

Reimagine: So That My House Will be Full
Reimagine the Work of the Holy Spirit in our Lives!
The Answer to Our Prayer Problems
Acts 1-3

INTRODUCTION: The gospels tell us that Jesus lived, Jesus died, Jesus rose, Jesus ascended into heaven, and then the book of Acts tells us what happens next.

Acts is especially the book of the Spirit. The full title of the book is The Acts of the Apostles, but that title could equally be The Acts of the Holy Spirit.

The book of Acts begins with the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit and goes on to show how the apostles preached Christ to the world.

Theme verse of Acts: ***“But you will 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.”*** (Ac 1:8)

In the American Standard Version there are **fifty-six** references to the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

In Samaria, Macedonia, Asia, and all other places where the kingdom expanded to, the Spirit moved through healings and other miracles. Paul caused the blinding of a sorcerer. Peter saw the region of Joppa open because of the resurrection of Tabitha. Philip performed wonders in Samaria. In each instance, the Holy Spirit was proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah and that these men were not just speaking empty words.

The Holy Spirit guided people to the right town, at the right time to speak to the right person. The Holy Spirit was on the move, in and through the early believers from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria, and throughout the world; and then we come to this interesting encounter in Acts 19; Paul is on his third missionary journey.

Acts 19:1-7 says, 1While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

4Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7There were about twelve men in all." (NIV)

Let's Pray

At some point in our Christian growth, we've all probably made a similar statement. I've not even heard of the Holy Spirit or I'm not sure who the Holy Spirit is and what He does.

There is a tremendous amount of confusion and controversy that exists about the Holy Spirit. Part of our problem is that the Holy Spirit seems so mystical. We can picture God the Father because we've all seen fathers. We can picture God the Son, because he became human, and we can read about what He did and what He's like. But when we try to picture the Holy Spirit, our minds go blank. We end up thinking of symbols like a dove or wind or fire.

Different churches tend to emphasize the Holy Spirit in different ways. Charismatic and Pentecostal churches focus on his power, evangelicals tend to emphasize the Spirit's work in bringing attention to Jesus Christ, and Roman Catholics focus on the Holy Spirit working through the church hierarchy.

In Acts 19. We see here 3 distinct baptisms.

Baptism of Repentance

Baptism of Water

Baptism of the Spirit

Just so you know, you don't need all three to go to heaven. All you need to do is repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (Thief on the cross)

The Holy Spirit at **conversion** places us in Christ. We are a new creation. We are perfect because of our position, not our performance.

The Holy Spirit at **water baptism** places us into the body of Christ

Holy Spirit baptism endue us with power to walk in our new life in Christ.

Baptism of Repentance – We become a new person.

Baptism of Water – the old person gets cut off.

Baptism of the Spirit – gives us power to walk in our new life.

We see these types in the Old Testament

Moses was a type of Christ.

Passing through the Red Sea a type of water baptism.

Fire by night and cloud by day was a type of Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the Trinity tells us that the Holy Spirit is a divine person. The 66 books of the Bible present God the Father as our Creator, God the Son as our savior, and God the Holy Spirit as our comforter, guide, and source of power. You might think of God the Father as **God for us**, God the Son as **God with us**, and God the Holy Spirit as **God in us**.

Jesus said in John 16:7 — ***“But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate (Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” (NIV)***

The Greek word is Parakletos! It is an incredibly rich word in the Greek language — there isn't one English word that can capture all its meanings!

- The word Parakletos was used in the legal arena to describe a defense attorney, or a character witness in a trial!
- The word Parakletos was used to describe a specialist in any field who could come in and supply the missing knowledge or insight needed to solve a perplexing problem!
- The word Parakletos was an encourager who knew the right thing to say or do when a person was suffering or discouraged!

Note that a Parakletos wasn't something — a Parakletos was **someone**. Just so you know, when Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit, He used the personal pronouns "he and him!"

2 Corinthians 13:14, where Paul writes: ***"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*** (NIV)

The Holy Spirit works in our lives in many ways!

A. The Holy Spirit wants to help us — get right! (Salvation)

John 16:8 — ***"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment..."***

B. The Holy Spirit wants to help us — grow right! (Sanctification)

Healthy ***babies*** grow. Healthy ***believers*** grow — being born again or born from above speaks of a beginning not an end!

Physical and spiritual growth is a process — and the Holy Spirit is the power (or the enabler) of that process!

C. The Holy Spirit wants to help us — go right! (Service)

Acts 1:8 — ***"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*** (NIV)

The Greek word translated 'Power' is 'dunimous' — where we get our English word 'dynamic' and 'dynamite.' The real meaning of the word is more than explosiveness — it was a word that literally meant — ability! The most basic meaning is — The ability to do whatever needs to be done!

People are too broken to be fixed through human caregiving; they need to be pieced back together through the supernatural healing of Jesus through the working of the Holy Spirit in and through believers, like you and me."

Commentator Lloyd Olgivie puts it like this, "The power of Pentecost is for people. What happened at Pentecost is for the paralysis of the world. The Holy Spirit, Christ in the present tense, is for the healing of people in the present age."

