

**connect360**

**BIBLE STUDY GUIDE**

# Living in the Spirit

**RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, AND JOY**

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 **BaptistWayPress®**  
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*Living in the Spirit: Righteousness, Peace, and Joy—  
Connect 360 Bible Study Guide*

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# How to Make the Best Use of This Issue

Whether you're the teacher or a student—

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. Overview the study. Review the table of contents and read the study introduction. Try to see how each lesson relates to the overall study.
3. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. (You'll see that each writer has chosen a favorite translation for the lessons in this issue. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translation chosen for that unit, of course.)
4. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the writer's comments. The comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible.
5. Read the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application.
6. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and they can also be used in the class session itself.

If you're the teacher—

Do all the things just mentioned, of course. As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. Here are some suggestions to guide your lesson preparation:

- A. In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents on page 8 and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date each lesson will be studied.
  - If all your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
  - Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org) under the “Teacher Helps” menu.
  - Develop a sticker with the lesson dates and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.
- B. Get a copy of the *Teaching Guide*, a companion piece to this *Study Guide*. The *Teaching Guide* contains additional Bible comments plus two teaching plans. The teaching plans in the *Teaching Guide* are intended to provide practical, easy-to-use teaching suggestions that will work in your class.
- C. After you’ve studied the Bible passage, the lesson comments, and other material, use the teaching suggestions in the *Teaching Guide* to help you develop your plan for leading your class in studying each lesson.
- D. Teaching resource items for use as handouts are available free at [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org) under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
- E. Additional Bible study comments on the lessons are available online. Call 1-866-249-1799 or e-mail [baptistway@texasbaptists.org](mailto:baptistway@texasbaptists.org) to order the *Premium Commentary*. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website, [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org). The price of these comments for the entire study is \$5 per person. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Commentary* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see

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# Living in the Spirit:

## Righteousness, Peace, and Joy

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# Introducing

## Living in the Spirit

### RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, AND JOY

The Spirit. The Spirit of God. The Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Grace. The Spirit of Promise. The Spirit of Glory. The Eternal Spirit. The Comforter. The Counselor. The Helper. All names and titles of the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Are all Christians indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

How can I be controlled by the Holy Spirit?

Can the Holy Spirit renew me?

Is the Holy Spirit God? Jesus?

What happens to a Christian who is filled with the Holy Spirit?

This 13-week study of the Holy Spirit will take a good hard look at what has been called the absolute key to the Christian life...*Living in the Spirit*.

### The Role of the Holy Spirit in Our Day

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Water baptism is an outward act that symbolizes the cleansing of your sins, but it only touches your body. Spirit baptism is an inner act that literally purifies your soul and spirit; you become Holy because the Spirit of God is Holy. That's why He is called the Holy Spirit. To be filled or baptized in the Holy Spirit means you are totally immersed in the life of God.

The promise of Jesus is still the same today. He promised the disciples something better, or someone even better. Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) to live in the disciples, and the Holy Spirit would bear witness to Jesus. He would empower the believers to demonstrate the personality of Jesus, the Fruit of the Spirit. God's plan for your life is not that you will be successful. Instead He wants you to be fruitful. Fruit is simply the outward expression of our inner nature.

The Holy Spirit will equip you and empower you to serve God today. God commands us to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. In fact, it has been said that the filling of the Holy Spirit is like the wind filling a sail on a boat. And He wants to fill you. Do you have your sails up?

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### Living in the Spirit: Righteousness, Peace, and Joy

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Lesson 1	The Baptism of the Holy Spirit	Mark 1:1-8
Lesson 2	God's Temple	Mark 11:11-19
Lesson 3	God's Approval of Jesus	John 1:29-34
Lesson 4	Go Now	Acts 1:8
Lesson 5	Joy in the Spirit	Romans 8:1-4
Lesson 6	Christ in You	Romans 8:5-11
Lesson 7	Praying in the Spirit	Romans 8:26-27
Lesson 8	Righteousness, Peace, and Joy	Romans 14:17-19
Lesson 9	The Holy Spirit's Part in Salvation	Ephesians 1:13-14
Lesson 10	Grieving the Holy Spirit	Ephesians 4:25-32
Lesson 11	Intoxicated by the Spirit	Ephesians 5:18-19
Lesson 12	The Power of the Gospel	1 Thessalonians 1:2-6
Lesson 13	The Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:22-25

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### Additional Resources for Studying the Holy Spirit

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Kay Arthur. *The Holy Spirit Unleashed in You: Acts (The New Inductive Study Series)*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2002.

