

"Believing On Jesus"
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September 26, 2021

"And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. There were about twelve men in all." (Acts 19:1-7)

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Charles Spurgeon addressed the matter of believing on Jesus on February 22nd, 1891 (his 2,191st sermon): "What is it to believe on Christ? It means not only to accept what he says as true, and to believe that he is the Messiah and the Son of God, but trustfully to rest in him. To believe on him is to take him as the ground of our hopes, as our Savior, upon whom we depend for salvation. When we believe in him or on him, we accept him as God sets him forth; and we make use of him by trusting on him to do for us what God has appointed him to do. This trusting on Jesus is saving faith. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." To believe him may be a very different thing from believing on him. Such belief may fall far short of saving faith. To believe on him means heartily to give yourself up to him, and to follow him as the way, the truth, and the life to you. Rejecting all rival confidences, the heart leans on Jesus all its weight, and leaves with him all its burdens. Believing in him, we repose all our concerns, for time and for eternity, in his hands. To believe on him is also to believe implicitly. We believe all that he may yet say. We accept not only what he says which we can fully understand, but that which as yet is dark to us. We so believe in him that we go with him in all his teachings, be they what they may. We not only go as far as he has hitherto revealed himself to us, but we are prepared to go as much farther as he pleases. What he says is truth to us, on the sole evidence that he says it." What exactly does it mean to believe "on" Jesus to me and what does it look like in my life? Explain.

Pastor Wally said that there are some who have no clue who the Holy Spirit is...Holy who? What, if anything, hinders me from better understanding who the Holy Spirit is?

Paul asked the question of the disciples, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" John Piper provided a practical application to that question: "Paul says, "Did you receive the

Holy Spirit when you believed?" We scratch our heads and say, "I don't get it, Paul. If you assume we believed, why don't you assume we received the Holy Spirit? We've been taught that all who believe receive the Holy Spirit. We've been taught to just believe that the Spirit is there whether there are any effects or not. But you talk as if there is a way to know we've received the Holy Spirit different from believing. You talk as if we could point to an experience of the Spirit apart from believing in order to answer your question... So in every case of the Holy Spirit's coming or being received in the book of Acts there are definite effects that one can point to as evidence that the Spirit has been received... however it comes, it is an experience of divine reality. It is not just an idea about our spiritual condition that we infer from a decision we have made. It is supernatural. You can use it to answer the question, "Did you receive the Spirit when you believed?" You can say,

"Yes, I have seen the Spirit of obedience at work in my life subduing sin and inclining me to acts of love.

"Yes, I have seen the Spirit of praise in my life filling my heart and mouth with worship to Jesus and God the Father.

"Yes, I have seen the Spirit of courage at work in my life overcoming fear and giving me a will to risk things for the cause of Christ."

How about me? Can I honestly "point to an experience of the Spirit apart from believing in order to answer your question ["Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"] If so, why so? If not, why not?

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. **To each** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions **to each one individually** as he wills." (1 Corinthians 12:4-11) First, the Holy Spirit is a person ("as **he** wills"), not an "it". As John MacArthur put it "He is a personality and He sorrows and He grieves and He is anguished by our sin, and He is defiled when the temple, which is our body, is defiled." What gift or gifts has the Holy Spirit apportioned to me?

Take notice of the involvement of the Trinity in my life found in the 1 Corinthians 12 passage: “The Spirit gives the gifts to men for service. Christ gives the gifted men to the church (cf. Ep 4:8-12). God the Father controls the numerous and various operations or workings, thus the Triune God works in each believer, to whom the Spirit's manifestation is given for profit and edification” (New Unger’s Bible Handbook). How well am using the Holy Spirit’s gift(s)?

Which of the Lord’s services am I providing and how well am I providing that service?

Which of God’s activities has He been empowering in my life?

In one of his Exhortations, Pastor Wally said that I am “to continually be filled by the Holy Spirit, but this is not a second baptism in the spirit...it is spiritual growth (sanctification). Ephesians 5:15-21 tells me that we need to “[l]ook carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” So, let’s see: 1) Walk wisely; 2) Understand what the will of the Lord is; 3) Don’t get drunk; 4) Be (continually) filled with the Holy Spirit; 5) Give thanks always and for everything; and 6) Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ...Which of these, if any, need my immediate attention and why?

