

Asking For The Holy Spirit



Foundations (Day 147)
by Derek Prince

We have now carefully considered four different groups of people portrayed in the New Testament: 1) the apostles, 2) the people of Samaria, 3) the disciples at Ephesus, 4) Cornelius and his household. Of these four groups, we have seen clearly that the first three – the apostles, the people of Samaria, the disciples at Ephesus – had all been converted before they received the Holy Spirit. Their receiving the Holy Spirit was a separate and subsequent experience following their conversion.

There is no other instance recorded, apart from Cornelius and his household, in which people received the Holy Spirit at the same time they believed in Christ. We are therefore justified in concluding that the experience of Cornelius and his household is the exception rather than the rule.

On the basis of this careful examination of the New Testament record, we may now set forth the following conclusions.

1. It is normal for a Christian to receive the Holy Spirit as a separate and subsequent experience, following conversion.
2. Even if a person receives the Holy Spirit at conversion, receiving the Holy Spirit still remains, logically, a distinct experience from being converted.
3. Whether a person receives the Holy Spirit at conversion or after conversion, the evidence that that person has received the Holy Spirit still remains the same: the person speaks with tongues as the Holy Spirit gives utterance.
4. The fact that a person has been genuinely converted does not by itself constitute evidence that that person has received the Holy Spirit.

This conclusion concerning the relationship between conversion and receiving the Holy Spirit has been based mainly on a study of the book of Acts. However, it is in full accord with the teaching of Jesus Himself in the Gospels. Jesus told His disciples:

> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly

Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"
(Luke 11:13)

The teaching of this verse – reinforced by the examples which precede it, of a son asking his father for bread, for a fish and for an egg – is that God, as a heavenly Father, is willing to give the Holy Spirit to His believing children if they will ask for it. However, a person must first put his faith in Christ to become a child of God.

Plainly, therefore, Jesus teaches not that the Holy Spirit is received at conversion, but rather that it is a gift which every converted believer has a right to ask for, as a child from his or her Father. Furthermore, Jesus definitely places an obligation upon the children of God to ask their heavenly Father specifically for this gift of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore not scriptural for a Christian to assume, or to assert, that he automatically received the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion without asking for it.

Devotional

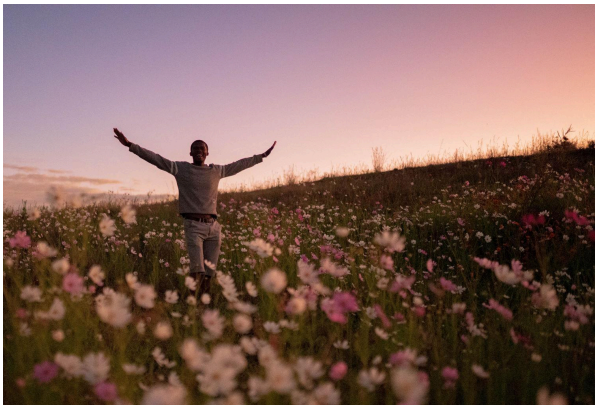
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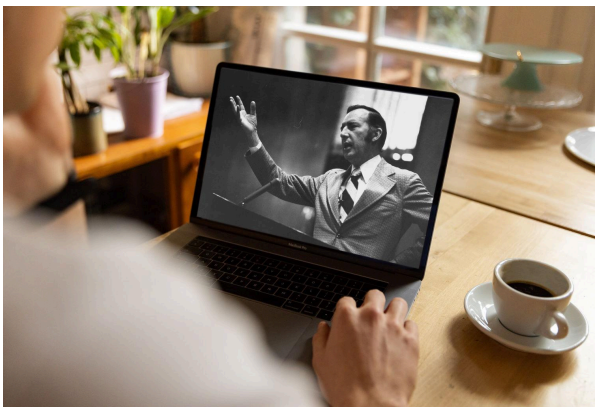
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