

# **The Bible Speaks To Me About My Witness**

Session 4: Part 1 – Witness Out of the  
Overflow 2: A Man Who Was Filled with the  
Spirit

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## Session 4

# Witness Out of the Overflow 2: A Man Who Was Filled with the Spirit

### **Session Overview**

Where do we find the power to witness?  
We see that only through the Holy Spirit's power can people come to Christ.  
Exam  
Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

### **Learner Objectives**

At the end of this session, you should:

- discuss a biblical example of someone who witnessed.
- understand how the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to witness.
- see examples of how the Holy Spirit works in people's hearts today when we witness.

### **Introduction**

As we look at the life of Phillip in the New Testament, we see that he was a person who was filled with the Holy Spirit.



## Witness Out of the Overflow 2: A Man Who was Filled with the Spirit

## Notes

Philip was a layman who was chosen to serve on the first local church board. The board was created because there was need to distribute food among Grecian Jewish widows. The primary qualification for election to the board was to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. Apparently not all early Christians were Spirit-filled or there would have been no need to specify this condition for election (Acts 6:1–5). When Stephen was stoned to death and the Church scattered, Philip went to Samaria and proclaimed Christ (8:1–8). He continued to live the Spirit-filled life, and God used him powerfully. Consider the account in verses 26–39:

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very



passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”

And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

The reasons I am convinced that Philip continued living a Spirit-filled life are:

1. Philip had to be spiritually sensitive to be preaching God’s Word, seeing great numbers come to Christ (8:4–8, 14–19), and yet sense the Spirit’s leadership to go to the desert (v. 26).
2. The Spirit clearly led Philip to go to the Ethiopian (v. 29).
3. Philip was immediately obedient (v. 30).
4. Philip was sensitive in dealing with the Ethiopian (vv. 30–35).
5. The Ethiopian’s heart was open to the gospel message, which validated the internal leadership experienced by Philip.
6. Philip delighted to tell him the good news about Jesus.
7. The Ethiopian was converted and baptized and took the message back to Ethiopia.

Isn’t that the model we want to follow? Filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, walking in the Spirit—and witnessing to the good news of Jesus.

Michael Green wrote in *Matthew for Today*, “Until our lives have been filled with the Spirit of God, we shall not be likely to engage enthusiastically in evangelism and mission . . . The power of the Lord and the mission of the Lord belong together” (Acts 1:8).

Does the fullness of the Spirit empower people to witness today?

I saw it in the life of a Filipino brother. Robin attended a discipleship group. The group discussions and his personal study about the Holy Spirit caused



him to recognize a lack in his Christian life. He also attended a week of revival services.

One Wednesday night during revival, Robin went forward to pray. He asked God to sanctify him entirely and fill him with the Holy Spirit. He received God's answer and testified with beaming face, "My heart is purified. I am so happy. I could sing. I could shout. I want to be with my Christian brothers and sisters."

Robin's concern went beyond Christian brothers and sisters. At the next discipleship group, he reported that he had been enemies with his brother for 10 years over a business disagreement. Since the Holy Spirit had filled Robin, he had been praying for his brother.

One night Robin arrived home, and his brother was waiting for him. His brother apologized, and they were reconciled. Robin and his wife, Elena, witnessed to the brother. He accepted Christ. Within another week, the two families gathered again for a meal. In our final discipleship group, Robin gave one last report to the group: "Before, I was ashamed to talk to people about Christ. Now I have courage. I'm amazed—I've talked to three people about the Lord, and they've all been converted. I feel like I'm a winner with my Lord."

The Spirit's fullness and power for witness. How good! For Philip—a man filled with the Spirit! For Robin—a man filled with the Spirit! For you and me!

### **Back to the Place of Prayer**

Two amazing practices characterized the early Christians—they were people of prayer, and they were led by the Spirit. The early history of the Church, the Book of Acts, shows that church life was conducted in an atmosphere of prayer. There are at least 34 references to prayer in Acts.

