



RIVER WEST PALM BEACH

— YOUR —
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— IN —
Christ

BY DR. COREY ERMAN

Your New Life in Christ

Foundations for the New Believer

Dr. Corey Erman

River Church WPB

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Written by Dr. Corey Erman

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CHAPTER ONE

SALVATION

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:7)

Receiving Jesus Christ is the beginning of an entirely new life. Salvation is not merely deciding to become religious, joining a church, or trying harder to be a good person. When you receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, something supernatural takes place on the inside of you. Your sins are forgiven, your spirit is made alive to God, and you are brought into a relationship with Him as His child. Jesus called this being born again. In John 3:3 He said, **“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** The new birth is the doorway into your life with God.

Many believers understand salvation only as forgiveness of sins and the promise of going to heaven one day. Thank God for forgiveness, and thank God for heaven, but salvation includes much more than that. Through the finished work of Jesus Christ, you have been given a new identity, a new nature, a new family, and a new standing before God. You have been brought out of darkness and into light. You have been redeemed, adopted, sealed, and made alive to God. This is why it is so important for a new believer to understand what really happened at salvation.

The first chapter of Ephesians gives us one of the clearest pictures of this. Paul shows us that salvation is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father planned salvation, the Son accomplished it, and the Holy Spirit seals the believer in it. Salvation was not random. It was not an emergency response that God came up with after mankind sinned. Redemption was already in the heart of God. Before you were born, before the earth was formed, before Adam was created, God already had a plan to redeem humanity through Jesus Christ.

Paul writes in Ephesians 1:3–4, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.”** This means God’s plan for salvation existed before you ever prayed a prayer. When you received Jesus, you stepped into what God had already prepared through Christ. Ephesians 1:5 says that He **“predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself.”** The word predestined simply points to the fact that God had a purpose beforehand. He determined that those who receive Christ would be brought into His family.

That is one of the greatest truths of salvation: God wanted a family. He did not simply want servants standing at a distance. He wanted sons and daughters who would know Him, love Him, walk with Him, and live in relationship with Him. Romans 8:15 says, **“You received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”** Through Jesus Christ, you are not simply forgiven; you are adopted.

This changes the way you see God. He is no longer someone far away whom you are trying to reach through religious effort. Jesus said in John 14:6, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** Jesus came to bring us to the Father. John 1:12 says, **“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.”** If you have received Jesus Christ, you belong to God. You are His child.

The motive behind all of this is love. Ephesians tells us that in love He chose us. John 3:16 says, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”** God loved you before you knew Him. He did not wait for you to become good enough before He reached toward you. Romans 5:8 says, **“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** Salvation began in the heart of a loving Father who wanted you restored to Himself.

The Father planned salvation, but a price had to be paid. Ephesians 1:7 says, **“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”** The word redemption means to buy someone out of slavery or captivity by paying a price. Humanity was enslaved to sin and separated from God. Romans 3:23 says, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** No one can save themselves through good works, religion, charity, morality, or church attendance. Sin required a Savior.

Romans 6:23 says, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Jesus came to pay the price we could never pay. He lived without sin. He went to the cross. He shed His blood. He died in our place. He was buried. And on the third day, He rose again. Salvation is free to us, but it was not cheap. First Peter 1:18–19 says that we were redeemed not with silver or gold, but **“with the precious blood of Christ.”**

The cross is at the center of our salvation because Jesus took our place. He carried the punishment for sin so that we could receive forgiveness and eternal life. When He said, **“It is finished,”** He was declaring that the price had been paid. There is nothing you can add to His finished work. You do not earn salvation; you receive it by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8–9 says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God, not of works.”**

God’s forgiveness is not partial or reluctant. It comes according to the riches of His grace. Romans 5:20 says, **“Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”** Your past is not greater than the blood of Jesus. Your mistakes are not stronger than God’s grace. When you truly repent and receive Christ, God forgives you. Psalm 103:12 says, **“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”** That means your old life does not have to determine your future.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”** This is one of the greatest miracles of salvation. God does not simply improve your old life. He makes you new. You may look the same on the outside, but something has changed on the inside. You have received the life of God. You are no longer spiritually dead. You are alive to Him.

I remember the day I received Jesus Christ. I had been raised in a Muslim family, and when a friend began speaking to me about Jesus, I eventually came to the point where I was ready to surrender my life to Him. My friend took my hand and led me in a simple prayer. I prayed, “Jesus, come into my heart. Be my Lord. Be my Savior. Forgive me of all my sins.” When I opened my eyes, I immediately knew something had happened.

Everything felt different. I jumped up and ran to the restroom because I wanted to look at my face in the mirror. I stood there looking at myself. Physically, I looked almost the same, but inside I felt completely different. I remember thinking, **“Did I just become a Christian?”** And inside I knew

the answer. Yes. I had become a born-again Christian. There was joy, freedom, and an inward assurance that something had changed.

Years later, while ministering in Istanbul, Türkiye, I watched a young Muslim man experience something very similar. He responded to an altar call and prayed to receive Jesus. Afterward, he suddenly disappeared. Someone came and told me that he was in the restroom looking at himself in the mirror, splashing water on his face and staring at himself. I immediately understood. He had not simply repeated a prayer. He had encountered Jesus. Something inside him had changed. That is the miracle of the new birth.

Ephesians 1 also tells us that when we believe, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Ephesians 1:13–14 says, **“Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance.”** The moment you are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live within you. Romans 8:16 says, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”** This is sometimes called the inner witness. Something on the inside begins to know, “I belong to God.”

A seal carried great meaning in the ancient world. It represented ownership, authenticity, authority, and security. When God gives you His Holy Spirit, He marks you as His own. First Corinthians 6:19–20 says, **“You are not your own. For you were bought at a price.”** Jesus purchased you with His blood, and the Holy Spirit is God’s mark upon your life.

The Holy Spirit is also called the guarantee of our inheritance. You can think of that like a down payment. A down payment is the first part of something greater that is still coming. The Holy Spirit living within you is a foretaste of the eternal life God has promised. Right now, you can experience God’s peace, His joy, His presence, and His Word coming alive to you. You can pray, worship, and know Him personally. But what we experience now is only the beginning.

Ephesians 1:11 says, **“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance.”** Salvation does not only rescue you from sin; it brings you into the Kingdom of God and into His family. Romans 8:17 says believers are **“heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”** God has not treated you like a stranger. He has made you family. As His child, you have an inheritance in Christ.

As a new believer, it is also important to understand that you are spirit, soul, and body. First Thessalonians 5:23 speaks about all three. You are a spirit, you have a soul, and you live in a body. Your soul includes your mind, will, and emotions. When you are born again, your spirit is made alive to God. Ezekiel 36:26 says, **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.”** That is what happens in the new birth.

