

Are People Really 'Slain in the Spirit'?

Why do people fall down in church? In charismatic and Pentecostal circles it is often called "slain in the Spirit." The reason many people fall down is because of the presence of the Holy Spirit, which the Bible calls the anointing. You need to understand that the anointing is often tangible—that is, it can be felt.

An example of this in the life of Christ is found in Luke 8. This is the story of the woman who was subject to bleeding for 12 years. She crept through the large crowds in order to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. Immediately when she touched Jesus, He stopped and asked, "Who touched me?" When they all denied it, He exclaimed, "Someone touched Me, for I perceive that power has gone out from Me" (Luke 8:46). How did He know that power went out from Him? He felt it. The anointing can be felt.

The anointing can feel like heat or electricity, or the feeling you get when your hand is asleep. This is evidently what Jesus felt. I've felt the anointing on many occasions. Sometimes I don't feel it but others feel it when I pray for them.

I remember several years ago, when I was working for a local restaurant in El Paso, a young lady and I were discussing the Bible. The conversation was on divine healing. Later, while she was cleaning the salad bar, she asked if I would pray for her sore knee. She lifted her knee in order to point out where the pain was. I quickly laid hands on her knee, prayed a short prayer and walked off. A short time later she came to me privately and said, "When you touched my knee something went inside of me and I became immovable for several seconds. What was that?"

This girl knew nothing about the power of God, yet she felt it. (By the way, her knee was instantly healed.) The power of the Spirit is tangible. The tangibility of the Spirit explains why many people fall down.

This phenomenon occurred in the garden of Gethsemane. A detachment of soldiers and some religious officials came to arrest Jesus. Jesus came out to meet them and asked, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

And when Jesus said, "I am he," the men fell backwards (see John 18:6). Why? They fell because of the power of the Spirit. We should be seeing more of this occurring, especially as the coming of the Lord draws near.

I also believe that sometimes people fall down because they are preconditioned to fall down. They see others do it, so they do it also. I try to discourage this, because I want people to focus on receiving from the Lord, not on imitating the group. I do have ushers that catch people, and they are necessary for those who fall down out of psychological need. I don't want them hurt, but those who fall down under God's power do not need anyone to catch them.

When our church first started, we met in a school gym, and one time I had everyone stand up, and I prayed a group prayer for everyone without laying hands on anyone. When I did, a woman fell down hard on the solid, wooden floor. You could even hear her head plop hard on the ground. People rushed to help her thinking she was greatly hurt, but when she stood up, she said she felt nothing—no pain. She describe to us, "I felt like I slowly floated onto a soft cushion."

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