

Acts 19:1-7 (NLT)

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" He asked them. "No," they replied, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." "Then what baptism did you experience?" He asked. And they replied, "The baptism of John." Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus." As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

**John 3:1-8 (NLT)**

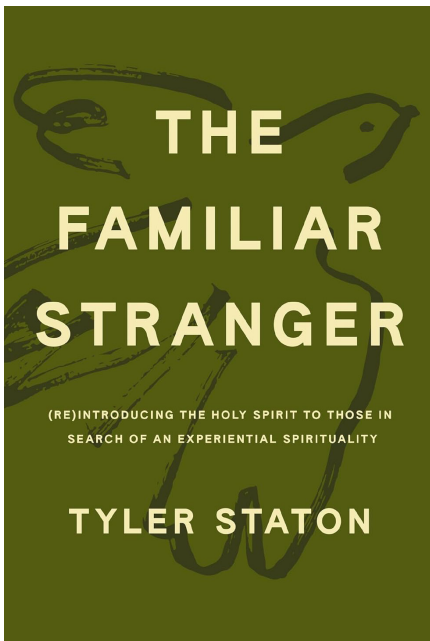
There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

John 16:6-7 (NLT)

..You grieve because of what I've told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate [Helper] won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.

Tyler Staton - The Familiar Stranger

A functional cessationist often embodies some form of passive availability, saying, "If God wants to speak to me, I'm right here. If God wants to heal me, I'm open. If God wants to fill my mouth with a miraculous word of knowledge, fill my imagination with a prophetic image, or fill my hands with healing power, he knows where to find me."



..[functional cessationists] neglect to seek out the gifts of the Spirit and fail to develop a set of habits and mindsets that can foster openness and availability to the presence, power, and gifting of the Spirit.

This passive stance toward the supernatural ministry of the Spirit is a tactic never employed in other aspects of spiritual growth. Christians of every theological persuasion readily agree that a pursuit of God is necessary for spiritual maturity. A stance of passivity may avoid the worst of spiritual abuses, but it does so while subtly stunting spiritual growth and vitality.

Am I Nicodemus? It may be worth asking, “When was the last time I prayed for miraculous healing? When was the last time a word of prophecy was shared with me or by me? When was the last time I had to seek out an explanation because my experience with God was a step ahead of my understanding of God?” Am I Nicodemus? And if so, what are the robes I need to risk taking off that I might experience the gift of God’s Spirit?

Acts 19:6 (NLT)

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