



Are you enjoying

The Spirit-filled life?

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ARE YOU ENJOYING THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE?

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1. INTRODUCTION

Many hundreds of years ago God made a promise: “In the last days it shall be,” God declares, “that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh ...” (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18). Now it is true that this prophecy was partly fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples as they waited on God in prayer. It is also true that since that day God has continued to pour out His Spirit, in a measure, upon Christians, throughout the whole history of the Church. In every age, since that first fulfillment of the prophecy, God has poured out His Spirit upon Christians, although, since the days of the early Church, the promise and the expectancy of its fulfillment has, to a very large extent, been forgotten.

In the book of Joel we read that there are to be two major outpourings of God’s Spirit: “God has given the early rain for your vindication, He has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before” (Joel 2:23). In Israel, it was essential that there be two major rainfalls, if the crops were to be successful: the first must come just after the grain was sown, so that the seed would germinate; the second came just before the harvest, to bring the grain into full maturity. In exactly the same way, God sent the early rain on the Day of Pentecost, just after the seed of the Gospel was planted, to bring the Church to birth or germination; today, just prior to the Harvest, God is sending the latter rain, to bring the Church to full maturity before Christ comes again to reap the Harvest. “In the last days ... I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh”, God declares (Acts 2:17).

For a number of years now, God has been pouring out His Spirit upon Christians in a way that the Church has not seen since the early Church days. Christians from all denominations are experiencing the “latter rain” outpouring of God’s Spirit. Literally thousands of Christians, from all denominations, from every walk of life and all positions in the Church, have been baptized in the Spirit and have come into a renewed relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This outpouring of God’s Spirit has welded these believers together in a way in which “Church Union” never has, and never will. It is a divine unity in the Holy Spirit, not a man-made union for the sake of expediency.

Some Christians may have difficulty with the term “baptism in the Spirit”, believing that this always occurs at conversion, and not after conversion. It is sufficient to say here that if they have a problem with the term “baptism in the Spirit” being applied to a post-conversion experience of the Holy Spirit coming upon a believer, then simply substitute the term “filled with the Spirit” – at least in the meantime!

These studies are written for all Christians who long for a deeper relationship with God – to know Him more intimately and to love Him more deeply. They are written for those who are not satisfied with their Christian lives, in the sense that they know God has much more for them, and that they have much more to offer God. As Paul said, “It is not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect, but I press on. ... I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal ...” (Philippians 3:12-14).

These studies have no intention of entering into theological controversy, or of presenting a defence of the doctrine of the Spirit-filled life (there are plenty of other books that already do that); its purpose is entirely **positive** and **constructive** – to lead us into a closer walk with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through enjoying the Spirit-filled life He offers to us all!

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled (satisfied)” (Matthew 5:6). These studies seek not only to answer the somewhat academic question “**Why be filled with the Spirit?**” but to present the Spirit-filled life in such a way that the reader will really hunger after God for it, will experience it, and will live the Spirit-filled life!

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would come to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus spoke of “the promise of the Father” (Luke 24:49) – in order to receive that promise we must come to Him in faith, ask in faith, and receive what God has promised us.

How can we receive? Jesus said, “Feed My sheep” (John 21:17). As we read and study and meditate on God’s Word, the hungry, thirsty Christian who, by faith, is seeking God for the fullness of His Spirit, will be fed – they will receive!

What comes next? Receiving the fullness of the Spirit is not an end in itself – it opens up the way into a new dimension in Christian living. “Walk in the Spirit ...” or “Live by the Spirit ...”, Paul writes (Galatians 5:16, 25). Later studies in this series will deal with some of the things which Spirit-filled Christians should be aiming for, in their walk with God.

Before you start seeking, may we emphasize the need to LOOK TO GOD. Don’t just seek after an experience; don’t just seek after gifts or a blessing from God. These are all good in themselves, but they are secondary to seeking God and getting to know Him. To be full of the Spirit is TO KNOW GOD in the most intimate and wonderful way possible, so look to Him!

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

A prayer that has been sung in past revivals, and which is well worthwhile praying now, says:

*Spirit of the living God – fall afresh on me!
Spirit of the living God – fall afresh on me!
Break me,
Melt me,
Mould me,
Fill me.
Spirit of the living God – fall afresh on me!*

“The Spirit and the Bride say ‘Come!’ Let everyone who hears say ‘Come!’ Let everyone who is thirsty come! Let anyone who wishes, take the water of Life as a gift!” (Revelation 22:17).

QUESTIONS for personal reflection and prayer

1. Am I “hungry and thirsty” for more of God and His righteousness? (Matthew 5:6)
2. Am I willing to receive all that God wants to give me? (John 16:24)
3. Am I willing to follow Jesus as His true disciple? (Luke 9:23; John 10:27)
4. Am I willing to obey the Lord in whatever He asks me to do or say? (John 14:15)
5. Do I need more of God’s power in my life? (Acts 1:8)
6. Am I enjoying the Spirit-filled life? (John 10:10; 15:11)

2. SOMETHING UNIQUELY DIFFERENT

When a person is a true Christian, there should be something uniquely different about their life: they have been “born again” by the Holy Spirit and they possess a unique quality that is not found in the rest of the world.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, a Jewish teacher and leader amongst his people, “Unless a person is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. ... Unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:1-8).

Paul describes this change with these words, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore he says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

The way in which Christians live, the way they act, react, think and speak, should be vitally different from the way the world lives, because we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our lives – we have been born again into a new life in Christ! Further, Paul says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God in Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). The Holy Spirit is the Guarantee, the Seal of God, by which our lives are secured for eternal salvation. Hallelujah! Do our lives bear this Seal? Can people see there is something different about us?

It is one thing to witness by our words (and that is vitally important – Romans 10:13-17), but do people see something beautifully different about the way we live? Do our lives back up our words? Do we attract people to Christ and the Christian way of life, or are people put off by what they see in us? This does not mean, of course, that in every case people will necessarily decide to become Christians just because they see the attractiveness of the Christian life. There are other issues involved as well! For example, the person’s preparedness to lay aside sin and selfishness, and follow after the Lord and His ways. Nevertheless, we **ought** to be demonstrating the love, joy, peace, and so on, that Christians have.

The intention of the previous questions is **not** to bring us into condemnation, or into a sense of failure, but rather to challenge us all to rise up in God to the full potential for which God has both created us and re-created us! “Christ in you – the hope of glory!” (Colossians 1:27). As we read God’s Word and meditate on its truths, may the Holy Spirit Who inspired its writing also inspire within us the desire to live as God desires us to live – full of the Holy Spirit!

Jesus our Example

“To this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps” (1 Peter 2:21). One of the reasons Jesus came was to show us how to live. He lived a perfect life, setting us the perfect example, with the call to us, “Follow Me!” The examples that other people have set us may not be very good. Perhaps our parents, our family, our friends, our teachers and even (sadly) some Christians, have not set us the best of examples; nevertheless, Jesus **has** set us the perfect example, and by His grace we should seek to follow after Him. Hence the importance of reading, re-reading, meditating on and praying over the Gospels as we seek to emulate His life and example.

1. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit

Jesus’ birth was, of course, unique (Matthew 1:18-25). But just as Jesus was physically born of the Spirit, so too we need to be born spiritually of the Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus was baptized in water and the Holy Spirit

Though Jesus was sinless and had no sin of which to repent, as a Man, identifying with Mankind, Jesus was baptized in water in order to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:1-15). In other words, water baptism is a part of “fulfilling all righteousness” as we are symbolically washed from sin, having died to the old way of living, having been buried with Christ by baptism, and then raised to newness of life in Christ (Romans 6:1-4).

Jesus’ identification with Mankind, in becoming our “Sin-Bearer”, is the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament scapegoat, which, though innocent, ‘carried away’ the sins of Israel (Leviticus 16:21-22).

When Jesus was baptized in water, He was also baptized in the Holy Spirit: “Behold, the heavens were opened and he [John the Baptist] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Jesus; and lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, ‘This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased’.” (Matthew 3:16-17).

3. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, led by the Spirit, and ministered in the power of the Spirit

Only **after** His baptism in the Holy Spirit do we read that Jesus was “led by the Spirit” (Matthew 4:1), was “full of the Spirit” (Luke 4:1), and ministered “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38). In fact, there are no recorded miracles of Jesus, nor public teaching, until after Jesus was baptised in water and the Holy Spirit. So unique was this anointing of the Spirit that John the Baptist recognised his cousin (Jesus) as the Messiah, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, because God had told him that the Messiah would be “He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain; this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:29-34).

Jesus is our Example. Like Him, we need to be born of the Spirit, baptized in water, baptised in the Holy Spirit, be constantly filled with the Spirit, and live and minister in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. (Perhaps we still have a long way to go – but let’s get going, and keep going!)

“Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit”

We would all agree that it is wrong to “get drunk with wine” but do we realize that the same verse also says, “Be continually filled with the Spirit”? (Ephesians 5:18). Alcohol and drugs are the world’s ways of trying to get happy and forget our problems; God’s way is to **deal** with the problems and then fill us with the Holy Spirit! This leaves no hangovers, and does not create further problems! Rather, it leads to “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making the melody to the Lord with all our heart; always and for everything giving thanks to God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:19-20). This is true joy, true happiness, and true peace!

May we be so inspired and full of the Holy Spirit! **Then** the world will see that unique quality which only Christians can possess: the Holy Spirit filling our lives to overflowing with a divine love, joy and peace that the world will envy, and yet which is available to all who will come to Jesus and receive!

QUESTIONS

1. What should be uniquely different about Christians?

2. Why did Jesus tell Nicodemus that he must be “born again”? What does this term mean? What similarities are there between becoming a Christian and being born as a baby?
 3. Why was Jesus baptized in water?
 4. How did John the Baptist know that Jesus was the Messiah?
 5. In what major areas should we be following Jesus’ example?
 6. What does it mean to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit?
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3. THE BEGINNING:

CONCEIVED AND BORN OF THE SPIRIT

There are many ideas as to what a Christian is. Some people think that if you go to church, or live in a “Christian” country, or if your parents are Christians, or if you try to live a “good” life (whatever that is!) then you are a Christian. Some people say that we are “all God's children”. But this is **not** what the Bible says!

We are **created** by God, so God is the **Creator** of everyone, but we are not all children of God, for God is not everyone's Father! (Jesus said to some Jews, because of their behaviour, “You are of your father the devil!” so they certainly were not children of God. See John 8:44).

What is a Christian?

The first mention of the word “Christian” in the Bible is in Acts 11:26, “In Antioch the disciples were, for the first time, called Christians.” A Christian is a disciple, or follower, of Christ: a person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has committed himself to Him and who sincerely seeks to follow Him and His teachings.

How does one become a Christian?

Jesus came to His own people (the Jews) and His own people did not (on the whole) receive Him. (In fact, some rejected Him and had Him crucified). But to all who receive Him, who believe in His Name, to them He gives the right to become children of God; these are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (see John 1:11-13).

No-one can be forced to become a Christian! It is by an act of our will, in response to God drawing us to Himself by the Holy Spirit, that we become Christians. We are not a Christian because our parents were Christians (it is “not of blood”). We are not a Christian because we (in your flesh), or someone else (“the will of man”), wanted us to become a Christian. We can only become a Christian by responding to the call of God on our life and saying “Yes” to His command, “Follow Me!”

Everything in our flesh wants to reject Him, for we are all selfish and want to follow our own evil desires (our “lower nature”). The world, the flesh and the devil have a strong attraction to everyone. But in our hearts we can choose to follow the Lord instead.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again (born from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wants to, and

you hear its sound, but you do not know where it is coming from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:3-8).

Jesus clearly spoke of two births: born of water or the flesh (physical birth) and born of the Spirit (a spiritual birth – being “born again”). The latter is as mysterious, and yet as real, as the wind! We don’t know where it came from, or how it arrived; we don’t know where it is going, or where it will lead. Yet it is real – and powerful! So it is with being born again!

Incidentally, the word “Spirit” in both Hebrew and Greek also means breath or wind. God breathed into Adam the breath (spirit) of life and man became a living being (Genesis 2:7). On the day of His resurrection, Jesus breathed into His disciples the breath (Spirit) of new life and He said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” – and they were reborn! (John 20:22).

If we have been born again – if we are true Christians – then we should have no doubts about it! “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away and, behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). We will know – and others will know too!

But conception comes before birth!

Before a baby is born, it has to be conceived. Seed has to be sown in fertile ground before it can develop, grow and bring forth fruit. So it is with the Spirit.

Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44). That is what the parable of the sower and the seed is all about (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23). The seed (the Gospel) is sown, but only if it falls on receptive soil will it grow to maturity and harvest. Some soil is hard, some is stony, some is full of weeds which will choke young plants and destroy them. But when the soil is prepared and receptive, growth occurs: the seed germinates, grows and produces a harvest.

One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to cause the seed to conceive life and to bring that life to birth. The Word of God (the Gospel) is sown, we hear it, the Spirit of God speaks to us and seeks to draw us to Christ. When we respond and receive Him, the miracle of the new birth occurs: we are born again! A new babe in Christ!

Prior to His crucifixion Jesus said to His disciples, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments, and I will pray to the Father and He will give you another Counsellor, to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells **with** you, and He shall be **in** you” (John 14:15-17).

Prior to the crucifixion, Jesus was sowing the seed and the Holy Spirit was with the disciples, drawing them towards salvation. The seed had conceived life and was beginning to grow. After His resurrection Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into His disciples and they were born again. Conception had led to birth!

Tragically, often when the seed is sown it is rejected. Sometimes it starts to grow but is choked or dies. Sometimes it is “stillborn”. But praise God when it comes to birth: even the angels of Heaven rejoice when a sinner is saved! (Luke 15:10).

The Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian

To be born of the Spirit, and become a true Christian, is far more than just an intellectual belief in God – it is a life-transforming experience of the presence of God in one’s life.

So: no one can come to Christ unless the Holy Spirit first draws them (John 6:44). It is through the Holy Spirit that a person comes to faith in Christ (John 3:5). It is the Holy Spirit Who convicts of sin (John 16:8-11) and Who enters our life when we repent and confess our faith in Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9-11). We are then sealed with the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). This is a unique, unrepeatable experience. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us assurance of our salvation (Romans 8:16) and who dwells in our bodies as the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). This whole process is called being “born of the Spirit”, “born again”, being “baptized into the Body” and “drinking of the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

Has the Gospel been sown in my heart? Have I heard and responded to the Lord’s call, “Follow Me”? Has new life been conceived in my heart and been brought to birth? Have I been born again by the Spirit of the living God? Have I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, and am I seeking to follow Him and His ways? If so, I will know it, and so will others!

This is the beginning ... !

QUESTIONS

Read John 1:11-13

1. How do we “receive Him”? What does it mean to “believe in His Name”? Why are we called “**children** of God”?
2. What does it mean to be born ...
 - (a) of blood?
 - (b) of the will of the flesh?
 - (c) of the will of man?
 - (d) of God?

Read John 3:1-8

3. What does it mean to be born again (born anew, or born from above)? What does it mean to be born of water, and to be born of the Spirit?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

4. The word “baptize” means “to immerse”. What, then, is the meaning of the words, “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body”? What does it mean to drink of one Spirit?
5. When are we baptized into the Body, and when do we drink of the Spirit?
6. If we are to become a Christian – to be saved – what are the essential steps? (a) What must I do? (b) What does God do?

4. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Why this subject is important

It is most important, as we shall see, that Christians have a clear understanding as to Who is the Holy Spirit. The following study is designed to show from Scripture Who He is, without getting bogged down in too much technical or theological jargon. A lot of Biblical references are given, but it is not essential to look them all up (at least not the first time through the study!); they are for reference, if required.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Authorized Version of the Bible frequently uses the word “Ghost” when it translates the Greek word *pneuma*, but it also frequently translates the same word as “Spirit”. The Holy Spirit is **not** a spooky apparition or ghost in the commonly accepted (occult) meaning of the word today. (See Matthew 14:26). Hence modern translations of the Bible always use the word “Spirit”. But is the Holy Spirit merely a mystical “force” or power that pervades the universe? No! A study of the Scriptures will clearly show Who is the Holy Spirit.

Names of the Holy Spirit

Many names and descriptive titles are used in the Bible for the Holy Spirit. These names and titles help us to understand Who He is and what He is like.

Names:

- My Spirit (God speaking; Joel 2:28-29)
- Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11 AV)
- Spirit of God (Matthew 3:16)
- Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:18)
- Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13 AV)
- Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
- Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30)

Descriptive titles:

- Spirit of Counsel (Isaiah 11:2)
- Spirit of Knowledge (Isaiah 11:2)
- Spirit of Understanding (Isaiah 11:2)
- Counsellor (John 14:16-17)
- Spirit of Truth (John 14:17)
- Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15)
- Spirit of Promise (Ephesians 1:13)
- Spirit of Wisdom (Ephesians 1:17)
- Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29)
- Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14)
- Seven Spirits (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6)

The Greek word for “Spirit” is *pneuma*, which is also translated: life, breath and wind. The Hebrew word is *ruach*, which is also translated: breath, wind, air and tempest. These names, descriptive titles, and alternative translations, help us to understand better who the Holy Spirit is.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

It is **most** important to realize that the Holy Spirit is a Person – He is not just an influence, an impersonal force, or an inanimate power; He is as much a Person as is God the Father, or Jesus Christ.

1. Personal pronouns are used of the Holy Spirit. In chapters 14, 15 and 16 of John’s Gospel, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as “He”. This is especially significant because the word “spirit” or “ghost” in Greek (and English) is *neuter* and so should be referred to as “it”, not “he”. Thus

Jesus **ungrammatically** refers to the Holy Spirit as “He” in order to emphasize that He is a Person. (See John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14).

2. The word “Comforter” is used both with reference to Christ and to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 16:7). This word is only used when referring to a person. Also the words “another Comforter” (John 14:16) mean “another one of the same kind”, not “another of a different kind”.
3. The Holy Spirit has personal characteristics: He has intellect, feeling and will (1 Corinthians 2:11; 12:11; Rom. 8:27). No mere force has these attributes!
4. Personal acts are performed by the Holy Spirit: He works, searches, speaks, testifies, teaches, reproves, regenerates, prays, guides into truth, glorifies Christ, calls people into service, directs, etc. (Acts 13:2; 16:6-7; etc).
5. He is intimately linked with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
6. He is treated as a Person: He can be tempted (tested), lied to, grieved, resisted, insulted, blasphemed, etc. (Acts 5:3, 9, etc).
7. If the Holy Spirit is synonymous only with power or influence, then Luke 4:14 would mean that “Jesus returned in the power of the power”, and this does not make sense!

The ‘Holy Spirit’ is the ‘Spirit of God’

One of the names of the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of God” (used 28 times in the Bible). He is intimately linked with both the Father and the Son.

1. All the attributes of God are attributed to the Holy Spirit. He is:
 - (a) omnipresent – present everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10)
 - (b) omnipotent – all-powerful (Luke 1:35)
 - (c) perfect – holy (Romans 1:4)
 - (d) omniscient – knows all things (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
 - (e) eternal – everlasting (Hebrews 9:14)
 - (f) unchangeable in His nature
2. The works of God are ascribed to Him (Genesis 1:2; John 3:5; Romans 8:11; 2 Peter 1:21)
3. He is equal with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
4. The words and works of the Spirit are considered to be the words and works of God (Isaiah 6:8-10; Acts 28:25-27)
5. He is called both God (Acts 5:3-4), and Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17)
6. The “Spirit of God” (Genesis 1:1-2) is the Holy Spirit, for God is Spirit and the (unique) Holy Spirit (John 4:24)

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The Holy Spirit was active in Old Testament times, as well as in the New Testament. In the Old Testament we see the Holy Spirit at work in:

1. Creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4).
2. Equipping God's people for service (Exodus 31:3-5; Judges 3:10; 14:6). Notice that the empowering of the Spirit in this way did not necessarily transform moral character.
3. Inspiring the prophets (Numbers 11:29; Ezekiel 2:2).
4. Producing moral character (Psalm 143:10). Thus we must distinguish between the gifts and anointing of the Spirit for powerful service, on one hand, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which have to do with character, on the other hand. Both are important!
5. Foretelling the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 61:1; Ezekiel 36:26; Joel 2:28).

The days of the Old Testament, however, were not really the "Age of the Spirit". Certain people were given the Spirit for particular tasks, but the Holy Spirit was not yet poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28). The new age of the Spirit began with the coming of Jesus and His baptism with the Spirit – the One on Whom the Spirit descended **and remained** (John 1:33).

Summary

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit. He is a Person, not merely a force or influence. The Holy Spirit is "God at work" in the world. He is THE (unique) HOLY (pure) SPIRIT (the perfect spiritual Being). The Holy Spirit is not physical (John 4:23-24), although He is sometimes revealed in physical ways, for example, as:

- breath (Genesis 2:7) – the breath of God is the Source of all life.
- rain (Hosea 6:1-3; Zechariah 10:1) – His refreshing!
- dove (Matthew 3:16) – His gentleness and peace.
- wind and fire (Acts 2:1-4) – His strength, power, and purging, cleansing influence.

QUESTIONS

1. What is my concept of (a) a ghost; (b) a spirit? Is there a difference?
2. Look at some of the descriptive titles of the Holy Spirit – what do they tell us about Who He is and what He is like?
3. What similarities does the Holy Spirit have to: breath, life, wind, air? (See Genesis 2:7; Ezekiel 37:8-10; John 3:3-8; 20:22; Acts 2:1-4).
4. Is it important whether the Holy Spirit is "He" or "it"? Why or why not?
5. Do you agree that the empowering of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily transform moral character? If this is so, how can it be?
6. Compare and contrast the work of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times with the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians today.

5. "JESUS, FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT..."

The charismatic Christ

As we have seen in a previous study, Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-25). After the events surrounding His birth, we read no more about Him in the Bible until He is 12 years old, when we read the incident about the time when He remained in the Temple while

His parents started to go back home without Him, not realizing that He was not with their group. Later, when questioned by His mother as to why He stayed in the Temple, listening to and asking questions of the teachers there, He replied, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:41-52).

Again we read no more about Him until He reaches about 30 years of age. His public ministry, teaching, preaching and performing miracles did not commence until He had first been baptized in water and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:13-17). From that point on Jesus began to move in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter, in preaching to the Gentiles, describes “... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). The title “Messiah” (or Christ) means “anointed”. Thus, Jesus Christ is the Anointed Saviour – the One on Whom the Holy Spirit descended at His baptism **and remained** (John 1:33).

Jesus performed no miracles, and did not enter His public ministry, until He had first been baptized in the Holy Spirit – a baptism with power! After that we read of His first miracle – the miracle of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). Note verse 11: “This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, thus manifesting His glory – and His disciples believed in Him!”

Jesus’ ministry was characterized by four things: His power, His authority, His supernatural gifting, and His closeness to His Father.

The word “charismatic” means [supernaturally] gifted, and because of the anointed, supernatural ministry which Jesus exercised, we may well refer to Him as the ‘charismatic Christ (or Messiah)’

Jesus’ closeness to the Father

The “secret” of Jesus’ ministry was two-fold: first, His baptism with the Holy Spirit and with power; and second, the closeness with which He walked with His Father.

Jesus Himself said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself, except what He sees His Father doing. Whatever the Father does, these things the Son does also. The Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing, and He will show Him even greater works than these so that you will marvel. I can do nothing on My own authority. As I hear, I judge, and My judgement is just because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me. I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father Who sent Me told Me what to say, and the Father Who lives in Me does His works. Whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do, and he will do even greater works than these because I am going back to the Father.” (See John 5:19-20, 30; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10, 12).

If Jesus, the Son of God, needed to walk so closely with the Father, how much more do we!

If Jesus, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and needed to live a life full of the Holy Spirit, how much more do we!

Jesus was a Man of the Spirit

God revealed to John the Baptist that he would recognise Jesus by the fact that He would be the One “on Whom you see the Spirit descend **and remain**” (John 1:33). No longer was the Holy Spirit to be a temporary endowment of power upon a person, and no longer was He to

be imparted to a select few – God was about to pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh”, and the Holy Spirit would “abide” in those who would receive Him in this way.

The Holy Spirit was active right throughout the life of Christ:

1. In the foretelling of His coming (Isaiah 61:1; Ezekiel 36:26; Joel 2:28).
2. He was conceived and born of the Spirit (Luke 1:35).
3. He was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism (Matthew 3:13-17).
4. He was led by the Spirit (Matthew 4:1).
5. He performed miracles through the Spirit (Acts 10:38).
6. He offered Himself on the Cross through the Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).
7. He was raised from the dead through the Spirit (Romans 1:4).
8. He gave commands to the apostles by the Spirit (Acts 1:2).

The gifts of the Spirit in Jesus’ life and ministry

Having been born of the Spirit and baptized in the Spirit, Jesus’ subsequent life demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit in remarkable, supernatural ways:

1. **Miracles:** The first sign Jesus performed was that of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11).
2. **Healing the sick:** Jesus’ ministry was constantly accompanied by the miraculous healing of the sick (e.g., Matthew 8:14-17).
3. **Raising the dead:** On three particular occasions we read of Jesus raising the dead: Lazarus (John 11:1-45); Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:21-43); the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17).
4. **Discernment:** Jesus also exercised the gift of discerning spirits – knowing what was in man (Matthew 17:14-21; John 1:45-51; 2:23-25; 6:60-64).
5. **Deliverance:** Together with the gift of discerning of spirits, Jesus also frequently used His power to set people free from demonic possession and bondage (Luke 4:18; Mark 5:1-15).
6. **Prophecy:** The gift of prophecy – a supernatural ability to foretell the future – was also a characteristic of Jesus’ ministry that confirmed the divine origin of His anointing and teaching (Mark 11:1-6; 13:1-37).
7. **Wisdom, knowledge, and faith:** Jesus also exercised the gifts of divine wisdom, the word of knowledge and supernatural faith (see, for example, John 8:3-11; 21:4-6; 11:38-44).

This, then, outlines the life and ministry of Christ, His utter dependence on the Father and the supernatural anointing, authority, inspiration, and power of the Holy Spirit in His life. He lived as a Man that He might be our example. If we, too, will live as He lived, in such dependence and closeness to the Father and the Spirit, then, as Jesus said, “He who believes in Me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My Name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:12-14). Amen! May it be so!

QUESTIONS

1. In John 16:13-15 Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would not draw attention to Himself, but to Christ. Why do you think this would be?
2. What were some of the “secrets” of the success of Jesus’ ministry?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said that He only did those things that He saw His Father doing (John 5:19)? How can we follow His example in this way?
4. What “greater works than these” can Christians do today? (John 14:12)

5. Why did Jesus need to be baptized with the Spirit before He began His public ministry and exercised supernatural gifts?
 6. What are some of the obstacles we face to being full of the Holy Spirit as Jesus was?
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6. HUNGRY AND THIRSTY

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled”
Matthew 5:6

Jesus was born of the Spirit, and if we are to be saved then we also must be born of the Holy Spirit. Only by being born of God can we become children of God (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8). Jesus was born of the Spirit; thirty years later He was baptized with the Spirit. We need to be born of the Spirit if we are to enter the Kingdom of God, and we also need to be baptized with the Spirit in order to live effective lives by the power of God, that glorify Him.

Do I long for more of God? Do I long to know Him more personally and more intimately? Is my Christian life more of a head knowledge than a daily experience? If so, God has good news for us: we can be filled with the Holy Spirit and these desires in our heart can be met. Jesus promised that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be satisfied.

Perhaps we might feel that we have got it all – that when we were converted and first came to Christ we received it all. Potentially we did – all God’s promises are for all God’s children, but not all of them have received. Why? Because many of God’s children have never asked in faith and fulfilled His conditions. God says, “You do not have because you do not ask ... Ask and you shall receive” (James 4:2 and Luke 11:9).

We should never imagine that we have received all that God has got to offer us, because if we think we have it all, we will never hunger for more, and so we will never receive more. Luke 1:53 says, “God has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich (those who are not hungry and who do not think they need anything more from God) He has sent empty away”. How tragic! “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it”, God says. (Psalm 81:10).

Jesus must have wept over the church in Laodicea when He said, “You say ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing’, not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked.” (Read Revelation 3:14-22). May God deliver us from ever thinking that we need no more of Him, and from Him!

Why be filled with the Spirit?

1. Because God commands it. Ephesians 5:18, literally translated, says “Always (or, constantly) be filled with the Spirit”. Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time experience to which we constantly look back. Certainly there is a first time when we are filled with the Spirit, but the Bible says that Christians should **always** be filled with the Spirit. We might know the date when we were converted but we shouldn’t live on that past experience – we should be living the Christian life every day. Likewise, our Christian life should be one that is constantly filled with God’s Spirit.

