

LESSON ONE

Introduction to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit Course

And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit....

Ephesians 5:18-21

“It changed everything. I went from being a weak, milk-fed Christian to a radical, on-fire believer who couldn’t stop reading his Bible and inserting Christ into conversations with my friends. The best part is I wasn’t trying to be a ‘good Christian!’ I was simply being myself and allowing the Spirit into my heart, my mind and my life. I surrendered all that I’d heard about the Spirit so that I could experience the adventure of God’s presence in my life.”

Chris Hodges in *Rethinking What You Know about the Holy Spirit*

November 2012 Charisma Magazine

I am not a theologian nor a Biblical scholar. I have never been to seminary. I cannot speak or interpret Greek or Hebrew, although I do know how to use a *Strong’s Concordance*. Back around 1970 I took off my denominational glasses and began to look at what scripture-not pastors or theologians or lay people-has to say on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. My study and over 50 years of ministry and participation in ministry groups has led me to my present conclusions. I realize that none of us has all the truth, that *now we see through a glass dimly*, according to 1st Corinthians 13:12, and I am not sure that all of my opinions are valid, although I have tried to stick with Biblical truth as the foundation of *all* that I believe. One of the foundations of my own ministry is this: The prophetic Word of God is inerrant and the infallible Word of God written by men as the Holy Spirit spoke to them what to write (2nd Peter 1:21: “...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God

spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.") I believe wholeheartedly, if the Bible, in the original Hebrew and Greek, *says it*, it is true.

I came out of a good church, one whose historical beginnings emphasized holiness and a Gospel very open to the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Yet the modern church version of the church I grew up in had begun to lose some of its Biblical moorings, and is in crisis today because of that. I never remember hearing any teaching on the Holy Spirit, and certainly, more specifically, on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This denomination was grappling with the social issues of the day, and the emphasis was on making good choice from a situational ethics, as opposed to a Biblical point of view.

Now I want you to be clear that I have no offense towards my former church. This church laid some good foundational truth in my life. It taught me about Jesus and about living a Christian life style. It also taught me that no one had all the truth, and that there would be more people in heaven than just those of my denominational label. In fact, this latter doctrine was one of the greatest strengths of this church, and one of its greatest weaknesses, as while it was accepting of other denominations, it increasingly also began to allow things that were not scriptural to creep in.

Nonetheless, this church did not teach against the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It just did not seem to know it was available, and I just did not know it even existed. That was until I meet my friend Marion. She was a born-again Baptist who was sovereignly and somewhat secretively baptized in the Holy Spirit, sitting in her church in Mobile, Alabama. She even had a double first cousin who was a Baptist missionary. This cousin told her that all the Baptist missionaries she knew spoke in tongues but just did not publicize it because it was against denominational teaching at that time. The plan of the Lord for Marion's life brought her and her family to Perry, Georgia. Her son became my best friend in late high school and college so I spent many hours in her home.

Marion was bold and sometimes loud and very forward and not intimidated by anyone. Some people say that those baptized in the Spirit

need to be locked up for at least six months because they are so excited about what the Lord has done for them. Marion never lost this excitement and wanted everyone to know about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I, on the other hand, was quiet, soft spoken, and shy. I guess opposites attract because we soon became very close friends and spent many hours praying together and with others, such as our friend Martha Pearson. Marion continued to stay in the Baptist Church, and I stayed in my church.

One night my friend George called in desperation from college. Every time he had a major test, he broke out in hives. His case was one of the worst I have seen, and even his eyes would close up from the swelling. This would prevent him from studying and from going to class to take the test. He had stayed out for a quarter already, trying to find relief and even went to Emory and other places, searching for relief. But there was not the knowledge in the late sixties and early seventies about his condition nor medicines to relieve the symptoms that exists today. This particular night was kind of George's last straw. He could not continue in college with this condition.

It just so happened that Marion and her husband George were having a cottage prayer meeting and had invited a young Pentecostal evangelist, Terry Batten and his wife Joyce, from Alabama, to come and minister. I called Marion to ask for prayer for George. She asked me to come and sit in proxy for George who was over 100 miles away. I was scared of "those kind" of people, and said, "No! I think the Lord can move without me coming there and sitting in proxy, and I have things to do anyway." After I hung up, the Lord began to gently convict me, and the Holy Spirit, who comes into our hearts when we truly invite Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, began to speak to me, asking me if my love for George was really real. Feeling much conviction and loving my friend, I finally rode across town to Marion's house and sheepishly knocked on the door. I was almost immediately thrust into the middle of a circle where the group prayed over me, not only for George to be healed but also for me to receive the baptism. They did not push me to stay and allowed me to

leave after the prayer, without insisting on any sign gift, and at the time I did not speak in tongues.

That night, however, my life changed, and George, one hundred miles away in another state, was healed. As far as I know, his healing was manifested immediately, and he never had a serious attack of hives again. This experience was only my beginning. It was much later that I spoke in tongues in the privacy of my bedroom and was greatly encouraged to step into the things of the Holy Spirit by a dear friend, of all things, a Baptist music minister.

What did the Baptism do for me? First, it electrified my prayer and Bible reading and study. I could hardly wait to study the Word each day, and I sometimes had to literally shut off my prayers because there was so much on my heart to pray for. I had a new burden for lost people, and I began to see the power in me to minister to the broken, the addicted, the possessed, the sick, the rejected, and the downcast. The deep longing for more intimacy and time with Jesus made me know that this experience was very real. I had a new power in me. I now know that power was the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit began to speak to me on a regular basis. I began to long for every born again Christian to receive this same baptism! Thus began a new journey of ministry for me, a ministry that I have been in for over 50 years now.

An organization, Women's Aglow, was very instrumental in my early days of walking in the Spirit, as I was asked to be an adviser to the area board of this group, and all the speakers and ministers who came to these meetings were spirit-baptized. I also got connected to two men, Don Van Hoozier and Ken Gore, at High Point Church who spent much time teaching me and demonstrating life in the Spirit, and I met many others, who lived the *Holy Spirit Baptized Life* in front of me and helped me learn *walking in the Spirit*.

When we finish this course, you will have a booklet of hundreds of pages. I am trying to use a format that lends itself to you taking these materials into churches and prisons and ministry groups sharing these studies on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Body of Christ is much

more aware of the Baptism today that it was when I received. Many in mainline denominations, however, are still vehemently against and ignorant about many of the aspects of the Holy Spirit that we will cover in this course. Some of the topics will be controversial but backed by scripture. You can, of course, use these materials without permission and free of charge. I ask that you not charge those whom you teach using these materials, and I ask that you give those cited, not me, credit for their work. It is not necessary to cite me, and in most cases, anything that does not have an author by it, is my own words and work, but you can use it as your own, as far as I care. Ultimately, if it is scripturally based, it is all God's word anyway! My prayer is that this study will greatly bless and enrich your life and lead you to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, if you have not already received.