

# The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

## God Promises Us Power

Begin the small group study with a time of fellowship. Have the students discuss the following questions. Use this lighthearted discussion as a lead-in to the study topic.

**1. If money were no object, what's one thing you would like to have or do that would make your life happier, easier, or more productive? Why would that possession or experience be so valuable to you?**

*(Encourage group members to "dream big." Remind them that we all have things we'd love to do—positive, life-altering things, if only we had the ability to make it happen.)*

**2. What would have to happen in order for you to receive that possession or experience?**

*(Most likely they could not experience these things without outside intervention. They'd have to come into a huge amount of money unexpectedly, or stumble upon wealth in ways that couldn't be imagined at this time.)*

**3. What are some positive ways your life would be impacted if the thing you wanted came to pass?**

*(Often when we dream about something like this happening, we think about ways we could help others, provide for our families, or better ourselves in some way.)*

It's fun to imagine what life would be like if we had something we really wanted—and even needed—yet could not possibly obtain on our own. We may eventually find ourselves wondering, "If only there were a way..." And while this is true in the physical world, there's a similar dynamic to be found in the spiritual realm. When we enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ, our eyes are suddenly opened to the incredible realities of God's kingdom. And we find ourselves wanting to do as much as we can to function in that kingdom. Yet we have limitations, which, while they are sincere, can leave us feeling like we would really love to do more. "I'm such a shy person; if only I could witness better"; "I sure wish I could help that coworker who is struggling at home, but I just don't know what to say"; "Sometimes I struggle in myself, not living up to what I know God wants me to do." These situations can leave us feeling powerless.

But God has an answer when it comes to deficiencies in our Christian lives. When Jesus left this world, He promised to send us power for ministry beyond what we could ever hope to experience in ourselves. This gift is called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and it's available to every believer—including you.



# BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT DISCUSSION

## **1. Why is spiritual power so important? (John 14:15-17; 16:7-11)**

*(For the believer in Jesus Christ, spiritual power is essential for a higher purpose: to fulfill God's purpose in this world for our lives. That purpose is ultimately to bring every man, woman, and child possible into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. While that might not sound so difficult, anyone who attempts it will be met with a wide range of challenges and obstacles. There are billions of people to reach in this world. There is a powerful enemy that wants to see that reaching them doesn't happen. It takes power to make evangelism and discipleship happen—spiritual power, and lots of it. Such power is available to every believer willing to seek it.)*

## **2. Why was it essential that Jesus send the Holy Spirit to help us accomplish God's purposes? (Matthew 28:18-20; John 16:8-11)**

*(Although God has always been present everywhere in our world, Jesus' guiding, teaching, and miracle-working impact on earth was largely limited to wherever He was at within a given time. He knew we would need a special measure of divine power and intervention that transcended the limits of space and time we have as human beings. Also, the Holy Spirit's influence to convict people of sin and prepare hearts for salvation would need to be spread throughout the world. That became possible when the Holy Spirit came to empower believers following Jesus' ascension into heaven.)*

## **3. Does it ever feel like there's an increasing sense of urgency today to reach people with the message of salvation and hope through Christ? Why do you think this feeling of urgency might be increasing? (Matthew 24:4-14; 2 Timothy 3:8; 2 Peter 3:3-7)**

*(Conditions in many parts of our world are deteriorating morally and spiritually at an ever-increasing rate. Evil influences are all around us. At the same time, there is a growing spiritual hunger as people search for truth. People are ready for an authentic witness of Christ's love and grace. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to reach them while there is still opportunity to do so.)*

**4. Why do you think God chose speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?**

**(James 3:3-10)**

*(Speaking in tongues requires full submission to the Holy Spirit. This includes surrendering our tongue, our most "unruly member" [James 3:10] to the work of the Spirit.)*

**5. What are the "prerequisites" for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Do you need to receive this gift in order to be saved? What would you say to a Christian who said that he or she desperately wanted this gift of power but felt they weren't deserving of it? (Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:16-21,38,39)**

*(This experience is not a requirement for salvation; rather, it is a gift of God for those who are saved. It must not be regarded as something to be achieved or indicating a higher level of spirituality. Scripture assures and encourages us that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is intended for every believer to experience.)*

**6. What are some ways the baptism in the Holy Spirit might change our lives? (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:42-47; also, compare John 18:15-17,25-27 with Acts 2:14-16,36-39; see also Acts 6:3; 7:55; 11:22-24)**

*(Jesus told His disciples that they would receive power to be His witnesses at home and wherever they might go. With the Holy Spirit's power in our lives, we discover greater passion and boldness to tell others about Christ through our life and words.)*

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