

A photograph of a sailboat on the ocean at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and reflecting on the water. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. The sailboat's mast and rigging are visible in the foreground. The title 'Life in the Spirit!' is written in a large, white, serif font across the center of the image.

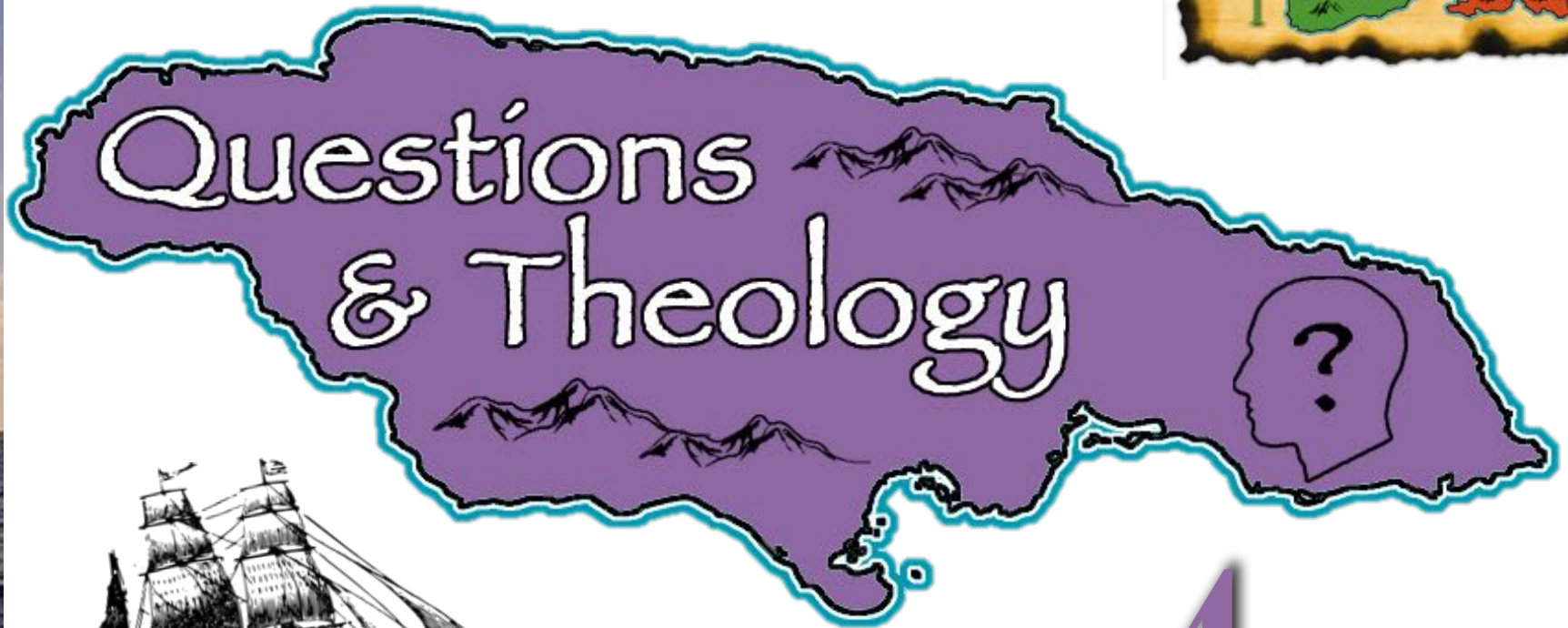
# Life in the Spirit!

*Experiencing the Fullness of Christ*

16) Special Experiences of the Spirit  
(1 Thes 1:5)

Paul J. Bucknell

# Section 4: Christian Doctrine



4

“If I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you” (Jn 16:7).

# A) The Need for the Spirit's Work (1 Th 1:5)

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph 3:16).

- “According to the riches of His glory” helps us imagine the celebrated work that God wants to do in us through the Spirit.
- “With power through His Spirit” asserts God’s people can overcome the world.
- “Inner man” teaches that much of the Spirit’s work has to do with our new spiritual being.

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (1Th 1:5).

- The gospel is associated with the preached word, but also with the Holy Spirit’s power and conviction (knowing its truth).
- We are right to demand the church to powerfully live out the love and truth of the gospel.

# A) The Need for the Spirit's Work (1 Th 1:5)

## Important Questions!

(1) Does the Holy Spirit come to stay with every genuine believer?

**Yes!**

(2) Will the Holy Spirit always fully manifest Himself by filling us?

**No**  
**But we need to seek His filling.**

(3) Should the believer seek a 2nd blessing of the Spirit to fully live out the gospel (e.g. laying on of hands, slain in Spirit, etc.)?