Your spirit is made new, but your mind still needs to be renewed. Romans 12:2 says, **“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”** This explains why a person can be genuinely saved and still have thoughts, habits, or attitudes that need to change. Salvation happens in a moment, but spiritual growth takes place over time.

Do not become discouraged if everything in your life does not change overnight. God begins a work in you and continues that work as you walk with Him. Philippians 1:6 says, **“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it.”** This is why the Word of God is so important. It renews your mind, teaches you what is true, and shows you who you are in Christ. This is also why

you need to be planted in a strong local church where you can receive sound teaching, fellowship with other believers, pray, serve, and grow.

Spiritual maturity is a process of continually yielding to God. You keep learning, keep growing, keep obeying, and keep allowing the Holy Spirit to change you. Salvation is not merely a one-time moment at an altar. It is the beginning of a transformed life.

One day, our salvation will also have a future completion. Jesus will return, and believers will receive glorified bodies. First Corinthians 15 teaches that what is mortal will put on immortality and what is corruptible will put on incorruption. Jesus said in John 14:2–3, **“In My Father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again and receive you to Myself.”** Death is not the end for the believer. Eternal life has already begun, and one day we will be with the Lord forever.

The Bible also teaches that you can know you are saved. Some Christians live constantly wondering whether God still loves them or whether they will really go to heaven. First John 5:13 says, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”** God wants you to have assurance.

Your assurance is not based on whether you feel spiritual every day. Some days you may feel close to God; other days you may not feel anything at all. Your salvation is based on what Jesus accomplished and what God’s Word says. If you have genuinely repented, believed in Jesus Christ, and received Him as Lord, you can stand upon the promise of Scripture. The Holy Spirit also bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

This is why you must stop identifying yourself by your old life. Many believers remain trapped because they keep defining themselves by their past. They say things like, “This is just who I am,” or “I’ll always be this way.” But Second Corinthians 5:17 says the old has passed away. Second Corinthians 5:21 says that Christ became sin for us **“that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

Righteousness means right standing with God. It does not mean you will never make another mistake. It means your standing with God is based upon what Jesus has done. You were separated from God, but now you have been reconciled. You were in darkness, but now you are in the light. You were spiritually dead, but now you are alive.

You are not your past. You are not your failure. You are not your addiction. You are not your worst mistake. You are not what someone else called you. Your identity is now found in Christ.

Colossians 1:13 says God **“has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”** Spiritually, your location has changed. Your identity has changed. Your family has changed. Your future has changed. Everything begins to look different when you understand what happened to you at salvation.

Because of what Jesus accomplished, you can now approach God with confidence. Hebrews 4:16 says, **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.”** God does not tell His children to crawl toward Him in fear. He tells us to come boldly. Your confidence is not based on thinking you are perfect. It is based on the blood of Jesus.

You can come to the Father in Jesus' name knowing that you belong to Him. This changes the way you pray. Instead of begging God as though He does not want to help you, you begin to pray according to His Word. First John 5:14 says, **"This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."** As you learn Scripture, you begin to understand God's will and pray with greater confidence.

At the end of Ephesians 1, Paul prays a powerful prayer for believers. He does not pray that they would receive another salvation. He prays that they would understand what God had already given them. Ephesians 1:17–18 says, **"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened."**

Paul understood that you can possess something without fully understanding what you have. Many believers are saved but do not yet understand their identity. They have an inheritance but do not know what belongs to them. They have been made righteous in Christ but still think like condemned sinners.

That is why this prayer is so important for you as a new believer. Ask God to open the eyes of your understanding. Ask Him to show you who you are in Christ. Ask Him to help you understand His Word and everything Jesus has made available to you.

The more you understand your salvation, the more confidently you will walk in it.

When you received Jesus Christ, much more happened than you may have realized. You were forgiven. You were redeemed by the blood of Jesus. You were born again. You became a new creation. You were adopted into God's family. You became a child of God. You were brought out of darkness and into light. You received eternal life. The Holy Spirit came to live within you. You were sealed as belonging to God. You received right standing with God through Jesus Christ.

And this is only the beginning.

Your new life starts now.

You can know God personally. You can read His Word. You can pray. You can worship Him. You can grow. You can become planted in His house. You can discover His purpose for your life. You can tell others what Jesus has done for you.

Do not spend your Christian life looking backward.

Paul said in Philippians 3:13, **"Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."**

Your past has been redeemed.

Your sins have been forgiven.

The Father has received you.

Jesus has purchased you.

The Holy Spirit has sealed you.

Your new life in Christ has begun.

A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me and bringing me into Your family through Jesus Christ. Thank You that my sins are forgiven and that I am a new creation. I ask You to give me wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. Open the eyes of my understanding. Help me understand who I am in Christ and everything Jesus has made available to me. Renew my mind through Your Word. Teach me how to walk with You, grow in faith, and become everything You have called me to be. Thank You that I belong to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you are reading this and have never personally received Jesus Christ, you can surrender your life to Him now. Romans 10:9 says, **"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."**

You can pray:

Dear Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and that God raised You from the dead. Forgive me of all my sins. Wash me and cleanse me by Your blood. Jesus, come into my heart. Be my Lord and be my Savior. I turn away from my old life and surrender my life to You. Thank You for forgiving me. Thank You for saving me. Thank You for making me a child of God. I am born again. I am forgiven. I am redeemed. I belong to Jesus. From this day forward, I will follow You. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you prayed that prayer from your heart and placed your faith in Jesus Christ, God's Word says that you are saved. Your sins are forgiven. You have become a new creation. You are now a child of God.

Your new life in Christ has begun.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

CHAPTER TWO

BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT & FIRE

The Promise of the Father

“For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:5)

Now that you have received Jesus Christ and have been born again, God has something more for you: He wants you to know the Holy Spirit and experience His power working in your life.

The Christian life was never meant to be lived through human strength alone. Jesus knew that His followers would need supernatural help to live for Him, share the Gospel, overcome fear, fulfill their calling, and impact the world around them. That is why, before He returned to heaven, Jesus told His disciples about what He called **“the Promise of the Father.”**

The Book of Acts begins with Jesus speaking to His disciples after His resurrection. For forty days, He appeared to them and taught them about the Kingdom of God. Before He ascended to heaven, He gave them an important instruction:

“He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father... ‘For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” (Acts 1:4–5)

Jesus was preparing His followers for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They already believed in Jesus. They had seen Him after His resurrection. They knew He was alive. Yet Jesus told them there was something they needed before going out to fulfill His mission: **they needed the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Acts is often called *The Acts of the Apostles*, but as you read it, you quickly discover that it is really a record of what the Holy Spirit did through ordinary people who surrendered themselves to God. He gave them boldness, directed their steps, empowered their preaching, performed miracles through them, and helped them carry the Gospel throughout the world.

