



Prayer Resources

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Characteristics Of A Genuine Revival

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Acts 2:1

The Christian community is abuzz with reports of revival – cities are being named, numbers tallied, and leaders endorsed! Unquestionably God is moving afresh among His people. Many of the accounts clearly match those of genuine revival, both from a Biblical and historical perspective. Some of the reports, however, portray a different sort of revival, a counterfeit revival. How does one distinguish between the two? Genuine revival has certain characteristic features that are always present. These characteristics are exemplified in the Biblical account of the Pentecost Revival of Acts 1 and 2. As Charles Finney stated, “Pentecost, as the first distinctive outpouring of the Holy Spirit, reveals the character of every subsequent outpouring.”

In a Biblical Revival God’s Glory is Revealed. The initial evidence of a Biblical revival is the Glory of God coming upon the people of God through the filling of the Spirit of God. This filling of God’s Spirit is actually His Glory revealed. Without the filling, there is no revival. Indeed, revival may be summarized into one phrase: God’s Glory being revealed. On the day of Pentecost, the early believers *were all filled with the Holy Ghost* (Acts 2:4). Furthermore each succeeding reference to God’s people being revived begins with God filling His people with this same overwhelming power. Note Acts 2:17-19; 4:31-33; and 11:15-16.

In a Biblical Revival the Word of God is Respected. When God’s Spirit reveals Himself through preaching and teaching, the Word of God gains a new respect and appreciation – indeed, the people *gladly received His Word* (Acts 2:41). The early disciples boldly prayed, preached, and practiced the Word of God. Note Acts 1:16 and 2:17-21, 25-28, 34-35, 42. As the believers *continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine* (Acts 2:42), a new respect for the authority of His Word resulted.

In a Biblical Revival Believers are Renewed. The impact of God’s Glory being revealed and the Word of God being respected is the believers of God being renewed. God’s Glory on the day of Pentecost changed a band of disciples hiding behind closed doors *for fear of the Jews* (John 19:38) into a church of bold, courageous witnesses who caused everyone to stand in wonder and amazement (Acts 2:12). Revival is neither genuine nor Biblical if it leaves the believers unchanged.

In a Biblical Revival Backsliders are Restored. Those first impacted by God’s Glory in revival are always those who are the closest to Him – i.e. *the eleven* (Acts 2:14). The greater

the Glory revealed and the more significant the believers are renewed, the greater is the opportunity for revival to impact the peripheral Christian community – namely, the backsliders who have been living inconsistent lives. When God moved on the day of Pentecost, *fear came upon every soul...And all that believed were together* (Acts 2:43-44).

In a Biblical Revival Churches are Refreshed. The accumulative effect of God's Glory being revealed, the Word of God being respected, believers being renewed, and backsliders being restored is the church becoming refreshed. Luke wrote in Acts that *the churches (were) established in the faith, and increased in number daily* (Acts 16:5). Often, the momentum is then noticed by the voyeuristic media and the questioning skeptics. Such exposure will bring about an opposing whiplash reaction from the world. Note Acts 4:1-21 and 11:22. But the opposition, in turn, 'fans the flame' of revival to impact still other churches. For example, when the church in Jerusalem heard how God was moving in the regions of Samaria, they sent Barnabas to exhort the church in Antioch. Note Acts 11:22-23.

In a Biblical Revival Sinners are Regenerated. Peter's Pentecostal message went straight to the heart and brought about such conviction that the lost cried out, *What shall we do?* Peter properly responded by instructing them to repent (Acts 2:37-28). When the lost see the Glory of God in the church, they will believe the Gospel of Christ from the pulpit. Often sinners are not impacted by so-called revivals until they see the significant changes in the lives of God's people. The regeneration of sinners is the by-product of genu-

ine revival – it is never, nor should it ever be, the goal of revival. Encountering God is the goal of revival! Note Acts 2:42; 5:14; and 11:18-24.

In a Biblical Revival Families are Reconciled. Scarred marriages and severed families are healed through the Holy Spirit during times of revival. God's power in revival moved *from house to house* (Acts 2:46). It should be noted in those early chapters of Acts how often the church met in homes and how the fractured family of Jesus was restored. Soon those members of His family were in places of leadership within the Christian community. We must learn to view genuine revival as an encounter with God within the home and not just something that happens at the church building! Note Acts 2:46 and 15:1-15.

In a Biblical Revival Communities are Reformed. The ever-widening effect of revival is felt by the communities in which the church ministers. The Pentecost Revival cut across cultural, racial, and national differences and impacted the community to such an extent that those who were touched by it *had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need* (Acts 2:44-45). Many revival historians discount the accounts of revival until they see whole communities morally and socially reformed. Note Acts 2:8-12, 46 and 11:26.

Many are praying for a revival in America. The revival needed in America cannot be less than the Biblical characteristics of a genuine revival. May God grant unto us a Biblical revival!