The Holy Spirit wants to help us — get right!...The Holy Spirit wants to help us — grow right!...The Holy Spirit wants to help us — go right!

D. The Holy Spirit want to partner with us in prayer.

How many believe that prayer is important? Have you ever struggled to pray? (Guilty; Busy; Tired, Distracted) Have you ever struggled to stay focused while praying? Have you ever been confused about what to pray for ... or how to pray about it?

There is an answer for our prayer problems! There is a way for us to defeat the struggles we so often have in prayer ... and experience a breakthrough that will revolutionize our prayer life and prayer effectiveness.

The answer to all our prayer problems is a person ...the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit not only has the solutions to our prayer struggles ... he is literally the spirit of prayer...who makes connecting with God possible and powerful!

Jude 20 says, ***"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit."***

Ephesians 6:18 says, ***"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."***

Romans 8:26,27 says, ***"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."***

To 'pray in the Spirit' ... or 'by the Spirit' are phrases that focus us on the prayer partnership we're meant to have with the Holy Spirit!

There are three ways in which the Holy Spirit partners with us in prayer.

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES US TO PRAY!

- There are many of us who view prayer as our idea ... as something we initiate ... let's be honest it's most often when we're in a crisis — like the pilot of a single engine plane who radioed an urgent message to the control tower:

“Pilot to tower, I’m 300 miles from the airport, 600 feet above the ground, and I’m out of fuel. I am descending rapidly. Please advise. Over.”

Moments later the air traffic controller responded — “Tower to pilot ... repeat after me — ‘Our Father who art in heaven...’”

- Prayer for many people is something we feel we must do to get God’s attention and hopefully receive God’s divine intervention!

Prayer doesn't start with us knocking on God’s door ... prayer starts with God knocking on our door! Revelation 3:20 says, ***“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” (NIV)***

Revelation 3:20 isn't about evangelism ... it's about **fellowship** ... it was Christ’s call to a group of Christians who were lukewarm and had lost their passion for God!

A. The Holy Spirit Arouses Us To — Koinonia prayer!

Arouse means: *to stir to action or strong response; to excite:*

While there is no exact translation in English, koinonia is a Greek word most closely associated as a divinely intimate, holy unity among believers—and between believers and the Lord—involving everything from spiritual oneness in the Holy Spirit, community life, sharing contributions from money to food gifts, and the communion partaken in the body and blood of Christ Jesus. The Book of Acts is the first place we see the word koinonia in the Bible.

While some are tempted to substitute the word “fellowship” for koinonia, it’s far deeper. Fellowship is a more surface-level, friendly relationship, while koinonia is intimate unity. As the apostles became filled with the Holy Spirit and then helped establish the first communities of new believers, who shared

not only in the Spirit, but also in all aspects of life together, from meals and homes to money.

In the little booklet — My Heart, Christ's Home — Robert Munger makes the same discovery as he writes about a man who accepts Christ and begins to let Jesus renovate every room of his heart!

The living room was the place he agreed to meet with Jesus daily ... just for fellowship and companionship ... but as his life became more and more hectic his times with Jesus became more sporadic ... until one day as he was rushing out of the house, he saw Jesus sitting in the Living Room just waiting...

Robert felt so convicted that he had neglected his special guest ... and he heard the master say the following —

'The trouble is that you have been thinking of the quiet time, of Bible study and prayer, as a means for your own spiritual growth. This is true, but you have forgotten that this time means something to me also. Remember, I love you. At a great cost I have redeemed you. I value your fellowship. Don't neglect this hour if only for my sake. **Whether or not you want to be with me, remember I want to be with you.** I love you!'

1 Corinthians 1:9 ***"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*** (NIV)

The truth is that Christ wants our fellowship. He loves us and wants us to be with Him. Don't let Christ wait alone in the living room of your heart, but every day find a time and place when, with the Word of God and in prayer, to be with him."

B. The Holy Spirit Awakens Us to — Warfare Prayer!

How many know that our greatest battles aren't physical, financial, or relational ... our greatest battles are spiritual!

The average Christian is the center of attention in a war they may not even be aware that a war even going on. Some people who are Christians do not understand the nature of the warfare aspect of the Christian life. The Christian life is not a walk; it is a war. The Christian life is not a playground, it is a

battleground. There is a war going on in the seen world and in the unseen world.

Ephesians 6:12 says, ***"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*** (NIV)

Prayer is an offensive weapon, that's why Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 10:4 —

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds." (NIV)

There are times when the Holy Spirit stirs us to stand in the gap for someone or something ... to battle in prayer ... to fight or wrestle for God's will to be done!

In Acts 12, King Herod had James the brother of John killed and Peter put in prison. Beginning in verse 5 we have this amazing story.

"Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

The truth is we know people who are in a prison who need to be free. Free from addiction, from sin, from bondage, from whatever; and what will help get them out is prayer...warfare prayer, earnest prayer, Holy Spirit inspired prayer.

6The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

9Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

12When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. **13**Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. **14**When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" **15**"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." **16**But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished."

The Holy Spirit stirs us to prayer so that we might have intimate fellowship with God and fight for the will of God in the lives of those we love, and in the lives of those God loves!

