

**INTRODUCTION
TO
THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

First Love Ministries, Inc.

Perry, Georgia

Prayer Study #270

And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

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 *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 has to say on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. My study and 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, and I am sure that not all of my opinions are valid, although I have tried to stick with Biblical truth. One of the foundations of my ministry is the *Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God written by men as the Holy Spirit spoke to them what to write*. Therefore, if the Bible 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 church I grew up in had lost some of its Biblical moorings, and I never remember hearing any teaching on the Holy Spirit, neither, more specifically, on the *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. This denomination was

grappling with the social issues of the day, and the emphasis was on making good choices from a situational ethics 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 being good. 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 label. In fact, this latter doctrine was one of the greatest strengths of this church *and* one of its greatest weaknesses, as it increasingly began to allow things that were not scriptural to creep in.

Nonetheless, I was not closed to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. 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 secretly baptized in the Holy Spirit sitting in her church in Mobile, Alabama. The plan of the Lord for her life brought her and her family to Perry, Georgia. Her son was my best friend in 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 six months because they are so excited about what the Lord has done for them. Marion never lost that excitement and wanted everyone to know. 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. Marion continued to stay in the Baptist Church, and I stayed in the Methodist Church.

One night my friend George called in desperation from college. Every time before 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. He had stayed out for a quarter trying to find relief and went to Emory and other places, but there was not the knowledge about his condition that exists today. This 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. Marion called me and asked me to come and sit in proxy for George who was over 100 miles away. I said, "No! I think the Lord can move without me sitting in proxy, and I don't feel comfortable with that kind of prayer meeting anyway." The Lord convicted 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 and allowed me to leave, without insisting on any sign gift signifying that I had received.

That night my life changed, and George, one hundred miles away, was healed. As far as I know his healing was manifested immediately, and he never had a serious attack of hives again. My experience was only the beginning. It was 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, 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 my prayers off 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 to minister to the broken, the addicted, the possessed, the sick, the rejected and the downcast. The change in my life to long for more intimacy and time with Jesus made me know that this experience was very real. I had a new power in me. Now I know that was the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit. I now began to long for every born again Christian to receive this same baptism! Thus begin a new journey of ministry for me, a ministry that I have been in for over 40 years now.

No man has had a greater influence on my life than Don Van Hoozier, pastor of High Point Church in Macon. He does not like to be mentioned in print or in person because he is so sensitive about taking any glory or of having anyone take their eyes off Jesus and look at him. I believe, however, that the Spirit of our God wants us to honor the fathers of the faith, and he is my spiritual father. Besides, some of the information in this study was written by him many years ago. It is still fresh and as pertinent today as it was when he wrote it. I will try diligently to give credit to him and any other person whose writings I use. Sometimes I do not know who the author was, and sometimes I cannot remember if I wrote the material or someone else wrote it. We are talking about 40 years worth of materials.

I will not be copyrighting these materials, and you have freedom to teach them and share them with others. I am trying to use a format that lends itself to taking the materials into churches or prisons or ministry groups and sharing these studies on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Body of Christ is much more aware of the Baptism today than it was when I received. Many in mainline denominations, however, still are ignorant about many of the aspects of the Holy Spirit that we will cover in this course. We offer

these materials free of charge. We just ask that you do not charge those whom you teach using these materials, and we ask that you give those cited 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 work.