



Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Discovering ways to help you draw on the Holy Spirit for strength and encouragement

REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

Where and how did you experience God last week?

SPIRIT LYFE EMPOWERED

At Pentecost the Spirit comes as the prophet Joel had predicted and the church gets underway! The implication is that the Spirit is available to all of us today. This is how Jesus is with us now. It is the Spirit that guides us as we grow in spiritual maturity.

READ

Acts 1.1-5

¹Theophilus, I first wrote to you about all that Jesus did and taught from the very first ² until he was taken up to heaven. But before he was taken up, he gave orders to the apostles he had chosen with the help of the Holy Spirit.

³ For forty days after Jesus had suffered and died, he proved in many ways that he had been raised from death. He appeared to his apostles and spoke to them about God's kingdom.

⁴ While he was still with them, he said:

Don't leave Jerusalem yet. Wait here for the Father to give you the Holy Spirit, just as I told you he has promised to do. ⁵ John baptized with water, but in a few

days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2.1-13

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

¹ On the day of Pentecost all the Lord's followers were together in one place. ² Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting.

³ Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there.

⁴ The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak.

⁵ Many religious Jews from every country in the world were living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And when they heard this noise, a crowd gathered. But they were surprised, because they were hearing everything in

their own languages. ⁷ They were excited and amazed, and said:

Don't all these who are speaking come from Galilee? ⁸ Then why do we hear them speaking our very own languages? ⁹ Some of us are from Parthia, Media, and Elam. Others are from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome, ¹¹ Crete, and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews, and others of us have chosen to be Jews. Yet we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done.

¹² Everyone was excited and confused. Some of them even kept asking each other, "What does all this mean?"

¹³ Others made fun of the Lord's followers and said, "They are drunk."

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ The book of Acts written by Luke (following his Gospel) covers a 30-year period from the day of Pentecost to Paul's eventual imprisonment in Rome. Under the power of the Spirit the new-born church bursts out of Israel to become a world-wide movement.
- ▶ Pentecost commemorates Moses receiving the 10 commandments at Mt Sinai. It is the New Testament name for the 'Feast of Weeks' when the wheat harvest was celebrated

by a one-day festival during which special sacrifices were offered (see Leviticus 23. 15-21).

- ▶ 'Fiery tongues' fulfils the prophecy of John the Baptist who said that Jesus would baptize them with fire.
- ▶ Transformed from hiding fearfully in the Upper Room, the apostles and disciples (approx 120 people) become the new church, full of life and power. They burst out in praise using the languages from the areas referred to in v 9-11 (other than their own Galilean tongue). As they move out to the streets,

this activity attracts attention from the crowds who were amazed and bewildered. This gave Peter the perfect opportunity to explain to the crowds what was now happening (Acts 2 .14ff)

- ▶ What are the 'shockers' and 'blockers' for you in this passage?
- ▶ The Holy Spirit either tends to be ignored or overemphasised in most churches today – would you agree?
- ▶ We will experience the Holy Spirit differently, according to our gifts and personalities. In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your own life?

RESPOND

Empowered challenge: This session leads us to explore the empowering of the Spirit. As a group, create a challenge to help you increase your understanding and experience of the Spirit this week.

Challenge ideas: If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

01 Spirit Past ... Spirit Present

Take some time this week to read about times when the Holy Spirit has come in power since the time of Pentecost. You might like to Google 'Azusa Street Revival' – a revival that lasted 3 years from 1906 – 1909, and formed the roots of today's Charismatic and Pentecostal movement. Or the '1904 Welsh Revival'

– involving young men and women and in particular Evan Roberts. It is estimated that the revival brought in 100,000 new converts and soon spread across the world. This revival changed communities and Wales once again became a God-fearing nation. In the mines you could hear men working to the sound of hymns instead of swear words and cursing. The pubs were empty, magistrates had no cases and strained relationships were healed. Amazing stuff!

02 Change Churches

Consider attending a church that may have a different attitude towards the Holy Spirit than your own. For example, you might like to check out the nearest Pentecostal or Charismatic church. If this is already the kind of church you

are used to – then try and attend a church with a different approach. If you can't physically attend, you could download a podcast or vodcast sermon/service from iTunes or a churches website to listen to or watch.

03 Reflection

Spend some time in quiet this week to reflect on your own relationship with the Spirit. You might like to spend some time in prayer talking to God about this and intentionally commit some time to asking God to fill you with his Spirit each day. Try talking to the Spirit in prayer. Perhaps use your daily showering routine as a prompt – ask God to fill you with his Spirit as the water invigorates you, and washes you clean.

'The moment that we feel we have the spiritual-life business all figured out, God surprises us with outbreaks of the Spirit we could never have imagined.'

Richard J Foster *Streams Of Living Water*

Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.

More resources on 'Spirit Lyfe'

- Listen to video interview with James Parker
- Read article by John Ortberg on the Holy Spirit
- Read 'lyfe story' biographies on John Wimber and Jackie Pullinger
- Recommended reading – *'Come Holy Spirit'* by David Pytches

GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you look to explore and experience more of the Spirit.