

HICKORY RIDGE



COMMUNITY CHURCH

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

A SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE

HICKORY RIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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THE SPIRIT IN SCRIPTURE

The story of the Holy Spirit does not begin on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit is God, present and active from creation onward. He gives life, reveals God, points people to Jesus, forms believers into Christ's likeness, and equips the church to participate in God's mission.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit belongs inside that larger biblical story. This guide follows the Spirit's work through creation, Israel, Jesus, Pentecost, Acts, and the life of the church. Its purpose is not simply to explain speaking in tongues, but to help believers know the Holy Spirit, understand the gift Jesus promised, and seek his empowering presence with faith and wisdom.

| Who the Holy Spirit Is

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, a religious feeling, or merely the source of unusual experiences. He is the third person of the Trinity - fully God with the Father and the Son. Scripture describes him speaking, teaching, guiding, revealing, choosing, helping, and being grieved. These are the actions of a personal divine presence, not an abstract power.

The Spirit shares the life and character of God. He is eternal, present everywhere, powerful, and perfectly acquainted with the mind of God. Christians worship one God who has made himself known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 9:14

| The Spirit and Every Christian

Every follower of Jesus has the Holy Spirit. The Spirit draws us to Christ, brings us to new birth, joins us to the body of Christ, lives within us, assures us that we belong to God, helps us pray, and begins the lifelong work of making us like Jesus. Paul says plainly that anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit of Christ.

Speaking in tongues is not the moment the Holy Spirit first becomes present in a Christian's life. Spirit baptism is an empowering work of the Spirit who already gives life to and dwells within the believer. No Christian is Spirit-less, and no spiritual gift makes one believer more loved, more saved, or more valuable than another.

John 3:5-8; Romans 8:9-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 12-13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14

| The Spirit at Creation

The first page of Scripture introduces the Spirit of God hovering over the waters while God brings form, order, light, and life to creation. The Bible later describes living creatures receiving life from God's breath and the earth being renewed when God sends his Spirit. From the beginning, the Spirit is associated with God's life-giving presence and creative work.

This matters because the Holy Spirit is not a late arrival in God's story. Pentecost is new, but the Spirit is not new. The same Spirit poured out by the risen Jesus is the eternal Spirit who was present at creation and active throughout Israel's history.

Genesis 1:1-2; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:27-30

| The Spirit in Israel's Story

In the Old Testament, the Spirit comes upon particular people and equips them for particular assignments. Joseph is recognized as a man in whom the Spirit of God is present and is given wisdom to lead in a crisis. Bezalel is filled with the Spirit for skilled craftsmanship in the tabernacle. The Spirit empowers judges such as Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson to deliver Israel.

The Spirit also equips kings and prophets. Saul prophesies when the Spirit comes upon him. David is anointed, and from that day the Spirit works powerfully in his life. Micah says he is filled with power by the Spirit of the Lord to speak God's message. Scripture itself is produced as people speak from God while carried along by the Holy Spirit.

These stories show a repeated pattern: God gives his Spirit, the Spirit empowers people for God's purposes, and the result is often courageous action, unusual wisdom, skilled service, or inspired speech. The Spirit is never given merely to create an experience. His power enables people to participate in what God is doing.

Genesis 41:38-39; Exodus 31:1-5; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6; 1 Samuel 10:6-10; 16:13; Micah 3:8; 2 Peter 1:20-21

| Moses and the Seventy Elders

Numbers 11 provides an especially important background for Pentecost. Moses is overwhelmed by the burden of leading Israel, so God places the Spirit who is upon Moses on seventy elders. When the Spirit rests on them, they prophesy. Two elders remain in the camp and prophesy there, prompting Joshua to ask Moses to stop them.

Moses answers with a hope that reaches beyond that moment: he wishes all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them. In Moses' day the Spirit's empowering presence rested on selected leaders. Moses longed for a day when God's whole people could share in that prophetic empowerment. The prophets later announced that such a day was coming.

Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30

| A Promise of Something New

The prophets looked forward to a new work of the Spirit. Isaiah spoke of the Spirit resting upon the coming Messiah and empowering him to bring justice, freedom, healing, and good news. Ezekiel promised that God would give his people a new heart, put his Spirit within them, and enable them to walk in his ways. Joel announced that God would pour out his Spirit on all people - sons and daughters, young and old, servants as well as leaders.

The promise is not that the Spirit would begin to exist or act. The promise is that God's people would experience his presence in a broader, inward, covenant-forming, and mission-empowering way. What had often been experienced by selected people would be poured out across the whole community. God's people would become a Spirit-filled and prophetic people.

Isaiah 11:1-5; 42:1-4; 61:1-3; Ezekiel 36:25-27; 37:14; Joel 2:28-29

| Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Jesus' life and ministry are saturated with the presence of the Spirit. He is conceived by the Holy Spirit. At his baptism, the Spirit descends upon him. He is full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and empowered by the Spirit as he announces good news, freedom, healing, and the arrival of God's kingdom. The Spirit who empowered selected servants in Israel now rests upon the promised Messiah without measure.

John the Baptist identifies a further part of Jesus' mission: John baptizes in water, but Jesus will baptize in the Holy Spirit. The source of Spirit baptism is therefore not a church, a minister, or a method. Jesus is the baptizer. The gift points to his identity and continues his ministry through his people.

Jesus also teaches his followers to ask. He compares the Father to a good parent who does not trick a hungry child. If imperfect parents know how to give good gifts, the heavenly Father can be trusted to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. Seeking the Spirit begins with confidence in the goodness of God.

Luke 1:35; 3:21-22; 4:1, 14, 18-19; John 1:29-34; 3:34; Luke 11:9-13

| The Spirit Had Not Yet Been Given

During the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus invites anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink. He promises that rivers of living water will flow from within those who believe. John then explains that Jesus was speaking about the Spirit, whom believers would later receive, because 'the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.'

John cannot mean that the Spirit did not exist or had never worked in anyone. John has already described the Spirit descending upon Jesus, and the rest of Scripture shows the Spirit active from creation onward. His aside signals that something new in salvation history was still ahead. The promised outpouring would be connected to Jesus' death, resurrection, exaltation, and the beginning of the new covenant age.

After Jesus was glorified, the Spirit would be given to the whole community of believers with a new fullness and scope. He would live within them, unite them to the risen Christ, make them a prophetic people, and empower them to carry Jesus' mission into the world. Pentecost is not the Spirit's first appearance; it is the public arrival of this promised new-covenant outpouring.

John 7:37-39; John 12:23-24; Acts 2:32-33

| Jesus Promises the Spirit to His Followers

On the night before his death, Jesus prepares the disciples for life after his physical departure. He promises another Advocate - the Spirit of truth - who will be with them and in them. The Spirit will teach them, remind them of Jesus' words, testify about Jesus, guide them into truth, and glorify Jesus by making his life and work known.

The Spirit does not replace Jesus or draw attention away from him. He makes the presence of the risen Jesus real to the church and equips Jesus' followers to continue his witness. A genuinely Spirit-filled life will therefore become increasingly centered on Jesus, faithful to his teaching, and available for his mission.

John 14:15-18, 25-27; 15:26-27; 16:7-15

| Wait for Power from on High

After the resurrection, Jesus commissions the disciples to proclaim repentance and forgiveness to all nations. Yet he tells these already believing followers to remain in Jerusalem until they are 'clothed with power from on high.' Acts repeats the promise: they will be baptized in the Holy Spirit, receive power when the Spirit comes upon them, and become Jesus' witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

The disciples already know Jesus, have witnessed the resurrection, and have received his commission. What they still need is power for the mission. Information, sincerity, and determination are not enough. The church can fulfill Jesus' mission only through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:1-8

| Different Works of the Same Spirit

The New Testament describes several works of the Spirit. He brings people to new birth, lives within believers, incorporates them into Christ's body, forms holy character, gives gifts, and empowers witness. These works belong together, but they are not identical. Baptism in the Holy Spirit refers particularly to the empowering gift Jesus promised his followers for life, service, and mission.

The Assemblies of God describes this experience as distinct from the new birth. That distinction does not mean the Spirit was absent beforehand. It means the Spirit who already gives life and dwells within the Christian can also come upon and fill the believer with empowering fullness. In Acts, this sometimes follows conversion after a period of time and sometimes happens almost immediately. The theological distinction does not require the same timetable in every person's story.

John 3:5-8; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-48; 19:1-7

| The Day of Pentecost

Pentecost was the Jewish Feast of Weeks, celebrated fifty days after Passover. Pilgrims from across the Roman world were gathered in Jerusalem. About 120 followers of Jesus had been praying and waiting together when the promised day arrived.

There was a sound like a violent wind, what appeared to be tongues of fire rested on each person, and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began speaking in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. The crowd heard the mighty works of God declared in its own languages and asked, 'What does this mean?'

