

The Work Of The Holy Spirit

Introduction

The Church's Calling: Do The Works Of Jesus

God has called the church to be an active, vibrant, and dynamic force in the world, going to the highways and byways, doing the works of Jesus.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father (John 14:12).

His good works included bringing Good News to people, binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, opening the eyes of the blind, comforting those who mourn, setting free those who are downtrodden, healing the sick, proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil (Isaiah 61:1-3, Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38). Jesus was able to do these things because the Holy Spirit had come upon Him and anointed Him to fulfill the work and ministry.

- The Holy Spirit is upon me...(Luke 4:18).
- God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power... (Acts 10:38).

Jesus Promises The Power Of The Holy Spirit to His Followers

Jesus promises the power of the Holy Spirit to all who follow Him, to the 12 disciples, the seventy, to the 120 and to all who were far off.

- To the twelve disciples, Jesus called them together and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases (Luke 9:1).
- To the 70, Jesus gave authority over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:17-19).
- To the 120 gathered at Pentecost, Jesus said:
- You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:7).
- To all those who were far off, Peter said:
- this promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off (Acts 2:39)

Authentic Christianity Offers Power

Real Christianity goes beyond ceremonies, creeds and rituals and offers a source of power to transform and change lives. It asserts that there is a resurrection power at work within each person who believes. It promises us power so we can do the works of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gives us power to do the works of Jesus and to be his

witnesses. The Kingdom of God consists of power...and according to Jesus, the Kingdom of God is begins within us.

- The Kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power (I Cor. 4:20).
- The Kingdom of God comes with power (Mark 9:1).
- He is able to exceeding abundantly beyond all we ask or think, according to the power that works within us (Eph. 3:20).
- Grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence, while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy, servant Jesus . . . when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:29-30).

Many Christians Lack Power, Unable To Do The Work Of Jesus

Yet in spite of this promise, many of God's people do not have much power. They know about the Holy Spirit, because they have been taught about the Holy Spirit, but yet they have not had very much to do with the Holy Spirit. They have not been filled with the Spirit or learned to be led by the Holy Spirit. They have not allowed the Holy Spirit to bring them revelation of Jesus Christ and to lead them into truth. They have no experiences with the power of God. They have remained stuck in heads. Scientific deduction and reason alone cannot bring us God's power. Having only rational Christianity or a social gospel, they have denied the power of God.

- Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power...avoid such men as these (II Tim. 3:5).

The centerpiece of New Testament Christianity is something to do with the Holy Spirit and power coming inside a person. It can't be separated from the Holy Spirit. This is one of the key differences between man's religion and Christianity. In man's religion, we try to be good, to have a morality, but end up with no morality. In Christianity, transformation occurs through the indwelling Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit working inside a person.

- Your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God... (I Cor. 2:5).
- God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power...(II Tim. 1:7).

The Church Needs The Holy Spirit

Pope Leo XIII

At end of 19th century he wrote an encyclical letter on the Holy Spirit and dedicated the 20th century to the Holy Spirit. Early in the 20th century, the Holy Spirit was poured out in the Azusa Street revival in California.

Pope John XXIII (1958-1963)

He welcomed the Holy Spirit afresh to the Roman Catholic world, specifically praying for the Holy Spirit to come and once more revive the church: "May there be repeated thus in the Christian family the spectacle of the apostles gathered together in Jerusalem after the Ascension of Jesus to heaven, and may the Divine Spirit renew your wonders in our time, as though for a new Pentecost". The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* "these charismatic gifts...are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the church."

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005)

He knew that mankind is incomplete without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and welcomed the Spirit in his own life. When he became Pope, he urged local priests to participate, and adopt a welcoming attitude toward it. "I have always belonged to this renewal in the Holy Spirit." He welcomed the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office under direction of Cardinal Suenens and invited it to operate from within the walls of the Vatican.

1986 Dominium et Vivificantem: document on the work of the Holy Spirit gives profound teaching about the role of the Spirit in revealing Jesus, bringing about personal transformation and empowering for mission. Had a sense of the need for the church to encounter the Spirit.

