

Dear Friend,

A sad but true reality is that in American society today we feel so accomplished and smart that we think we no longer need God. Thus, we are fulfilling the scriptures, which say: *"Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools"* (Romans 1:21–22). Read the rest of the chapter and tell me if this has not become the reality of our day.

This brings me to the thoughts of this newsletter now before you. It's about you and me, the Church of Jesus Christ in this present time. How dependent on the presence and power of God are we? Have we become so wise that we no longer need His power?

Surely the decay of this present society testifies to our condition! We are called to be the salt and light of God to this confused moment in history. I don't know about you, but I need a fresh touch of His power to make a difference in this mountain of confusion all around us. I'm not afraid or ashamed to admit my need. As a matter of fact, this is now my daily cry: "Oh, Lord Jesus, I so need your Holy Spirit to touch my life again."

It's time, again, to pray.

With you, seeking Him,

Pastor Carter Conlon

COME, HOLY SPIRIT — WE NEED YOU

Carter Conlon

A personal experience changed the course of my life. Although I was a believer in Christ, I was desperate for something that would allow me to break out of the box of my former life. I wanted God's full plan for my life, but I did not know how to get to that place...until the day that I had a profound encounter with Him.

Before I get to my story, let's look in the book of Acts to get a biblical basis for it. *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord and in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues ... And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?'"* (Acts 2:2–8).

This is God doing what He said He was going to do in the last days. Now, the last days began on the Day of Pentecost, and it is going to culminate with the return of Christ. We are quite possibly in the last of the last days in our generation.

"It shall come to pass in the last days," says God, "That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, and on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17–18).

The question is, if we know this is the way God works, what hinders us from calling out again for what we obviously need in our time? Why would we talk ourselves out of the power of God that is promised to each of us in the last days? Here are three possible reasons, followed by a bit of my story.

Fear

First is the fear that God will not answer us. Some people's faith is hanging by a thread: "If I ask God for this and He does not give it to me, how can I trust Him for anything else?" The root cause of such reasoning is fear.

Remember that Jesus said in Luke 11:9–10, “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” If we ask God for the right reason—to bring glory to His name—He will surely answer us.

Indecision

The second reason why we may be hesitant to ask God for His power is the indecision about leaving where we are for what God has for us. Many people want to experience the presence of God’s Holy Spirit, but they do not want to move from where they are. In other words, “I want the blessing here; I want it my way.” On the other hand, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, there also comes a change.

THERE MUST BE MORE THAN THIS!

Consider Hebrews 11, where it says, “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (verse 24). There was an immediate leaving of old associations—a willingness to go with God no matter what the cost. The Word continues, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward” (Hebrews 11:25–26). Moses was willing to embrace a new identity and a new path for his life. He was no longer the son of Pharaoh’s daughter with access to all that came with it.

Pride

The third reason we are hesitant to ask for what we need is simply pride. No one wants to be rejected in the marketplace or by coworkers. Sadly, we often modify our behavior in attempts to fit in with a fallen society. We care more about what godless people think of us than what God says about us.

Remember, Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in all of Egypt. There comes a point when we have to die to pride. God

reminds us, “I will give you what you asked for, but it is only in a place of humility that you are going to find this.”

My Personal Encounter

I certainly learned this in my journey with the Lord. When I was saved at the age of 24, I began attending a church that I loved. However, they taught that once the Word of God came, we no longer needed the Holy Spirit.

I started reading the Word of God, and saw that Jesus said, “If any man believes in Me, out of his inward parts will flow rivers of living water” (see John 7:38). I remember thinking, “My life is more like a leaky tap. I have a hard time sharing Christ with people. There must be more than this!” I felt so free in church but so bound when it came to living for God the rest of the week. Eventually, after two years, I got sick of it. One day, as I was driving my patrol car, I punched the steering wheel and exclaimed, “Jesus, I am going to live for You if it kills me! I am sick of the cowardice in my life!”

A couple of days later, another cop named Bob came to me at work and said, “Carter, I got permission from the Chief to go to the regional jail to share Christ with the prisoners!”

I replied, “Bob, there was a riot there last month. If they riot again and we are there in uniform, you know we are as good as dead.”

“Yeah, I know that,” he replied. “Are you coming or not?”

I remember thinking, “Oh, God, You didn’t have to take me up on my ‘I’m going to serve You if it kills me’ vow so soon!” But we headed out later that week to the Regional Detention Center. On the way, Bob said, “I have a buddy who is an ex-outlaw in a motorcycle gang. It’s his one-year spiritual birthday, and I want to drop by the halfway house and say happy birthday.”

So we stopped at a facility that housed heavy-duty guys who had done big-time crime. They had gotten out of jail and were being integrated back into society. They all had found Christ in prison and we walked in there in uniform just as they were about to have a testimony and worship time.

Bob asked me, “Do you want to stay here instead of going to the jail?” I agreed, knowing it was certainly safer than the jail.

They started to worship, and the presence of God came down. With tears streaming down their faces, men testified of what Christ had done for them. Then at the end, the director asked me, “Would you like to share your testimony?”

I went through all the doctrine I had learned in church and shared my testimony. And they said, “But God will not just bring you to salvation through Christ, He will give you the power of the Holy Spirit so you can live as a witness for Him!”

Suddenly, I found myself arguing against them, but in the back of my mind, I heard this little voice saying, “What are you talking about? You cannot witness to anybody. You remember punching the steering wheel; you know why you are on this journey!” Finally, one of the guys said, “Would you like us to pray for you?”

I tried to convince myself, “Well, these are all coming out of jail; they will need the Holy Spirit to integrate back into society. But I’m a cop. I’m a fine, upstanding citizen. I’ve got the Word of God. I don’t need this!” But another voice was saying, “Who are you kidding? You know they have more victory in their lives than you do!”

I was battling within because of fear: “What am I getting myself into here?” Secondly, there was the hesitation of, “Where is this going to lead? Will I now have to be associated with these people?” And, of course, I was concerned about, “What is the Chief going to say if he finds out these guys prayed for me?” I experienced it all—the fear, indecision, and pride. But, finally, I consented.

One of the guys went to stand behind me. “Don’t stand behind me,” I objected, as it made me uncomfortable. He insisted, and then they said, “Would you raise your hands?” How ironic—twenty ex-cons and me, the cop, and I’m the one with my hands raised! It just did not make sense to me. But I raised my hands while they prayed for me. The next thing I knew, I was flat out on a hardwood floor! I never felt a thing. I just went down on the floor and began speaking a language I had never learned. The only thing in my mind other than speaking in tongues was, “What if the Chief finds out about this?”

All the way home that night, I was thinking, “This didn’t happen to me. I’m not going to speak in tongues anymore.” But I would open my mouth, and I would be speaking in the language I had never learned! Then I would argue with myself, “I am just making that up. That cannot be God.” So I would shut my mouth but when I opened my mouth again, another language

would come out—completely different from the former one!

I finally said, “Oh, God, You’ve touched me!” I got home and said to my wife, “Hey, Teresa, listen to this!” It was 11:30 at night, and she had been waiting for me to come home. I started speaking in tongues, then I ran out the door and went running through our 30-acre farm, shouting to the heavens, and singing “Amazing Grace!” My wife later told me that she thought I had lost my mind, but she acknowledged that I was a different man—I had been transformed.

Everywhere I went, I could not stop speaking about Jesus. There was a river of His life flowing through me! Doors started opening, and since that time I have travelled all over the world. I have seen God do miracles, and it all began that time in my car when I said, “God, I’m going to do it Your way!”

Ask for His Spirit

Being filled with the Spirit is God’s intended purpose for our lives. The Bible says that God is not a respecter of persons. Remember, Peter said, “This is that! Your sons and daughters, your young men, the old, the young, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will find Christ and know the power of God.”

We are not going to be able to make a difference without Him. We desperately need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and we must be willing to be ridiculed by a lost world one more time. Let us esteem the reproach of Christ a greater treasure than all the treasures of the world. If you are willing, I am confident that what He did for me, He will do for you—and you will be a powerful witness of the reality of Christ to everyone around!

Carter Conlon
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Update from Our Bible School

Living for the Benefit of Others

Carter Conlon is General Overseer of Times Square Church, Inc. He joined the pastoral staff as an associate pastor in 1994 and was the senior pastor from 2001 to 2020.

Times Square Church is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City, founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade."

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Tim Dilena

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Sunday 10 AM & On Demand

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