



The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

*"..he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,
whatsoever I have said unto you."*

John 14:26

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Forward

There is no greater subject in the than the study of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. If we do not understand the work and meaning of the Holy Spirit, we will fail to understand the basic meaning of the Bible. As we delve into this remarkable study, it is the desire of the author to present the Scriptures that will bring knowledge and understanding of the working of the Holy Spirit in your life and in the world.

The Holy Spirit is a person, the third person of the God Head. The Holy Spirit is an influence and a personality that has been sent into the world to convict the lost and equips the saints for Christian Service. The Holy Spirit speaks. He is a being who glorifies Jesus. He is the power that directs every thought toward God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings God's presence into the world.

Receive and love God's presence, his Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a fulfillment of the promise given by the prophet Joel.

Acts 2:16

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28-29 was happening that particular morning. The “last days” include all the days between Christ’s first and second comings and is another way of saying “from now on.” “The great and glorious day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20) denotes the whole Christian age. Even Moses yearned for the Lord to put his Spirit on everyone (Numbers 11:29). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world—to men, women, slaves, Jews, Gentiles. Now *everyone* can receive the Spirit. This was a revolutionary thought for first-century Jews.

Everything that happened to Jesus was under God’s control. His plans were never disrupted by the Roman government or the Jewish officials. This was especially comforting to those facing oppression during the time of the early Christian church.

Peter began with a public proclamation of the resurrection at a time when it could be verified by many witnesses. This was a powerful statement because many of the people listening to Peter’s words had been in Jerusalem 50 days earlier at Passover and may have seen or heard about the crucifixion and resurrection of this “great teacher.”

Jesus’ resurrection was the ultimate sign that what he said about himself was true. Without the resurrection, we would have no reason to believe in Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Peter quoted from Psalm 16:8-11—a psalm written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself, because David died and was buried (Acts 2:29). Instead, he wrote as a prophet (Acts 2:30) who spoke of the Messiah who would be resurrected. The audience understood “decay” (Acts 2:27) to mean the grave. The emphasis here is that Jesus’ body was *not* left to decay but was in fact

resurrected and glorified.

He “has poured out what you now see and hear” could be paraphrased, “gave Jesus the authority to send the Holy Spirit, with the results you are seeing and hearing today.”

After Peter’s powerful, Spirit-filled message, the people were deeply moved and asked, “What shall we do?” This is the basic question we must ask. It is not enough to be sorry for our sins—we must let God forgive them, and then we must live like forgiven people. Has God spoken to you through his Word or through the words of another believer? Like Peter’s audience, ask God what you should do, and then obey.

Offering the promise to those who repent and are baptized, Peter declares that those who desire and follow these things may themselves receive this precious gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38-39

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. [39] For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

If you want to follow Christ, you must “repent and be baptized.” To repent means to *turn from* sin, changing the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God’s laws. At the same time, you must *turn to* Christ, depending on him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves—only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit was the speaking in tongues.

Acts 2:1-4

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. [2] And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. [3] And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. [4] And they were

all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This was a fulfillment of John the Baptist's words about the Holy Spirit's baptizing with fire (Luke 3:16) and of the prophet Joel's words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

Tongues symbolize speech and the communication of the gospel. Fire symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven (Exodus 19:16-18). At Pentecost, God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire.

At Mount Sinai, fire had come down on one place; at Pentecost, fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is now available to all who believe in him. God made his presence known to this group of believers in a spectacular way—violent wind, fire, and his Holy Spirit.

Would you like God to reveal himself to you in such recognizable ways? He may do so but be wary of forcing your expectations on God. In 1 Kings 19:10-13, Elijah also needed a message from God. There was a great wind, then an earthquake, and finally a fire. But God's message came in a "gentle whisper." God may use dramatic methods to work in your life—or he may speak in gentle whispers. Wait patiently and always listen.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:16

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

John's baptism with water symbolized the washing away of sins. His baptism coordinated with his message of repentance and reformation. Jesus' baptism with fire includes the power needed to do God's will. The baptism with the Holy Spirit was

fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit came upon believers in the form of tongues of fire, empowering them to proclaim Jesus' resurrection in many languages.

The baptism with fire also symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing God's judgment on those who refuse to repent.

Matthew 3:11

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John's message demanded at least three specific responses: (1) share what you have with those who need it, (2) whatever your job is, do it well and with fairness, and (3) be content with what you're earning. John had no time to address comforting messages to those who lived careless or selfish lives—he was calling the people to right living. What changes can you make in sharing what you have, doing your work honestly and well, and being content?

Mark 1:8

I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

Luke 3:16

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

John's baptism with water symbolized the washing away of sins. His baptism coordinated with his message of repentance and reformation. Jesus' baptism with fire includes the power needed to do God's will. The baptism with the Holy Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit came upon believers in the form of tongues of fire, empowering them to proclaim Jesus' resurrection in many languages.

The Holy Spirit serves as God's agent to strengthen and bless.

Ephesians 3:20

[20] Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, without end. Amen.

The family of God includes all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in the present, and all who will believe in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father. He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything.

God promises his love and power to his family, the church (Ephesians 3:16-21). If we want to receive God's blessings, it is important that we stay in contact with other believers in the body of Christ. Those who isolate themselves from God's family and try to go it alone cut themselves off from God's power.

Chapter 2

The Promise of the Holy Spirit Promises from the Old Testament”

Joel 2:28 -29

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Peter quoted this passage (see Acts 2:16-21)—the outpouring of the Spirit predicted by Joel occurred on Pentecost. While in the past, God’s Spirit seemed available to kings, prophets, and judges, Joel envisioned a time when the Spirit would be available to every believer. Ezekiel also spoke of an outpouring of the Spirit (Ezekiel 39:28-29). God’s Spirit is available now to anyone who calls on the Lord (Joel 2:32).

These “wonders” would give a hint or a picture of coming events,

Prophecies of Isaiah:

Isaiah 44:3-5

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: [4] And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. [5] One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and surname himself by the name of Israel.

The time will come when Israel will be proud of belonging to God. If we are truly God’s, we should be unashamed and delighted to let everyone know about our relationship with him (Isaiah 44:8).

