

SOLID ROCK 4: WHERE DO I PLUG IN?

Let's say you've accepted the first three classes. If not hang in there....You've said, "Yes, Lord, I want You to be the Lord of my life, and I accept your word as from a loving God to me personally. Now what do I do?" You need some guidance. Well you've got the Bible. That's a big book! How do I apply it? How am I supposed to live like God wants me to? I feel like Paul in his letter to the Romans 7:19 *"The good I want to do I don't and what I try not to do I end up doing."* I need help. You're right! We all need a lot of help and God knew it. Look at these guys in Acts 8:12-18. Philip leads them to Christ, Peter comes and they receive the POWER to live it. Peter knew the need. He was the one that denied Christ and a short time later he's standing in front of crowds preaching! 1000s come to Jesus. What happened in between? Pentecost! After he was baptized (immersed) in the Holy Spirit he was totally unashamed. He followed Jesus' instructions in Acts 1:8 and waited till he got the power to be a witness. Homework: read Acts 1-5. You can believe and not receive this power if you choose, but the more God shows you how much He loves you, the more you are going to want to live a life that pleases Him. John 14:15. It's simply not possible to live like that without the Holy Spirit empowerment.

In Acts 10 Corny was trying to serve God the best he could. vs1-5 An angel has him call Peter over and before he says much, BOOM, they are immersed in the Spirit. Many Christians have come to this point of feeling inadequate to live the desire God has put in their heart. Oswald Chambers, while making a living as a Bible teaching professor, stood up in an evening church meeting and declared, "Either I'm missing something or this Christian life is impossible." The next day alone with the Lord and his Bible he read Luke 11:10-13. That began what today is the most widely read devotional.

I was sixteen when a group of my friends got together at my home for a Bible study. We hit a section of scripture describing our Christian walk. We stopped and said something like, "Wait a minute. How come they lived like this and we don't? What are we missing? Let's pray and ask God for help to know how we can." After a few minutes every young man in the room was crying, and then hugging each other. I walked around laying my hands on each guy's head and praying things I didn't understand. The next week a lady came to our Bible study and started with, "I think the Lord wants me to tell you about the baptism of the Holy Spirit." We read the book of Acts and see over and over these people having this experience. Do you realize why we don't ask, "Lay hands on me and pray for me till I'm filled!?" It's because we don't want to die and take up our cross. We are too busy with our own agenda. That's safe and comfortable. The Holy Spirit is gentle but rarely safe or comfortable. Some one said, "The most uncomfortable place for a Christian is a comfortable place."

Lets go to Jesus own words and find out what he had to say about it. (John 14:15&16 14:26, 15:26 16:7 16:13-15 Luke 24:49) A few practical observations for discussion: Same people filled in Acts 2 were filled again in chapter 4! Sometimes hands laid on, sometimes just words spoken. Jesus needed the Holy Spirit to begin His ministry. Read the story of His baptism. The fruit of the Spirit in Ephesians 5 cannot be produced without the Holy Spirit. You and I need a Friend. And if you want to live a Christ-like life you need POWER. This is a place of total sacrifice. Romans 12:1&2 Consider surrendering; become a living sacrifice. Are you ready to climb up on the altar and lay down? It is true that you have the Holy Spirit from the time you accept Christ, but the empowerment we're writing about is when you surrender all of you to Him.

Different denominations recognize this need and call it by different names. Most do believe the Spirit resides in you from the time you repent and give your life to Jesus. The problem is, does the Spirit have all of you? Though you may have surrendered all to the best of your knowledge, as you live your life you will find that there is more to surrender. Baptists call it rededication or deeper surrender, Methodist call it sanctification, and Assembly of God calls it being filled with the Spirit. It is all the same thing, a deeper surrender of your life to His work in you. When you invite him into those areas of your life you have been reserving for yourself, He will come in.

It is also true that you can take back over. We need a daily surrender, a daily filling. We need to be renewed daily. If you die daily, you also need to be resurrected daily in His power and control. Looking back to an experience and considering the work done may hinder you from coming to Jesus today to submit your body and mind to Him for His service. It is a lifestyle. Will you make it yours?