Eve of Pentecost 1998: He asked the entire church to focus on the person and work of the Holy Spirit for all of 1998, and on the eve of Pentecost he invited all the renewal movements in the church to join him to celebrate this feast of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. "Open yourselves docilely to the gifts of the Spirit! Accept gratefully and obediently the charismata which the Spirit never ceases to bestow on us."

Jubilee 2000: Called church to prepare for a fresh work of the Holy Spirit, as the third day of Christianity arrived. Stood at the doors of the Vatican, at the dawn of the new millennium and said before a listening world: "We welcome you, Spirit of Jesus"

January 6, 2001: Summons to the new evangelization: "Allow ourselves to be filled with the ardor of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost."

Called For Repentance: He understood that it would only come on the wings of repentance. He broke ancient strongholds through repentance. Scandal of pedophilia broke out, just as he was hoping for a new holiness in his flock, and the focus was diverted. Held to Prophetic Hope: "A new spring time of Christian life, ...if docile to the action of the Holy Spirit" he continued to insist that a great day of Christian unity and revival was just ahead.

Pope Benedict XVI

“Task is to keep the door open to the renewal movements to prepare room for them.” He affirmed Pope John XXIII’s prayer for a new Pentecost, and says that his prayer did not go unheard.

Who Is The Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the same person who brooded over the waters, who came down upon Jesus when He was baptized, who was upon the prophets of old, and who filled the people at Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit of Power. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and is here for many purposes, including teacher, guide, comforter, leader.

Jesus said it is better that He go away so He could send the Holy Spirit to be with us and in us (John 7:38-39). Why? So we could receive the promise of the Father, the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit.

The Third Person Of The Trinity

Many people are confused about the Holy Spirit. We mistake Jesus for the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit for the Father. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, (yes he is with us through His Spirit, inside of us, that is how we are united with Him); yet, He is seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father. The Father is also seated in heaven. The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the trinity, is here on earth, and He is here for a purpose.

The Holy Spirit is a Person, it is not a force, power, or energy. As the third Person of the trinity, it has feelings (Ephesians 4:30), a mind of infinite knowledge (Romans 8:26,27) and a will. It speaks. (Acts 13:2; John 16:13). A force or power does not have these attributes and abilities!

The Holy Spirit, The Promise of The Father

From the scriptures it is clear that the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father for all who believe...

- I am sending the *promise* of the Father upon you until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).
- ...wait for what the Father had *promised*, which, He said, you heard of from me. For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (Acts 1:4,5) .
- ...Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the *promise of the Holy Spirit*..., He has poured forth this which you both see and hear (Acts 2:33).
- Peter said to them, Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For *the promise is for you* and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself” (Acts 2:38,39).

The Holy Spirit, Sent To Live Within The Believer

The Holy Spirit was sent to dwell within each believer, not just a few holy saints.

- I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; . . .but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you (John 14:16,17).
- Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you (I Cor. 3:16).

The Holy Spirit Has Its Work To Do

In bringing us to salvation and wholeness, each part of the trinity has its work to do. The Father has His, the Son, Jesus Christ, has His, and the Holy Spirit has its. And the Church has its work. We need to make room and allow the Holy Spirit to do its work. (Then we need to do our work.)

The general working of the Holy Spirit is to edify us, transform us, and lead us, and to fill us with God's power and authority, giving us spiritual gifts.

Two Images Of The Holy Spirit

The Bible gives us several images for the Holy Spirit that help us understand its work. They are the fire, wind/breath, and the dove. At Pentecost there came a rushing mighty wind, and tongues of fire burned on each individual apostle (out of the wind came fire).

At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. Noah sent out doves after the flood and one returned with an olive branch. These images suggest something of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

1. Breath/the wind (*pneuma* in Gr, *Ruach* in Heb.): divine power; the effects or the expression of divine spirit; messenger of God. Jesus taught: "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:7).
2. Fire: purifying and renewing; because of its power to destroy, it can be understood as a means to rebirth at a higher level.
3. Dove: peace; sign of reconciliation with God; the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Examples of differing types of *spirits*, suggest that they are predominantly used to convey something that brings about a transformation.

