

Do You Want to Experience the Holy Spirit

One of the great gifts of life in Jesus is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit opens our eyes that we might understand God's Word. He convicts us of sin and leads us in the ways of righteousness. He empowers us to obey God. He produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, etc. And He equips us to be witnesses of Jesus. The reality is that we simply cannot live the Christian life on our own. We need the Spirit's work in our lives. And so the question is, what needs to be true of a believer to experience the Holy Spirit? Today's passage demonstrates through two different groups of people that to experience the Spirit we must be rightly related to the Jesus.

Read Acts 19:1-7

1. What questions does Paul ask these disciples? What do you think he is trying to understand about them? What was "off" in their experience?

2. What did their lack of experience with the Holy Spirit reveal?

3. Ultimately, these disciples were baptized in Jesus' name indicating that they believed in Jesus. After this what was their experience of the Holy Spirit?

4. Should we expect a similar experience of the Holy Spirit upon conversion in our day? Why or why not?

Read Acts 19:8-20

5. How would you describe Paul's ministry in Ephesus? What was the reach of his ministry?
6. Why would Luke call the miracles "extraordinary miracles" (v. 11)? Aren't all miracles extraordinary? What's the point?
7. The sons of Sceva didn't have a personal experience of Jesus and therefore of the Spirit. They didn't believe in Jesus and proclaim him as Lord. They were simply trying to invoke Jesus' name to cast out evil spirits for personal gain (v. 13). What was the result? What does this reveal about our need to be rightly related to Jesus?
8. How did others respond to what happened with the seven sons of Sceva?

Steve said:

We experience the fulness of the Holy Spirit as we submit to the Lord Jesus. And as we experience the fulness of the Spirit, our witness is more compelling to others. By way of application, I'd like you to do something rather simple here and now . . . in response to this passage, identify anything in your life analogous to the "magic arts" practiced by the believers in Ephesus. In other words, identify anything in your life that is obviously incompatible with the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

9. Is there anything that comes to mind in your life that is obviously incompatible with the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Will you submit that to Jesus? What might it cost you to do so?