

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-20 You Can Help Others Receive the Holy Spirit

When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans were being saved, they immediately sent Peter and John to pray with them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. The Apostles, like Jesus, placed great emphasis on all believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit. They did this because they fully grasped the significance of Jesus' parting words to the Church, when He told them, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). They knew that if the gospel was to advance to the ends of the earth, every follower of Jesus must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Only then would they be able to effectively witness for Christ.

This truth remains today. Do we want our churches to rapidly advance, and the lost to be won to Christ? Then we too must work to ensure that every member is empowered by the Holy Spirit. In the last lesson, you learned how a person can be filled with the Spirit. In this lesson, we will discuss how you can lead others into the experience.

To lead believers into the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you must first prepare them to receive. You can do this in three ways. First, create a desire in their hearts for the Spirit-empowered life. Second, help them to better understand the experience of Spirit baptism. Third, build their faith in preparation for receiving the Spirit.

We can create hunger in people's hearts by showing them the benefits of living "in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). These benefits include power to witness, a closer relationship with Christ, and assistance in prayer. Many more benefits have been discussed in this study. People will observe these spiritual dynamics being lived out in the lives of Spirit-filled Christians. Then a desire will be born in their hearts for a closer walk with the Spirit. Further, we can create a desire in people's lives by cultivating the Spirit's presence in our church services. When people encounter the Spirit in church, He will create a desire in their hearts to know Him better.

Next, we can prepare people to receive the Spirit by helping them to better understand the purpose and nature of the experience. We do this by preaching and teaching often on the subject. As individuals become more knowledgeable, they are enabled to validly receive the experience.

Finally, we can prepare people to receive the Spirit by building their faith. Paul states that it is "by faith [that] we...receive the promise of the Spirit" (Gal 3:14). We build people's faith by sharing with them the promise of Christ—"everyone who asks receives" (Luke 11:10). Many other promises of the Spirit are also found in God's word. And, we must frequently give people opportunities to receive the Spirit. Prayer for the Spirit must become a regular event in our worship gatherings.

When praying with someone to receive the Spirit, it is often helpful to lead them in two prayers. First, *lead the seeker in asking for the Spirit*. Remember, Jesus' promise: "Ask and it will be given to you" (Luke 11:9). You know how to lead a sinner in the sinner's prayer. In a similar way, you can lead the new believer in a prayer asking to be filled with the Spirit. The prayer may proceed as follows, with the seeker repeating each line:

Lord, I come now to be filled with the Holy Spirit... You promised that I would receive power when the Spirit came upon me... I need that power to be your witness ... You also promised that everyone who asks receives ... I am asking; therefore, I expect to receive... When I receive I will speak in faith... I will not be afraid... I will begin to pray in tongues as Your Spirit gives me utterance.

After you have prayed, assure the candidate that God has heard their prayer. He is ready now to fill them with the Holy Spirit. Encourage the candidate to be spiritually sensitive to the Spirit's working. You may want to take a few moments to worship the Lord together, responding to the Spirit's presence.

After you have led the seeker in asking, and you sense the Spirit's presence, *lead the seeker in his or her step of faith*. You will remember that in our last lesson we compared receiving the Spirit to Peter's step of faith. At Jesus' command, he stepped out of the boat and began to walk on water. To lead the seeker in their step of faith, ask them to lift their hands toward heaven. Then ask them to pray, in faith, this simple prayer: "Lord, right now, in Jesus' name, I receive the Holy Spirit." This prayer provides a definite point where the seeker can focus his or her faith to receive the Holy Spirit. They should, at that moment, believe that they have received! The instant the seeker believes, the Spirit will come and fill them. Instruct them to sense the Spirit's presence deep inside.

Now, encourage the candidate to act in bold faith and begin to speak. They will speak, not from their mind, but from deep within, from where they sense God's Spirit inside. As they yield to the Spirit flowing into and through their being, they will begin to speak words they do not understand. This speaking will not be a forced effort, but a natural flow of supernatural words. Encourage the seeker not to be fearful, but to cooperate fully with the Spirit by boldly speaking out in faith.

If the seeker seems to have difficulty responding to the Lord, it is sometimes helpful to go back to the beginning. Repeat the above procedure. As you do, point out how the seeker may more deeply respond to the Spirit. Once he or she begins to speak in tongues, encourage them to continue on. Remain with them as long as they continue to pray in the Spirit.

It is important that counseling be given to the candidate after prayer. If they have been filled with the Spirit, you will give one kind of counsel. If they have not been filled, you will give another kind.

If the candidate is filled with the Spirit and speaks in tongues, the following advice is appropriate. Tell them that receiving the Spirit is not an end in itself; it is a means to a greater end. The purpose for receiving the Spirit is that we may receive power for life and witness. You may want to say, "This is not the end; it's just the beginning. God will now begin to use you in new and powerful ways. Expect to have new power in your life. Go out right now and tell someone about Jesus." You may want to add, "You should also spend time each day praying in the Spirit, that is, in tongues. This will give you strength and will remind you of the Spirit's presence in your life."

If the candidate is not filled with the Spirit, you will want to give the following advice and encouragement. Tell them to not be discouraged, and assure them that the promise of Jesus is still true: “Everyone who asks receives” (Luke 11:10). Tell them that they should keep asking, seeking, and knocking, as Jesus taught. As they do, they should keep in mind that Jesus promised, “You will receive.” You may want to ask the seeker if he or she wants to pray again. If they do, repeat the above procedure, encouraging them to act in bold faith.

This lesson is **important** because in it you have learned how to pray with others to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and empowered as Christ’s witnesses.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that God can use us to help others receive the Holy Spirit.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson:

1. What three things can one do to help prepare new Christians to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “By creating a desire in their hearts for the Spirit-empowered life, by helping them to understand the experience, and by building their faith in preparation for receiving the Spirit,” you are correct.
2. What two prayers can we pray in helping seekers receive the Holy Spirit?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you said that we can first lead the seeker in asking for the Spirit, and we can then lead them in their step of faith in receiving the Spirit, you answered correctly.
3. What should we do after we have prayed with them to receive the Spirit?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “We should give counsel to both those who have received the Spirit and to those who have not received, you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to gather some seekers. Memorize Jesus’ words recorded by Mark, “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24).

Then, using what you have learned in this lesson, pray with them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Be sure to give them counsel after your time of prayer.