Peter answered by preaching Jesus. He explained that Joel's promise was being fulfilled: the Spirit was being poured out on sons and daughters, young and old, servants and leaders. He announced that the crucified Jesus had been raised, exalted to the Father's right hand, and had poured out what the crowd could see and hear. The signs of Pentecost pointed to the lordship of the risen Jesus.

Peter then invited the crowd to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, receive forgiveness, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise was for them, their children, and all who were far off. Pentecost began with one praying community in Jerusalem, but from the beginning the gift was aimed toward an ever-widening people.

Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-41; Joel 2:28-32

| What Was New at Pentecost

At Pentecost, God did what he had always done—he gave his Spirit, empowered people for his work, and inspired speech. Yet he also did something new. The risen Messiah poured out the Spirit upon the whole believing community. The prophetic hope of Moses and Joel began to take visible form as women and men, young and old, ordinary people as well as recognized leaders, became participants in the Spirit's mission.

The Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in tongues, and people from many nations heard the wonders of God in their own languages. The scene revealed the international direction of Jesus' mission: the gospel would go to every people and language, and the Spirit would empower the church to carry the good news across every boundary. Pentecost was both a gift of God's presence and a commissioning for God's mission.

| The Gift Spreads Through Acts

Acts does not leave Spirit baptism confined to one unrepeatable day in Jerusalem. Luke shows the gift recurring as the message of Jesus crosses new boundaries. The stories are not identical, but together they form a recognizable pattern of believers receiving the Spirit's empowering presence.

Jerusalem again. After Peter and John are threatened, the church prays for boldness. The place is shaken, they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they speak God's word boldly. People who were filled in Acts 2 are filled again in Acts 4, showing that life in the Spirit includes repeated experiences of fresh empowering.

Samaria. The Samaritans believe Philip's preaching and are baptized in water. Peter and John later pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Something observable happens, although Luke does not name the manifestation. The story shows believers receiving an empowering work of the Spirit after coming to faith.

Saul of Tarsus. After Saul encounters the risen Jesus, an ordinary disciple named Ananias lays hands on him so that he may regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts does not mention tongues in that scene, though Paul later says he speaks in tongues frequently.

The household of Cornelius. While Peter is still preaching, the Holy Spirit comes upon Gentile hearers. Jewish believers know the gift has been poured out because they hear them speaking in tongues and praising God. The sign makes their equal inclusion unmistakable, and they are baptized in water.

Ephesus. Paul meets disciples whose understanding is incomplete. After they are baptized in the name of Jesus and Paul lays hands on them, the Holy Spirit comes upon them; they speak in tongues and prophesy.

Acts 4:23-31; 8:4-24; 9:1-19; 1 Corinthians 14:18; Acts 10:34-48; 11:15-18; 19:1-7

| A Pattern Without a Formula

These accounts include prayer, waiting, preaching, water baptism, laying on of hands, spontaneous outpouring, tongues, prophecy, praise, bold speech, and mission. They do not present one technique that controls God. Sometimes people wait; sometimes the Spirit comes while the message is still being preached. Sometimes apostles pray; sometimes a little-known disciple lays hands on someone; sometimes no human agent is involved.

The recurring center is not a method. The risen Jesus gives the Spirit, believers receive, the Spirit makes his presence known, and people are empowered to praise, speak, serve, and bear witness. The variety protects us from formulas; the repetition invites us to expect the gift.

| What Baptism in the Holy Spirit Means

The phrase 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' comes from John the Baptist's promise that Jesus would baptize in the Spirit, a promise Jesus repeats in Acts. Luke also speaks of being filled with the Spirit, receiving the Spirit, the Spirit coming upon people, the gift of the Spirit, and the promise of the Father. No single expression says everything; together they describe believers being immersed in, overtaken by, and empowered through the Spirit's presence.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift of the risen Jesus through which believers are filled and empowered for witness, service, worship, prayer, spiritual gifts, and participation in his mission. It is not a reward for unusually holy people, an achievement produced by effort, or entrance into an elite group. It is grace for ordinary followers of Jesus who need God's power to do God's work.

Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4-8; 2:33, 38-39; 10:44-47

| Power for Witness and Service

Acts 1:8 gives the controlling purpose: the Spirit gives power to be Jesus' witnesses. In Acts, timid believers speak with courage, the church crosses racial and cultural barriers, leaders are directed and sent, people serve with wisdom, and spiritual gifts confirm the good news. Spirit baptism is deeply personal, but it is never merely private.