Isaiah 32:15-17

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field,

and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

God acts from above to change man's condition here on earth. Only when God's Spirit is among us can we achieve true peace and fruitfulness (Ezekiel 36:22-38; Galatians 5:22-23). This will happen in the end times. We can also have God's Spirit with us now, for he is available to all believers through Christ (John 15:26). But the outpouring mentioned here happens when the worldwide kingdom of God is established for all eternity (see Joel 2:28-29)

Prophecies of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 36:26-27

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

God promised to restore Israel not only physically, but spiritually. To accomplish this, God would give them a new heart for following him and put his Spirit within them (see Ezekiel 11:19-20; Psalm 51:7-11) to transform them and empower them to do his will. Again, the new covenant was promised (Ezekiel 16:61-63; Ezekiel 34:23-25), ultimately to be fulfilled in Christ. No matter how impure your life is right now, God offers you a fresh start. You can have your sins washed away, receive a new heart for God, and have his Spirit within you—if you accept God's promise. Why try to patch up your old life when you can have a new one?

Ezekiel 39:29

Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.

Both in this prophecy and in Joel 2:28-29, God promises to pour out his Spirit on mankind. The early church believed this began to be fulfilled at Pentecost when God's Holy Spirit came to live in all believers (Acts 2:1-18).

Prophecy of Zechariah:

Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost; 50 days after Christ's resurrection (see Acts 2). Zechariah calls the Spirit "a spirit of grace and supplication." It is this Spirit who convicts us of sin, reveals to us God's righteousness and judgment, and helps us as we pray. "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" (Romans 8:26). Ask God to fill you with his Spirit.

Eventually, *all* people will realize that Jesus, the man who was pierced and killed, is indeed the Messiah. There will be an awakening, with sorrow for sin and genuine revival. The crucified Messiah will be clearly revealed (Philippians 2:10; Revelation 5:13).

The Teaching of Jesus Christ concerning the Holy Spirit:

Luke 11:13

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Even though good fathers make mistakes, they treat their children well. How much better our perfect heavenly Father treats his children! The most important gift he could ever give us is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), whom he promised to give all believers after his death, resurrection, and return to heaven (John 15:26).

John 7:37-39

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. [38] He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [39] (But this spake he of

the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus' words, "come to me and drink," alluded to the theme of many Bible passages that talk about the Messiah's life-giving blessings (Isaiah 12:2-3; Isaiah 44:3-4; Isaiah 58:11). In promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

Jesus used the term *living water* in John 4:10 to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers at Pentecost (Acts 2) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

John 14:16-17

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

Jesus was soon going to leave the disciples, but he would remain with them. How could this be? The Counselor—the Spirit of God himself— would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. The regenerating power of the Spirit came on the disciples just before Jesus' ascension (John 20:22), and the Spirit was poured out on all the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven.

The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants and building Christ's church on earth. By faith, we can appropriate the Spirit's power each day.

The word translated *Counselor* combines the ideas of comfort and counsel. The Holy Spirit is a powerful person on our side, working for and with us.

The world at large cannot accept him (John 14:17); he lives with us and in us (John 14:17); he teaches us (John 14:26); he reminds us of Jesus' words (John 14:26; John 15:26); he convicts us of sin, shows us God's righteousness, and announces

God's judgment on evil (John 16:8); he guides into truth and gives insight into future events (John 16:13); he brings glory to Christ (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit has been active among people from the beginning of time, but after Pentecost (Acts 2) he came to live in all believers. Many people are unaware of the Holy Spirit's activities, but to those who hear Christ's words and understand the Spirit's power, the Spirit gives a whole new way to look at life.

The Holy Spirit bears witness of Christ:

John 15:26-27

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: [27] And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Once again Jesus offers hope. The Holy Spirit gives strength to endure the unreasonable hatred and evil in our world and the hostility many have toward Christ. This is especially comforting for those facing persecution.

Jesus uses two names for the Holy Spirit—*Counselor* and *Spirit of truth*. The word *Counselor* conveys the helping, encouraging, and strengthening work of the Spirit. *Spirit of truth* points to the teaching, illuminating, and reminding work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers to both the head and the heart and both dimensions are important.

Chapter 3

The Person of the Holy Spirit

The Word of the Holy Spirit manifested in a personal way: The Holy Spirit speaks:

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

The “later times” began with Christ’s resurrection and will continue until his return when he will set up his kingdom and judge all humanity.

False teachers were and still are a threat to the church. Jesus and the apostles repeatedly warned against them (see, for example, Mark 13:21- 23; Acts 20:28-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Peter 3:3-7). The danger that Timothy faced in Ephesus seems to have come from certain people in the church who were following some Greek philosophers who taught that the body was evil and that only the soul mattered. The false teachers refused to believe that the God of creation was good because his very contact with the physical world would have soiled him. Though these Greek-influenced church members honored Jesus, they could not believe he was truly human. Paul knew that their teachings if left unchecked would greatly distort Christian truth.

It is not enough that a teacher appears to know what he is talking about, is disciplined and moral, or says that he is speaking for God. If his words contradict the Bible, his teaching is false.

Like Timothy, we must guard against any teaching that causes believers to dilute or reject any aspect of their faith. Such false teaching can be very direct or extremely subtle.

The Holy Spirit gives directions:

Acts 8:29

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Philip found the Ethiopian man reading Scripture. Taking advantage of this opportunity to explain the gospel, Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading. Philip (1) followed the Spirit's leading, (2) began the discussion from where the man was (immersed in the prophecies of Isaiah), and (3) explained how Jesus Christ fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies. When we share the gospel, we should start where the other person's concerns are focused. Then we can bring the gospel to bear on those concerns.

The eunuch asked Philip to explain a passage of Scripture that he did not understand. When we have trouble understanding the Bible, we should ask others to help us. We must never let our insecurity or pride get in the way of understanding God's Word.

Acts 13:1-4

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. [3] And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

The church set apart Barnabas and Saul to the work God had for them. To *set apart* means to dedicate for a special purpose. We too should dedicate our pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers for their tasks. We can also dedicate ourselves to use our time, money, and talents for God's work. Ask God what he wants you to set apart for him.

The Holy Spirit teaches:

John 14:16-17

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

Jesus was soon going to leave the disciples, but he would remain with them. How could this be? The Counselor—the Spirit of God himself— would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. The regenerating power of the Spirit came on the disciples just before Jesus’ ascension (John 20:22), and the Spirit was poured out on all the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven.

The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants and building Christ’s church on earth. By faith, we can appropriate the Spirit’s power each day.

The word translated *Counselor* combines the ideas of comfort and counsel. The Holy Spirit is a powerful person on our side, working for and with us.

The following chapters teach these truths about the Holy Spirit: he will be with us forever (John 14:16); the world at large cannot accept him (John 14:17); he lives with us and in us (John 14:17); he teaches us (John 14:26); he reminds us of Jesus’ words (John 14:26; John 15:26); he convicts us of sin, shows us God’s righteousness, and announces God’s judgment on evil (John 16:8); he guides into truth and gives insight into future events (John 16:13); he brings glory to Christ (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit has been active among people from the beginning of time, but after Pentecost (Acts 2) he came to live in all believers. Many people are unaware of the Holy Spirit’s activities, but to those who hear Christ’s words and understand the Spirit’s power, the Spirit gives a whole new way to look at life.

