

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

How Important is the Holy Spirit in the Healing Ministry?

by Norma Dearing

The Holy Spirit is vital to the healing ministry. He empowers us for ministry and brings us into all truth.

Jesus gave His disciples instructions to wait and receive the Holy Spirit: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17). "If you love me, you will obey what I command, and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. That is the Spirit of Truth" (John 4:15).

Jesus made a promise that by the power of the Holy Spirit believers can do what He did and even more: "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 4:11).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit comes when the Holy Spirit, already residing in us from the time we accepted Jesus as Savior, is released to operate fully in our lives. As Dennis Bennett used to say, the question is not, "Do you have the Holy Spirit?" But rather, "Does the Holy Spirit have you?"

In Jesus' life, there was a particular event, a second experience, where the Holy Spirit was released to empower His ministry. From the day of His conception, the Holy Spirit resided in Him. There was never a moment in His life when He was not God. Yet, for the first 30 years of His life, there is no recorded ministry of Jesus, other than those occasions when He was found in the temple as a young boy. Nor are there any recorded teachings or miracles — not until He was baptized in the Jordan at the hands of John the Baptist.

So what happened to Him at the River Jordan? He says He was baptized in the Holy Spirit. If we emulate Jesus' personal example and the examples of His disciples, we conclude that there is an additional experience through which we can expect empowerment by the Holy Spirit to heal, teach and lead people to a closer relationship with God.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are chronicled in a couple of places in Scripture. **They include the gifts of healing, discernment, wisdom, knowledge, miracles, prophecy, faith, tongues and interpretation of tongues.** These are the weapons we use to advance the kingdom of God and protect it from encroachment by Satan.(1Cor. 12)

The Holy Spirit is unifying and brings us closer to God and each other. Things that separate us from one another are contrary to the work of the Holy Spirit. Satan tries to cause confusion and division over Baptism of the Holy Spirit, because the gifts of the Holy Spirit help destroy the enemy's works.

Separating those of us who are baptized in the Holy Spirit from Christians who have not is a foreign concept to the Holy Spirit. This separation is to the shame of the Holy Spirit, who works to unite. He unites us as Christians to one body — the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit also brings us into a more intimate relationship with the Lord. Through this Baptism, we have a direct line of communication with God in a new and powerful way. As a result of this closer intimacy with the Lord, the Holy Spirit begins what I call “house cleaning” — He reveals to us those things in our lives that are not pleasing to God. He takes away our desire to do the things we did before that were displeasing to Him and gives us the power to resist temptations. This is life changing in every respect.

Imagine a dry sponge in a puddle of dirty water. It soaks up the dirty water. But take that same, dry sponge and fill it with oil, then put it in the puddle. It no longer soaks up the dirty water. Rather, the oil spreads into the water until the entire puddle is covered with oil. When we receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, our lives become like that sponge full of oil. Accepting Jesus is a life-changing event, as we begin to learn the principles by which God expects us to live. When the Holy Spirit is released in our lives, we discover it is possible to live the way God expects us to live, and His power affects every area of our lives.

One of the most important aspects of Baptism of the Holy Spirit is empowerment for ministry to others: “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:4). When we lay hands on someone for healing and God pours His power through us to them, the manifestation of healing is for the person, not us. Likewise, when the Holy Spirit uses us to teach others or to deliver a word of wisdom, it is for the benefit of the other person. These gifts are given for the benefit of serving others with God’s love and power and to be witnesses to the world.

Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and...to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Remember how Peter denied Christ three times, but after the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, he preached to the five thousand and never denied Christ again? Peter is an excellent example that Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an essential element for living a victorious life in Christ.

Must everyone be baptized in the Holy Spirit? No. But everyone can be if they only ask. Jesus said, “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13) Although it is not mandatory for salvation, the Holy Spirit is available to everyone.

In the kingdom of God, there are citizens, or people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior. The kingdom of God also has an army. This army includes those who are baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is strictly a volunteer army; no one is drafted. We enlist in this army when we ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once we have enlisted, we are taught how to use the weaponry of the Holy Spirit.

If you would like to be a soldier in the Army of God, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is essential. All you have to do is ask in faith: