



# LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

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## READ: ACTS 2:1-47

Pentecostalism has experienced phenomenal growth worldwide to become one of the fastest-growing movements in history, claiming over 500 million adherents in just 100 years. Given its current growth rate, some predict that by 2025 one billion people will identify with this movement worldwide. Globally, it is most dominant in the non-Western and non-English speaking communities of the Third World.

### WHAT IS PENTECOST?

If you think about it, to speak of a day of Pentecost makes it sound like a holiday, which is precisely what it was. If you go back and read the Old Testament, you will discover that Pentecost was one of the Jewish feast days; only they did not call it Pentecost. That is the Greek name. The Jews called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. It is mentioned five places in the first five books of the Bible—in Exodus 23, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16. It was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Palestine, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall.

PENTECOST WAS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BEGINNING OF THE EARLY WHEAT HARVEST, WHICH MEANT THAT PENTECOST ALWAYS FELL SOMETIME DURING THE MIDDLE OF MAY OR EARLY JUNE.

### WHY DOES PENTECOST MATTER?

What happened on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 was fulfilling what the Old Testament harvest celebration was all about. The Old Testament celebration was the foreshadowing of Acts 2, the most important chapter in the Book of Acts. What happened on the Day of Pentecost cannot be overestimated in its importance for the church of Jesus Christ and you and me.

MANY PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THE WORD 'PENTECOSTAL' HAS DEEP ROOTS IN THE BIBLE, BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS PENTECOST, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

PENTECOST, IN MANY RESPECTS, IS A VERB BECAUSE IT IS ALL ABOUT BRINGING IN THE HARVEST AS WITNESSES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The streets of Jerusalem were clogged with thousands of pilgrims who had come from every point of the compass to celebrate the goodness of God and the bringing in of the wheat harvest. The Old Testament was a celebration of the physical harvest. The New Testament was a celebration of the spiritual harvest: the birth of the church, which includes both Jews and Gentiles. The Holy Spirit's arrival galvanized Peter and gave him and the other disciples the courage to preach openly (Acts 2:14), resulting in a great revival (Acts 2:47) and a great missions movement that took the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome (Acts 28:14) and over the centuries from Rome to us. Pentecost, in many respects, is a verb because it is all about bringing in the harvest as witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## HOW DOES PENTECOST AFFECT MY DAILY LIFE?

**I'M EMPOWERED TO LIVE** | Because of Pentecost, we are *empowered to live*. We are enabled to evaluate how we live each day—in the power of the Spirit or in our power? Do we rely on the presence of the Holy Spirit? Are we open to His guidance? Is the Fruit of the Spirit evident in our lives? Are we an open conduit for the Spirit's gifts? Perhaps sin, fear, distraction, or low expectations limit us from living fully in the power of the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit offers us access to the resources of God's Kingdom. This is physical, spiritual, and supernatural provision. We can live victoriously over sin, addiction, idolatry and so much more. Pentecost is an opportune time to evaluate how reliant we are on the Holy Spirit. We then can confess this shortcoming and ask the Lord to fill us afresh with the power of His Spirit.

**I'M EMPOWERED TO WITNESS** | Additionally, Pentecost *empowers us to witness*. In Acts 2, we see that the Holy Spirit's power, displayed through His gifts, paved the way for Peter to proclaim the Gospel powerfully. This led to the salvation and transformation

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of 3,000 souls. These believers became fully devoted followers of Jesus. This was the first fellowship of believers, and the Lord added to their number daily. This is the birth of the Church—the body of Christ. As a disciple of Jesus, you should daily submit to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work through you as a witness for the Kingdom of God. Pentecost reminds us that we are empowered by the Spirit for the mission of spreading the Gospel. Ask the Lord how you can partner with Him in this mighty mission every day.

**I'M EMPOWERED TO ENGAGE** | Through Pentecost, we are also *empowered to engage our culture and community*. We find in Scripture that the Holy Spirit gave supernatural power to believers to praise God and preach the Gospel in languages they did not know. This was a miracle, and it symbolizes that the mission of the church is multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-lingual. In Galatians 3:28, Paul says, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” We are often divided by race, ethnicity, language, or socioeconomic status.

As we reflect on Pentecost, we should evaluate our attitudes towards those that are not like us. We may need to repent of attitudes or actions against those who do not share our culture. In Acts 2:17, God declares that He will “pour out His Spirit on ALL flesh.” Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can engage our culture and community where we are.

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What has been your experience with Pentecost? Discuss your understanding of life in the Spirit.
2. How can we evaluate the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives?
3. Do you find it easy to share the love of Christ with others? Why or why not?
4. Pentecost teaches us that Christ’s Kingdom is for all people: regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. What are some practical ways we can engage with those who do not share our culture?