In conjunction with prayer it is important to recognize the openness of Christians to hear the Spirit's prompting. Most of the 29 references to divine leadership in Acts are related to evangelistic witness or strategy. Philip was led to the Ethiopian (8:29–30), Ananias was led to Saul (9:10–17), Peter was guided to Cornelius (10:19–20). While the church was praying, fasting, and worshiping, the Holy Spirit launched the first New Testament missionary team (13:2).



Indeed, the privilege of believers is recorded in Rom. 8:14, “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” So today we should discover, as James Engel and H. Wilbert Norton wrote in *What’s Gone Wrong with the Harvest*, that “research based, Spirit led strategy to reach people with the Good News and build them in the faith.”

When Christ saw the need of workers for His harvest field, He did not simply send them but rather asked them to go to prayer for the sending (Matt. 9:37–38). The place of prayer would cause them to face themselves before God, to be searched and purified by the Spirit. The place of prayer would keep the presence of God real in their lives.

We should be careful if we pray for workers to be sent to the harvest, because the ones commanded to pray for harvest workers in chapter 9 of Matthew are the ones sent into the harvest in chapter 10!

New strategies come because we repeatedly ask the Lord to send out workers into His harvest. The results will continue to magnify present-day grace.

We need regular, daily return to the place of prayer for our spiritual renewal. Our witness will have impact as it arises out of the Spirit’s overflow in our lives. And it doesn’t seem likely that we will remain filled with the Spirit unless we are people of prayer.

Beyond that, prayer is part of the battle gear we use to defeat evil powers in our world (Ephesians 6:10–20). Specifically, our prayer is to be “in the Spirit” (v. 18), and prayer is needed so that we “will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel” (v. 19).

Prayer should go both before and after our witness. Dave Wilkerson’s efforts to reach street kids and see people delivered from drug addiction saw encouraging results. Yet Wilkerson said, “All souls won on the street are first won in prayer.”

Cameron Thompson illustrates the importance of the long range in prayer in Roger Palms’ book, *Enjoying the Closeness of God*:

Our prayers should be persistent. God’s delays are not denials. Each day brings the answers to our prayers nearer... At a meeting in a small town in the United States a very old man was converted. Another old man stepped forward and with tears told how 50 years earlier 25 young people had made a pledge to pray for this man



every day. Said he, “I am the only one still living to see the prayers of 50 years answered.”

When there seems to be no response to our witness, we still can pray.

A young relative my wife and I were close to had left her marriage, her Lord, and her church. I felt extremely sad whenever I thought of her.

We prayed for her salvation regularly. Months became years, and nothing seemed to happen. Then I remembered Rosalind Rinker’s advice in *Prayer—Conversing with God*: If you don’t get an answer to the big request, break it down to bite-size pieces or segments that your faith can believe for.

I prayed that God would drop some Christian influences into this woman’s life and that He would lead some Christian witnesses across her path. She had just gone to work at a bank with more than 1,000 employees. I was sure some Christians must be among them.

Without thinking of my prayer, I began to send her some recordings of some of my sermons. Soon she began to write to Nancy and me, quoting my sermons and giving her responses.

A little spark of encouragement began to glow in me. Then she reported she was getting romantically involved with a man from work who was of another faith tradition. I thought, *Lord, this was not exactly what I had in mind.*

One day she played a recording of one of my messages for her friend, Bill. He got serious at the end of the message and said, “If I’d been there, I would have gone to the altar.”

Knowing the young woman’s background was Church of the Nazarene, Bill contacted the Nazarene district office, and got directions to a local church. The next Sunday Bill took her to Chicago First Church of the Nazarene.

Over the next months and years God was working. The young woman had known the godly medical missionary and surgeon Howard Hamlin. She read his story *This Pair of Hands*. God drew her through it. She remembered how Dr. Ralph Earle, Bible scholar and translator, had been especially kind to her when she was a little girl. His admonition to her as an adult, “Let God be first,” was accepted.

Orlan Smith, a former nightclub entertainer, found Jesus and brought his sweet saxophone to Christ. A recording of one of his saxophone solos spoke



to her. The Christian influences I had prayed would drop into her life were multiplying.

She came to our home for a visit in September of 1988. One of our new converts told her how Jesus had changed his life. That impacted her. After my devotions one morning, I said to my wife, “When I prayed this morning, I could see her coming to the altar.”