**No**  
**No, we have what we need.**

(4) Doesn't the Spirit desire to fully show His power, presence, love, and wisdom in our lives?

**Yes!**  
**This is the right question to ask!**

# B) Describing the Terms of the Spirit

## Sources of Our Confusion of the Spirit

The term 'spirit' is often confused with 'Spirit' (519x – Lesson #1).

References to the Spirit's work span from Genesis to Revelation.

The Spirit has worked differently at different times (related to the cross).

The Holy Spirit is invisible. "What is He like?"

False understandings are everywhere! (e.g New Age)

Absence of biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit.

The enemy purposely counterfeits to lead astray.

The lack of obedience.

The believer's belief that the world offers more than God.

regeneration

sealing

baptism

filling

assurance

sanctification

## B) Describing the Terms of the Spirit

- **Regeneration** (Tit 3:5; Jo 3:7 'born again') is the one-time spiritual life-giving operation by the Holy Spirit that animates His people by God's presence and power.
- **Sealing** of the Spirit (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13) refers to the one-time spiritual marking of a believer at salvation forever establishing him or her as His own.
- **Baptism** of the Spirit (Lu 3:16; Ac 1:5,2:38,10:47) is the unsought for, obviously noticeable work of God in a believer's life, that flows from regeneration.
- **Filling** of the Spirit (Eph 5:18) reminds us of the ongoing responsibility for each believer to be fully influenced by the Spirit's presence and work in their daily lives.
- **Assurance** of the Spirit (Ro 8:16) speaks of the special revelation of the Spirit, persuading God's people that they belong to Him forever.
- **Sanctification** of the Spirit (2 Th 2:13; 1 Pe 1:2,15-16-holiness) refers to the experiential process of increasingly being shaped in life and character by the Spirit to be holy like God.

# sanctification

filling

filling

## sanctification

filling

filling

### sanctification

assurance

baptism

sealing

regeneration

**The Holy Spirit's work in a genuine believer**

**SALVATION CHRISTIAN LIFE**

## C) Describing the Special Blessings (John 15:7-8)

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Lu 11:13)

- “Give the Holy Spirit” indicates the powerful experiential presence of the Spirit of God upon His people. Counterfeits abound.
- “Your heavenly Father” shows that this was not for salvation but apparently another experiences of the Spirit’s work in their lives.
- “To those who ask Him” teaches us that His gifts are personal, requested, and unique. Further intimacy with God is always to be sought within the biblical parameters of love, forgiveness, obedience, and humility.

## C) Describing the Special Blessings (John 15:7-8)

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples” (John 15:7-8).

- Although special experiences come, they are set in an abiding relationship with Christ constrained by God’s Word.
- Focus on abiding rather than a ‘laying on of hands’ (Ac 8:18-19) or ‘being slain in the Spirit’—(lost control is unbiblical).
- Special experiences of the Holy Spirit are possible, however:
  - ➔ John Flavel
  - ➔ Jonathan Edwards
  - ➔ D.L. Moody

# C) Describing the Special Blessings Puritanism

## *Intellectualism*

John Owen,  
Thomas Goodwin

Trusted only  
intellectual reasoning

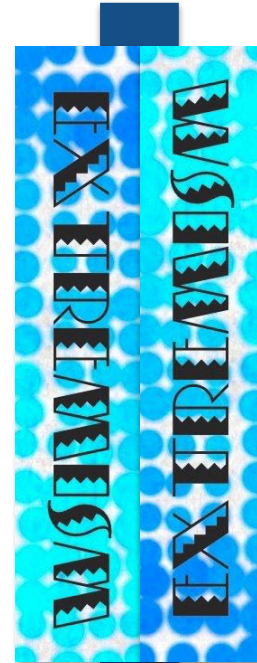
Fear of Quakers  
Quenched the Spirit

## *Experientialism*

George Fox  
|  
Quakers

Only sought  
inner light

Fear of reasoning  
Neglected doctrine



Jonathan Edwards  
(Great Awakening Revival)  
Good blend

We are seeking true experiences consistent with the Bible where we are not merely looking for spiritual experiences, but those which come from abiding in Christ that bear fruit that lasts.

## C) Describing the Special Blessings (John 15:7-8)

“Seek not an experience, but seek Him (Christ). Seek to know Him. Seek to realize His presence. Seek to love Him. Seek to die to yourself and everything else that you may live entirely in Him and for Him and give yourself entirely too. If He is at the center, you will be safe. But if you are simply seeking an experience, ... thrills...excitement, well then you are opening the door to the counterfeit and probably receive it.” –Martyn Lloyd-Jones

**Two important conclusions must drive our perspectives:**

(1) Believers do not need another new experience of God’s Spirit to be filled with and led by the Spirit of God.

