

# The Holy Spirit

[Primary reference materials: *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, by Charles C. Ryrie, *Bruce and Stan's Guide to God*, by Bruce Bikel and Stan Jantz, and *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, by John R. W. Stott.]

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and is identified as God (Acts 5:3-4).

“Spirit” is in the neuter gender, though the Spirit is clearly identified as a person.

The Holy Spirit:      -- knows the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)  
                              -- has a mind and will (Romans 8:27, 1 Corinthians 12:11)  
                              -- teaches us and guides us (1 Cor. 2:13, John 16:13)

## A. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

- Involved in Creation: Genesis 1:2, Psalm 104:30, Job 33:4
- Inspired the scripture writers: 2 Peter 1:21 (examples: 2 Samuel 23 :2, Micah 3:8)
- Came upon (or indwelt) various people for specific purposes: Joseph (Genesis 41:38), Joshua (Numbers 27:18), Othniel (Judges 3:10), Samson (Judges 13:25, 14:6 & 19, 15:14), Saul (1 Samuel 10:10, 11:6), David (1 Samuel 16:13), the prophets (Ezekiel 2:2, Daniel 5:11).
- Enabled people to perform particular tasks, such as construction of the tabernacle (Ex. 31:3, 35:31).

## B. The Work of the Spirit in Salvation

1. *Convicting*. The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). We must first see and acknowledge our state of sin, then understand the righteousness offered to us by God through Christ who can save us from sin. Without this, we face God's judgment and condemnation.
2. *Regenerating*: God's supernatural act of imparting eternal life (Titus 3:5).
3. *Sanctifying*: “Sanctify” means to be set apart, or declared holy, for God's use and service. We are presently being saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2), resulting in our moral and spiritual improvement as we become more Christ-like
4. *Indwelling*: Every believer is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, John 14:16-17, Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9-11), even those who are “carnal” Christians (much of what the New Testament teaches about the Spirit and spiritual gifts is found in 1 Corinthians, an epistle written to a group of Christians who had numerous problems with sexual immorality, idolatry, litigation, and other issues).
5. *Sealing*: Every believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30). The concept of sealing includes the ideas of ownership, authority and security. We have been given the Holy Spirit as a seal of God's pledge to us that we shall inherit eternal life.

### C. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church

1. *Teaching*: The Holy Spirit taught the disciples and helped them remember and understand Christ's teachings (John 16:12-15, 1 Cor. 2:10-13), and continues to teach through those who have the gift of teaching (see below).
2. *Guiding*: The Holy Spirit guides believers (Romans 8:14). The Spirit will never lead us in a manner contrary to the Word of God but always in ways consistent with it.
3. *Giving Assurance*: The Spirit assures us that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16).
4. *Comforting*: The Holy Spirit is described as our "Comforter" in John 14:16-17, 15:26 (Gr. *parakletos*, also translated as "helper" or "advocate" or "counselor"), a word that suggests the ability to give aid. Used as a legal term, this word describes a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, or advocate. See also Acts 9:31.
5. *Praying*: The Holy Spirit guides and directs us as we pray so that we bring to God those petitions that are in His will (Ephesians 6:18-19); and the Spirit intercedes for us, praying in ways we cannot (Romans 8:26).
6. *Giving Spiritual Gifts* (see below).

### D. The Baptism and Filling of The Spirit

*Baptism* in the Spirit occurs once when we first acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior; it is common to all believers, and is a one-time experience (1 Cor. 12:13).

Being *filled* with the Spirit is an ongoing process, experienced repeatedly, not just once. In Ephesians 5:18-21 we are told to "be filled with the Spirit" (the Greek verb is a present continuous imperative which literally means "keep on being filled"). Being filled with the Spirit empowers us to do God's work and experience God's joy (Acts 13:52).

The evidence of being filled with the Spirit is in **the fruit of the Spirit**: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). These moral qualities mark the person who follows the leading of the Spirit.