That same Holy Spirit wants to work in and through your life.

1. THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus described the Holy Spirit as a gift promised by the Father. This means you do not have to convince God to give you the Holy Spirit. The Father desires for His children to receive everything He has provided for them.

Jesus had already told His disciples:

“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth.” (John 14:16–17)

Jesus knew He was returning to heaven, but He promised that His followers would not be left alone. The Holy Spirit would come to be their Helper. He would teach them, guide them into truth, strengthen them, remind them of the words of Jesus, and empower them to accomplish God's purposes.

The Holy Spirit is not simply a feeling, an emotion, or a spiritual force. **The Holy Spirit is God.** He is the third Person of the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

He speaks. He teaches. He leads. He comforts. He helps. He strengthens. He reveals Jesus to us.

Jesus called Him the Helper. The Greek word used is *Parakletos*, meaning one who is called alongside to help. The Holy Spirit has been given to help you live your new life in Christ.

As a new believer, you do not have to figure everything out on your own. You have the Holy Spirit to help you.

2. BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus said:

“You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:5)

The word *baptize* means to **immerse, submerge, or place fully into something.**

Think about water baptism. When a person is baptized in water, he or she is immersed beneath the water. In the same way, Jesus spoke about believers being immersed in the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist had already prophesied that Jesus would do this:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

John baptized people in water, but Jesus is the One who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit and fire.

This baptism is an empowerment from God. It is the Holy Spirit coming upon the believer with supernatural power to live for Jesus and accomplish His purposes.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples began asking Him questions about future events and the restoration of Israel. Jesus redirected their attention toward what they needed right then.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me...” (Acts 1:8)

The word translated *power* is the Greek word **dunamis**. It refers to supernatural ability, strength, might, and miraculous power.

The disciples had spent years with Jesus. They had listened to His teaching, watched Him perform miracles, witnessed His death, and seen Him alive after His resurrection. Yet Jesus still told them that they needed the Holy Spirit's power.

If they needed His power, so do we.

God does not expect you to live the Christian life in your own ability. The Holy Spirit gives you power to follow Jesus, overcome fear, pray, share your faith, minister to others, and fulfill God's calling upon your life.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not merely about having a spiritual experience. **The power has a purpose.**

Jesus said, **“You shall be witnesses to Me.”**

God fills you so His life can flow through you to others.

3. THE DAY OF PENTECOST

After Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and waited as He had commanded them.

Then came the Day of Pentecost.

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” (Acts 2:1)

Suddenly, a sound like a rushing mighty wind filled the house where they were sitting. Something that looked like tongues of fire appeared and rested upon each of them.

Then the Bible says:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)

They were all filled.

Something supernatural had happened.

The disciples who had been waiting were now empowered to do what Jesus had called them to do.

Peter is one of the clearest examples of this transformation. Before Pentecost, Peter became afraid and denied that he even knew Jesus. After being filled with the Holy Spirit, that same Peter stood publicly before a crowd and boldly proclaimed Jesus Christ.

What made the difference?

The power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit did not turn Peter into a different person. He empowered Peter to become the person God had called him to be.

The same is true for you.

You may feel unqualified. You may be shy. You may wonder whether God could ever use you. You may think you do not know enough yet.

Do not measure what God can do through you by your natural ability.

God gives you His Spirit so that you can accomplish what you could never accomplish by yourself.

4. SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES

When the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:4 says they **“began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”**

Speaking in tongues is a supernatural language given by the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Book of Acts, we see believers receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues.

For example, when Peter preached at the house of Cornelius, something happened before he even finished his message:

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.” (Acts 10:44)

How did Peter and the believers with him know that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit?

“For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” (Acts 10:46)

Later, Peter explained:

“The Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.” (Acts 11:15)

The same thing God had done at Pentecost, He did again as the Gospel spread.

Paul also teaches about praying in tongues:

“For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.” (1 Corinthians 14:2)

When you pray in tongues, you are speaking to God from your spirit. You may not naturally understand the words you are speaking, but your spirit is praying.

Paul said:

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.” (1 Corinthians 14:14)

He then explained:

“I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.” (1 Corinthians 14:15)

There are times when you pray with words you understand, and there are times when you pray in the Spirit.

Both have a place in the believer’s prayer life.

Notice also what Acts 2:4 says: **they began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

The Holy Spirit gave the utterance, but the believers did the speaking.

Receiving the Holy Spirit involves yielding yourself to Him. He does not need to physically force your mouth to move. As you yield to Him in faith, He gives you the utterance and you speak.

5. MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

When I first became a Christian, I did not know anything about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I was born into a Muslim family and raised as a Sunni Muslim. When I received Jesus Christ, I became the first born-again Christian in my family.

I knew very little about Christianity or church. A friend brought me to a Southern Baptist church in Texas, and that was where I began learning about the Bible.

They immediately taught me about water baptism. When I learned that Jesus commanded believers to be baptized in water, my response was simple: if Jesus commanded it, I wanted to obey Him.

But as I began reading the Bible, I had another question:

What about the Holy Spirit?

I was told that the Holy Spirit would help me understand the Bible, so I began reading the Word for myself.

Then I came to the Book of Acts.

Because I had been trained as an engineer, I understood the importance of a blueprint. A blueprint shows how something is supposed to be built. Jesus said, **“I will build My church.”**

As I read Acts, I felt as though I had discovered the blueprint of the Church.

I saw believers preaching with boldness. I saw signs and wonders. I saw miracles. I saw people being filled with the Holy Spirit. I saw supernatural guidance. I saw cities impacted by the Gospel.

But when I compared what I was reading with what I was seeing around me, I began asking questions.

Where was the power?

Where were the miracles?

What about the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

I was told that these things were not for today, but I could not reconcile that answer with what I was reading in the Bible.

So I decided to seek God for myself.

I began crying out to Him:

“God, if this is for today, I want Your fire. Holy Spirit, if You are real, I want Your power to come upon me like it did in the Book of Acts.”

As I prayed, the power of God suddenly came upon me.

The best way I can describe it is that it felt like a bolt of electricity struck the top of my head and traveled through my entire body. I felt the power of God from my head all the way down to my feet. My body began to shake, and I fell to my knees.

It felt like waves of fire were moving through me.

Then something began flowing from deep within me. A language I had never learned began coming from my mouth.

I began speaking in other tongues.

No one had laid hands on me. No one was coaching me. I had simply discovered a promise in the Bible, believed it, and asked God to make it real in my life.

I laughed. I wept. I prayed in tongues. The presence of God overwhelmed me.

