

RELYING
ON THE
POWER OF
THE SPIRIT

ELIZABETH
GEORGE



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Before You Begin

In my book *A Woman After God's Own Heart*[®], I describe such a woman as one who ensures that God is first in her heart and the Ultimate Priority of her life. Then I share that one crucial way this desire can become reality is by nurturing a heart that abides in God's Word. To do so means that you and I must develop a root system anchored deep in God's Word.

Before you launch into this Bible study, take a moment to think about these aspects of a root system produced by the regular, faithful study of God's Word:

- *Roots are unseen*—You'll want to set aside time in solitude—“underground” if you will—to immerse yourself in God's Word and grow in Him.
- *Roots are for taking in*—Alone and with your Bible in hand, you'll want to take in and feed upon the truths of the Word of God and ensure your spiritual growth.
- *Roots are for storage*—As you form the habit of looking into God's Word, you'll find a vast, deep reservoir of divine hope and strength forming for the rough times.
- *Roots are for support*—Do you want to stand strong in the Lord? To stand firm against the pressures of life? The routine care of your roots through exposure to God's Word will cultivate you into a remarkable woman of endurance.¹

I'm glad you've chosen this study out of my *A Woman After God's Own Heart*[®] Bible study series. My prayer for you is that the truths you find in God's Word through this study will further transform your life into the image of His dear Son and empower you to be the woman you seek to be: a woman after God's own heart.

In His love,



Lesson 1

Waiting for the Promise

ACTS 1

*A*s you journey through the book of Acts, you will follow the thrilling progress of the birth of the church and its spread throughout the regions bordering the Mediterranean Sea over a 30-year time span.

In reality the book of Acts could be entitled “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” This book of the Bible could be seen as volume 2 in the ongoing story of the life and ministry of Jesus. What Jesus began in the Gospel of Luke in a *limited* physical body, He continues in Acts through the *unlimited* power of His Spirit working in and through His followers.

But in truth, the activities of the book of Acts have never ended. It’s a story of what Jesus “began to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). Now, over 2000 years later, you are asked to continue the work that Jesus and the early church began. The baton has been passed on to you. Relying on the power of

the Holy Spirit, you too are asked to pass on to others what Jesus began.

God's Message...

1. Read Luke 1:1-4. Who wrote this Gospel, and what was his purpose?

2. Read Acts 1:1-5 and answer the following questions:

Compare Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:1-4. What additional information do you receive from this second book written by Luke?

What did the risen Savior “do” (verse 3)?

What did He teach (verse 3)?

What twofold command did He give (verses 4-5)?

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3. Read Acts 1:6-11 and the disciples' concerns in verse 6.

What answer did the Lord give them (verse 7)?

Describe the geographical progression that the gospel message would take (verse 8).

Where would the power come from for this worldwide mission?

Briefly describe the events of verses 9-11. (Theologians refer to what happened in these verses as “the ascension.”)

4. Now read Acts 1:12-14 and list the three groups of people who responded to the instructions of “the men in white.”

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What were they doing?

5. Read 1:15-25 and briefly describe what takes place.

...and Your Heart's Response

- *Base your faith on facts.* Christians are often accused of foolishly taking a giant leap of faith in the dark. Luke, however, gives just the opposite view. He points to the verifiable fact that Jesus appeared to hundreds of people over a period of 40 days after His resurrection. Armed with the reality of His resurrection, His faithful followers went out and boldly preached Jesus to the world. How should knowing that your faith is supported by solid historical facts help you as a witness for Jesus?
- *Know your Bible.* As you look again at Peter's speech in the upper room (Acts 1:15-25), he quotes numerous verses from the Old Testament. His thoughts and speech centered on his knowledge of the truths of Scripture. What are you doing to deepen your knowledge of Scripture? What difference should this make in your daily life and actions?

Relying on the Power of the Spirit

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are part of a rich heritage that started at the beginning of recorded history in the Garden of Eden. When all seemed to be lost, God promised to send someone who would defeat Satan. The Old

Testament predicted the coming of this Savior, the Messiah. The Gospels then told the story of His coming and His death for the payment for the sins of the lost. And the book of Acts now describes His empowering of His people to take this message of salvation to a lost world.

