

APRIL-JUNE

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2006

# Getting to know The Holy Spirit



A Devotional Bible-Study Guide  
for Young Adults



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# Getting to Know the Holy Spirit

APRIL—JUNE 2006



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## This Quarter's Illustrator



Stilian Stoyanov was born in Svishtov, Bulgaria, in 1986. He attended elementary school in Strazhitza and then the High School of Visual Arts in the capital city of Sofia, where he focused on painting and ceramics. His work has appeared in exhibits in Bulgaria and Poland.

# Getting the most Out of CQ

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

CQ is based on the conviction that the Word of God offers transforming power and that group study is one important way to tap into that power. CQ's purpose is to provide Seventh-day Adventist young adults with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed each week in Sabbath School. Many who use the *Adult Bible Study Guide* find that because CQ deals with the same topics, it enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Four hundred Adventist young adults contribute to CQ each year. The wide variety and occasional repetition of the content reflects the great diversity of its contributors around the world as they respond creatively and individually to the subject.

Circulation of CQ is about 70,000.

## POINTERS FOR STUDY

1. Through prayer, open your mind to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you study.
2. The Bible passages on which each week's lesson are based appear in bold type in the "Logos" portion of the lesson. Read these entire passages.
3. The Bible passages for the week are usually divided into sections on the "Logos" pages. When studying these sections, carefully reread the Bible passages indicated in bold headings before reading the comments beneath the headings.
4. Read the other sections for the week with the perspective you have gained from your own study of the biblical passages.
5. Keep in mind the purposes of each section of the Bible study guide:
  - "Introduction" is designed to stimulate your interest and focus your thinking on the week's theme.
  - "Logos" is a guide for direct study of the Bible passages for the week.
  - "Testimony" presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.
  - "Evidence" approaches issues raised by the lesson from a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective.
  - "How-To" discusses what the abstractions in the lesson mean for day-to-day living.
  - "Opinion" is a personal viewpoint on the lesson meant to encourage further thought and discussion.
  - "Exploration" provides the reader with a variety of open-ended, creative ways to explore the topic of the week's lesson.

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# The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit



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“ ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ ” (Matt. 28:19, NKJV).



# My New Toy . . . a PS2

## INTRODUCTION

2 Cor. 13:14

Do you have a PS (PlayStation) 2? I have one; in fact I've had it since 2000. I told a friend who worked at a retail store to get me one because it was almost impossible to get them. But there was another problem: I had to convince my wife. Hmm . . . how could I do that? Well, it wasn't that difficult! The PS2 is one system; but, in fact, it is really three systems in one.

The PS2 is a truly versatile system. First, my PS2 is a video-game console. I can turn it on, put a game on, and voilà! I can play games (including most of the original PS games). My PS2 is also a CD player. I can put in a Michael W. Smith CD, push the button, and enjoy the CD praising the Lord. Last but not least, my PS2 is a DVD player. I can put in *The Passion of the Christ*, hit the play button, and watch the film! I have only one PS2 though it is really three systems in one, and even if I happen to be playing a CD or DVD, the player is still a PS2.

How many gods are there? Of course there is only one God. "O Lord, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You" (1 Chron. 17:20, NKJV).

God is somewhat like my PS2. He is one God in Three Persons, and just because He's Three Persons in One doesn't mean the Three are not God. They all work at the same level.

First, there is the Father. That's what the Bible tells us: "For us there is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things" (1 Cor. 8:6, NKJV). God is the reason Jesus said, "that they may know You, the only true God" (John 17:3, NKJV).

Second, there is Jesus. God became human, coming down to earth to die for all of our sins. Jesus is 100 percent God in a human form. This is what He said when praying for all of us: "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are" (verse 11b, NKJV).

Finally, there is the Spirit. "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2b, NKJV). The Holy Spirit was right there since the beginning of the world and is God with us today. Jesus mentioned that the Holy Spirit was the Helper sent in His name to help us (John 14:26).

In the same way I have only one PS2 that is three systems in one, there is only one God—but He is God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

How many gods are there?

# The Holy Spirit Is Real

## LOGOS

Gen. 1:26; 3:22; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4–11, 28; 2 Cor. 13:14

Jesus once said that “all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:23, NKJV). But where does this leave the Holy Spirit? Today many people question whether the Holy Spirit actually exists or not.

In the Bible the existence of the Holy Spirit is not to be proved; it is simply stated. We’re not talking about some form of energy. We’re talking about Someone whom we can distinguish from the Father and the Son.

We first encounter the Holy Spirit as He participates in the creation of our physical universe: “The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2, NKJV). And Job also recognizes the Holy Spirit as his Creator: “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4, NKJV).

Throughout the book of Psalms, we read what David has to say about the Holy Spirit. While admitting his sin of adultery, he begs for mercy: “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11, NKJV).

In Psalm 106:32, 33, the Holy Spirit’s authority is unquestionable: “They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them; because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips” (NKJV).

Finally, David recognizes there is nowhere he can hide from the omnipresent Spirit: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?” (Ps. 139:7, NKJV).

Isaiah stated that the Holy Spirit was prophetically associated with the Messiah: “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (11:2, NKJV).

In a Messianic vision Isaiah sees all Three Members of the Deity together, announcing a battle plan that will restore humanity to heaven. “‘From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there.’ And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me, with his Spirit” (48:16, NIV).

Words of warning are issued to all who choose to oppose the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost is love and compassion, but as with the Father and the Son, His patience is limited: “They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against

**We get to know the Holy Spirit better through His personality.**

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them as an enemy, and He fought against them" (63:10, NKJV).

It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that Christ fulfills His plan of battle and earthly ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (61:1, NKJV).

Jesus also testifies on the existence of the Holy Spirit: " 'When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me' " (John 15:26, NIV). In this passage Jesus is telling us that the Spirit exists and that He works in harmony with the Father and the Son. He is describing His nature, where He comes from, and what to expect of Him.

We get to know the Holy Spirit better through His personality. What He says, does, and feels helps us understand Him. He isn't something impersonal that we can turn on or off; He is alive just as we are. Energy doesn't possess intelligence and mental faculties. The Spirit can love (Rom. 15:30), He reproves, helps, glorifies, intercedes (John 16:7–13; Rom. 8:26), and so much more. He does that which only a real person (divine or human) can do. The very nature of what He can do indicates personal distinction.

His divinity is established through different means:

1. The names of God are ascribed to Him (Exod. 17:7; Ps. 95:7; Heb. 3:7–11).
2. The divine attributes are also ascribed to Him: omnipresence (Ps. 139:7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:17, 18), omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10, 11), omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Rom. 8:11).
3. Creation is ascribed to Him (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Ps. 104:30), and the working of miracles (Matt. 12:28; 1 Cor. 12:9–11).
4. Worship is required and ascribed to Him (Isa. 6:3; Matt. 28:19; Acts 28:25; Rom. 9:1; Rev. 1:4).

## **REACT**

1. How can you show to others that the Holy Spirit is with you?
2. In terms of the results, what is the difference between reading the Bible without the Holy Spirit and reading it with the Holy Spirit? Give some examples.
3. What is the power of the Holy Spirit?

# Getting to Know the Holy Spirit

## TESTIMONY

Matt. 28:19

"We need to realize that the Holy Spirit . . . is as much a person as God is a person. . . .

"The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God.

"The Holy Spirit is a free, working, independent agency. The God of heaven uses His Spirit as it pleases Him; and human minds, human judgment, and human methods can no more set boundaries to its working, or prescribe the channel through which it shall operate, than they can say to the wind, 'I bid you to blow in a certain direction, and to conduct yourself in such and such a manner.'

"From the beginning God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. . . . The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld

God's faithful children in every succeeding age.

**"The Holy Spirit has a personality."**

"The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He [Jesus] could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to

be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.

"The Holy Spirit is an effective helper in restoring the image of God in the human soul."<sup>1</sup>

"The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the Holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul. He who looks to Christ in simple, childlike faith, is made a partaker of the divine nature through the agency of the Holy Spirit. When led by the Spirit of God, the Christian may know that he is made complete in him who is the head of all things. As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will he again be glorified in the closing work of the gospel, when he shall prepare a people to stand the final test, in the closing conflict of the great controversy."<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Faith I Live By*, p. 52.

2. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 29, 1892.



# Three Are Equal to One

## EVIDENCE

1 Cor. 12:4-11

No matter what stage of history that we are in, the Holy Spirit has been and will always be the same. He has never changed. He has been present since the beginning of Creation (Gen. 1:2) and will be present until the end of our time (Rev. 22:17). Before Jesus died for us on the cross, He said to the disciples: "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 depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, NKJV). But if God is the Supreme Creator and the Son, Jesus Christ, is our Redeemer, why do we need another person like "the Counselor"?

The function of God the Father is to take care of us through our steps in this life. Dying on the cross (the worst death sentence during His time), the Son broke the chains that tie us strongly to sin.

The Holy Spirit has the same functions as the Father and the Son. The "Spirit of God" is exactly God. For that reason the Counselor is the One who helps us to overcome the temptations and to get the victory.

How can we be certain of His existence? Here are some points to answer this question:

John 14:2, 3: God sent His Son to set us free from sin.

Jesus has said that when He went away, it was to prepare a place for us. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (verse 3, NKJV). That is, when Jesus comes to rescue us, He will meet with the Messenger, the One who has cared for us since He flew away.

Genesis 1:2: This verse shows us that from the creation of skies, the Holy Spirit has been on the earth. Also it is shown that He is part of the Trinity with the Father and the Son.

Second Peter 1:21 says that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible's writers. This means that the writers of the Bible are the messengers of the Messenger of God. If we do not have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we could read the Bible from beginning to end and it would not make any sense. As Peter says, to live without love. To have a personal encounter with God, we must ask for the Holy Spirit, the Source of power, the Source to understand the Bible, the Source to feel real love.

**The Holy Spirit has been and  
will always be the same.**

# Working With Him

## HOW-TO

John 14:15, 16

So how do you work with God? God's ways are easy. Our partnership with the Deity is based on love, faith, and trust.

**Love.** "If you love Me, keep My commandments. . . . and He [the Father] will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:15, 16, NKJV). Receiving the Holy Spirit is subject to obeying what God has asked of us. Simply, we obey His word and the Holy Spirit will arrive as the seal of His approval.

**Faith.** How far can we get if we don't trust, if we don't have faith in those we work with? Would Abraham have offered to sacrifice Isaac without believing that God would keep His promise? How far would Moses have gotten if he hadn't had faith in what he heard on Mount Sinai? Would Samson have avenged the Philistines if he hadn't kept his faith in the bond between himself and God? The list goes on and on. Simply stated: no faith, no success.

**Trust.** How far would Ananias and his wife Sapphira have gotten if they had trusted the Holy Spirit with their money? Two potential leaders in the Way lost their way and became a warning to all of us. We've got to trust the Holy Spirit in our lives with everything He's given us—our resources, our lives, and our salvation.

What did all the prophets have in common? "Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21, NKJV). Anyone who is willing to work in partnership with the Lord will be guided by the Holy Spirit.

What can we expect for the future? "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28, 29, NKJV). We can work with Him and success is guaranteed.

The Holy Spirit loves so dearly that He is looking for more partners to work with. Just as He did with Samson against the lion (Judg. 14:6), as He inspired David to write, as the armies of Israel faced incredible odds, as He worked with Mary and with the primitive church at Pentecost, He will do again with us.

## REACT

1. What is holding you from an excellent partnership with the Holy Spirit? What are you missing?
2. How can we help others to become co-workers with the Holy Spirit?

# Work of the Spirit

## OPINION

Gen. 1:26; 3:22

The Holy Spirit is very busy. He is responsible for so much in our salvation that we take Him for granted. We know that the Holy Spirit is omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10, 11), is eternal (Heb. 9:14), is omnipresent (Ps. 139:7), and gives life (Rom. 8:2).

Among other things, the Holy Spirit calls all to repent. If He stood by Noah's side for 120 years, He'll do it with us as long as we request His aid.

The Holy Spirit was designated to inspire all the holy men and women of God to write the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:21).

The Holy Spirit has the responsibility to resurrect the dead. He resurrected Jesus and will resurrect the dead come Judgment Day (Rom. 8:11).

He calls His chosen to ministry, selects church leaders, and leads the body of Christ (Acts 13:2).

By Him we "were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30, NKJV).

He can execute judgment (Acts 5:1-10).

The Holy Spirit works continuously to regenerate each of us so we can enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

"The Holy Spirit is the source of all power and works as a living, active agent in the new life created in the soul. The Holy Spirit is to be in us a divine indweller. Then

let gratitude and love abound in your heart to God. 'Study to show thyself approved unto God.' Let your conduct, your character, be in accordance with the sacred trust and heavenly endowment of the Holy Spirit."

According to Ephesians 4:12, 13, it's the Holy Spirit's job to (1) prepare God's people for works of service, (2) build up the body of Christ, (3) help us reach unity in the faith, (4) help us reach unity in the knowledge of the Son of God, (5) become mature, and (6) attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Even as we pray, He helps us, for "the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26, 27, NKJV).

Let's not forget that He has time for each of us. He wants to work with us so that all humanity can be saved.

**The Spirit helps us in our weakness.**

\*Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald, June 29, 1897, par. 10.



# The Power in the Presence

## EXPLORATION

John 3:6–8; 1 Cor. 2:4, 5

## CONCLUDE

God functions as a system—a union of three stand-alone components. This study looks specifically at the Holy Spirit. In the Bible the existence of the Holy Spirit is a given. The Spirit is distinguished from—and related to independently of—the Father and the Son. He is an individual we can grieve and rebel against. He makes possible “God with us.” The very One whose power sustained the “big names” of the Bible knows us too. The Holy Spirit is God and makes possible the means by which we come to know God.

## CONSIDER

- Creating a picture using a theme of “3s.” For example, draw three trees on one page. Use a different medium for each tree, like graphite, ink, and pastels. Or make a triptych of one subject, like flames or clouds.
- Buying or building a weather station that tracks wind speed and direction. Keep a log of the changes in wind movement (John 3:8).
- Using a topical Bible to find and write down as many Holy Spirit metaphors as you can.
- Looking up “Holy Spirit” in the topical index of your church hymnal. Of all the hymns listed in that section, how many of them are written in three or six beats per measure? Pick your three favorite songs and play them through, concentrating on the words.
- Organizing the following exercise: In a group setting have three or more men stand shoulder to shoulder in a line. Walk behind the line and randomly (with care, please) push one person’s back and watch how well he stays in place. Have everyone in the line link arms with his neighbor. Push another person and see the difference that being “three-in-one” makes in how well he keeps in place.
- Searching in a natural setting for a tree or vine that is actually multiple trunks or stalks.

## CONNECT

Joel 2:28, 29.

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 671, 672.

Philip Yancy, *Reaching for the Invisible God: What Can We Expect to Find?*



# The Holy Spirit symbolized in Scripture



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“ ‘The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit’ ”  
(John 3:8, NKJV).

# **“Water! Water! Who Will Take?”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

John 7:37–39

A poor boy lived on a valley near a town set on a hill where water supply was a problem because of its location. At times, since he lived down the valley, he filled up empty bottles with water, packed them in a bag, and went up to town to sell it. As he walked up the streets, he usually called out, “Water! Water! Who will buy! Who will buy?” On some days generous people further up would have pity on him and buy all the bottles. After taking their share, they would have the boy give the rest to anyone, free. When this was the case, the boy would come down hill with a cheerful tone and a new message: “Water! Water! Who will take! Who will take?” Those who heeded the boy’s call would come to take advantage of the free offer.

In the last days of the feast of the tabernacles, “Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’ ” (John 7:37, 38, NKJV).

One wonders how someone can give living water. Jesus explained that He was referring to the Holy Spirit as the Living Water (verse 39).

**We’ve all had enough of a  
dry spirituality.**

Why did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit as living water?

When Jesus went up to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit down to guide, direct, and mold His children to be like Christ. The Holy Spirit will reveal the truth, and the truth will set free anyone willing—even from death. The Holy Spirit, who is Jesus’ substitute on earth now, is the only hope of salvation. Without the Holy Spirit, we won’t experience God’s amazing grace on mount Calvary. Like water that flowed out from rocks in the wilderness for the Israelites, so it is in this wilderness of sin, where the Holy Spirit is the only thirst quencher for the thirsty souls that long for true love, acceptance, forgiveness, hope, and—most of all—for everlasting life in this dying, lifeless world.

We’ve all had enough of a dry spirituality. We’ve been wandering in this desert too long. With our present Laodicea kind of lukewarm drink, we need the cool refreshing taste from the spring of Living Water that wells from within. This living relationship with Jesus through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit will surely lead us to eternity.

Water! Water! Who will take?

# Unity Maker

## EVIDENCE

Psalm 51; 1 Cor. 12:1–10; Gal. 5:16–23; Eph. 5:9, 10

*"When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:31, 32, NKJV).*

"Christ prayed for his disciples 'that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The unity of believers is to be an evidence to the world of the divine power and mission of Christ. This should be the mighty argument to convince the world that Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of fallen man. The love existing between believers is to be similar to the love existing between the Father and the Son. And this love in the soul is the evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are to love God supremely, and our neighbors as ourselves. It is in the lack of this love that thousands fail, and are found transgressors of the law. Supreme love for God will lead to love for our fellow-men, and the commandment of Christ is, 'Love one another as I have loved you,' 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.' We cannot have this love unless Jesus is abiding in the heart by living faith. The very unity of disciples, the love manifested one for another, will be evidence to the world that God has sent his Son into the world as its Redeemer. This unity and love will exist wherever the Spirit of the Lord abides; heart will be bound to heart, and works of righteousness will appear in the daily life."\*

**We are to love God  
supremely.**

The Spirit of God blesses with a diversity of gifts, and not every one gets blessed with the same gift. Some receive a word of wisdom, another the word of knowledge, another faith, to another the gift of healing, another miracles, another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another the gift of diverse tongues, another to interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:4–10). If you walk in the Spirit, you shall not be filled with the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusted against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affectations and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 17, 22–25).

\**The Signs of the Times*, April 13, 1891.

*Hercules Cornelius du Preez, Western Cape, South Africa*



Monday  
April 3

# I Want to See Results

## LOGOS

Matt. 3:11; 10:16; John 1:9, 32; 7:37–39; 2 Cor. 1:20–22; Gal. 5:22–26; 1 Pet. 1:22

Have you ever heard the phrase “I want to see results”? Maybe it came from the mouth of a boss, a parent, or a teacher?

I work for the largest health-care system in Colorado. We have 12,000 employees, 12 hospitals, and 8 senior-care centers. My boss, a very intelligent man and a great guy to work for, was formerly head of marketing for Visa, USA. I love my job and feel very fortunate to be working where I do.

My boss and the other leaders of the organization I work for are looking for results. They want to see better patient satisfaction scores, higher employee engagement numbers, and a profitable bottom line. These things allow us to carry out our mission of extending the healing ministry of Christ.

Working there, I feel a great responsibility to produce results. But, I feel that way

not just because I work with people who expect results, but also because our work is important and contributes to serving more than 500,000 Coloradans each year. Something from within compels me to serve in the very best way I can.

**Have you ever been thirsty for some meaning in your life?**

When we accept Christ into our lives, He places His Holy Spirit within us. When we allow the Spirit to work within us, we are compelled to go beyond producing the kind of results that simply make us look good to others, and we are filled with a deep desire to serve our fellow humanity unselfishly.

The Scriptures symbolize the indwelling of the Spirit in many different ways, but the end result is always the same. When we allow the Spirit to work within us, He enables us to stand firmly for Christ and faithfully serve our fellow humanity. Let's look at a few of those symbols:

### The Spirit as Fruit (Gal. 5:22–26)

This classic treatise on the Holy Spirit states that the fruit, or results, of the Spirit's presence in our lives produces such characteristics as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and more. The bottom line of the Spirit in this passage is a life of service to those around us. It builds relationships with people that lead them to Jesus.

### The Spirit as a Dove (Matt. 10:16; John 1:32)

These two verses symbolize the Spirit as a Dove, placing purity, innocence, and wisdom all in the same package. These verses indicate that when the Spirit is in



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our lives, He will enable us to deal with others in openness, honesty, and wisdom. When I read the Gospels, I'm shocked at the authentic manner in which Jesus dealt with those around Him. His constant goal was to wake people up to the realization that the kingdom of God was at hand.

### **The Spirit as a Guarantee (2 Cor. 1:20–22)**

These verses provide us a guarantee more solid than the additional insurance plan you bought for your last vehicle. It says that God has given us His Spirit as a deposit to ensure that His promises are real and that His Spirit will enable us to stand firm in Christ.

How much time do we spend berating ourselves for failures and missteps? Maybe we've forgotten that God has placed His Spirit within us to enable us to stand for Christ and seek forgiveness on our behalf. Had you forgotten the Spirit was there? Have you recently thanked God for His presence in your life?

### **The Spirit as Streams of Living Water (John 7:37–39)**

Have you ever been thirsty for some meaning in your life, really wanting to make a difference? Jesus says in this passage that if we believe in Him we will have streams of living water flowing from within us. Jesus was referring to the abundant life the Holy Spirit will bring to our lives. Imagine, through even difficult times, the blessing of knowing that your life matters and will make a difference in the grand scheme of God's plan. There is no better thirst quencher for the soul.