I knew I had encountered the Holy Spirit.

But the greatest evidence was not merely what I felt in that moment. It was what the encounter produced afterward.

I became hungry for God.

That hunger caused me to pursue Him, His Word, His presence, and His purpose for my life.

An encounter with God should always lead to transformation.

6. THE PROMISE IS FOR YOU

After the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached the Gospel to the people gathered in Jerusalem. They were deeply convicted and asked what they should do.

Peter answered:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

Then he said:

“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:39)

This is important for every new believer to understand.

The Holy Spirit was not given only to the original apostles. Peter said the promise extended to their children, to those who were far away, and to everyone the Lord would call.

That includes you.

The first disciples had to wait in Jerusalem because the Day of Pentecost had not yet come. Today, Pentecost has already happened. The Holy Spirit has already been poured out.

Jesus said:

“How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”
(Luke 11:13)

You do not have to earn the Holy Spirit.

You do not have to become a perfect Christian first.

You receive by faith.

“That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:14)

The same way you received salvation—by believing God’s Word—you can receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit by faith.

Ask.

Believe.

Receive.

And yield yourself to Him.

7. WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not the end. It is the beginning of learning to live a life that is continually led and empowered by Him.

The Holy Spirit wants to be involved in your everyday life.

He wants to help you understand Scripture. He wants to lead you in decisions. He wants to strengthen you when you are weak. He wants to convict you when something is wrong. He wants to help you pray. He wants to give you boldness to tell others about Jesus.

Learn to recognize His leading.

Spend time in the Word.

Spend time in prayer.

Pray in your understanding and pray in the Spirit.

Worship God.

Obey when the Holy Spirit prompts you.

Stay connected to a Spirit-filled local church where you can grow in the Word and in your relationship with God.

And do not live only on yesterday's experience.

In Acts 4, believers who had already received the Holy Spirit were filled again:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31)

God wants you to remain filled.

Jesus described the life of the Spirit as a river:

“He who believes in Me... out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)

The Christian life is not supposed to be spiritually dry. There should be a continual flow of God's life through you.

The goal is not simply to say, **“I was filled with the Holy Spirit.”**

The goal is to **live filled with the Holy Spirit.**

A PRAYER TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and desire to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, you can receive by faith right now.

Pray:

Heavenly Father,

I come to You in the name of Jesus. Thank You for saving me, forgiving me, and making me Your child.

Jesus, Your Word says that You are the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire. I believe Your Word, and I believe this promise is for me.

I ask You now to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. Fill me with Your presence and Your power.

I receive the Holy Spirit by faith.

I yield my heart to You. I yield my mind to You. I yield my body to You. I yield my mouth and my tongue to You.

Holy Spirit, give me utterance. Empower me to live for Jesus, to pray, to be a witness, and to fulfill God's purpose for my life.

I receive by faith now.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Now begin to thank God.

Worship Him and yield yourself to the Holy Spirit. Do not struggle or try to manufacture something. Trust your heavenly Father.

As the Holy Spirit gives you utterance, begin to speak.

Remember Acts 2:4:

“They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

They spoke, and the Holy Spirit gave them the utterance.

Continue developing your relationship with Him. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not simply an experience to remember. It is an invitation into a life of fellowship, power, prayer, boldness, and surrender.

You have not been called to live your new life in Christ alone.

The Holy Spirit is your Helper.

CHAPTER TWO TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Holy Spirit is the Promise of the Father.

The Holy Spirit is a Person—He is God.

He is my Helper, Teacher, Comforter, and Guide.

The Holy Spirit gives me power to be a witness for Jesus.

Speaking in tongues is a biblical expression of praying in the Spirit.

I receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

I can yield myself to the Holy Spirit and follow His leading.

The power of God is given for a purpose.

An encounter with God should produce hunger and transformation.

I can live continually filled and led by the Holy Spirit.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me...” (Acts 1:8)

CHAPTER THREE

WATER BAPTISM

A Public Step of Obedience and New Life

Water baptism is one of the first steps a believer takes after receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is not a religious ceremony meant to earn salvation, nor is it simply a tradition of the church. Baptism is an act of obedience, a public testimony of faith, and a biblical picture of the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Before looking at baptism itself, Acts chapter 19 gives us an important picture of what it means to leave the old life behind. During the revival in Ephesus, many people came to faith in Christ. Acts 19:18 says, **“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.”** These were already believers, yet as God was working in their lives, they recognized that certain practices from their past needed to be dealt with.

Some of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them publicly. The value of what they destroyed was significant, but their commitment to Christ mattered more than what those things had cost them. They were making a deliberate break with practices that no longer belonged in their lives.

Their actions did not save them. They had already believed. Instead, they were responding to the work God had begun in them. Acts 19:20 says, **“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”** As they removed what belonged to their former lives, the Word of God gained greater influence in them and throughout the city.

This is an important principle for every believer. When you come to Christ, the Holy Spirit begins showing you what belongs in your new life and what needs to go. There may be habits, practices, objects, relationships, or influences that no longer agree with the life God has called you to live. Following Jesus involves more than adding Him to your old way of living. He gives you a new life and then teaches you how to walk in it.

Water baptism becomes one of the clearest biblical expressions of that transition.

Jesus commanded His followers to baptize believers. In Matthew 28:19–20 He said, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”** Baptism was included in the Great Commission because it is part of discipleship.

Salvation itself is received by grace through faith. Romans 10:9 says, **“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”** A person is not saved by entering water. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism follows that decision as a response of obedience.

Jesus Himself was baptized. Matthew 3 tells us that He came to John the Baptist at the Jordan River. John initially hesitated because he understood that Jesus had no sin to confess. Jesus

answered, **“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”** (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus did not need repentance, yet He willingly submitted to baptism. He honored the ministry God had entrusted to John and demonstrated obedience to His Father. When Jesus came out of the water, the Spirit of God descended upon Him and the Father declared, **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”** (Matthew 3:17).

That moment shows us that obedience matters. Jesus did not ask us to do something He was unwilling to model Himself.

The early church followed that same pattern. In Acts chapter 2, after Peter preached the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, the people asked how they should respond. Peter told them to repent and be baptized. In Acts chapter 8, Philip preached the Gospel to an Ethiopian official who believed in Jesus. As soon as they came to water, the man asked, **“What hinders me from being baptized?”** After confessing his faith in Christ, he was baptized immediately.

There was no long waiting period and no requirement that he first prove himself worthy. Baptism was not something he earned. It was the natural response of someone who had believed the Gospel and wanted to obey.

Baptism is also a public testimony. Salvation takes place in the heart, but baptism gives the believer an opportunity to openly declare, “Jesus Christ is my Lord. I belong to Him.”

