

Following Christ: The Holy Spirit



Slice F8

The Holy Spirit

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1 Memory Verse

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)

10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

2 The Holy Spirit

As Christians, we believe in the 'Trinity', which is the complete unity of three Persons into one Godhead. This concept may be difficult for a person to grasp because our understanding is limited to a three-dimensional world. The simplest way to explain the Godhead is that people are created in the image of God; we are three different parts functioning as one as we are spirit, soul, and body. To understand God, a person must, therefore, grasp all of who God is: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is the least understood but, as we covered in F7 of *The Gospel Message*, He has already started His work in you.

In Hebrew, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the *Ruach ha-Kodesh*, where *Kodesh* means 'holy' and *Ruach* means 'breath' or 'wind,' an unseen, but powerful force. The Holy Spirit is the very breath of God, by which the Word of God comes forth. We cannot speak without breath coming out of our mouths.

When Jesus was raised into heaven, the disciples felt a distinct loss; the 'Rabbi' they had lived with and learned from for three years was gone. But what God had prepared for them was even better, they would not have God *with* them but they would have God *in* them. Knowing the Holy Spirit and learning how He works in your life will radically change your life. However, it must be remembered that the Holy Spirit is a gentleman, He will not operate in a person's life unless He is invited to do so. So let us spend some time understanding the dynamics of the Spirit in your life and how He can transform your life.

3 Convincing and Convicting Work of the Spirit

As was stated in the introduction, the Holy Spirit was at work in your life even before you asked Jesus to come into your life. Before His resurrection, Jesus told his disciples of the Holy Spirit saying:

John 16:8 (ESV)

8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

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The Greek word *elenxei*, used for 'convict,' may also be translated as 'convince'. Both interpretations apply as the Holy Spirit convinced you that Jesus was 'the Way, the Truth and the Life and, in doing so, He convicted you of your sins and the need to repent.

4 Life-Giving Power of the Spirit

One night Jesus was in conversation with a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was attempting to understand the teachings of Jesus. Jesus made a statement that was very confusing to Nicodemus:

John 3:5–7 (ESV)

5 Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Jesus begins by telling Nicodemus that what He was about to say is the absolute truth, that only those born of water and of the Spirit can enter the kingdom of God. Jesus is making it clear to Nicodemus that faith in Jesus is required for a spiritual rebirth. The Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus to dwell in the person (John 15:26) and, as the Spirit is part of the Godhead, it may be said that Jesus dwells in the believer's heart, as the Trinity cooperate with one another.

The gift of the Holy Spirit brings spiritual life to a person and they begin to grow in their relationship with God. Consider a person who is religious and follows traditions but is spiritually dead. Compare this with a person who has found Jesus and is developing a relationship with Him through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

5 Be Filled with the Spirit

There are three distinct terms used by Scripture to describe the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.

5.1 Receive the Holy Spirit

This occurs at salvation and is when the Holy Spirit indwells the New Believer.

John 7:39 (ESV)

39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

38 And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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Acts 8:15 (ESV)

15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 10:47 (ESV)

47 'Can anyone withhold water for baptising these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?'

Galatians 3:2 (ESV)

2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Galatians 3:14 (ESV)

14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

5.2 Be Baptised with the Holy Spirit

This is the full immersion by the Holy Spirit to receive power by speaking in tongues and is associated with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:16 (ESV)

16 John answered them all, saying, 'I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Acts 1:5 (ESV)

5 for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'

Acts 2:1–4 (ESV)

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 11:16 (ESV)

16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 19:6 (ESV)

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6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

5.3 *Be Filled with the Holy Spirit*

Because of our inability to contain the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, our spirits need to be filled by the Holy Spirit, initially and continually.

The Holy Spirit is our connection to God and, therefore, an important point for every believer to understand is that we must continually seek to be always filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. This is done by remaining obedient to God, continually consecrated to Him, yielding ourselves and our wills to the authority of the Trinity.

Acts 2:4 (ESV)

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:8 (ESV)

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders ...'

Acts 4:31 (ESV)

31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 9:17 (ESV)

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 13:52 (ESV)

52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

6 The Spirit helps us Resist Temptation

The Holy Spirit works in our lives by requiring us to live in the Spirit and to resist temptation. This point was covered in F3 Temptations.

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Galatians 5:16–18 (ESV)

16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17** For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. **18** But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law.

Paul describes living in the Spirit as literally walking in the Spirit, following the path set for us by God, and not straying to follow the desires of the flesh. Jesus described it in

Matthew 7:13–14 (ESV)

13 ‘Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **14** For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Simply put, it is easy to be selfish and allow yourself to experience the pleasures of the world, while to ‘walk by the Spirit, requires a more disciplined life’. We can do so with the help of the Holy Spirit and the rewards of service are eternal, not temporal and temporary.

7 The Fruit of the Spirit

There are nine fruits of the Holy Spirit that blossom in a believer through the work of the Holy Spirit, moulding us into the image of Jesus:

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV)

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.

The nine ‘Fruits of the Spirit’ are a result of true repentance, turning away from our sinful ways towards love for God and our neighbour. Just as a fruit tree needs to be watered to produce healthy fruit to prevent it from becoming flaccid, shrivelled and sickly, so too does a person require the Holy Spirit to blossom in the love of others. All the fruits of the Spirit can be found in the definition of love, and Jesus is the essence of that Love. The developing of the fruits of the Spirit in our lives is no overnight task, it is lifelong, and each believer is continually learning and growing, becoming the new creation that we are in Christ. This was discussed in F1 You are a New Creation.

