

Holy Ghost - A Gift Easily Received!

By Evangelist Ken Douglas

REASONS PEOPLE DO NOT RECEIVE

Lesson One

The tear stained face of the 12 year old boy looked up at me, expectantly, as we stood in the altar service of a large Midwestern Apostolic Church, more than 25 years ago. I sensed this boy was “seeking” the Holy Ghost and his crying was evidence of his repentance. I was a bit frustrated (a very common feeling in altar services) but a nudge of the Holy Spirit in my soul prompted me to do something different and unusual. Something I had not seen in my 30+ years of living for God. I simply bent down and spoke quietly, but very confidently to him. Confidence that I did not have, but only felt as a result of the anointing.

“Adam, do you want the Holy Ghost?” I can still see the anxious look in the eyes of this child and the slow “yes” in the nod of his tear stained face.

“I tell you what I will do, Adam. If you promise me you will not try to say anything in English, I will lay hands on you and God will fill you with His Spirit! OK?” I received an uncertain “yes” by another shake of his head. In the midst of the roar and confusion of a typical Pentecostal altar call, which involved several hundred people, I bent down, laid my hands on his head and watched him immediately began speaking in other tongues! I was somewhat amazed! In fact, I was flabbergasted to use a popular phrase! How could this be? So simple, so easy and as I remembered my own experience more than 35 years before, how I knelt at the altar for several hours, 3 nights consecutively . Two dear ladies held up my 12 year old skinny arms, as I struggled to say “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus” in hopes of receiving the Spirit. Sometime late in the third night I did receive but was this scriptural? Did I receive the Holy Spirit because of my actions or in spite of them?

This Bible Study as a report on the past 20+ years which includes seeing thousands filled with the Holy Spirit, both in the USA and overseas. This is not to take away from Pentecostal tradition but to replace it with “behold, I show you a better way!”

For some years each person I pray for either receives the Holy Spirit or I know the reason why not. Recently I have “heard” several filled with the Spirit as a result of my telephoning them. Many also have been delivered over the phone in the past few months. The Holy Spirit is a Gift according to the scriptures and since a gift is not difficult to obtain, since Jesus died that we might receive His Spirit and since he does not play spiritual games of “hide and seek” with us, it is imperative that we, as ministers of the gospel, understand the principles involved in a person receiving the Holy Spirit. When we do this, we are able to bring more spiritual children to birth, more effectively, more efficiently and without the struggle which is not scriptural.

I have been accused of “teaching folks to talk in tongues” but there is no basis for this allegation. One man (minister) said publicly “We are getting folks filled with the Spirit before we get them cleaned up!” I shudder at the indictment of the Lord God when it is implied that He, who does the filling, is not correct in His

timing. When God moves to fill a person with His Spirit obviously it is the right time.

It is easy to get a person filled with the Holy Spirit. An evangelist friend in Texas was photographed during many of the services over which about 1800 were filled with the Spirit, in the USA, and they established the fact that it took about 3 minutes before Bill began speaking with them until they were born of the Spirit. Another man of God, whom I admire greatly, has over the past few years seen more than 250,000 filled with the Spirit. In Africa in 1998, during one service alone more than 112,000 were filled and his "methods" are not the "conventional" ones employed by Pentecostal preachers. In Italy I am known as "Un Momento, Spirito Santo" which in English means "In one minute - the Holy Spirit." All Glory be to the Master but through experience and through a search of the scriptures I am convinced we should have easier spiritual births and there should NEVER be a chronic "seeker" on any Apostolic pew.

It takes only a minute to cause a person to be filled with the Holy Spirit, BUT it takes a pastor and a lot of work to make a Christian out of them!

THIS LESSON OBJECTIVE:

To discuss reasons WHY PEOPLE DO NOT RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT and HOW TO OVERCOME THEM.

REASON NUMBER ONE: *Little or no understanding of their :*

- a. Need for the Holy Spirit
- b. God's love and willingness to give them the Spirit.
- c. Ease of obtaining this Gift of God.