Being Spirit-filled is sometimes regarded as an “optional extra” to the Christian life, for those who would like it (like the optional extras you can get with a car or a camera, if you wish). **This**

is not what the Bible teaches! We are **commanded** to be filled with the Spirit and we are living in disobedience if we are not.

It is interesting to notice that this command is one of two commands that are given in the same sentence and the same verse. The other command is “Do not get drunk”. Thus, while there are two commands in the same verse, almost all Christians obey the first (“Do not get drunk”) but most neglect the second (“Be filled with the Spirit”). Why do we expect ministers, pastors, church elders, and others, not to get drunk, and yet we do not worry if they are not Spirit-filled? Surely this is an inconsistency and only partial obedience (which is disobedience!) to God’s Word.

2. Because it will help keep us from sin. We cannot be filled with the Spirit and sin at the same time. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Holiness and will give us a hatred of sin, and the power to overcome temptation, if we give Him full control of our lives. Part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin, righteousness (which God expects and requires of us) and of judgement (John 16:7-11).

3. Because it will lead us into a new dimension of Christian faith and power. Ephesians 3:19 says “that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.” Ephesians 4:13 says “to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 5:18 says “be filled with the Spirit.” Just as all the fulness of deity (God) dwelt bodily in Jesus (see Colossians 1:19; 2:9) so God desires to dwell in us – God wants us to be filled with Himself – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And when we are filled in this way, God’s power dwells within us too. This will revolutionize our Christian living. It will bring power to our witness, new joy to our lives, greater love for God and other people – we will be different!

How will we know?

What results can a Spirit-filled Christian expect? That is, how can a person know when they have received the fulness of the Spirit? One very important point to note is this: we should not compare ourselves with others – this will only lead to pride, jealousy, division, carnal thinking, and opposition. We need to compare ourselves with ourselves – before and after we were filled with the Spirit. See Paul’s conversion testimony in Acts 26:4-23. Paul compared his life before his conversion, with his life after; he did not try to compare his spirituality with other people’s.

Four basic things should occur as a result of our being filled with the Spirit – we will have:

1. The power and authority of the Holy Spirit

See Luke 9:1; 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8; 4:33 – POWER (Greek: *dunamis*)

See Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 9:1-2 – AUTHORITY (Greek: *exousia*)

The difference between power and authority can most easily be shown by an illustration. When a car comes to a red traffic light, it stops. The car has plenty of power to go, but it has no authority to go. When the lights change to green, if the car runs out of petrol it has the authority to go, but no power to go! When we are filled with the Spirit, God gives us supernatural power and divine authority. We have the power to witness with authority and conviction. For example, when Paul preached he ended up either with a riot or a revival! Supernatural power to witness (both verbally and by the fruit of our lives) is the only sign that is promised in the Bible, that will follow the baptism of the Spirit (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2 Timothy 1:7). Notice, however, that we will only have power and authority as long as we submit to God, just as an army officer has the power and authority of the army behind him, as long as he submits to the authority of those over him.

2. The gifts of the Holy Spirit

See 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. The gifts of the Holy Spirit frequently follow the baptism with the Spirit. Jesus promised that “these signs will accompany **those who believe**: in My Name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them, they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18). Notice that Jesus added the condition of faith: “those who believe”. If we believe, we will see these signs take place and they will accompany our ministry; if we do not believe, we will not see them – it is as simple as that! The disciples believed, and the signs followed (see Mark 16:20; Romans 15:18-19). See also Luke 11:13; Matthew 7:11. The gifts of the Spirit are given especially for use when witnessing, counselling, or in public ministry.

3. The ministries of the Holy Spirit

As well as the nine gifts of the Spirit, there are a number of other ministries of the Spirit which the Lord gives, in order to help us serve Him and other people: see Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-14; Luke 4:18-19.

4. The fruit of the Holy Spirit

One evidence of the Spirit-filled life is the presence of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and conversely, the absence of the lusts of the flesh mentioned in verses 19-21.

The baptism in the Spirit greatly enlarges, increases and expands the changes that occurred in our lives at conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) and puts the theoretical and potential into practice. It dramatically changes a Christian’s life for the better and makes it more Christ-like.

To be baptized with the Spirit is to be full of the Spirit – full of God, His nature and His character, up to the limits of our capacity. As we grow and expand our Christian lives, we can still be full of the Holy Spirit and yet contain more of Him (something like a balloon being inflated!)

Do I really hunger and thirst after these things in my life? If so, then I can be filled!

QUESTIONS

1. What is the problem with thinking we have “got it all”?
2. Why should we be continually filled with the Spirit?
3. What is the main purpose of the baptism with the Spirit (Acts 1:8)?
4. What is the difference between power and authority?
5. How do we receive supernatural power and divine authority?
6. “These signs will follow ...” who? (Mark 16:17-18).

7. THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to Him must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

If a person is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, then faith is essential. All good gifts come from God, but they are given to those who ask and receive by faith. The Bible says that “Faith comes by hearing ... the Word of God” (Romans 10:17), so in this study we will look at what Jesus called “the promise of My Father” (Luke 24:49) – the promise of the baptism in the Holy

Spirit: "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you, but wait ... until you are clothed with power from on High."

What is the promise of the Father?

Ezekiel 36:25-27 "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new Spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to observe My ordinances."

Joel 2:23, 28-29 "He has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain ... And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out My Spirit". (See also Acts 2:17-18)

Isaiah 28:11 "By men of strange lips and with an alien tongue the Lord will speak to this people." Paul, in 1 Corinthians 14:21, relates this prophecy to the gift of speaking in tongues. It was first fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples told of the mighty works of God with other tongues (Acts 2:1-11). Although 3000 people were saved on that day, the Jews as a whole did not turn to Christ (see Acts 7:51-53). Today, the gift of tongues is a sign that God still gives, so that unbelievers may hear the voice of God in a supernatural way, and turn to the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:21-22). Some will, but some still will not listen.

Matthew 3:11 "I (John the Baptist) baptize you with water for repentance, but He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (see also Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

Acts 1:4-5, 8 "Wait for the promise of the Father ... John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ... You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses ... (see also Acts 11:15-17).

Other references to the Holy Spirit being given include: John 4:13-14; 7:37-39; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15.

Note on 1 Corinthians 12:13

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body and all were made to drink of one Spirit." This verse does not refer to the baptism with the Spirit in which Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit. This verse refers to the Holy Spirit baptizing (or immersing) us into the Body of Christ, the Church. This, of course, occurs at conversion, when we are born of the Spirit and enter into the Christian Church. Thus:

At conversion, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Body of Christ.

At the baptism in the Spirit, Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit.

These are clearly two separate, distinct experiences, as is seen, for example, in Acts 8:14-17 when the Samaritans, who had been saved and baptized in water, were later prayed for and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. See also Acts 19:1-6.

Three key words: with, in, upon

A good illustration of the relationship between the Holy Spirit before and after conversion, and before and after the baptism with the Holy Spirit, is found in a comparison of the three prepositions "with", "in" and "upon", that are used in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was speaking to His disciples about the Holy Spirit prior to the crucifixion, He said "You know Him (the Holy Spirit), for He dwells **WITH** you and will be **IN** you" (John 14:16-17). After

Jesus' death and resurrection He breathed the Holy Spirit **INTO** His disciples and said "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22).

Just prior to His ascension He told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on High (Luke 24:49). He said, "Before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ... You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come **UPON** you ..." (Acts 1:5, 8). "I will pour out My Spirit **UPON** all flesh", the Father promised (Joel 2:28-29).

In other words, before a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit is **WITH** them, seeking to draw them to Christ (John 6:44) and into an experience of salvation through receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. When a person is saved, they receive Christ and His Spirit into their lives and the Holy Spirit is **IN** them (John 1:11-13; Romans 8:9). So at conversion, the Holy Spirit Who was **WITH** us before, drawing us to Christ, comes **IN** – into our lives, and makes us children of God. Jesus' disciples were not saved until after He had died on the Cross and risen again. This is why, on the day that He rose again, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit", just as God breathed the breath of life into Adam and Adam became a living being (Genesis 2:7).

However, 40 days later Jesus said to those same disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come **UPON** you." Previously the Holy Spirit had been **WITH** them, then He came **IN**, now He came **UPON** them.

This same preposition **UPON** is used of the baptism with the Spirit in a number of other verses of Scripture: "I will pour out My Spirit **UPON** all flesh ... and also **UPON** the servants, and **UPON** the handmaids ..." (Acts 2:17-18). "On" and "upon" mean exactly the same, and are translations of the same word.

Acts 8:15-16 "When they were come down, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet He was fallen **UPON** none of them, only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

Acts 10:44-45 "The Holy Spirit fell **UPON** all those who heard the word."

Acts 11:15 "The Holy Spirit fell **UPON** them as [He fell] **UPON** us at the beginning."

When a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit they receive a supernatural endowment of power from on High, and they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Is the Holy Spirit **WITH**, **IN** or **UPON** you? Paul said to the disciples at Ephesus, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered "No". "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came **UPON** them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying" (Acts 19:1-6).

Have **you** received "the promise of the Father" yet?

QUESTIONS

1. What is "the promise of the Father"?
2. What is uniquely different about Christians, compared to the Israelites in Old Testament times?
3. When is the Holy Spirit described as being **WITH** us, **IN** us, and coming **UPON** us?
4. What is the difference between the baptism referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and the baptism referred to in Matthew 3:11b?
5. How do we receive the promise of the Father?
6. Why is it so important that we are baptized with the Holy Spirit?

8. THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Please read Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 3:11-12; Acts 2:1-47

Three baptisms

Matthew 3:11 speaks of three baptisms:

1. **With water:** This symbolizes repentance and the washing away of our sins at conversion (1 Peter 3:21). When we are saved and our sins are washed away, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Body of Christ, and we drink in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; the word “baptize” means “to immerse”).
2. **With the Holy Spirit:** This occurs when we receive the promise of the Father and are endued with supernatural power from on High. It is commonly called “being baptized in the Holy Spirit” or “being filled with the Holy Spirit”.
3. **With fire:** This is sanctification (the special purifying and setting apart of the life of the Christian for God’s service). See Matthew 3:8-12 for the meaning of “fire”.

It is helpful to tabulate the above three baptisms as follows:

Experience	Candidate	Person Baptizing	Baptised into / with
Conversion	Believer	Physical act: Pastor	Water
		Spiritual act: Holy Spirit	The Body of Christ
Baptism with the Holy Spirit	Christian	Jesus	The Holy Spirit
Sanctification	Christian	Jesus	Fire

Notice that Ephesians 4:5 talks of one baptism, but we have just mentioned three. However, this same verse also talks of “one Lord and one faith”, yet the Bible speaks of three Lords: Father (Revelation 4:8), Son (Philippians 2:11) and Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17); and of three faiths: saving faith (Ephesians 2:8), day-by-day faith (Galatians 2:20) and the supernatural gift of faith (1 Corinthians 12:9). Each of these three thus comprises a compound unity, and conversely, each “one” comprises three aspects.

What is the baptism with the Spirit?

The term “baptize with the Holy Spirit” occurs six times in the Bible (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16).

As we have already mentioned, to “baptize” means to “immerse”. To be baptized in or with the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit comes upon a person in such a way that they are totally immersed in the Holy Spirit, or filled with the Holy Spirit. It is a deep, life-changing encounter with God the Holy Spirit.

Usually the term “baptism with the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to the initial experience, and subsequently a person should continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Bible commands us to “be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit” (this is the literal Greek meaning of

Ephesians 5:18). It is to be a **continuous** experience. Although Jesus baptized the disciples with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), we later read of them again being filled with, or full of, the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9).

Even those people who don't believe that the baptism with the Spirit is a separate experience from conversion, would still agree that we need to be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit means that the Holy Spirit is flooding through our life and is the One in control – that is, Lord.

What is the evidence?

What is the evidence of having received the baptism with the Spirit? There is only one thing that is given in the Bible as evidence that a person has been baptized with the Holy Spirit, and that is power to be an effective witness (see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:41). On the day of Pentecost 3000 people were saved; later 5000 came to the Lord (Acts 4:4); and "multitudes were added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14). This is the principal evidence of having received the baptism with the Spirit. There are, however, other things that also will normally occur:

1. The gifts of the Spirit may be given (1 Corinthians 12:4.11).
2. The fruit of the Spirit should increasingly be manifest in the person's life (Galatians 5:22-23).
3. The lusts of the flesh should disappear, and a life of increasing holiness should be evident (Galatians 5:13-25).

How can I receive the baptism with the Spirit?

Being baptized in the Spirit is a spiritual experience, just as it is to become a Christian and be born again. Hence, one cannot lay down a list of rules and regulations that guarantee the baptism in the Spirit. Nevertheless, God has given us certain conditions that we do well to fulfill, if we want all He has for us as His children.

1. **Believe.** We must believe that Jesus wants to baptize us in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Hebrews 11:6).
2. **Hunger and thirst.** We must really desire that God will fill us with His Spirit – we must diligently seek Him, and hunger and thirst after Him and His righteousness (Matthew 5:6; 6:33). If we hunger and if we have faith, God is ready to feed us!
3. **Be clean.** We must make sure that there is no unconfessed sin or unrepentance in our lives. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Holiness and cannot fill an impure or unclean life. All sin must be confessed and repented of (Ezekiel 36:25-27; Psalm 66:18; Psalm 139:23-24; Acts 2:38). If we do not desire with all our heart to be obedient to the Lord, and submit to His Lordship, then don't bother asking for the baptism with the Spirit.
4. **Ask in faith.** Although God wants to fill us with His Spirit, He has also told us to ask. "You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2; see also Luke 11: 9-13). It is often helpful (although not essential) for someone who has already received, to lay hands on you and pray for you (see Acts 8:14-17; 9:17-19; 19:5-6 for examples of this.)
5. **Receive by faith** (Mark 11:24). Start praising and worshipping God, and thank Him for Who He is and what He has done for you in saving you, forgiving you, hearing your prayers and answering. Let the Holy Spirit inspire your praying and begin to exercise any gift the Holy Spirit chooses to give you. Above all, look to the Lord and not simply to an experience; keep your eyes on Him and worship and receive by faith. Then go out and demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit within you, to a lost and needy world!

Don't be afraid of what might happen!