- Oil is transformed into power through the *spirit* in petroleum.
- *Spirits* of salt and spirits of ammonia burn, cleanse, purify and destroy.
- *Spirits* in alcohol lift us out of our ego and alter our personality.
- *Spirit beings* have transformed situations for good or evil.

The *Holy Spirit* in the Godhead entered into woman and transformed God himself into incarnate man. The *Holy Spirit* that came at Pentecost ran like fire through the pagan world and gave birth to the new Christian era.

The Holy Spirit Sent To Help us (John 14:16)

Jesus said that He would ask the Father to give us a helper.

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; . . .(John 14:16).

To Teach Us All Things

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things...(John 14:26a)

To Bring To Our Memory All That He The Lord Says To Us

The Helper, the Holy Spirit...will...bring to your memory all that I said to you (John 14:26b).

To Guide Us To Truth

...when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak...(John 16:13),

To Prepare Us

...and He will disclose to you what is to come (John 16:13)

To Reveal And Bear Witness To Jesus

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me (John 15:26)

To Bring Revelation And Wisdom

The Apostle Paul prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give to them a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

To Reveal The Things God Has Prepared For Those Who Love Him

The Holy Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God....Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God...we have received the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God. (I Cor. 2:10-12).

To Establish A Witness Within Us That We Belong To Him

- For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:15,16).
- Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (II Cor. 1:21)

To Bear Witness Within Us When We Make Right Decisions

To Intercede For Us Pray (Romans 8:26,27)

The Spirit Himself intercedes for us...according to the will of God (Romans 8:27)

To Help Us With Our Weaknesses

See Romans 8:26.

To Convict The World Of Sin And Righteousness

See John 16:8.

The Holy Spirit, Brings Life And Freedom

- I will put my Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land (Ezekiel 37:14). It is the Spirit who gives life... (John 6:63).
- The Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty (II Cor. 3:16).

The Holy Spirit, Essential for Spiritual Maturity

We cannot come into a place of spiritual maturity without the Holy Spirit. We have to have the Holy Spirit there to usher us into it. It is the Spirit alone that can make people live and change – not our cleverness, education, charisma, or personal power. The Holy Spirit does the work. He is the teacher, the guide, He reveals Jesus Christ in us and guides us into the truth. No one can guide a person into a place of spiritual maturity. I can point to the way, but it is the Holy Spirit who must teach you and guide you into the fullness of whatever the Lord has for you. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. We must go to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to teach us.

We must become more reliant upon the Holy Spirit to do a wonderful work in us. We must rely upon Him to receive revelation and the different things He has to offer us. In relying upon this spiritual part of our being and responding and functioning from it, we are developing a new way of thinking. Our emotional being is not such a shipwreck anymore, something wonderful happens in our emotions too. We are literally being transformed, and it is restoration.

In the journey to spiritual growth, inner healing and wholeness, the presence and activity of the power of the Holy Spirit working within us is essential—perhaps more important than the laying on of hands, inner healing prayers, and gifts of the Spirit. However, the growth depends somewhat upon how responsive we are to the Holy Spirit, this teacher who God gives us. The Holy Spirit is sent to us to help us develop fully into being that new creation. He causes the spiritual senses to flourish within us. He teaches us how to begin to see spiritually, hear spiritually, speak spiritually, and respond spiritually to the things of God.

The Holy Spirit, Sent To Lead And Guide Us

Both Jesus and St. Paul taught that we must learn how to be led by the Spirit. This is a key issue if we ever want to mature spiritually and grow up and break free—from man's religion—and experience something deeper. It's only by the Holy Spirit that this can happen. We must have the boldness and courage to be led by the Spirit, then we will mature spiritually and be transformed. God has made us adequate to be follow and serve the Spirit—but not the letter of the law (II Cor. 3:6). We are capable of being led by the Spirit. We can trust the Holy Spirit!

- For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God (Romans 8:14).
- But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law (Galatians 5:18).
- Who made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit (II Cor. 3:6).

The Holy Spirit, Sent To Empower Us For Ministry

Jesus is the example for us. The Spirit came upon Him and anointed Him to fulfill the work and ministry. He was led by the Holy Spirit all of the time. He made that very clear. It's not a matter of just knowing stories about Jesus, but it's seeing that this is the way we are to walk and live; this is how we are to function too.