That public declaration matters because Christianity was never meant to be lived as a hidden or private identity. Jesus calls us to follow Him openly. Baptism is one way of identifying yourself with Christ before others.

Romans chapter 6 gives us an even deeper understanding. Paul writes, **“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:3–4).

The imagery is powerful. Going down into the water pictures death and burial. Coming out of the water pictures resurrection. In baptism, the believer identifies with what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection.

This is why baptism can become such a meaningful point of reference in a person’s life. It represents a clear transition. The old way of living no longer has the final word. The believer is now called to walk according to the life of Christ.

Romans 6:6 says, **“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”** The “old man” refers to the person ruled by sin before coming to Christ. Through Jesus, that former identity has lost its authority.

This does not mean a Christian will never face temptation again. It means sin is no longer the believer’s master. Romans 6:11 says, **“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed**

to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The believer must learn to see himself or herself according to what God has declared.

For someone who has struggled with addiction, destructive habits, or fleshly desires, baptism can become a strong point of faith. Galatians 5:24 says, **“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”** The power is not in the water itself, but baptism becomes a moment in which the believer deliberately identifies with Christ and chooses to leave the former way of living behind.

There have been people who experienced remarkable freedom during baptism. Some have testified that addictions lost their hold or that long-standing desires changed as they responded to God in faith. We should never turn those testimonies into a formula, but they remind us that God is able to work powerfully in moments of obedience.

I can share a personal family testimony that illustrates this kind of faith. After my wife, Rose, and I were married, we attended Bible school in Tampa, Florida. Rose’s mother had heard the Gospel from us, but she had not yet fully surrendered her life to Christ.

While we were away, she became seriously ill and bedridden. In that condition, she remembered what she had heard about Jesus and cried out to Him.

She later testified that her room filled with brilliant light and that she experienced an overwhelming sense of power and peace. Afterward, her health improved and she began reading the Bible that had been left for her.

As she read Scripture, she became convinced that she needed to be water baptized. She did not have a local church available to her, so she traveled to the Mediterranean coast and went into the sea.

In simple faith, she baptized herself in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When she came out of the water and took her first breath, she said she smelled an unmistakable fragrance of lilies, though there were no lilies around her.

Later, I told her that Song of Solomon 2:1 refers to the Lord as “the lily of the valleys.” She wept as she realized the significance of what she had experienced. She later said that the same fragrance would occasionally fill her home while she prayed or worshiped.

Her testimony is not about the sea itself. It is about a woman who heard the Gospel, believed, and responded to God with sincere faith. Baptism became part of her personal decision to follow Jesus.

Scripture also connects baptism with the conscience. First Peter 3:21 says, **“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism—not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”**

Peter makes it clear that he is not talking about physically washing the body. Baptism points to something deeper. It is connected with the believer’s response toward God and with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:14 teaches that it is the blood of Christ that **“cleanse[s] your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”** The foundation of our cleansing is always the finished work of Jesus. Baptism can help establish that truth in the heart of the believer. Instead of continuing to live

under the weight of past sin, you can move forward knowing that Christ has forgiven and cleansed you.

Romans 8:1 says, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”** This is especially important for new believers who may still carry memories and regret from their former lives. God does not call you to spend the rest of your life rehearsing everything you did wrong. He calls you to receive His forgiveness and begin walking with Him.

Baptism does not mean spiritual growth is finished. It does not replace prayer, studying the Word, being planted in a local church, or learning to walk with the Holy Spirit. It is one step in a lifelong journey of discipleship.

Neither should baptism be viewed as a work that earns salvation. Ephesians 2:8–9 says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** We are saved because of what Jesus has done, not because of what we have done.

Yet the grace that saves us also leads us into obedience. When someone has genuinely received Christ, there should be a willingness to follow His commands.

That is why the words spoken to Saul in Acts 22:16 remain so powerful: **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized... calling on the name of the Lord.”**

If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and have never been water baptized, this is a simple step of obedience you can take. You do not have to wait until you understand everything about the Christian life. You do not have to become perfect first. You simply respond to what Jesus has already said.

When you are baptized, understand what you are doing. You are publicly identifying yourself with Christ. You are acknowledging that your salvation is found in Him. You are recognizing that the former way of living no longer defines you, and you are committing yourself to follow Jesus in the life He has given you.

Water baptism is not the end of your journey. It is part of the beginning.

From that point forward, continue growing in the Word, developing a life of prayer, staying connected to the Body of Christ, and learning to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The same Jesus who saved you will continue transforming you as you walk with Him.

Your past does not have to determine your future. In Christ, you have been given a new beginning. Water baptism is a powerful opportunity to acknowledge that new beginning and move forward in obedience.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for saving me through Jesus Christ. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me a new life. I choose to follow You and obey Your Word.

I surrender every area of my life that does not belong in the future You have for me. Teach me to leave behind the habits, thoughts, and influences that are inconsistent with who You have called me to be.

As I obey You in water baptism, help me understand the significance of identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Strengthen me to walk in the new life You have given me, free from condemnation and confident in Your grace.

My life belongs to You. Lead me, teach me, and help me follow You faithfully.

In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEING PLANTED IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

When you are born again, God does not simply call you out of the world; He calls you into His family. The word *church* comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which speaks of those who have been called out. Through salvation, you have been called out of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of God. Colossians 1:13 says that God “has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” You have passed from death to life, and you now belong to Jesus. But if God has called you out of one kingdom, He has also called you into another. He does not intend for you to spend your Christian life wandering spiritually without connection, direction, or accountability. He places believers in His family and plants them in local churches where they can belong, grow, serve, develop, and participate in His work.

This is especially important because the Christian life was never designed to be lived in isolation. Hebrews 10:24–25 tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, especially as we see the day of Christ’s return approaching. Gathering with other believers is not merely a tradition or something Christians do because it is Sunday. It is part of God’s plan for our spiritual development. We need one another, and we need to be planted in the house of God.

Psalm 92:13–15 gives us a beautiful picture of this truth: “Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright.” Notice that the promise of flourishing is connected to being planted. God wants His people to flourish, remain spiritually fresh, and continue producing fruit throughout their lives, but there is an instruction connected to that promise. We must first be planted.

There is a great difference between visiting a garden and being planted in one. A visitor can walk through a garden, admire its beauty, enjoy its surroundings, and then leave. A tree that is planted is different. It remains in the soil long enough to develop roots. Those roots go deeper and begin drawing nourishment from the ground. As seasons change and storms come, the tree becomes stronger because it has been established. Eventually, what has been developing beneath the surface becomes visible through the fruit it produces. In the same way, God has not called us to become spiritual visitors who move from place to place without ever developing roots. He wants us planted.