(2) Some believers have been specially moved of God by special experiences of the Spirit, often heightening the believers’ sensitivity to the things of God, enabling their service of ministry to be more productive and ongoing (John 15:1-15).

# D) Seeking Revival

- **What is a revival?**

Revival is the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the believers in such a way as to significantly move the work of God forward in their lives and that many come to know the Lord.

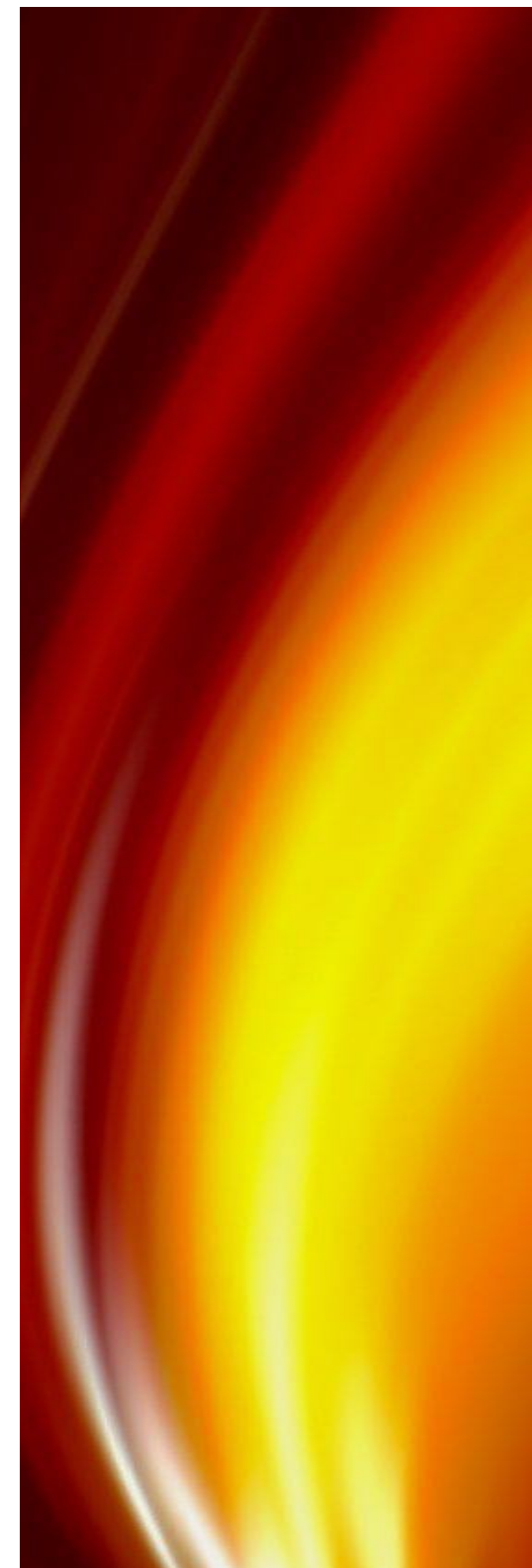
- **What are some characteristics of the First Great Awakening?**

"The town," says Mr. Edwards, "was never so full of love, nor so full of joy, nor yet so full of distress, as it was then." Whenever he met the people in the sanctuary, he not only saw the house crowded, but every hearer earnest to receive the truth of God, and often the whole assembly dissolved in tears: some weeping for sorrow, others for joy, and others from compassion. In the months of March and April, when the work of God was carried on with the greatest power, he supposes the number, apparently of genuine conversions, to have been at least four a day, or nearly thirty a week, take one week with another, for five or six weeks together. –CHAPTER VII. Remarkable revival of religion, in 1734, and 1735

- George Whitefield's (1735) "great and sudden fame had preceded him and he was in immediate demand. He began preaching in Philadelphia at once and thousands flocked to hear him. The population of the town did not exceed 12,000 souls, yet his initial audiences numbered from 6,000 to 8,000!" ([revival-library.org](http://revival-library.org))

# Final Application

- ➔ We all have what we need at salvation to live out the gospel by the Holy Spirit.
- ➔ Many professing believers are deadlike because they were never genuinely saved.
- ➔ We should not seek a 'second' post-conversion experience.
- ➔ The Lord does work in His people in unique ways through His Spirit for His own purposes.
- ➔ We should seek a fuller and deeper walk with the Lord for all by seeking God's greater works!





# Discussion Questions

- Do you sense that the church is missing something? Explain.
- How do you discern between the genuine and bogus work of the Spirit of God in the lives of His people?
- Do you sense a need for a revival for the church today? Why? What would you want to happen?



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