8 Gifts of the Spirit

With the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes a special gift, or gifts, from God that should be exciting and motivating for all believers. God empowers each of His children with the spiritual equipment that they will need to fulfil their life purpose and serve Him in the church. There is a distinct difference between the Fruit of the Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit:

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- Fruit of the Spirit: the character of Christ formed in us.
- Gifts of the Spirit: spiritual equipment for our mission of proclaiming the good news of Christ.

Both are essential to the effective Christian life, one moulds us into the image of Jesus, the obedient servant. The other combines a person’s talents, abilities, and passions, and empowers them to fulfil God’s plan and purpose for their life.

1 Corinthians 12:4–7 (ESV)

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. **7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

In his letter, Paul exhorts Timothy ‘to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you. Paul is encouraging Timothy to never to let the gift that he has within him burn down to embers. Timothy was to continually stir up the flames with the bellows of action.

Paul’s instruction for all believers is that they are to eagerly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The desire for the gifts must be connected to a love of God and a willingness to serve Him. It should not be motivated by a religious spirit and a desire for selfish gain and the praises of men.

The laying on of hands to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit is not a magic show, where the gift is suddenly manifest in the person. The gift of wisdom, for example, may be imparted to a person through a burden from the Holy Spirit to study God’s Word. This should be followed by years of Holy Spirit-guided opportunities to grow and learn. There is an old expression, ‘God helps those that help themselves,’ which is very true of receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God gives gifts to those who are motivated to seek His will for their lives and to dedicate themselves to His service.

Table Showing the Three Lists of Gifts

Romans 12:3-8	1 Corinthians 12:8-10	Ephesians 4:11-13
Prophecy	Wisdom	Apostles
Serving	Knowledge	Prophets
Teaching	Faith	Evangelists
Encouraging	Healing	Pastors
Giving	Miracles	Teachers
Leadership	Prophecy	
Mercy	Distinguishing between spirits	
	Speaking different kinds of tongues	
	Interpreting tongues	

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These lists do not cover all the many gifts of the Holy Spirit. For example, the gift of service covers a large variety of talents that the church can benefit from. There are also the all-important prayer warriors, who not only display compassion for, but must also have a dedication to daily spend considerable time conversing with the Lord. Music and artistic skills are also spiritual gifts to be used for God (Exodus 31:3; 1 Chronicles 25:7). There is also the gift that some have named 'helps,' which should not be confused with the gift of mercy. These gifts are similar, but there is a distinction. Those with the gift of 'helps' are those believers who can, with humility and grace, aid or assist others in the church.

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)

10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

The various gifts of the Holy Spirit are covered in more detail in the course *Deeper in Christ: Foundation Principles*.

9 Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

Gift-giving should be understood from God's point of view, not from our own pride-contaminated perspective. We need to always avoid the error of the Corinthian Church, where gifts became a status symbol. The dishwasher could receive more rewards in heaven than a deacon of the church because God measures the heart behind the deed, not the deed itself. Gifts are given for the advancement of the Kingdom, we are all servants of God who have been detailed with specific roles within the Kingdom. How we fulfil that role is our measure of worth, not the role itself.

Paul's instruction for all believers is that they are to eagerly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are imparted through the laying on of hands and prayer by the elders. To eagerly desire the gifts requires the person to continually go before the Lord in prayer and ask Him to reveal the gifting they have received.

We are to always remember that God is not limited to a set of templates when giving gifts. We are all children of God and God deals with us as His unique child who He has created for a specific purpose. Our gifting will, therefore, also be unique, taking into consideration several factors, such as our character traits and talents, the society in which we live, God's plan for our life, and His plans for the church the believer is attending.

10 Nothing Is Impossible

We serve a mighty God who fulfils His will no matter what opposition there may be to it. God is not restricted by the laws of physics, and a three-dimensional world. He is the Creator God who exists outside of the limits of creation. Therefore, the Gifting provided

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by God can provide supernatural abilities, such as prophecy, healing and miracles. Scripture makes the power and authority that is available to the believer very clear:

Jeremiah 32:27 (ESV)

27 'Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?

Luke 1:37 (ESV)

37 For nothing will be impossible with God.'

Luke 18:27 (ESV)

27 But he said, 'What is impossible with man is possible with God.'

Matthew 17:20 (ESV)

20 He said to them, 'Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.'

11 Walking in the Spirit

When on operations in the military, communication is vital for the success of the mission. The Non-Commissioned Officer or Officer who is leading the unit is required to be in constant contact with their superiors back at base for the success of the mission. So, a believer needs to see each day as going out into the mission field, to start the day by committing it to the Lord, and then to remain in communication throughout the day, so that they can and be 'led by the Spirit' and 'walk in the Spirit'.'

Galatians 5:18 (ESV)

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Galatians 5:25 (ESV)

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

We believers, have an immense privilege: to have God live in our bodies by His Spirit and to be able to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These are more than words; they are a reality. We encourage you to press into God, to get to know Him, and to learn how His Spirit works. There is absolutely no limit to what God can do with a person who loves Him and seeks Him.

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12 Proclamation

'Thank you, Lord Jesus, for baptising me with the Holy Spirit and fire. I proclaim I walk in the fullness of Christ's power and wisdom as I willingly yield my will and life to the guidance and leading of You, Holy Spirit. I impart and release the gifting I have received from, You Holy Spirit, to others to bring You glory, Father.'

13 Prayer

'Heavenly Father, help me to walk and be led by the Holy Spirit. Fill me and enable me to bear much fruit and dispense the power of Christ through Your gifts, Holy Spirit to advance the kingdom of God on earth and to bring You glory.'