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember what he had been teaching them. This promise ensures the validity of the New Testament. The disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life and teachings, and the Holy Spirit helped them remember without taking away their individual perspectives. We can be confident that the Gospels are accurate records of what Jesus taught and did (see 1 Corinthians 2:10-14). The Holy Spirit can help us in the same way. As we study the Bible, we can trust him to plant truth in our mind, convince us of God’s will, and remind us when we stray from it.

John 15:26-27

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: [27] And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Once again Jesus offers hope. The Holy Spirit gives strength to endure the unreasonable hatred and evil in our world and the hostility many have toward Christ. This is especially comforting for those facing persecution.

Jesus uses two names for the Holy Spirit—*Counselor* and *Spirit of truth*. The word *Counselor* conveys the helping, encouraging, and strengthening work of the Spirit. *Spirit of truth* points to the teaching, illuminating, and reminding work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers to both the head and the heart and both dimensions are important.

The Holy Spirit Guides:

John 16:12-13

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. [13] Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. Acts 16:6-7

In his last moments with his disciples, Jesus (1) warned them about further persecution, (2) told them where, when, and why he was going, and (3) assured them that they would not be left alone, but that the Spirit would come. Jesus knew what lay ahead, and he did not want the disciples' faith shaken or destroyed. God wants you to know you are not alone. You have the Holy Spirit to comfort you, teach you the truth, and help you.

The Holy Spirit forbids:

Acts 16:6-7

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, [7] After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

We don't know how the Holy Spirit told Paul that he and his companions should not go into Asia. It may have been through a prophet, a vision, an inner conviction, or some other circumstance. To know God's will does not mean we must hear his voice. He leads in different ways. When seeking God's will, (1) make sure your plan is in harmony with God's Word; (2) ask mature Christians for their advice; (3) check your own motives—are you seeking to do what you want or what you think God wants? —and (4) pray for God to open and close the doors as he desires.

The “Spirit of Jesus” is another name for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had closed the door twice for Paul, so Paul must have wondered which geographical direction to take in spreading the gospel. Then, in a vision (Acts 16:9), Paul was given definite direction, and he and his companions obediently traveled into Macedonia. The Holy Spirit guides us to the right places, but he also guides us away from the wrong places. As we seek God's will, it is important to know what God wants us to do and where he wants us to go, but it is equally important to know what God does not want us to do and where he does not want us to go.

The Holy Spirit intercedes:

Romans 8:26

Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

As a believer, you are not left to your own resources to cope with problems. Even when you don't know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with and for you, and God answers.

With God helping you pray, you don't need to be afraid to come before him. Ask the Holy Spirit to intercede for you “in accordance with God's will.” Then, when you bring your requests to God, trust that he will always do what is best.

Romans 8:34

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Paul says that Jesus is interceding for us in heaven. God has acquitted us and has removed our sin and guilt, so it is Satan, not God, who accuses us. When he does, Jesus, the advocate for our defense, stands at God's right hand to present our case.

Personal Characteristics of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit has a mind.

Romans 8:27

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The Holy Spirit has knowledge.

1 Corinthians 2:11

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

No one can know what anyone else is really thinking except that person alone, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit.

The Holy Spirit possesses Affection.

Romans 15:30

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Too often we view prayer as a time for comfort, reflection, or making our requests known to God. But here Paul urges believers to join in his struggle by means of prayer. Prayer is also a weapon in all believers' armor as we intercede for others who join in the fight against Satan. Do your prayers reflect that urgency?

The Holy Spirit has a will.

1 Corinthians 12:11

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Prophecy” is not just a prediction about the future; it can also mean preaching God’s Word with power. “Distinguishing between spirits” means the ability to discern whether a person who claims to speak for God is actually doing so or is speaking by an evil spirit. (Paul discusses tongues and their interpretation in more detail in 1 Corinthians 14.) No matter what gift (s) a person has, each gift is given by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit decides which gifts each one of us should have. We are responsible to use and sharpen our gifts, but we can take no credit for what God has freely given us.

The Holy Spirit can suffer personal injuries:

The Holy Spirit can be grieved.

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

We can grieve the Holy Spirit by the way we live. Paul warns us against unwholesome language, bitterness, improper use of anger, brawling, slander, and bad attitudes toward others. Instead of acting that way, we should be forgiving, just as God has forgiven us. Are you grieving or pleasing God with your attitudes and actions? Act in love toward your brothers and sisters in Christ, just as God acted in love by sending his Son to die for your sins.

The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed.

Matthew 12:31-32

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. [32] And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the

Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is when you give credit to the devil for what the Holy Spirit has done.

The Pharisees had blasphemed against the Spirit by attributing the power by which Christ did miracles to Satan (Matthew 12:24) instead of the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin is the deliberate refusal to acknowledge God's power in Christ.

It indicates a deliberate and irreversible hardness of heart. Sometimes believers worry that they have accidentally committed this unforgivable sin. But only those who have turned their backs on God and rejected all faith have any need to worry. Jesus said they can't be forgiven—not because their sin is worse than any other, but because they will never ask for forgiveness. Whoever rejects the prompting of the Holy Spirit removes himself or herself from the only force that can lead him or her to repentance and restoration to God.

The Holy Spirit can be insulted.

Hebrews 10:26-29

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, [27] But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. [28] He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: [29] Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

When people deliberately reject Christ's offer of salvation, they reject God's most precious gift. They ignore the leading of the Holy Spirit, the one who communicates to us God's saving love. This warning was given to Jewish Christians who were tempted to reject Christ for Judaism, but it applies to anyone who rejects Christ for another religion or, having understood Christ's atoning work, deliberately turns away from it (see also Numbers 15:30-31 and Mark 3:28-30). The point is that there is no other acceptable sacrifice for sin than the death of Christ on the cross.

If someone deliberately rejects the sacrifice of Christ after clearly understanding the gospel teaching about it, then there is no way for that person to be saved, because God has not provided any other name under heaven by which we can be saved (see Acts 4:12).

The Holy Spirit can be lied to.

Acts 5:3

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land?

Even after the Holy Spirit had come, the believers were not immune to Satan's temptations. Although Satan was defeated by Christ at the cross, he was still actively trying to make the believers stumble—as he does today (Ephesians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8). Satan's overthrow is inevitable, but it will not occur until the last days when Christ returns to judge the world (Revelation 20:10).