The Holy Spirit is symbolized in many different ways throughout the Scripture. But no matter how the Spirit is portrayed, it is always in a manner that compels those who have accepted Christ into their lives to serve others and lead them toward God's kingdom.

If you've accepted Christ, His Spirit is within you. Every impulse to serve others with joy and kindness comes from the Spirit. Every desire you have to create honest, authentic relationships with others is from that same Spirit. When you are compelled to stand for Christ, it's the Spirit working within you. And it's the Spirit who gives meaning and fulfillment to your life as you serve those around you.

Have you recognized the Spirit's presence in your life? Have you exercised your faith, confident that God's Holy Spirit will give you all you need to live for Christ? Have you discovered the fulfillment that the Spirit brings to your life as you serve those around you? Try it out—you'll be amazed at the bottom-line results.

### **REACT**

1. In what situations did Jesus rely on the Holy Spirit?
2. What makes it so easy to forget sometimes about the Spirit's presence in our lives?
3. What difference would it make if we were aware of the Spirit's presence in our lives every minute of the day?

# Be True, Be Pure, Be Obedient

## TESTIMONY

John 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:22

Our lives as Seventh-day Adventists should reflect what the power of the Spirit can do through us. We as born-again Christians were baptized in the name of the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We not only become sons of God but also are sealed with His Holy Spirit. What exactly does that mean for us?

As we search Scripture, we find how important it is to be filled with the Holy Spirit as a daily process. If this is so, an important question to consider is whether the Holy Spirit is symbolized in our lives. "All human effort combined is weakness without the deep moving of the Spirit of God."<sup>1</sup> This signifies that there is no way we as Christians can walk the talk without Holy Spirit-filled lives.

"The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ."<sup>2</sup> For our spiritual life to be alive and refreshed, we need the Holy Spirit.

**"The Holy Spirit is the breath  
of spiritual life in the soul."**

It's similar to the body that cannot go without water.

In an oil lamp the oil, which the lamp depends on in order to give light, needs to be filled daily in order

to continue to light. In the same way we are to receive a fresh supply of the Spirit each day to stay alight spiritually. "This also symbolizes the Holy Spirit who was the active agent in the inspiration of the Scripture."<sup>3</sup>

"We shall be entrusted with the Holy Spirit according to our capacity to receive and our ability to impart it to others."<sup>4</sup> We know the light but in order for us to be the light to the world, we need the Holy Spirit to be symbolized in our lives. Unless we share this light, speak it, walk it, and live it, we cannot expect to be filled daily with the power to do so. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will be obedient, true, and pure as Jesus Christ is.

## REACT

1. We have seen the power of the Holy Spirit symbolized in the lives of Joseph, Bezaleel, Saul, and David to name a few. Have our lives remained alight so that the world can see the attributes of God's Spirit in us?

2. In practical terms how does one daily become filled with the Spirit?

1. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, p. 38.

2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 805.

3. David Wolkwitz, *Mighty Rushing Wind, Power for a Finished Work*.

4. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 57.

# How to Be Purified

## HOW-TO

2 Cor. 1:20–22; 1 Pet. 1:22

Before change takes place in a person's life, there are a few things he or she needs to know to allow the work of purification.

**Repent.** The first thing to do is repent. God will never force anyone to follow Him, so it's totally up to the individual person to choose whether to allow the Holy Spirit to work within or not, whether he choose life or death. And to the willing heart, He offers life eternal.

**Believe.** "The convicted sinner has something to do besides repent; he must act his part in order to be accepted by God. He must believe that God accepts his repentance, according to His promise. 'Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'"<sup>1</sup>

**Daily watch.** "The work of grace upon the heart is not an instantaneous work. It is affected by continuous, daily watching and believing the promises of God. The repentant, believing one, who cherishes faith and earnestly desires the renewing grace of Christ, God will not turn away empty. He will give him grace.

**"The convicted sinner has something to do besides repent."**

And ministering angels will aid him as he perseveres in his efforts to advance."<sup>2</sup>

"Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike. When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners. As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God."<sup>3</sup>

1. *Evangelism*, p. 287.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

## OPINION

John 16:7, 13

We can very well comfort anyone, but it won't last forever. Our Lord Jesus, who is the Truth, says, "I tell you the truth. . . if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, NKJV). He also says "When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning" (15:26, 27, NKJV).

The world is in constant turmoil and there can be little doubt that we are living at the edge of this world's history and awaiting Jesus' return. While waiting, we will be smothered by waves of trials and tribulations the world has never witnessed; for these, we urgently need the Holy Spirit to guide us through a clear passage to eternity. "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (16:13, NKJV).

**If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit.**

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love."\*

If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual death.

Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.

\* *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.



# Symbols of the Spirit

## EXPLORATION

Isa. 11:2, 3; John 7:37–39; Gal. 5:22–26

## CONCLUDE

We cannot see the Holy Spirit any more than we can see the wind, but the Scriptures are full of symbols that help us recognize His presence and His work in our lives. Illustrations of streams of living water flowing, light from an oil-filled lamp, fruit, fire, and a dove show how the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives produces Christlike love, unity, service, and godly relationships.

## CONSIDER

- Associating each color of the rainbow with an aspect of the Holy Spirit's work. Design a tablecloth, stained glass window, or T-shirt, using these colors and/or other symbols in such a way that they bring to the viewer a picture of the fullness of the Spirit's work. (See the seven spirits described in Isaiah 11:2, 3, as well as Galatians 5:22–26.)
- Using a concordance to list symbols that refer to the Holy Spirit in both the Old and New Testaments. Compare and contrast these two witnesses to the nature of the Holy Spirit's work illustrated by these symbols.
- Using paper mache, modeling clay, or polymer clay to create a bowl full of fruit of the Spirit. Add a leaf to each fruit with an appropriate Scripture describing each fruit. Give as a gift. (See Galatians 5:22–26.)
- Writing and performing a piece of music illustrating the rhythms and tones of the streams of living water described in John 7:38. Consider using water glasses and/or sounds of flowing water as part of your composition, as well as a reading of John 7:37–39.
- Designing a family supper around the theme of symbols of the Holy Spirit. Use an oil lamp as a centerpiece. Give each guest fruit to prepare and add to a fruit salad, as well as a corresponding Bible verse relating each type of fruit to a fruit of the Spirit. Serve water from a fountain, labeled with Scripture about living water. Share experiences of the Spirit's work in your life during the meal.

## CONNECT

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 107, 108, 172, 173, 670, 671; *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 61, 68, 69, 327, 385, 407.

L. E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, pp. 39, 207, 241, 267, 299.

# Jesus and the Holy Spirit



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“The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God’ ” (Luke 1:35, NKJV).

# The Holy Spirit's Body

## INTRODUCTION

Mark 1:10

Numerous questions have been raised about the form and work of the Holy Spirit as the world faces the challenge of miracles. Many are of the view that churches that exorcise demons and perform healing are more spiritual. This is more deceptive because of the power of the devil to duplicate the divine acts of Jesus.

Before Creation God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters, when there was no light (Gen. 1:2). The Spirit was first at Creation and has ever since been present with humanity. His body comes in three main forms; like a fire, a mighty wind, or like a dove; yet He is One. During the time of the prophets, the Spirit took Elijah like a chariot with horses of fire (2 Kings 2:11). At the baptism of Jesus, He descended like a dove (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10) and at Pentecost like a rushing mighty wind resting on their heads like tongues of fire (Acts 2:2).

The Holy Spirit comes in the form of fire to consume all traces of sin in us. God is holy and His Spirit does not dwell in filthy hearts. Appearing as a strong wind signifies power and as a dove signifies humility. Everyone needs the Spirit. God does not want us to do His work with our own strength. "He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal."\*

**The Spirit was first at  
Creation and has ever since  
been present with humanity.**

As I was watching on National TV, I saw people falling backward because of the action of a human healer. I could not believe it. If prophets and apostles truly possess the Spirit of God, demons would have fled upon seeing them because the evil spirit has eyes to identify God's people (Matt. 8:29). If Paul's shadow could heal a sick person, was it not the Holy Spirit in him?

When God's Spirit enters a person, it leads and guides in doing good things. To test whether the Spirit is in someone, observe the works of the person. If it is kindness, love, longsuffering, humility, gentleness, it is authentic. If it is otherwise, shun it. "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matt. 7:16, NIV).

\**My Life Today*, p. 37

## LOGOS

Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Matt. 1:18–20; 3:16, 17; Luke 1:35; John 3:3–8, 34; Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14

There is a metal that sets metal to motion. People go places only by this metal. Pistons moving against the pressure of fluid power that metal. Ultimately, no oil, no movement. Rust and dirt impede my movement. Who am I? The engine of a car functions better when it is lubricated. There is life in humanity because of God's Spirit in them. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7, NKJV). Without the Lord's breath (Spirit), humankind remains dust.

### Transfer is not possible.

In the parable of the ten virgins, we read of five wise and five foolish virgins attending a wedding. The delay of the bridegroom caused their lamps to burn low, and fortunately for five, they had oil to rekindle their lamps. It is true that the five wise virgins had extra oil; however, they could not share. If we run short of the Holy Spirit, we cannot borrow from others. Anyone who possesses the Spirit of God needs lubrication because of the rust of sin. Just as rust makes an engine nonfunctional, so does the human system become nonfunctional without the Holy Spirit.

**God knows us much better  
than we know Him.**

### We must have a spiritual refill.

The question of Nicodemus about rebirth should be the question for us today. Too many of us have a taste more for fun than for devotion, sex before marriage more than friendship. I was bewildered when I heard a friend saying, "You hate sex," even though both of us were unmarried. That was the first time in my life that I had heard this. It is shameful and ungodly for a Christian to deem sex an ingredient for friendship. Human behavior is like a falling object. The end is a dart, a crash, and a splash. It is nothing but death.

### Four things need to be done for rebirth.

*First, believe in the Son Jesus Christ.*

*Second, be baptized in water to bury your sins.* Baptism is an outward expres-



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sion of an inward conviction that your iniquities have been washed away. Mere baptism does not count.

*Third, have daily communion with God through prayer and Bible reading.* That is the only way to obtain full knowledge of God. To be good friends, both must know the likes and dislikes of each other. God knows us much better than we know Him; therefore, we have a duty to know Him better through personal devotion.

*Fourth, worship in truth and in deed, and you shall receive the Holy Spirit.* It is the evil in us that neutralizes the God-given Spirit in us. Our lawless deeds make the Spirit nonfunctional.

Thus, skipping one of these steps makes one deficient of the Spirit. “ ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’ ” (John 3:5, NKJV). Water baptism is the only ritual that prepares the soul for spiritual baptism. Without the Spirit heaven is denied. Investing your time in spiritual things is worth much more than the pleasures of this world. Everyone needs the Holy Spirit because our body is His temple. “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19, NKJV). Heaven should be the ultimate destination of every true Christian.

## **Jesus made a promise.**

Jesus promised the disciples the Holy Spirit that fell on the Day of Pentecost. “ ‘John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’ ” (Acts 1:5, NKJV). In the upper room the Spirit resumed full duty to control the affairs of humanity. The disciples feared nothing because of the power of the Spirit working in them.

According to Joel the prophet, “ ‘It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions’ ” (Joel 2:28, NKJV). Even though the Spirit fell at Pentecost, it is still falling in our day today. Every one of us is to prepare adequately for the latter rain in order to stand the persecution awaiting us. The words of the Lord are sure and true and will all come to pass.

## **Jesus issues a warning.**

If you speak against the Holy Spirit, you will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come (Matt. 12:32). How would you know you are sinning against the Holy Spirit? Jesus said this in response to the Pharisees when they accused Him of casting out demons in the name of Beelzebub. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a consistent and progressive resistance to truth that ends in a final and irrevocable decision against the Holy Spirit that in so doing one chooses to pursue his own course of action in opposition to the divine will. The divine Agent works on our conscience.

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\*The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 396.

## The “Binity” and Us

### TESTIMONY

Luke 1:35

**QUESTION:** The “Binity” sounds like something in my ears. Is it a new theological concept or possibly the 29th Seventh-day Adventist belief?

**ANSWER:** Absolutely not! It is a term coined for the most wonderful Partner(s) ever to exist and will exist in the history of the universe—Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

One of the most important and respectable things learned, appreciated, and believed in Christianity is that for something to be successful in the name of Jesus, it must be done with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture does not tell us only about the presence of the Holy Spirit before and during the noncoitus conception and birth of Jesus. His life, ministry, death, and ascension provide an important and explicit account of the Spirit's active involvement and influence. When the fate of all humanity was at stake in Gethsemane, the Holy Spirit was His strength and our Advocate.

I can now envisage with all clarity why Jesus gave the Holy Spirit—as our Comforter—at His farewell party. It's indeed a priceless inheritance. Believers should always fill their hearts with thanks to the Lord for such a gift.

**It's indeed a priceless inheritance.**

If the “sinless man” needed the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit, then our need of it cannot be overemphasized. The Holy Spirit directed Jesus as He subjected Himself to the Holy Spirit's control. Not once did the Pharisees question Jesus' teachings. Many are those today who question the work and teaching of the Holy Spirit. “They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. . . . But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift.”<sup>1</sup>

The problem, therefore, is our stubbornness to control our own affairs rather than allowing the Spirit to work through us.

Anyone willing to give the Spirit a chance in his or her life would be given it. “The Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling.”<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

2. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 21.

# Is a Force a Person?

## EVIDENCE

Rom. 8:14, 26

Humanity is acquainted with different kinds of forces in the universe. The force of gravity associated with falling; buoyancy, which has to do with floating and sinking; centripetal and centrifugal, which have to do with the maintenance of equilibrium in circular motions of objects. Interestingly, these forces remain in their active (kinetic) or passive (potential) courses until influenced by external factors. A river carrying its victim away in its current does not care whether the passenger is drowning or swimming.

It does not care whether the passenger is taking in a life-supporting or a lethal quantity of water. The case is the same with someone falling from a cliff. None of these forces has a human face—empathy or affective sensitivity. The one, subject to influence, has no mercy or consideration. On the contrary the Holy Spirit touches our plight with some kind of empathy that knows no bounds.

"The [Holy] Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings

which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26, NKJV). We cannot therefore compare Him with the natural forces enumerated above. Right from Creation of the world, He has been striving with humankind: "The Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men's hearts."<sup>1</sup>

Though we slip, He does not leave us like orphans with no hope of support, control, or direction. He does not leave us alone in our fight against the floods and storms of life. A Christian author describing this intervention writes: "Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. . . . wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer."<sup>2</sup> The Holy Spirit is therefore more than a steering wheel of our life. He is the Energizer and Comforter of our life to help us stand as children of God (Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:14).

He is interested in giving us hope and success. No wonder we grieve Him when we slight His counsel and take Him for granted. The very Greek word used to explain His connection with us as a Comforter and a companion in life is *parakletos*, which means "called alongside."

**He does not leave us like  
orphans with no hope of  
support.**

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 670.



# Christians Without Christ

## HOW-TO

John 14:16–19; Acts 2:1–4

The ascension of Christ filled the disciples with many questions. And the most prominent one probably would have been “How can we be Christians without Christ?” When the disciples decided to follow Christ, most of them were disowned by the society they were in. But Christ comforted His disciples by giving them the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, which was endowed on Him in the form of a dove at His baptism, was in Him and was with Him, and worked with Him from His incarnation, through His ministry, to His crucifixion. We can therefore be Christians if we claim this promise of the Spirit.

This Spirit, which Christ promised His disciples, was the One who revealed Christ-likeness in those who follow Him. At Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. This is because “the Spirit Himself bears witness . . . that we are children

of God” (Rom. 8:16, NKJV). “The carnal mind is enmity against God. . . . So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. . . . Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His” (verses 7–9, NKJV).

**We can still be Christians  
but not without the Holy  
Spirit living within us.**

Paul admonishes us that we should let the Spirit that was in Christ Jesus be in us. When the Spirit dwells in us, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). This fruit of the Spirit is the character, which is in similitude with that of Christ. Although Christ is not physically present with us, we can still be Christians but not without the Holy Spirit living within us.

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the “the Promise of My Father” (Luke 24:49, NKJV), and Paul describes Him in Ephesians as the “the Holy Spirit of promise” (1:13, NKJV). Peter also confirmed that the Holy Spirit is promised to every converted person (Acts 2:38, 39). There is only one way to prepare man for the Holy Spirit:

1. Believing in Christ,
2. Baptizing your past under water,
3. Daily reading of the Holy Writ, and
4. Praying

Faith brings a person into the family of God. When seeking a spiritual refill, Christians resort to personal devotion, prayer, and meditation on God’s words. Until conversion, the Spirit works with sinners, leading them to learn of Jesus and His plan of salvation. As soon as sinners open their hearts in surrender and by faith, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in those lives and represents Jesus there.



# Let Him In

## OPINION

Rom. 8:11

When I contemplate Christ crying for water at Golgotha, I certainly believe He would have had similar difficulties in reaching my locality due to human limitation. Jesus' power was limited and individualized while in the human form. Thanks to His ascension and the subsequent unction of the Holy Spirit, the saving power of Christ is everywhere accessible and even dwells in the heart of the regenerate.

Christ lived and grew in the Spirit. But at what age did He begin to hear the Holy Spirit? Gradually from infancy He was led into greater knowledge of God. All who are full of the Holy Spirit would feel the sense of urgency to help others come into the truth they are led into. Christ—because of the Spirit's manifestation—at the age of 12 began to teach the greatest scholars of His day. Truly the Spirit leads the willing heart beyond human understanding at every stage of development. "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11, NKJV).

I am sure the Spirit's direction and guidance into the knowledge of God is synonymous with intelligence, understanding, and greatness. Blessed is he who understands the mysteries of God and has the right discernment between right and wrong in this world of relativism and liberalism. This is the pedigree to which the Holy Spirit wishes to elevate young people who yield to His direction and guidance. If there is any generation in which Christians need constant reliance on the Holy Spirit, it is ours. Today the very thought of humankind seeks to grieve the Holy Spirit, thereby reducing the definition of sin into a mere word.

The Spirit served as the vitalizing, sustaining, stimulating, and the enabling force in the ministry of Christ against sin. He did not perform a single miracle with His own power. He depended on the Spirit for every action and decision.

"The present enjoyment of the Spirit is but an earnest gift before hand, a pledge of the coming fullness of righteousness."\* All that is left for Christians is to access this gift in constant prayer and humility. The Spirit will never relent in His effort to knock at your door until you let him in (Rev. 3:20).

**At what age did Jesus begin to hear the Holy Spirit?**

\*Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ* (Fort Washington, Md.: Christian Literature Crusade).

# Jesus and the Holy Spirit

## EXPLORATION

Luke 1:35

## CONCLUDE

Jesus relied on the Holy Spirit for support and guidance throughout His life and ministry on earth, and promised the Spirit—"the Comforter"—to His followers after His departure. The Holy Spirit seeks to draw us to God in countless untold ways. The Bible depicts the Spirit polymorphously—as a dove, as fire, as a "still, small voice." The Holy Spirit whispers in our ears and gets under our skin. If we tune into the Spirit, consecrating our hearts as a temple for the Spirit, God will be our constant Comfort, Companion, and Guide.

## CONSIDER

- Singing the song "O Holy Dove of God Descending," #270 in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (1985), and contemplating its varied imagery for the Holy Spirit.
- Journaling about points you remember when the Holy Spirit's leading was particularly evident, either in your own life or in those around you.
- Thinking of people you know who are resistant to human witnessing. Pray for the Holy Spirit to touch their hearts and to shine through your actions.
- Asking a child how God speaks to him or her.
- Reading the story of Jesus' wilderness temptations in Matthew 3. How might the Holy Spirit have helped Jesus through this ordeal?
- Meditating on where God may be leading you in life, and how you can better tune in to the Holy Spirit.
- Painting an image of a temple to represent how the Holy Spirit wishes to dwell within us.

## CONNECT

*Steps to Christ*, chaps. 9; 10.

*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, chap. 5.

# The Promise of the Holy Spirit



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“ ‘I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever’ ”  
(John 14:16, NKJV).

# Letter to Friends: Promise of the Holy Spirit

## INTRODUCTION

Acts 1:2

*"He was taken up into heaven. But He did not leave before He had instructed His chosen apostles and had promised them the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:2, Clear Word Bible).*

Right now I feel the Holy Spirit resting on and in me.

The Holy Spirit—resting: What a comforting thought.

The Holy Spirit talks to me also, and He has promised to be with me always. That I believe. Let me explain.

The Holy Spirit was with me one fall day in September of 2002. I walked into the women's unit of a local hospital; I was to have a biopsy of my left breast to see if I had the "help opportunity" that beckoned some 215,000\* women in 2004. I sat in that room, waiting. I could not breathe until I heard the Holy Spirit say, *"Ramona, I am with you—right now; lean on Me."* I looked up and out of myself.

### Soon after the nurse called me in for a second X-ray.

Sitting across from me was an older woman. I asked her how she was doing; she smiled a smile I'd seen before. You know, it is the kind of smile that says, I trust God will see me through. She told me she

was to undergo a mastectomy. I told her I was to have a biopsy. I asked if she would pray with me; we prayed. I imagine the Holy Spirit led me to pray: "Dear God, through the intercession of the Holy Spirit, please place Your healing hands on this dear lady; please heal all Your children who suffer in this old world. And Lord, I thank You for the precious gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Soon after the nurse called me in for a second X-ray. I said Goodbye to my dear sister; I hugged her. I prayed a silent prayer for her and for every woman sitting in a room waiting to see if they had a help opportunity, for that is what disease is: an opportunity to experience healing. What was comforting about this is that my Friend, the Holy Spirit, was with me, resting in and on me.