God only gives **good** gifts to His children, and if we sincerely ask for the fulness of the Spirit as outlined above, we won't receive an evil manifestation or counterfeit. God does not mock His children who come to Him in child-like faith and ask a blessing from Him (see Matthew 7:11; Luke 11:5-13).

Even if we do not fully understand all the benefits, blessings and responsibilities of being filled with the Spirit, after we have received the baptism with the Spirit, God will give us a greater understanding of them. At least this may show you that there is far more to the Christian life than you ever thought of before!

QUESTIONS

1. How does the baptism with the Spirit differ from conversion?
2. Do conversion and the baptism with the Spirit *necessarily* occur at different times?
3. How many "baptisms" are there (one or three?) How would you explain this?
4. What evidence is there whether or not a person is full of the Holy Spirit?
5. If you have been baptized with the Spirit, *how* did it happen, and *what* happened? What differences have you noticed since?
6. What is the difference (if any) between being baptized with the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?

9. THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read 1 Corinthians, chapters 12, 13, 14 (especially 12:4-11; 12:28 to 13:3 and 14:1-5).

God's gifts

In different parts of the New Testament a number of things are referred to as gifts from God. God is a good God – a loving, generous Giver – and He has given different gifts to His Bride.

In this study, while not wanting to minimise the other gifts in any way, we are concerned here with the supernatural, spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit (literally, "the spirituals") rather than our natural talents and abilities. God has given natural talents and abilities to everyone, but we will be looking here at the supernatural gifts given to Spirit-filled Christians.

The nine spiritual gifts

The nine gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 can be described as follows:

WISDOM: This gift is the gift of supernatural wisdom to do or say something in a given, difficult situation. It is a wisdom far above natural wisdom, where our natural wisdom would fail. For example, see the story of Solomon when he was confronted by two women, both claiming that a baby was theirs (1 Kings 3:16-28). Here Solomon was given a divine gift of supernatural wisdom.

KNOWLEDGE: This is a supernatural revelation of some piece of knowledge that is not humanly known, given when a person really needs to know something that they do not know in the natural. See, for example, the case of Peter when Ananias and Sapphira lied to him and the church about the sale of some property (Acts 5:1-11).

FAITH: This is a supernatural and bold faith that enables a person to step out in a situation in which they would otherwise fear to act or speak. It may also be given in conjunction with the performing of miracles. For example, Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:17-40).

HEALING: The gifts of healing are miraculous gifts of physical or mental healing, and could also include the raising of the dead. These are instantaneous healings, as distinct from gradual healings, or those where a person gradually gets better, perhaps after medical treatment. See, for example, Acts 5:12-16.

MIRACLES: This includes the working of other miracles and supernatural signs (see Luke 5:4-9; John 2:1-11).

PROPHECY: Prophecy is a divinely inspired message from God which may or may not include the foretelling of the future. It brings revelation, and may convict a person's conscience, bring edification, exhortation, comfort, guidance, or warning. The Old Testament prophets often revealed future events in their prophecies, but they also contained warnings from God. Prophecy is not something we think up, but something that God reveals to us by His Spirit. The Bible is full of prophecies which include these various aspects of divine revelation. See Acts 21:9-14, for example.

DISCERNMENT: The gift of discernment or distinguishing between spirits (those which are of God and those which are of man or the devil) allows us to know if a person is, for example, bound or possessed by evil spirits, leading to their deliverance or the breaking of the bondage. It is not always easy to discern the origin of things which people say and do, and the way they act, but this gift is divinely given in order to discern that which is of God from that which is not. See, for example, Paul's dealing with the girl who said things which were true but who was, in fact, demon-possessed (Acts 16:16-18).

TONGUES: The gift of tongues is supernaturally inspired prayer in a language that is unknown to the person speaking it, but which may be known to some of those who hear it (see Acts 2:1-21). This language, inspired by the Holy Spirit, may be for personal edification or it may be given as a sign to a group of people.

INTERPRETATION: Because a message in tongues may not be understood by all those who hear it, or by the person speaking in tongues, God also gives the gift of interpretation: the person who spoke in tongues, or some other person, may interpret it so that it can be understood by everyone. The interpretation, therefore, may be like a prophetic message, but has the additional sign of speaking in tongues first (see 1 Corinthians 14 for more details about the gifts of tongues and interpretation).

The gifts of the Spirit

It is interesting to compare the gifts of the Spirit as they were given in the Old Testament, New Testament, and in the life of Christ. These passages clarify the meaning of each of the gifts.

GIFT	IN THE O.T.	IN THE N.T.	IN CHRIST'S LIFE
Wisdom	Gen. 41:25-41	Acts 23:6-11	John 8:3-11
Knowledge	2 Kings 5:19-27	Acts 5:1-11	John 21:4-6
Faith	Gen. 22:1-12 Heb. 11:17-19	Matt. 14:28-29	John 11:38-44
Healing	1 Kings 17:17-24	Acts 19:11-12	Luke 4:38-41
Miracles	2 Kings 6:1-7	Acts 12:6-11	Matt. 15:32-38

Prophecy	1 Sam. 10:9-13	Acts 21:8-14	Matt. 24:3-31
Discernment	Neh. 6:10-14	Acts 16:16-18	Luke 8:26-33
Tongues	Dan. 5:1-31 Isaiah 28:11 cf. 1 Cor. 14:21-22 1 Sam. 1:12-16 cf. Rom. 8:26-27	1 Cor. 14:18 Acts 19:6	Rev. 1:15; 14:2 cf. Dan. 10:5-6 John 11:33, 38, 41 cf. Rom. 8:26
Interpretation	Dan. 5:25-30 Gen. 40:18-19 Gen. 41:12-13	1 Cor. 14:13, 27	Matt. 13:36-43

It is important to remember that all the gifts are received and exercised **by faith**, to the glory of God **alone**, and for the salvation or blessing of **others**. They are certainly *not* intended to make us proud, to show off or boast about, or for our own selfish ends; they are gifts, exercised through human channels, to bring blessing to other people.

Also, God gives gifts as **He chooses** (1 Corinthians 12:11, 18, 28). While we may ask for gifts of the Spirit, the Lord is Sovereign over what gifts He gives, and to whom.

Why speak in tongues?

The gift of tongues is probably the least well understood of the nine gifts of the Spirit. Why speak in tongues? The Bible gives six reasons why we should speak in tongues. Paul considered these reasons so important that he said, "I want you all to speak in tongues ... I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all. ... Do not forbid speaking in tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:5, 18, 39).

When speaking in tongues:

- (a) We can declare the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11)
- (b) We are edified – built up in the faith (1 Corinthians 14:4-5)
- (c) We pray in our spirits to God (1 Corinthians 14:2, 13-15)
- (d) We can give thanks to God (1 Corinthians 14:16-17)
- (e) It is a supernatural sign (1 Corinthians 14:22)
- (f) We can pray when we would otherwise not know how to pray (Romans 8:26-27).

If we wish to be effective, Spirit-filled Christians, we should seek God for any and all of the gifts He is willing to bestow upon us, and use them to the glory of God, in our ministry to the Church and to the lost (Mark 16:15-20).

QUESTIONS

1. How do the nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 differ from our natural talents, abilities, and skills?
2. If God gives gifts as He chooses, should a Christian ask for and desire certain gifts, or should we passively wait and let God give us whatever He wants to? (See Matthew 7:11; 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, 39; James 4:2-3).
3. If we should seek after gifts, how should we do this, and how do we receive them?
4. Why does Paul emphasize prophecy as being a gift we should especially desire (1 Corinthians 14:1)?
5. How can we tell if a person is genuinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, and not speaking from his own mind and spirit, or (even worse) is demonically inspired? (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21).

6. Do you think it is important whether or not a Christian speaks in tongues? Why or why not?
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10. MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the last study we looked at nine of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. While the Lord teaches us to “ask and you shall receive” He certainly does not encourage us to be selfish in our use of what He has given us. Indeed, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not intended primarily for us – they are gifts to enable us to be better witnesses; to minister to, bless and encourage other people; and to serve the Lord more fully. In other words, the blessings we receive from exercising the gifts of the Spirit are to see God glorified, His Kingdom extended, other people served and encouraged. If we think that they are for our own exclusive use and blessing then we may be disappointed! We are called to serve others – the Lord first, then His people, and those who are, as yet, unsaved.

It is sometimes said that we are “saved to serve”. This is not totally true; we are saved to love, worship and obey the Lord, although this includes service or ministry. In the New Testament we therefore read of various ministries of the Holy Spirit – Spirit-inspired service in the Body of Christ.

As we mature in the Spirit, God will give us ministries to exercise for His glory, for the upbuilding (edification) of the Church, and to reach out to the lost.

Sacred or secular?

Some of these ministries may seem to be secular rather than sacred or spiritual, but it depends on how we exercise them. Many things can be done in the flesh, rather than under the inspiration of, and in the power of, the Holy Spirit. As Spirit-filled Christians we are to be led by, empowered by, and inspired by the Holy Spirit in all that we do.

For example, it is very easy to pray off the top of our heads (to pray with the natural mind) but the Bible tells us to “pray at all times in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18). It is easy to sing hymns and choruses, clap our hands and repeat words of praise, but Jesus said the Father wants us to “worship Him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Let God, by His Holy Spirit, transform all you do, for His glory!

Ministries of the Holy Spirit

Some of the ministries of the Holy Spirit which are mentioned in Scripture are as follows:

Romans 12:3-8

PROPHECY: One who has a ministry in prophecy – speaking forth the Word and words of God.

SERVICE: One who serves or ministers to the needs of the Church, and others.

TEACHING: One who teaches the Word of God.

EXHORTATION: One who has the divine ability to exhort and encourage other Christians, inspiring faith and challenging people to a greater vision and dedication.

CONTRIBUTING: Those whom God has enabled to give generously of time, talents, and money to the needs of the Church and others.

ASSISTANCE: Those who are able to assist in the running of the Church, other Christian work, ministries and missions.

MERCY: Those who have compassion, understanding, sympathy and love for the needy, the lonely, the elderly and the sick, to encourage, befriend and help them.

Ephesians 4:11-14

APOSTLES: Those who are called to a travelling ministry, to evangelize, teach and establish churches. Basically, apostles are missionaries.

PROPHETS: Those with the gift of prophecy that is often used in public ministry and who have a recognised prophetic calling.

EVANGELISTS: Those who are called to witness to the lost and evangelize those who have not yet found Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

PASTORS: Those who are called to look after a local congregation of Christians, to counsel, teach, and lead on to maturity those who are in their congregations.

TEACHERS: Those who have a specific calling and ability in teaching the Word of God and the ways of God.

Luke 4:18-19

TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR: The ministries of encouragement, exhortation and evangelism, together with practical ministry to their physical needs – healing for the whole body (physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually).

TO BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED: The gift of mercy, help, compassion for the needy.

TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES: The discernment of spirits, and the power and authority to bring deliverance to those who are bound, possessed, oppressed or depressed by evil spirits, especially those who have been involved in occult practices.

RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND: The gifts of healing – spiritually, mentally, and physically.

TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED: The ability to release those who are bound by Satan and whose Christian lives are suffering because of attacks of the devil.

TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD: To witness and evangelize, both publicly and personally, and bring the lost to Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:28

As well as the ministries of apostles, prophets, teachers and those with gifts of miracles, healing and speaking in tongues, Paul also mentions helpers and administrators. All of these are necessary for the balanced, fully-functioning of the Body of Christ. It is easy to look at some tasks as more important or more spiritual than others; it is easy to be jealous of other people's gifts or proud of our own. But Paul goes to some length in 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 to show how important and essential every part of the Body is.

For example, the ministry of giving (say, financially) is of vital importance in almost every sphere of Church life and missions today. Without the generous (and often sacrificial) giving of all Christians, many aspects of the Church's ministry would have to be severely curtailed. Especially is this true of those who are in "full-time Christian work" and of those ministries of the Church to the poor and needy.

Another example is the giving of assistance to the running of the Church and its organisations. Without the ministry of helps, those who have other gifts and ministries would be so tied up in administrative and other work that their main ministry would suffer. Our giving, our help and

our service, releases other people to fulfill their calling as apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc. **We are all needed!** We all have some ministry!

We each need to find and fulfill our ministry or ministries in the Church, so that the Body of Christ functions as a complete, united Body, and fulfills its ministry in the world today. Besides this, we need to check from time to time and ensure that what we are doing is inspired by, and led by, the Holy Spirit.

“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. ... Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving Christ the Lord.” (Colossians 3:17, 23-24).

QUESTIONS

1. Does every Christian have some particular ministry?
2. How do we know what is our ministry?
3. How can “secular” work become a spiritual ministry?
4. Why are “secular” things like giving, helping, and administrating listed amongst the ministries of the Holy Spirit?
5. What ministries are lacking in the Church today, and what can be done to meet this lack?
6. If the Spirit of the Lord is upon the Church, as He was upon Jesus (Luke 4:18-19), where are the fruit of this anointing to be seen in the Church today?

11. THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have looked at the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit which the Lord gives to the Church, but the gifts and ministries by themselves are not enough – the character of our lives (not just our giftings) is equally important!

It is not sufficient to say “Lord, Lord!” It is not enough to **claim** to prophesy in Jesus’ Name, or to cast out demons, or exercise other gifts (powerful though they might be); it is by **the fruit of our personal lives** that we are to be known (Matthew 7:15-23).

Great harm is done to the Church, and to the Name of Christ, when our lives do not match up to our preaching.

Galatians 5:13-25

We are called, as Christians, to freedom, but that freedom and liberty do not include a licence to sin.

Negatively, we are not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh: immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, division, envy, murder, drunkenness, wild partying, and so on. These things, and many others like them, are inconsistent with living a Spirit-filled life.

Positively, we are called to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The desires of the flesh are totally opposed to the Spirit-filled life. If we are truly being led by the Holy Spirit we will walk in freedom and will not be under the law. This does not mean that we are free to break the law (for the Holy Spirit will not lead us to do that which God says is wrong), but rather that as we walk in the Spirit our desire will be to do those things that are pleasing to God.

As we live in and by the Spirit, the flesh, its passions and desires, will be crucified and the fruit of the Spirit will increasingly be seen.

LOVE

“Love” is one of the most abused words in our language today. So often it is equated with lust, illicit sex, selfish desire, and so on.

No greater demonstration of the meaning of true love has ever been given than that of God “Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16); and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who so loved us that He gave His life on the cross, dying for us in order that we might be saved (John 15:13).

True love is sacrificial – giving, not demanding. True love costs. True love is given in spite of, not because of. True love is not conditional. If it doesn’t cost anything, it probably isn’t worth anything! (See 2 Samuel 24:18-25).

Look at the attributes of love that God describes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful. Love is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on getting its own way. Love is not irritable or resentful. Love rejoices when things are right, not when things go wrong. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails – love is unending!” Oh, that this sort of love would bind people together in marriage, and, indeed, in all of life’s relationships!

Especially written to overbearing, authoritative husbands, Paul says: “Be subject **to one another** out of reverence for Christ. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her (sacrificially!) ... Husbands should love their wives as they love themselves” (Ephesians 5:21-33).

The fruit of love will cause each truly Spirit-filled Christian to have a much greater love for God, for His Word, for prayer, and for other people (Mark 12:30-31; John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

JOY

Many people think of joy in terms of laughter and happiness – things that are dependent on outward circumstances being agreeable and pleasant. But the Biblical concept of joy is much higher than that. How else could Peter write, “In this you rejoice, even though now, for a little while, you may have to suffer various trials ...” (1 Peter 1:6-8) and “Rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings ...” (1 Peter 4:12-14). How else could Jesus, “for the joy that was set before Him, endure the Cross, despising its shame”? (Hebrews 12:2). Why would James write “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials ...”? (James 1:2-3). How else could those who suffer for their faith in Christ still produce the fruit of a deep, inner joy in their lives, which is not dependent on outward circumstances?

Great joy, in spite of outward circumstances, comes from an absolute assurance of God’s presence and of being in the centre of God’s will – even in prison, if necessary! (Acts 16:19-25; Hebrews 13:5-6).

PEACE

The world cries for peace, but it seems so elusive. Like joy, peace is far more than the absence of war – true, inner peace involves a security of mind and heart too; it is independent of outward circumstances for one can be at peace within one's own self even when outward circumstances are so disturbed and lacking in peace.

Some people seek 'peace' through alcohol, drugs, other religions and meditations, but these are false because the fruit of true peace can only be found in the lives of those who know God and have received His peace (John 14:27). The fruit of peace involves peace with God (reconciled through the Blood of the Lamb of God), peace with and within one's own self, and peace with others – reconciled to both God and man. If other people refuse to be reconciled to us then we can still be at peace by our unconditional love and forgiveness being extended towards them, even if, at this point in time, they refuse to accept it.

PATIENCE

In our present "instantaneous age" where everything has to be done quickly if not immediately, impatience is seen far more than patience! Nobody wants to wait – we want instant maturity, instant success, instant wealth, and so on.

But growth, maturity and experience all take time! Although it is true that obedience, and learning our lessons, are keys to not wasting time in our spiritual growth and our walk with the Lord.

Patience includes the ability to bear trials and testing without complaining. "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance (patience), and endurance produces character ..." (Romans 5:3-5). "The testing of your faith produces patience, but let patience have its full effect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4).

KINDNESS

The fruit of kindness requires unselfishness – a caring and thoughtfulness for other people's needs rather than a preoccupation with our own. Indeed, many people's troubles and problems would be largely overcome if they began to help other people in their needs, instead of constantly dwelling on their own.

Kindness is "going the second mile." It is looking at another person's situation and, in a spirit of unselfishness, care, compassion and genuine concern, seeking to meet that need (Philippians 2:1-4).

Kindness is the opposite of self-centredness and greed. It says, "Your will be done, rather than mine." How the world needs to see the fruit of kindness! (James 2:14-17).

GOODNESS or GENEROSITY

To be truly good is to live a Godly, Christ-like life. It is an inner quality which, born out of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, produces good thoughts, good words, good deeds, good relationships – both with God and people.

FAITHFULNESS

Faith and faithfulness are closely linked. Often we pray for faith – but are we faithful? Often we exhort people to “have faith”; we need also to exhort them to “be faithful”! We have faith, hope and trust in God, and His goodness, because He is faithful, trustworthy and good!

As Christians we ought to be able to have faith in one another and in the Church, faith in one’s husband or wife, parents and children. Tragically, so many people have been hurt and disillusioned in this area because their faith has been betrayed by unfaithfulness. The solution is not in allowing it to quench our faith, but in forgiveness!

GENTLENESS

Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit that is not held in very high regard today. Too often, at least in our thinking, we equate gentleness with weakness, indecisiveness – somebody that is easily pushed around. Today we are taught to be assertive – to push your way to the top, no matter who you tread down in the process!

Titus 3:2 says, “to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle and show meekness toward to everyone.” Moses was described as being the “meekest man in all the earth” (Numbers 12:3) but he was no spineless jellyfish!

Gentleness is being sympathetic, understanding and kind to those weaker than ourselves; it is not to take advantage of others, but to help others; it is to use our strength to support people in their weakness and helplessness. It is to be meek, humble and kind, not easily provoked, and ready to yield rather than cause trouble.

SELF-CONTROL

In this permissive age in which we are living, how desperately we need the fruit of self-control! Discipline, self-discipline and the ability to control one’s words and actions are so sorely needed in an age in which people want to “do their own thing”, be free (or so they think!) and indulge themselves in whatever takes their fancy.

The prevailing philosophy of the present age is: never be negative (only be “positive”), never criticize, don’t discipline – just encourage, never use corporal punishment, never talk about sin, never judge wrong (that makes people feel condemned), let people be free to express themselves how they want to, and so on. And what is the end result of all this sowing to the flesh? – we reap a harvest of undisciplined, permissive, confused young people and a whirlwind of anti-social, selfish, violent, immoral behaviour! Broken homes, broken families, broken lives, chaos, and confusion.

We desperately need to pray for self-control! Self-control: the ability to control one’s thoughts, words, and actions so that the Holy Spirit rules a person’s life, and not the world, the flesh or the devil (Matthew 26:41; 2 Timothy 1:7).

QUESTIONS

1. What would you say to a person who claimed to be baptized in the Spirit but was not showing the fruit of the Spirit?
2. Do the fruit of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit, necessarily occur together in a person’s life?
3. Can a person who is not a Christian produce the fruit of the Spirit?

4. How can we best encourage the fruit of the Spirit in Christians' lives?
 5. Most of us demonstrate a mixture of both the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh. What can we do about this?
 6. Why are **both** the gifts **and** the fruit of the Spirit so important?
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12. WALK IN THE SPIRIT

What comes next?

Becoming a Christian, and being baptized in the Holy Spirit, are landmarks in a person's life; but they are not the final goal – they open up new realms of living and walking with God. In this sense they are new beginnings.

After being baptized in the Spirit (a first-time experience in which we are filled with the Holy Spirit) God commands that we be **constantly** filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). It is not sufficient to look back to past experiences – we need to live in the reality of them, and enjoy them, **now!**

If we grieve God by sin, if we quench the moving of His Spirit in our lives, if we back-slide in our Christian life, we need to humbly confess our sin, turn from it, and ask God to fill us again with His Spirit. See, for example, Psalm 51:1-17.

As we serve the Lord – witnessing, preaching, praying for the sick, counselling, encouraging others, and so on – we also need to pray that God will anoint us with His Spirit for that occasion. The anointing of the Spirit is a special outpouring or measure of the Spirit to enable us to do something in the power of the Holy Spirit at a particular time. We can have an anointing on our ministry as a whole, or on some particular thing we are doing. In this way we walk in the Spirit instead of walking in the flesh.

We are told in the Bible to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), to pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18), to witness in the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8), to live a life of service and ministry to God and His people, to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), to exercise our gifts and ministries in power and with divine authority, to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and to live a holy, sanctified life (Matthew 3:8-12; 1 Thessalonians 4:3). All this is in contrast to walking in the flesh (living a carnal life).

Walk in the Spirit

“Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. ... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25). God's desire is that Christians are constantly filled with the Holy Spirit and that they live under His inspiration, power and authority. The problem is that though we may be filled with the Spirit, we are human too – and, apart from that, the devil will constantly seek to persuade us to do his will. So there are basically three different sources of inspiration – the Holy Spirit, our humanity, and the devil. We can walk in the Spirit, or we can lead a carnal life and walk in the flesh, or we can be led by evil, demonic forces (if we allow them to control our lives).

Most Christians have little difficulty discerning the temptations and ways of the devil. Even a basic knowledge of God's Word, together with our conscience, will tell us when the enemy is tempting us to go his way, rather than God's.

But the difference between the ways of the flesh and the ways of the Spirit may be much harder to discern. We are surrounded constantly by people, many or most of whom may not be Christian. Many of them may be good-living people who live within the law but whose ways are carnal – of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

We so easily get squeezed into the world's mould (Romans 12:2), even unconsciously. We find ourselves doing things which may be quite legitimate and good in themselves, but they are not necessarily what God wants us to do, or how God wants us to do them. To be led by the Spirit is to be inspired by God, doing **His** will, **His** way. Jesus knew what God was doing, and He did His Father's will (John 5:17-20, 30; 14:10) – ideally, so should we!

There are times when we talk to God and share our thoughts, desires and feelings with Him. But when we pray, in the strict sense of the word, we are told to “pray at all times in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20). In other words, we should seek to pray in the way in which the Holy Spirit inspires us, praying according to the will of God and hence having the assurance that God hears our prayers and will answer them (Romans 8:26-27; 1 John 5:14-15).

Death to the flesh

If we are really going to live in the Spirit then this will mean death to the flesh – to our old, carnal, worldly nature; to our old lusts and sinful desires, and even to those things which, though good in themselves, are not God's will for us. “The good is the enemy of the best!” – and God wants His best for us. Hallelujah!

No doubt you have heard prophecies which, though they are Scriptural in the sense that they are in general agreement with the Bible, and are basically sound, they still lack the inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit. (No doubt you have heard sermons like that too!) It is possible to preach sermons and prophesy out of the natural mind – we learn facts, we know the Bible, we “put together a message”, but it lacks that divine quality which brings the word alive as a “rhema” (an anointed, inspired word from God) to our hearts.

And this applies to every area of our lives, not just preaching and prophesying! Do our lives have a divine anointing, a divine quality, about them? Are we **really** different from the rest of the non-Christian world? Are we inspired by the Spirit? Do we live and walk and pray in the Holy Spirit? Or is most of what we do, still done in the flesh?

Rather than point the finger at anyone else, let us examine our own lives before God, and pray, “Lord, cause me to continually walk in the Spirit; not fulfilling the desires of the flesh, but living in total obedience to Your will, with a divine anointing and inspiration upon my life.”

Walking daily with the Lord

A good way to learn to walk in the Spirit is as follows:

- Begin each day by committing the day to the Lord in prayer – praying over all the main things you will (probably!) be doing during the day.
- Then, during the day, pray for God's help, wisdom, inspiration, and so on, especially as you sense you need it. These prayers need not be long – perhaps only a brief calling on the name of the Lord – but it means we begin to live each day consciously dependent upon God for His help at all times.
- Bring God into every situation – at home, with your family, at work, with your neighbours and friends, at church, and so on.

QUESTIONS

1. Galatians 5:25 seems to imply that there is a difference between “living in the Spirit” and “walking in the Spirit”. Is there a difference? If so, what is the difference?
 2. How do we know when we are inspired by the Spirit? How do we know when other people are inspired by the Spirit?
 3. Can we really “pray at ALL times in the Spirit”? (Ephesians 6:18).
 4. Can Christians today really expect to know, and be able to do, God’s will as Jesus did? (John 5:17-20, 30; 14:10).
 5. What would you say to a Christian friend who had been baptized in the Spirit but did not continue to walk in the Spirit? (That is, their experience did not last).
 6. “The good is the enemy of the best.” Discuss this statement in relation to walking in the Spirit.
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13. THE ON-GOING SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

“Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, singing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord with all your heart; always and for everything giving thanks to God the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18-20)

ROMANS 8

In Romans 7 Paul talks about the Law, and the battle we have with temptation and sin – the desire to do what is right, but our weakness and often our inability to do it. Then he concludes: “Who will set me free from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, I am set free!” (Romans 7:24-25).

In chapter 8 Paul begins with the glorious truth that for those who are living in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation, as we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh (v. 1-4). On Calvary, Christ died for our sins and set us free from sin and its death penalty.

We either live after the flesh, with our minds set on worldly, fleshly things (but the ultimate end of that is death), or we can set our minds on the Spirit and live in the Spirit – that will bring us life and peace. What a choice! (v. 5-8). For the Christian, who seeks to follow Jesus, there really is no choice, for you cannot please God if you live in the flesh – that is utterly contrary to God’s nature and will. Besides, if the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us then He will produce the fruit of the Spirit, and with the fruit of the Spirit in our lives there is no room for the lusts of the flesh (v. 9). Can a good tree bring forth bad fruit? (Matthew 7:16-20).

Our old nature is dead because of sin, but our spirits are alive because of the righteousness we have through Christ. The same Holy Spirit who raised Christ’s body from the dead also dwells in us, in order to give life to **our** mortal bodies (v. 10-11). Hallelujah! The old, sinful nature is dead and buried; now we live in newness of life – resurrected, filled with the Spirit, experiencing abundant life, joy and peace!

If we live in the flesh, fulfilling its desires, we will die, for death is inherent in the seeds of sin. But if, by the power of the Spirit, we die to the flesh, then we will live (v. 12-13).

So the choice is simple: either we choose to walk in the flesh and follow its path to death, or we choose to walk and live in the Spirit, following the path to eternal life.

Those who choose to be led by the Spirit are the children of God, and when they call Him “Abba (Father)” the Holy Spirit bears witness that they are children of God – and **more than that**: they are heirs of the Father (heirs of God) and joint-heirs with Christ, God’s only begotten Son! What an inheritance! (v. 14-17).

But there is one provision – in order to be a child of God we must also “suffer with Him in order that we might be glorified with Him.” We must die to self, die to our selfish desires, die to sin, and live a Godly, Christ-like life. And Paul reminds us that this is not easy! Because the world has no love for Christ, purity or holiness, “all who choose to live Godly Christian lives will suffer persecution” in various ways (2 Timothy 3:12).

However, we should not think of this negatively. Any suffering that we may go through **for the Lord’s sake** (not because of our own foolishness!) is nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed to us. Even creation waits with eager expectation for the day when the sons of God will be revealed. One day creation itself will be delivered from bondage to decay, and we will be redeemed, set gloriously free, and adopted as sons of the living God. At the moment we wait patiently, not yet able to see this, but with hope in our hearts for that wonderful day which is coming (v. 18-25).

In the meantime, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don’t even know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us in incomprehensible ways, and God (who searches our hearts) knows what is the mind of the Spirit, as He intercedes for us according to God’s will (v. 26-27).

Finally, we have the absolute assurance that God will work everything out for the good of those who love Him. Those He knew would love Him, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son; He called them, justified them, and glorified them! (v. 28-30). So if God is on our side, who can be against us? If God gave His own Son for us, will He not also give us everything else we need? Absolutely nothing can now separate us from the love of Christ, for in Him we are more than conquerors! Hallelujah! (v. 31-39).

Oh, the privilege, the joy, the blessing, the honour, the glory of being a child of God who walks in His ways!

COLOSSIANS 3

If we have been (spiritually) raised from the dead with Christ, then we ought to be seeking things which are above. Instead of being concerned for earthly things, we should be concerned for those things which are heavenly, eternal, and spiritual. We have died to our old ways; our lives now have their roots in Christ, so that when He appears we will also appear with Him in glory (v. 1-4).

Therefore we must put to death all the old, earthly, corrupt practices we may have had: immorality, impurity, lust, wrong desires, greed (which is a form of idolatry), and so on. God’s wrath is coming upon these things!

Once this was how we lived, but now we must get rid of them, including anger, hate, slander, filthy talk and lying. We must put off our old nature and its evil practices, and put on the new nature which is Christlike (v. 5-10).

In Christ it does not matter what race we belong to, whether we are a servant or a master – nothing matters for, as Christians, Christ is all and He is in us all, therefore there must be no division between us (v. 11).

Instead of the old nature, as people who God has chosen, let us put on compassion, kindness, humility, patience, tolerance, forgiveness (forgiving other people the same way as Christ has forgiven us). Above all else, let us put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony (v. 12-14).

Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, and be thankful (v. 15).

Finally, let Jesus' words dwell in you richly. Teach and encourage one another with wisdom. Sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, being thankful to God for all His goodness. Indeed, **whatever you do and whatever you say**, do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God our Heavenly Father (v. 16-17).

The above two passages, from Romans 8 and Colossians 3, sum up the very essence of the on-going Spirit-filled life. May God give us the grace and divine ability so to walk!

QUESTIONS

1. What should a Christian do if they are under condemnation? (Romans 8:1-4).
2. What is a "carnal Christian"? (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).
3. If we are "dead to sin", how is it that we still sometimes sin? (Romans 8:13).
4. How does the Holy Spirit help us to pray? (Romans 8:26-27).
5. What does it mean to "seek the things that are above"? (Colossians 3:1).
6. How do we "put off the old nature and put on the new nature"? (Colossians 3:9-10).

14. FIRE FROM OFF THE ALTAR

I said, "Woe is me, for I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of people with unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" Then flew one of the seraphim (angelic beings) to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from off the altar, and he touched my mouth, saying, "Behold, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away and your sin is forgiven." (Isaiah 6:1-7)

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Power (2 Timothy 1:7), the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13), and the Spirit of Holiness (Romans 1:4).

As the **Spirit of Power**, we see in Him the dynamic of God – life, breath, inspiration, power and authority.

As the **Spirit of Truth**, we see in Him the revelation of God – absolute truth, God's perfect standard, the One Who reveals deception and lies, the One Who leads in the right paths.

As the **Spirit of Holiness**, we see in Him the One Who purifies, purges, sanctifies and keeps us from sin, evil and corruption.

People (even Christians) have a great tendency to go to extremes rather than keep things in balance and harmony. Some people over-emphasize the power of the Spirit at the expense of truth and holiness; others emphasize truth but at the expense of His power; while others especially major on holiness. All three are necessary – and in balance. It has been said, "All power and we will blow up! All truth and we will dry up!" And without holiness we will rot! (Which might not quite be Scriptural, but it at least illustrates a point!)

We need to keep in balance the power of the Holy Spirit, the fact that He is the Spirit of Truth, and that He is the Spirit of Holiness. Do we know and experience God's power in our lives

and ministries? Are we earnestly seeking after truth and living in the light of that truth? Is holiness something we strive for?

The Baptism with water, the Holy Spirit, and fire

John the Baptist spoke of three baptisms when he said, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but He Who is coming after me (Jesus) ... will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

Baptism with water is both an indication of repentance and cleansing from sin, and also an identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:1-11). Even Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was baptised in water.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is both the on-coming of divine power and anointing upon a believer, and also identification with the Holy Spirit in His power, authority and ministry.

Baptism with fire is both a purging and sanctifying work in a Christian who dies to self and selfishness in order to totally live for God, and also an identification with the Father Who is a holy God (Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 12:14, 28-29).

If you read about the baptism of fire in its context (Matthew 3:8-12; Luke 3:16-17) it is obvious that what is being spoken of is a separation (of the wheat from the chaff) and a burning or purging of the chaff. It has nothing directly to do with "being on fire for God" in the sense of being *zealous* for God.

We are called to live a holy, sanctified life (1 Thessalonians 4:3). The baptism with fire is for purging and sanctifying our lives, separating them from the sins of this world, from the old nature, from self, and separating them to God.

Sanctification is the purifying and setting apart of the believer's life, to be dedicated to the Lord's service. This can occur as a unique, definite experience, or it may occur as a series of events over a period of time. Whichever happens, we should allow God to test us, try us, and purge us from sin, self, pride, and everything else that would hinder us from being more effective for Him.

Sanctification of the Spirit

Jesus said, "Be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Peter wrote, "It is written 'Be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:45). Paul wrote, "This is God's will: your sanctification!" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

So it is obviously God's desire that we lead holy, sanctified lives, purged from sin, purified, and totally dedicated to the Lord and to His service.

The baptism with the Spirit, and indeed many of the special things we experience spiritually (our "mountain-top experiences") are often followed by a period of testing. This should not surprise us, because God is a Teacher and a Builder, building our lives to be more like Christ. A teacher teaches and then tests, teaches and then tests again. A builder builds and tests what he has built, builds further and tests once more. So it is with God's dealing in our lives.

Mark's Gospel says (1:12-13) that after Jesus' baptism in water and the Holy Spirit, "The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness and He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan, and He was with the wild beasts". But angels ministered to Him!"

Notice several things from this passage:

1. It was the Holy Spirit, not the devil, who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested.
2. This occurred immediately after Jesus' public ministry began; after He had been announced by John the Baptist, baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit. Often we will find that the strongest testing will come after a spiritually significant time in our life. We "come down from the mountain-top" to be tested! Let us beware, but not be afraid!
3. Jesus was taken into the wilderness – a place of loneliness, barrenness and isolation. The Christian life is not always easy. Praise God for the times of encouragement and help we get from other Christians, but there may be times when we are left "all alone" – except for God! Times when we are sorely tested and can only cast ourselves on God's care, help and protection. Praise God, He is faithful! While we do not long for the wilderness, it may well be that our faith will grow stronger through the wilderness testings than through the excitement and exuberance of mountain-top experiences!
4. Jesus was tempted for forty days. The number 40 occurs often in Scripture. Forty days or forty years occurs 56 times in the Bible, and is usually associated with a period of testing or trial.
5. Jesus was tempted. Jesus knew temptation just as we do. The three temptations listed here (Matthew 4:1-11) involved temptations to selfishness, pride and compromise. But Jesus overcame these temptations: He died to self, He died to pride, He died to compromise.
6. Jesus was tempted by Satan. Notice that while God **tests** our faith, our love, our commitment, and so on, the devil **tempts** us to sin. God does not tempt us to sin (James 1:12-15). A good analogy is that of a teacher who **tests** students' ability, while the devil (working through pride, ambition, selfishness, greed, etc) may **tempt** them to sin by cheating.
7. The passage also says that Jesus was "with the wild beasts". While this should probably be taken literally, it is also possible that apart from Satan's three temptations, there were also other demons testing and tempting Him in various ways. In other words, while Satan is one particular demonic being, and the leader of them, the "wild beasts" may refer to other devils and their attacks on Christ in other ways, too.
8. The ultimate outcome was that Jesus was victorious in every way – tempted like we are, and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14-16). He conquered in the wilderness, so He was also able to conquer at Calvary. Hallelujah! And after all His temptations and testings, the angels of God came and ministered to Him. The Lord will not allow us to be tempted or tested beyond our ability to endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).

So, too, after our baptism in the Spirit, and after other important spiritual times, we may well find that, like Jesus, there is a time of real testing and trial – a "wilderness" experience – but it will not last forever! The Lord will bring us through, stronger, more mature, better able to love, worship and serve Him.

The fiery trial

See 1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-14. Peter says three important things in these passages:

1. **Don't be surprised when you are tested by fire:** Don't be caught by surprise, and don't let this trouble you – every Christian, as they follow their Lord, should expect these things to happen.
2. **Don't be discouraged or depressed by this:** Rather, rejoice! Accept it as a challenge! Let your faith rise to believe that "He Who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion" (Philippians 1:6) and He will keep you through all testing.

3. **The reason we can rejoice** is because all this shows that God loves and cares for us (see Hebrews 12:3-14), and that He is purifying our faith, strengthening our character, and leading us on to greater maturity.

“... so that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold ... may redound (contribute in the end) to praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed!”

QUESTIONS

1. Should every Christian be baptized with fire? If so, how do we receive this baptism, and how will we know we have received it? Should we ask for it?
2. What are the dangers of over-emphasising TRUTH or POWER or HOLINESS, without keeping a balance between all three?
3. How can we “strive for holiness” (Hebrews 12:14)?
4. Why do we need to be especially careful and watchful after “mountain-top” experiences?
5. What are some of the lessons we can learn from Jesus’ experience in the wilderness?
6. What is God’s purpose in allowing us to go through times of real testing and trial (“wilderness experiences”)? See 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.

15. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this study we shall look at four aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit and prayer
- The Holy Spirit and the Church
- The Holy Spirit and evangelism
- The Holy Spirit and revival

The Holy Spirit and Prayer

Many Christians, either consciously or unconsciously, when they come to God in prayer, simply pray and ask for things out of their own minds and desires. There is little, if any, waiting on God to see how **He** wants us to pray. It is as though we don’t really believe what it says in Romans 8:26-27, that “The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. He Who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

Knowing the will of God (what to pray for and how to pray for it) is so important because we are assured that “This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us, and if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

For these reasons, Paul writes “Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Ephesians 6:18), and Jude writes, “Build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20).

In order to pray in the Holy Spirit we need to learn to wait on God, to seek to be inspired by His Spirit, so that instead of us making up prayers from off the top of our head, the Spirit of prayer and intercession wells up within us and we pour out our hearts to God in Spirit-inspired prayer.

When the early Christians did this, the place was shaken (Acts 4:31), prison doors were opened (Acts 12:5-11), and people were saved (Acts 10:9-48).

When Jesus did this, miracles happened, the sick were healed (Matthew 14:23-36), the demon-possessed were delivered (Matthew 17:14-21), and the dead were raised (John 11:40-44).

May we, too, learn to pray at all times in the Spirit!

The Holy Spirit and the Church

One major difference between the early Church and the Jewish synagogues and temple, was that the Church pulsed with the life and supernatural power of the Holy Spirit!

The early Church knew no dead orthodoxy. It was not an organisation, a tradition, a club, or a memorial to the past. The life of Christ and the power of the Spirit inspired all who were part of it. The Church consisted of God's people, filled with the Holy Spirit, worshipping, praying, witnessing, serving, and glorifying God!

How dependent on the Holy Spirit are our churches today? If the Holy Spirit was to withdraw from our churches, would people notice any difference? Or would we keep going as normal? Are we so dependent on God that we would collapse and come to a halt without Him, or have we so developed the technique and organisation that we can "run the church as normal" without His supernatural presence?

David cried to the Lord, "Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11). He knew what he so vitally needed! We, too, need to call on the Lord for a yet-greater manifestation of His glory and power, His purity and presence, in the Church.

Our worship needs to be truly "in Spirit and in truth", for this is what God wants – true worshippers who worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Our preaching and praying needs to be anointed by the Holy Spirit – both inspired and inspiring! Our witness – both by word and by deed – needs to pulsate with the life of Christ.

The Church ought to be absolutely unique in the world. There ought to be no other organisation or group of people like the Christian Church. It ought to be obvious to everyone – Christian and non-Christian alike – that the Church has something supernaturally different about it: it is the Body of Christ, the manifestation of God in the world; it exists because the Spirit of the living God inspires and upholds it! Even the powers of darkness should recognise this fact – after all, "through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:9).

How we need to pray that the Church will be restored to this position of authority, anointing and glory!

God's word says, "Cleanse the temple! For your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. You have been bought with a price – the precious Blood of Redemption – therefore glorify God in **your** bodies, and in **the** Body, the Church of Jesus Christ." (See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

The Holy Spirit and Evangelism

The phenomenal growth of the early Church, and of the Church in some parts of the world today, can only be explained in terms of the moving of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer, and the obedience of people who, filled with the Holy Spirit, have gone out and become witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you, but WAIT ... until you are endued with power from on High!" (Luke 24:49). He also said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses ... to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Book of Acts, the growth of the early Church, and the growth of the Church today in much of the world (except in many Western nations) are testimony to the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit working through the lives of Spirit-filled believers. In contrast, the materialism, intellectualism and scepticism of much of the West has led to a decline in effective evangelism. How we need to pray "Lord, rend the heavens and come down – come down in power, so that the nations will tremble at Your presence!" (Isaiah 64:1-2).

We, in the West, have largely resorted to intellectual methods, various techniques and programs in order to win people to Christ, whereas what people really need is a confrontation with the living Christ, a revelation by the Holy Spirit, a demonstration of the power of God in and through the lives of Spirit-filled Christians!

The Holy Spirit and Revival

Surely the longing of every true Christian is for a deep work of God's Spirit in revival – first in the Church, and then, through the Church, to the world about us. When there is sin in the Church, when there is a real apathy towards reaching the lost for Christ (even apathy towards the fact that people *are* lost), when the glory and power of God are not demonstrably present, then surely it is time to cry to God: "**Revive us again!**"

"The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). "God so loved the [whole] world that He gave His only begotten Son ..." (John 3:16). God never created people for Hell; Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). How we need to see the Spirit of God poured out afresh in mighty revival power, wakening the Church, converting the lost, and above all, glorifying Almighty God!

The Holy Spirit is more than willing to move in answer to prayer; to move upon and through the Church; to inspire evangelism and bring revival – if we are willing to set our lives right before God, to be set free from apathy and other worldly distractions, and to become actively involved in what He wants to do in the world!

"Lord, revive us again!"

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to "pray in the Spirit"? (Ephesians 6:18).
2. Do all our prayers have to be inspired by the Holy Spirit?
3. What are some major reasons for lack of church growth in many Western nations today?
4. Is it any use trying to witness before we are filled with the Holy Spirit, or should we be filled first? (See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

5. What can we do to prepare for revival? Can we hasten its coming or must we wait for God's time?
 6. To what extent must we pray, serve in the Church, witness and seek revival, and to what extent are these a work of the Holy Spirit?
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16. RENEWING THE RENEWAL

At the beginning of last century (about 1903-1906) the Holy Spirit began to move in many parts of the world in what came to be known as the Pentecostal movement. The baptism and gifts of the Spirit were given to many people, and revival came to many nations. Two World Wars, and a worldwide depression, followed in the next 40 years. Then, early in the 1960's, the Holy Spirit again began to move throughout the world in what is now known as the Charismatic renewal. Once more the gifts and baptism of the Spirit were restored, especially affecting many Christians in the traditional churches.

Today, over 50 years later, there are still mighty moves of God's Spirit in parts of Africa, Asia (including China), South East Asia, and South America. But, to a large extent, what has happened in the Western world has begun to die down: the renewal needs renewing! In many cases the church has become introverted, has lost its vision and zeal for evangelism, and has got too tied up in material, political, rights and racial issues. While we should be concerned for the poor, for moral issues, human rights and racial harmony, the Church must *never* lose the primary thrust of evangelism – reconciling repentant sinners to the Lord God through the atoning Blood of Jesus Christ. If we lose this thrust, then both the Church and the world are doomed!

The following are some of the major areas in which we need to see the "Renewing of the Renewal":

1. Prayer, intercession, and spiritual warfare

Praise, worship, teaching, "charismatic" (gifted) preachers, celebrations and so on, are very popular today. Prayer meetings are far less popular! But unless and until we realize the vital importance of Holy Spirit-led intercession and spiritual warfare, we have almost lost the battle before we begin. The battle on earth is potentially won when we win the battle in the heavenly places. Without victory in the heavenlies we will see little victory on earth.

2. Divine inspiration – hearing from God

The Church is full of programs, ideas and schemes; what we need is divine inspiration – God saying, "This is what I want you to do in this situation ..." We need to hear from on High. The way God works in another town or nation may be totally different from what He wants us to do in our church and in our town. We need to seek God until we know His will. "Where there is no vision [from God] the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). God longs to move, save, heal, deliver, bring blessing and so on. But will we seek Him for the keys to such blessing?

3. Commitment and discipline

We live in a free-and-easy age in which people like to do their own thing, without interference, commitment, or cost. Our discipleship is often shallow, our discipline is often lacking, and often we are not prepared to pay too great a price to follow God. We may be "soldiers", but only when there is no real battle going on!

Today, God is preparing His people. There may be a lot of testing, shaking, delivering, deep dealings of God in our lives. These are days of preparation for a new move of God (perhaps

the last before Jesus returns!). God will raise up a mighty army; the question is, "Will I be part of it?"

4. Obedience and holiness

2000 years ago we were told to "walk in the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). We live in a very "fleshly", carnal world. Sadly, a lot of the flesh has got into the Church! It has been said that in Moses' time 'it only took a day to get Israel out of Egypt, but it took 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel!' God is looking for an obedient, holy people. In fact, only those with clean hands and a pure heart can ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in the Holy Place before God (Psalm 24:3-5).

One of the things that has brought a genuine move of God's Spirit into disrepute has been hypocrisy and sin in the Church, especially in leadership. God is looking for a pure, holy, dedicated people who He can trust with His power and authority, and for humble people who can handle the glory without becoming proud!

5. A deeper knowledge of God's Word

Heresy and extremes have also plagued the Church and have plagued revivals. One of the problems with large numbers of people coming to Christ in times of revival is that there may be many zealous, but immature, believers. The zealousness, enthusiasm, faith and even miracles, need the solid foundation of a deep understanding and knowledge of God's Word if things are not to go astray. Probably the greatest need in many Third World countries that are today experiencing revival is not for more missionaries or evangelists, but for mature pastors and teachers who can lay a sound foundation in the Word. Bible preaching, teaching and study are desperately needed if the Church is to grow and be balanced, avoiding extremes and false teachings.

6. Unity

The move of God's Spirit in the charismatic renewal has broken down many denominational barriers. Today there is far less emphasis on what denomination people belong to, than there used to be. There is a recognition of other Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ, as being part of the one Body, part of the same Kingdom. But while there is a much greater openness towards one another and recognition of one another, we can still go a lot further towards **working together in practice**, not just talking about unity. "When the brethren **dwelt together** in unity ... there the Lord commands the blessing" (Psalm 133).

We need to spend more time praying together, worshipping together, breaking bread together, fellowshiping together, witnessing together, working together. More of our meetings need to be combined – open to all who are born of God's Spirit and who sincerely seek to follow His ways.

7. Personal evangelism

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8). One of the tragedies of the charismatic movement, especially in recent years, is that to a large extent it has been confined within the walls of "church meetings" and has not broken out into the world round about. The gifts of the Spirit have been exercised largely amongst the saints, rather than the demonstration of God's power being seen in the world. We have "hidden our light under a bushel" (Matthew 5:14-16). If each Christian brought just one other person to Christ in the next year, the Church would double in size. In communist China, under the extremely oppressive regime of Mao Tse Tung, the Church grew by about 50 million. In much of the West, the Church seems to be declining. How we need a new thrust in evangelism, inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit!

8. Spiritual gifts and ministries

God has given to the Church many spiritual gifts and ministries, but many of these need to be “stirred up” again (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6-7). It is one thing to receive gifts, to have talents, to know your ministry; it is another to get out and serve the Lord and serve the Body of Christ in exercising those gifts and ministries. We also need to ask God for increased faith and boldness in exercising our gifts, for we exercise these according to our level of faith (Romans 12:6-8) and in many cases this would seem to be somewhat shallow. “Lord, increase my faith!” There is a much greater demonstration of God’s power and glory yet to be seen!

9. Praise and worship

One of the areas in which the charismatic renewal has been strong is the area of praise and worship. Scripture choruses and other spiritual songs have been widely incorporated into most church services, but singing choruses, clapping our hands, raising our hands and even dancing are not, in themselves, proof of what is inside us. The worship God the Father longs for must be genuine, sincere and in the Spirit – “worship in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). May the true Spirit of praise and worship continue to fall upon all of God’s people!

10. The Church as a community or fellowship

Church is not just Sunday – it is every day, seven days a week! We, as Christians, are to live out our Christian faith, witness, and influence in every sphere of our activities. We are people of the Kingdom of God – the light of the world and the salt of the earth. The Christian community should be experiencing and sharing the *koinonia* (fellowship) of God with one another; we must not live in isolation. Our faith should be contagious; our encouragement should build one another up; our lives and ministries should contribute to the building of Christ’s Kingdom.

No matter how far we have already come (and praise God for what He *has* done in the past!) there is still further to go. The height, length and breadth of God’s love and God’s purposes are so great that we can never fully plumb their depths. In whatever way we may have flagged in zeal since the last move of God, let us now “renew the renewal” and press on in the purposes of God!

Where do we begin?

“Send a revival ... start the work in me!” Let us, each one, resolve to let God’s work of restoration and revival begin in us, in MY life! Let it spread to my family, my church, my city, my nation, the world! If I am totally committed, then God can begin. “Even so, come Lord Jesus!”

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does “the renewal need renewing”?
2. Why do you think there is revival in many Third World countries, but a decline in Western churches?
3. Why are much of our commitment, and our prayer lives, so shallow? What can we do about this?
4. What are some of the hindrances to revival, and how can they be overcome?
5. “Unity begins with a recognition of our oneness in Christ but needs a practical outworking as well.” Discuss this statement and how it can be done.
6. Why has so much of the charismatic movement been confined to “church services” rather than being demonstrated to a lost and needy world? What can we do about this?

17. “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME ...”

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus quoted the above verses from Isaiah 61, and, of course, they apply supremely to Him and His ministry. However, shortly before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you.” Then He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22). Jesus’ physical ministry on earth was about to end. He breathed the Holy Spirit into His disciples and told them to continue the ministry the Father had given to Him. The same commission, and the same anointing, were given to the disciples. And this same commission, and same anointing, are ours today, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Our commission

1. To preach Good News to the poor

The supreme need of each individual, and of all mankind, is to hear and understand the Gospel of salvation. No matter how rich we might be in this world’s goods, we are spiritually bankrupt until we find the fulness of life in Christ (John 10:10).

“Bring good news to the afflicted” (Isaiah 61:1). There are millions of afflicted people in our world today – people without hope; bound by false cults and religions; bound in fear and unbelief; bound by a materialism or philosophy that can never truly satisfy the real needs and desires of the human heart, or bring them to salvation and eternal life. We need to tell them the Good News!

2. To bind up the broken-hearted

Even in the affluent, “Christianized” Western world there are millions of broken-hearted people – people with hurts, bitterness, rejection, loneliness, grief. Jesus can – and longs to – minister into these broken hearts and lives, ministering “inner healing” to the mind, the soul and the spirit. In Jesus’ Name we need to bind up the broken-hearted!

3. To proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. Most people think they are free; many are, in fact, bound – bound by fear, evil habits, evil spirits, by the occult, witchcraft, Satanism, permissiveness, and so on. “They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, for whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved” (1 Peter 2:19). In Jesus’ Name, those that are bound can be set free, and “whoever the Son sets free, is free indeed!” (John 8:31-36).

4. To bring sight to the blind

Both spiritually and physically there is healing for those who are blind. “The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). We need to bind the spirits that blind people spiritually, and set people free to believe in Christ. This also includes, of course, the ministry of physical healing.

5. To set at liberty those who are oppressed

People are not only oppressed by evil spirits; there is much in this world's system that oppresses people – poverty, injustice, racial prejudice, extreme authoritarianism, fear, war, and so on. In ministering **wholeness**, Christians need to address all these issues, not just the spiritual ones! We need to minister to the whole person – body, soul, and spirit – just as Jesus did! Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, set free those who were bound or possessed; He brought peace, joy, love, and unity. So, also, should we! “God has shown you ... what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: justice, mercy (kindness), and a humble walk with your God” (Micah 6:8).

6. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

“Behold, **now** is the acceptable time; behold, **now** is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). This is the day of God's power. Now is the time for Christians to rise up and minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit will not always strive with us – besides, why wait? God only wants to do good things in our lives and in the lives of others!

Declare the Kingdom of God

As Christians, we need to declare the Kingdom of God in the same three ways that Jesus did:

1. By Word

Jesus preached the Gospel; He proclaimed the truths of God's Word. We, too, are called to preach God's Word, in Spirit and in truth, under the anointing God's Spirit (Romans 10:8-17).

2. By deed

Many people will not hear our words until they first see it lived out in our lives. Jesus practiced what He preached; so must we! There is great power in anointed preaching coupled with a godly life!

3. By signs and wonders

In the days of the early Church, we read of the believers that “they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20).

The same Lord who accompanied the early believers is still with us today, to the uttermost parts of the earth, and He still has the same miraculous power and the same divine authority as He always had! (Matthew 28:18-20). It is up to us to step out in faith, full of the Holy Spirit, and trust Him to work in us as He worked in former days. Hallelujah – He still does!

The key

Jesus began His quote from Isaiah with the words “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me ...” We need the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon us! We need to seek God for the baptism and fulness of His Spirit! We need to walk constantly in the Spirit! We need to pray for God's anointing on our lives and ministry!

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it not presumptuous to apply Luke 4:18-19 to Spirit-filled Christians today?
2. In today's terms, who are “the poor”, “the captives”, “the blind”, “the oppressed”, “the afflicted”, “the broken-hearted”?

3. What are some of the “prisons” that bind people?
 4. What is “the acceptable year of the Lord”?
 5. Is the Church today really fulfilling this divine commission? If not, why not?
 6. What is the key to declaring the Kingdom of God with power?
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18. THE POWER AND THE GLORY

“[Our Father who is in Heaven ...] Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen!” (Matthew 6:13)

So far in these studies on the Spirit-filled life we have emphasised the fulness, gifts, fruit, and ministries of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Spirit-filled Christian – that is, we have focused on God’s work in our lives. In this study we want to focus our eyes on the power and the glory which belong to God.

This study is really a meditation on some passages of Scripture that reveal something of the glory of the Lord. Please read these verses, meditate on them, and let the glory of the Lord touch your spirit!

When was the glory of God seen?

1. When the Tabernacle was built (Exodus 40:34-38)

When Moses had finished the Tabernacle, the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, and so great was the glory that even Moses could not enter it! So real and so important was that glory that the Israelites moved forward only when the cloud of God’s glory moved, and stayed still when it stayed still.

2. When the Temple was built (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:11-14; 7:1-3)

Likewise, when Solomon had finished building the Temple, and all the vessels and the Ark of the Covenant were transferred into the Temple, a cloud filled the Temple of the Lord so that even the priests could not stand to minister, for the glory of the Lord filled the Temple.

Then, when Solomon ended his prayer of dedication of the Temple, fire came down from Heaven and consumed the offerings and sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple. The Israelites, seeing the fire and glory, bowed down before the Lord and worshipped Him, giving thanks for His goodness, love, and steadfast mercy.

3. When Christ came (Luke 2:8-11; Matthew 17:1-8; John 1:14)

When Jesus Christ was born, and the angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds to tell them the good news, the glory of the Lord shone around them as he declared the news of “a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord”.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, God drew aside some of Jesus’ humanity and revealed something of the glory of the Son – He was transfigured before the disciples, His face shining like the sun and His garments white as light. Then the Father declared, “This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him”. And the disciples fell on their faces and were filled with awe.

So indelible a mark did Jesus’ life and ministry leave on John that when he wrote his Gospel he said, “The Word (the eternal God) became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We beheld His glory – glory as of the only Son of the Father”.

4. In this present age (2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

In this passage Paul contrasts the coming of the Law to Moses and its splendour, with the coming of the Holy Spirit to Christians and its far greater splendour: “If the dispensation of death came with such splendour that the Israelites could not look at Moses’ face because of its (*fading*) splendour, why should not the dispensation of the Spirit be accompanied by even *greater* splendour? ... We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, as in a mirror, are being changed from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord Who is the Spirit”. Even so, in this age we see but the reflected glory of the Lord (“as in a mirror”) – the day is yet to come when we shall see the glory of the Lord directly!

5. In the coming age (Revelation 4:8-11; 5:11-14; 21:10-11, 23)

Peter encouraged those Christians who were facing fiery trials not to give up, but to rejoice, for the day would come when Christ’s glory will be revealed (1 Peter 4:12-14).

In Revelation we see the living creatures and the elders giving glory and honour to the Lord, worshipping Him Who lives for ever and ever. Then they are joined by millions of angels; then every creature in Heaven and on earth is saying, “To Him Who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour and glory and power for ever and ever.” Amen!

So great is God’s glory and power, that the new Jerusalem, the holy city, has no need for the sun or moon to shine upon it for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb of God!

What is the glory like?

The glory of God is described in terms of fire and cloud. A number of times the glory of the Lord appeared to Moses and the children of Israel, and it is described either as a fire or as a cloud (e.g., Exodus 24:15-18).

What effect does the glory of God have on people?

When people see the glory of God there is an awesome fear which comes over them; they often fall on their faces before the Lord and worship Him (e.g., Matthew 17:6; Luke 2:9; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3; Ezekiel 44:4; Revelation 1:9-20). After Moses had been in the presence of the Lord, his face shone (Exodus 34:29-35). When Isaiah saw the Lord, he was filled with an overwhelming sense of his unworthiness and sin (Isaiah 6:1-8).

What is the Glory of the Lord?

While the glory of the Lord is described in terms of fire or cloud, they represent the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in all His fulness, power and glory. This is why people sometimes fall prostrate before Him and worship Him! (See Ezekiel 43:2-5; Acts 7:55-56). When the Holy Spirit comes in all His fulness, as on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the glory of God is seen – the “rush of a mighty wind” speaks of His power; “tongues of fire” speak of His glory – and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Note: “the sound of many waters” in Ezekiel 43:2 refers to a large number of people all speaking together, worshipping God as they did on the Day of Pentecost. See also Daniel 10:6; Revelation 1:15.

“Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours – Yours is the Kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come from You, and You rule over all. In Your hand are power and might, and in Your hand it is to make great and give strength to all. Now we thank You, our God, and praise Your glorious Name!” (1 Chronicles 29:10-13).

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the glory of God?
 2. What are some of the effects of seeing the glory of God?
 3. When was the prophecy in Isaiah 40:3-5 fulfilled?
 4. When will the prophecies in Numbers 14:21 and Habakkuk 2:14 be fulfilled?
 5. Where else is the glory of God seen? (Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 6:3; Acts 7:55-56).
 6. Why does Paul say that we see the glory of God in a mirror (2 Corinthians 3:18)? Is there more yet to be seen? (See 1 Corinthians 13:12).
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19. RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

Please read Ezekiel 47:1-12. The following points are based on this passage:

1. Water

In the Scriptures, water speaks of life and the Holy Spirit. We often take water for granted today because it is so easy to simply turn on a tap and get all the clean water we want. This was not so in Ezekiel's day! Water (or rather, the lack of it) was life-threatening!

Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. The water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

On the last day (the great day) of the Feast of Dedication, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive, for at this time the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39).

The river of living water, the water of life, thus refers to the Holy Spirit, and life in the Spirit.

2. Source

The source of the river was the sanctuary of the Temple – it came from the presence of God.

There are many rivers and many sources. The "river" we choose, and its "source", are very important. Contrary to a common saying, all roads do *not* lead to Rome! There is salvation in no other source than that of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Only one 'Source' and one 'River' bring the life which leads to eternal life.

3. Distance

One thousand cubits is about 500 metres. Four times this distance was measured. The distance was long, and it took some time to measure the two kilometres. This speaks to us of the fact that growth is usually slow, although there may be periods of more rapid growth. There are no short-cuts to maturity. A daily walk with God, going through the experiences of life with Him, leads us on to greater and greater maturity.

4. Growth

First the water was ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then up to the waist, and finally it was deep enough to swim in – borne along by the water of the Spirit.

How deep have we gone in God? Are we still paddling around in the shallows when God wants to take us in deeper? Jesus said “Launch out into the deep ... From now on you will be catching men”, and the disciples left everything and followed Him (Luke 5:4, 10-11). Jesus would say to us, today, “Launch out into the deep!”

5. Stagnant water

Stagnant water brings sickness, disease and death. No animal or plant life, or fish, can live in the Dead Sea – it is stagnant and dead.

The Dead Sea is dead because it constantly takes in, but it never gives out! The surface of the Dead Sea is about 400 metres below sea level (it is actually a lake, not a sea!) Rivers flow into it, carrying dissolved salt, but nothing flows out. The region is so hot that the water simply evaporates, leaving the salt behind.

What an illustration of what a Christian’s life could be: stagnant and dead because it always receives but never gives out!

6. Fresh water

Fresh water brings freshness and life. Where the rivers enter the Dead Sea there is life, but not further out. How we need freshness, day by day, bringing life to us and those around us!

7. “Will not”

Refusal to receive is our prerogative, but God's heartache. God wants to give us the water of life; He wants rivers of living water to flow from our lives, but some people “will not!”

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, **but you would not!**” (Matthew 23:37).

8. Result of fresh water

Where there was fresh water, there was life – trees never wither, there is constant growth, fruitfulness, food, and healing. This is what God wants! (See Psalm 1:1-3 and Revelation 22:1-2).

9. River in full flood

A river in full flood is not static but dynamic; not stationary but moving; not stagnant but active; not going nowhere but purposeful, with a sense of direction; not achieving nothing but fruitful; not sterile but life-giving; not stale but fresh; it brings not death but LIFE!

“The thief comes to steal and to kill and to destroy, but I have come”, Jesus said, “so that you will have LIFE in all its abundance and fulness!” (John 10:10).

The need for a vision

Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision (or prophecy) the people perish (cast off restraint)”. A prophecy or vision brings revelation from God. We need to hear from God and have a sense of divine direction in our lives. “Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2:7).

Where there is no divine direction, people “cast off restraint” – they wander aimlessly like lost sheep, with nowhere to go, no fences to keep them in the right place; they “perish” (Matthew 9:36-38).

Our spiritual lives can be like this: if we have no sense of divine direction, if we have not heard our calling to serve the Lord, if we do not know where we are going, we may simply stagnate and die.

We need to seek God and wait upon Him until we know our calling in God. “Lord, what would you have me to do?” Then, as you get a vision of God’s will for your life, as the rivers of living water begin to flow into and out of your life, go and minister in the Name of Jesus, bringing life wherever you go!

Footnote: Many of us feel like Moses when he was called by God to speak to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites – he said to the Lord, “Who am I, that I should go? ... I am not eloquent ...” (Exodus 3:11; 4:10). Paul reminds us that “not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong” (see 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

Do not limit what the Almighty can do through your life if you are surrendered to Him! The Source of the River of Life is the water which flows from the Throne of God – and you are called to be a channel through which that river can flow and bring life!

- We may not be a preacher or teacher, but we can all share what we know.
- We may not be an evangelist, but we can all share what Christ has done for us.
- We may not be a prophet, but we can all share what God has shown us.
- We may not be a pastor, or leader, or counsellor, but we can all give ourselves in love to others, providing a sympathetic and listening ear, encouraging others, speaking a word in season.
- We may not be an administrator, but we can all help, even in little things.
- We may not be a mighty prayer warrior and intercessor, but we can all pray!

Be faithful in the small things, and God will expand your ministry (Matthew 25:14-29, 40).

Let us pray, in the words of the hymn:

I’m pressing on the upward way, new heights I’m gaining every day,
Still praying as I’m onward bound, “Lord, plant my feet on higher ground!”
“Lord lift me up and let me stand, by faith on Heaven’s table-land,
Where love and joy and light abound; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground!”

QUESTIONS

1. What is the Source of the River of Life?
2. How do we become spiritually mature?
3. How can we “launch out into the deep” spiritually?
4. What lesson can we learn from the Dead Sea? How can we ensure that we bring life to those around us?
5. What is the secret of continual fruitfulness? (See Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Ezekiel 47:12).
6. Why is it so important to have a spiritual vision for our lives?

20. WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

What next? What follows the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

In this last study on the Spirit-filled life we will summarize some of the things mentioned in previous studies in order to answer the above question.

The baptism with the Spirit is not an experience to end all experiences; it is not an end, but a new beginning. The baptism in the Spirit is no more a goal than is becoming a Christian. Both are landmarks in the life of a Christian, but both open up into new realms of living with God.

Rather than constantly look back to a past experience, we should **continually** be filled with the Holy Spirit and constantly walk in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16, 25).

If we grieve God by sin, if we quench the moving of His Spirit in our lives, if we back-slide in our Christian life, we need to humbly confess our sin, turn from it, and ask God to again fill us with His Spirit.

Results of the baptism with the Spirit

Please read Acts 2:37-47 and 5:11-16.

1. Power from on High. When a Christian is baptized with the Spirit they receive power from on High. The primary purpose of this is to give them a powerful, effective witness to the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-8). Note that it is very important to remember that we witness by our lives as well as by our words!

2. The gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit will be imparted to us by God as He chooses (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). We are told to “earnestly desire the spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1); “do not neglect the gift you have” but “stir up the gift of God that is in you” (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

We are also reminded that the gifts of the Spirit should be exercised in love (not out of pride) for they are given to edify (build-up) others in the Church, and for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 14:1-5).

3. The fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit should increasingly be seen in our lives as we daily walk in the Spirit, and we should get greater victory over the lusts of the flesh, until they completely fall away, and we are delivered from them (Galatians 5:13-25).

4. Witness. The power of the Holy Spirit is given to us primarily so that we might witness to Christ, both by our words and our lives (Acts 1:8). Witnessing should be the spontaneous overflow of Spirit-filled lives. We witness because we can't help it!

5. Worship and service. Jesus said, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve” (Matthew 4:10). When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we often receive great joy, and the ability to worship God in new ways and with much greater freedom. God desires us to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24). We will also have both the desire and ability to really serve God and serve others with humility and sincerity (John 13:1-17).

As we mature in the Spirit, God will give us ministries to exercise for His glory and for the upbuilding (edification) of the Church (Ephesians 4:11-14; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28).

6. Victory. We have the power and authority of the Lord God Almighty to cast out demons (Matthew 10:1; Luke 4:18-19; 10:17-19) and to be victorious over temptation and over all the works of darkness (Colossians 2:13-15). We should be fighting spiritual battles and we should be victorious over the enemy (Revelation 12:10-11).

7. Walk in the Spirit. We should daily seek to walk in the Spirit, being sensitive to the Lord's leading and obedient to His voice. We are to press on towards maturity (Hebrews 5:11 to 6:2; Philippians 3:10-14). Five specific areas in which we should be maturing are: Prayer, Bible Study, Fellowship, Obedience, and Witness.

God will test our faith and sanctify us as we walk with Him. But rather than fear this, we should rejoice that we are worthy to be His children – loved, disciplined, and our faith tested by fire so that it will become all the more pure and God-honouring! (1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-14).

As a result of our walk in the Spirit and growth in maturity we will be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-16) with all believers. (Division is a mark of immaturity or carnality – see 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-9).

As we seek to be constantly, continually filled with the Spirit we will discover the truth of the words: "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a Spirit of **power**, and of **love**, and of a **sound mind** (or self-control)" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Maintaining the Spirit-filled life

As a result of being filled with the Spirit, a Christian should:

- have a much greater joy in their Christian life.
- have a much greater desire to read God's Word and pray.
- be eager to witness for Christ.
- long for good Christian fellowship.
- have a greater desire to be obedient to the Lord and not grieve Him by sin.
- have a desire to serve the Lord.

The only way to avoid stagnation is to keep moving with God. This is why constant, active service, witnessing, and fellowship are so important. If we stop, we stagnate; if we do not go out, we get introverted; if we do not go forward, we are in danger of sliding backwards. We grow spiritually by serving the Lord and ministering to those in need.

1 Timothy 4:12 shows that every Christian, no matter how young, can set the believers an example in five ways:

1. in their speech.
2. in Godly conduct.
3. in Christ-like love.
4. in their faith.
5. in their purity.

Let us strive, with God's help, to attain this!

Am I enjoying the Spirit-filled life?

QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between boldness, power and authority, on one hand, and pride, impudence and presumption on the other hand?
2. Why is the Church today, on the whole, not exercising the power and authority it should?
3. What would you say to a person who said that there is no need to talk about Christ; we should simply show Him in our lives?

4. What would you say to a person who said they spoke in tongues but did not demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit?
 5. Should every Christian be baptized with fire? If so, how can we receive this baptism, and how will we know when we have received it?
 6. Which areas of the Spirit-filled life are most lacking in your life, and how do you plan to overcome this lack?
-

God's Gifts

God the Father has given us, His children, two supreme Gifts:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ, and eternal life through Him (John 3:16; 10:10)
2. The Holy Spirit, and His fulness and power (Luke 11:13; John 7:37-39)

God has also given us many other good gifts (Matthew 7:11; James 1:17)

As well as these, God has given us:

The Ministry Gifts – gifted men and women who carry on Christ's ministry in the Church and in the world today (see the list below).

The Supernatural Gifts of the Holy Spirit – divine enabling of God for the tasks to which He has called us (see the list below).

"There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. There are various operations, but the same God Who inspires them all. The manifestations of the Spirit are given to each person to profit everyone. ... All these gifts are inspired by one and the same Spirit Who gives to each person individually as He chooses."
(1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11)

Note: The following words should *not* be rigidly defined – they often overlap, and are broader than many people think. Most people are gifted in more than one way. They are for God's glory, not ours. They are for other people's blessing, not just ours.

MINISTRY GIFTS

Ephesians 4:8, 11

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Pastors (Shepherds)
- Teachers

Romans 12:6-8

- Prophets
- Ministers (Deacons, Servants)
- Teachers
- Exhorters
- Givers (Sharers)
- Rulers (Leaders)
- People who Show Mercy

1 Corinthians 12:28-31

Apostles
Prophets
Teachers
Miracle workers
Healers
Helpers
Governors
Tongues speakers
Interpreters

1 Peter 4:10-11

Speakers
Ministers

SUPERNATURAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Wisdom
Knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracles
Prophecy
Discernment
Tongues
Interpretation

Hebrews 2:4

Signs
Wonders
Miracles
Gifts

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