The sin Ananias and Sapphira committed was not stinginess or holding back part of the money—it was their choice whether or not to sell the land and how much to give. Their sin was lying to God and God's people—saying they gave the whole amount but holding back some for themselves and trying to make themselves appear more generous than they really were. This act was judged harshly because dishonesty, greed, and covetousness are destructive in a church, preventing the Holy Spirit from working effectively. All lying is bad, but when we lie to try to deceive God and his people about our relationship with him, we destroy our testimony about Christ.

The Holy Spirit can be resisted.

Acts 7:51-53

Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. [52] Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: [53] Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it.

Indeed, many prophets were persecuted and killed: Uriah (Jeremiah 26:20-23); Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38:1-6); Isaiah (tradition says he was killed by King Manasseh; see 2 Kings 21:16); Amos (Amos 7:10-13); Zechariah (not the author of the Bible book, but the son of Jehoiada the priest, 2 Chronicles 24:20-22); Jesus also told a parable about how the Jews had constantly rejected God's messages and persecuted his messengers (Luke 20:9-19). The Righteous One refers to the Messiah.

Have you considered your personal relationship to the Holy Spirit? Allow him to intercede for you. He was being sent to bring God's presence to you. Be Thankful.

Chapter 4

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

What the Holy Spirit reveals about God.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinguishable. All were present in different forms at the baptism of Jesus.

Matthew 3:16-17

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: [17] And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The doctrine of the Trinity means that God is three persons and yet one in essence. In this passage, all three persons of the Trinity are present and active. God the Father speaks; God the Son is baptized; God the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus. God is one, yet in three persons at the same time. This is one of God's incomprehensible mysteries. Other Bible references that speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5; and 1 Peter 1:2.

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

Jesus was soon going to leave the disciples, but he would remain with them.

How could this be? The Counselor—the Spirit of God himself—would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. The regenerating power of the Spirit came on the disciples just before Jesus' ascension (John 20:22), and the Spirit was poured out on all the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven.

The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants and building Christ's church on earth. By faith, we can appropriate the Spirit's power each day.

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember what he had been teaching them. This promise ensures the validity of the New Testament. The disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and teachings, and the Holy Spirit helped them remember without taking away their individual perspectives. We can be confident that the Gospels are accurate records of what Jesus taught and did (see 1 Corinthians 2:10-14). The Holy Spirit can help us in the same way. As we study the Bible, we can trust him to plant truth in our mind, convince us of God's will, and remind us when we stray from it.

John 15:26

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Once again Jesus offers hope. The Holy Spirit gives strength to endure the unreasonable hatred and evil in our world and the hostility many have toward Christ. This is especially comforting for those facing persecution.

Jesus uses two names for the Holy Spirit—*Counselor* and *Spirit of truth*. The word *Counselor* conveys the helping, encouraging, and strengthening work of the Spirit. *Spirit of truth* points to the teaching, illuminating, and reminding work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers to both the head and the heart and both dimensions are important.

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Jesus' words affirm the reality of the Trinity. Some people accuse theologians of making up the concept of the Trinity and reading it into Scripture. As we see here, the concept comes directly from Jesus himself. He did not say baptize them into the *names*, but into the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word *Trinity* does

not occur in Scripture, but it well describes the three-in-one nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.

Paul's farewell blessing invokes all three members of the Trinity— Father (God), Son (Lord Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit. Although the term *Trinity* is not explicitly used in Scripture, verses such as this one show that it was believed and experienced through knowing God's grace, love, and fellowship.

See Luke 1:35—the angel Gabriel's announcement of Jesus' birth to Mary; Matthew 3:17—the Father's voice was heard at the baptism of Jesus; and Matthew 28:19—Jesus' commission to the disciples.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit each possess deity.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

With God you are something valuable and unique; apart from God you are nothing, and if you try to live without him, you will be abandoning the purpose for which you were made.

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

“The Word became flesh” means becoming human. By doing so, Christ became (1) *the perfect teacher*—in Jesus' life we see how God thinks and therefore how we should think (Philippians 2:5-11); (2) *the perfect example*—as a model of what we are to become, he shows us how to live and gives us the power to live that way (1 Peter 2:21); (3) *the perfect sacrifice*—Jesus came as a sacrifice for all sins,

and his death satisfied God's requirements for the removal of sin (Colossians 1:15-23).

“The One and only, who came from the Father” means Jesus is God's only and unique Son. The emphasis is on unique. Jesus is one of a kind and enjoys a relationship with God, unlike all believers who are called “children” and said to be “born of God.”

When Christ was born, God became a man. He was not part man and part God; he was completely human and completely divine (Colossians 2:9). Before Christ came, people could know God partially. After Christ came, people could know God fully because he became visible and tangible in Christ. Christ is the perfect expression of God in human form.

The two most common errors people make about Jesus are to minimize his humanity or to minimize his divinity. Jesus is both God and man.

Matthew 1:21-23

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. [22] Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, [23] Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

The angel declared to Joseph that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and would be a son. This reveals an important truth about Jesus—he is both God and human. The infinite, unlimited God took on the limitations of humanity, so he could live and die for the salvation of all who would believe in him.

Jesus means “the LORD saves.” Jesus came to earth to save us because we can't save ourselves from sin and its consequences. No matter how good we are, we can't eliminate the sinful nature present in all of us.

Only Jesus can do that. Jesus didn't come to help people save themselves; he came to be their Savior from the power and penalty of sin. Thank Christ for his death on the cross for your sin, and then ask him to take control of your life. Your new life begins at that moment.

Jesus was to be called *Immanuel* (“God with us”), as predicted by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus was God in the flesh; thus, God was literally among us, “with us.” Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present today in the life of every believer.

Perhaps not even Isaiah understood how far-reaching the meaning of “Immanuel” would be.

Philip. 2:5-6

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

The *incarnation* was the act of the preexistent Son of God voluntarily assuming a human body and human nature. Without ceasing to be God, he became a human being, the man called Jesus. He did not give up his deity to become human, but he set aside the right to his glory and power. In a submission to the Father’s will, Christ limited his power and knowledge. Jesus of Nazareth was subject to place, time, and many other human limitations. What made his humanity unique was his freedom from sin. In his full humanity, Jesus showed us everything about God’s character that can be conveyed in human terms. The incarnation is explained further in these passages: John 1:1-14; Romans 1:2-5; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14; and 1 John 1:1-3.

Colossians 2:9

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Again, Paul asserts Christ’s deity. “In Christ, all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” means that all of God was in Christ’s human body. When we have Christ, we have everything we need for salvation and right living. See the note on +Colossians 1:15-16 for more on the divine nature of Christ.

There is something else that we cannot easily comprehend, and that is the love God has for sinners.