Power does not mean domination, spiritual celebrity, or constant intensity. The Spirit empowers believers to tell the truth about Jesus, love people across boundaries, endure opposition, serve where needed, pray beyond their own ability, and make the character and reign of Jesus visible. The Spirit makes the church effective by making it faithful to Jesus.

Acts 1:8; 4:29-31; 6:3-10; 8:26-40; 13:1-4; 1 Peter 4:10-11

| The Beginning of a Spirit-Filled Life

Spirit baptism is an important experience, but it is not a finish line. The New Testament calls believers to keep being filled with the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, use spiritual gifts, and bear the Spirit's fruit. A past experience cannot replace present dependence upon God.

The goal is a life increasingly open to the Spirit - attentive to his direction, responsive to his gifts, courageous in witness, faithful in service, and transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18-21; Galatians 5:16-25; Jude 20

| What Speaking in Tongues Is

Speaking in tongues is Spirit-enabled speech in a language the speaker has not learned. The person speaks, and the Spirit provides the utterance. The gift is supernatural, but the speaker is not unconscious or possessed. The Spirit works through a person's willing response rather than eliminating self-control.

In Acts 2, listeners recognize the languages and hear God's mighty works declared. At Caesarea, tongues are described as praising God. Paul describes tongues as speech directed toward God, prayer, singing, praise, and thanksgiving. Scripture does not identify every tongue as a known human language, nor does it require us to label tongues as angelic speech. The consistent emphasis is that the speech is enabled by the Spirit and honors God.

Acts 2:4-11; 10:44-46; 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:2, 14-17

| Why Tongues Fit the Mission

The word translated 'tongues' also means 'languages.' Languages are a fitting sign for a gift that empowers the church to carry the gospel to the nations. At Pentecost, the sign announces that the risen Jesus is Lord of every people and that his good news will not remain inside one language, ethnicity, or region.

Tongues also fit the Old Testament pattern of the Spirit producing inspired speech. At Pentecost, Peter interprets tongues through Joel's promise that God's sons and daughters would prophesy. Tongues are a new form of Spirit-inspired speech for a new-covenant people whose mission extends to the ends of the earth.

Numbers 11:25-29; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:4-18; Revelation 7:9-10

| Initial Physical Evidence

The Assemblies of God teaches that speaking in tongues, as the Spirit enables, is the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. 'Initial' means the first observable sign associated with receiving this empowering fullness. 'Physical' means that the evidence involves actual speech that can be heard. 'Evidence' means that the gift makes an inward reception outwardly recognizable.

This conviction comes from the recurring pattern in Acts. Tongues are explicitly present at Pentecost, at Caesarea, and at Ephesus. At Caesarea, Peter and his companions recognize that the Gentiles have received the same gift precisely because they hear them speaking in tongues and praising God. The other reception stories share the same wider pattern of observable, Spirit-inspired response.

Tongues are the initial evidence, but they are not the purpose of Spirit baptism and not the only continuing evidence of a Spirit-filled life. The purpose is empowerment for witness and service. The continuing evidence includes growing love for Jesus and people, boldness, obedience, holiness, generosity, spiritual gifts, and faithful participation in God's mission.

Acts 2:4; 8:14-19; 10:44-48; 11:15-17; 19:6

| Tongues and Salvation

Speaking in tongues is not required for salvation. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit brings us to new birth and lives in every person who belongs to Christ. Spiritual gifts flow from salvation; they do not purchase it or prove that Jesus' saving work is complete.

A Christian who has not spoken in tongues is not less saved, less loved, or a second-class member of Christ's body. At the same time, Pentecostal teaching invites every believer to seek all that Jesus has promised, including baptism in the Holy Spirit and openness to the speech the Spirit enables.

John 3:16; Romans 8:9; 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3

| Tongues and Spiritual Maturity

Speaking in tongues is not a badge of maturity. The Corinthian church practiced remarkable spiritual gifts while still struggling with pride, division, selfishness, and disorder. Paul did not tell them to abandon the gifts; he taught them to exercise the gifts in love and to pursue the way of Jesus.

A genuine spiritual experience never excuses harmful behavior or replaces Christian character. Gifts are received by grace. Maturity appears as love, humility, holiness, faithfulness, self-control, and service. The gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit are meant to grow together.

1 Corinthians 1:4-11; 3:1-3; 12:4-7; 13:1-13; Galatians 5:22-25

| Personal Prayer and Public Ministry

The New Testament describes tongues in more than one setting. In personal devotion, Paul speaks of praying, singing, praising, and giving thanks in tongues. This prayer is directed to God and can strengthen the believer. Paul is grateful for his own practice of tongues, while also insisting that gathered worship serve the understanding and growth of others.

