

The Next Generation Will Perish Without the Holy Spirit

During my teenage years, I was eager to move beyond the confines of my narrow Pentecostal background, so I rejected much of my upbringing. I had been touched by the Lord, but was running from Him. To me, surrendering to God meant ending up in some forlorn mission field, and I didn't want that for my life. Plus, I was influenced by the rebellious hippie culture, and as I was coming of age, I wanted to experience what had always been forbidden in my Pentecostal home: a liberal lifestyle. As uncomfortable as I might have been, I made it my goal to join a fraternity and be like the other college kids.

I know I'm not the only one who has experienced that tug to stray away from what is good for the things of this world. Just look at what happened recently with the outbreak of hundreds of teenagers destroying property and fighting in the middle of Chicago. The upside-down world is hurtling toward our young adults. I pray that instead of being pulled in by the darkness of this chaos that the gospel would be revealed to them as the truth, just as it was for me.

During college, I broke my foot running across campus. This gave me a lot of time to think while it was healing. I was unhappy and afraid I was getting far from God. So, I called out to the Lord and prayed that if He was real to give me power to live for Him. I didn't want the up-and-down spiritual existence I'd had, where I'd repent of my behavior, then repeat it and repent all over again.

The Lord touched me and set me on fire. I can show you exactly where I was at the University of Florida when I finally surrendered to God and was forever changed. This was in the

early 1970s, just when the Jesus movement was exploding around the country. During this era I also experienced deliverance which is the subject of the very successful documentary Come Out in Jesus Name. That is a subject for another day. But it's part of my story too, that I rarely have a reason to tell.

All this has come rushing back this week. On Sunday I had a reason to visit the University of Florida for the first time in two decades and I'm excited to see campus ministries such as Greenhouse Church, who are having powerful services right on campus. I saw and heard how students being motivated to serve Jesus with all their hearts. Sure the woke culture is here, but so is the power of the Holy Spirit.

We now see this same history repeating itself. There was the outbreak of the Holy Spirit at Asbury University recently where we saw an authentic and raw revival take place and spread across the nation. Yet, at the same time, there is still chaos going on in the world. Just as revival helped my generation turn away from sin and draw close to the Holy Spirit in the middle of an upside-down world, I believe He will do the same for this next generation.

Prayer, fellowship and worship were the cornerstones the Christian students around me built themselves upon. We'd often sit cross-legged in a circle. Someone would play a guitar, and we'd pray for one another and worship with upstretched arms. Often, we'd pray for a healing if someone was sick. We'd lay hands on one another and pray for the power of the Holy Spirit.

During this era, riots against the Vietnam War were common. We still see riots today for a plethora of other reasons. Student unrest was particularly high one Tuesday when we had our meeting. We huddled in the student center and prayed the best we knew how. We even rebuked Satan, following what we'd been taught by older charismatic Christians. The situation was frightening. We felt almost helpless. Tear gas was being used

on the rioters, and we worried some would blow our way. But I believe our prayers that day shifted something in the spiritual realm. As far as I know, during my time as a student there, the University of Florida never again had an anti-war rally. In our simple way we were experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit and learning to walk in the Spirit. This desire for more of God is part of how the Holy Spirit draws us to God and leads us to a place where we can overcome condemnation, guilt and shame. I have no doubt that God still desires to draw people in this same way in this generation.

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