I left the clinic with two gifts that September day: I did not have to undergo a biopsy, and I received a practical understanding of how available the Holy Spirit is to me. The Holy Spirit spoke to me in that small room, and the Holy Spirit is speaking to me right now. And I am listening.

\*American Cancer Society Web site. <[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)>.



## **“ ‘Woman, Thou Art Loosed’ ”**

### **EVIDENCE**

Rom. 8:14

Mark 5:25–34 speaks of the woman with the issue of blood. The Bible says that this woman had gone to many doctors. Going to many doctors would be analogous to a modern patient going to a specialist. Initially, the woman saw a primary-care physician who took her history, and then ordered a battery of blood tests to try to find out the cause of the problem. The information with the first doctor was inconclusive. He could not find a cause for the blood disease. The symptoms persisted; therefore, her primary-care physician sent her to a specialist (a hematologist). There was no doubt in the patient's or the primary-care physician's mind that the specialist would discover the cause of the disease.

More tests were run, and the woman's condition remained unchanged. She continued to try to manage her disease at home. It became increasingly difficult. She was weak and found it difficult to work. People did not want to be around her because she had an odor: She smelled of blood. Her family and friends grew tired of trying to help her. As with a lot of illnesses, initially everyone is there at first to see you through. Unfortunately, as time passes, the strength to remain dutiful wanes, and all too often the loved one is left alone to tough it out.

What led the woman with the issue of blood is found in Psalm 42:7, “Deep calls unto deep” (NKJV). The Lord has given us the

**The woman's condition remained unchanged.**

Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit in her called unto Himself. This is a major factor that aided in the woman's healing. The Lord knew that she would rise to the occasion. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit” (Rom. 8:16, NKJV).

It is evident that the Holy Spirit helped the woman with the issue of blood realize that she needed help that was outside of the human realm. We see the evidence of the Holy Spirit in her thoughts. “When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment; for she said, ‘If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well’ ” (Mark 5:27, 28, NKJV). When that happened, she felt the manifestations of the Spirit say within her “ ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity’ ” (Luke 13:12, NKJV). We also see the evidence of the Holy Spirit in her actions. It was at this moment that she realized the battle was not hers but the Lord's. It was also evident that she was called to be a child of God. Her effort-laden search for a relief of her “issue,” directed by the Holy Spirit, led her to what she so desperately wanted. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14, NKJV).

# The Spirit: God's Plan to Get Closer

## LOGOS

John 14:16, 17; Rom. 8:16; 15:16; Eph. 3:16

### When Close Is Not Enough (John 14:16, 17)

Though all cultures and religious systems speak about God, the Bible presents a more compelling picture of a God who desires to be near His creation. He pursues His creatures in the Garden after they have fallen. He is willing to “come down” (Exod. 3:8, NKJV) to relieve them of their misery brought on by Pharaoh’s oppressive dictates; and later He asks them to build Him a house so that He may “dwell among them” (25:8, NKJV). And as if that weren’t enough, God prepared a body for Himself (Heb. 10:5) and lived among men as man—the incarnate Son of God.

But as near as God has gotten to us through gardens and sanctuaries, and even as close as He came to us through Christ, He longs to get closer. He is not content to be near—He wants to move in!

**He is not content to be  
near—He wants to move in!**

“ ‘I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know

Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you’ ” (John 14:16, 17, NKJV).

Through His Spirit, God has determined to live as intimately with His people as possible—inside of them, individually, one by one. Simply put, this is a deeper commitment than marriage. This is more than “God with us”—this is “God in us!”

### Moving in With a Purpose (Rom. 8:5–14)

The presence of God’s Holy Spirit in our lives is more than just a desire on God’s part to be near His people. Although that is a large part of why God gives His Spirit, the more urgent necessity rests in God’s focus on redemption: God moves in as a part of His plan to reclaim and restore.

You are disputed territory. Since the sin of Adam, Satan has laid claim to every person born to a man and woman. However, God also lays claim to each of us—after all, we are His by creation. The end result is that our souls become a battlefield.

We are not left alone to fight this battle; God, through His indwelling Spirit, works to reclaim us as His own.

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"The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Gal. 5:17, NKJV).

It is through God's Holy Spirit that a war is waged against sin, self, and Satan for every soul. Through His Spirit, God—working on the inside—is striving to assert His claim over us.

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16, NKJV).

As we learn to appreciate this part of the Spirit's work, we can better cooperate with His work of restoration.

It isn't enough to be reclaimed by God; we must also be restored. The process of restoration is what makes the difference between a valuable historic artifact and a piece of junk. Restoration is the lifelong, continuous work of the indwelling Spirit that makes us fit for the companionship of God.

This process (often referred to as "sanctification") makes the power of God, through His Spirit, available to those who seek it. Paul says that we are to be "sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (15:16, NKJV), and later says that this sanctifying work of the Spirit is the pathway to salvation (2 Thess. 2:13). It is through the Spirit that we find strength for our inner struggles (Eph. 3:16), and it is through the Spirit that God awakens (or "quickens") our dormant, weak faculties.

The ultimate work of the Spirit's restorative process is to cultivate within our lives a mature and balanced holiness that Paul refers to in this way: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23, NKJV).

## **The Power Behind the Promise**

The promise of the Spirit is not God's attempt to provide a second-best, follow-up program after Christ's departure. Instead it was actually God's way of strengthening what Christ had started! Whereas Christ was limited by time and space, the Spirit is unbounded; He can be anywhere or everywhere at once.

It must also be noted that the term "the Third Person of the Godhead" does not imply a lessening of rank, place, or power of the Spirit. He is in every way God, co-equal with the Father and the Son. As such, with the promise of the Spirit comes a promise for a delivery of God's full power to every believer!

In fact, the word used for *Spirit* (*pneuma*, often translated "wind") implies a force that is nonmaterial but extraordinarily effective. From this we can infer that the promise of the Holy Spirit implies God's intent to make His power available to us through ways and means above and beyond human measure or qualifications.

It is an outrageously generous and compassionate promise: God commits Himself to us; to live with us and in us—and most importantly, through us by His Spirit.

# Empowered by His Spirit

## TESTIMONY

John 14:16

“Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation. . . . It came with a fullness and power, as if for ages it had been restrained, but was now being poured forth upon the church.”<sup>1</sup>

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. . . . the Comforter has been sent

**“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race.”**

to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Savior, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely

believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer’s love and of His saving grace.”<sup>2</sup>

“The necessity of the Holy Spirit’s working should be realized by all. Unless this Spirit is accepted and cherished as the representative of Christ, whose work it is to renew and sanctify the entire being, the momentous truths that have been entrusted to human beings will lose their power on the mind. . . . ‘There is no attribute of My nature that I will not freely give in order that man may reveal My image.’ ”<sup>3</sup>

“ ‘As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you’ (John 20:21). We are to bear as definite a testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, as did Christ and His apostles. Trusting in the efficiency of the Holy Spirit, we are to testify of the mercy, goodness, and love of a crucified and risen Saviour, and thus be agents through whom the darkness will be dispelled from many minds, and cause thanksgiving and praise to ascend from many hearts to God.”<sup>4</sup>

1. *My Life Today*, p. 36.

2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

3. *In Heavenly Places*, p. 335.

4. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 263.



# How to Receive the Promise

## HOW-TO

Matt. 7:8; John 14:16; Acts 2:38

"Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, but how little is this promise appreciated. How seldom is [the Spirit's] power felt in the church; how little is His power spoken of before the people. The Saviour has said: 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me' (Acts 1:8). With the reception of this gift, all other gifts would be ours; for we are to have this gift according to the plentitude of the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive. Then let us not be satisfied with only a little of this blessing, only that amount which will keep us from the slumber of death, but let us diligently seek for the abundance of the grace of God."<sup>1</sup>

"The Holy Spirit was sent as the most priceless treasure man could receive."<sup>2</sup>

Here are three steps to receiving and maintaining the priceless treasure, the promise of the Holy Spirit:

**1. Repent.** "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38, NKJV). We need God's help to repent, and it is His goodness that

leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

**2. Ask.** "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13, NKJV). "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth" [Matt. 7:8]. . . . Asking for the Holy Spirit is connected with receiving this gift."<sup>3</sup>

**3. Maintain.** We must pray, asking daily for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Receiving the gift of God will make everything in life easy. The more of the Spirit of God, the more of his grace, is brought into our daily experience, the less friction there will be, the more happiness we shall have, and the more we shall impart to others."<sup>4</sup>

**"Let us not be satisfied with  
only a little of this blessing."**

1. *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 221.

2. *My Life Today*, p. 36.

3. *The Bible Echo*, August 12, 1901.

4. *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 8, 1892.

# Bringing on the Heat!

## OPINION

Matt. 3:11

Many Christians believe that once you've accepted Christ as your Savior and are baptized, life is supposed to become progressively easier. They feel they are somehow inoculated from trials and tribulations. Their guiding texts are 3 John 2 and Isaiah 58:14. So, when trials come (as they often do, and will) they feel God has forsaken them, or they have fallen out of favor with heaven. But our key text reminds us of the reality of Christianity.

When John the Baptist spoke those words, he prophetically foresaw that a personal relationship with Christ, and a total *immersion* in God's Spirit, would bring about trials and troubles. There is one thing we must understand: Real Christians *aren't* cool! They are ablaze with the Spirit of God. Jeremiah 20:9 says that God's "word was in [Jeremiah's] heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones" (NKJV). Paul tells us that "fire will test each one's work" (1 Cor. 3:13, NKJV) because "the Spirit of God dwells in [us]" (verse 16, NKJV).

### Real Christians *aren't* cool!

God promised to put within us His Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:26, 27), who would "refine and test" us (Jer. 9:7, NIV) "in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10, NKJV).

When purifying silver, a metalsmith will hold the raw silver in the hottest part of the flame to cause the impurities to burn off. He has to be extremely attentive and careful. If he holds it too long, the silver will burn up. He knows it's completely pure when he can see his reflection in the liquid.

God promises to be with us and to deliver us from being consumed by the fires (Zech. 13:8, 9) just like the Hebrew boys in Daniel 3, but He will not prevent us from going through them. First Peter 4:12–14 reminds us that trials or suffering aren't to be considered strange, but they reveal "the Spirit of glory and of God" resting upon us (verse 14, NIV). So if our goal is to be saved, then our daily prayer should be "Bring on the heat!"

## REACT

1. What is God trying to "burn out" of your life?
2. What are some texts you can use for encouragement as you go through trials?

# Outrageously Generous Guidance

Friday  
April 21

## EXPLORATION

John 14:15, 16; 25–27

## CONCLUDE

When Christ returned to heaven, He realized that every day of our lives, we would face a battle for our souls. He knew the battle would be too great for us to fight alone. He knew there would be days when our best would simply not be good enough. And so He made an outrageously generous provision: He guaranteed that the Holy Spirit would be available upon request. Through the Spirit we have assurance of comfort, rest, restoration, freedom, guidance, help, empowerment, representation, and counsel. We have a direct line to God's full power.

## CONSIDER

- Drawing something that represents an obstacle (shyness, weakness, procrastination, fear, etc.) that comes between you and serving God. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to overcome this obstacle.
- Singing "Spirit Song" by John Wimber. Think about how the Spirit has guided in your life.
- Asking the Spirit to guide in a specific area of your life. Write your prayer down in your journal. Track the responses you receive.
- Making a tape of several well-known people with easily identifiable voices and mixing in the voices of people from the class or from church. See if students can identify the speaker. Remind them that familiarity with someone comes from spending time together and learning to recognize their voice.
- Visiting someone who has been in the church for decades and interviewing them about how the Holy Spirit has led in their life.
- Writing a short play describing how the Holy Spirit works on our hearts.

## CONNECT

Ezekiel 39:29; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26, 27; 1 John 4:13.

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 172, 173, 671, 672.

Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit*.

# The Promise fulfilled



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“Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”  
(Acts 2:2–4, NKJV).



# Always Need to Be Prepared

## INTRODUCTION

Acts 1:13, 14

A child is gladdened when her parents tell her that her grandmother will be coming to their house next day. Surely Grandmother will bring some gifts for her. The child prepares by cleaning her room. When Grandmother arrives, the child's room is neater than on ordinary days. Her grandmother is impressed by the preparations the child has made. However, the neatness is only temporary. When Grandmother returns to her own home, the child's room returns to its former state.

The parents are disappointed over the child's behavior. They think their child should always continue to keep her room neat and clean. Finally the parents get an idea. They tell the child that her grandmother will pay a visit again and that the child should prepare her room for her grandmother's arrival. The child asks when Grandmother will be coming. Her parents say that Grandmother has not told them when she will come, but that she will surely return. Now the parents think the child will continue to keep her room neat and clean because she will want to be ready for her grandmother's return.

Though the Holy Spirit does not warn us of Jesus' return as a way of manipulating us, He does warn us nevertheless. In the same way we always need to be prepared for His return. We must make sure that our hearts are always clean. A clean heart enables the Holy Spirit to bless us.

The apostles prayed earnestly for the ability to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. They put away their differences and desires for supremacy that had stood between them. Confession of sin and repentance brought them into close fellowship with Christ. Those who accept Christ today need a similar experience in preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Spirit is not a one-time event; we can experience it daily. We need to plead with the Lord for that baptism because it gives the church power to witness and to proclaim the gospel. To do this we must continually surrender our lives to God, abide fully in Christ, ask Him for wisdom to discover our gifts (James 1:5).

In this current week we will see how the everlasting promise of God, the Holy Spirit, leads us to come to Jesus as our Redeemer and to receive the greatest power of His Spirit.

**The baptism of the Spirit is  
not a one-time event.**

# Beginning of a New Age

## LOGOS

Joel 2:28, 29; Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 3:21; 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1; 2

### Order to Begin

The disciples who returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives after the ascension of Jesus were a very different group from those dejected few who 40 days earlier had mourned the death of their Master, and their sorrow on that occasion was an expression of their unbelief. They could not grasp the truth that Jesus would rise again. Now that He has ascended they return to Jerusalem with gladness and triumph written all over their faces. It was the joy of fulfillment that filled their hearts—a sense of having arrived in order to begin.

In obedience to their Master's command, they waited for the promise—the outpouring of the Spirit, and they did not wait in idleness. The disciples humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief; they reproached themselves for their misapprehension of the Savior. Putting away all differences, all

**We do not again read of them hiding away for fear of men.**

desire for supremacy, they now came closer together in Christian fellowship. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised while they waited for the fulfillment of the promise from the time of the patriarchal

age. "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:1, 4, NKJV).

What an incredible joy to know that you, like the disciples, are standing on the threshold of a new age—the last age, the end of which will be marked by the return of the Lord.

### Men Made New

Before the Pentecost, "the import of the event is that life comes to the inert, power to the impotent, enthusiasm to the bewildered, boldness to the timid."<sup>1</sup> But now, the Pentecost—the beginning of a new age—made everything look different to the disciples, including themselves. They were new men.

"From cringing cowards to fearless preachers . . . we read of Christians making all sorts of mistakes afterwards, and they are far from being perfect. But we do not again read of them hiding away for fear of men. The Holy Spirit altered all."<sup>2</sup> At Pentecost Peter said to his hearers that the promise of the Spirit "is to you and to

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your children, and to all who are afar off' " (verse 39, NKJV). This statement was fulfilled by presenting the gospel as a Spirit-movement going from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria and to the Gentile world. "With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all" (4:33, NKJV).

Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. And God can work mightily through us when we give ourselves up to the control and power of His Spirit to finish His commandment (Matt. 28:19, 20).

## Power From Above

What did the disciples pray about during those few days? We are not told by the Bible writers, but it would seem that Luke, who elsewhere gave a prominent place to prayer, missed an opportunity here. Although they had been told to go into Jerusalem and there await the Gift from above, there is nothing in the record to suggest that those days constituted a prayer meeting for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Above all, it was a time for commitment. They resolved to dedicate themselves totally to the task of witnessing to the resurrection of the Lord. The effective availability of the power of the Spirit as "power from on high" (Luke 24:49, NKJV) is always tied to commitment. In praying for this power in one's personal life as well as in the church, one must guard against giving the impression that he is pleading with God for a power that God is reluctant to give.

But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the second coming of Christ. This outpouring of the Spirit is like the falling of the latter rain, and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petition to the Lord of the harvest during the latter rain. In response "the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain" (Zech. 10:1, KJV). "He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain" (Joel 2:23, KJV).

Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? Remember, the Lord is more willing to give the Holy Ghost to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.

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1. J. C. Haughey, *The Conspiracy of God: The Holy Spirit in Men*, p. 82.

2. L. Morris, *Spirit of the Living God* (London: IVP, 1974), p. 53.



# Holy Spirit Is Unlimited

## TESTIMONY

John 14:26

“When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.”<sup>1</sup>

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a coun-  
selor, sanctifier, guide, and witness.

**“If we have the spirit of  
Christ we shall work as He  
worked.”**

The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love.”<sup>2</sup>

“If we have the spirit of Christ we shall work as He worked; we shall catch the very ideas of the Man of Nazareth and present them to the people. If, in the place of formal professors and unconverted ministers, we were indeed followers of Christ we would present the truth with such meekness and fervor, and would so exemplify it in our lives, that the world would not be continually questioning whether we believe what we profess. The message borne in the love of Christ, with the worth of souls constantly before us, would win even from worldlings the decision: ‘They are like Jesus.’ ”<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

3. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 159, 160.



# The Amazing Gift

## EVIDENCE

John 14:16

*"I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:16, 17, NKJV).*

The Lord promised before He returned to heaven that He would give a Helper to remind us of all truth. The Bible tells some stories about the Holy Spirit's guidance.

We read about one of the greatest and most important events in salvation's history: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Holy Ghost came upon them as He had promised and they began speaking in other languages: "'We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God'" (Acts 2:11, NKJV). Note that the first thing they did with this gift was witness for their Lord.

The remarkable and phenomenal event came in fulfillment of what the Lord had promised before He returned to heaven: that these apostles and disciples would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5, NKJV). This event tells us that salvation was from the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had the same duties as God. We could not see the body of God, but we would perceive His presence by the Holy Spirit.

**The Holy Spirit was active  
with the Father and the Son  
in Creation, Incarnation,  
and Redemption.**

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Holy Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption. The Holy Spirit extends spiritual gifts to Christians, empowering them to bear witness of Christ and, in harmony with Scripture, to lead into all truth.

This was only the beginning of what the Holy Spirit would do, and is still doing, for the Lord's church.

As we will soon see, this great event didn't happen in a vacuum. It was the culmination of many other events, all centering on the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Among those events, too, was the Lord's preparation of His people in order that they be ready to receive this wonderful outpouring from heaven.

# Thermometer or Thermostat?

## HOW-TO

Acts 1:14

Charles Finney said that the measure of the success of ministry is the measure of the Holy Spirit in that ministry. "It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless. Learning, talent, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment may be possessed; but, without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them channels for the outflowing of the highest influence in the universe."<sup>1</sup>

When Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized, John the Baptist said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, NKJV). After He was baptized, the Spirit came down from heaven as a dove and remained on Him.

**The measure of the success  
of ministry is the measure  
of the Holy Spirit in that  
ministry.**

The promise to be filled with the Holy Spirit can occur only in those who are filled with the love of Jesus. For the promise to be fulfilled in our lives, we need two simple steps:

**1. Preparation.** "Praying with one heart. All differences should be put away, and unity and tender love

one for another pervade the whole."<sup>2</sup> Be humble, repent of sin, and let your soul be saved and be cleansed in Christ.

**2. Action.** Ask the Holy Spirit to give us the character of the Lamb of God. "Christians who manifest a spirit of unselfish love for one another are bearing a testimony for Christ which unbelievers can neither gainsay nor resist. . . . Nothing will so successfully defeat the devices of Satan and his emissaries, nothing will so build up the Redeemer's kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church."<sup>3</sup>

If the promise of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled in our lives, we are like a thermostat. We can give warmth to the hopeless and satisfaction to the hungry. We aren't a thermometer, which merely reflects the hot or cold of the environment.

Are you a thermometer or a thermostat?

1. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (2005 ed.), p. 76.

2. *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 246, 247.

3. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 167, 168.

# Did You See the Result?

## OPINION

John 4:35; Acts 2:47

During the year 2004 many evangelistic efforts were carried out in various places in Indonesia. One of the great examples of the Holy Spirit's leading occurred in Manado. Five hundred souls surrendered to Jesus as their personal Savior and were baptized in a campaign there with the theme "Love Knocks Over Manado."

When Christians receive the Holy Spirit, they will experience a change in themselves. They will become active for Christ. They will say, "God, at this time I am ready to become Your soldier and Your steward!"

Under the training of Christ, the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit's teaching they received the final qualifications and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of one accord, "of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32, NKJV). Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and people "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (verse 13, KJV).