In a gathering of the church, a public message in tongues should be interpreted so that the church can be strengthened. If no interpreter is present, the speaker should remain quiet publicly and speak to God personally. A tongue with interpretation can function like prophecy by communicating something the congregation can understand and receive.

Pentecostals commonly distinguish this public gift from the believer's devotional use of tongues and from tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism. The speech is the same in essence, but its purpose and use differ. Not everyone will give a public message in tongues, just as not everyone exercises every other public gift.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; 14:1-5, 13-19, 26-28

| Love, Order, and Self-Control

Paul's answer to disorder is not prohibition. He says not to forbid speaking in tongues, but he also requires love, interpretation, discernment, turn-taking, and order. Spiritual gifts remain under the believer's responsible control. The Spirit does not compel people to ignore Scripture, leadership, the needs of others, or the presence of guests.

The question in gathered worship is not simply, 'Did something supernatural happen?' It is also, 'Did this honor Jesus, agree with Scripture, build up the church, operate in love, and reflect the peace and order of God?' The Holy Spirit who gives gifts also forms wise and considerate people.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 14:20-33, 39-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

| The Gifts of the Spirit

Spirit baptism opens believers more fully to the Spirit's power for ministry. The New Testament names gifts such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, and others. These are expressions of God's grace through ordinary people for the good of others.

The Spirit distributes gifts as he chooses. No believer possesses every gift, and no gift makes one member of the body unnecessary or superior. The church needs the full variety of the Spirit's work. Believers should desire spiritual gifts, practice them with humility, test what is spoken, and use every gift to strengthen others and make Jesus known.

Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 14:1, 26; 1 Peter 4:10-11

| The Fruit of the Spirit

The Spirit who empowers ministry also transforms character. He produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities are not an alternative to spiritual gifts, and spiritual gifts are not an alternative to these qualities. A healthy Spirit-filled life welcomes both the power and the character of the Spirit.

The fullest evidence of a life yielded to the Spirit is not one isolated moment but an ongoing pattern: Jesus is honored, people are loved, sin is resisted, gifts serve others, the gospel is shared, and the believer continues to depend on God.

Galatians 5:16-25; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

| Discerning the Spirit's Work

Scripture invites openness and discernment at the same time. We should not quench the Spirit or despise spiritual gifts, but we should test what is spoken. The Holy Spirit will not contradict the character of God, the teaching of Scripture, or the lordship of Jesus.

Helpful questions include: Does this confess and honor Jesus as Lord? Is it consistent with Scripture? Does it build up others? Is it practiced in love and humility? Is there good fruit? Is the person willing to receive correction and remain under wise pastoral leadership? Genuine spiritual activity does not need manipulation, exaggeration, or immunity from accountability.

John 15:26; 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 14:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; 1 John 4:1-3

| Seeking the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Begin with Jesus, not with a manifestation. Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. The goal is not to reproduce another person's experience, achieve a spiritual status, or satisfy someone else's expectations. The goal is to receive more fully from God and become more available to his mission.

Come to Jesus. Turn your attention toward the risen Lord. Worship him, thank him for salvation, and remember that the Spirit's work is centered on Jesus.

Ask. Pray honestly for the fullness and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus specifically teaches believers to ask the good Father for the Spirit.

Receive. Spirit baptism is a gift of grace, not something earned through perfect behavior, emotional intensity, or the right technique. Receive with trust rather than strain.

Respond. The Spirit does not erase your will or forcibly control your mouth. At Pentecost the believers spoke as the Spirit enabled them. As the Spirit prompts, cooperate and speak rather than waiting to be physically compelled.

Keep seeking. If nothing happens immediately, delay is not rejection. Continue to seek Jesus, remain open to the Spirit, and welcome prayer from trusted believers.

Luke 11:9-13; Acts 1:14; 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 9:17; 19:6; Galatians 3:2-5

| Healthy Prayer Ministry

The New Testament often connects receiving the Spirit with prayer and sometimes with the laying on of hands. A trusted pastor or mature believer can pray, encourage, answer questions, and help someone recognize fear or confusion. The person seeking remains free to respond to God without pressure.

