

Chapter 10 Seven Steps To Receiving the Holy Ghost

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

— John 14:16,17

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

— Acts 2:32,33

This lesson has a twofold purpose: Number one is to help those who have not yet received the infilling of the Holy Ghost. Number two is to help Spirit-filled believers pray with those who are seeking to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Any layperson can take the following seven steps and help any Christian get filled with the Holy Ghost without any tarrying or waiting.

I was preaching in a certain meeting once where about sixty-five people had been filled with the Holy Ghost. In one of the daytime services, someone asked, "What are we going to do when you leave, Brother Hagin?"

You see, all that the people had known in the past was to struggle and struggle in order to get believers filled with the Holy Ghost. One of the women who was an outstanding altar worker said, "In every meeting, I always pray with people to receive the Holy Spirit until my throat almost gives out. And after the meetings sometimes I've had laryngitis for a month."

I told them about these seven steps to receiving the infilling of the Holy Ghost. That night seven believers came forward to receive the Holy Ghost, but I didn't pray for them. Instead, I prayed for the sick who came forward for healing and sent these seven people into a prayer room, telling the altar workers, "All right, go back there and get them filled, following the instructions I gave you earlier today."

They went to the room and came out in ten minutes' time with six of the seven having been filled with the Holy Ghost! They apologized for not getting the seventh one filled, but it turned out that he wasn't even a Christian, and he didn't want to get saved. You see, you can't get the Holy Ghost without getting saved first.

One of these workers was so thrilled to learn how to help people receive the Holy Ghost that she could hardly wait to go visit her mother who lived some distance away and help her be filled with the Holy Spirit. "Mama has been seeking the baptism for nineteen years," she told me, "but now I know she will receive."

Several months later I was back in the same church to hold meetings again, and this woman told me, "I drove about one hundred and fifty miles to my mother's home, and Mama was outside waiting for me. I said, 'Mama, just come on into the house. I can't stay long. I'm going to have to get back home. I only have time to attend to the business I came for — to get you filled with the Holy Ghost.'"

"But, you know, I have been seeking a mighty long time," her Mama answered.

The woman related, "I told her, 'I know it, Mama, but now you are going to receive.' We went into the house and I said, 'Just sit down and open your Bible to Acts chapter 2.' I sat down on the seat next to her and spent ten minutes with her just sharing the Word. Then I laid hands on her and she received the Holy Spirit and started speaking in tongues!"

The Seven Steps To Receiving the Holy Spirit

I list here the same seven steps which I have used in my revival meetings across the country to help believers receive the Holy Spirit.

Step Number 1

Help the believer see that God has already given the Holy Spirit and that it is now up to that person to receive God's free Gift.

Above everything else, help the believer see that he is not to beg God to fill him with the Holy Spirit. The promise that the Holy Spirit was to be given was fulfilled in Acts chapter 2. The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, and He has been here ever since. After that time God hasn't given the Holy Spirit to anyone. Now people simply have to receive the Holy Spirit.

For instance, let's look at what the Apostle Paul said some years after the incidents recorded in Acts chapter 2.

ACTS 19:1-6

1 ... Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye RECEIVED the Holy Ghost since ye believed? [He didn't say, "Has God given you the Holy Ghost?" He said, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"] And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Paul didn't tell these disciples to pray that God would give them the Holy Ghost. The Bible says, ". . . the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

Notice also Acts chapter 8 which occurred some years after the Day of Pentecost.

ACTS 8:14,15

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD [concerning salvation], they sent unto them Peter and John:
15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might RECEIVE the Holy Ghost.

The apostles didn't pray that God would give the Samaritans the Holy Ghost. They prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost: "Then laid they their hands on them, and they RECEIVED the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17).

God hasn't given the Holy Ghost to anyone since the Day of Pentecost, but people have received Him. The Holy Ghost is already here for believers to receive.

Step Number 2

Show the person who has come to receive the Holy Ghost that anyone who is saved is ready to immediately receive the Holy Spirit.

ACTS 2:37,38

37 Now when they [the unsaved multitude who gathered as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and to whom Peter had preached quoting Joel's prophecy] heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 38 shows us that anyone who is saved is immediately ready to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Some people think there are certain things they have to do to qualify to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For example, some think they have to make restitution for past sins. One fellow in east Texas once said, "I had to return a pig that I had stolen before I could get the Holy Ghost."