**The disciples had been led  
to feel their need of the  
Spirit.**

"Pentecost brought them the heavenly illumination. The truths they could not understand while Christ was with them were now unfolded. With a faith and assurance that they had never before known, they accepted the teachings of the Sacred Word. No longer was it a matter of faith with them that Christ was the Son of God. They knew that, although clothed with humanity, He was indeed the Messiah, and they told their experience to the world with a confidence which carried with it the conviction that God was with them."\*

We cannot do anything without the grace of God. Though we are living in a time of great chaos, the Adventist people must be ever ready to serve our fellow human beings. The harvest has turned golden and the time is short.

\* *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 45, 46.



## **EXPLORATION**

Eph. 1:13–18

## **CONCLUDE**

The Holy Spirit prepares us for Jesus' soon return, and is vital in developing a relationship with the Lord, maintaining a ministry, and fulfilling our purpose in spreading the gospel while on earth. Obtaining Him requires yielding ourselves to God's desires, performing all duties with the mind of Christ. The Holy Spirit then serves as our motivation in witnessing, leading even the most stubborn heart to the truth. We must be actively involved in His service all our days. The more we seek the Holy Spirit, the more keenly we will feel God's presence around us.

## **CONSIDER**

- Listening to, or singing, Bryan Duncan's song "Come, Holy Spirit." Reflect on the lyrics of the song and learn how you can continue to strengthen your relationship with the Holy Spirit.
- Reading Ephesians 4:11–16 and identifying your own spiritual gifts. Ask the Holy Spirit through prayer how you can use those gifts to spread the gospel.
- Volunteering in a children's Sabbath School class, using any of your spiritual gifts.
- Viewing paintings with the themes of "Pentecost" or "Holy Spirit" at your local art gallery. Draw your own depiction of what either theme means to you, and refer to it each day during prayer as a reminder of your commitment to God's calling for your life.
- Ranking the spiritual gifts from Ephesians from the most to least common. Share this list with your church's prayer group, praying for the least common gifts to be manifest among the people in your church.
- Classifying your church's various ministries with the corresponding spiritual gifts needed for them to be successful. Identify in which areas you might be able to provide the most assistance.

## **CONNECT**

<<http://www.bibletools.org>> Forerunner Commentary and People's Commentary  
<[http://btww.net/ths/3hvern\\_er.shtml](http://btww.net/ths/3hvern_er.shtml)> "Who Is the Holy Spirit?"



# The Baptism of the Holy Spirit



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“Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18, NKJV).

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## INTRODUCTION

Isa. 57:15; Gal. 5:5

A young, single mother struggles to make ends meet, but finances are not her only worry. Her three-year-old son has never seen or known his father, who walked out before his birth. An educated, well-groomed man sees a need for this child to have a stable male figure in his life, and takes it upon himself to become a mentor to this little boy. Their frequent outings give the mother a short break. The man also supplies clothes and shoes for a growing boy, which helps defray some of the financial strain from the little boy's mother.

A man sits on the street wondering where his next meal will come from. As a young couple walks by, their heart goes out to him and they ask if they could take him out for lunch.

A woman rushes to leave the house on her way to work. As she reaches for the door knob, she is impressed to take a copy of *Steps to Christ* with her. She has read it at least four times. *Is the Lord trying to give me more insight?* she wonders—not knowing that she would later run into an individual searching for Christ.

**Their frequent outings give the mother a short break.**

A teenage boy has lost his mother in a car accident. He must now face the world alone, struggling to make it through high school, peer pressure, and the changes that come along with adolescence. He feels as if the weight of the world is on his shoulders. His aunt takes him in as one of her own, and she makes herself available for him to have someone to talk to. She teaches him that God is always available and that all he needs to do is go to Christ in prayer. His aunt's kind hospitality and involvement in his life has kept him from seeking comfort in drugs and alcohol.

In each of these cases, the Holy Spirit works on the hearts of men and women, inspiring them to give of themselves for others as witnesses for Him. How much more would we as children of God be effective witnesses for Christ if we allowed ourselves to be baptized with the Holy Spirit by giving our lives completely over to Him in faith and obedience?

# Rivers of Living Water

## EVIDENCE

John 7:37, 38

The Greek word for baptism is *baptisma* or *baptizo*, a derivative of the word *bapto*, which means “to whelm, to overwhelm, or to make fully wet.”<sup>1</sup> According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, the word “whelm” means to submerge, cover, or engulf.<sup>2</sup> Therefore to be baptized is to be submerged in something, or overwhelmed by something, such as water.

John baptized many people by submersion in the Jordan River. We read of Christ's baptism by John in Mark 1:9–11. But before Jesus came to the Jordan to be baptized, John referred to Him as the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:32–34).

This is evidence that there is more to repentance and acceptance of Christ in our hearts than being baptized by water. There is another baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which can be accomplished by Christ alone. We know this also by the words of Jesus Himself: “‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. . . . [And] out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’ ” (7:37, 38, NKJV). Verse 39 tells us that the “rivers of living water” of which Jesus speaks is none other than the Holy Spirit.

When we study the Bible, we often see a comparison between the Holy Spirit and water. We read words such as *wells*, *thirst*, *floods*, and *drink*. (See Isaiah 12:3; 44:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13.) The Lord says that He will “pour water” (Isa. 44:3, NKJV), or pour out His Spirit, on those who are thirsty, and they will “spring up . . . like willows” (verse 4, NKJV). Here again, we see how God uses the word *water* to refer to His Spirit. And just as water gives life or causes willows to grow, those whose hearts have been filled with, or who have received, or who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, will spring to life. This life—a Spirit-filled life—will bear much fruit (Gal. 5:22–25).

Baptism by water is the outward demonstration of what should be taking place in the heart, the outpouring of—or the baptism of—the Holy Spirit. Just as our physical bodies need water to survive, our spiritual natures need the Living Water, the Holy Spirit, present in our hearts continuously, so that our spirits will thrive and reflect the character of Christ in our daily living.

We often see a comparison  
between the Holy Spirit  
and water.

1. James Strong, *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996), p. 16.

2. *Webster's New World Dictionary: Third College Edition* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.), p. 1520.

Monday  
May 1

# The Holy Spirit: An Overview

## LOGOS

Acts 2:37, 38; 9:5, 6; 1 Cor. 12:1–13; 2 Cor. 7:9–11; Gal. 3:1–11; 5:5, 6

Invisible as wind, yet still detected by the results of its working, so is the Holy Spirit to us. Mentioned over one hundred times in the Old Testament and more than two hundred times in the New Testament, this Person and Power is still considered by many a mystery too deep to comprehend and too nebulous to experience. Yet, it is essential that we enter into an intimate relationship with Him.

### One-Third of the Godhead (1 Cor. 12:4–6; 2 Cor. 13:14)

The Holy Spirit shares equally in the name, power, planning, and purpose of God. He is referred to as a person, and the eternal God (Acts 5:3, 4; 13:2; Heb. 9:14). He was present at Creation, hovering over the water in the way a mother hen broods over her clutch of eggs (Gen. 1:2). Finally, the Holy Spirit is deeply involved in working out in us the salvation Christ purchased for us at Calvary. He is that remarkable Third Partner in the heavenly Trio.

**Talk about power!**

### Christ's Gift, the Comforter (John 21:22)

When Jesus left this world to return to His Father, His desire to be with each of us personally was hindered because He bears our humanity. To overcome this obstacle, He chose to send us His Representative—the Holy Spirit. Before His departure He told His disciples that the Holy Spirit was “another Comforter” (John 14:16, KJV). *Strong's Concordance* indicates that the word *another* means another presence or person of the same kind. He was just like Jesus!

Through the Holy Spirit, Christ maintains His connection with all who believe in Him. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are not abandoned orphans in our spiritual conflict (John 14:26; 16:7). He thus becomes a down payment, a guarantee (2 Cor. 1:22) that Christ intends to close the deal at the end of time, returning to be with us forever. Jesus promised the gift of all gifts, the most valuable blessing He could bestow, one that would “bring all other blessings in its train”—the Holy Spirit.

### Our Daily Helper (John 16:8)

The work of the Holy Spirit can be easily missed. We could easily mistake His gentle counsel, guidance, and direction for coincidence and self-talk. So stealthily does He work that often we take Him for granted, until some larger event triggers



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our awareness of something greater working for our good. Without the Holy Spirit, we could not repent, become converted, or desire holiness.

“The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering . . . on the cross of Calvary, to . . . the love of God, and to . . . the precious things of the Scriptures.”<sup>2</sup>

The self-effacing ministry of the Holy Spirit draws attention to Christ and glorifies Him (John 15:26; 16:13, 14). We must take time to unplug from the pace of life. When we take time to reflect on what we have studied or prayed about, it allows us to detect His leading.

## Special Power (Acts 1:8)

There are times and situations when we need more than quiet help. Emergencies arise, and in these crucial times the Holy Spirit responds in more manifest ways to assist us in personal growth and extending of God's kingdom.

Joseph's sterling character prepared him to stand before Pharaoh. As he told the Egyptian monarch the meaning of his dream, Pharaoh exclaimed that the Spirit of God was in him (Gen. 41:38). The same was said of Daniel (Dan. 5:11, 14). The Bible speaks of being filled, baptized, or anointed with the Holy Spirit when He accomplishes extraordinary things through ordinary people. We are instructed to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). It is only from this vantage that we can have power to subdue self and sin (Gal. 5:16, 17).

“God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and to purify our hearts.”<sup>3</sup>

Talk about power! It is available to everyone who trusts God and asks for it. However, the Holy Spirit not only works to bring victory in our struggles with temptations, He also empowers us to bear testimony of God's faithfulness to those who live around us. Twice in the book of Acts the Holy Spirit shook things up and supercharged God's people to meet the challenges confronting them, equipping them to boldly proclaim their life-changing message (Acts 2:2–6; 4:29–31).

In the future when events of history and prophecy converge, can there be any doubt that the Holy Spirit will be there for each of us to bring hope, assurance, help, and victory? “The stronger the conflict, however, the more strength will the Holy Spirit impart to us. We are not left to struggle alone against the mighty opposing forces of evil.”<sup>4</sup>

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1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 52

3. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 19.

4. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Aug. 1, 1907.

Tuesday  
May 2

## Empowered to Finish the Work

### TESTIMONY

Acts 2:37, 38

"Impress upon all the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the members of the church, so that they will be living, growing, fruit-bearing trees of the Lord's planting."<sup>1</sup>

"We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today. Moral darkness, like a funeral pall, covers the earth. . . . Without the Spirit and power of God it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth."<sup>2</sup>

In Acts 2:37, the word *pricked* comes from the Greek word *katanussomai*. It means " 'to pierce,' and metaphorically, 'to pain mentally.' Here is the deep inner sorrow that should accompany true repentance."<sup>3</sup> Repentance, or *metanoia* in the Greek "specifically denotes a change of mind, and implies that the change is for the better and produces good results."<sup>4</sup> "The apostle promises the presence of the Spirit of God as a personal possession for each believer."<sup>5</sup>

**"God has many thousands  
who have not bowed the  
knee to Baal."**

"God's work is to be carried forward with power. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that God will add to the ranks of His people men of ability and influence who are to act their part in warning the world. All in the

world are not lawless and sinful. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal."<sup>6</sup>

"The Spirit of the Almighty is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence become witnesses for God and His truth. . . . And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God."<sup>7</sup>

1. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 86.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 158.

3. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 147.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 883.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

6. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 110.

7. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 54.

# In the Presence of the Spirit

## HOW-TO

John 16:13

I used to think that the gift of the Holy Ghost was given only to certain people and that those people had a monopoly on His special gifts because they were closer to God—until one morning, while preparing for church, the strangest thing happened. I found myself in the presence of the Holy Spirit. It was around 7:30. Early morning power hour (prayer meeting) started at 8:00. I was in a hurry, but in my haste I decided to change purses. I hastily ran back upstairs and grabbed another purse. While transferring items from one purse to the other, I decided to leave most of the items I was carrying in the original purse, including my wallet. But something said to me, “Take your wallet.”

“I’m not taking that wallet,” I replied to whatever it was that had invaded my thoughts. The same something said again, “Take your wallet.” I turned around and rushed back into the room, opened the other purse, and got my wallet. Arguing with whoever it was that was interrupting my morning, I said, “I don’t know why you keep telling me to take this wallet, I am in a hurry.” I couldn’t figure out why I was taking the time to address an entity that I could not see, yet I was.

**“I’m not taking that wallet.”**

Finally, I got out of the house and into my car. While driving along the street toward church, I approached an intersection and proceeded to drive through it. Suddenly, I heard a loud crash. Another car had hit the rear end of my car. I continued through the light and pulled my car to a stop along the curb to assess the situation. After the police had arrived and pertinent information had been exchanged, I continued on to church. In prayer meeting, I gave my testimony of how the Lord had protected me that morning. I then realized it was the Holy Spirit who had been speaking to me before I left home. For in my wallet was my driver’s license, and I needed my license to present to the police at the scene of the accident.

## REACT

1. How do we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?
2. How does the Holy Spirit teach us today?

Thursday  
May 4

# The Ever-Present Spirit

## OPINION

Rom. 8:9

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface" (Gen. 1:1, 2, NLT). The Holy Spirit has been present from the very foundation of the earth. The Spirit has walked with God the Father and the Son through the ceaseless ages of eternity and has been ever present in the controversy between good and evil. The Holy Spirit is God's personal connection to humanity. He gives us the character of Christ, fills us with praise and adoration, and counsels us in all that is good.

Without the gift of the Holy Spirit, humankind would be unable to become fit for the kingdom of God. "You are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you" (Rom. 8:9, NLT). When you decide to follow Christ, it is the Holy Spirit that fills you and changes your character to be a reflection of the beautiful nature of Christ.

**We should be constantly praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

When the Spirit fills a Christian, he or she has a new outlook on life, and the true nature of humanity is more evident (1 Cor. 6:19). The blessings that God has bestowed upon His children become clearer

than ever before, and the Spirit-filled person is filled with praise. "Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery!" (Ps. 145:3, NLT).

As Christians we know that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and that it leads us into all good counsel. The Holy Spirit is its only interpreter. To unlock the secrets of God, we must have the guidance of the Spirit of God. "We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all" (1 Cor. 2:15, NLT).

We should be constantly praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit may impart wisdom and understanding. The Holy Spirit is as essential to our salvation as the Father or the Son. It is through the Spirit that we may obtain characters like that of Christ. He is the Author of all true praise, and the omniscient Counselor to all who would open their hearts to receive Him. "He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5, NLT).

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*Theodore C. Stewart Jr., Silver Spring, Maryland*



# What's in a Name?

## EXPLORATION

2 Cor. 3:17, 18

## CONCLUDE

Throughout the Bible, the Holy Spirit is referred to by many names and job descriptions. Each gives us clues to His identity. Of all these descriptions, perhaps the image that best describes Him is that of a mirror, perfectly reflecting God to us. He passes on encouragement, warnings, and clarification, teaching us the language of heaven in order to strengthen our relationship with God.

When we become filled with God's Spirit, we will, in turn, reflect God in this world (Phil. 2:15).

## CONSIDER

- Choosing someone whose life seems to reflect the Holy Spirit and considering what it is about this person that shows the presence of the Holy Spirit. Ask them how they developed this relationship.
- Using the art medium of your choice to create a representation symbolizing how you think of the Holy Spirit. On what relationship did you base this representation?
- Drinking a glass of water. As you do, think about this question: What would happen in your life if you let the Holy Spirit fill you with "living water" (John 7:38, 39)?
- Thinking about St. Patrick, who used the three-leaf clover to explain the Trinity. With your study class or a group of friends, go on a treasure hunt, looking for other visible symbols that reflect the unique position of God the Spirit to God the Father and Son. When reunited, share your finds.
- Making a list of the names for the Holy Spirit found in the Bible. How do these names reflect His identity?
- Setting up a mirror so that it reflects an image. How are the images alike? How are they different? What importance does the perfection of the mirror have in its ability to reflect a true image? What happens if you use a broken or tarnished mirror? How can our reflection tarnish the image of God that others see?
- Learning some names for the Holy Spirit in other languages.

## CONNECT

*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, chap. 8.

LeRoy Froom, *Coming of the Comforter*; Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, pp. 27–38.

# Gifts of the Holy Spirit



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**“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: . . . There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:1, 4, NKJV).**

# My Gifts to You

## INTRODUCTION

Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 4:14; James 1:17; 1 Pet. 4:10, 11

I love getting gifts, not really for any special occasion like Christmas or Easter, but “off season” gifts just to say I love you, I am thinking of you, I appreciate you. I know I may not deserve the gifts I get sometimes, but because of how forgiving, caring, or understanding the givers are, they still shower me with lots of gifts.

I reflect in awe when I think of all the gifts I have received and still continue to receive from my mother. Whatever I need and more—she gives. I know she gives because of her love—unconditional, unwavering, and unchanging.

I am amused when I remember that during high school my girlfriends and I would always look for special occasions like Valentine’s Day to see just what we would get from a secret or open admirer. Sometimes we would even give each other gifts secretly to ensure we never felt left out.

I even remember there were times my friends—after ending a relationship—would sometimes decide to return in anger all they had ever received from the person.

It is a blessing—it is awesome—that God’s gifts are not conditional or just for any special occasion, but simply because He loves us. Despite our shortfalls, our Father freely gives, freely bestows blessings on us.

He would never take back the gifts in anger.

Incredible: He knows just what gift to give to each person and in what proportion.

Each gift is given in a personalized package—just for you, just for me.

I get excited just thinking of all the gifts God has given to us through His Holy Spirit: prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, leadership, showing mercy, wisdom, knowledge, healing, contributing to the needs of others—the list is endless.

The gifts are so diverse, resulting in our need for each other. We are all important. Like the human body, which needs all its parts, we need each other with our unique gifts.

## PAUSE!

Reflect on the Giver

Reflect on the Gift

Reflect on His love for you.

You will get excited—guaranteed

You will start using it and appreciate it today.

You will start sharing it with someone.

Have you opened your gift yet?

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*Kirsha Campbell, St. Catherine, Jamaica*

# "Parts of One Stupendous Whole"

## LOGOS

Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:7–25; Eph. 4:11

Indian folklore tells of six blind men of Indostan who, through only the sense of touch, tried to determine what an elephant is like. The blind man who felt the elephant's side declared it to be like a wall. The one who touched its tusk likened it to a spear. The one who grabbed its trunk thought it like a large snake. And the comparisons continued: leg, tree; ear, fan; tail, rope. All six were partly correct in their assessment. Yet each needed the others' insights.

In 1 Corinthians 12 God likens the members of His church to parts of a body. Let's note just three great benefits from the God-ordained specialization of labor that we discover in the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.

**1. Efficiency.** During college I worked several summers on the projects of a builder/developer. He hired subcontractors for almost every task. We all had our specialty. And we became extremely adept at our particular role. It would never have been as efficient had each of the many teams worked independently and tried to do every aspect of the construction themselves.

God seems to believe that there's merit in specialization. When He calls someone to a task, and then equips for the task, He doesn't

expect any one person to have all the skills. But He does want our wholehearted participation.

In his translation of the New Testament, J. B. Phillips renders Romans 12:7, 8 this way: "If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching let us give all we have to our teaching; and if our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it."

**2. Every role vital.** In the church, the body of Christ, there's a lot to get done. We've been given the mammoth task of sharing with the whole world the good news of salvation through Christ (Matt. 28:19, 20). And it's not just a matter of telling about sins forgiven and salvation to come. It's also a matter of helping people experience in the here and now the abundant life that Jesus wants us to enjoy (John 10:10).

To achieve these goals, God has arranged that each of us should make a contribution. And no one should feel that his or her role is insignificant or unimportant.

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bution.



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Some roles are high-profile. Others are behind the scenes. But all are essential.

The apostle Paul describes it this way: "If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?" (1 Cor. 12:15–17, NKJV).

In short, it takes all components to get the job done. Alexander Pope described this thought beautifully in his "Essay on Man":

What if the foot ordain'd the dust to tread,  
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?  
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd  
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?  
Just as absurd for any part to claim  
To be another, in this gen'ral frame: . . .  
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul; . . .  
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;  
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

**3. A correct picture of God.** Jesus told His disciples that when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they would be His witnesses to every part of the world (Acts 1:8). Witnesses describe something. Jesus was a witness of what God was like. He not only talked about God, but He was a flesh-and-blood example of what God is. He wants us to be the same for Him.

And remember, even in the entity we call the Godhead, there is a division of labor and a uniqueness of role. God the Father doesn't do it all. God the Son doesn't do it all. God the Holy Spirit doesn't do it all.

So doesn't it make sense that as God's representatives on earth—as parts of the body of Christ—we would have to work in concert if the fullness of God's character is to shine forth to everyone?

## REACT

1. Are spiritual gifts supernaturally bestowed? Are they hereditary? Or could they be both? Explain your answer.
2. Is there anything we can do to develop spiritual gifts? Or should we leave it 100 percent to the Holy Spirit?
3. In the latter part of 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul seems to imply that we should be content with our role, reminding us that we're not all apostles or prophets or teachers. Then he says, "But eagerly desire the greater gifts" (verse 31, NIV). How can these two emphases be harmonized?

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\*Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man and Other Poems* (Dover Thrift Editions, 1994).