Romans 5:6-11

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good

man some would even dare to die. [8] But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. [10] For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [11] And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

As believers, we now stand in a place of highest privilege. (“this grace in which we now stand”). Not only has God declared us not guilty; he has drawn us close to himself. Instead of being enemies, we have become his friends—in fact, we have become his own children

Chapter 5

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit was at work in creation.

Genesis 1:2

And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The creation story teaches us much about God and ourselves. We learn the Holy Spirit moved upon the face of the waters. He is creative; (2) as the Creator he is distinct from his creation;

Psalm 104:30

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

God is sovereign in history; this psalm tells of his sovereignty over all creation. God has supreme, unlimited power over the entire universe. He creates; he preserves; he governs. As we understand God's power, we realize that he is sufficient to handle our lives.

Job 26:13

By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

His Spirit made the heavens beautiful, and his power pierced the gliding serpent.

Psalm 33:6

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

This is a poetic summary of the first chapter of Genesis. God is not just the coordinator of natural forces, he is the Lord of creation, the Almighty God.

Because he is all-powerful, we should revere him in all we do.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

With God you are something valuable and unique; apart from God you are nothing, and if you try to live without him, you will be abandoning the purpose for which you were made.

Colossians 1:16

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Christ is supreme over all creation, including the spirit world. We, like the Colossian believers, must believe in the deity of Jesus Christ (that Jesus is God) or our Christian faith is hollow, misdirected, and meaningless. This is a central truth of Christianity. We must oppose those who say that Jesus was merely a prophet or a good teacher.

The Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of man.

Job 33:4

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

The Holy Spirit gives Divine revelation:

2 Peter 1:20-21

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. [21] For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

“Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”

means that Scripture did not come from the creative work of the prophets' own invention or interpretation. God inspired the writers, so their message is authentic and reliable. God used the talents, education, and cultural background of each writer (they were not mindless robots); and God cooperated with the writers in such a way to ensure that the message he intended was faithfully communicated in the very words they wrote.

1 Peter 1:10-11

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: [11] Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

The Spirit of Christ is another name for the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus left his ministry on earth to return to heaven, he promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, to teach, help, and guide his followers (John 14:15-17, 26; John 16:7).

The Holy Spirit would tell them all about Jesus and would reveal his glory (John 15:26; John 16:14). The Old Testament prophets, writing under the Holy Spirit's inspiration (2 Peter 1:20-21), described the coming of the Messiah. The New Testament apostles, through the inspiration of the same Spirit, preached the crucified and risen, Lord.

The Holy Spirit worked with Christ to confirm his work.

Acts 10:38

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Peter's brief and powerful sermon contains a concise statement of the gospel: Jesus' perfect life of servanthood; his death on the cross; his resurrection, personally witnessed and experienced by Peter; Jesus' fulfillment of the Scriptures; and the necessity of personal faith in him. A sermon or witness for Christ does not need to be very long to be effective. It should be Spirit-led and should center on Christ, the way and the truth and the life.

The Holy Spirit was at work in regeneration.

Acts 2:37

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men, and brethren, what shall we do?

After Peter's powerful, Spirit-filled message, the people were deeply moved and asked, "What shall we do?" This is the basic question we must ask.

It is not enough to be sorry for our sins—we must let God forgive them, and then we must live like forgiven people. Has God spoken to you through his Word or through the words of another believer? Like Peter's audience, ask God what you should do, and then obey.

The Holy Spirit is at work in sanctification.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: [4] That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

Being *sanctified* or made holy is the process of living the Christian life. The Holy Spirit works in us, conforming us into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

1 Thessalonians 5:23

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The spirit, soul, and body refer not so much to the distinct parts of a person as to the entire being of a person. This expression is Paul's way of saying that God must be involved in *every* aspect of our lives. It is wrong to think that we can separate our spiritual lives from everything else, obeying God only in some ethereal sense or living for him only one day each week. Christ must control *all* of us, not just a "religious" part.

Chapter 6

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift itself.

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

If you want to follow Christ, you must “repent and be baptized.” To repent means to *turn from* sin, changing the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God’s laws. At the same time, you must *turn to* Christ, depending on him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves—only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

The Holy Spirit is given to those who become children of God.

Galatians 4:6

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Under Roman law, an adopted child was guaranteed all legal rights to his father’s property, even if he was formerly a slave. He was not a second-class son; he was equal to all other sons, biological or adopted, in his father’s family. *Abba* is an Aramaic word for father. It was used by Christ in his prayer in Mark 14:36.

As adopted children of God, we share with Jesus all rights to God’s resources. As God’s heirs, we can claim what he has provided for us— our full identity as his children (see Romans 8:15-17).

A promise related to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? Do, you not know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

What did Paul mean when he said that our bodies belong to God? Many people say they have the right to do whatever they want with their own bodies. Although they think that this is freedom, they are really enslaved to their own desires. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit fills and lives in us. Therefore, we no longer own our bodies. “Bought at a price” refers to slaves purchased at auction. Christ’s death freed us from sin, but also obligates us to his service. If you live in a building owned by someone else, you try not to violate the building’s rules. Because your body belongs to God, you must not violate his standards of living.

Through Abraham’s promise, all of the worlds would be blessed.

Genesis 22:18

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Abraham received abundant blessings because he did not hold back, but obeyed God. First, God gave Abraham’s descendants the ability to conquer their enemies. Second, God promised Abraham children and grandchildren who would, in turn, bless the whole earth.

People’s lives would be changed as a result of the knowledge of the faith of Abraham and his descendants. Most often we think of blessings as gifts to be enjoyed. But when God blesses us, his blessings are intended to overflow to others.

Believers are blessed by turning away from their sins.

Acts 3:25 - 26

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

God promised Abraham that he would bless the world through Abraham’s descendants, the Jewish race (Genesis 12:3), from which the Messiah would come. God intended the Jewish nation to be a separate and holy nation that would

teach the world about God, introduce the Messiah, and then carry on his work in the world. After the days of Solomon, the nation gave up its mission to tell the world about God. Here too, in apostolic times as well as in the time Jesus spent on earth, Israel rejected its Messiah.

Titus 3:5-7

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; [6] Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; [7] That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Paul summarized what Christ does for us when he saves us. We move from a life full of sin to one where we are led by God's Holy Spirit.

All our sins, not merely some, are washed away. Washing refers to the water of baptism, which is a sign of salvation. In becoming a Christian, the believer acknowledges Christ as Lord and recognizes Christ's saving work. We gain eternal life with *all* its treasures. We have *renewal* by the Holy Spirit, and he continually renews our hearts. None of this occurs because we earned or deserved it; it is all God's gift.

