

## **AFFIRMATION: ATTAINING THE FULLNESS**

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### **1. The Fullness of the Holy Spirit Is a Promise**

- a. Joel 2:28, 29: “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”
- b. Acts 1:4, 5: “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”
- c. Acts 2:16-18: “No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’”

### **2. The Fullness of the Holy Spirit Is an Experience**

- a. Acts 2:1-4 (People at Pentecost): “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”
- b. Acts 8:15-17 (Samaritan believers): “When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”
- c. Acts 9:17 (Paul): “Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’”

- d. Acts 10:44-46 (Cornelius and his household): “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”
- e. Acts 19:1-7 (Ephesian disciples): “While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road to the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.”

### **3. The Fullness of the Holy Spirit Is Participation**

- a. Acts 4:31: “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”
- b. Ephesians 4:13: “Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”
- c. Mobilizing the Membership

The local church will grow in direct proportion to its willingness to mobilize its membership for ongoing evangelistic action. The virus of noninvolvement reaches the terminal stage of congregational life when leadership fails in discipling laypeople into positive Christian service.

Jesus mobilized His followers by discipling them in Kingdom living and sending them out for mission action. Not only did Jesus send the Twelve out on mission, He reached beyond their number and sent out the Seventy (see Luke 10:1-20). Following their mission, He personally critiqued their successes and weaknesses so they might increase their proficiency in personal ministry to both believers and nonbelievers.

The growth of the church following Pentecost would have been impossible had the disciples not delegated some of the ministry tasks to other congregational members with the appropriate spiritual gifts. The

congregation accepted ownership of this vision by selecting seven Spirit-filled men to assist the disciples in ministry.

Obviously, Stephen and Philip, two of the seven chosen, did not limit their ministry to serving tables and distributing food to widows. Philip pushed beyond the racial barriers by preaching to the Samaritans and baptizing the Ethiopian. Stephen went on to perform signs and wonders among the people and gave public defense of his actions. For this he became the first martyr.

The front lines of moral and spiritual battle continue to remain with laypeople. However, they often lack effective witness until they are guided, instructed, and inspired.

Churches will never develop an effective ministry of housewives, farmers, merchants, and craftsmen simply by making public pronouncement. They will achieve effective lay ministry by freeing pastoral leadership to mobilize laity to ministry. Apart from equipping "God's people for work in his service," we cannot justify our ministerial offices and denominational agencies (Ephesians 4:12, *NEB*).

The New Testament charges the whole membership with becoming involved in Christian community action and personal witness. Without a mobilized membership, there will be little success in pastoral ministry.

—From an article by Wayne M. Warner in *Enrichment*