### E. The Gifts of the Spirit

Four primary passages describe the specific "gifts of the Spirit": Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-10 and 28-31, Ephesians 4:11-12, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. These are considered to be representative lists of spiritual gifts, not necessarily all-inclusive. These gifts are given to individual believers for the accomplishment of God's purposes and for the edification of the church.

Every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7, 1 Peter 4:10).

The gifts belong to God and are given to believers "to prepare [or equip] God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). Spiritual gifts are ultimately intended for the glory of God (1 Peter 4:11).

## Specific Spiritual Gifts

These are suggested definitions of the named spiritual gifts. There are differing views on what constitutes a given gift, so these definitions are intended mainly as a reference and a framework for discussion and further study. In each case, it is important to remember that these are abilities the Holy Spirit has given to various members of the body of Christ for the accomplishment of God's purposes.

**Prophecy.** The capacity to receive and express truth from God in order to exhort, edify, or console believers and to convince non-believers of God's message (more of a gift of preaching rather than predicting future events).

**Teaching.** The ability to instruct, explain or reveal Biblical truth relevant to the health and ministry of the church in such a way as to cause others to learn and understand Biblical truth and acquire greater knowledge and mastery for their own use.

**Pastoring.** The capacity to exercise influence over a group, providing a positive Christian role model and assuming a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of that group so as to lead it toward greater spiritual knowledge and maturity.

**Wisdom.** A special ability to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in given situations within the church for receiving insight into how knowledge, understanding and compassion might best be applied to the specific needs of each situation.

**Knowledge.** The ability to discover, accumulate, analyze and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the well-being of the church. [Some writers define it as the capacity to receive supernaturally revealed knowledge that otherwise could not or would not be known.]

**Exhortation.** The ability to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel, applying Scriptural truths to the needs and circumstances of others, so as to motivate, help, and heal others in the Body.

**Discernment.** [Discerning/distinguishing of spirits] A supernaturally intuitive or analytical ability to distinguish truth from non-truth and to clearly see hidden motives in order to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human or even demonic.

**Giving.** The ability to contribute material resources to the work of the Lord generously and joyfully with pure motives and a sense that giving is simply sharing what God has provided.

**Helps.** The capacity to unselfishly meet the needs of others through practical service, often acting behind the scenes without recognition to enable others to increase their own effective use of their gifts. Often involves seeing a need and taking the initiative to meet that need, no matter how menial the undertaking.

**Service.** The ability to identify the unmet needs in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired results.

**Mercy.** The capacity both to feel empathy and compassion for those suffering from physical, mental, emotional or other problems and to manifest that compassion in some practical helpful way with a cheerful spirit so as to encourage and aid those in need.

**Missionary.** The ability to utilize one's spiritual gifts in ministry in a different culture.

## **(Spiritual Gifts, continued)**

**Evangelist.** The desire and ability to share the gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ with unbelievers in such a way that they hear and respond with a commitment to become Christians and begin their discipleship.

**Hospitality.** The ability to provide an open house or otherwise act as a host to give a warm welcome and care to those in need of food, lodging, love and acceptance.

**Faith.** The ability to pray with great confidence that God hears and answers and to *trust* God for a result that is consistent with His will. This gift can also be manifested in an ability to recognize in a given situation what God's will and purpose may be.

**Leadership.** The ability to sense God's leading, set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to motivate and encourage others to work together voluntarily and harmoniously to accept and accomplish those goals for the unity of the body and the glory of God.

**Administration.** The ability to manage and coordinate the details of the various service and ministry functions within the church, and to devise and implement effective plans for achieving the goals of the church of a Christian organization.

**Miracles.** The capacity to act as a channel through which God may choose to perform powerful acts that are perceived as supernatural, with the result that God is acknowledged as the cause of the miracle.

**Healing.** The ability to serve as a human intermediary through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore physical, mental, or emotional health in supernatural ways.

**Tongues.** The ability to speak spontaneously to God or others in a language one has never learned.

**Interpretation.** The ability to spontaneously translate the utterances of one who speaks in tongues in a general assembly of Christians.