## To Truly Rest, Have Faith!

### TESTIMONY

Heb. 12:2

As young Christians we often lose faith in the church, in its leaders, and most of all in ourselves. We think in our hearts that we don't make a difference, that there is nothing we could possibly do to make a change. Often we allow ourselves to be overcome by the problems of daily living, and we begin to think that nobody cares, that no one understands our needs, and even that God does not understand. We begin to wonder if He really is looking out for us, or if He might not be playing some cosmic game with our lives.

Faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1, NKJV), is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and the only way we can claim this gift is to accept it, to believe it is our own. If I bought you the car you've always dreamed of and said, "Here, this is yours," you probably would not believe me. Possible reasons include the fact that you don't know me at all. Why should I be giving you a

**It may be that we don't  
know God well enough.**

car and such an expensive one at that? If you do decide to accept the gift, you may keep wondering in the back of your mind when I would show up and say, "OK, just kidding."

But this is where the crux of the problem lies. It may be that we don't know God well enough or we don't know Him at all. This is why we doubt Him when He says that He is working all things for our good. We fail to realize that God means what He says and we instead focus on our own limitations.

"Many who are sincerely seeking for holiness of heart and purity of life seem perplexed and discouraged. They are constantly looking to themselves, and lamenting their lack of faith; and because they have no faith, they feel that they cannot claim the blessing of God. These persons mistake feeling for faith. . . . They should turn the mind from self, to dwell upon the mercy and goodness of God and to recount His promises, and then simply believe that He will fulfill His word."\*

Focus on Jesus, daily read His words, and reaffirm His promises to us. Then and only then will we begin to experience true working faith. Then we will find rest and truly believe that everything will work for our good.

\**Messages to Young People*, p. 111.

# Go, I Tell You!

## EVIDENCE

Eccles. 11:9, 10; 12:1-7

We Christians have only one straightforward task to accomplish on earth: Matthew declares it; Mark emphasizes it; actually the entire New Testament emphatically resounds it: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20, NKJV).

As young people, particularly in Western civilization, the simplicity of the above text often eludes us, to the point that we commonly create complex arguments that are specifically, albeit unwittingly, engineered to excuse ourselves from executing our Christian duty. *The Pilgrim's Progress* has etched the universal phrase within my conscious vault that we must not only be hearers of the word but also doers. With the Holy Spirit as our Guide, why do we shrink from our supposed burden of responsibility in conveying truth to our fellow human beings?

Within a civilization where conscientiousness and dependability languish in lethargy, consider this: "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity" (Eccles. 11:9, 10, NKJV). Remarkable!

**Our Christian experience  
should be stronger, higher,  
and faster.**

Consequently, we have a clear knowledge and warning, where although we can do what we want, we will face a judgment. Thus it would be better to execute the required tasks now than to become even more delinquent within the chaotic distractions that detach us further from God, and which are surely dragging us toward the decadent swamp that has always been human civilization.

"Men who allow intellect to be enlightened by Divine foresight would accomplish superior distinction, based upon stronger powers and an unparalleled confidence; to tackle successfully life's numerous difficulties."\*

The memorable scriptural encouragement speaks thus: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them'" (Eccles. 12:1, NKJV).

Feeling guilty? Feeling inspired? Consider this: Our Christian experience should be stronger, higher, and faster.

\*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, sec. 13, Medical Studies.

## Earnestly Seek the Best Gifts

### HOW-TO

1 Cor. 12:31

Gifts are free—that's why they are gifts. Since they are free, we can hardly demand them from anyone. The only thing we can do is to accept the gifts humbly, without examining the quality and quantity of the gift.

Nevertheless, the Bible inspires us to ask for the best gifts—gifts that are not material in nature, but abstract in form, which are highly holy. Whoever possesses those gifts will have a transformed life and character, and an eternal influence on those around them—that is the power of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in today's lesson we shall see three ways to seek the best gifts from the Holy Spirit.

**1. Place the desire before God.** God knows every intent of our heart. It doesn't mean that we have to be silent before God. Instead, we have to earnestly and eagerly place the desire to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Once someone has a holy alliance with the Almighty, then that person needs an overhauling

through a new life experience. This is possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is manifest through the gifts. Once the petition is filed before the heavenly court in a proper manner, then our case will receive a fitting reply in due time.

God knows every intent of  
our heart.

**2. Give enough time for God.** The Bible clearly reminds us that "there is a time for everything" (Eccles. 3:1, NIV). Therefore, if our request is not granted immediately, we are not to wear a wry face. Instead, we have to be positive and know that God will do His will in the appointed time. When God grants our request according to His appointed time, then the gifts that we receive from Him will be more meaningful and powerful. So, give enough time for God and grab the best. Also remember that enough time for God can vary from a few seconds to several years.

**3. Get ready to receive the gift.** Usually gifts are received during occasions, and we are ready for occasions. Likewise, we also have to be always ready to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which we have asked for. Once we are spiritually ready, then God will fulfill the desire that you sought.

### REACT

In keeping the meaning of "gift" in mind, do you find anything wrong in asking God to give the gift of the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.



# My School, the Church

## OPINION

Isa. 40:31; Heb. 13:2

I was sure that I wasn't hearing correctly. The student had just sworn at the teacher! It was my first day at a pupil referral unit in the United Kingdom. In my 15 years of teaching, I had never experienced that before.

My ears rang for days after. I feared that I would go home one day and begin swearing (garbage in, garbage out!). Was this where God wanted me? How was I going to combat the inappropriate language and conversation the students participated in daily? What could I do? Why was I here? My heart ached with each lesson I wasn't able to teach because the students were resistant to any academic offering I had! I was a failure!

Then I remembered. It wasn't about me. It was about Christ *in* me and *through* me and *with* me. I asked the Giver of my gift of teaching, the Master Teacher Himself, to guide me into using this gift to reach His children who were now my responsibility.

**My ears rang for days after.**

I decided that since I wanted a win-win situation, I would pray for these students, individually and collectively. They were now my prayer project. On weekends I would pray *en masse* but during the week I would pray for them individually. Whenever a student entered my room, I would present him or her to the Lord and I would be better able to handle their mood swings, recalcitrant behavior, swearing, and general disaffection. I waited on the Lord so that I would be able to entertain these "angels" and be able to use my gift productively, if in an unorthodox way.

So although my job description as a teacher doesn't say chase kids into toilets while reading a story to them, I do and it becomes a game. And though it doesn't say play "Hide and Seek" I do—until the student gives up because he finds it amusing and then he comes to the lesson.

No, my gift is not being used in the usual way, but it is reaching students I previously did not know I could reach. Yes, my school is my church and I use my gift to edify the Lord, especially with kids who may not have any other contact with Christ except through me.

# Gifting Back Our Spiritual Gifts

## EXPLORATION

Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:7–10

## CONCLUDE

God promises extraordinary gifts to those who are willing to receive them. Have you ever prayed and asked for such a gift? Spreading the gospel to the entire world is the goal, and working together as one body is the way to achieve that goal. If you have all the power of heaven bestowed on you in the form of one of the spiritual gifts, what do you impart to those to whom you witness? It is the greatest gift of all salvation through knowing the Gift Giver, Jesus Christ.

## CONSIDER

- Making a list of all of the gifts and then adding to each which Bible character best exemplifies that gift.
- Charting the gifts, starting with the one most common in the church today and ending with the one least often seen.
- Identifying someone in your community who demonstrates one of the spiritual gifts and interviewing that person to learn more about their faith.
- Leading your church group in an exercise in which each member in turn considers one of the spiritual gifts and in three words or less describes its role in spreading the gospel.
- Using some or all of the gifts to write a poem or verse about spreading the gospel.
- Praying every day for a week that God will bless you with a spiritual gift, and then sharing your experience with someone close to you.
- Writing an essay giving the pros and cons as to why music and musicians are conspicuously absent from this list.

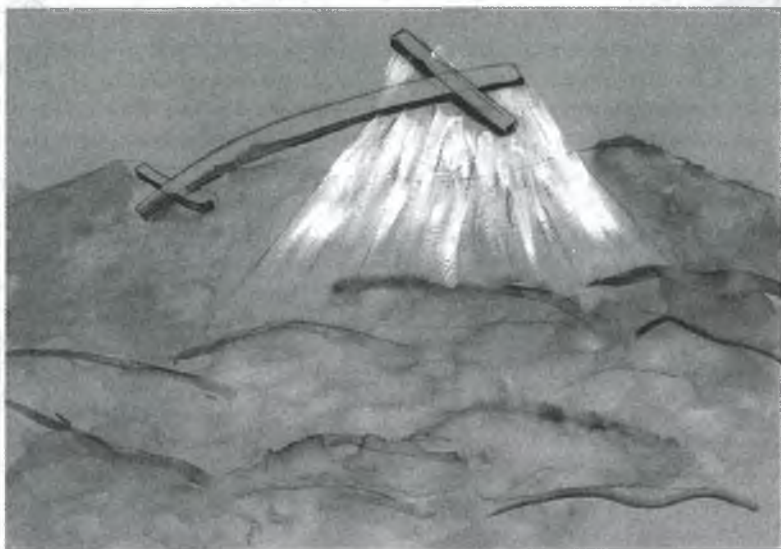
## CONNECT

Acts 2:1–12; 3:1–11; 4:31–37.

*The Acts of the Apostles*, chap. 5.

Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, chap. 9.

# The Fruit of the Holy Spirit



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**"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23, NKJV).**

## INTRODUCTION

Matt. 5:13–16; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16

The security guard led me through the gate and onto the turf of Dairy Farmers Stadium—home of the National Rugby League’s North Queensland Cowboys. I surveyed the stands encircling the playing field, feeling dwarfed in the center of the huge bowl. The manicured grass bounced beneath my feet and the light towers seemed to touch the night sky. I was there for a purpose and knew what I had to do. I felt a momentary thrill as I strode toward the center line.

There’s something about such a setting that stirs the blood a little—even though the stands were empty and darkened. In the middle of the gloomy stadium, a small group of people were working in preparation for an event a couple of days later.

They had phoned for a pizza—and I was the delivery driver.

**The people around you  
watch how you live.**

While they were pleased to see the arrival of their pizzas, it was probably not quite the same atmosphere as would have been created

by 30,000 screaming fans urging me on. But—in a way—we do live our everyday lives in front of an attentive audience. Peter urges us to “be careful how you live among your unbelieving neighbors” (1 Pet. 2:12, NLT). The idea is straightforward enough: If we live upright and godly lives, those around us will be influenced “when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ” (3:16, NLT). The final part of that verse is significant. We do not just decide to be a good example or witness; it happens “because you belong to Christ.” It is God working in us—that is what the fruit of the Spirit is about.

“This Little Light of Mine” has been sung so many times it has become a cliché, but it is actually something Jesus taught (Matt. 5:14–16). It’s about Jesus shining through us. He also said we were to be the salt of the earth (verse 13), gently influencing our communities and the many lives we come into contact with each day. The people around you watch how you live, how you react, how you believe, how you serve, and how you give. They want to know whether God makes any real difference in your life.

In this way, we are God’s representatives on earth. As C. S. Lewis put it, “A tree is known by its fruit; or, as we say, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. When we Christians behave badly, or fail to behave well, we are making Christianity unbelievable to the outside world.”\*

\*C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Glasgow: Fount Paperback, 1977), p. 173.



# A Fruitful Spirit

## EVIDENCE

John 14:15–31; Gal. 5:22, 23

The Holy Spirit: a power available, accessible, and promised by Jesus Christ in John 14:16, 17. “Christ Himself informed His followers that the Holy Spirit would act as His representative in continuing to communicate the divine message through His messengers. Jesus said that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, ‘will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.’ ‘He will guide you into all the truth’ (John 14:26; 16:13, NRSV).”

The key is that the Holy Spirit living in you produces fruit all can witness and experience—thus you become a living witness for Christ. Found in Galatians 5:22, 23, these fruits are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (NIV). This is an extensive list of the qualities of Christ. Why this order? There is a real development process seen in the order of these fruits, one building on the other to allow Jesus to shine through our lives.

The fruits are the product of having the love and peace of Jesus Christ in our lives. In *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby says to “focus your attention on hearing God’s call to an assignment, His invitation for you to join Him. When you adjust your life to Him and obey Him, the Holy Spirit will be at work in you enabling you to accomplish all that God desires.”<sup>2</sup>

**The fruits are the product  
of having the love and  
peace of Jesus Christ in our  
lives.**

The fruit changes us and creates in us a true witness! None is easy to develop on one’s own. Each points to Jesus and His ability to change us. Although it is hard to understand, the love chapter indicates that we will fully understand when the time is right: “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Cor. 13:12, NIV). By building the fruits in our lives, we allow Jesus’ character to shine through us. This experience, the personal and spiritual growth, demonstrates God’s love for us. “We know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love” (Rom. 5:5, NLT).

1. <<http://www.whiteestate.org/newwebsite/issues/how-god-speaks.asp>>

2. Henry Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 48.

# The Fruit of Love

## LOGOS

Isa. 53:3; John 3:16; 15:13; Rom. 5:5; 1 Corinthians 13; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 4:11–13;  
1 John 3:16; 4:8

### Which Path to Salvation? (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8)

Throughout the Bible, we are given laws and instructions on how to live our life in favor of the Lord: things to do, things not to do. However, verses like John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8 appear at surface level to make those rules optional. According to these verses we are saved by grace and through our belief and faith in our loving God—and that's it! No mention of any conditions or of having to do anything else after accepting the grace God gives us, having faith and believing in him. Could it be that we're saved and that's it? It sounds as if this path is much easier than the other option of trying to keep all those rules. But what if we are saved by grace and not works? At what point do we know we have enough faith to be considered saved?

**Surely we aren't expected to have to go to such an extent.**

### How to Know God (1 John 4:8)

To believe in God and have faith in what He is going to do for us, we really need to know God's character.

After all, if we didn't know Him, how can we trust Him wholeheartedly? According to 1 John 4:8, the only way to know God is to love. That doesn't seem too difficult. It's not as if we'll have to do anything too hard to fulfill this simple request. Love is such a nice fluffy thing, isn't it?

### Love, Love, Love (1 Corinthians 13)

Love does seem to have huge importance; it's recommended everywhere in the Bible. The Ten Commandments are meant to be all about love, and we were told in an earlier text that God is not only lovable, not only in love with us, but is by definition love itself! I've often heard 1 Corinthians 13 read at weddings, even at my own, but at a second look—in this lesson context—this passage is really talking about us having to love everyone, not just our partner!

If this passage were followed wholeheartedly and without fail in a marriage situation, what a perfect, harmonious, joyful thing marriage would be. But even with the loves of our lives, this stuff is sometimes hard! Patience? No records of wrongs? Never failing? How then can we be expected to submit ourselves to such a perfect life of love for everyone else when it's so difficult to keep it going in our families?

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Surely we aren't expected to have to go to such an extent and immerse every single thing we think and do as an act of love? How far do we have to go to know God, to fulfill our faith and salvation?

### **Dying for Love (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16)**

We may have reached our practical limit in John 15:13. Yes, this sounds like a pretty costly kind of love, but not many of us lay down our lives even for our loved ones. But is this passage really talking about our voluntary surrender of our heartbeats and breathing? You know, come to think of it, in this context it may be talking about our lives that consist of work, rest, and play. When we are to show true love by being prepared to sacrifice our own work aspirations, our times of deserved rest, or our opportunities for recreation in our lives, love is not sounding as attractive anymore. The death of "our lives" for our brothers, in the name of love, and living in love for others by donating our time to them and their needs, surely this must be the fullest extent of our love to others. How much more can we give than laying down our life's agenda?

### **Suffering for Love (Isa. 53:3)**

Surely we can't be expected to suffer, like Jesus, for our love. How can we reply to others with actions of love as they despise us, reject us, subject us to suffering, and ignore our genuine efforts of love with a slap in the face?

How can it be possible to love truly those who despise you, reject you, and make you suffer? That's just not human!

### **Content With Love (Phil. 4:11–13)**

With God's strength we can live a life of love for others, though at the expense of giving up our own time and comforts and possibly subjecting ourselves to persecution. We can learn to live in love for others even though it appears to defy normal human desires. How can God give us this strength? How does He share His love through us to make us capable of such things?

### **Love Delivered (Rom. 5:5)**

The Holy Spirit does it—the same Holy Spirit that has led you to read this lesson and led me to write the words on this page. With the Holy Spirit's presence in us, we shall be able to love anyone. And with that love will come "joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23, NKJV).

If we accept God's gift of salvation and come to know God through loving others, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is love, will be seen in us.

# Producing All the Fruit

## TESTIMONY

John 15:5

"No one can truly confess Christ unless the mind and spirit of Christ are in him. . . . We must understand what it is to confess Christ and wherein we deny Him. . . . The fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life are a confession of Him. If we have forsaken all for Christ, our lives will be humble, our conversation heavenly, our conduct blameless. The powerful, purifying influence of truth in the soul, and the character of Christ exemplified in the life, are a confession of Him."<sup>1</sup>

"The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone, is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit.' "<sup>2</sup>

"Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs, or for the rose bush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart."<sup>3</sup>

**"The truly righteous man . . .  
is unconscious of his  
goodness and piety."**

"The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. . . . It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."<sup>4</sup>

"The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches. 'He that abideth in Me,' said Jesus, 'and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.' When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing."<sup>5</sup>

1. *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 277.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

3. *Living by Principle*, p. 12.

4. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1112.

5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.



# The Importance of Staying Connected

Wednesday  
May 17

## HOW-TO

John 15:5; Rom. 8:11

In talking to His disciples, Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NKJV).

What does a branch have to *do* to bear fruit? The simple answer is nothing—except stay connected. Consider a branch on an orange tree. The branch produces oranges simply because of what it is and because of that life-giving connection it has. The branch does not “work” to earn the fruit. On a healthy tree, the same connection that keeps the branch alive naturally results in a crop of juicy oranges. The oranges do not happen immediately, but the life that will lead to fruit is present and working in the branch for as long as that connection is maintained. To bear fruit, we must keep the following in mind:

**1. We must maintain the connection with Christ.** If we are connected to God through daily communion with Him, we will bear fruit in our lives.

**2. Fruit is the natural result of the Spirit living and working in us.** It is not up to us to be constantly monitoring how fruitful we are. Our focus should be on the Giver of that fruit, not on ourselves.

The Holy Spirit is the source of *spiritual* fruit.

**3. Just as God disciplines those He loves, a branch cannot escape the pruning process.** This is our contribution to fruitfulness: a daily surrender to His will, allowing the pruning, being obedient to the Holy Spirit's convictions, and growing into the vine He planned us to be.

**4. A branch cannot boast that the fruit is a result of its hard work; instead it must give the credit to the Holy Spirit.** Romans 8:11 says: “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (NKJV). How can a branch produce fruit if the source of life is not nourishing and growing it? How can it be fruitful on its own if fruit comes directly from the vine?

The Holy Spirit is the source of *spiritual* fruit. A life devoted to God, immersed in prayer and faithful studying of the Word *will* produce fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23).

# The Spirit in Tasmania

## OPINION

Gal 5:22, 23

*The Spirit of Tasmania* is a ferry connecting Tasmania with the mainland of Australia. The following three conversations took place on the ship. They reveal something intriguing—the Holy Spirit is busy interacting with people in the world.

**Robert.** I sat next to a window studying my Bible while waiting for breakfast. A gentleman approached me. "Pardon me, is that the Word?" This started a few hours of conversation. After breakfast Robert said, "I have a couple spiritual questions. Could I speak with you privately?"

His second question excited me: "How can you be sure that the Sabbath is still valid today? Can you prove it?"

I explained that the Sabbath was a promise. I challenged him, "Rob, we don't prove promises—we test them. I invite you to keep the Sabbath for six months and see if God blesses you." Robert's eyes lit up and he said, "My wife and I have been keeping the Sabbath for some time now, and God *is* blessing us!"

**"I guess we all believe in  
God in our own way."**

**John.** On the return trip I sat reading my Bible in the morning sun when John, my bunkmate, sat down across from me and we began sharing our life stories. After about three hours, John asked, "Does it anger

you to talk to someone like me who doesn't believe there is a God and it is your job to make me believe?"

I laughed and said, "Not at all, John. I'm honored that we've shared our stories. Life is a journey. Every relationship is another stepping stone in that journey. All you have said to me is now part of me and I will go away and think about it."

John nodded and replied, "Yes, true. And I will go away and think about all you have said."

**The Australian Outlaw.** The Tasmanian chapter of the Australian Outlaws was on the ship. I approached one of them on the top deck. After chatting for a while, I asked him what the various patches on his vest represented. The main patch was their creed: "No law, no politics, and no religion." I asked, "So what would happen if you found God?" He smiled and pointed to another patch that said, "God forgives, Outlaws don't."

I said, "You'd be kicked out?"

"Nah." He shrugged, "I guess we all believe in God in our own way. But I have to be honest with you—I don't. I used to think maybe there was a God until my 13-year-old niece got cancer and died. If there is a God, why did he let my niece die?"

# Stemming From the Vine

## EXPLORATION

Gal. 5:22, 23

## CONCLUDE

The fruits of the Spirit are tangible evidence of God working in us—the divine message communicated through His messengers. Without the mind and Spirit of Christ in us, we cannot truly be working for Him. God's strength empowers our lives of love for others, although at the expense of our own time and comforts. This process occurs as we stay connected to God, as a branch bears fruit when it remains attached to the tree. But unlike the tree, the immaterial nature of the Holy Spirit frees Him to work unfettered by our physicality.

