

TREK 201

CORE CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Lesson 6 – THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” Philippians 2:12b (NLT)

TREK is a Discipleship Ministry of Rockpointe
Church

Written by Dr. Matthew S. Harding and Gene Griffin

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

We live in the age of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament period may be called the age of God the Father since we see Him in that role with Israel. The Gospels may be called the age of God the Son since Jesus is the focus. The age of the Holy Spirit began in Acts 2 with Pentecost and continues until the Second Coming of Christ.

This emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit and why we should study about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Despite this importance, the Holy Spirit is the least known and understood member of the Godhead –Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Do we call the Holy Spirit him (meaning a person) or it (meaning an influence)? What is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Why is there such a controversy surrounding the Holy Spirit especially as it relates to spiritual gifts?

Let's answer these questions as we dig deeper into the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

A. THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Why the Holy Spirit is important?
 - a. The Holy Spirit makes the Trinity personal to our lives. We know God the Father is separate from creation and not dependent upon the creation in any way (that is, God is transcendent) so many think of Him as far off somewhere up there. God the Son came in the flesh over 2000 years ago and we only read about it in the Gospels. The Holy Spirit however is active in and resident of every believer as we'll discover later in this study. That's personal!
 - b. We live in the age of the Holy Spirit as noted in the introduction. Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit's work is more prominent (not more important) than other members of the Trinity. The Father's work was most visible in the creation. The Son's work most visible in His birth, His death on the Cross, resurrection and His ascension. Now our awareness of God, our ability to abide in Christ, our conversion and more is the work of the Holy Spirit. We'll study this in much more detail in Section B, number 4.
 - c. The Holy Spirit allows us to experience God. Through His work, we come to God, experience Him, and feel His presence within and around us.

2. Why do we have difficulty in understanding of the Holy Spirit?
 - a. There is less Biblical material about the Holy Spirit than about the Father and Son.
 - i. The most extensive teaching is by Jesus in John 14-16.
 - ii. As Jesus tells us, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to bring attention to Jesus not Himself. The Holy Spirit's ministry is more behind the scenes than out front as the Cross or Creation.
 - iii. **Read aloud** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. John 15:26 (ESV)

iv. **Read aloud** He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. John 16:14 (ESV)

b. The names and imagery given to the Holy Spirit

- i. The King James Version and other older translations refer to the Holy Spirit as the Holy Ghost. What image (s) does that conjure up in your mind?
- ii. The word “spirit” translates the Greek word pneuma meaning air or breath and from which we get the word pneumonia. In the NT, pneuma is consistently translated as spirit.
 1. Nouns in Greek may be masculine, feminine, or neuter. Pneuma is neuter.
 2. In the King James Version (KJV), for example, translates the pronoun identifying the Spirit as “itself” rather than Himself. See Romans 8:16. Compare the KJV to ESV.
 3. This obviously adds confusion to the personality of the Holy Spirit.
- iii. Symbols of the Holy Spirit include oil, fire and water. Acts 2:1-4. John 3:5-8. These inanimate symbols lead to confusion as to personality of the Holy Spirit and relationship to and within the Godhead.

c. The controversy in our lifetime between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. This has produced disagreement as well avoidance of the subject particularly among non-Pentecostals for fear of being identified as Pentecostal.

3. What is the Nature of the Holy Spirit?

a. The Holy Spirit is Deity

The deity of the Holy Spirit is not so easily established or perhaps understood as that of the Father and the Son. The Scriptures affirm the Holy Spirit is God.

- i. The Holy Spirit is called God. Read Acts 5:3-4 and 1 Cor 6:19. These passages interchange the name God and Holy Spirit.
- ii. The Holy Spirit possesses attributes of God.
 1. Eternal. Heb 9:14
 2. Omnipresent. Ps 139 7-10
 3. Omniscience. 1 Cor 2:10-11
 4. Omnipotent. Luke 1:35
- iii. The Holy Spirit performs the divine works ascribed to God
 1. Creation. Gen 1:2, Job 33:4
 2. Inspiration of Scripture. 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21
 3. Raised Jesus from dead. Rom 8:11
 4. Regeneration. John 3:5-8
- iv. The Holy Spirit is identified as equal with the Father and the Son
 1. Great Commission in Matt 28:19. The Bible does not say “baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and of the wind” but of the “Holy Spirit”.
 2. Benedictional statement. 2 Cor 13:14

b. The Holy Spirit is a personality/personal being

The Holy Spirit, like the Father and like the Son, is a personal being – not an impersonal force or influence. As result we should always refer to the Holy Spirit as Him—never “it”.

- i. Use of masculine pronouns to refer to the Holy Spirit. The bold pronouns in the following verses are masculine and refer to the Holy Spirit.
 1. **Read aloud** ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you. But if I go, I will send **him** to you. ⁸ And when he comes, **he** will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: John 16:7-8 (ESV)
 2. **Read aloud** ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for **he** will not speak on **his** own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ **He** will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. John 16:13–14 (ESV)
- ii. The Holy Spirit is Jesus’ replacement. Read John 14:16. Note the word “another” which means “another of the same kind”. Since Jesus is a person so is the Holy Spirit.
- iii. Has personal characteristics. Personality or personhood is characterized by the fundamental elements of intelligence, will and emotions. The Holy Spirit has:
 1. Intelligence. John 14:26. He teaches us all things.
 2. Will. 1 Cor 12:11. The Holy Spirit determines which spiritual gift we receive.
 3. Emotions. The Holy Spirit can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4) grieved (Eph 4:30), quenched (1 Thess 5:19), resisted (Acts 7:51), and sinned against (Mark 3:29).
- iv. Does personal actions. The Holy Spirit speaks (Rev 2:7), intercedes (Rom 8:26-17), calls people to service (Acts 13:2), helps (John 14:16).

4. Axioms about the nature of the Holy Spirit

- a. The Holy Spirit is a person not a vague force or influence. Therefore He is one we can have a personal relationship with and pray to.
- b. The Holy Spirit is fully God. Therefore we are to give Him the same honor and respect we give the Father and to the Son. We worship the Holy Spirit as we do the other members of the Godhead.
- c. God is not far off. Since the Holy Spirit actually indwells us believers, God has truly become Immanuel which means “God with us”.

B. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. In the Old Testament

The OT uses various names for the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of God (14x), the Spirit of the Lord (23x), the Holy Spirit (3x) and Spirit (approx 30x).

- a. Creation. Gen 1:2.
- b. Equipped for service
 - i. Physical service –Samson. Judges 14:6
 - ii. Leadership skills -- Gideon. Judges 6:34
 - iii. Technical skills –Bezalel. Exodus 31:3-5
- c. Giving of prophecy and Scripture. Ezekiel 2:2. Also 2 Peter 1:21

2. Relation to the Life of Jesus

- a. Conception. Luke 1:31-35
- b. Anointing for ministry. Mark 1:8; Acts 10:38
- c. Led into wilderness to face temptation. Matthew 4:1
- d. Ministry of healing (context here cast out demons). Matthew 12:28
- e. Power to offer Himself on the Cross. Hebrews 9:14
- f. Raised Jesus from dead. Rom 1:4, Rom 8:11
- g. Power to teach the Apostles. Acts 1:2

3. Relation to the Scriptures

- a. Inspired them. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21
- b. Teaches them and gives understanding. John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13

