

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer.

Do I have the Holy Spirit dwelling in my heart? This is a legitimate question, and we need to be sure of the answer. The Bible says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9)

Question: How can one know if he or she has the Holy Spirit?

Answer: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).

Quotes: "And where the Spirit is, there shall also be the fruits of the Spirit, as it is infallible that if the Spirit is in man, whether evil or good, it will manifest itself by its fruits" (*Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, p. 448).

"Therefore whosoever has not died unto sin, and does not live unto righteousness, has not the Spirit of God. But whoever has not the Spirit of God does not comprehend the word of God, and cannot discern spiritual things. How then can he rightly teach God's word or rightly dispense the gift of the Spirit" (*Dietrich Philip*, p. 184)

Question: Can an experienced Christian lose the Holy Spirit and not realize it?

Answer: We read in Judges 16:20 of Samson, 'And he wist not that the Lord had departed from him.' Samson was powerless and didn't know it until the test came.

Example: A person can become so accustomed to his home and the arrangement of the articles within that he can move about in the middle of the night and find the article he wants without the aid of a light. Likewise a Christian can, by observation, knowledge (intellect), or habit, talk, walk, dress, or act like a believer on the outside but be empty inside of divine inspiration!

Unless the Holy Spirit Resides in Us:

(a) We cannot know Jesus, because only the Spirit reveals Him to us (without the Spirit one knows Jesus only by hearing or reading, not intimately as a father or close friend).

(b) We cannot understand the Scriptures; only the Spirit opens our understanding (we can have head knowledge but be completely void

of the spiritual meaning).

(c) We cannot speak with power (like a sounding brass or a tinkling symbol, our speaking or our tears do not move and warm the hearts of others with inspiration).

(d) There is no conviction of sin (man can disobey the Scriptures and feel no condemnation).

(e) There is no true worship.

(f) In essence Christ remains meaningless to us unless the Spirit makes Him precious to us.

(g) Man cannot come to the Father except he be drawn by the Holy Spirit (John 6:44).

(h) Evil cannot be overcome except by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Determination and sheer willpower can go a long way in changing habits, etc., but they cannot regenerate the heart. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can do that.)

Comments: The Holy Spirit is given only to those who are obedient to Him. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

In a Sunday school lesson this comment was made: "If the Holy Spirit were taken out of the world, many churches would continue on, not aware that anything had happened!"

To Receive the Holy Spirit One Must:

(a) Repent of every known sin in his or her life. "By repentance and faith in Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost comes into the penitent and believing heart. He is received simultaneously with the new birth" (Acts 2:38)

(b) Trust in the blood of Christ to cleanse him. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

(c) Resolve with all his heart to be obedient to the light he receives through the Word.

(d) Make a complete surrender to God, with nothing withheld from Him.

(e) Accept the Holy Spirit in a simple act of faith.

Comments: Receiving the Holy Spirit is not a mere act of the will but is the fulfillment of God's promise upon true repentance and faith in Christ Jesus.

Attributes of the Holy Spirit

(a) He is our Comforter. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

(b) He is our Teacher. "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" (John 14:26).

(c) He dwells in human hearts. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:9).

(d) He leads. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

(e) He intercedes for us. "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. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

(f) He reveals to us the great mysteries of God. "But as it is written Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

(g) He is the giver of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 28).

Comments: The influence of the Holy Spirit promotes equality. He brings together people of all walks of life and blends them into one body. This "oneness" knows no one by their status in life, their nationality or color of skin, whether they are rich or poor, or by their level of education or natural gifts and abilities. The tenor of the Scriptures substantiate what Abraham Lincoln spoke: "All men are created equal."

The body the Holy Spirit uses is ours. (1 Corinthians 6:19) God cleanses our being so His Spirit can dwell and work in us. The Holy Spirit is more than just a good influence. We must know Him as a person; then we will want to know Him better. The Holy Spirit must become precious enough to us that we obey His still small voice from a willing heart, lest He be grieved and be taken from us!

The Nature of the Holy Spirit:

(a) Divine personality. The Holy Spirit is a person. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "Him" or "He," not "it." John 14:16 says, "And I will pray the Father, and He [God] shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; 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."

(b) Very trustworthy. He has no ambition of His own; He is a mouthpiece for God (John 15:15). (We must realize that when the Holy Spirit speaks to us, it is none other than God Himself speaking!)

(c) Speaks only the truth. He speaks the same message to all people in similar settings, no matter who, what, when, or where.

(d) Quiet (still small voice).

(e) Peaceable and gentle (came upon Jesus in the form of a dove).

The Holy Spirit Works with the Spirit of Man in Conversion.

The Spirit of God strives with man and teaches him that he cannot be accepted of God at the Day of Judgment because of his iniquity and defilement. The Spirit of God teaches man that God is Holy and Just and that no unclean person can come to Him and dwell with Him. When the Spirit of God moves upon the spirit of man, this makes a person restless; so that the spirit of man is troubled and groans after the liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:19,21-22). The Spirit of God teaches man to know the corruption of his heart and his many trespasses and sins. The immortal spirit (soul) of man groans to be delivered from the bondage of this corruption and desires to come to the glorious liberty of the children of God. This, in its united working, makes a person feel his sins and works repentance in him

Hindrances that Prevent an Infilling of the Holy Spirit.

- (a) Not earnest or sincere, casual.
- (b) Carnal, light-minded.
- (c) Pride.
- (d) Hypocritical life, covered sin, unwillingness to confess sin.
- (e) Neglect (one can be lost by doing nothing).
- (f) Resisting the Holy Spirit by ignoring His conviction.
- (g) Iniquity abounding and love of God waxing cold.
- (h) Hardness of heart.
- (i) The flesh (that which must be crucified). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh... (Galatians 5:24).

Comments: As man rejects this convicting Spirit, he becomes hardened in heart and lessens his opportunity of being saved. God convicts and draws through the Spirit, and aside of this, the sinner has no desire for salvation. "The Spirit has been grieved and quenched, and the heart has, by continual rejection, become so hardened that the Spirit cannot convince the sinner anymore, and thereby cannot move him to repentance. The condition described here is very sad and should be feared; for without a miracle by God, this is hopeless"

The Work of the Holy Spirit

- (a) The Christian's surety, or guarantee (Ephesians 1:13-14). As long as the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, he will not be lost.
- (b) The "earnest of our inheritance." The Holy Spirit is the "down payment" for the promised eternal rest in heaven.
- (c) Reveals God's will to man because He knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:11). He knows the future much better than we know the past. Can we trust the Spirit to lead us into the future?
- (d) Relays our prayers to God. "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" (Romans 8:26).
- (e) Dwells in the heart of the Christian and gives direction for a life of sanctification.
- (f) Enlivens the Holy Scriptures. Without the Holy Spirit, the Scrip-

tures are as a dead letter. The Scriptures were inspired and written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Holy Spirit must interpret them and unlock that which inspires the hearts of men.

Comments: Take special note in each of the next five points to determine what is the work of the Holy Spirit and what is man's part.

Then answer the question, "Do men sometimes usurp the part that is for the Holy Spirit?" And on the other hand, "Do we neglect our part and expect the Holy Spirit to perform what is our responsibility?"

(g) Brings a message to the lost, which convicts by reproving sin.

(h) Convinces the sinner, causing him to realize his need of the Saviour.

(i) Shows the sinner the great difference between right and wrong.

(j) Shows the terrible consequences of the Judgment without Christ.

(k) Points sinners to Calvary, the only place of hope.

Finally: the Holy Spirit works and teaches and guides into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ... and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).