## CONSIDER

- Putting the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22, 23 in a spreadsheet column with "love" at the bottom and "self-control" at the top. Analyze why they may be listed in this particular order. Record your reasoning in an adjacent column. Study the order of the list and see if you would arrange the items differently. Do these fruits appear simultaneously, or does each build on the one below it in the column?
- Comparing the words for the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23 in several Bible translations and paraphrases. Look up the meaning of the words from their original language. Write your version of the list using your own words or descriptive phrases.
- Taking a fruit that has a skin or peel. Remove it, and cut up the rest into pieces. Enjoy the taste of the fruit as you make it a part of your body. Ponder the Communion emblems as we "take, eat, and drink ye all of it."
- Setting aside some time to connect deeply with someone you know. Make it a time for inviting them to share about themselves—how they are feeling. Should they ask you to share about yourself, do so briefly, but return the focus to the other as soon as you can.
- Exploring in your journal what connectedness with a vine or tree trunk means. Examine how you can experience the same sort of intimate relationship with God in your life.
- Researching the process of grafting. Is it possible for you to see examples of grafted branches near where you live?

## CONNECT

Psalms 1:3; Isaiah 58:6–14; Hosea 10:12; Luke 8:15.

Bruce H. Wilkinson, *Secrets of the Vine: Breaking Through to Abundance*.

Gill Bahnsen, Auburn, Washington

# The Christian's guide



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“ ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come’ ” (John 16:13, NKJV).



# The Holy Spirit, a Comforter for Everyone

Sabbath  
May 20

## INTRODUCTION

John 14:26

Not so long ago in Thailand, newborn babies were called “ugly” or “terrible” or “rotten.” This was to confuse the spirits. If the parents called their baby by another name or by a bad name, the spirits wouldn’t know which baby was being talked about. Many people joke today about the reason that all Thais have nicknames. It’s not because Thai names are long or unpronounceable for Westerners; it is to confuse the spirits.

It’s tempting to say that the spirits are rather dull here in Thailand, but for the Thais, who fiercely believe in the spirits and their power, it is no joke. Thais fear the spirits. Every Thai house or place of business has a “spirit house,” a place specifically designed for the spirits to live in. This is, of course, so the spirits won’t bother the people who live in the house, the same people who confuse them by using names they don’t understand.

For Thais the spirits are tormentors. For Christians the Holy Spirit is a comforter and a guide.

Numerous times Jesus promised His disciples that they would not be alone when He returned to heaven. He promised a comforter, a counselor, a teacher, and a guide. The Holy Spirit is all this and more.

**For Thais the spirits are  
tormentors.**

He will open our eyes and our ears as we study the Bible. “What knowledge can result from adapting the meaning of the Scriptures to suit one’s own likes? The true sage discovers, through Spirit’s wisdom, the hidden mysteries to which the Scriptures bear witness,” Peter of Damaskos wrote in *The Philokalia* in the twelfth century. As we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit will guide us through. He will guide us to the truth as we read. He will intercede on our behalf as we pray. And when the words fail us in our human limitations, He will intercede on our behalf.

But not just when we read the Bible will the Holy Spirit guide us. As we perform the most mundane to the most monumental tasks, the Spirit will be there to guide us. Christ never said the Holy Spirit will be with us only a short time. But He will be with us forever (John 14:16).

In Thailand the spirits are considered always to be there, but the difference for Christians is that the Holy Spirit is ever beside us, guiding us, comforting us, nudging us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, the only One who can save us and give us eternal life.

# A Guide for the Journey

## LOGOS

Luke 2:25–30; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12–14; Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 12:10

### Our Need for a Guide

One popular activity for visitors to Thailand is trekking, where one ventures into and explores the jungle by elephant, raft, foot, or some other means of transportation. As rewarding as some find trekking to be, however, few people would dare enter the jungle without a local to guide them. The danger of getting lost, getting bitten by a poisonous snake, or wandering too close to militants along the border with Myanmar is just too high to face alone. In the same way, Christians need a guide in our spiritual life, someone who knows the territory intimately and who has our best interests in mind. This is what we find in the Holy Spirit.

### A Guide Into Truth (John 15:26; 16:12–14)

**Once we begin to rely on the Holy Spirit for holy living, the Christian life will become a joy.**

One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into a knowledge of God and His plan for salvation. Since the Holy Spirit is sent to us by Christ from the Father (John 15:26), we can rely on the knowledge that He leads us to Christ—the Holy Spirit will never lead us astray. It is as

Christ said: the Holy Spirit “‘will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you’” (John 16:13, 14, NKJV). Since we know that the Holy Spirit speaks only as guided by Christ and the Father, and since “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16, NKJV), we can test that guidance which we feel is by the Spirit by holding it to Scripture.

This is not to say, however, that all that comes from the Holy Spirit must already be stated in the Bible. As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we believe that while God’s truth remains always the same, He may help us to understand that truth better as time progresses. This is what Adventists call “progressive truth,” and the Holy Spirit is sent to us from the Father to help guide us as we journey further into this progressive truth. As we learn more about what God has to teach us, we can be assured that while the Holy Spirit may reveal things that are not explicitly stated in the Bible, He will never try to convict us of something that contradicts the Bible or its principles.

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## **A Guide to Both the Father and the Son (John 15:26)**

The Holy Spirit will also guide us to a deeper knowledge of the Father and the Son. After the Holy Spirit convicts us of our need to know God by revealing to us the hopelessness of our situation without Him (John 16:8), He guides us to the Father through Christ and brings us into a more intimate relationship with Him, all the while revealing to us more of Christ's character (John 15:26). And who better to do this than the Holy Spirit, who works intimately with the Father and the Son and "searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10, NKJV). The Holy Spirit, who knows our hearts better than we do, and who is one with God, works to bring us ever closer together, with greater effectiveness than we could ever achieve on our own (Rom. 8:26).

## **A Guide in Holy Living (Rom. 8:11; Gal. 5:16)**

Once the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and leads us to a saving relationship with Christ, we can be sure that we are saved. Even Christians, however, will find a daily Christlike life to be elusive if we do not rely on the Holy Spirit to enable Christ to live His own holy life through us (Rom. 8:11; Col. 1:27). Unlike what one may be tempted to believe, living a Christian life does not automatically become easier once we are saved. In fact, Satan oftentimes increases his attacks upon us, trying to make us stumble and become discouraged. This is why we need the Holy Spirit, to strengthen us and enable us not to live by our own strength, which will always end up failing us, but instead to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16, NKJV). It is through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that we are able to live not according to our old ways, but according to the ways that Christ has for us and will accomplish through us. Once we begin to rely on the Holy Spirit for holy living, the Christian life will become a joy, not just something that frustrates us as we realize our inability to live up to what we should. Through the Holy Spirit, we can finally live our lives with a feeling of liberation instead of drudgery.

## **REACT**

1. Do I listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance from day to day?
2. Am I still open to the Holy Spirit guiding me into progressive truth today?
3. Why do you suppose obedience is necessary when asking for the Holy Spirit?



# Holy Spirit: The Faithful Guide

## TESTIMONY

Gen. 41:38–40; Exod. 33:12–14; 2 Sam. 23:2–4; Ps. 25:4, 5; Dan. 1:9; Acts 4:8–11; Rom. 15:13

**David (Ps. 25:4, 5).** It is evident in these verses that King David is expressing a desire to be guided into the truth. David is also urging God to teach him His ways since he trusts God in whom he sees hope. Such a desire to be guided by the Spirit is also expressed by many other characters in the Bible.

**Joseph (Gen. 41:38–40).** So Pharaoh asked them, “‘Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?’” (verse 38, NKJV). Here is evidence that God’s Spirit guided Joseph into making known the king’s dream. The prompting of the Spirit kept Joseph away from the allurements of Mrs. Potiphar.

**Moses (Exod. 33:12–14).** The Lord replied, “‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest’” (verse 14, NKJV). Have you ever wondered why Moses is considered the greatest prophet of God?

**Samuel (2 Sam. 23:2–4).** “‘The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue’” (verse 2, NKJV). The life of Samuel is a monumental testimony of how young children are also guided by the Spirit. Here we see a result of a Spirit-filled life.

**Daniel (Dan. 1:9).** Since King Nebuchadnezzar is pleased with Daniel’s wisdom, he calls Daniel,

Beltshazzar, the name of the King’s personal god. Through the guidance of the Spirit, Daniel continued to represent God’s mission to three earthly rulers.

**Peter (Acts 4:8–11).** “Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole’” (verses 8–10, NKJV). Peter’s testimony helped to lay the foundation for the many churches he planted through the guidance of the Spirit.

The list of other individuals such as Paul, Timothy, and Barnabas—who were led by the Holy Spirit—is endless. Now the question remains: Are we willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit?

**Are we willing to be guided  
by the Holy Spirit?**



# Pride Goeth Before Salvation

## EVIDENCE

Rom. 8:1–4

The Holy Spirit is my ever-present Counselor, but like all counselors, He doesn't make the ultimate decisions. He is only there to guide and help me as I accept salvation every day. But why do I need the Holy Spirit's help? Two reasons: because I don't think I need God, or because I don't feel that I deserve salvation.

The problem in both cases is pride. Pride is what keeps me from making the decision, either because I feel self-sufficient or because I feel unworthy. On one extreme, since the Bible teaches the difference between good and evil, the main difficulty is to accept that I need the Holy Spirit at all. My pride tells me that I know what I should do, and I don't need to listen to anybody. I can do this "being good" thing by myself. The minute I concentrate on doing the right thing, however, the devil has me. Splash! I'm floundering in deep water and I realize I can't swim!

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit, instead of leaving me to drown, points me to the Lifeguard. But do I accept His help? I don't want or need help. My pride won't let me admit defeat. "I'll do better the next time," I say. Or, I think that I should help God. "Let me try to swim," I gasp. "I can't let Him do all the work!"

**The Holy Spirit counsels me  
that I have value.**

The Holy Spirit reminds me of my imperfections and inabilities. I need to stop trying to swim and relax. We need to "change from being confident about our own efforts . . . despair of doing anything for ourselves, and leave it to God."\* On the other extreme, if I start comparing myself to others, then my pride turns into low self-esteem. It's still pride, but with a different face.

I look at the other people around me. "Why is it so easy for them? I must be really bad if I can't even do one thing right! I'm so horrible! I'm a little slimy thing crawling on the floor; how can I ever be good enough?" I forget about the verse "no condemnation"—I am my own worst critic!

The Holy Spirit counsels me that I have value because God made me in His image. My value does not derive from what I have or do; it's what He was willing to pay for me. The way to be "good enough" is to let Him claim the prize He died for, to let Him set me free from self-condemnation and pride.

The Holy Spirit is the One who keeps me from straying too far in either direction—who gives me the strength to accept salvation every day.

\*C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Pub., 1980), p. 130.

# How to Ask for the Spirit

## HOW-TO

Luke 11:15–23; John 14:15, 16, 26; 16:6–14; Acts 1:8–14

Jesus told His believers He would not leave them as orphans, but that when He left, the Spirit would come to take His place (John 14:26). The disciples did not want Jesus to leave, but Jesus insisted it was for the best. He told them He had to leave in order for the Spirit to come, and that when the Spirit came, the Spirit would guide them into even greater truth (16:6–13).

Yet, after Jesus was crucified, the disciples went back to doing what they had always done. They went fishing (21:1–3). It wasn't until after Jesus reappeared to them after His resurrection, and finally, when He ascended to heaven before their very eyes (Acts 1:8–11) that what Jesus had been saying really sank home.

For the first time, they realized they had a mission. This time, they did not go back to fishing. They went back and prayed (verses 13, 14).

Just as the disciples did, and even our early Adventist pioneers, we too can call upon the Holy Spirit in prayer.

**For the first time, they realized they had a mission.**

**1. Ask in boldness.** In Luke 11:5–13 Jesus tells a story of a man coming to his friend's door in the middle of the night for bread. "I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his

friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. . . . how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (verses 8, 13, NIV). Ask for the Holy Spirit as though you were at someone's door in the middle of the night in need of bread, and see if God answers your prayer.

**2. Gather with fellow believers to pray.** Acts 2 says that on the Day of Pentecost, all the Lord's followers were in one place.

**3. Obey God.** Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" (John 14:15, 16, NIV).

**4. Expect great things.** When the disciples returned to the upper room to pray, they did not go there with doubtful hearts. They went with full confidence in their mission, knowing Jesus' words would come true. On the Day of Pentecost, the Lord added 3,000 to their number.

# The Christian's Guide: "The Voice Within"

Thursday  
May 25

## OPINION

Gal. 5:22, 23

No, I am not belting out the famous song of Christina Aguilera. Neither am I talking about the conscience that can drive a guilty person to the edge of madness. I'm hinting about our sole passport to heaven, what else but the Holy Spirit?

Imagine the world without the Holy Ghost. Everybody would be free to drink and to party all night. Nobody would keep us in line. Nothing would remind us of the consequences of our wrong doings. We'd be free to do whatever we want in this worldly world. But here's a mind opener: Without the Spirit that bugs us to go back to the Lord, nothing would lead us back to the right path of righteousness. Without that Guide through this world, everybody might as well prepare for destruction.

The Lord sent the Holy Spirit to watch over His children. He is not only here to "annoy" us to do the Lord's calling, He is also here to guide, to keep us safe, and to give us strength whenever our knees would buckle at the sight of temptation. See how great the Lord is? He knows how tempting temptation is, so He gave us a mighty and powerful shield: the Spirit.

**The Lord sent the Holy Spirit to watch over His children.**

One time during our Sabbath School class, the teacher touched upon the topic of ancient men, that period of time when people believed in truth and in honor. How do you think those primitive peoples had ideas for witchdoctors, shamans, and leaders of their tribes? How did they think of worshipping a god? Clearly something powerful is "whispering" to them so they would know there is a God.

Galatians 5:22, 23 states that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (NIV). Why is this important to our lives? Because if we live with the Spirit, we are assured of that heavenly kingdom. The Spirit guides us and leads us in the right paths. It whispers sweet thoughts of reminders like "quit smoking or you'll get addicted" or something that all of us have experienced: "Listen to your parents."

So the next time that little voice inside us says something like "Be honest," let's listen to it. There are always hidden significances in the Spirit's words. Maybe it is time for us to listen hard and deep to understand what it means.

## EXPLORATION

Gen. 41:38–40; Ps. 25:4, 5; Daniel 2; 4; 5

## CONCLUDE

Though the Holy Spirit was always present and working in the world, Jesus' explanations illuminated our understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in our lives. The Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus' words and facilitates our understanding of the truth. He convicts us of sin and draws us to God's offering of mercy. His power enables us to do God's bidding and brings us into unity with each other and with Christ. He helps us pray and gives us the words to speak at the proper time. He is our ever-present link to Christ.

## CONSIDER

- Drawing a cartoon strip of one day in your life describing the Holy Spirit's interactions with you from the time you wake up until you go to sleep—or even while you are sleeping.
- Comparing the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart with the biological processes of germinating and sustaining growth in a seed. What similarities do you find?
- Reading Psalm 25:4, 5 from a variety of Bible versions. Write your favorite version of the verse on a card and keep it in a handy place where you will see it often. Memorize it.
- Comparing the qualities of Joseph and Daniel, both of whom were recognized by heathen rulers to have the Spirit of God. (See Genesis 41:38–40; Daniel 2; 4; 5.) What qualities of leadership did these two men display as a result?
- Writing a letter to yourself, as if it were authored by the Holy Spirit. What have you heard Him tell you lately?
- Meditating in nature. The out-of-doors is a good place to learn from God's second book. Spend at least an hour in one place in a natural setting, listening to what God's Spirit has to tell you from creation.
- Finding the music and words to "Spirit of the Living God." Sing this song as a prelude to your personal devotions each day. (For both words and music, see <<http://fellowshipinhislove.com/index28.html>>.)

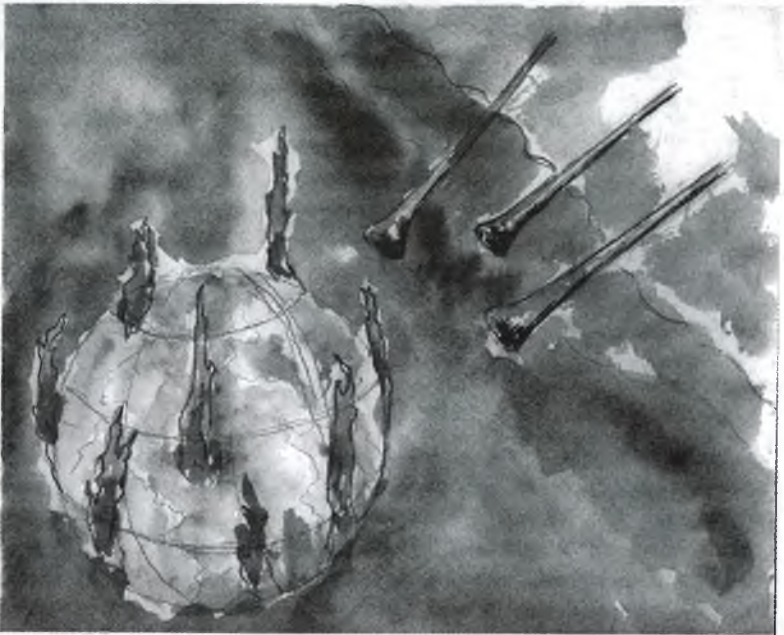
## CONNECT

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 172, 173, 176, 189, 302, 341, 355, 671, 672; *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 56, 70, 96, 149, 385, 408, 411, 415, 419.

L. E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, pp. 24, 30, 59, 66, 69.



# Life through the Holy Spirit



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“ ‘It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.  
The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life’ ”  
(John 6:63, NKJV).

# Holy Spirit: Agent 001

## INTRODUCTION

Gal. 5:16–25; Eph. 1:6

We can live for days without food or water, even years with no proper clothes or decent shelter, but not more than 10 minutes without air. Air is very important in that its mere absence means death not only to human beings like us but even to the tiniest creature that exists in our planet. We greatly depend on it for survival.

The same is true in our Christian life. The Holy Spirit is essential in our lives, for He plays a vital role in the salvation of humanity. He is God's direct hand here on earth after He ascended to heaven. Without His aid, we would all be doomed for eternal dissolution.

Truly, living a Christian life nowadays is getting tougher and tougher. It is because Satan's forces are working day and night to divert our interest away from God. It could be TV programs, Internet, or anything that holds us until we are too tired to communicate with our Savior. And as we drift away from God, the devil will

have full control of us and we will be unable to do anything about it unless the Spirit of God who is in us would work in our defense.

**As humans we are unable to resist the devil's wiles.**

*The Desire of Ages* says that "the power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submis-

sion of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer."<sup>\*</sup>

As humans we are unable to resist the devil's wiles. We have no power to do it on our own. God our Creator knows that. So He gave us His Spirit as His own agent who will help us overcome temptations that we will encounter in this life. He is the "air" in our Christian life that will sustain us till it is time for us to meet our Lord.

Neither God nor His Spirit, however, would force Himself on us. No matter how good His intentions are, He will leave us the option on whether we would like to work with Him or not. Without our support in His effort, He could not do much for us. The decision is ours to make. Let's decide wisely.

<sup>\*</sup>p. 671.

# The Holy Spirit Today

## EVIDENCE

Gen. 1:2

God is always God, even without humankind. But humanity without God in his life is nothing—lifeless. We were created by Him (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), and yet we are still given continuous life through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was present in the Creation story where He moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2). He acted as the Third Person in the Godhead. He was present at the descent of a dove when Jesus submitted to the basis of human submission to God: the baptism (Matt. 3:16).

When Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles, He stood and said, “if anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37–39).

Jesus assured His followers that when He went back to heaven, He would leave them a Comforter. The omnipresence of the Holy Spirit expresses His ministry to all humanity. He has the ability and power to save humankind only if they are willing to respond to Him in full surrender of their lives. He is so mighty and so great that no one can fathom it, and His goodness and mercy are working in the hearts of humanity, even today.

The Holy Spirit serves as our conscience that knocks every time we do wrong or are tempted to do wrong. He is the little voice that tells us what to do when we decide on something. Sometimes we do not realize how important the role of our conscience is. It is co-terminus with our life-giving breath. Job exemplified the idea that as long as He had life within him, the breath of God was in his nostrils (Job 27:3).

Many are approached by the Holy Spirit and feel guilty later because they hardened their hearts and ignored that voice. If we are willing to be empowered by the Holy Spirit today, we will have the power to resist evil and the right attitude in this troubled world even though it seems unfair. Through the Holy Spirit, life will be filled with the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Therefore, let us live and walk with the Spirit because heaven is waiting to receive us to dwell with God forever.

**The Spirit was present in  
the Creation story.**

## Get One Free, Take All

### LOGOS

John 3:3–6, 15–17; Rom. 8:6–11; Gal. 5:16–25; Eph. 1:6, 7; Col. 2:6

### Being Born Again

During Jesus' time, the prominent elite of religious society were the Pharisees. They were a group of leaders who were usually referred to as the "hypocrites," for they had this holier-than-thou attitude. But one man stood out among them, and that was Nicodemus. He was also a member of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin. Even though he was a learned teacher himself, he approached Jesus in the night to know more about Him personally and to learn from Him.