When you are born again, you become part of the Body of Christ. First Corinthians 12:27 says, “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.” The Body of Christ includes believers from every nation, tribe, language, culture, and generation, but our relationship with the worldwide Body of Christ is primarily lived out through the local church. Technology allows us to watch services, hear preaching, and receive teaching from ministries around the world, and those things can be a tremendous blessing. However, watching church cannot replace being planted in a church. You can receive teaching through a screen, but you cannot fully experience biblical fellowship through a screen. You cannot serve people, develop meaningful relationships, walk beside other believers, carry someone’s burden, or fulfill your part in the Body simply by watching from a distance.

The local church is where believers gather to worship, pray, receive the Word, fellowship, serve, and be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. It is also the place from which believers are sent out to reach their communities with the Gospel. A healthy church must have both dimensions: gathering in and going out. We gather to become strengthened, equipped, refreshed, and encouraged, but then we go into the world to preach the Gospel, make disciples, minister to people, and demonstrate the love and power of God. We cannot be properly planted without gathering, and we cannot completely fulfill our mission without going.

Being planted therefore means much more than simply attending services. We often say that we “go to church,” but the church is not merely a building we enter. The church is the people of God. It is the Body of Christ, a spiritual family united under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Attendance is important, but planting goes deeper than attendance. Being planted involves commitment, connection, participation, relationship, and responsibility.

It is possible for someone to attend a church for years and still remain a spectator. A person may enjoy the worship, appreciate the preaching, receive prayer, and sit in the same section every week without ever developing meaningful relationships or becoming involved in the work of the ministry. God has more for us than sitting on the sidelines. Being planted means reaching the place where you can say, “This is the spiritual family God has joined me to. I will worship here. I will grow here. I will build relationships here. I will serve here, and I will help advance the work God has given this house.”

This kind of commitment is important because there are three commitments that should develop in every believer’s life. The first and greatest is our commitment to Jesus Christ. Everything begins with Him. Salvation comes when we surrender our lives to Jesus and receive Him as Lord. The local church can never take the place of Jesus because He alone is the Head and Savior of the Church. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” The Church belongs to Him.

Our commitment to Jesus naturally leads to a second commitment: our commitment to His Body. We cannot continually embrace the Head while rejecting the Body. Christianity is personal, but it is not meant to be private or isolated. Scripture describes us as individual members of one body, and one member cannot make up the entire body. We need one another. As our love for Jesus grows, our love for His people should grow as well.

The third commitment is our commitment to the work of Christ. Jesus has given His Church a mission. We are called to preach the Gospel, make disciples, reach the lost, minister to hurting people, pray for the sick, bring hope to those who are hopeless, and carry the light of Christ into a dark world. Commitment to Jesus should lead us into commitment to His people, and commitment to His people should lead us into participation in His work. We are not called merely to occupy a seat; we are called to put our hands to the work God has given us.

First Corinthians 12:18 says, “But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” This shows us that God is interested in where we are planted. Finding a local church should therefore involve more than choosing the congregation closest to your house, the church with your favorite music, or the service time that is most convenient. The important question is, “Lord, where do You want me planted?” Where can you receive the Word, grow spiritually, be equipped, corrected, encouraged, and challenged? Where can you serve and develop

the gifts God has placed inside of you? Where can you participate in a vision that is advancing the Kingdom of God?

Once God plants you somewhere, you must allow your roots time to grow. A plant cannot flourish if it is constantly pulled out of the ground and moved to different soil. Every time it is uprooted, its development is interrupted. The same can happen spiritually when believers continually move from church to church because of preferences, personalities, inconveniences, or minor offenses. It becomes difficult to develop deep relationships, receive consistent spiritual nourishment, and grow through the different seasons God uses to mature us.

This does not mean that a believer must remain in an environment of genuine spiritual abuse, serious doctrinal error, manipulation, criminal behavior, or unrepentant misconduct. Christlike leadership protects and serves people; it does not exploit them. Serious wrongdoing should always be handled truthfully and appropriately. At the same time, we should not confuse normal correction, disagreement, inconvenience, or personality differences with abuse. Part of spiritual maturity is learning to communicate, forgive, receive correction, work through ordinary difficulties, and continue walking in love.

One of the primary reasons being planted is so important is because we need consistent spiritual nourishment. Acts 2:42 tells us that the early believers “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” They did not occasionally sample the things of God. They continued steadfastly. Their spiritual lives were marked by consistency and commitment.

In the same way that your physical body needs consistent nourishment, your spirit needs the Word of God. Ephesians 4:11–12 explains that Jesus gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” God gives spiritual leaders to the Church to help feed, strengthen, equip, and mature His people. As you consistently receive the Word, it begins to renew your mind, strengthen your faith, expose wrong thinking, develop discernment, and produce spiritual maturity. One sermon may inspire you, but consistent application of the Word over months and years is what produces transformation.

We also need the relationships that develop within the local church. Christianity was never designed to be lived alone. First Corinthians 12 teaches that the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” because every member has a different function. One person may be gifted to encourage while another is gifted to teach. Someone may have a heart for children, another for evangelism, another for hospitality, administration, worship, giving, prayer, or serving behind the scenes. No single believer possesses every gift, which is why God joins us together.

Isolation can make us vulnerable to discouragement, deception, offense, and spiritual weakness. God often brings encouragement, wisdom, correction, and strength into our lives through other believers. When you surround yourself with people who are hungry for God, their faith encourages your faith. Their hunger stirs your hunger. Their testimony reminds you of God’s faithfulness. Relationships are one of the ways God strengthens His people.

Being planted also gives us healthy spiritual leadership. Jesus is the Head of the Church, but He places shepherds within local congregations to feed, guide, protect, and equip His people. Biblical

leadership is not domination or control. Jesus modeled servant leadership. A true shepherd loves the sheep, serves them, protects them, feeds them, and recognizes that he or she is accountable before God for that responsibility.

At the same time, believers need teachable hearts. We should be willing to receive biblical instruction, wisdom, correction, and direction. Some people have experienced genuine wounds through authority figures, whether in their family, school, workplace, or even a church. Those wounds are real and should be addressed with truth, wisdom, forgiveness, healing, and appropriate boundaries. However, the misuse of authority by some does not cancel God's design for healthy spiritual authority. God wants to heal the areas of our hearts that keep us from trusting, connecting, receiving, and growing.

Another essential part of being planted is serving. The local church is not simply a place where we receive; it is also a place where we contribute. Jesus said in Matthew 20:28 that "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." If Jesus served, then serving should also characterize His followers. Serving keeps us humble, connects us with people, develops responsibility, and gives us an opportunity to use what God has placed inside of us.

