

Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit has long been the subject of much debate within the evangelical church. In fact, for decades this doctrine separated Pentecostals from their evangelical brethren. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is, Pentecostals believe, a renewal of first-century Christianity, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church on the Day of Pentecost. This gave the disciples such power and boldness that within one generation they had turned the known world upside down.

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It gives a believer access to the power source that enables us to live pure, godly lives that are pleasing to the Father. It does not eliminate the need for the spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible reading and fellowshiping with other believers. Nor does it immunize a person from sin. But there is something within the baptism of the Holy Spirit that confers power.

Ten days after Jesus ascended to heaven, on the Day of Pentecost, the people heard a sound like a mighty, rushing wind and saw something over each person's head that looked like tongues of fire. And as they prayed, they did so in languages they didn't know. People from around the world were in Jerusalem, and they heard the men and women in that Upper Room speaking in their native languages.

The Holy Spirit came with mighty power and transformed the lives of every person in that Upper Room. The second chapter

of Acts tells us the disciples began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. That encounter with the Holy Spirit gave them power to then leave that Upper Room and boldly proclaim the gospel in their city, their country, and even the world. In describing the work of these early believers, Acts 17 says they “turned the world upside down.”

The power Peter, John and the rest of the 120 received in that Upper Room enabled them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, spread the gospel and establish churches. Once the Holy Spirit resided in their lives, they were fearless in life and in the face of death.

I know there is vast power available to help us change—it is the power that comes from the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Not only does the baptism give us the power to change, but it also gives us power in many other areas. These include:

- power to hear God’s voice
- power to pray and see results
- power to manifest the fruit of the Spirit
- power to love
- power to minister
- power to speak beyond what you know
- power to take authority over circumstances
- power to take authority over the evil one
- power to see people delivered from the evil one
- power to do miracles.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers, not a select few. Just as we receive new life in the Son of God by a definite act of personal faith, so we receive supernatural power in the Spirit of God by an act of conscious faith. Bible scholar John Rea created a simple acrostic, “READY,” that can serve as an aid in remembering various important steps.

R—Repent. Those who seek to be baptized in the Spirit should first of all repent of any and all sin and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

E—Expect. Because the Holy Spirit is appropriated by faith, those seeking the baptism in the Spirit must have an expectant attitude, believing God will fulfill His promise to them.

A—Ask. Candidates for this baptism should come to Jesus in prayer, asking and expecting Him to pour out the Spirit upon them.

D—Drink. Jesus gave us this great invitation: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”

Y—Yield. Those seeking to be baptized and filled with the Spirit must be willing to yield control of every part of their being to Him.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the overcoming life. His power in my life has helped me step confidently into the destiny God has for me. I do not have to wonder every moment of the day if I am really going to make it or fear that right around the corner is the big temptation that will be too hard for me to withstand. God’s power has taken away the fear of failure and replaced it with “power, and love and self-control.” He can do the same for you.

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