1 Corinthians 6:11

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Paul is describing the characteristics of unbelievers. He doesn't mean that idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, slanderers or swindlers are automatically and irrevocably excluded from heaven. Christians come out of all kinds of different backgrounds, including these. They may still struggle with evil desires, but they should not continue in these practices. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul clearly states that even those who sin in these ways can have their lives changed by Christ. However, those who say that they are Christians but persist in these practices with no sign of remorse will not inherit the kingdom of God. Such people need to reevaluate their lives to see if they truly believe in Christ.

In a permissive society, it is easy for Christians to overlook or tolerate some immoral behaviors (greed, drunkenness, etc.) while remaining outraged at others (homosexuality, thievery). We must not participate in sin or condone it in any way, nor may we be selective about what we condemn or excuse. Staying away from more “acceptable” forms of sin is difficult, but it is no harder for us than it was for the Corinthians. God expects his followers at any age to have high standards.

Paul emphasizes God’s action in making believers new people. The three aspects of God’s work are all part of our salvation: our sins were washed away, we were set apart for special use (“sanctified”), and we were pronounced not guilty (“justified”) for our sins.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is given unto the believers.

John 7:37-39

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [39] (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus’ words, “come to me and drink,” alluded to the theme of many Bible passages that talk about the Messiah’s life-giving blessings (Isaiah 12:2-3; Isaiah 44:3-4; Isaiah 58:11). In promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

Jesus used the term *living water* in John 4:10 to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus’ followers at Pentecost (Acts 2) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

Acts 5:32

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Chapter 7

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is given to the Christian.

John 7:37-39

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. [38] He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [39] (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

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The Holy Spirit dwells in the church.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Two sure ways to destroy a building are to tamper with the foundation and to build with inferior materials. The church must be built on Christ, not on any other person or principle. Christ will evaluate each minister's contribution to the life of the church, and the day of judgment ("the Day") will reveal the sincerity of each person's work. God will determine whether or not they have been faithful to Jesus' instructions. Good work will be rewarded; unfaithful or inferior work will be discounted.

God has sent his spirit to indwell our hearts:

Galatians 4:6

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your

hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Under Roman law, an adopted child was guaranteed all legal rights to his father's property, even if he was formerly a slave. He was not a second-class son; he was equal to all other sons, biological or adopted, in his father's family. *Abba* is an Aramaic word for father. It was used by Christ in his prayer in Mark 14:36. As adopted children of God, we share with Jesus all rights to God's resources. As God's heirs, we can claim what he has provided for us—our full identity as his children (see Romans 8:15-17).

God has sent his Holy Spirit to produce endearment in our hearts.

Romans 8:15

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

We are no longer cringing and fearful slaves; instead, we are the master's children. What a privilege! Because we are God's children, we share in great treasures as co-heirs. God has already given us his best gifts: his Son, forgiveness, and eternal life; and he encourages us to ask him for whatever we need.

The Holy Spirit is at work in us as we work out our salvation.

Philip. 2:12-13

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. [13] For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

To be like Christ, we must train ourselves to think like Christ. To change our desires to be more like Christ's, we need the power of the indwelling Spirit (Philippians 1:19), the influence of faithful Christians, obedience to God's Word (not just exposure to it), and sacrificial service. Often it is in *doing* God's will that we gain the *desire* to do it (see Philippians 4:8-9). Do what he wants and trust him to change your desires.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life. To what are you drawn when you feel empty inside? How can you find true contentment? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities, and your source of power.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the inner man.

Ephesians 3:16

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

The family of God includes all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in the present, and all who will believe in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father. He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything. God promises his love and power to his family, the church (Ephesians 3:16-21)

Believers function according to the power of the Spirit within.

Ephesians 3:20

Now unto him, that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Paul described the timeless role of the church, and how church members should live in order to bring about the unity God desires.

Some benefits of the Spirits indwelling.

Ephesians 1:13

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

The Holy Spirit is God's seal that we belong to him and his deposit guaranteeing that he will do what he has promised. The Holy Spirit is like a down payment, a deposit, a validating signature on the contract. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God's children, and secures eternal life for us. His power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

Now he which establishes us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; [22] Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Paul mentions two gifts God gives when we become believers: (1) a *seal of ownership* to show who our Master is, and (2) the Holy Spirit, who guarantees that we belong to him and will receive all his benefits (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit guarantees that salvation is ours now and that we will receive so much more when Christ returns. The great comfort and power the Holy Spirit gives in this life is a foretaste or down payment ("deposit") of the benefits of our eternal life in God's presence. With the privilege of belonging to God comes the responsibility of identifying ourselves as his faithful servants. Don't be ashamed to let others know that you are his.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer.

Romans 8:9-11

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. [10] And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

The Holy Spirit dwells within us.

Romans 8:9-11

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in

you. Now if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. [10] And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

A Christian is anyone who has the Spirit of God living in him or her. If you have sincerely trusted Christ for your salvation and acknowledged him as Lord, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life, and you are a Christian. You won't know that the Holy Spirit has come if you are waiting for a certain feeling; you will know he has come because Jesus promised he would. When the Holy Spirit is working within you, you will believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son and that eternal life comes through him (1 John 5:5); you will begin to act as Christ directs (Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:22-23); you will find help in your daily problems and in your praying (Romans 8:26-27); you will be empowered to serve God and do his will (Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6ff); and you will become part of God's plan to build up his church (Ephesians 4:12-13).

1 Corinthians 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Just as our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19), the local church or Christian community is God's temple. Just as the Jews' temple in Jerusalem was not to be destroyed, the church is not to be spoiled and ruined by divisions, controversy, or other sins as members come together to worship God.

How to become a child of God.

Romans 10:9-10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. [10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Have you ever been asked, “How do I become a Christian?” These verses give you the beautiful answer—salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart. People think it must be a complicated process, but it is not. If we believe in our hearts and say with our mouths that Christ is the risen Lord, we will be saved.

Galatians 3:26-27

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

In Roman society, a youth coming of age laid aside the robe of childhood and put on a new toga. This represented his move into adult citizenship with full rights and responsibilities. Paul combined this cultural understanding with the concept of baptism. By becoming Christians and being baptized, the Galatian believers were becoming spiritually grown up and ready to take on the privileges and responsibilities of the more mature. Paul was saying that they had laid aside the old clothes of the law and was putting on Christ’s new robe of righteousness (see 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:23-24).

Mark 16:16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

It is not the water of baptism that saves, but God’s grace accepted through faith in Christ. Because of Jesus’ response to the criminal on the cross who died with him, we know it is possible to be saved without being baptized (Luke 23:43). Baptism alone, without faith, does not automatically bring a person to heaven. Those who refuse to believe will be condemned, regardless of whether or not they have been baptized.