There are countless ways to serve within a local church. Some people may serve with children, while others may help with hospitality, worship, media, security, transportation, evangelism, housekeeping, administration, ushering, welcoming people, or caring for those in need. Every believer has something to supply. First Peter 4:10 says, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

You may not immediately know where you fit or what your calling is, and that is all right. Often your gifts are discovered while you are serving. David developed faithfulness while caring for his father's sheep before he ever stood before Goliath or sat on a throne. Elisha served Elijah before stepping fully into his prophetic ministry, and Timothy served alongside Paul while being trained and developed for ministry. God frequently develops extraordinary callings through ordinary acts of faithfulness.

Many believers make the mistake of waiting until they completely understand their calling before they begin serving. Instead, start with what is in front of you. Be faithful. Be available. Help where help is needed. As you begin moving, God can direct your steps and reveal more of His purpose for your life. Very often, your calling becomes clearer while you are serving.

Being planted also produces spiritual stability. A tree with deep roots is not easily moved when the weather changes. In the same way, a believer who is rooted in the Word and connected to a healthy church is not easily shaken by every new teaching, controversy, emotional difficulty, or changing circumstance. Ephesians 4:14 says that mature believers should no longer be "children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." As you grow in the Word, you develop discernment. You begin to recognize truth, identify error, and understand what is happening spiritually around you.

A planted believer also receives consistent nourishment. Just as a tree draws life from the soil in which it is planted, we receive spiritual nourishment through the environment God places around us. In a healthy local church, we receive the Word, prayer, worship, fellowship, encouragement, the gifts of the Spirit, and opportunities to experience the presence of God. Over time, these things

become part of the spiritual soil in which our lives develop. Inspiration may affect us temporarily, but consistent truth that is received and applied produces lasting transformation.

As you remain planted, you also begin discovering your place and purpose. First Corinthians 12 teaches that God places every member in the Body according to His will. You may not initially understand your function, but as you attend faithfully, serve, build relationships, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, your gifts begin to emerge. Sometimes spiritual leaders or other mature believers will recognize something in you before you recognize it in yourself. Their encouragement may help awaken gifts and abilities God has already placed within you.

Faithfulness in small things prepares us for greater responsibility. God does not need us to begin with something impressive. He needs us to begin with obedience. When we faithfully handle what is in front of us, He develops our character and prepares us for what is ahead.

Being planted also provides protection and accountability. A sheep separated from the flock becomes much more vulnerable to a predator. In the same way, isolation can make believers vulnerable to deception, discouragement, destructive decisions, temptation, and sin. God uses mature believers and spiritual leaders to help protect us. Healthy accountability is not punishment; it is a blessing. It means there are people who know you well enough to pray for you, encourage you, tell you the truth, warn you when necessary, and help restore you when you stumble. Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 reminds us that “two are better than one” because when one falls, another can help lift him up.

The relationships within a church also become one of God’s greatest tools for developing our character. Church families are made up of people from different backgrounds, cultures, generations, personalities, and levels of spiritual maturity. Those differences can become a source of frustration, or they can become an opportunity for growth. God uses relationships to teach us patience, humility, forgiveness, faithfulness, and unconditional love.

We cannot learn to walk in the love of God if we only remain around people who always agree with us. Jesus calls us to love beyond our preferences. The Body of Christ contains many different kinds of people, but love is the bond that holds us together. As we learn to honor one another, forgive one another, encourage one another, and serve one another, we become more like Christ.

This is why we must also learn how to handle offense. One of the greatest enemies of remaining planted is allowing offense to take root in our hearts. No local church is filled with perfect people. Pastors are not perfect, leaders are not perfect, church members are not perfect, and neither are we. If we expect perfection from everyone around us, we will eventually become disappointed.

There is a difference between serious wrongdoing and ordinary relational conflict. Abuse, criminal activity, dangerous behavior, and serious misconduct should never be hidden under the language of forgiveness or spiritual submission. Such situations should be handled truthfully, lawfully, and with proper accountability. But many broken relationships within churches are not caused by major scandals. They are caused by misunderstandings, assumptions, hurt feelings, personality differences, poor communication, unmet expectations, and small offenses that were never properly resolved.

Jesus gives us a pattern for dealing with these situations. Matthew 18:15 says, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.” Our first response

should not be gossip or trying to gather people to our side. We should pray, guard our hearts, communicate directly, listen humbly, and seek reconciliation. Offenses will come, but we do not have to receive them into our hearts and allow them to become bitterness.

Walking in forgiveness is one of the clearest signs of spiritual maturity. Colossians 3:13 tells us to bear with one another and forgive one another, “even as Christ forgave you.” It is easy to talk about love when everyone treats us exactly the way we want to be treated. Love becomes real when we choose to forgive, remain patient, believe the best, and respond according to the Word even when relationships become difficult.

As we remain planted through different seasons, fruit begins to appear. Psalm 92 says that those who are planted will flourish and continue bearing fruit. Part of that fruit is the development of Christlike character. Galatians 5:22–23 describes the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities are developed in us as we walk with God and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

Fruitfulness also includes the lives touched through us. It is seen when people are encouraged through our service, when someone receives the Gospel because we shared it, when children are disciplined, when families are strengthened, when people are prayed for, and when our gifts are used to advance God’s Kingdom. Fruit does not appear instantly. There may be seasons when it seems as though very little is happening, but beneath the surface roots are growing. God may be establishing character, deepening your faith, and preparing you to carry greater fruit in the future. Do not abandon the ground where God has planted you simply because you cannot yet see everything He is producing.

When you are planted, your life also becomes part of something much greater than yourself. One believer can accomplish something, but a united Body can accomplish far more. Together, believers can feed the hungry, reach neighborhoods, preach the Gospel throughout cities, disciple children, strengthen families, support missionaries, plant churches, help people in need, and carry the Gospel to nations. When our prayer, faith, giving, service, and gifts are joined together, we can accomplish things none of us could accomplish alone.

This is the power of unity. The enemy works to isolate believers because isolation weakens, while biblical unity strengthens. When every member supplies his or her part, the entire Body becomes stronger. Ephesians 4:16 describes the Body as being joined together and growing as “every part does its share.” Your part matters. You may not do what someone else does, but God has placed something in you that is needed.

As you consider what it means to be planted, examine your own heart. First, ask yourself whether you are truly committed to Jesus Christ and His lordship. Everything begins there. Church attendance cannot replace salvation or a personal relationship with Jesus. You must be born again and personally surrender your life to Him.

Then ask yourself whether you are actually planted in a local church or merely attending one. Have you allowed yourself to become known? Are you consistently receiving the Word? Are you building relationships with other believers? Are you serving? Are you giving? Are you walking in love and accountability? Are you supporting the mission God has given the church where He has placed you?

