

SECTION 3

God's Power for Bringing People to Jesus

Goal: *To make sure we evangelize in the power of God's Holy Spirit and not in our own wisdom and strength.*

I

Jesus called His followers to be His witnesses, but added a warning that they must not go until they received the Holy Spirit's power.

1. In the Luke 24:46-49 recording of Jesus' "Great Commission," after He said that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, Jesus told His followers to wait until they were clothed with power from God.

"And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

2. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said that the order for their sharing Him would be:
 - a. The power first.
 - b. Then the witnessing to all the world.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

3. After Jesus' followers, 120 men and women, waited together for ten days in prayer (Acts 1:14), they all were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

II

What did the Holy Spirit do for the original ones sent out to tell the world about Jesus?

1. He gave them power for ministry because Jesus knew they could not witness effectively in their own human strength and power.
 - a. Acts 11:22-24 says that when God used Barnabas to bring considerable numbers to the Lord, he was full of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Paul said it was God’s power that worked mightily in him.

***“And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me”
(Colossians 1:29).***

- c. Paul gave credit for the conviction not to his words, but to the power of the Holy Spirit.

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

- d. When Paul confronted supernatural evil and the magician was struck blind (Acts 13:8-11), Paul’s power was because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus’ followers boldness to preach Him—even to those who had crucified Jesus (Acts 2:14-36).
3. Their courage to suffer and even die for Jesus was because of the Holy Spirit (see the story about Stephen in Acts 7:54-60).

<p>III</p> <p>Why do Christians today need the same power of the Holy Spirit as we strive to complete the task of reaching the whole world for Jesus?</p>

1. It is true that each person who receives Jesus as Savior receives the Holy Spirit at that moment—as Peter told the crowd while preaching on the Day of Pentecost:

“Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

2. However, there is much of the Holy Spirit's *working* that Christians need in their taking Jesus to the whole world.
 - a. Although God is omnipotent and capable of everything, Ephesians 3:20 tells us that He is *able* to do those great things only according to the power that *works* in us:

“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”

- b. So, if we evangelize in our own power instead of letting God work with the power of His Holy Spirit, we limit what God is able to do through us.
 - c. Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18,19 for Christians who already had the Holy Spirit living in them:

“That you may know...what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

3. Why aren't human efforts alone enough to bring people to Jesus?
 - a. Plans and programs are not wrong, but only God's power through the Holy Spirit can actually convict and help people to accept Jesus.

“And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”
(1 Corinthians 2:4).

- b. In contrast to our feeble human ability, we have the same power working in us that God used when ***“He raised Him [Christ] from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places”*** (Ephesians 1:20).

4. Much of our lack of *boldness and courage* is because we have not availed ourselves of the power of the Holy Spirit as we ask God in prayer and wait for Him to give it.

<p>IV How can Christians who are trying to witness for Jesus hinder the working of the Holy Spirit?</p>

1. By ***quenching*** the Holy Spirit (literally putting out His fire).

“Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

- a. Plans and programs are important, but Christians quench God’s Spirit by substituting only human efforts for His divine power working in them.

“*Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power...*” (2 Timothy 3:5).

- b. We also quench Him by trying to persuade with *our words of wisdom* and *methods* instead of relying on the Holy Spirit of God to demonstrate His power through His Word and prayer (1 Corinthians 2:4,5).
- c. We quench the Spirit by *ignoring the urging of the Holy Spirit* when He sends us to reach such a person He knows is ready to hear of Jesus.
- d. *By being impatient* for people to accept Jesus in our own way and in our own time—when the Spirit of God has not finished softening their hearts—also quenches the Holy Spirit’s effectiveness.
- e. *By not fully availing ourselves of His power*, we limit God in His ability to do His great and mighty things in our touching the world for Jesus.

2. By **grieving** the Holy Spirit.

“*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*” (Ephesians 4:30).

- a. Christians grieve the Holy Spirit of God by sin in their lives, hindering His power from flowing freely through them.
- b. See “Must be no known unconfessed sin in the life of the pray-er” in Section 2 for what to do about your sin as a Christian so as not to grieve the Holy Spirit.
- c. “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit*” is right in the middle of the list of things Christians should and should not do to keep from sinning in Ephesians 4:25-32.

V

How can we be assured of the power of the Holy Spirit as we bring our witness of Jesus to the world?

1. Confess and turn from any sins that are grieving the Holy Spirit.
2. Make sure we are not quenching Him by insisting on doing it our own way.
3. Believe Ephesians 5:18b: that it is God’s desire that Christians, to whom this was written and who received the Holy Spirit at salvation, should keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. (The Bible’s tense in the Greek is a continuing, on-going process.)

4. Believe and trust Jesus' promise in Luke 11:13:

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”

5. Be willing to spend time alone with God in prayer—emptying yourself of your own desires and asking for His power and wisdom—so you can be full of God's Holy Spirit rather than your own self before witnessing.

For You to Do

1. Examine God's Word with an open heart to find His instructions for you personally about the Holy Spirit.
2. Look carefully at the methods and results of your witnessing efforts. Does God have more of His power for you?

For You to Pray

1. Confess any sins which are grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit, and turn from them.
2. Now ask God's Holy Spirit to fill you with all the wisdom, courage and power He knows you need to help reach someone for Jesus.
3. In silence, wait on Him to give you that power, strength and courage.