We need the Holy Spirit to come upon us. We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into the world, to fulfill the Great Commission. We need the Holy Spirit to speak to us and tell us what to do. We desperately need the Holy Spirit working in our lives. It is not enough to mentally accept ideas about the Holy Spirit in our minds, but we must possess the reality of them in our hearts. We need heart knowledge and experiences with the Holy Spirit.

If we want to become the Christian workers God wants us to be, we need the Holy Spirit. It is essential. We cannot do it on our own. God through the power of His Holy Spirit gives us His power and authority—so we can handle different kinds of problems, including sicknesses and demonic activity.

The Gifts Of The Holy Spirit, The Workman's Tools

Many Christian people are in a very sad condition, because they do not have the power of God active in their lives. They do not know how to deal with evil spirits that come against their families, homes, loved ones, pastors, and churches. The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit gives God's people the power and authority to deal with evil spirits. Yet very few Christian people know to deal with this, so they stay away from it. They don't want to do this type of ministry, because they feel powerless themselves; and in effect, they are powerless, because they simply do not know to use their spiritual authority.

Satan is a counterfeiter, he is not a creator; he can bring knowledge, but he cannot bring revelation. Many arts (psychics, fortune tellers) have sprung up that have a spirituality to them. We need spiritual discernment so that we are able to recognize the spirit that is speaking: Is it the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit? Or is it a familiar spirit, an unclean spirit, a lying and deceiving spirit, an evil spirit?

We find in Jesus' ministry all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested: tongues, interpretation, prophecy, healing, miracles, faith, discernment of spirits, words of wisdom and knowledge. Jesus said, "You shall do all the things that I have done, and more." It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit that we can effectively minister to a weary, hurting world. Apart from them, we can do nothing. If we have the fullness of the Holy Spirit in us, we have the potential for all these gifts.

A Vision

In a vision I saw a man working in a garden. He was trying to shovel dirt but he was using a hoe. Then he tried to cultivate the plants but he used a shovel. Next he tried to dig a hole but he used a rake. Then he tried to clear rocks from the ground but he used a trowel.

God gave me the interpretation of this vision: "A workman must have the proper tools to do a good job. If you use the wrong tool the job doesn't get done properly. I have not left the workmen without the proper tools. The tools that I have given to the church are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Every worker must know how to use the tools. I want you to begin praying for the gifts of the Holy Spirit one at a time, so you can learn how to use them."
(Ralph Nault, *Out of Confusion*)

The specialized gifts of the Spirit are our tool kit. They are the tools with which we do the work of God. The Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ our captain commands us to go forth and seek and save those who are lost. In order to do this adequately, we need the gifts of faith, discernment, healing, miracles, wisdom, knowledge, etc. operating in our lives.

For to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healings, miracles (works of power), prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues...(I Cor. 12:7-10).

Pray For The Gifts Of the Holy Spirit

Pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one at a time, so you can learn how to use them. Pray for the faith to use these gifts. We must have a willingness to be used, and yet know that do not need to try to control the Spirit of God. We must get over our fear of the supernatural...of the Holy Spirit, and allow Him room to function.

About The Baptism In The Holy Spirit

In John 3, Jesus talks about the need to be born again—of the water and the Spirit—if we want to enter into the kingdom of God. Hebrews identifies the spiritual foundation as 1) repentance from dead works; 2) faith toward God; 3) *instruction about washings*; 4) laying on of hands; 5) the resurrection of the dead; 6) eternal judgment. . . (Hebrew 6:1-2).

We understand that the “instruction about washings” has to do with two different types of baptisms: water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The baptism or washing in water deals with the sin issue through the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus (See Romans 6:3-12). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for submersion into His power and authority, bringing us into a new position where we can function spiritually (See Acts 1:5,8).