Finally, ask whether you are participating in the work of Christ in the world. A healthy church does not only gather in; it goes out. We gather to be strengthened and then go into our communities carrying the Gospel. We are called to preach Jesus, demonstrate His love and power, reach people, and make disciples.

God wants you to be more than present. He wants you to be planted. There is a difference between occupying a seat and putting down roots. When you are planted, your faith becomes stronger, your understanding of God's Word deepens, your gifts develop, your character matures, your relationships grow stronger, and your life becomes increasingly fruitful. Your individual life becomes connected to a mission far greater than yourself.

Do not remain a visitor when God is calling you into family. Do not remain a spectator when God has given you something to supply. Do not continually uproot yourself because of inconvenience or minor offense. Ask the Lord where He wants you planted, and when He shows you, determine in your heart to grow there, serve there, love people there, receive the Word there, and faithfully participate in what God is doing.

Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus is still building His Church, and He has given every believer a place within His Body. Put down your roots. Receive the Word. Build relationships. Serve faithfully. Walk in love. Reach the lost. Allow God to establish you in His house, because "those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God" (Psalm 92:13).

PRAYER

Father, thank You for saving me and bringing me into Your family. Plant me in the house where You want me to grow, serve, and fulfill Your purpose. Help me to stay rooted in Your Word, walk in love and forgiveness, and remain faithful through every season.

Holy Spirit, develop the gifts You have placed within me and show me how to use them to serve others and advance Your Kingdom. Let my life be fruitful, and use me to reach others with the Gospel.

I choose to be planted, faithful, and available for Your work.

In Jesus' name, amen.

The River Church West Palm Beach

The Lord sent us to West Palm Beach in April 2017 to establish a base for revival and to reach the nations and the harvest of souls. We are equippers and mobilizers, passionate about empowering believers to reach their full potential in Christ.

River WPB is a place that contends for the move of the Spirit of God. We believe in being a genuine Book of Acts Church.

We are both from Sunni Muslim backgrounds and became the first born-again Christians in our respective families. After receiving a baptism of fire and an apostolic calling, we launched out to the nations. Over 30 years of full-time ministry, we have established many churches, Bible schools, and a television ministry, and have carried revival to 25 nations.

The Lord said, “Go to America! Get ready for a Great Awakening! Get My people ready for the Final Days! Mobilize many! Equip and cover those I have called into unique and diverse ministries.”

We invite you to be a part of what God wants to do in Palm Beach County and beyond.

We love you and pray God’s richest blessings upon your life.

Love and Blessings,
Pastors Corey & Rose Erman

River School of Ministry

The River School of Ministry is our Accredited Bible College. RSM exists to raise up men and women who are carriers of the Word and the Anointing, equipped not just with head knowledge, but with the fire and power of God to fulfill the call of ministry. In this critical hour, the Church needs believers who are full of the Spirit, able to flow with the Holy Ghost, and carry revival wherever they go.

RSM is a special training program designed to prepare students for real ministry, emphasizing impartation and transformation. It is not just about what you learn in the classroom; it is about what is deposited in your spirit. When you leave RSM, you do not just graduate with information—you carry the ministry inside of you, ready to impact the world with the Word and power of God.

Upon completion of the program, students are eligible to be awarded a Certificate of Theology, an Associate of Theology, or a Bachelor's of Theology, depending on the level of study completed. These credentials reflect not only academic achievement, but also spiritual growth, practical training, and the ability to carry the Word and the Anointing into ministry. RSM is an Accredited Bible School Program and is an Associate Member of Transworld Accrediting Association International (<https://transworldaccrediting.com/>). You will learn ministry ethics, be taught sound doctrine through seasoned teachers of the Word of God, gain hands-on experience in the ministry, and receive an impartation of the Anointing.

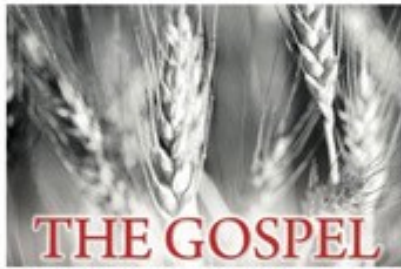
RSM runs on a monthly basis, with a different Bible School course each month. You can register and jump right in before each course. You will be expected to fulfill course requirements such as exams, reading, and outreaches. Get more info at riverschools.com.

God wants to work through you to reach the lost!

The command Jesus gave to go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel was not meant for a few—it is a mandate for every believer. You are called to carry the Good News. When the Gospel is declared, people don't just hear words—they encounter Jesus. He alone has the power to change hearts, lives, families, and even entire nations.

On the next page, you'll find a practical tool designed to help you confidently share the Gospel with others. The Gospel Soul-Winning Script can be copied, folded lengthwise, and read aloud. As you step out in obedience and use it, you will see people respond to Christ, because the Gospel itself carries the power of God to bring salvation to everyone who believes.

JESUS SAVES • JESUS HEALS • JESUS DELIVERS



THE GOSPEL SOUL-WINNING —SCRIPT—

Has anyone ever told you that God loves you and that He has a wonderful plan for your life? I have a real quick, but important question to ask you. If you were to die this very second, do you know for sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you would go to Heaven? [If "Yes"—Great, why would you say "Yes"? (If they respond with anything but "I have Jesus in my heart" or something similar to that, PROCEED WITH SCRIPT) or "No" or "I hope so" PROCEED WITH SCRIPT.]

Let me quickly share with you what the Holy Bible reads. It reads "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" and "for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord". The Bible also reads, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". And you're a "whosoever" right? Of course you are; all of us are.

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JESUS SAVES • JESUS HEALS • JESUS DELIVERS

I'm going to say a quick prayer for you. Lord, bless (FILL IN NAME) and his/her family with long and healthy lives. Jesus, make Yourself real to him/her and do a quick work in his/her heart. If (FILL IN NAME) has not received Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior, I pray he/she will do so now.

(FILL IN NAME), if you would like to receive the gift that God has for you today, say this after me with your heart and lips out loud. Dear Lord Jesus, come into my heart. Forgive me of my sin. Wash me and cleanse me. Set me free. Jesus, thank You that You died for me. I believe that You are risen from the dead and that You're coming back again for me. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Give me a passion for the lost, a hunger for the things of God and a holy boldness to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm saved; I'm born again, I'm forgiven and I'm on my way to Heaven because I have Jesus in my heart.

As a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I tell you today that all of your sins are forgiven. Always remember to run to God and not from God because He loves you and has a great plan for your life.

[Invite them to your church and get follow up info: name, address, & phone number.]

Revival Ministries International
P.O. Box 292888 • Tampa, FL 33687
(813) 971-9999 • www.revival.com