The following scriptures, and a rational look at the individual who comes to the altar as a result of an anointed message which brought conviction will show that one important, but USUALLY MISSING INGREDIENT, is understanding. In more than 58 years of working at Apostolic altars, I conclude this is usually very confusing (to the sinner) frustrating (to the altar workers) and non-productive in terms of successful spiritual births. "He almost got it!" should never have to be said. WHY DIDN'T HE RECEIVE WHAT HE CAME FOR? Was it God's fault? No! Was it the fault of the individual "seeking?" NO! Simply because at that point in time they are willing to do most anything to get rid of the feeling of conviction which the service and the sermon has placed solidly upon them. Whose fault is it? Leadership who fail to instruct the prospective new Christian on who, why, what, when, how and where! Understanding of what to do, what to say, and what to expect and how to respond to the Spirit of God when the Lord comes down to fill him. How many people have you seen get "so close" to being filled and not be completed? Many, I am sure. Why is this? Not because God was not willing. Not because they were not willing. Not because the altar workers were not willing. Simply because the recipients did not know how to receive, or respond to the Spirit. See Prov 4:7; 24:3; 29:18 and Col 1:9.

It is the will of God for ALL MEN to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), and our responsibility is to bring them to the point of believing the gospel (preaching) and being filled with the Spirit (teaching needed!).

REASON NUMBER TWO: *Little or no desire:*

The most important necessity in an individual is the **DESIRE** for God to fill them with His Spirit. One factor of their desire is their understanding of the absolute necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit. Even though they may be emotional, caught up in the moment of the spirit of the encounter with God, there still must be a deep seated desire to find God, to know God and to be filled with His Holy Spirit. It is like auto insurance...we must not drive without it so therefore we go looking until we find it. It is absolutely necessary!

See Deut 4:19 I Chron 28:9 Psa 10:17; 73:25; 119:2
Prov 10:24; 13:12 and Heb 11:6

HOW TO OVERCOME REASONS ONE AND TWO:

The clear solution is to use the appropriate scriptures to prepare their hearts both with desire and understanding of the Holy Spirit's importance, as well as the willingness of the Lord to fill them. Most Apostolics can easily show by the scriptures the absolute essentiality of the Holy Spirit and how that it, with the water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, constitutes the new birth described by Jesus in John 3 and set forth by Simon Peter in Acts, Chapter 2. This can be done in "short form" in any service. I make this instruction a part of every evangelistic message and follow through with more information as the candidates are sitting on the front pews, in a regulated, organized and effective altar call. Justification for the "sitting" is found in Acts, 2, where they were "sitting" when the Holy Spirit initially came.

A common problem which must be overcome is the residue, if any, of the popular concept of "accepting the Lord as your personal savior" as a means of salvation. This is a common false doctrine to which most people have been exposed. This can prevent the individual from understanding their need for the new birth (John 3:5, water and Spirit) as well as their attempting to receive Him. Rev 22:18 says we must NOT add to the scriptures and this doctrine is "adding" to the Word of God, since there is not one scripture which clearly indicates this procedure is needed, necessary or makes one complete in salvation.

The ease with which the church of Acts received the Spirit as well as the promises shown in Luke 11:13, John 7:37-40; Acts 1:5; 2:38 and the other instances where the Spirit was given or poured out in Acts should be used to teach the individual UNTIL they understand that God's purpose is to have them born again by the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The ease of obtaining the Spirit can very well be shown by a reference to the 4 occasions in Acts where the Spirit was given. In two instances, Acts 2 and 10, it fell on them, or was “poured out.” On two other occasions, Acts 8 and 19, a man of God laid hands upon them and they began to speak with other tongues. There is NO indication there was a delay or struggle of any kind. Wonder why modern Pentecost is not like that?

Obvious, if speaking in tongues is a problem, i.e., a question as to whether this is the initial evidence, then this must be resolved prior to attempting to get the Spirit to move on them. That would be the subject of a separate study.

Hosea 4:6 shows distinctly the need for instruction because “people perish because of lack of knowledge” and knowledge can only be imparted through instruction. How many times did Jesus “open his mouth and taught them” as opposed to preaching?

SUMMARY: When we can cause them to see their need for the Holy Spirit, God’s willingness to baptize them, the ease of obtaining it and have an intense desire for Him, we are well on the way to seeing them born again of the Spirit.

Lesson 2 will cover Low Faith, Weak Repentance, Failure to Forgive Others and Cultic or Demonic Involvement.