

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 20

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: Baptism In The Holy Spirit Part 5

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In this study I will tackle two very practical questions: How then can we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit? And why do some Christians lack deeper spiritual experiences despite having good character and moral lives?

In answer to the first question, there are at least two methods of receiving the Spirit mentioned in the book of Acts:

A) Direct reception when He is poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and at Cornelius' place (Acts 10:44-45)

B) Receiving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands - when the apostles went to Samaria (Acts 8:14-17), when Saul's eyes were opened and he was filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17) and later when Paul laid hands on the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:6).

In a powerful revival the Holy Spirit may be poured out on a whole group of people and they will be simultaneously be baptized in the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost. Others receive the Spirit through personal ministry and the laying on of hands. Christians have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while praying at home or, in one famous case that began the modern Pentecostal movement, the Spirit was received during devotions at a bible college in Topeka, Kansas.

The laying on of hands also seems to be involved in ministry such as in the commissioning of Saul (Paul) and Barnabas, and in the imparting of spiritual gifts to Timothy:

Acts 13:2-3 HCSB *As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work that I have called them to." (3) Then, after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.*

1 Timothy 4:14 HCSB *Do not neglect the gift that is in you; it was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.*

2 Timothy 1:6 HCSB *Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

From these examples it seems to me that we should:

- a) Fervently pray for more and more of God's infilling and power for ministry and
- b) Seek the imparting anointing and spiritual gifts for ministry by the laying on of hands of senior Christian leaders who have integrity and good Christian character and who are clearly already moving in the Holy Spirit.

God may personally visit us with an outpouring of grace during our quiet times, or even while we are driving! Or the Lord may put us next to somebody who can impart wisdom and spiritual gifts to us via prophecy and the laying on of hands. We cannot dictate the method of the blessing – but we should still seek the blessing!

Now for the second question that this study is addressing. Some Christians cry out: 'But I have served the Lord faithfully all these years, why don't I have any of these spiritual experiences'. The answer is in the statement itself. The person is seeking God's blessing because of his or her service to God, and not by faith and trust in a God who has promised those blessings. They are trying to earn the free gift, instead of just receiving it by faith. We inherit spiritual blessings through promises – and not through works or laws or any effort of the flesh:

Galatians 3:2-5 HCSB *I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? (3) Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so much for nothing--if in fact it was for nothing? (5) So then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?*

We only receive the Holy Spirit through hearing and through faith in the promise of God. We do not receive the Holy Spirit by obeying laws, being good, or having the right theology. This even applies to ministry in the Holy Spirit:

Acts 3:12 HCSB *When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk?"*

It is not your theology, or your wisdom or your good moral life that will cause you to receive the Holy Spirit, but only your faith in God who has promised the Spirit to you:

Galatians 3:14,22,29 HCSB *The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.(22) But the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin's power, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ... (29) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.*

You also have to stop looking at yourself and your own unworthiness and saying "God would never bless me I am too much of a mess". That is just a reverse form of the works doctrine. The Samaritan woman had a shattered moral life, a huge inferiority complex, and poor theology but Jesus told her that the Holy Spirit could be hers, then and there, just for the asking:

John 4:9-10 HCSB *"How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked Him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. (10) Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would ask Him, and He would give you living water."*

The Holy Spirit is the free gift of God. If we ask Jesus he will give us this Living Water

to all who ask it of Him in faith. That is the Promise. (Acts 2:33,38,39; Acts 3:14, Ephesians 1:13)

Luke 11:13 HCSB *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*

Revelation 21:6 MKJV *And He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the Water of Life freely.*

Blessings,

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