Chapter 8

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

A promise of the Holy Spirit to believers.

John 7:37-39

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. [38] He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [39] (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus' words, "come to me and drink," alluded to the theme of many Bible passages that talk about the Messiah's life-giving blessings (Isaiah 12:2-3; Isaiah 44:3-4; Isaiah 58:11). In promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

Jesus used the term *living water* in John 4:10 to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers at Pentecost (Acts 2) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit defined:

- Love:** An expression of goodwill toward God and man.
- Joy:** Expressing a response of gladness and delight.

Peace: Harmony and tranquility toward God and man. Longsuffering: Forbearance in the face of provocation.

Kindness A temperament that puts others at ease Goodness. To reach beyond what one must do.

Faithfulness To be reliable.

Gentleness A kind demeanor that helps to calm anger. Self-control--One who masters desires and appetites.

The Holy Spirit can develop all of these graces within a believer.

Other graces produced by the Holy Spirit may include:

Righteousness and Hope.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:13

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Other graces could include faith, virtue, knowledge, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness.

2 Peter 1:5-8

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; [6] and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; [7] And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. [8] For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith must be more than belief in certain facts; it must result in action, growth in Christian character, and the practice of moral discipline, or it will die

away (James 2:14-17). Peter lists several of faith's actions: learning to know God better, developing perseverance, doing God's will, loving others. These actions do not come automatically; they require hard work. They are not optional; all of them must be a continual part of the Christian life. We don't finish one and start on the next, but we work on them all together. God empowers and enables us, but he also gives us the responsibility to learn and to grow. We should not be surprised at or resentful of the process.

We are saved so that we can grow to resemble Christ and so that we can serve others. God wants to produce his character in us. But to do this, he demands our discipline and effort. As we obey Christ who guides us by his Spirit, we will develop self-control, not only with respect to food and drink but also with respect to our emotions.

Where the Spirit indwells, the fruit of the Spirit will be evident.

Ephesians 3:16

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Believers must walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-17

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. [17] For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

If your desire is to have the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-23, then you know that the Holy Spirit is leading you. At the same time, be careful not to confuse your subjective feelings with the Spirit's leading. Being led by the Holy Spirit involves the desire to hear, the readiness to obey God's Word, and the sensitivity to discern between your feelings and his promptings. Live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit. Then the words of Christ will be in your mind, the love of Christ will be behind your actions, and the power of Christ will help you control your selfish desires.

Believers must be led by the Spirit.

Romans 8:12-14

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. [13] For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. [14] For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Through Obedience and Prayer, we are led by the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:16-17

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; [17] That Christmas dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Chapter 9

The Sins against the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is active in God's plan of redemption.

The Holy Spirit reveals the word of truth.

Hebrews 2:3-4

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; [4] God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry had handed down his teachings to the readers of this book. These readers were second-generation believers who had not seen Christ in the flesh. They are like us; we have not seen Jesus personally. We base our belief in Jesus on the eyewitness accounts recorded in the Bible. See John 20:29 for Jesus' encouragement to those who believe without ever having seen him.

"God also testified to it" continues the thought from Hebrews 2:3. Those who had heard Jesus speak and then had passed on his words also had the truth of their words confirmed by "signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit." In the book of Acts, miracles and gifts of the Spirit authenticated the gospel wherever it was preached (see Acts 9:31-42; Acts 14:1-20). Paul, who discussed spiritual gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4, taught that their purpose is to build up the church, making it strong and mature.

The Holy Spirit convicts men's hearts of sin.

John 16:7

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Unless Jesus did what he came to do, there would be no gospel. If he did not die, he could not remove our sins; he could not rise again and defeat death. If

he did not go back to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come. Christ's presence on earth was limited to one place at a time. His leaving meant he could be present to the whole world through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit regenerates those that respond to the gospel.

John 3:5

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus undoubtedly would have been familiar with God's promise in Ezekiel 36:25-26. Jesus was explaining the importance of a spiritual rebirth, saying that people don't enter the kingdom by living a better life, but by being spiritually reborn.

The Holy Spirit indwells those who respond to the gospel.

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Each one must turn from your sins and turn to God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit fills and lives in us. Therefore, we no longer own our bodies. "Bought at a price" refers to slaves purchased at auction. Christ's death freed us from sin, but also obligates us to his service. If you live in a building owned by someone else, you try not to violate the building's rules. Because your body belongs to God, you must not violate his standards of living.

The Holy Spirit leads those who walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-18

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. [17] For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. [18] But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

If your desire is to have the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-23, then you know that the Holy Spirit is leading you. At the same time, be careful not to confuse your subjective feelings with the Spirit's leading. Being led by the Holy Spirit involves the desire to hear, the readiness to obey God's Word, and the sensitivity to discern between your feelings and his promptings. Live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit. Then the words of Christ will be in your mind, the love of Christ will be behind your actions, and the power of Christ will help you control your selfish desires.

Two forces are conflicting within us—the Holy Spirit and the sinful nature (our evil desires or inclinations that stem from our bodies; see also Galatians 5:16, 19, 24). Paul is not saying that these forces are equal—the Holy Spirit is infinitely stronger. But if we rely on our own wisdom, we will make the wrong choices. If we try to follow the Spirit by our own human effort, we will fail. Our only way to freedom from our evil desires is through the empowering of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9; Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians 3:3-8).

The Holy Spirit will strengthen those who seek to please God.

Ephesians 3:16

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

The family of God includes all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in the present, and all who will believe in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father. He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything. God promises his love and power to his family, the church (Ephesians 3:16-21)

The Holy Spirit will seal those that belong to God.

Ephesians 1:13

In whom ye also trusted, after that, ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

The Holy Spirit is God's seal that we belong to him and his deposit guaranteeing that he will do what he has promised. The Holy Spirit is like a down payment, a deposit, a validating signature on the contract.

The Holy Spirit serves as an earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance.

Ephesians 1:14

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God's children, and secures eternal life for us. His power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity.

It is possible, to sin against the Holy Spirit.

We can resist the Holy Spirit.

Acts 7:51

Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Many prophets were persecuted and killed: Uriah (Jeremiah 26:20-23); Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38:1-6); Isaiah (tradition says he was killed by King Manasseh; see 2 Kings 21:16); Amos (Amos 7:10-13); Zechariah (not the author of the Bible book, but the son of Jehoiada the priest, 2 Chronicles 24:20-22).

Jesus also told a parable about how the Jews had constantly rejected God's messages and persecuted his messengers (Luke 20:9-19). The Righteous One refers to the Messiah.

