



## THE STORY CONTINUES

### LIFE WITHOUT THE SPIRIT | ACTS 19:1-10

What is the one thing in the world you absolutely could not live without? We are not asking the same old questions. “What is the one essential you would like to have if you were stranded on a desert island?” or, “What would you risk life and limb to rescue if your house was in flames?” We’re not talking about things you’ve grown attached to. We are talking about one thing. What is the one thing in the world you absolutely could not live without?

David had a ready answer. In the moment of ultimate loss, David’s mind did not turn to thrones, or palaces, or even trusted advisors. He didn’t think of friends or family. His impassioned plea to God was, “Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me (Psalm 51:11). The one thing he feared losing more than anything else was the life giving presence of God’s Spirit”

He obviously wasn’t all that concerned with God’s presence when he turned his gaze toward Bathsheba. Or when we acted on his fantasies. Or when he tried to conceal the affair. Or when he arranged to have Uriah killed in battle. But when faced with the consequences, he realized far more than reputation or kingdom were at risk. His relationship with God was at risk. Over time David had taken the Holy Spirit for granted, and now he was in danger of losing the Spirit altogether.

There is no doubt we take the Holy Spirit for granted, as well. A. W. Tozer wrote:

“If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit is the one thing that the church could not live without. Remove the Holy Spirit and you no longer have a church. You

just have a group of people doing a lot of church stuff. Whatever else they may be doing, they are simply going through the motions.

The same is true with each one of us. The one thing we absolutely cannot live without is the Holy Spirit. If his presence is not evident in our lives or in our fellowship then something is terribly wrong.

When Paul meets a group of believers who did not “even know there was a Holy Spirit,” he quickly concludes that whatever else they might have been, they were not a people who had experienced a genuine encounter with Christ.

### THE ABSENCE OF THE SPIRIT (vv. 1-7)

*While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup> and 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.”*

*<sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. <sup>4</sup> Paul 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.”*

*<sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues <sup>7</sup> and prophesied. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.*

1. What do you think prompted Paul to ask, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”
2. How would you describe a church where the Holy Spirit is not visibly and powerfully at work?
3. What do you think prompted Paul to ask, “Then what baptism did you receive?”
4. Contrast and compare “John’s baptism” with “baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
5. What outward signs of the Spirit’s presence are highlighted in this passage?
6. What are some of the inward signs of the Spirit’s presence that are not highlighted in these passages?
7. How does the inward work of the Spirit show up in our lives and in our fellowship?

### RESISTING THE SPIRIT (vv. 8-9)

*<sup>8</sup> Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them.*

1. How does Luke describe Paul’s engagement with the synagogue in Ephesus?
2. How does he describe the negative reaction of some?
3. What does it mean to be obstinate or hard hearted?
4. What are some ways we can be obstinate or hard hearted?
5. What impact do you think this might have on the Spirit’s work in our lives?
6. What does it mean to “refuse to believe?”
7. What are some ways we can “refuse to believe?”
8. What impact do you think this might have on the Spirit’s work in our lives?
9. How should we respond when we detect hard heartedness and a lack of faith?

### THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT (vv. 9-10)

*He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.*

1. Pull out your calculator and estimate the amount of time Paul spent teaching in Ephesus (this will obviously call for some guess work on your part).
2. What do you think Paul’s teaching might have involved?
3. How does Luke describe the impact of Paul’s teaching?
4. Take a moment to imagine the impact a handful of believers who were fully committed to allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through them might have on their city?