Nicodemus possessed an inquisitive and a teachable spirit. Jesus told him, "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3, NIV). Responding to the statement literally, Nicodemus initially thought that common sense would dictate that "he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" (verse 4, NIV). Being born by the water and the spirit, however, signifies the process of spiritual renewal through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and the outward manifestation of cleansing by water.

**Where can you find a  
better offer?**

### Toward Transformation

Everything was perfect until sin came into the world—which caused humanity's spiritual death and physical decline. God's immense and incomparable love for humankind prompted Him to send His Son into the world to pay the ultimate price: giving His life for us in exchange for our freedom from sin. After Christ ascended to heaven to intercede for us, He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

"The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail."\* The Third Person of the Godhead causes our spiritual transformation when we believe and accept Christ alone as our personal Savior. Christ is within us when the Holy Spirit lives in us.

### Faith in Action

A life controlled by the Holy Spirit is highly evident in a person's demeanor in contrast to the life controlled by the sinful nature. You can clearly see the difference. If a person's heart and mind follow the instructions of the Spirit, his thoughts would be seen in his words and actions reflecting the character of Christ. Life and peace have been promised in heeding God's law. Sadly, a life manipulated by sin brings



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death as a result of disobedience. The sinful self-gratifying desires are overcome through our daily renewal of commitment to God.

## **Fruit-Bearing**

All of our actions—whether good or bad, deliberate or unintentional—have their consequences. When the sinful nature prevails, the outcome ranges through very evident acts such as sexual immorality, idolatry, and witchcraft. The less obvious ones that probably we may not be keenly aware of are hatred, discord, selfishness, and jealousy. On the contrary, life guided by the Spirit brings forth the nine fruits: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23, NKJV). The Bible admonishes us that every step we take should be in consonance with the prodding of the Holy Spirit.

## **Deeper and Higher Growth**

As we receive Jesus into our lives, Paul encourages us to remain steadfast in faith. He compared our faith to a plant that should take root firmly on the ground so that it would not be easily swayed and uprooted by the wind. Its life comes from the nourishment of the soil just as our faith is strengthened by our daily communication and experiences with the Lord.

Little by little we grow like a seed growing into a full-grown plant. We should be in constant guard against Satan’s temptations. The great deceiver is as eager as the Holy Spirit to win people to his side, realizing that his time is running short.

## **The Best Offer**

God could have opted that our salvation must be earned before we can obtain it. The good news is that it’s given to us free! We should be very thankful that the price of salvation was freely bestowed upon us even if we really do not deserve it. No amount of human effort can merit one’s redemption because it comes from God’s graciousness and love for us. To top it all, Jesus’ offer is eternal life! It is not just the ordinary offer you see in your favorite stores: “buy one, get one free.” If you believe and accept Christ, you get it all. But if you choose not to believe and accept the Son of God, you lose everything. Where can you find a better offer?

## **REACT**

1. What would happen if God offered salvation to us for a price?
2. How can we discern that the Holy Spirit is leading us?
3. What if Jesus had not sent the Holy Spirit when He went back to heaven?
4. Is it possible to be born by the Spirit without being born by water?

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*\*The Desire of Ages, p. 671.*

# Let the Spirit Work in You

## TESTIMONY

2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 2:6

"It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil and to impress His own character on His church."<sup>1</sup>

"Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."<sup>2</sup>

"The heart must be converted and sanctified else we have no connection with Christ. While our hearts are divided, we shall never, never be fitted for usefulness in this life or for the future life."<sup>3</sup>

**"The heart must be  
converted and sanctified  
else we have no  
connection with Christ."**

"When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of

heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God."<sup>4</sup>

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, "I am Christ's; I have given myself to Him," and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing in Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Col. 2:6, NKJV).

1. *My Life Today*, p. 46.

2. *Messages to Young People*, p. 99.

3. *This Day With God*, p. 48.

4. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

# Unworthy but Useful

## HOW-TO

1 Cor. 1:27–29

"If we had a just appreciation of the importance and greatness of our work, and could see ourselves as we are at this time, we should be filled with wonder that God could use us, unworthy as we are, in the work of bringing souls into the truth. There are many things that we ought to be able to understand, that we do not comprehend because we are so far behind our privileges.

"Christ said to His disciples, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now' (John 16:12). This is our condition. Would they not have been able to understand what He had to say to them, if they had been doers of His word?"<sup>1</sup>

**Examine the truth point by point.** Although we could not understand, He told us that He would send the Comforter, who would lead us into all truth. We should be in a position that we can comprehend the teaching, leading, and working of the Spirit of Christ. We must not measure God or His truth by our finite understanding, or by our preconceived opinions.

**Examine yourselves.** There are many who do not realize where they are standing for they are spiritually blinded. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Cor. 13:5, NKJV).

**Work upon your hearts.** Through the energies of the Holy Spirit, we will be stimulated to exercise the talents God has given us; every man, woman, and youth shall employ them to set forth the truth for this time.

"Those who profess to be united to Christ should be laborers together with God. The people of God are to warn the world, and to prepare a people to stand in the day of wrath when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven. The members of the church of Christ should gather up the divine rays of light from Jesus, and reflect them to others, leaving a bright track heavenward in the world."<sup>2</sup>

**"The members of the church of Christ should gather up the divine rays of light from Jesus, and reflect them to others."**

1. *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 170.

2. *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 8, 1889.

## OPINION

Acts 1:8; Eph. 6:10–18

If you are going to choose between your lust (ambition, riches, principalities, power, and flesh) and faith in God, what are you going to choose? Easy to say: faith in God, of course! But then, most of the time it is difficult to “walk the talk.” In our Christian life, problems, conflicts, and weaknesses arise and we cannot control them. They are part of our struggle.

I came from a converted Seventh-day Adventist family and it has not always been easy to stand firm on my faith and my belief in God. There are times when I struggle with my thoughts, having difficulty in deciding for myself and weighing whether things are really what God wants me to do. I do fail—often.

It is not a guarantee that if you are a born a Seventh-day Adventist, you are stronger in faith compared to others. You may not be exempt from pain when you have God in your life. It is also no guarantee that if you're a newly baptized Seventh-day Adventist, a Christian life is not necessarily an easy-go-lucky lifestyle. We are in the last days, and living at this time is real pressure for each of us. We all have to be serious!

**There are times when I struggle with my thoughts.**

Our lives should be fully committed and dedicated to God. We should be doing our very best to be a victor

by His grace. But why are there a lot of situations in which our own leaders fail to be righteous in God's sight? Though negative things happen around us that disappoint us, pull us down to sin, and make us lose our hope, there is only one thing that we have to do: connect to God through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives strength:

**1. to follow (Acts 1:8).** The Christian life may be hard to live, but the Spirit gives us strength as we pray.

**2. to fight (Eph. 6:10–18).** The Christian life is a battleground. With the help of the Spirit and with the God-given tools, we can succeed in our Christian life.

**3. to fellowship.** The Holy Spirit gives us strength to attend the house of God. Though we may often be disappointed in how other Christians live their lives, it is important to attend church because the Holy Spirit is always in us to quicken and to strengthen us. Though we may never see it, He is making a way to change us into His likeness.

From a human standpoint, the fight may be too difficult for us to overcome, but with the Holy Spirit working for our salvation, we can hope that the reward of heaven that is immeasurable in glory will be within our reach.



# Life in the Spirit

## EXPLORATION

John 6:63

## CONCLUDE

Our natural spirit leads to death, but the Spirit brings life. We are broken, worn, and ravaged, but the Holy Spirit offers redemption. We can do nothing on our own, but the Holy Spirit strengthens, guides, and works through us. We are spiritually dry and impatient for temporal satisfaction, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The Holy Spirit transforms our lives, for "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17, NKJV).

## CONSIDER

- Doing a word study of "Spirit" in the Bible. How does the "Spirit of God" work throughout Scripture? Are the Spirit's actions always easy to understand?
- Creating, decorating, and sending a greeting card of gratitude to a friend who exemplifies the fruit of the Spirit.
- Composing an instrumental song portraying the Spirit's work.
- Looking for evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of those who may irritate you.
- Comparing the Holy Spirit's ministry to the soul-destroying efforts of the devil.
- Reflecting on where you'd be without the Holy Spirit's work in your life.
- Sketching your reflections on the Holy Spirit's presence at Pentecost.

## CONNECT

*Steps to Christ*, chap. 11; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 73.

Jon Paulien, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier*, John, chap. 13.

# The Restorer



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**“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6, NKJV).**

# The Holy Spirit and Basketball

## INTRODUCTION

1 Cor. 12:4, 5

"Deny ball, Blue, deny the ball!" yelled my coach from the sidelines. The point guard managed to free himself from me for a split second, and received the inbound pass. Still having him deep in the backcourt, I quickly closed off any space that he had created. Feeling trapped, the point guard brought his elbows up in an effort to create space. In doing so, his left elbow connected squarely with my jaw.

No whistle.

As my jaw burned with pain, I forgot everything my coaches had taught me over the years about the fundamentals of defense. My opponent made a move, and I responded with a hard foul across the arm. The whistle blew, and I was charged with a foul. "Watch it, 22," the referee warned me.

The substitution buzzer sounded immediately and I was sent to the sidelines. "What are you doing?" my coach yelled at me.

"That guy threw that elbow on purpose," I griped. At that point, I should have realized the foolishness of my thinking. Whether my opponent had meant to hurt me or not was irrelevant—his actions did not give me the right to try to hurt him.

**The substitution buzzer  
sounded immediately.**

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Cor. 13:4, 5, NIV). If I had remembered this verse during my basketball game, would I have reacted like this? Probably not. As Christians, we are asked by God to treat people with love, even when we are treated with hate. It is hard to remember this, however, when we are faced with situations like mine.

Looking back, two things would have helped me to respond in the way that God has asked:

1. Consider the witnessing possibilities. If my goal was to see my opponent in heaven, how should I have treated him?
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts and actions. If God was in control of my life at that point, how would I have responded?

In the Holy Spirit we have an ally that Satan can never stand up to. As we study the Scriptures this week, we'll look at how God's Holy Spirit plays a part in our lives.

# Handwriting on Our Hearts

## LOGOS

Genesis 1; Jer. 17:9; John 15:13; Rom. 1:21; 5:10–19; 1 Cor. 13:4–7; 2 Pet. 1:2–9

### A Perfect World (Genesis 1)

Genesis tells us very little about what this world was like before we fell, save that it was orderly—light emerging from darkness, sky emerging from sea, day emerging from night. In the next chapter are lands of gold and gems among vast rivers; the woman is drawn from the side of her husband, the two of them to be lords of the earth. In the Creator's words, it was "very good." Such a world is incomprehensible.

**We can no more live godly  
lives than a sailboat can  
push itself through the  
water.**

However strange, this is the world we're returning to, the earth made new, where children play with wild animals. As the Holy Spirit was intimately involved with Creation (Gen. 1:2), so must He play a similar role in

the restoration. We still know little, but it will be very good—two words that when spoken of such a home cause a wistful grief to well up inside us. We're not anywhere very good yet.

### Imperfect People (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 1:21)

You know the story: Our first parents ate the fruit and corrupted us all. Not only did death accept their invitation, he brought total corruption and decay with him. If we believe Jeremiah, the ancient command to "know thyself" becomes an impossibility; no wonder we look in our mirrors every morning to see strangers staring back at us. The Paul Coleman Trio ask the right question when they sing, "They say just follow your heart—but what if it lies?" The heart is faithless; in Romans Paul writes that even those who know God choose not to believe.

### Restoration Beginning With Reconciliation (Rom. 5:10–19)

If we are born incapable of belief, God Himself has to make faith possible again. In Romans 5:10–19 we find that Christ's death reconciles us to God even when we are His enemies. As he explains, Paul becomes so excited he can hardly contain himself: Adam's one sin brought death to everyone; Jesus' death was a much big-



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ger event, with greater consequences for us all. At the Cross, God gave us both justification and righteousness.

Often we think of righteousness as our response to justification, but the two words are so closely related in Greek they are virtually inseparable. How do we experience it? What does it mean to say that God has given me righteousness/justification?

Hebrews 10:14 describes the same event with different words: "By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (NIV). As He gazes on us, God sees the perfection of His Son; we look at ourselves and see something far different. Are we, or God, seeing the truth? The answer is obvious. Though we are already perfect in His reality, we do not experience that reality from day to day. As believers, our hearts are now good (see Jeremiah 31:33), but not yet our lives.

## **The Battle (John 15:13; 1 Cor. 13:4–7; 2 Pet. 1:3–8)**

Peter gives us a laundry list of spiritual chores in 2 Peter 1:5–8. Be good; learn more; control yourself—commands exhausting just to look at, especially after years of trying—and failing—to be virtuous. This is all difficult enough, much less learning to love truly as in 1 Corinthians 13.

But starting there is missing the most important part. Peter himself began in verse 3 by declaring, "His divine power has given us all we need for life and godliness through the intimate knowledge of the One who called us to His very own glory and virtue."<sup>2</sup> We can no more live godly lives than a sailboat can push itself through the water. Just as it depends on the wind, we depend on the Holy Spirit to move us forward.

As any passionately married couple will agree, "intimate knowledge" takes time. Intimacy with the Holy Spirit is no different; you must have time alone with Him, whether that's with a Bible and a candle at six in the morning or praying while you jog to work.

And over time, if we look, we find that we are adding knowledge to our goodness, and self-control to our knowledge; we find that we are becoming patient, and kind, and protecting—maybe not all the time, but more than before. We may even be able to give up all for our friends, or as Christ did, for our enemies.

When we find ourselves in a habitual sin that won't quit, we're immediately tempted to begin striving again. But the Spirit of Jesus brings us back, reminds us we are already ultimately perfect, and uses our times of intimacy to strengthen us.

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1. Paul Coleman Trio, "Run," *New Map of the World*.

2. My own translation.

# Preparing for the “Big Day”

## TESTIMONY

Acts 1:8

I recently got married, and as I approached the Big Day I noticed my character began to change. Instead of thinking only about myself and my needs, I was thinking more and more about my wife and her wants and desires. One day my fiancée asked me about a certain girl that had passed by us as we were walking on the street. I had honestly not even noticed. I was thinking about seeing my wife in her beautiful wedding gown. I was imagining what we would look like in 20 years, what our children would look like. I also found myself telling everyone I ran into that I was getting married, whether they asked or not. It was such good news I had to share it with the world.

All of us in this world are approaching the Big Day of all Big Days—the day when Christ will return and our time in eternity with Him will begin. As we approach the wedding supper of the Lamb, we should be noticing changes taking place in

**All of us in this world are  
approaching the Big Day.**

our lives. These changes are not easy, though, considering the sinful nature of man, but praise the Lord, He sent us a Helper. This Helper is the Holy Spirit.

Just as my character began to change as I approached marriage, so does the Holy Spirit help bring about a permanent change in us as we approach the wedding supper of the Lamb, “As in humility they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine.”<sup>1</sup>

Our focus will no longer be on the things of the world. “The Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness.”<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the Holy Spirit will give us not only the desire but the ability as well to share the good news of Christ’s soon coming with everyone we come into contact. “No truth is more clearly taught in the Bible than that God by His Holy Spirit especially directs His servants on earth in the great movements for the carrying forward of the work of salvation. Men are instruments in the hand of God, employed by Him to accomplish His purposes of grace and mercy.”<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 53.

3. *The Great Controversy*, p. 343.

# The Caterpillar Restored

## EVIDENCE

John 14:16; Rev. 21:2, 3

Humans restore many things: we fix up old cars, old houses, and even old bones. The most we can ever do is get things back to the original state. God's restorative power is so much more wonderful. One example is the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

A caterpillar has a small life. Its main job is to eat. One individual caterpillar can spend its life on a single tree or shrub. Life is about feeding an unquenchable appetite and in the process it can strip the plant of all the leaves and kill the plant. Caterpillars cause crop failures for farmers as well as hardships for the other animals that depend on that plant for food and shelter.

There is hope for the caterpillar, and that hope is in the form of re-creation. In the cocoon, the insect's body is digested and made new into a butterfly.

A butterfly has a large life. Some species can travel for thousands of miles. After the transformation, they spend their days tasting sweet nectar and pollinating the flowers. These winged creatures possess unspeakable beauty.

Just like the caterpillar, we come into this world incredibly selfish and sinful. If this behavior doesn't change, we end up making the lives of those around us miserable and end our days unhappy.

However, there is hope for us if we claim the saving blood of the Lamb, because Jesus promised us the Comforter (John 14:16). He can take our feeble, selfish lives and transform them into something lovely that is a blessing to ourselves and all those we come in contact with.

With restoration God's way, both caterpillars and humans receive something better than our original state. He isn't just going to put us back in the Garden of Eden; God is coming to live *with* us forever! "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God' " (Rev. 21:2, 3, NKJV). Amazing love, amazing grace!

**Both caterpillars and  
humans receive something  
better than our original  
state.**

# How to Find Restoration

## HOW-TO

Genesis 1; Jer. 17:9; John 15:13; Rom. 5:10–19; Titus 1:15

For the reader of Romans who takes Paul's words seriously, here is a serious dilemma. Though we recognize that we were created in God's image, we also believe that as a result of sin that image has been distorted. The condition that we find ourselves in has weakened both our physical frames and our spiritual being. But Scripture gives believers evidence that restoration is not only possible but guaranteed for those who know where to find it. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**1. Restoration is a complex issue (Jer. 17:9).** As tainted beings, we are not equipped to repair ourselves. We play an integral part in the process, but an honest search for restoration means acknowledging One who knows our hearts better than we do. And because we believe the Holy Spirit to be active in the process of conviction, the importance of believers' ability to recognize the Spirit's work becomes clear.

**The condition that we find ourselves in has weakened both our physical frames and our spiritual being.**

**2. By beholding, we become changed (Titus 1:15).** Athletes who aspire to greatness don't spend their time thinking about failure. Similarly, Christians who are looking for restoration can't afford to fill their time with damaging thoughts. This might include the entertainment

believers choose. It also has some interesting implications for the kinds of conversation in which we take part.

**3. Christ has already done the work (John 15:13; Rom. 5:10–19).** If we believe that Jesus has already wiped out our sin, why do we spend so much time trying to be good? Some Christians spend so much time trying to do the right thing that they forget to listen for the right voice. The challenge for some is that in their desire to "get it right" they never allow themselves to rest in the grace of the One who has already made the necessary arrangements.

## REACT

1. In what areas have you met the most difficulty in finding restoration?
2. What suggestions would you have for those seeking restoration?



# Restoring Ourselves to Death

Thursday  
June 8

## OPINION

Rom. 5:10–19

We take ourselves very seriously sometimes. As a human race, we take pride in the things we have developed, the systems we have devised, and the programs we have created. It should come as no surprise then that many believers do the same thing when it comes to their spiritual walk. We develop prayer formulas and schedules. We incorporate communion regularly into our worship services. We say, do, and eat the right things at the right times. Yet, somehow, we do not manage to feel any better in the process.

I am certainly no exception. I attend regular worship services, study, and read the occasional inspirational book. My formal education has been almost exclusively at Christian institutions. I consider myself to pray at least as much as the next guy. In fact, on a regular basis, I lead out in worship services. So why do I feel so often as if I don't have it together spiritually?

The answer, of course, is that I spend so much time trying to restore myself that I forget what Paul wrote to the Romans.

Apparently, I am not alone in the

misconception that I am capable of filling some sort of quota to balance the works-grace scale. Paul reminds his readers that sin is not a condition like hunger, which is simply satisfied by eating more. If that were the case, some of us would have no problem finding spiritual wholeness. We could simply join a church and make ourselves as busy as possible, throwing ourselves into small groups, prayer meeting, and service projects.

Within the last six months, I took up running on a more regular basis. Never a real running enthusiast, I decided the best way to get into the sport would be to run every day as much as possible. But several days into my regimen, I realized that in order really to enjoy the benefits of my running, I would need to rest from time to time. The same is true of our spiritual exercise, particularly for those who believe that real restoration is the result of God's work and not our own. In much the same way that taking a break from running gave my muscles time to heal and grow, spending time resting in God's work will energize and prepare us to do the work he has called us to with a greater sense of zeal and purpose than we might have known otherwise.

**Somehow, we do not manage to feel any better in the process.**

# New Life: Pick Up Yours Today

## EXPLORATION

Ps. 51:7–13

## CONCLUDE

You buy an old, dusty violin at an auction. Excited, you rush it to a violin shop. The restoration process begins. The wood is cleaned, the strings are replaced, the bridge is repaired. The shop calls: your violin can be picked up. You dash to the shop. And there you find a beginner's quality violin. Your instrument has been restored to what it was created to be. No restoration in the world can turn it into a Stradivarius. What God offers us is so much better. He offers complete restoration, total re-creation. A whole new you. Infinitely better than before.