How often do I read a list of “To-do” items like these in God’s Scripture that I say “I need to get around to this list sometime when I have more time...but not today”?

Regarding Ephesians 5:18, John MacArthur pointed out that “...what he’s saying is that this is something that I demand of you, this is a command. There is in the Greek language an indicative mood, which is a statement of fact, and there is an imperative mood, which is a command – this is an imperative. “Be being kept filled with the Spirit.” This is a command for the believer. This is not an option, this is not a suggestion; God rarely, if ever, has made a suggestion. He makes commands and He states facts; He doesn’t deal in suggestions. In fact, there are very few optional things with God. This is not one; this is a command... The word pleroo is used of a wind filling a sail and billowing the sail out and moving the ship

along...to be filled with the Spirit is to be carried along from day to day, from moment to moment, from enterprise to enterprise, from thought to thought, from word to word, from deed to deed, by the power of the energy of the Spirit of God. So it has the idea of pressure – of pressure, of carrying you along in God’s will...Pleroo is used sometimes of something which permeates, I used to use the illustration also of a Fizzie, and if you’ve read my little book called Found: God’s Will, you’ve read about the Fizzie principle. Fizzies were kind of a flavored Alka-Seltzer, a little thing about the size of an Alka-Seltzer, only they made them in grape and orange and root beer and cherry and all of that, you know, and you’d get a little deal of those things and you’d drop them in a glass of water and they’d “pshew!” you know, like an Alka-Seltzer does, and they’d fill it up, and it was permeation, you know. You put a grape Fizzie in there and the whole glass of water tastes like grape juice, and what it did was flavor the water. And pleroo is used in that sense... But the dominant thought here, in my mind, as compared with the gospel record particularly, the dominant use of pleroo is to speak of control, to speak of total control. That’s kind of the idea. You’ve got the idea of moving along, you’ve got the idea of permeation, but the control idea is the key. Let me see if I can illustrate it to you. Whenever in the gospel record the writer wants to talk about somebody who just is dominated by an emotion, he will use the word pleroo, which is used here. In other words, in John 16:6, it says, “They were filled with sorrow.” In other words, sorrow to such a degree that it can’t be balanced off by happiness and they’re just totally sorrowful... That’s what it means to be filled with the Spirit, you see. That’s the heart of the matter. It is the idea of being moved along, it is the idea of being permeated so you have the flavor of Jesus Christ, but it is also the idea of being controlled by, and a firm hand of control... How do I get the filling of the Spirit, how can I know this, if it’s commanded? Well, you know, it’s amazing, I hear people praying for the filling of the Spirit. You don’t have to pray for it. It’s not a prayer request, it’s a command. You don’t say, “Lord, oh, I want to be filled.” If He gave you a command, then you have the resources, right? And the resource is to empty yourself of yourself; it’s a matter of the confession of sin. But let me give you a simple way to look at it. It involves a surrender of your will, your intellect, your body, your time, your talent, your treasure, everything to His control. It’s the death of self. It’s the crucifixion of self. It’s the slaying of your own self-will. It’s the mortification of the members of your body. It’s the death of you. When you die, He fills. When you empty yourself of yourself, He’ll fill it up. He’ll fill it up... People say, “Oh, the filling of the Spirit is mystical, very mystical.” No, the filling of the Spirit is taking the Word that Christ has given us and letting it dwell – Where? – in your heart. You want to be Spirit-filled, don’t go sit in a corner somewhere and plead God. If you want to be Spirit-filled, feed yourself the Word of Christ. And as you’re fed and filled with the Word, and as it results in dwelling in you “abundantly, richly in fullness” - you’ll find yourself coming under its control. Who is the author of the Word of Christ? The Spirit. And when you pour the Word in, it becomes the thing that controls you.” So...what seems to be filling me up, self or the Holy Spirit and why?

What of “self” do I need to jettison to make more room for the Holy Spirit?