Need The Power Of The Holy Spirit Like Jesus Did

The ministry of Jesus to the public did not begin until the promise of the Father had come, the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21,22). The Spirit came upon Jesus and anointed him to fulfill the work and ministry. The same was true for the disciples and other New Testament Christians. The Holy Spirit would call people to the work and empower them. This appears to be a standard procedure throughout the Bible. In Acts 9:17, Saul was *filled* with the Holy Spirit. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

We need the Holy Spirit to come upon us. We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into the world, to fulfill the Great Commission. We need the Holy Spirit to speak to us and tell us what to do. We desperately need the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

Do you have an inner confidence that you have received the Holy Spirit, the power of God? Do you have an inner witness saying, “Abba, Father. I belong to You.” This the issue here.

The Promise Of The Holy Spirit Is For All Believers

- For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off (Acts 2:38).
- In the last days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and they will prophesy, have visions, and dreams (Acts 1:17).
- He gives the Spirit without measure (John 3:36)
- You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

Receiving The Holy Spirit, An Act Of Faith

The Scriptures tell us that receiving the Holy Spirit is an act of faith:

that you might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14).

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit requires an act of faith. It is an act of faith on the part of the person praying over someone, it is an act of faith on the part of the person who is receiving. This is why some people receive much more than others, because their faith has been inspired and built up, and they are just expecting something great and wonderful to happen. So something powerful happens in their life. Other people are not expecting a whole lot, so they don't seem to receive much. By your faith be it done to you.

For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks find, and everyone who knocks, the door shall be opened. When a child who asks his father for fish, will his father give him a snake? Or if he asks for an egg, will he be given a scorpion? If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how" much more" shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask? (Luke 11:8-13).

Please note that my program notes are not a treatise or doctrinal position on the Holy Spirit. They simply reflect my understanding at this time. I encourage you to go to God, asking Him to bring revelation about the work of the Holy Spirit to you. He will not fail an honest heart. If we desire to be of service to God and fulfill His purposes for you, we need to know about the Holy Spirit.

At this time I understand that when individuals receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through genuine heart faith, they receive the "Spirit of Christ" and their own spirit is quickened and made alive, because of the righteousness of Christ Jesus (Romans 8:9,10). We understand the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a distinct work of grace which is not to be confused with the conversion or born again experience. It involves a filling or immersion into God's power and authority and the capability of praying in tongues and functioning with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. .

My Encounter With The Holy Spirit

(From Program Notes: Can You Tell Me If There Is A God?)

For all of my church going, I did not know how to find God or if He was even knowable. Over the years I listened to many experts debate and discuss the validity of God, the person of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I frequently heard things like, "God doesn't do that any more; that was only for their time. He doesn't need to do miracles, cast out demons, or heal the sick. That time is over with. And those apostles, prophets and workers of miracles—well we don't need them either. They are not for us. We have something better, something more perfect: we have the book that tells us how it used to be." Some even told said that God was dead. In 1968, *Time Magazine* reported the 'God Is Dead Movement'. Apparently He wasn't very knowable by ordinary people.

The ongoing crisis of David's battle with leukemia brought a tremendous pressure to bear upon my life. There was no way I could survive this unless I found God. This pressure became the catalyst for an intense spiritual search, a search that was to lead me outside of my narrow and rigid confines—to a time of profound change in my orientation to life.

About this time the spiritual climate across California was stirring; there was a longing in the air. People were looking for something more. Old ways no longer satisfied them. In the 60's, youth

from across the nation had come there in droves, seeking more freedom and liberty. For many, it was a time of copping out or breaking free from rigid, lifeless lifestyles. For others it was a time of seeking spiritual reality—they hungered to find God, giving birth the the Jesus People Movement.

A fresh wind was blowing in the church too. Books about the power of the Holy Spirit began to pour into the market place from every quarter of the world, books like *9:00 In The Morning*, *A New Song*, *They Speak With Other Tongues*, and *Like a Mighty Wind*. These books gave accounts of men and women who were experiencing God in a new and living way. What was this all about? Miracles, healings, and other supernatural phenomena. I had just read in *Time Magazine* that God was dead. Apparently reports of His death were premature.

Seeking God

I set out to find these things for myself. My search took me to small storefront churches where "Jesus People" in sandals and shorts sat on the floor praising God. I went to large healing crusades, conducted by Kathryn Kuhlman in her flowing white dresses, and to Full Gospel Christian Businessmen's meetings, where people prayed in tongues and lifted their hands in praise to God. All these groups seemed to have something in common: the people were alive with joy and enthusiasm. They radiated a sense of God's presence among them, and they expected God to do something for them.