Francis Chan. *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009.

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## NOTES

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1. Listing a book does not imply full agreement by the writers or BaptistWay Press with all of its comments.

# lesson 1

## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

### MAIN IDEA

Spirit Baptism is an inner act that purifies your soul and spirit.

### QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Why does God command me to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit?

### STUDY AIM

To learn that being baptized in the Holy Spirit means to be totally immersed in the life of God

### QUICK READ

There is a baptism more important than baptism in water. It is baptism in the Holy Spirit.



## Introduction

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When I was a child, I went to church with a friend. It was the first time I'd ever been inside a church, ever heard a Sunday School lesson, and it was also the first time I'd ever heard a sermon. During the invitation, I went down front and asked to be baptized because my friend told me that was what I needed to do. I didn't understand the meaning of baptism or what it symbolized.

Several years later, I went to a summer youth camp where I gave my heart to Jesus. When we returned home, I told the church what had happened, and I was baptized again. This time, though, I understood the meaning and significance. I wanted to be baptized as an outward symbol of what happened inwardly. On that Sunday morning, I was baptized physically because when I accepted Christ, I was immersed into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Today's story talks about both physical and spiritual baptism. John the Baptist preached repentance and physical baptism as a symbol of that changed heart. Jesus would later come and baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit.

### Mark 1:1-8

<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, <sup>2</sup> as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"— <sup>3</sup> "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

<sup>4</sup> And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## John, the Forerunner of Jesus (1:1-3)

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When my family gathers around the table to tell stories, everyone speaks from their unique perspective. Every account begins at a different place. I go straight to the heart of the story, but my brother makes the story a long, drawn-out account and add details that the others forgot. But for the most part (with the exception of some whopping fish tales), the meat of the story stays the same.

Each of the Gospel writers begins the story of Jesus at a different place. Matthew began with Jesus' ancestry, Luke talked about John the Baptist, and John spoke of the Word (Jesus) becoming flesh and dwelling among His people (John 1:14). The writer Mark began with the ministry of John the Baptist, who is often called the forerunner of Jesus.

Mark used two prophecies from the Old Testament to describe the ministry of John the Baptist. Both, Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1, foretold of a time when John would "prepare the way." In other words, through John's preaching, God was preparing the hearts of the people to receive the message of Jesus. John the Baptist's voice was the first to prophesy in over 400 years (with the exception of Anna and Simeon at Jesus' birth). The people had not heard a prophet since Malachi had spoken to Judah around 430 B.C. No doubt, as time passed, the people wondered why God had been so silent. Maybe they doubted that God had anything more to say. Perhaps they thought God had forgotten them. John's arrival disproved both of those ideas. God was still very much at work. And today, He is still at work in the hearts of people, even though He may seem silent or absent.

Mark also spoke of John's mission to "make paths straight for him" (1:3). When John the Baptist spoke of paths, the hearers likely thought of the massive network of roads they traveled during that time, and some of those roads still exist today. John's role was to make paths flat and accessible. Instead of a physical road, though, John was preparing the hearts of the people. In today's language, John was the bulldozer leveling the ground so Jesus and humanity could be reconciled. All people—Jew and Gentile alike—would have access to God's Anointed. There would be nothing hindering the path to Jesus.

Like John the Baptist, believers can make the paths to God straight and clear. While we cannot change people's hearts, we can be the kind of winsome

people who make a relationship with Jesus attractive. Instead of becoming a roadblock to Jesus, Christians can make God's grace and mercy desirable. We can live in such a way that we make people want to know more about God.

## John's Ministry (1:4-6)

These verses explain *how* John the Baptist made the paths straight—through a strong message calling the people away from their sin and back to God. Mark said that John went into the wilderness and preached “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (1:4). Interestingly, John didn't go into the temple or the synagogue to preach to a large audience. Instead, he made the wilderness his base of operation. In a deserted area of Judea, John called the people to return to God and to be baptized in the Jordan River.

John did not preach that forgiveness of sin came *through* baptism. Rather, he was calling to the Jewish people to repent from their sins. To demonstrate repentance, the people needed to be baptized. It was an outward expression of an inner change of heart, not the means of salvation.

### Ritual Cleansing

Water as a symbol of cleansing was a well-known concept in New Testament times and had its roots in the Old Testament. God required ritual cleansing or bathing under certain circumstances. For example, a person cured of leprosy had to bathe with water as a part of becoming “ceremonially clean” (Leviticus 14:8-9). The same ritual was required after a person came into contact with a grave or a dead person. In several other places in Leviticus, God commanded ritual cleansing for specific situations (6:27; 15:2-13; 16:24). Later, God commanded the Levites to go through ritual purification (Numbers 8:5-7). In the Psalms, David asked God to wash him so he could be whiter than snow (Psalm 51:7).

