christ today, he or she is placed into the church, the body of Christ, that very moment. Paul wrote, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 CORINTHIANS 12:13). The words translated “we were all baptized” speak of an action

that took place in one instant of time. The baptism of the Spirit takes place at the moment of salvation, is not repeated, and is not to be sought after salvation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is the placing of the believer into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.



four


Walking in the Spirit

As we think through the topic of the Holy Spirit, we may wonder where we are spiritually. Some questions to ask ourselves are: Have I submitted to the Holy Spirit? Do I ask Him to lead me? Am I learning from the Bible through regular reading, study, and meditation? Am I relying on the Holy Spirit to help me overcome my sinful desires?

Do I enjoy getting together with God's people for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer? Would people describe me as a happy, joyous Christian? When trouble comes, am I at peace in my innermost being? When I become aware of sin in my life, do

I immediately confess it and ask God to help me to gain the victory?

Am I gentle in my relationships with other people and patient with God? Can I point to certain times when the Holy Spirit gave me the power to perform a certain task or carry a heavy burden? Am I growing in self-control?



To be filled with the Holy Spirit we must be Christ-centered, reading the Bible, submitting to God's authority, and have confidence that He will do His part as He promised.

If you are a Christian, being filled with the Spirit is not an option—it is a command. But perhaps you have never placed your faith in Jesus. If you have never trusted Him as your Savior, you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit because He is not in you.

To bring Jesus into your life, you simply need to admit your sin and your inability to save yourself (EPHESIANS 2:8–10). Ask Him to rescue you. He has promised to save all who desire to turn from their sins and call on Him in faith. The Bible says: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (JOHN 1:12). It also says, “Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (ROMANS 10:13).

Turn to Jesus today. It's the vital first step to being filled with the Holy Spirit.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Our mission is to make the life-changing wisdom of the Bible understandable and accessible to all.

Discovery Series presents the truth of Jesus Christ to the world in balanced, engaging, and accessible resources that show the relevance of Scripture for all areas of life. All Discovery Series booklets are available at no cost and can be used in personal study, small groups, or ministry outreach.

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