I examined the scriptures, searching for their meaning: "Does God heal today? What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Who is it for? How do we receive it? What is speaking in another tongue? I pondered on the following scripture:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off. . ." (Acts 2:38,29).

"Can it really be?" I asked myself. The only time I'd about these things was when the adults whispered—"They speak in tongues and roll in the aisles!"—as we drove by a tiny white church with shades pulled. In the midst of my searching, a faith and expectancy in a personal God began to take root in me.

Our local church also opened itself to these new ideas through books and discussion. The pastor, himself, was interested. Controversy swirled over the Holy Spirit, miracles, tongues, prophecy, demons, and healing. People were all stirred up over these things: some of my friends hungered to know for themselves, some just did not know, while others openly said they had no interest—they did not want more from God.

Finally, I made up my own mind. I became convinced that it was possible to experience God in a personal way, now in the twentieth century. I began to seek God in earnest, confessing my sins, and praying for Him to forgive me, and make Himself real to me.

The Bible says, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." I was asking and asking. One day, I knelt down beside my bed and cried out

to God to manifest Himself to me. Nothing happened. Another day, I stretched out on the floor before God, crying out to Him. Nothing seemed to happen. I tried following all of the steps in one of the books, reading the prayers, confessing His name, and praising God. But to no avail. Nothing happened. I was still the same on the inside. I couldn't find the 'magic' formula.

During this time, something unusual was taking place in our Sunday School class. The room had swelled to overflowing with people standing at the door. An air of expectancy was present. People were searching for something—they wanted more. These were good church people!

One couple in the class seemed different from the others. Their names were Andy and Nancy Woods. When they prayed, they acted as if they really believed God heard them. They even gave reports of answered prayers and physical healing. One Sunday, they quietly dropped a bomb on the class: "We pray in tongues," they said. I could hear a pin drop. This was unknown to us Baptists who claimed these things weren't needed any longer—we were in a different dispensation, because we had the Bible. Intrigued by the things this couple shared and by their confidence in God, I asked Nancy to come to my house. I wanted to hear more. I wanted to know God like she did. But I didn't want anyone else to know, so I kept her visit a secret.

A Secret Visitor

Nancy came. Feeling very nervous, self-conscious, and embarrassed, I did not know what to say. I blurted out that I wanted to receive the Holy Spirit. She responded by asking me to tell her something about my relationship with God. I spoke about my church experience, going down the aisle at twelve to receive Christ, and my water baptisms. I also told her of my fear of God and of my lack of assurance that He was in me. I explained how hard I had been praying, and yet nothing seemed to change.

The Key: Luke 11:8-13

Then Nancy said, "Let's begin at the beginning; let's talk about your spiritual foundation. She explained to me the underlying premise of true Christian experience. In so doing, I was given the *key* which opened the door for me to an authentic experience with God, that is...

without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

Even though I had prayed many times, went to church all of my life, been baptized, and walked the aisle to receive Christ, I had no genuine faith or heart belief in God. My mind believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, but I had never learned how to apply faith in God when I came to Him. At thirty years of age, I finally understood.

Nancy read to me:

I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and everyone who knocks, the door shall be opened. When a child who asks his father for fish, will his father give him a snake? Or if he asks for an egg, will he be given a scorpion? If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask? (Luke 11:8-13).

...when his son shall ask him for a loaf, he will not give him a stone...how much more will he give what is good to those who ask (Matt. 7:11).

Building My Faith

When she finished, she turned to me and asked, "What does Jesus say a child will get if he asks his father for a fish? Will he get a snake?" "No," I said, "the child will not get a snake; he will receive what he asked for, a fish." "What does Jesus say a child will get if he asks his father for an egg? Will he be given a scorpion?" Nancy asked. "No", I said, "He will not get a scorpion; he will be given an egg."

Can God Lie?

Then she asked me a question, "Judy, can God lie?" This brought me up short. Nancy was asking me to make a 'decision' about the nature of God. I struggled with it for a moment, then I knew my answer, "No, I said, "I do not believe God can lie." At that moment something happened. Something quickened in my heart: it was faith. In the moment I made the decision God could not lie, faith became alive and active in me.

My hungry heart was like a dry sponge soaking up the truth. Nancy made it sound so easy: "Judy, Jesus taught that those who seek will find, and those who ask will receive. Jesus absolutely believed this. Do you? From what you tell me, you have been asking, but not receiving. Why? Does God, or does He not, want to give the Holy Spirit to you?" she probed.

Now for the first time, I really heard the words of Jesus and they were united by faith in me. My faith expanded more. "Now," she said, "let's start at the beginning again. You've asked many times but never applied any faith. Now this time as you ask, apply your faith in God and in what He has said."

I Pray,

Under her guidance, I began to pray, "God I ask for your help. I want to know you. I need your son Jesus. I place my faith in His work on the cross, His burial and His resurrection. I accept the blood He shed as enough for my sins and the sins of others against me. Please come into my heart and cause me to live."

As I spoke these words aloud, my heart looked only to the trustworthiness of God and to what He said. I did not to look to my feelings or my own thoughts. When I finished, Nancy asked, "Where is Jesus now?"

Still not feeling anything, my mind went back to what she had read: If a child asks his father for loaf, he will not give him a stone . . . how much more will the heavenly Father give what is good to those who ask.

I *had asked* my heavenly Father to forgive my sins and to send Jesus to live within my heart, hadn't I? These were good things, weren't they? I reasoned to myself. Then had He done what He

promised to do? It was decision time. If I chose not to take God at His word, I would be calling him a liar. And I could not do that. My decision was made.

"He is in my heart," I responded with confidence.

Nancy pressed, "Why is He in your heart?"

"Because God simply cannot lie," I replied. "I choose to place my faith and trust in His words and His words."

Genuine Heart Faith – Not Mental Assent

I want to make it clear, I was doing something more than mouthing words or giving mental assent when I prayed. I did that for years. I was adding something to my words: faith.

"We have had the good new preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard" (Heb. 4:2b).

Jesus said, "the man who hears His words and does not act upon them is like the foolish man who builds his house upon the sand (Matt. 7:24-27). Up until that point, I was like the foolish person; the words I had listened to about God had not profited me.

Faith is hard to describe because it is far more than an idea, an emotion, or a mental belief; it means persuasion, i.e. conviction. In the Greek, "faith" (Gr. Pistis) means to be fully persuaded, convinced, convicted in our heart and mind, that what God says is true (Rom. 4:20-21). To believe means to have faith; i.e. to entrust or commit (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible). Faith is not system of religious truths, but a vital life force. An electric atmosphere develops when spiritual power is released.

The Bible says it is "with the heart man believes" (Rom. 10:10). True faith goes beyond doctrine and theology; it must reside in a deeper place within us—in our heart. The heart is a much deeper thing than our mind. According to Dr. Bruce Morgan, "We come to know truth with our hearts or spirits, rather than with our minds". Our western world has not known very much about our heart. We have been trapped in our heads and tried to make our relationship with God work through it.

Catholic lay evangelist, Ralph Nault (The New Life, Inc., Barton, VT), says when it comes to Christianity, "We often put the cart before the horse. We teach people how to have a nice cart, how to be a good Christian, but give them nothing to pull it with." Faith is necessary in obtaining and receiving all of God's provisions and promises. The extent to which I receive God's blessings depends precisely upon the degree to which I believe.

- If thou shalt believe, all things are possible to him that believes (Mark 9:23).
- If I have faith. . . nothing shall be impossible unto me. (Mt. 17:20)
- According to your faith be it unto you. (Mt. 9:29)

Applying My New Faith In God

Back to my visitor. Nancy then asked if I would like to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. She explained this is what the Father promised to those who believed (Acts 1:8; 2:17; 2:33-39.) For

weeks I'd poured over the Scriptures about this and decided the promise of the Holy Spirit was meant for "all who were far off", and that was me. Now I was really nervous because I knew the coming of the Holy Spirit was connected to a phenomena called tongues. This, I was afraid of.