You, like the apostles and early believers, have been given the truth—the good news about the only way to God, the message of eternal life, through Jesus Christ. And like these early Christians, you are to share this message with boldness and love. Jesus has promised that His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, will give you the power you need to be His witness. The baton has been handed to you. Take it willingly! And rely on the power and strength of God’s indwelling Spirit as you run the race.



*From beginning to end,
the Holy Spirit is the operative agent in
the outworking of God’s will,
the communication of God’s Word, and
the accomplishment of God’s purpose.²*

—A BIBLE HANDBOOK TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson 2

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

ACTS 2

*H*as anyone made a promise to you they couldn't or didn't keep? Most sincere promises are offered with the greatest of intentions that the promise will be fulfilled. But things happen, many times at no fault of their own, and the one making the promise is not able to fulfill their word.

In Acts chapter 2, we see God the Son, Jesus the risen Savior, fulfill His promise to send the Helper, the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who will take up permanent residence in those who put their faith in Jesus.

Acts 2 is a progression of God's marvelous promise that the Spirit will be poured out on 120 believers in the upper room. This supernatural power will next be passed on to 3000 people on that same day! This coming of the Holy Spirit

will be the catalyst for believers to take the message of the “good news” to the ends of the earth as mandated in Acts 1:8.

God’s Message...

There is little doubt among Bible scholars that Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Luke was a highly educated Greek physician (Colossians 4:12-14). His medical training as a keen observer might well explain his use of the word “accurate” (Luke 1:3) in his desire to be precise with his observations.

1. Read Acts 2:1-4 and describe what happened in the room where the disciples gathered.

The sounds (verses 1-2)—

The sights (verse 3)—

The speeches (verse 4)—

2. Read Acts 2:5-13 and describe the crowd’s initial responses to the coming of the Holy Spirit as seen in verses 6 and 7.

One response in verse 6—

Two responses in verse 7—

—

What were the people amazed about when they heard the fishermen of Galilee speaking (verses 8-10)?

What was the message they were hearing (verse 11)?

How did the people respond?

Verse 12—

Verse 13—

3. Read Acts 2:14-21. How did Peter explain that the disciples were not drunk? (Just a note: The Jewish day started at 6:00 a.m. with the “first hour.”)

What was happening, according to the Old Testament prophet Joel (verses 16-21)?

4. Read Acts 2:22-36 and summarize Peter’s explanation of what has happened (see verses 32 and 36).

5. Read Acts 2:37-41 and notice the evidence of the crowd's conviction (verse 37). They were:

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What was Peter's twofold command in verse 38?

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—

What would result from following Peter's instructions (verse 38)?

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After responding to Peter's challenge in verse 40, what happened (verse 41)?

6. Read Acts 2:42-47 and list the four actions of the new believers after they were baptized (verse 42):

1.

2.

3.

4.

Read verses 43-47 and enjoy a picture of “body life”—the fellowship of believers. What impresses you the most?

...and Your Heart's Response

- *Emulate the life of the newly formed church.* Look again at the activities of the new believers in Acts 2:44-47. Which aspects of their behavior are you following, and what may be lacking in your church experience?

- *Focus on Christ.* The Jerusalem church was joyous because its singular focus was Jesus Christ. Having just read Acts 2:43-47, how do your behavior and joy match up with those of the early believers? Have you lost some of your excitement for the Savior? Take some time to reflect on your focus and make a note of anything that is diverting your attention away from the Lord. Jot down several changes you plan to make.

- *Do your part.* You cannot miss the fact that every believer seems to have been actively involved in the early church. As a result, the church grew in both quantity and quality. What can you contribute to help make your church a spiritually healthy place that will draw others to Christ? Note one thing you can do or need to do to contribute to your church's body life.

Relying on the Power of the Spirit

Can you imagine? Three thousand people walking and witnessing in unity, empowered by the Holy Spirit? The unity of the believers caused a great stir in Jerusalem. Envision the impact this kind of unity in your own church could have on your community—and even the world! Where does this unity start? With the power of the Spirit working within you as you follow the apostle Paul's admonition



*When you strip it of everything else,
Pentecost stands for power and life.
That's what came into the Church when the
Holy Spirit came down on the Day of Pentecost.³*

—DAVID WILKERSON