

## What Just Happened?

I was about 14-15 years old when these events unfolded. Brent was an acquaintance who I had seen at school. Brent used to invite me to church for youth group. He intrigued me, but I certainly was not going to go somewhere with a boy that I barely knew. The church that he attended was known for being a bit more expressive than what I was used to. He went to an Assembly of God church. I attended a Church of Christ. We were both Christians. We differed because we worshiped Jesus in different ways. Because of my narrow perspective, I allowed my interpretation of the Bible to get in the way of recognizing that we were all members of His church. There are many buildings full of people expressing their love with a variety of methods. The collective group of people is the one church. The believers in Jesus... past, present, and future are the one church. This is important to remember! God intervened.

Trish, a girl I knew from my Spanish class, invited me to go to youth group with her. She seemed nice. I agreed. She and her brother arranged to pick me up and drop me off at my house. Wouldn't you know it? It was the same youth group that Brent invited me to visit. It became a pattern for Trish and her brother to take me to youth group each week.

Brent and I started spending more time together. I liked him very much... enough that for a long time I resisted calling him my boyfriend. Everyone knows that boyfriends and girlfriends in high school often break up after just a short period of time. Friends were safer. Friends were friends for a very long time. I wanted him to be around for a long time. After about six months of becoming "best friends," we decided to jump to the boyfriend / girlfriend status. He started to go with my family to worship on Sunday mornings. I wasn't allowed to attend church services on Sundays where he worshipped.

Brent thought that services with my church were dull. I thought they were rather exciting. We had a quartet that would lead our voices in songs from the song books. There certainly were not any musical instruments. That would be considered sinful. He was used to several instruments that would accompany the singing congregation to the songs projected on a screen. People would lift their hands in praise... that would be complicated if holding a song book. The hymns that I knew from my childhood experience were different. I thought that modern songs were too enjoyable to sing at a church service. Many songs have been written over the centuries by mankind to worship, honor and praise God.

As Brent and I progressed in our relationship together, we found ourselves praying together almost every day. I can't remember all the details of a particular time in prayer, but I will tell you what I can remember. One day, we were praying and talking about God. Brent asked me a question. I think he asked me if I wanted to feel the Holy Spirit. I wasn't exactly sure what he meant or what might happen by my answer, but I loved God and I trusted Brent. I didn't think that either of them would want to hurt me.

We were sitting down. I don't remember if Brent said anything else or not. I do remember that he just reached over and just gently tapped my forehead. I immediately fell back. I do know that I was not expecting to fall over! When I became aware that I had fallen over, I remember having a mixture of emotions. I was confused, surprised, and completely at peace. How could I fall over with just the tap of a finger?

It seemed a physical impossibility that I would lose my balance and fall over with just one tap of a finger. It was not logical at all and my brain could not make sense of it. I had no knowledge of this type of experience. I knew I was having some sort of religious experience, but I thought that religious experiences only happened in churches. We were in a personal home. If you think about the definition of the Christian church, it involves all people seeking God through Jesus. We were two people seeking God.

God was sending the Holy Spirit through Brent. I don't remember how long after the incident, perhaps a week to a year, I was alone in my bedroom praying. I was sad. Outside it was dark and raining very hard. Going over to my bedroom window, tears ran down my face as I continued to pray. I knew that I was sad, but I didn't understand my uncontrollable crying.

I was unloading all my stress on God. I started speaking words that I didn't understand. I didn't know where these words came from or if they were even words. All I knew was that I liked saying these sounds or words. In my heart, they felt like words even though my mind had never learned them. Even though I continued to cry, I felt so much better. As these strange words came rushing from my mouth, I enjoyed an incredible sense of peace. I looked out of the window at the dark night as the raindrops poured from the sky. Gradually, the crying stopped. Nothing in my life had changed. I still had the exact same circumstances that had originally left me feeling sad and overwhelmed. The only difference in me was that God had taken my heartache.

I never talked to anyone about these experiences. I just thought they were strange. I was afraid that people would think that I was crazy... part of me wondered if I were crazy. Can someone be peaceful and crazy at the same time? Had I imagined these things? What was going on?

Approximately 30 years later, I am finally understanding and being given words to articulate what was happening to me so many years earlier. I was slain or resting or consumed by the Holy Spirit. I was talking in tongues. You can think I'm crazy if you want. It's OK. Some may read or hear this and completely understand. Others will think that I was influenced by the power of suggestion. There was no suggesting. I had never seen, heard, or read about my first experience. I had read and heard about the apostles speaking in tongues, but I thought that it was a kind

of miracle that only happened when the original Christians met. I had not physically seen a flame of fire resting over my head. I thought that to have the Holy Spirit in you or to speak in tongues, you had to physically see fire. To my knowledge, this had not happened in approximately 2000 years.

About a year ago, I believe that God had told me to write down my life experiences. Shortly thereafter, I told someone at church that I thought that I was supposed to write down times I've seen God working in my life. She said, "Oh, your testimony." Perhaps that is the definition that I have been looking for. In any case, I don't know who I am writing these events for... myself, my family, or an audience that I have yet not found. It is OK. I will, with the Holy Spirit's help, continue to write and let God figure out the rest.

I believe individual prayers to God are important, but I also see the value in group prayers. I want to use all my available resources to communicate with God. I know He can hear me, but I don't think asking others to intercede on my behalf is going to hurt anything. I am compelled almost every week to ask for additional support. I am not too proud to ask for additional prayers. One week I briefly explained this writing project to some prayer warriors. I told the prayer warriors that I needed help with clarity and help to avoid the daily distractions of this world. We prayed for just the right words to help others understand the message that I am trying to convey. By sharing the times in my life when I have seen God working in my life, I hope that your faith will be strengthened. After our prayer, but before I returned to my seat, the wise older man reached over and grabbed both of my hands in his. "He's always with you... not just when you see Him." How true! The same is true for you. Hallelujah!