She explained to be more about tongues. I learned God does not want us to be lacking in any gift (I Cor. 1:4-7), and that my spirit is not dumb; it can speak.

When it came time to pray, I was so frightened and embarrassed I told her I'd go into my bedroom and pray alone. She said okay, and waited out in the living room. In my room, I got down on my knees and prayed to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, but all the time I felt nothing. I tried to do as Nancy instructed me, and make whatever timid sounds I could. Finally I returned to Nancy, and told her what I'd did. She said, "Good, now let's pray in tongues together!"

She began to pray fluently in another language, a language I did not know. I tried to let go of my tongue and give it free reign to make whatever sounds that came, while I kept my faith centered in on God and His trust worthiness. I remembered the words, "these signs will follow them *who have believed*: . . . they will speak with new tongues. . . (Mark 16:17)." I had believed! I could speak in a new tongue.

I felt very foolish and awkward making these strange sounds, but after a few moments Nancy said, "That's it! Listen, you are praying exactly the same sound, syllable for syllable as I am! Now I know why God changed my prayer language this morning, it was for you".

I filled with joy and excitement. Suddenly, an inner knowing of God's presence burst forth in my heart. I knew that I knew, with a deep inner awareness, that God was my Father, Jesus was in me, and my sins were forgiven. A feeling of peace permeated me from within.

"Abba! Father!" I Am His Child

For the first time in my life, I *knew*—I knew God was within me. I knew for certain that He had forgiven me, I knew I was His child. Jesus was no longer just an historical event. I would need Him desperately in the years ahead!

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:15,16).

I had been afraid of God for so many years. Now my suffering and pain had brought me to the place where I came to Him with all of my heart, believing He would hear me and answer. And as a result, God became real to me. I knew that I knew I belonged to Him, and I was His child. An inner witness had been established in my spirit. What a place to be in! Today, thirty-five years later, this witness remains in me. He said, He would never leave me, or forsake me, and He hasn't.

I had known about God before, but now I'd experienced His power and His presence for myself. I was so excited, I wanted to tell everyone, especially Jerry. But somehow I felt impressed not to say very much about this to him. For the next seven months I went quietly about my life.

During this time, the Bible became alive to me. I couldn't get enough of it. I also loved praying. My prayers became alive and relevant. I loved singing praises to God and worshipping Him. He seemed so near. I had more vitality and more joy. My steps were lighter. There seemed to be a new peace, a new strength, and a new stability in me. Life took on new meaning and purpose—in spite of David's illness.

Seven months later, Jerry suddenly said, "You know, you are different; I want what you have." Interestingly, it was the changes in me that caused him to desire for more from God—not my words. Right then, we got down on our knees by our living room couch and prayed for Jesus to baptize him in the Holy Spirit, too. In a moment, God's spirit fell upon him in a powerful way: this electrical engineer bolted backwards in a somersault and came up praising God in a strange new tongue.

Prayer

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is received through faith, the same way you accepted Jesus Christ to be your personal Lord and Savior.

First we need to ask. The Bible says, "Ask, and it shall be given to you" (Luke 11:9). We need to ask God to baptize us in the Holy Spirit.

Second, we need to apply our faith, believing that what we asked for, we have received—that God cannot lie. The apostle Paul explains that we receive the Spirit "by hearing with faith." (Galatians 3:2).

You may want to find a Christian who has confidence in this aspect of our Christian foundation to pray with you.

Pray something like this:

Heavenly Father, I come to You right now in this moment. I thank You that Jesus has forgiven me of my sins through His blood on the cross. I need your power and authority in my life. I want to serve only You. Lord Jesus, I ask you to baptize me now in the Holy Spirit. Please fill me with your power and anoint me for the work you have called me to do...I do receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit right now by faith, because You cannot lie. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for baptizing me in Your Holy Spirit, for giving me this gift. Amen.

Inter Action Ideas

1. Write a letter to God, describing how you feel about the Holy Spirit.
2. Have you received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
3. Draw or paint what the Holy Spirit means to you.
4. What changes do you think the Holy Spirit has brought about in your life?
5. What keeps you from receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit?