

BILL JOHNSON

Hosting the Presence

Focus The face of God shines upon us. We have a commission from God to see the kingdoms of this world yield to Him. God has entrusted the Holy Spirit to us. The Holy Spirit is in us for our benefit, but He flows through us for others' benefit.

Fun Take a minute to share your highlights or experiences from Thanksgiving. Share one thumb up (something you liked) and one thumb down (something you wished were different).

Review Key Scriptures: Mark 1:9; Acts 3

1. The face of God shines upon us.

When the shining face of God looks upon us, it activates joy in our lives. God gave us the promised Holy Spirit as a down payment, meaning there is more of Him and more of His presence to come. The Holy Spirit in us seals God's promise that we are heirs with God—God inherits us and we inherit Him.

2. We are designed to express the life of God.

God predetermined that the Holy Spirit would dwell within us. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is for our benefit, and He flows through us for the benefit of those around us. God has given His children an appetite for the impossible—that we would see the impossible bow to the will of God.

3. We have an invitation to follow Jesus.

Jesus emptied Himself and became like a man, while on earth, so that we would have a perfect example of how we should live. Jesus healed everyone who came to Him and everyone God sent to Him. We have an invitation from God to conscientiously live in the presence of the Holy Spirit, which happens when we make space for the things of God. We should live with our souls anchored in the presence of God.

Group Dynamics Idea As a leader, a message like this may bring up conversations you might not be ready to fully answer. If people in your group are from a religious background that taught against the Holy Spirit or had bad doctrine, this may come up. Every semester, Gateway offers an Equip class called The Baptism of the Holy Spirit because it is one of our core doctrines. For people who have many questions or who want more information, direct them there. Also, Pastor Robert taught an entire series on the Holy Spirit last year called *The God I Never Knew*. As a leader, use these resources to help people in your group who want to learn more and have a greater encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Discuss

1. Many people limit the Holy Spirit's work because of bad teaching or lies from the enemy. What lies or incorrect theology do you think the enemy tries to use to limit the work of the Holy Spirit?
2. Bill Johnson used the imagery of walking with a dove on your shoulder to explain how we walk with an awareness of the Holy Spirit. How would having this perspective affect the way you live? What specific things in your life would it impact?
3. What are some things you can do to live with a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit in your life?
4. When we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can bring God's kingdom to this earth. What are some areas in your life, or in your sphere of influence, where you would like to see more of God's kingdom? What would those areas look like if more of God was present there?
5. What would it look like or feel like if there were an open heaven over your life? Over your family? Over your city and our country?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- God made us to dwell in His presence.
- God made us to have His presence.
- God made us to benefit from His presence.

- God made us to bring His presence to others.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, please empower us by Your Holy Spirit to live and move in a way that makes room for You in our lives. Help us to be more aware of Your Holy Spirit. Let us reflect Your nature. Help us to be anchored in the reality of Your presence. Let us not be overwhelmed by the difficulties of this world. Instead, empower us by Your Holy Spirit to be Your examples of love and power to everyone we encounter. In Jesus' name. Amen.

New Leader Tip One way to encourage your group to go deeper with God is to empower them to serve in some way. Becoming a Gateway Church member is the first step to serving. Talk to your group members about attending the next Catch the Vision class at Gateway. As a part of this class, they will learn of various opportunities to serve in the church.