

The Normal Christian Life: *Not Weak, Not Weird, Not Wandering*

Week Three: *How to STOP God's Movement*



God has made it abundantly clear: He desires and intends to pour out His Holy Spirit on **all** people (see [Joel 2:28-32](#) and [Acts 2:14-21](#)). He makes it a firm promise through the revealed truth of [Acts 2:38-39](#). So, if the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for every person—including you and me—is indeed the promise of God, why have so many of us never had the distinct experience of being baptized by the Holy Spirit? Why doesn't God get done in more believers what He has promised to do for **all** believers? Is it possible that we have a part to play in this? Is it possible that *we* are the ones who are holding back the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Is it possible that we are stopping God's movement in our lives? [Acts 2:38](#) lays out two important prerequisites for being filled (*baptized*) with the Holy Spirit. The first is **repentance**—meaning to pivot away from everything that is opposed to God in our lives. The second is **salvation**—to be certain we are “born again” by receiving Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior (see [John 1:12](#) and [John 3:1-18](#)). It is important to recognize potential “strongholds” of thought and ideas that are long-held inner beliefs which are opposed to Christ. To experience God's power in our lives, we must repent of those stronghold thoughts and bring them into obedience to the will of Jesus Christ (see [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#)).

So What? What am I supposed to DO with this?

- **Decide if my American contentment** is enough for me, or if I truly want more of God. Do I want God enough to face and tear down the strongholds in my life that pull against God's activity?
- **Ask God to help identify** the strongholds in my life. What deep-rooted and long-held beliefs and ideas do I have that are out of alignment with God's will?
- **Repent of the strongholds.** Simply change my mind. God will help me change your thinking if I will start with repentance.
- **Stand in fresh faith** that the Holy Spirit will empower me.

This week, make a commitment to *invest four blocks of time* to meditate on God's Word slowly and carefully, to reflect on the internal leanings of your own heart, and surrender to God for His help.

- You can also watch our “*Daily Six*” video series released each day this week—*Monday through Thursday*—that parallels these readings from the Book of Acts. (<https://www.youtube.com/@mounthopechurch1651>)

Day One: Do You Possess the Name of Jesus?

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 3:1-12](#).

Reflect: As Peter and John began to live out their new Spirit-filled, Spirit-anointed life, there was a fresh boldness and power they began to engage and live from. Peter recognized he had something far more valuable for the disabled man than money. He had healing to offer in the “name of Jesus.” When the power given to him by the Holy Spirit was coupled with the authority of the name of Jesus, Peter served the man with all that God had. Led by the Spirit to extend healing to him, the results were miraculous. Consider how Jesus instructs us to use his name—his delegated authority—in mission and ministry (see [Mark 16:17](#), [John 14:13-14](#), [John 15:16](#), and [John 16:23-26](#)). As believers in Jesus, we have received a delegated authority to fulfill his mission in the world.

- *Do you believe that you have been given the authority of Jesus' name to use in spiritual battle? Why or why not? What do you think it looks like to live from this place of authority in his name?*
- *Do you consider the Book of Acts to represent the “normal” pattern of what it looks like to follow Jesus? If so, would not the example of how God worked in the disciples' lives also apply to you? If not, what prevents you from believing this?*

Pray: *God, reveal to me what authority has been given to me in Jesus' name. Help me recognize how you want me to stand in faith upon that name for answered prayer. Use me in spiritual battle to bring about your will in every circumstance. Fill me with your Spirit and power. In Jesus' name!* (**ALSO:** Consider praying [Psalm 28:7-9](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Two: Jesus is All God Has for Us

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 3:13-26](#).

Reflect: When God healed the disabled man through Peter leveraging Jesus' name, the crowd was surprised and shaken. To them, Jesus was the criminally blasphemous fellow they had Rome crucify mere weeks beforehand. But now, his name—which symbolizes his authority and identity—was being used to perform miraculous demonstrations of God's power. Peter challenged them to repent and turn to this same Jesus they had hated weeks ago, arguing that Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of all the promises God had ever made to them. Jesus is all that God has for us, so we'd be best to give all of ourselves to him.

- *Who is Jesus to you? Is he your all? Is he more important than all others whom you love, or all agendas you have? Why or why not?*
- *Wherever Jesus is not the most important to you, what might you need to repent of to move him to the center of your life? What beliefs, values, or impulses need to be surrendered to him?*

Pray: *God, search my heart and reveal to me where I am holding other things, other ideas, or other people in a higher place of importance than you. Lead me in repentance and surrender to truly make you Lord of my life. Help me make you the most important thing in my life. In Jesus' name!* (ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 131](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Three: Have You Been with Jesus?

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 4:1-13](#).

Reflect: The apostles were hauled in front of the Sanhedrin for healing the disabled man in Jesus' name. This healing threatened the Jewish leaders by proving Jesus was indeed Lord. But the disciples preached Christ to these powerful men without hesitation. They were filled with the Holy Spirit as they spoke. The men opposing them could not deny the power by which they spoke, recognizing that they "had been with Jesus."

- *Are you close enough to the heart of Jesus that other people take note and recognize that you have been with him?*

- *What do you think it means to be "with Jesus?" Is this an intimacy in prayer? Or a deep faith in his reality? Or a commitment to his Word? What is it for you to be with Jesus?*

Pray: *God, lead me into such a powerful encounter with you that it would be obvious to me and to others that I have been in your presence. Reveal to me what intimacy with you looks like and what I need to do to be in close proximity to you in my life. In Jesus' name!* (ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 73:23-28](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Four: Obedience and Boldness in the Holy Spirit

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 4:14-37](#).

Reflect: When people in power have their authority threatened, they usually try to stop the threat rather than reflect on what they should change. The Jewish political leaders were deeply afraid of what Jesus' disciples were doing as the crowds were amazed at the miracles and power of the Holy Spirit they were manifesting. Peter and John were clear on who they would obey and to whom they would submit. They were fearless in their disregard for human opposition. And yet, they turned to God and raised their voices for more strength. They had been bold; they wanted more boldness. And the Holy Spirit was more than willing to oblige. Their prayer meeting was literally shaken, and the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them.

- *How do you feel about the opposition that seems to be growing in our culture towards Christianity? While it is not a universal hostility, there are many in our culture who disregard, dislike, distrust, or disdain Christianity. Does this generate fear in you? Or frustration? Or anger? How should you feel?*
- *Do you seek the Holy Spirit for strength to navigate living for Christ in our society? How about asking God for wisdom and boldness in the relationships you have with non-believers?*

Pray: *God, lead me to recognize who you have placed in my life that I should share Jesus with. Empower me with boldness to be more open with my faith around others. Use me to be a witness to who you are. I need your Holy Spirit to equip me, empower me, and fill me. In Jesus' name!* (ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 138](#) as your own prayer to God!)