No one needs to imitate another person's sounds, repeat coached syllables, manufacture emotion, or prove that an experience occurred. Leaders should not shame, rank, or publicly expose sincere seekers. Healthy ministry makes room for worship, silence, questions, time, and repeated prayer. It trusts the Spirit to give the gift and the believer to respond.

| If Nothing Happens Right Away

A person who has not spoken in tongues is not less saved, less loved, or a second-class Christian. The Spirit is already present and active in every believer. God is not measuring your worth by the speed or intensity of an experience.

Continue seeking Jesus rather than obsessing over yourself. Ask simple questions: Am I afraid of losing control? Am I trying to earn a gift? Am I waiting for God to move my mouth without my participation? Am I carrying confusion from a past church experience? These questions can be explored without blame. Time spent in God's presence is not wasted, and a delay is not a divine rejection.

| Keep Being Filled

The Spirit-filled life continues after the initial experience. Believers can seek fresh filling for courage, prayer, service, worship, and mission. The same disciples filled at Pentecost were filled again when they faced new opposition. Paul later commands the church to keep being filled with the Spirit.

Continue praying, continue using the gifts God gives, continue growing in love and holiness, and continue saying yes to the mission of Jesus. Spirit baptism is a doorway into deeper dependence, not a certificate that the journey is finished.

Acts 4:23-31; Ephesians 5:18-21; 2 Timothy 1:6-8

Common Questions

Do I already have the Holy Spirit if I am a Christian?

Yes. The Spirit brings believers to new life and dwells in everyone who belongs to Christ.

Why seek Spirit baptism if the Spirit already lives in me?

Because the Spirit's saving and indwelling work does not exhaust all that God offers. Jesus promised empowering fullness for witness, service, prayer, and spiritual gifts.

Must Spirit baptism happen a long time after conversion?

No fixed delay is required. Acts includes both a period of time after conversion and an experience that occurs almost immediately. The work is distinguishable even when the timing is close.

Is speaking in tongues required for salvation?

No. Salvation is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Why does the Assemblies of God call tongues the initial physical evidence?

Because tongues repeatedly appear as the first observable sign when people receive Spirit baptism in Acts, and Acts 10 explicitly identifies tongues and praise as the evidence that the Gentiles received the same gift.

Does speaking in tongues prove spiritual maturity?

No. Christian maturity is seen in growing love, holiness, obedience, humility, self-control, and faithfulness.

Does everyone give public messages in tongues?

No. The Spirit distributes different public gifts to different members of the church. A public message in tongues requires interpretation.

Are tongues always known human languages?

Acts 2 describes languages understood by the gathered crowd. Other passages do not identify the language. Scripture emphasizes that the speech is enabled by the Spirit and directed toward God.

Will I lose control?

No. The Spirit enables speech without erasing human participation or self-control. Paul gives speakers clear instructions about when to speak and when to remain quiet.

Can I seek the gift again if I prayed before and nothing happened?

Yes. Delay is not rejection. Continue seeking Jesus with trust, and invite a wise pastor or mature believer to pray with you.

I A Guided Reading Path

- 1** Meet the Spirit. Read Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 104:27-30; John 14:15-27; Romans 8:1-27. Notice who the Spirit is and the range of his work.
- 2** Trace the Old Testament pattern. Read Exodus 31:1-5; Numbers 11:16-30; 1 Samuel 10:1-10; 16:1-13; Micah 3:8. Ask what the Spirit empowers people to do.
- 3** Listen to the prophets. Read Isaiah 11:1-5; 61:1-3; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-32. List what is promised and who will receive it.
- 4** Watch Jesus. Read Luke 3:15-22; 4:1-21; 11:9-13; John 7:37-39; 14-16. Notice the Spirit's role in Jesus' ministry and promises.
- 5** Read Pentecost slowly. Read Acts 1-2. Pay attention to Jesus, prayer, power, tongues, Joel's prophecy, witness, repentance, and the new community.
- 6** Follow the gift across boundaries. Read Acts 4:23-31; 8:4-24; 9:1-19; 10:1-48; 19:1-7. Compare what repeats and what varies.
- 7** Learn how gifts serve the church. Read 1 Corinthians 12-14 in one sitting. Track the themes of Jesus' lordship, the body, love, edification, interpretation, and order.
- 8** Respond. Read Luke 11:9-13 and Acts 1:14 again. Ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit, empower your witness, and make every gift fruitful in love.

| Further Study

Brian W. Lidbeck, Making Sense of Speaking in Tongues: A Look at Tongues in Light of Christ

Assemblies of God Position Paper on Baptism in the Holy Spirit – ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Baptism-in-the-Holy-Spirit

Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths, articles 7 and 8