It is true that sin which has not been confessed can hinder people from receiving the blessings of God. However, if folks are saved and walking in fellowship with God, they couldn't possibly be any cleaner than they are right then. Once we confess our sins, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). I believe that saved people go to heaven when they die. And if they are good enough to go to heaven, they are good enough to have a little bit of heaven in them here on earth!

Some people think they have to follow certain standards of dress in order to receive the Holy Spirit. For example, we were preaching at a certain place and in the meeting a woman came forward to receive the Holy Spirit. She did receive and spoke with tongues for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Afterwards, she was sitting down and praising God in English. One fellow walked over to her and thought she hadn't received because he hadn't heard her speaking in tongues. He also noticed that she was wearing a wedding ring and he said to her, "Sister, if you will take that wedding band off, God will fill you with the Holy Ghost."

I whispered to him, "Brother, you are too late. He has already filled her, wedding band and all."

You see, some people have the mistaken idea that they have to court God's favor in order to get Him to do something for them. All we have to do is to be saved and walk in the light of salvation. A person who is out of fellowship, of course, would have to come back into fellowship with Him.

As I said, some people have imagined that one has to be perfect before he can get the Holy Ghost. However, even the great Apostle Paul said he wasn't perfect. Yet we know he had the Holy Spirit.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12,13

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. . . .

13 ... I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

If you could do everything you ought to do and be everything you ought to be without the Holy Ghost, what would you need Him for? If you can do everything for yourself, why do you need the Holy Ghost?

Carnal Christians (or Christians who are sense-ruled or dominated by the flesh) can be filled with the Holy Ghost. How do we know that? Because the Bible says the Corinthian Christians were carnal, and yet Paul prayed for them that they would come behind in no gift (1 Cor. 1:7). He was not endorsing carnality, to be sure. He was trying to get them to grow up in God and outgrow carnality. But as believers yield to Him, the Holy Ghost will help them grow out of carnality.

Baby Christians can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Carnal Christians and baby Christians — indeed, all believers — greatly need to be filled with the Holy Spirit because then they will receive power that will help them (Acts 1:8). Also, if they will walk in the light of God's Word and be led by the Holy Spirit, He will lead them into all truth and help them to outgrow some things in their lives which have perhaps hindered their Christian walk (John 16:13).

Therefore, if a person is saved, he is ready to receive the Holy Ghost now. Always lead the believer who is seeking the Holy Ghost to see that truth.

Step Number 3

Tell people that when you lay hands on them, they are to receive the Holy Ghost.

Anyone can lay hands on another in faith, for God honors faith. However, there is also a ministry of laying on of hands, and some are used along these lines more than others. But anyone can lay their hands on a person in faith as a point of contact, and tell them, "This is the time — right now — that you are to receive the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is received by faith, and faith is always "now" or present tense (Heb. 11:1).

Step Number 4

Tell the candidate what to expect as he receives the Holy Spirit; otherwise, he won't know what is happening when the Holy Spirit begins to move on him.

Tell the candidate that he is to expect the Holy Spirit to move upon his vocal organs and put supernatural words on his lips which he will have to speak out himself in cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

Remember, the person is the one who does the actual speaking, not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives the utterance, but man does the actual speaking.

Some people have taught things that are unscriptural for so long that it is hard for them to break the habit of teaching them. For example, I have seen someone about to speak with tongues; the Spirit of God would be moving on his lips and vocal cords. Then I would hear someone say to him, "Let the Holy Ghost talk." But it is not the Holy Ghost who is to do the talking. It is the person receiving the Holy Ghost who is to do the talking.

Now it is all right to tell the person to yield to the Holy Ghost. But notice again Acts 2:4: ". . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and [they] began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Notice, they were all filled and they began to speak. In other words, the Holy Spirit gives the utterance; the person who is receiving the Holy Spirit does the speaking.

Many people have thought, If I do the speaking, that would just be me. Well of course, it will be you talking. It sure won't be me! And it sure won't be the person praying with you who will be doing the talking. Anytime you ever speak with tongues, it will surely be you doing the talking. But the Holy Ghost gives you the utterance, and it is a supernatural utterance.

The point is this: The Holy Ghost doesn't take you over, so to speak, and force you to do anything. But you can respond to Him and follow His promptings. He will give you the utterance, but you do the talking. Nowhere in the Bible do we find that the Holy Ghost spoke in tongues. Every scripture reference tells us that the person receiving the Holy Ghost does the talking and speaks the supernatural utterance — tongues — the Holy Spirit gives him.

Let's look at what the Scriptures say about the believer's role in speaking in tongues and the Holy Spirit's role in giving the utterance.