However, the religious leaders had twisted this symbolic act over time, emphasizing the act without focusing on the reason for it. Ritual washing became a point of contention between these rulers and Jesus. The Pharisees complained because Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands before eating (Mark 7:1-2). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for caring more about outward cleansing than inward cleansing (Luke 11:37-41).



Verse 5 explains the wide appeal of John's message. People came from all over the Judean countryside and from Jerusalem itself. After experiencing 400 years of silence, the people had finally heard from God and the people responded in masses. When the people repented, John baptized them in the Jordan River, which had had a long history with God's people. This was the same river the Israelites crossed to enter the Promised Land (Joshua 3). It established a boundary line between the different tribes of Israel (Numbers 32). Elijah struck the Jordan with his cloak so he and Elisha could pass through on dry land (2 Kings 2). Even today, many believers who travel to Israel undergo baptism in the Jordan River as a symbol of renewal and recommitment to Jesus. Obviously, the mere act of being baptized there does not save a person from their sin.

Interestingly, Mark paused his story to describe John the Baptist's clothing and diet. John wore clothes made of woven camel hair. What a sight that must have been! He ate locusts, which was a sign of humility and poverty, as well as honey that was plentiful in the wilderness where John preached. Clearly, John was not concerned with impressing anyone or hobnobbing with the upper crust of society. If people came to him—or rejected him, as some did—it would be because of his message, not because of his social status or likeability.

Why Mark mentioned these small details about John the Baptist is unclear, but the description does give readers a deeper understanding of John's personality. John's clothing and eating habits can remind readers that the people in Scripture are not merely two-dimensional flannel board characters we learn about in Sunday School. They were real people with diverse backgrounds, character, and behavior. And God used all of them.

In much the same way, God uses a variety of people today. God places unique people in different areas of influence to reach people within different subcultures. Some people wear three-piece suits and share their faith with co-workers over a fancy lunch. Others wear t-shirts and talk with people about Jesus as they walk across a school campus. The point is, each of us has a role to play in the places where God has placed us, just like He used John the Baptist.

## Jesus and Baptism of the Holy Spirit (1:7-8)

John preached Jesus, not himself. He pointed to Jesus, not himself. He understood his role of preparing the people's hearts for the coming of the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. John understood his role as the forerunner and took up that mantle willingly.

John's humility was crystal clear. He said he wasn't even worthy to untie Jesus' sandal, a task usually performed by a slave. In saying this, John was not debasing himself out of self-hatred. Rather, in comparison to Jesus, John saw himself as subservient to Jesus, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Later in His ministry, Jesus would demonstrate humility when He washed the disciples' feet, another task only the lowest of slaves would perform.

John also understood the difference between his baptizing people and Jesus' baptizing them. When John baptized people, it was a demonstration of repentance, of returning to God. However, no physical baptism could ever cleanse anyone of their sins. Only the sacrificial death of Jesus could bring redemption.

John saw his baptizing people with water as a precursor of what Jesus' would bring—immersion in the Holy Spirit (1:8). Physical baptism was a symbol of spiritual baptism, and that spiritual baptism was greater than and superior to physical immersion. Water can cleanse the outside of the body. Only the Holy Spirit can cleanse the inner heart of a person. Only immersion in the life of Jesus matters.

### To apply this passage in your daily walk with God:

- Ask God to show you if you are immersed in the Spirit.
- Take time to reflect on how the Holy Spirit has changed your life.
- Look for the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in your daily actions.
- Evaluate your actions to see if they draw people to Jesus or turn them away.

## Implications and Actions

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Today's culture is full of people who claim to be Christians. Some go to church on Sunday. Others give to the poor or volunteer at a soup kitchen. Some of them have been baptized, perhaps even in your church. However, none of these actions prove that a person is a follower of Jesus.

Today's passage makes clear that being immersed in the Holy Spirit is the defining mark of one's relationship with God. All the religious activities under the sun means nothing. Life in and through the Spirit of God is the true evidence of real conversion.

## Questions

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1. How do you picture John the Baptist in your mind?
2. Have you ever gone through a time when God seemed silent? What did you learn from this experience?
3. Why do you think Mark talked about John the Baptist's appearance and diet?

4. How has God used someone unusual or “different” to minister to you?

5. What do you remember about your own baptism?