

Christian Growth

Week 4: The Holy Spirit

Introduction

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a *Person*, not a force or a part of God. All of the elements of personality are attributed to Him:

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1 Cor. 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

Note Paul's reference to the *mind* of the Spirit,

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1 Cor. 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

Notes that the Spirit gives spiritual gifts as He *wills*.

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Eph. 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

This verse warns us not to *grieve* the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: The Bible refers to the Holy Spirit as "He" or "Him"— not because the Spirit is male, but to emphasize that He is a Person rather than an impersonal force.

The Holy Spirit is fully God. He is one of the three Persons of the Trinity.

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Matt. 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

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1 Cor. 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

The Spirit is *omniscient*—He knows the thoughts of God

Ps. 139:7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

The Spirit is *omnipresent*.

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2 Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Acts 5:3,4 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

Why does the Holy Spirit play a greater role with God’s people in the New Testament?

If you survey the Bible, you will find that the Holy Spirit was not as active among God’s people before Jesus came as He is now that Jesus has come. The three key contrasts are:

BEFORE JESUS	AFTER JESUS

Before Jesus, the Holy Spirit was _____

During Old Testament times, the Spirit “came upon” Israelites to empower them to carry out God’s strategic purposes (Jdg. 14:6; 1 Sam. 16:13; Mic. 3:8; Ex. 31:3).

Jn. 14:17 . . . that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

- Before Jesus, His involvement was _____

1 Cor. 12:13* For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Rom. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

- Before Jesus, His involvement was _____

Old Testament figures could (and did) lose the presence of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:11; Jdg. 15:14; 16:20; 1 Sam. 16:14). But Jesus promised that after His death, His followers would have His Spirit “forever.”

Jn. 14:16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth . . .

What is the reason for these differences?

The Old Testament tabernacle:

Jesus is the _____ (Jn. 1:29)

This is why Jesus predicted that the Spirit would soon indwell those who believe in Him – but not until after His death.

Jn. 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (Jesus’ atoning death was a key aspect of His glorification [see John 12:23]).

What does the Holy Spirit do in Christians' lives?

The New Testament describes the following specific ministries of the Holy Spirit. Think about ways you have experienced many of these ministries of the Spirit.

Prior to conversion, the Spirit:

- _____ us of our need for His forgiveness through Jesus. Otherwise, we would never come to Christ.
Jn. 16:8 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment . . .

At conversion, the Spirit permanently:

- _____ us, or makes us alive to God and gives us a new nature.
Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit . . .
- _____ us
Rom. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him . . . 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- _____ us, or identifies us with Christ and His Body, other Christians
1 Cor. 12:13* For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
- _____ us in Christ until His return.
Eph. 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise . . .
The grammar in Eph. 1:13 indicates that the Spirit is given to us the moment we believe the gospel, not at some later time (as taught by some Pentecostals).
Eph. 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- Normally gives us _____ to build up the Body of Christ.
1 Cor. 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

Subsequent to conversion, the Spirit is our “Advocate” (Jn. 14:16) in the following ways:

- He _____ us of our salvation by enabling us to relate to God personally.
 - Rom. 8:15,16* For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God . . .
 - Gal. 4:6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

The following ministries explain *ways in which* the Holy Spirit provides this assurance.

- He _____ us, or enables us to understand the meaning and significance of God's Word, and how it personally applies to our lives.
 - 1 Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.
 - Eph. 1:16 . . . I do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

EXAMPLES:

- He _____ us by personally guiding us into God's will for our lives. This leadership consists primarily of personal guidance in the areas of our character transformation and ministry purpose and opportunities.
 - Gal. 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law . . . 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
 - Acts records a number of instances of the Spirit’s guidance of Christians into fruitful ministry situations (see Acts 8:25-40; 10:9-33; 16:6-10).

EXAMPLES:

- He _____ us to please God by anointing us for character transformation and ministry.

Rom. 8:12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

1 Cor. 2:3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Col. 1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

The Spirit also sometimes empowers Christians to perform miracles that help God's people and/or validate the gospel to non-Christians (see for example Acts 2:43; 3:1-26; 5:12-16; 6:8-10; 8:5-8; 9:17,18; 14:3; 19:8-12; Rom. 15:18,19; 2 Cor. 12:12).

EXAMPLES:

- He _____ us with God's love.

2 Cor. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Rom. 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

EXAMPLES:

- He _____ us to pray—both by giving us a desire to pray and by guiding us on how to pray according to God’s will (Rom. 8:26,27; Matt. 18:19,20).

Rom. 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

Eph. 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

EXAMPLES:

What dangers should I avoid concerning the Holy Spirit?

According to our temperament, background, current church culture, or other factors, we may be vulnerable to two opposite dangers concerning the Holy Spirit.

1 Thess. 5:19-22** Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.

“Do not quench the Spirit”

We may neglect the importance of the Holy Spirit and live without anticipation of His activity in our lives. Paul calls this “quenching” the Holy Spirit, and he warns the Thessalonian Christians not to do this (1 Thess. 5:19).

Without a healthy relationship with the Spirit in which we regularly experience His activity as described above, we can become “functional atheists” in various ways:

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Ways to avoid this danger:

“Examine everything carefully”

We may emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit, but have unbiblical expectations about how He works in our lives. We call this “super-spirituality.”

- Some expect _____ (e.g., visions or prophetic words for guidance; being “slain in the Spirit”).
- Some expect that all Christians must have _____ (e.g., speaking in tongues). Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift that God gives to some, but not all Christians (1 Cor. 12:30).
- Some expect that walking by the Spirit will _____
- Some equate having certain spiritual experiences with _____
- Some encourage _____ instead of Spirit-filled, other-centered, sacrificial love.
- Some use “The Lord led me” to _____
- Some use “Only the Lord can bear fruit” _____

Ways to avoid this danger:

To which of these dangers are you most vulnerable?

Let’s aim for lives of healthy appreciation of and dependence on the Holy Spirit!!

Memory verses

1 Cor. 12:13* - All Christians have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit and baptized by Him into Christ and His Body.

Rom. 8:15,16* – The Holy Spirit assures Christians of their adoption by helping them to call out to their heavenly Father, and by personally testifying to them of their Father’s love.

1 Thess. 5:19-22** - We should not quench the Spirit, and we should test all spiritual experiences by God’s Word.

Homework assignment

Chuck Smith, *Charisma vs. Charismania*, Chapters 3,12,13