

## Book Review

*Act Normal*

**Scott Wilson**

(Springfield, Missouri, Influence Resources, 2012) 252 pages

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Compassion is not an event, but rather a lifestyle for the Spirit-filled follower of Jesus Christ. Scott Wilson's desire to define the actions of Pentecostal believers leads to the probing question: "What is the normal Christian life?"

The normal Christian life is a life that is led and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit so that believers can accomplish the work God set before them. As believers we are called to witness of the grace of God, to be agents of change in the lives of those around us, and to live in such a manner that we represent and honor the one who saved us, Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

*Act Normal* is a 31-day journey through the Book of Acts. It explores the normal actions of the Early Church believers who had recently been empowered by the Holy Spirit. Wilson believes this reveals what God considers normal for all believers:

Luke's history of the Early Church was a continuation of the ministry of Jesus as the Spirit worked in the lives of those he loved. Today, the Spirit of Jesus continues to live in each of us. In the same way the Father sent Jesus into the world, today he sends us, not just to proclaim the good news of forgiveness and new life, but to be living examples

of God's grace so that people will sit up and take notice. It's the greatest adventure the world has ever known. Are you ready to live a normal Christian life? (p. 248).

Wilson's book is thematic in nature as he spiritually invests in the heart of the reader by discussing a variety of issues, including the following:

- waiting, as a time of shaping mature faith,
- experiencing Pentecostal power in one's life,
- flowing as one with the Spirit,
- showing compassion,
- having open hearts and open hands,
- finding one's role in compassionate actions,
- never giving up,
- developing a willingness to change for effectiveness in ministry,
- recognizing strategic opportunities for ministry,
- showing relentless love,
- living in the power of grace and gratitude,
- exemplifying true repentance, and
- standing strong in the midst of storms and in the face of opposition.

These represent a few of his themes that define “moving compassion from niche to norm.”

According to George O. Wood, General Superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, “*Act Normal* is a campaign designed for churches to motivate those merely involved to move to God’s standard of normal, Spirit-led, compassionate, and generous lives modeled in the book of Acts” (p. 4).

*Act Normal* is uniquely structured as a personal study guide. Organized into thirty-one daily readings, it is perfect for a month-long devotional. Because the content is applicable for all believers, it is useful for small group study, Sunday School classes, home fellowship groups, and large Bible study groups. The book may be used in conjunction with the Study Guide and/or the DVD teaching series. When the question “What’s normal?” is posed, the series address the following topics:

- Compassion is normal
- Sharing your faith in Christ is normal
- Struggles are normal
- Divine intervention is normal.

As the author argues that many believers have lost their sense of purpose in serving Jesus, he builds a strong foundation for the necessity of being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Some people are joyful and passionate, living a life of purpose and meaning. Others are simply going through the motions of everyday living. They appear religious, yet their daily actions are seemingly indistinguishable from non-believers.

Each chapter accomplishes a new step forward in defining the normal, expected, supernatural outcomes of a life of obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Each real-life example helps the believer to grasp the practical suggestions for living a life that honors the Lord Jesus Christ.

The predominant goals of *Act Normal* include increasing one’s personal spiritual growth and reviving one’s actions of compassion to impact people in need. By expounding upon these goals, Wilson coaches the reader along a journey of insight and obedient obligation to fulfill the purposes of Christ, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. From a mentorship or discipleship vantage point, each chapter is an effective step in this journey.

In summary, Wilson effectively communicates his passion for compassion to move from niche to norm while encouraging every believer to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work of God. He further encourages every believer to actively witness the grace of God while serving as agents of change in the lives of hurting people and living in a manner that represents and honors Christ.

*Act Normal* is a life-changing resource that will benefit every student of the Scriptures, every venue of Bible teaching in the church, and pastors and leaders with a heart for compassion ministries. It is a practical guide that will produce spiritual fruit in church ministries for years to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Wilson, Influence Resources, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:axAGYIOumeQJ:store.influencerresources.com/products/act-normal+act+normal&cd=6&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us> (accessed September 6, 2013).