

Following the Scriptural Trail

The Work of the Holy Spirit

One of the most misunderstood aspects of Christianity is the work of the Holy Spirit. People often have false ideas about the operating of the Holy Spirit. Some think it made them shout, or that it is a rumbling down inside them during a sermon. Others say it is an emotion, something they 'felt', but **the Bible indicates that the work of the Holy Spirit in your life is dependent on and assists with your obedience to the Word of God.**

There is also confusion between the ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit’ himself, given at baptism, and the ‘gifts of the Holy Spirit’ given to the apostles and passed on through laying on of the apostles hands. We read that Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the power from Holy Spirit – Acts 1:4-5 and Luke 24:49

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 24:49

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

The promise was fulfilled on Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

The Holy Spirit given to the apostles enabled them to do miraculous things such as speaking in other languages they did not know, doing miracles of healing, and other unique miraculous abilities. Only the apostles were able to pass these abilities on to others by laying their hands on them – Acts 8:18-19.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money ¹⁹ and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit given to the apostles enabled them to do miraculous things such as speaking in other languages they did not know, doing miracles of healing, and other unique miraculous abilities. Only the apostles were able to pass these abilities on to others by laying their hands on them – These included the following special abilities – 1Cor 12:7-11.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Not all Christians had these special abilities – 1Cor 12:29-30.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

These special abilities were needed because the entire New Testament had not yet been revealed and written down – 1Cor 13:8-10.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

Completeness of “prophecies and knowledge” => the scriptures

By the time Jude wrote down his letter, the word had been completed and those miraculous gifts were no longer needed – Jude 1:3

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

2Tim 3:16-17 –

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Since the miraculous 'gifts of the Spirit' were able to be passed on only through the laying on of an apostles hands, and since the Bible has been completed – those miraculous 'gifts' no longer exist today.

They were designed to confirm that the message of the apostles and preachers of the day was indeed the true Word of God since the completed Bible did not exist at that time. But now, one can check the written Word of God to confirm that is being preached is correct and true.

But ALL Christians are promised ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit’ himself in Acts 2:38-39. Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

When we are baptized and our sins are forgiven, we are given the Holy Spirit Himself to live in us – 1Cor 3:16

Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?

and while we are not given miraculous powers, we are given help and assistance in living for Christ by the Spirit.

Follow the scriptural trail and find the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives today.

Basic facts from scripture:

•The Holy Spirit is a person, a part of the Trinity, and is referred to as 'HE' not 'it'. John 14:17 -

..the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

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Jesus had to leave the earth in order for the Holy Spirit to come and live in us - John 16:5-7

but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

• While sin separates us from God (**makes us dead to God spiritually**), the removal of those sins by baptism allows the Spirit to bring us back into relationship with God (**makes us alive to God**) and gives us the promise of an eternal life with God in a new spiritual body. Rom 8:10-11

But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Baptism allows God to 'renew' our Spirit, to make us a 'new creation', to 'give us new birth', to restore our relationship with God through the price paid for sin by Christ.

This revival of our spirit at baptism is described in the scriptures as being ‘born again’ – just as Adam became alive when God breathed His Spirit into him, so we become ‘alive again’ (spiritually) when God places His Holy Spirit in us.



The Holy Spirit has certain things He does as He works in us :

- The Holy Spirit helps us understand the scriptures

John 16:8-11 –

When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

The world rejects the idea of an absolute right and wrong (sin), about having to be forgiven to be right with God (righteousness – most think they are fine the way they are) and the idea of having to answer to God for our words and deeds (judgment) – the Holy Spirit helps us understand the truth of these things.

- **The Holy Spirit helps us understand the scriptures**

1Cor 2:14 –

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

To those who reject God and His word – the instructions in the Bble seem foolish because they do not understand their spiritual significance. The Spirit helps the Christian grasp the spiritual meaning of those instructions in the Bible.

•The Holy Spirit helps us deal with difficult situations

2Tim 1:7 –

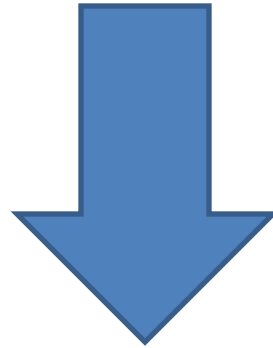
For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

We don't have to be afraid of what the devil may throw at us – the Holy Spirit gives us assurance that God is with us and will guide us through the situation.

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Phil 4:12-13 –

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

- The Holy Spirit gives us assurance of God’s care and love

Rom 8:14-17 –

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- The Holy Spirit helps us pray

Rom 8:26-27 –

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 through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

We don't need to know special words or even what to say – the Spirit knows our hearts and takes our requests to God in an acceptable manner.

- The Holy Spirit is our advocate (Paraclete)-(defense attorney)

John 14:16-17 –

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Truth never changes – and the Spirit works to remind us of that truth.

•The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live as we should if we allow Him to direct our lives

Gal 5:22-25 -

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will show Himself in our attitudes and actions. We know what we ought to do – allow the spirit to help you do it!

- The Holy Spirit helps us overcome sin

Gal 5:16 - **So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**

The spirit reminds us that this world (the flesh) is only temporary and that we need to concentrate on the eternal things.

2 Corinthians 4:18 **So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

•The Holy Spirit uses the words of Jesus and the Bible to direct us

John 6:63-

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you— they are full of the Spirit and life.

John 6:68 -

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

The Holy Spirit helps us remember what we have studied in the Bible- it does not give us miraculous powers or new revelations, but rather it enables us to recall the things we have studied and helps us understand how to apply it to our daily lives

But the power and help of the Holy Spirit in our lives can be limited or even negated by the way we act (by whether or not we allow Him to direct us - or if we allow our own emotions and ideas to direct us)

Eph 4:29-31 – Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

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1Thess 5:19-20 – Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt

Don't ignore or belittle the power of the scriptures !

So, in conclusion, the Holy Spirit given at baptism is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit himself in our hearts and minds.

It does not give us miraculous powers since the very purpose of those powers was to confirm the word that was still being given at the time those miraculous ‘spiritual gifts’ were in existence. The Spirit living in us today has specific things that He provides for us as ‘Children of God’ – including assurance of our salvation, assisting us in understanding the Words of scripture, acting as our advocate before God by making our prayers acceptable and working in our consciences pointing out sin so we can avoid it, and helping us apply the words of Scripture to our lives. The Holy Spirit revives our spirit that was ‘killed’ by sin and makes us alive again to fellowship with God. He works to ‘renew our minds’ to understand and do God’s will.