ACTS 2:4

4 [They] began to SPEAK with other tongues, as THE SPIRIT gave them UTTERANCE.

ACTS 10:46

46 For they heard THEM SPEAK with tongues, and magnify God... .

ACTS 19:6

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, THE HOLY GHOST CAME ON THEM; And THEY SPAKE with tongues, and prophesied.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:2,4,5

2 For HE THAT SPEAKETH in an unknown tongue speak-eth not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit HE SPEAKETH mysteries... .

4 HE THAT SPEAKETH in an unknown tongue edifieth himself. . . .

5 I would that YE ALL SPAKE with tongues....

1 CORINTHIANS 14:14,15,18

14 For if I PRAY in AN UNKNOWN TONGUE, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I WILL PRAY with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding. ..

.18 I thank my God, I SPEAK with tongues more than ye all.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:27,28

27 IF ANY MAN SPEAK in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church....

Notice that every one of these scriptures shows that in receiving the Holy Ghost and in praying in tongues and in ministering tongues in public assembly, it is always the person himself that does the actual speaking. But the Holy Spirit gives the supernatural utterance.

When I tell this to people who have been seeking the Holy Ghost for thirty or forty years, they often look at me in amazement and say, "If I had known that, I could have been speaking in tongues for the last thirty years. I had the urge — I had the prompt-ing all the time. In fact at times, it was all I could do to keep from speaking in tongues, but I was waiting for the Holy Ghost to come and take my tongue over."

Some people think that the baptism in the Holy Ghost is as if someone swallowed a small radio. And then when God gets ready, He just turns on "the radio" and it starts playing or speaking automatically. However, the Holy Ghost gives you the utterance, but you do the talking.

When the Spirit of God is moving on your tongue and lips, what you must do is lift your voice and put sound to it. If you will obey those promptings of the Holy Spirit, you will find yourself speaking with tongues. You see, you must cooperate with the Holy Ghost. Speaking with tongues isn't entirely you, and it isn't entirely the Holy Ghost. Speaking with tongues is a cooperation between you and the Holy Ghost.

Step Number 5

It may be necessary to help some folks get over their fears first before they can receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Many seekers have been told by well-meaning people that they might get something that is false or counterfeit when receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I have heard people say, "You know, there is a wrong spirit as well as a right one. I want to be certain and be sure I get the right thing."

When I hear people talk like that, I point out Luke 11:11-13 to them.

LUKE 11:11-13

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: HOW MUCH MORE SHALL YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THEM THAT ASK HIM?

Jesus was saying in this passage of Scripture, "If your child asked you as a parent for bread, would you give him a stone? If your child asked you for a fish, would you give him a serpent? If your child asked you for an egg, would you offer him a scorpion?"

No, of course you wouldn't. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). We can be assured that God will not give His children a counterfeit when they ask Him for the Holy Spirit.

It is a different thing entirely, of course, when a sinner is seeking the Holy Spirit because the sinner cannot receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:17). But if a person who is a child of God is seeking the Holy Spirit, he is not going to receive an evil spirit.

Notice that the words "serpent" and "scorpion" are used here in Luke chapter 11. Turning to Luke 10:19, we read that Jesus said, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. . . ."

Jesus used the terms "serpents" and "scorpions" to talk about evil spirits. So He said in Luke 11 you are not going to get a "serpent" or a "scorpion" when you ask for the Holy Spirit. If you are a child of God and you go to your Heavenly Father to receive the Holy Ghost, then that is what you are going to get — the Holy Ghost.

When I have given these scriptures to those who have been misled by false teaching, I have seen them immediately begin to speak with tongues. They later told me, "If I had known that, I could have been speaking with tongues and could have known the fullness of the Spirit for many years. But I was afraid I might get a wrong spirit." Thank God, we can be relieved of our fears through the Word of God.

Step Number 6

Tell the candidate to open his mouth and be ready to use his own mouth and vocal chords, for the Holy Spirit will give the utterance, but he must yield and give voice to that utterance. At the same time the believer should tell God in his heart, "I am receiving the Holy Spirit right now by faith."

I like to absolutely insist that people not speak one word in their natural language. And I will give Scripture further in this lesson why a person receiving the Holy Spirit shouldn't speak one word in his natural language.

Then when the Holy Spirit begins to move upon the believer, I tell him to lift his voice and speak out whatever utterance is given to him by the Holy Spirit, regardless of what it sounds like.