Not only does the Holy Spirit — INSPIRE US TO PRAY!

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT INVIGORATES UN IN PRAYER!

Romans 8:26 says, ***"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."***

There are three vital ways in which the Holy Spirit strengthens us to pray:

A. The Holy Spirit invigorates us by — energizing us!

Romans 8:11 — ***"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."*** (NIV)

This isn't simply a promise of life after we die ... it's the promise of having an overcoming life while we live!

Why could Jesus pray through the night ... while his disciples couldn't pray for an hour? Jesus gives us the answer when he said — ***"The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."***

On their own ... the disciples didn't have the energy, physically or mentally to — stay in the battle — neither do we!

There is an energizing that comes from the Holy Spirit ... an empowering that gives us the strength we need to stand and to pray — Paul writes in 2 Cor. 4:16 **"...Outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day!"**

B. The Holy Spirit Invigorates us by — enlightening Us!

Not only do we struggle physically and emotionally ... we often struggle mentally to know —

- what to pray for ... and ...
- how to pray about it!

PAUL WRITES —

"We do not know what we ought to pray for..."

If we seek to know God's will, the Holy Spirit will burden us with God's agenda!

The Holy Spirit wants to shape our prayers ... and give us a strategy for our prayers! (That's what it means to pray in "Jesus' name" ... according to his purposes and power!)

C. The Holy Spirit Invigorates us by — engaging us!

"...helps us in our weaknesses..." The Greek word translated 'helps' is a really interesting word ... it's only found in one other place in the New Testament ... the word is used when Martha asks Jesus to make Mary help her in the kitchen!

The word literally means — "To come to the aid of another, helping them bear a load but not taking the load from them."

answer ... his goal was bigger than mine ... mine was for a right solution ... his was for a right student!

The Holy Spirit inspires us to pray! The Holy Spirit invigorates us to pray!

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT INTERCEDES FOR US IN PRAYER!

Paul writes, "**... And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.**" (Romans 8:26-27, NIV)

Not only does the Holy Spirit help us pray ... by stirring us and strengthening us ... but there are times when He steps in and personally stands for us in prayer!

- Have you ever been so burdened ... so overwhelmed with a need or a situation that there were no words to express the cry of your heart ... and at that moment all you can do is groan?
- At that moment we aren't the only one groaning ... the Holy Spirit picks up our groans ... and literally lifts our wordless cries to the throne of God ... where they are heard and understood...
- Jesus intercedes for us from the Father's right hand, and the Holy Spirit intercedes for us from our hearts ... there is hope and help when we don't know what to do or where to turn or how to pray ... because the Holy Spirit stands for us in prayer!

If God is for us ... who can be against us?

Conclusion: Tony Campolo writes about a day he was invited to speak at a chapel service. Just before I spoke, eight guys took me into a back room of the chapel and got me down on my knees. Then they laid their hands on my head and prayed for me. That was good. I need all the prayer I can get.

There was only one problem. These guys prayed a long time. The more tired they got, the more they leaned on my head, and when eight guys are leaning on your head, it doesn't feel so good.

One guy wasn't even praying for me. Instead, he went on and on praying for somebody named Charlie Stoltzfis. He shouted, `Dear Lord, you know Charlie

Stoltzfis. He lives in that silver trailer down the road about a mile. You know the trailer, Lord. It's just down the road on the right-hand side.'

Anyway, he went on and on. 'Lord, Charlie told me this morning he has decided to leave his wife and his three kids. He told me he was walking out on his family. Lord, step in and do something.'

Finally, the prayers were over, and I went to the pulpit and preached. After I finished, I got in my car, drove to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and headed for home. As I drove onto the turnpike, I noticed a hitchhiker. I stopped and picked him up.

We drove a few minutes, and I said, 'Hi, my name is Tony Campolo. What's yours?' He said, 'My name is Charlie Stoltzfis.' I couldn't believe it. I got off the turnpike at the next exit and headed back. He got a bit uneasy with that. After a few minutes, he said, 'Hey, mister! Where are you taking me?' I said, 'I'm taking you home.'

He narrowed his eyes and asked, 'Why?' I said, 'It's because you just left your wife and three children, right?' That blew him away — Yes! That's right! —

I drove off the turnpike at the next exit. Then I really did him in, as I drove right to his silver trailer. When I pulled up, his eyes seemed to bulge as he asked, 'How did you know I live here?' I said, 'God told me.'

We got out of the car, and I ordered him to get in the trailer. When he opened the trailer door, his wife exclaimed, 'You're back.'

He whispered in her ear, and the more he talked the bigger her eyes got. Then I said with real authority, 'The two of you sit down. I'm going to talk, and you two are going to listen.' That afternoon, I led those two young people to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is our prayer partner.

The Holy Spirit Stirs Us To — Fellowshiping Prayer.

The Holy Spirit Stirs Us To — Fighting Prayer!

The Holy Spirit Strengthens us by — Energizing Us!

The Holy Spirit Strengthens us by — Enlightening Us!

The Holy Spirit Strengthens us by — Engaging Us!

The Holy Spirit intercedes for Us in Prayer!