You can quench the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Quench not the Spirit.

By warning us not to “put out the Spirit’s fire,” Paul means that we should not ignore or toss aside the gifts the Holy Spirit gives. Here, he mentions prophecy (1 Thessalonians 5:20); in 1 Corinthians 14:39, he mentions tongues. Sometimes spiritual gifts are controversial, and they may cause division in a church. Rather than trying to solve the problems, some Christians prefer to smother the gifts. This impoverishes the church. We should not stifle the Holy Spirit’s work in anyone’s life but encourage the full expression of these gifts to benefit the whole body of Christ.

You can grieve the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

We can grieve the Holy Spirit by the way we live. Paul warns us against unwholesome language, bitterness, improper use of anger, brawling, slander, and bad attitudes toward others. Instead of acting that way, we should be forgiving, just as God has forgiven us. Are you grieving or pleasing God with your attitudes and actions? Act in love toward your brothers and sisters in Christ, just as God acted in love by sending his Son to die for your sins.

The Holy Spirit within us is a seal or guarantee that we belong to God.

You can insult the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:29

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

The point is that there is no other acceptable sacrifice for sin than the death

of Christ on the cross. If someone deliberately rejects the sacrifice of Christ after clearly understanding the gospel teaching about it, then there is no way for that person to be saved, because God has not provided any other name under heaven by which we can be saved (see Acts 4:12).

You can blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:31-32

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. [32] And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

The Pharisees had blasphemed against the Spirit by attributing the power by which Christ himself from the only force that can lead him or her to repentance and restoration to God did miracles to Satan (Matthew 12:24) instead of the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin is the deliberate refusal to acknowledge God's power in Christ. It indicates a deliberate and irreversible hardness of heart. Sometimes believers worry that they have accidentally committed this unforgivable sin. But only those who have turned their backs on God and rejected all faith have any need to worry. Jesus said they can't be forgiven—not because their sin is worse than any other, but because they will never ask for forgiveness.

When people deliberately reject Christ's offer of salvation, they reject God's most precious gift. They ignore the leading of the Holy Spirit, the one who communicates to us God's saving love. This warning was given to Jewish Christians who were tempted to reject Christ for Judaism, but it applies to anyone who rejects Christ for another religion or, having understood Christ's atoning work, deliberately turns away from it (see also Numbers 15:30-31 and Mark 3:28-30).

We must be careful not to reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He is the means by which God bore witness to Jesus.

Acts 10:38

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Chapter 10

The Leading of the Holy Spirit

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Paul uses adoption or “sonship” to illustrate the believer’s new relationship with God. In Roman culture, the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate child in his new family. He became a full heir to his new father’s estate.

Likewise, when a person becomes a Christian, he or she gains all the privileges and responsibilities of a child in God’s family. One of these outstanding privileges is being led by the Spirit (see Galatians 4:5-6). We may not always feel as though we belong to God, but the Holy Spirit is our witness. His inward presence reminds us of who we are and encourages us with God’s love (Romans 5:5).

We are no longer cringing and fearful slaves; instead, we are the master’s children. What a privilege! Because we are God’s children, we share in great treasures as co-heirs. God has already given us his best gifts: his Son, forgiveness, and eternal life; and he encourages us to ask him for whatever we need.

Those led by the Holy Spirit are not under the law. Galatians 5:18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

If your desire is to have the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-23, then you know that the Holy Spirit is leading you.

At the same time, be careful not to confuse your subjective feelings with the Spirit’s leading. Being led by the Holy Spirit involves the desire to hear, the readiness to obey God’s Word, and the sensitivity to discern between your feelings and his promptings. Live each day controlled and guided by the Holy

Spirit. Then the words of Christ will be in your mind, the love of Christ will be behind your actions, and the power of Christ will help you control your selfish desires.

Holy Spirit leads externally the word through.

He was sent to convict the world.

John 16:7-11

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. [8] And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: [9] Of sin, because they believe not on me; [10] Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; [11] Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Unless Jesus did what he came to do, there would be no gospel. If he did not die, he could not remove our sins; he could not rise again and defeat death. If he did not go back to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come. Christ's presence on earth was limited to one place at a time. His leaving meant he could be present to the whole world through the Holy Spirit.

Three important tasks of the Holy Spirit are

- (1) convicting the world of its sin and calling it to repentance,
- (2) revealing the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes, because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, and
- (3) demonstrating Christ's judgment over Satan.

Christ's death on the cross made a personal relationship with God available to us. When we confess our sin, God declares us righteous and delivers us from a judgment for our sins.

The Holy Spirit guided all the apostles into all the truth.

John 16:12-13

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. [13] Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for

he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would tell them “what is yet to come”—the nature of their mission, the opposition they would face, and the final outcome of their efforts. They didn’t fully understand these promises until the Holy Spirit came after Jesus’ death and resurrection. Then the Holy Spirit revealed truths to the disciples that they wrote down in the books that now form the New Testament.

Acts 20:27

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

2 Peter 1:3

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

The power to grow doesn’t come from within us but from God. Because we don’t have the resources to be truly godly, God allows us to “participate in the divine nature” in order to keep us from sin and help us live for him.

When we are born again, God by his Spirit empowers us with his own moral goodness. See John 3:6; John 14:17-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and 1 Peter 1:22-23.

The Holy Spirit revealed. The apostles received and preached.

Ephesians 3:3-5

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, [4] Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) [5] Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

“The administration of God’s grace” means the special stewardship, trust, or commitment that Paul had been given. He had been assigned the special work of preaching the Good News to the Gentiles, God’s great plan shown to Paul in a

revelation. “As I have already written briefly” may refer to a previous letter that was not preserved by the church, or it may refer to an earlier part of this letter (especially Ephesians 1:9ff; Ephesians 2:11ff).

The revealed word is given according to the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

They will experience life and peace.

Romans 8:6

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Paul divides people into two categories—those who let themselves be controlled by their sinful natures, and those who follow after the Holy Spirit. All of us would be in the first category if Jesus hadn’t offered us a way out. Once we have said yes to Jesus, we will want to continue following him, because his way brings life and peace. Daily we must consciously choose to center our lives on God. Use the Bible to discover God’s guidelines, and then follow them. In every perplexing situation ask yourself, “What would Jesus want me to do?” When the Holy Spirit points out what is right, do it eagerly

They will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit. Then the words of Christ will be in your mind, the love of Christ will be behind your actions, and the power of Christ will help you control your selfish desires.

They will be led by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:18

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

If you desire to be led by the Holy Spirit, let him lead you through his word. It is a wonderful thing to be led by the Holy Spirit. Allow him to guide and strengthen you as you serve him.

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