4. Relation to the Believer:

- a. Beginning of our Christian life by:
 - i. **Convicting** us of sin. John 16:8-11
 - ii. **Regeneration**—new birth. John 3:5-8
 - 1. At our conversion, accepting Christ as our Savior, being saved, we are given God’s likeness and God’s nature and made part of God’s family (John 1:12)
- b. **Indwells** us. Rom 8:9. 1 Cor. 6:19. God’s presence in us through the Holy Spirit results in our body being His temple.
 - i. What are some implications of this as it relates to the care of our physical and well-being of our body?
- c. **Seals** us. Eph. 1;13-14
 - i. A seal is a symbol of ownership, finished transaction. We are “branded” as God’s property.
 - ii. God’s seal is His guarantee He will fulfill all His promises to us including preserving our salvation.
 - iii. The Holy Spirit is God’s handshake on a done deal and serves as the down payment or earnest money that the rest will come.
- d. **Teaches** us. John 14:26. We know the Author of the Bible personally. The Holy Spirit instructs us which removes the cry “I cannot understand the Bible”. All we have to do is ask the Author what He meant. We are blessed with all kinds of tools for study but even if we did not have them we could still understand the Bible.
- e. **Leads** us to/in worship. Eph. 5:18-20.
- f. **Empowers** us for Christ-like living. This is the process the Bible speaks of as sanctification.
 - i. **Fills** us. Eph. 5:18. This is not a matter of receiving more of the Holy Spirit but a matter of Him possessing/influencing more of us so the result is the Holy Spirit is in full control of our lives(thoughts, attitudes, actions, priorities, etc)

1. There is much discussion/difference of opinion about baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit. Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a one-time event that occurs at the moment of conversion when the Holy Spirit indwells us or takes up residence in us. It may or may not be an emotional event nor be evidenced by external signs.
2. The filling of the Holy Spirit may be repeated many times in our lives. Compare Acts 2:4 and Acts 4:31. Same group of people filled.
3. The Holy Spirit is the “Agent” of the filling (Gal. 5:16) and Christ is the Content of the filling.
 - ii. **Produces spiritual fruit.** Gal 5:22-23. The presence of these 9 qualities/fruit is evidence of the Holy Spirit’s filling and work in our lives. The presence or absence of these qualities shows who is in control of your life.
 - iii. **Gives us power over sin.** Romans 8:13. Sin remains in us but sin **MUST NOT REIGN** over us. Christ has conquered sin, broken its power over us and the Holy Spirit give us the power of the victory.
- g. **Intercedes** for us. Romans 8:26-27. There are times our heart is so broken we cannot pray or we just don’t know how to pray in a specific situation. The Holy Spirit intercedes in our behalf “according to God’s will”.
- h. **Bestows spiritual gifts** so we are equipped for service. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:10.
 - i. Spiritual gifts are for the common good of the Body –mutual edification. They are not for personal enjoyment or a reward.
 - ii. No one person has all the gifts (1 Cor 12:14-21) nor is any one gift given to all (1 Cor 12:28-30)
 - iii. All gifts are important. 1 Cor 12:22-26. Some gifts pushes us in the limelight and others have us serve behind the scenes.
 - iv. The Holy Spirit gives to whom as He will. 1 Cor 12:11. This means you don’t pick and choose but just as with any gift –receive it and use it.
- i. **Empowers us** to share our faith. Acts 1:8 One definition of witnessing is when a willing worker (that’s you) crosses path with a seeking soul and shares Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit. Sharing our faith is about being responsible for sharing not the results.
- j. **Encourages** us as our
 - i. Helper/Counselor. John 14:16. The word here is the Greek word *Paracletos*, which means one called alongside to help; or Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor.
 - ii. Advocate/Defense counselor when we sin. 1 John 2:1. Jesus is our defense counselor who takes up our case before God. In view our sin and failure, our restoration and future usefulness are all urgent matters which Jesus takes up with God when sin occurs.

5. Axioms about the Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. Spiritual gifts are just that—gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit. They are not rewards for service or merit badges to brag about.
- b. The Holy Spirit empowers believers for service. God has removed the excuses and worry out of serving Him. Any personal inadequacies should

not discourage us from serving. Read about Moses' inadequacies and God's responses. Exodus 4:1-17.

- c. We can rely upon the Holy Spirit to give us understanding of Scripture and to guide us to do His will.
- d. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts sovereignly. No gift is for everyone and no person has every gift.
- e. Since the Holy Spirit is God, part of the Godhead like the Father and the Son, we may pray to Him, thank him for His work in our lives.