At 9:30 that evening, our telephone rang. “What were you doing tonight?” she asked.

I said, “I was giving my testimony at St. Paul’s Church.”

She said, “While you were giving your testimony there, I was here, listening to a recording of your testimony,” and she began to cry. She said, “For the last half hour I’ve been down here beside my bed on my knees confessing my sins, and I want you to know that Jesus Christ has come into my heart, and the whole burden of sin is lifted, and I feel the best I’ve felt in the last five years.”

She feared facing her coworkers the next day, where her reputation as a woman of the world was well established. God gave her Philippians 4:4–7. Particularly significant were the words “Do not be anxious about anything” and “the peace of God . . . will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

F. F. Bruce said in *The Epistles of John*, “John and his associates bear witness to the truth of what they have seen and heard” (1 John 1:2–3; 4:14), “but behind their witness lies the witness of the Spirit” (3:24; 4:13).

Since that miracle night, that young woman has returned to Kansas City. She found an outstanding job, become very active in our local church, and married a man who shows her gracious Christian love. She now witnesses and brings others to Christ.

In a letter she wrote to us five days after her conversion she said, “You have not given up, you loved me and cared for me, even when I was not so lovely. Thank you for your concern and many prayers. I love you both dearly.”

Today she is a brand-new woman. Prayer was a major factor in the victory. Let us all be sure we have been back to the place of prayer. May we witness from the Spirit’s overflow in our lives.





### **Application**

You have been praying for five people who need Jesus. You hope to witness to them. You realize your witness should flow from a rich daily relationship with Christ, empowered by the Spirit.

Choose one or two trusted Christian friends (or a class that may be studying this book), and report your progress to them once a week over the next four on one of the following issues:

1. What I will do to be sure I am presently a Spirit-filled, entirely sanctified Christian?
2. What I will do to establish a meaningful daily devotional time with the Lord?
3. What I will do to improve and strengthen my daily devotional time with the Lord?



### EXAM – Session 4

1. Which statement regarding the Holy Spirit and Witness is not true?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- a) Michael Green said, "Until our lives have been filled with the Spirit of God, we shall not be likely to engage enthusiastically in evangelism and mission."
  - b) Philip and the Ethiopian met entirely by chance.
  - c) The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."
  - d) The Ethiopian's heart was open to the gospel message, which validated the internal leadership experienced by Philip.

2. The importance of prayer in the early church is evidenced by

- \_\_\_\_\_
- a) at least 34 references to prayer in the book of Acts.
  - b) when Christ saw the need of workers in the harvest field, He asked for prayer for their sending (Matthew 9:37-38).
  - c) while the church was praying, fasting, and worshipping, the Holy Spirit launched the first New Testament missionary team.
  - d) All of the above

3. Regular, daily return to the place of prayer is needed for our spiritual renewal. Thus, it is true that \_\_\_\_\_

- a) it doesn't seem likely that we will keep filled with the Spirit unless we are people of prayer.
- b) All souls won on the street may be won simply by our witness.
- c) Prayer should be consistent, but it is important to remember that delay in answer means denial
- d) prayer for workers to go into the harvest (Matthew 9:37–38) will always result in a person other than the person praying being sent.

4. After Dr. Shaver's relative left her marriage, her Lord, and her church, Dr. Shaver learned that \_\_\_\_\_

- a) continued prayer was not going to bring an answer.
- b) her boyfriend of another faith could be no help in the young woman's return to Christ.
- c) an answer could come if he would break the big request down to bite-size pieces or faith-size requests.
- d) a sermon on the prodigal son made a tremendous impact on her.



### **Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant**

1. Ask your mentor to tell you how he or she became a Spirit-filled, fully sanctified Christian or how that became a reality for someone he or she knows.
2. Find three evidences of connection between the Holy Spirit and witness in Scripture (beyond what was presented in this lesson), and report them to your mentor.
3. Tell your mentor of a time that the Holy Spirit empowered you after prayer or when you sensed the Holy Spirit helped you in a witness. Ask for your mentor's reactions to your example.
4. Discuss what most makes you want to witness for Christ to another person.