

Stay Filled With the Spirit

After I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in 1974, everything changed. Though I had served God, I had not led anyone to a personal relationship with Jesus. But as a product of the Jesus movement, I was used by God to win hundreds of souls and saw many awesome healings. The next 10 years were great.

The decade of my life after that was a wilderness. I thought God had lifted His hand off my life. Looking back, I can see that wasn't true. But I simply didn't know how to transition from a corporate move of God to personally staying filled with the Holy Spirit.

While working on my doctoral degree at Fuller Seminary, I took John Wimber's now infamous class, "Signs, Wonders and Church Growth." Instead of receiving his insights on the depths of being filled with the Spirit, I had a cavalier attitude of "been there, done that."

In fact, I was consumed with a desire to quit ministry after the hardest year of my life in 1993. I was so depressed, I had to exercise my faith to move from depression to discouragement.

Things dramatically shifted in 1994. I still faced trials, but the power and presence of the Lord in my life changed forever. It began when I experienced the power of God at Anaheim Vineyard Church in California and Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. My family got revived, and I began an unending transformation in my walk with God.

As a result, I have seen more fruit, healings and radical salvations than I ever imagined. I've seen Muslims and many Buddhist Chinese get saved and become members of our church. I've seen blind eyes open, tumors disappear, limbs grow and the deaf hear. It's happening in the more than 36 nations

where God has enlarged our outreach.

But what made the difference? For the last 14 years, I have tried to remain constantly filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 says, “Do not be drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit” (NKJV). The word “filled” in Greek is the “continual” present tense and literally translates “be continually filled with the Spirit.” There is one baptism in the Holy Spirit, but many fillings.

How do I stay continually filled? Every day I give my heart afresh to Jesus and ask Him to fill me anew with the Holy Spirit. I also soak in the presence of God.

Soaking is literally spending enough time on a regular basis in a yielded position that you become “marinated” or “pickled” in the Lord (a term derived from the verse in Ephesians). As we are “continually filled” with the Holy Spirit, we are transformed into God’s image. We delight to do His will.

When I spend this time with Him, I come empty-handed with no list of prayers or expectations. I come to receive His agenda, not mine. I find that soft instrumental worship music sets the tone as I simply sit or lay before the Lord. I let the Holy Spirit take me where He wants to go.

Sometimes I see visions or the majestic works of God in the Spirit, or I see Jesus. I may receive strategies or correction, but I always leave refreshed, encouraged and directed by His love!

But whether alone in your living room or joined by thousands of people, you can stay filled in the Holy Spirit. Doing so will change your life.

Che Ahn is senior pastor of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California. He leads an apostolic network in more than 30

nations and has authored numerous books, including *Fire Evangelism* and *Close Encounters of the Divine Kind*. One of his greatest joys is joining the Father in what He is doing today.