I tell the candidate to begin to speak the words and the language the Holy Spirit gives him, continuing to praise God and speak to God with those supernatural words until the language becomes more and more fluent.

When that person can hear himself speak in tongues in a distinct language, he will have assurance and confidence that he has received the Holy Ghost.

JOHN 7:37-39

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, OUT OF HIS BELLY [spirit] SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The Bible says the Holy Spirit will come to us as the rain. And Jesus said in John chapter 7 that we are to come and drink of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, Jesus said receiving the Holy Ghost is like drinking water. That is, the same principle is involved. The point is no one can drink with their mouth shut. And in the same way, in order to receive the Holy Spirit, a person must put action to his faith and give voice to the unction of the Holy Spirit; he can't do that with his mouth closed. Remember, the Holy Spirit gives the utterance; the person does the actual talking.

Secondly, no one can drink and talk at the same time. I have seen people come to receive the Holy Spirit and open their mouth in faith. I have never seen anyone who opened his mouth in faith to receive the Holy Spirit who didn't receive as quickly as you can snap your finger.

I have seen thousands upon thousands of folks filled with the Holy Ghost — preachers and pastors of every denomination, doctors, lawyers, school teachers, college professors, laborers, farmers, and people from every walk of life.

Once I saw five businessmen come down the aisle in one of my meetings to receive the Holy Spirit. They all opened their mouths in faith that they were going to receive the Holy Spirit, and they were all filled too!

That's scriptural because Jesus said, "Come and drink" (John 7:37). If you will act on God's Word, He will honor His Word, and you can receive the Holy Ghost or whatever it is that He has promised.

Step Number 7

Keep the candidate from being distracted.

For instance, don't permit a crowd to gather around the candidate, giving instructions all at once.

This will confuse a person. I like to have only a few workers whom I have specially instructed to help folks receive the Holy Spirit.

Many times folks are a little slow about yielding to the Spirit, but if someone is there to help encourage them to yield to the Holy Spirit, people can more readily receive.

For example, when going swimming, sometimes it is hard to get some folks in the water, but if you will take the lead and get in the water and swim around and say, "The water sure feels good," they will be encouraged to get in the water too.

Similarly, sometimes you can simply speak in tongues yourself after praying with the candidate, and this will encourage the candidate to "follow you into the water," so to speak — into the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I have been in Full Gospel circles more than fifty years, and I have seen nearly everything happen you can mention when people were seeking the Holy Ghost (and a lot I don't want to mention).

For example, I have seen dear folks at the altar seeking the Holy Spirit while someone on one side of them was yelling in one ear, "Hold on Brother, hold on."

Someone else might be hollering in the other ear, "Turn loose, Brother, turn loose."

Someone kneeling right behind them would be patting him on the back hollering, "Let go, Brother, let go." Then someone sitting right in front of them would be shouting something else at the top of his voice.

Many have still received the Holy Spirit this way, not because of this kind of behavior, but in spite of it! However, even though multitudes have received, many honest and sincere believers have been driven away. We will see more folks filled with the Holy Spirit if we will follow scriptural practices.

Therefore, don't allow several people to crowd around candidates who are seeking the Holy Spirit. And don't allow more than one person to give instructions at one time, because that would cause the candidate to become confused. Let one person instruct him how to yield to the Spirit.

If others are standing nearby, have them pray quietly in tongues, not in their own language. If people are praying in their own native language, that person receiving the Holy Spirit can hear what they are saying, and it will distract him. In other words, he might get his mind on the others and what they're saying. And many times people will not yield to God if they are listening to what people around them are saying.

You will find that by following these seven steps, you will help believers receive the Holy Spirit immediately without tarrying. As you assist believers in receiving the Holy Spirit, you will feel personally blessed and rewarded for your part in their receiving this wonderful gift of the Holy Ghost.

Question For Study

1. What is the twofold purpose of this lesson?

2. This chapter list seven steps to receiving the Holy Spirit. What are they?

3. The apostles didn't pray that God would give the Samaritans the Holy Ghost. What did they pray?

4. According to Acts 2:38, who is ready to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?

5. How do we know that carnal Christians (or Christians who are sense-ruled or dominated by the flesh) can be filled with the Holy Ghost?

6. What will happen if baby Christians will walk in the light of God's Word and be led by the Holy Spirit?

7. Why can anyone lay hands on another in faith?

8. How is the Holy Ghost received?

9. Anytime you ever speak with tongues, who will be doing the talking?

10. When the Spirit of God is moving on your tongue and lips, what must you do?