## CONSIDER

- Looking through magazines that focus on celebrities. Pick a celebrity who is often in the news. Using what you know about this celebrity, or what you read in the magazines you've looked through, make a list of ten values you think this celebrity holds. Acting as the celebrity's "campaign manager," use these values to create a "campaign platform" for him or her. Decide what would qualify your celebrity for a position in government. Then compare his or her values with the Christian values outlined in Matthew 5:1–12: the values that someone who has been "restored" by Christ would demonstrate.
- Making a list of things at which you excel. In a second column, make a list of things you can't do well. In a third list, titled "With God's Help, I Can . . ." list things you can do with God's assistance.
- Reading *The Doug Batchelor Story: From Caveman to Christian* by Marilyn Tooker and Douglas Batchelor.
- Going to a public place, like a mall, and interviewing ten people. Ask them how a Christian behaves. See if the popular conception of a Christian matches the biblical description of Christians.
- Singing or playing "They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love."
- Acting out how a person would change after turning his or her life over to Christ. Videotape the performance.

## CONNECT

Matthew 5:1–12; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Charles Stanley, *The Wonderful Spirit-Filled Life*; Marilyn Tooker and Douglas Batchelor, *The Doug Batchelor Story: From Caveman to Christian*.

# The Sin against the Holy Spirit



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“ ‘Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation’ ”  
(Mark 3:28, 29, NKJV).



# Shutting Out All the Warnings

## INTRODUCTION

Mark 3:28

Crash! Thunder broke the peaceful silence of the cloudy afternoon. Jack was spending his day off from work in the yard outside his secluded countryside home. But now dark stormy clouds rolled in and he was forced indoors. When he entered his home, the weather radio was sounding off. Annoyed with the inclement weather, he walked over and unplugged the radio. Hoping to relax, he plopped down on the couch and turned on the television. Channel 3 showed a radar with swarming clouds. Frustrated, he firmly tapped the remote to flip through the channels. Nonetheless, some sort of weather-related report interrupted all normal programming. One station advised all residents of the area to seek shelter in a basement or a secure place. Jack did not have a basement and was not about to go all the way over to the neighbor's for shelter.

"What a bad day."

In one last attempt to enjoy his day off, he popped in his favorite movie. Minutes

into the movie, the phone began to ring. Determined to enjoy what he was doing, he paused the movie, calmly walked over to the phone, and pulled the plug from the phone jack. With a deep sigh, he sat back

**The huge funnel filled the  
dark green sky.**

down, pressed play, and continued his movie. The wind pounded the window with debris. Jack simply blocked out all the noise by turning up the volume on the movie. Abruptly, the television, stereo, and lights shut off, leaving Jack in darkness.

Deciding to see for himself what the big deal was, he stepped out his front door. There, angling down from the sky, swirled an enormous, angry-looking tornado. Screaming like a train, the huge funnel filled the dark green sky and headed directly toward his house. His time was up. He had nowhere to go.

The Holy Spirit reaches out to us every moment of every day. Speaking through others, working miracles, and even talking directly to us are just a few of the many ways the Holy Spirit attempts to contact God's children. Many people ask if God can forgive all sins. How can anyone possibly do something that God cannot forgive? The unpardonable sin is created by us. A time comes when the Holy Spirit has to give us what we have chosen—to be left alone. The Holy Spirit can do in us only what we allow. The unpardonable sin is the continuous act of rejecting the Holy Spirit so that God cannot reach us and we will not be saved. The unpardonable sin is a choice. This week, our lesson study will focus on this topic.



# Sawing Off the Branch on Which You Are Sitting

Sunday  
June 11

## EVIDENCE

Mark 3:28, 29

In many translations Mark 3:28, 29 is a difficult text to read. Despite our belief in a kind and merciful God who is always willing to forgive, this text seems to describe a sin that will not be forgiven. Something isn't making sense.

Understanding the setting might help us. The Pharisees are accusing Jesus of being of the devil because He cast out devils. Mark points out that the devil cannot cast himself out—that would be foolish. The devil doesn't work against himself. But even more importantly, Mark points out that the Pharisees are involved in something extremely dangerous: they are calling the work of the Holy Spirit the work of the devil. They are rejecting the work God is trying to do in their lives as coming from Satan—something this text calls unforgivable. If we repeatedly push away the Holy Spirit, we push away the one who forgives us. When we push the Holy Spirit away, we are distancing ourselves from the one element that can draw us closer

to God, Jesus, and salvation. It is the Holy Spirit who points out our need for forgiveness, and without Him, we cannot even know we need Christ. Rejecting His work as being from Satan makes as much sense as sawing off the limb we are sitting on. You and I need the vital life support of the Holy Spirit to experience forgiveness and to grow as Christians.

**Eventually He will respect  
our decision.**

Though initially scaring us, this text actually reveals something awesome about our God. He respects our freedom of choice. If we repeatedly push Him away, eventually He will respect our decision. This isn't something that happens without our knowing what we are doing. In fact, the whole point is our choice in the matter. Our loving God allows us to choose not to serve Him, even though He knows it will mean our eternal ruin. Not only do we have a choice; we will know when the limb is starting to dip and then break under our weight. We will know when we are continually refusing to listen to the Holy Spirit. God is promising in this text that He will not force us to choose life. It's our decision!

It is also amazing that this text begins with the phrase "nothing done or said that can't be forgiven" (*The Message*). It is a huge promise that is the emphasis of this passage. Mark is stating the obvious: God wants to forgive every sin. But, He will not force us to choose life. Though He will not force any of us to come to Him, with open arms and limitless forgiveness, He will accept all who will. The choice is ours.

Monday  
June 12

## Falling Into a Pit or Mucking in Mire?

### LOGOS

Matt. 12:22–32; Mark 3:22–30; 10:45; Luke 18:10–14; John 3:14–16; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 2:9

"I am a lost man! I would like to come back, but it is too late. I am a lost man!" D. M. Canright, an early Adventist leader who turned and worked against the church throughout the last 30 years of his life, sobbed out these words to an Adventist friend. Esau, that surly hunter of Genesis, having spurned his birthright "found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears" (Heb. 12:17, NKJV). Judas, the betrayer, in despair took his own life. These men apparently died with unpardoned sin.

They did not want to be lost, but they could not accept the Holy Spirit's invitation to receive the forgiveness of God.

Without using the actual term *unpardonable sin*, Scripture indicates clearly that there is such a sin. Careful Bible study, however, reveals that such a sin consists not of one grossly wicked act—a brutal murder, a heinous act of betrayal, or disgraceful adulterous relationship—rather it is a process—a long process. This becomes clear as we study the background of Jesus' own statement that " 'the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven' " (Matt. 12:31, NIV).

**The very fact that we seek forgiveness assures us that it is available to us.**

Jesus had just performed the glorious miracle of healing the blind and dumb man by the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 28). The crowd was excited. "All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' " (verse 23, NIV). But the Pharisees spat out the demeaning judgment: " 'It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons' " (verse 24, NIV). This was no first-time rejection of the work of the Spirit of God.

It was "a process that had begun with the birth of Jesus but which became more intense as His ministry progressed." They refused to visit Bethlehem to look for the Messiah. They refused the message of John the Baptist, confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, that the Lamb of God had arrived. They dogged Jesus' steps daily—accusing and badgering. They refused to accept His miracles as divine acts. And in the Matthew story, when Jesus healed the blind and dumb man, they boldly attributed His work to the devil rather than to the Spirit of God. Jesus gave the stern warning of where this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was leading, but sadly they continued in this path until finally they made the decision to kill God, and caused their nation to be rejected as God's chosen people.

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It is the continual rejection of the voice of the Holy Spirit that gradually hardens the heart and deafens the ear. Continual sunshine on stubborn clay makes it harder and harder. Consistently turning off your alarm clock without the appropriate response of swinging your legs over the edge of the bed will soon result in deafness to that penetrating call. Obstinate maintenance of a stand against the call of God's Spirit will finally result in destroying the sensitivity to that call, and will destroy the faith mechanism by which the sinner latches on to the promise of the forgiveness that comes with repentance. Paul refers to it as having their conscience "seared" (1 Tim. 4:2, NIV) as a result of following "deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (verse 1, NIV). It "consists of progressive resistance to truth that culminates in a final and irrevocable decision against it."<sup>2</sup>

Even in the terrible reality of unforgiven sin we recognize God's gracious gift of free choice to every individual. God honors a sinner's decision to choose a destiny without Him and grants the sinner's desire to be free from the Spirit's entreaties. So while the saints of God by their acceptance of the guidance of the Holy Spirit are "sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30, NIV), the continuously rebellious sinner has bartered away the "measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3, NIV) given to everyone, so that while he may yet understand his lost position he is too dead in spirit to act on that knowledge and gains for himself only "a certain fearful expectation of judgment" (Heb. 10:27, NKJV).

Need we live in fear of crossing this dark line? No, Jesus is not reluctant to forgive our sins. He gave His life up freely just so that He could forgive our sins. Read John 3:14–16, 1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Timothy 1:15. Though at times we may feel chief of sinners, Jesus has promised that whosoever believes in Him will have eternal life. Return for a moment to the illustration of the Pharisees. At what point was their sin unpardonable? We, of course, cannot tell. But we know that Saul of Tarsus—from among the strictest sect of Pharisees (Acts 26:5) and persecutor of the followers of Jesus—when the light shone through to his mind, became a forgiven man and one of the greatest warriors for God this world has ever known.

We are not to worry or fret over our salvation. As struggling sinners, unfortunately we at times fall into a pit. But reaching up from our despicable position we can grasp the divine hand reaching down to us. Of even more sobering consequence is that wandering off the path into the quagmire of carelessness, ignoring the lifelines offered until we gradually sink to the depths where we can neither hear nor respond to the loving voice of the Spirit. This need never be the experience of any one of us. The very fact that we seek forgiveness assures us that it is available to us—the promise is to all who truly look for it: "the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37, NKJV).

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1. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 395.

2. *Ibid.*



## Neglecting the Light

### TESTIMONY

Matt. 12:31

"Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. . . .

"It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual per-

ceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. . . .

"It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to

come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. . . . The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.

"When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan."\*

\**God's Amazing Grace*, p. 215.



# How to (Not) Commit the Unpardonable Sin

## HOW-TO

Mark 3:29; 1 John 1:9

The so-called “unpardonable sin” seems to be a mysterious threat. Many people wonder what it is exactly, but everyone has heard of it and knows that it can’t be forgiven. The question is: If this unpardonable sin exists, how do we go about committing it? (Or, more importantly, how do we avoid committing it?)

**1. Blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.** Blasphemy captures the essence of insult, contempt, and irreverence all in one word. The Holy Spirit works in our lives and prompts us toward accepting salvation. Avoiding the unpardonable sin, then, is constantly remembering that it is the Spirit’s conviction and transformation that allows us—mere sinners—to qualify for God’s grace shown through Christ. Remembering will lead us to humility and gratefulness for the Spirit’s work.

**2. Keep doing it.** In Mark 3:29 Jesus calls blasphemy against the Holy Spirit an “eternal sin” (NIV). He is not talking about a one-time sin that makes you unreachable by God’s grace. The unpardonable sin is a lifestyle of continued rejection of the Holy Spirit’s invitations and refusal to follow His prompting. To avoid the unpardonable sin, we must keep our hearts from being hardened over time. We must remain impressionable and responsive to the Holy Spirit. If we’re on the path of hardening our heart, we need to get off now and open our heart to be changed by God.

**The Holy Spirit works in our lives and prompts us toward accepting salvation.**

**3. Never give up.** We commit the unpardonable sin when we no longer desire forgiveness. As long as we want to be forgiven, God is faithful to forgive us. In 1 John 1:9 we read, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (NKJV). There is no need to fear the unpardonable sin. When we see our need for salvation and seek God’s forgiveness, He is ready and able to pardon all sins.

## REACT

1. How are you grateful for the work the Holy Spirit does in your life? How do you realize His role in your salvation?

2. How do you know you are still listening to the Holy Spirit? How are you responding to His guidance?

3. What keeps you aware of your need for forgiveness and salvation?

# Fearing the Worst

## OPINION

Mark 3:28, 29

As a child, when I knew I had done something wrong, I would get mad at myself and tell God to leave me alone. I didn't want Him to remind me of my failures. I knew I had messed up, but I didn't want to have to ask anyone for forgiveness. After a short time, however, my stubbornness would fade and I would say sorry to whoever I had hurt and ask God for forgiveness. But each time I was worried that I might have committed the unpardonable sin. In Sabbath School I had been taught the outcome of this terrible sin: not being forgiven, never going to heaven. That's all I knew. I was terrified that I might accidentally commit the unpardonable sin and be lost forever.

Each time I messed up I would tell God I was sorry and beg Him to forgive me. Yet I was still afraid I had forgotten to ask forgiveness for one sin. I would search my mind for any forgotten sins. I also feared that someday I might mess up and

unintentionally commit this "unpardonable" sin. This was one of the biggest spiritual battles I faced as a child.

**Worry about committing this sin was a sign that I hadn't committed it.**

Through my spiritual growth I have gained an understanding about the unpardonable sin. Now I realize my worry about committing this sin was a sign that I hadn't committed it. Pushing the Holy Spirit away is telling God we don't want or need His help. When we intentionally push the Holy Spirit out of our lives with the hope that He will never return we have used our free will, which God will not go against. By having a connection, no matter how small, with God, our sins are pardonable.

I am a stubborn person and sometimes I don't listen to the Holy Spirit. Doing it my way is "easier," but when my life gets messy, I realize my need for Him and I try again.

All we have to do is keep trying. God doesn't ask that we never mess up; only that we recognize our need for Him. I don't live in fear of committing the unpardonable sin anymore. By staying connected to God I am pardoned.

## REACT

1. How do we know if we have committed the unpardonable sin?
2. How can our view on the unpardonable sin affect our relationship with God?
3. What helps us understand how important the Holy Spirit is to us?

# Come, Holy Spirit

## EXPLORATION

Heb. 6:4–6

## CONCLUDE

When we sin, the Holy Spirit rebukes us, leading us to confess and repent. When we want forgiveness, Jesus is quick to comply, because He does not turn anyone away who comes to Him for help. We need not worry about our future if we place it in His hands, because even when we fall into sin, the connection we share with God enables us to not be lost. It is only when we ignore each attempt He makes to get our attention that we choose to distance ourselves from a relationship with Him and face eternal death.

## CONSIDER

- Listening to or singing hymn 268 in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, “Holy Spirit, Light Divine.” Think about your life and if there are any sins the Holy Spirit is leading you to turn from and confess.
- Journaling your thoughts for a month, writing down every instance of when and how the Holy Spirit tries to get your attention.
- Role-playing the story in Matthew 12:22–35 with your Sabbath School class. Discuss the reasons that the Pharisees reacted as they did and identify ways to share the truth of Jesus’ source of power to people of this era who behave as the Pharisees did.
- Mentoring youth from your church, helping them learn how to recognize the Holy Spirit’s calling. Offer to pray with them when they are in need of direction.
- Researching the instances of those in the Bible who ignored God’s pleas to change. Note their fates and whether or not they learned from their mistakes or sealed their eternal fate of death.
- Observing a parent interacting with a child for a day or more. Report your findings in a short article, paralleling that relationship with one with the Lord.

## CONNECT

Charles Stanley, *Handbook for Christian Living*.

<<http://bibletools.org//index.cfm/fuseaction/Def.show/RTD/ISBE/ID/3531>> #9  
*Limitations of Forgiveness.*

# The Holy Spirit in the Last Days



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**“Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isa. 30:21, NKJV).**



# "Lo, I Am With You Always"

## INTRODUCTION

Matt. 28:20; John 16:7

Have you ever been alone in a strange place and suddenly realized you were lost? It's happened to almost all of us, I'd suspect, and it's happened to me more than a few times.

Whether it's daylight or particularly at night, it's easy to feel uneasy, even scared.

On one or two of those occasions, I was fortunate in finding someone to help me find my bearings and a route back to where I wanted to go. Perhaps one of those people was really an angel—a messenger of the Lord sent to guide my steps.

There are other times, however, when I feel lost, even if my surroundings are utterly familiar to me. It can happen at home, on the job, even in church. This is a situation in which my response is needed, and I don't know what to do.

Maybe it's a tense moment that needs to be diffused, or a difficult decision that has to be made—and made right now. Perhaps someone has challenged me about my faith: Why do I believe what I believe? Or it could be a crisis for someone else, someone who needs the right word of comfort or encouragement.

**Where do the best answers  
come from?**

Where do the best answers come from? How can I know what's best to say in each situation, when my own strength is often lacking? Jesus promised, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20, NKJV). But how could this be?

Christians believe it is through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus also promised: "If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, NKJV). That Counselor is the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus' personal promise of help in these last days of earth's history.

Unlike every other religion or system of belief in history, Christianity—the real, Bible-based faith—teaches that God will be with us to help us make decisions and do the right thing, if we but ask and listen. During times of challenge and crisis, we can expect God to offer a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12, KJV) of encouragement and direction when we need to hear it.

I've experienced this myself at several times in my life. God, the Holy Spirit, has given me the right answers at the right time, and I've been able to help and encourage others with words I didn't have—but God did.

As the conflict of the ages moves toward its conclusion, we don't have to fear: As the lessons in this Bible study guide show, the Holy Spirit will be with us, and with Him, we're never alone!

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*Mark A. Kellner, Rockville, Maryland*

# You Are Not Alone

## LOGOS

Joel 2:28, 29; John 1:9; Acts 2:14–24; 3:19, 20; James 5:7; Rev. 14:6–16; 18:1–5

### God's Promise (Joel 2:28, 29)

Joel lived in a time of locust plagues. A swarm of locusts could wipe out a harvest in minutes, resulting in starvation and famine. He told Israel that the locusts were there as a result of their turning away from God. He warned that if they did not change, it would not just be locusts but enemy armies that would attack. It can be the same in our lives. Wrong habits or lifestyles or the influences of the wrong types of friends can be just as devastating as a plague of locusts.

But Joel points out that it is never too late to turn back. He states that God is merciful, kind, and caring (Joel 2:13). Joel spends most of his book stating that God is always willing to rescue His people. It is in this context that God promises extra help, pouring out His Spirit on all people. Note how the promise includes

young and old, male and female—even to the lowest levels of society. Accepting this gift allows us to battle the locust swarms of this world and to rescue others from spiritual starvation.

**It seems strange that Jesus' followers should be accused of drunkenness.**

This is especially important as Joel 2:29 takes the prophecy way beyond the time of Israel and applies it to the last days. The promise of the Holy Spirit is a reality for now!

### Preparing for the Spirit (Acts 2:14–24; 3:19, 20; 4:12)

It seems strange that Jesus' followers should be accused of drunkenness when really they are filled with the Spirit. There was obviously some great joy and vibrancy in their lives as they caught the full picture of how God could use them. But note that there were some serious steps that led up to the joy and exuberance of Pentecost.

They spent serious time in prayer (Acts 1:14) and were united in purpose. From then on they preached repentance (Acts 3:19, 20) and believed that the Spirit of Christ would empower lives. As a result, the Holy Spirit filled their lives and they could witness with power and authority. The Holy Spirit gave them the courage to stand up for Jesus even in front of those who, a few weeks earlier, had put Jesus to death (Acts 4:12).

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## More Gardening Lessons (James 5:7)

It is easy to look at others and see God moving in their lives. We can look at our Adventist pioneers, Ellen and James White, J. N. Andrews, and others, and marvel at how God used them. We may also look at current preachers and leaders whom we admire and wonder why we can't have the same power in our lives. It can be discouraging. We need to remember that God gives different gifts to different people (see lesson 7) and that He gives them at different times according to need. This is why James calls for patience. He uses an illustration from gardening.

In Palestine there are two main periods of rain. One comes in the autumn and helps to sprout the newly sown seed. The second comes in the spring and gives the necessary water to bring the growing crop to maturity. The farmer needs patience. He can only hope and pray for the rain. However, when harvest time approaches, he rejoices. While we can rejoice in seeing God work in other parts of the world than our own, we equally need to prepare ourselves for the autumn and spring rains that God surely promises will come to our own lives and communities.

## Empowered by the Spirit (Rev. 14:6–16; 18:1–5)

Revelation 14:6–16 points out that we live in very exciting times. The last-day message of salvation is for every nation, tribe, language, and people. It is an all-inclusive message. In the last days of earth's history, we are called to worship the Creator God and challenged to turn away from false worship, whether pseudo-religion or secularism. These verses present a powerful promise for those who stay faithful to Jesus, yet also warn that Satan and his forces will work hard to impose their will on us. Peer pressure or apathy could easily mean we lose out on the promise of eternal life. Never is Joel's promise of the Holy Spirit needed more than at this time.

We need to recognize that there is a "different spirit" who will always try to draw us away from true worship. Revelation 18:1–3 pictures it in extreme language. As with Israel in the Old Testament (Rev. 2:14), it is easy to be seduced by false worship and thus allow evil spirits rather than the Spirit of God to influence our lives. That is why the angel gives a clear and categorical call to "Come out of her, my people." Read Micah 6:6–8 and reflect on how the Holy Spirit can lead to true worship.

## REACT

1. In what practical ways can I see God pouring out His Spirit in my life and my community?
2. What choices do I need to make in my life so that the Holy Spirit can use me more?
3. How can I determine the difference between true and false worship?



# Letter to My Children

## TESTIMONY

James 5:7, 8

This earth is ending, and there comes a time of great strife, stress, trial, and tribulation that will try your souls. People will cry for the peace, comfort, and assurance of a Savior—and will look to you to show them yours. People will scream, fight, cheat, lie, steal, and break the most respected of laws seeking a scapegoat for their pain—and will look to you to be one. People will deny God, replacing Him with all manner of theologies newly hatched and paganisms rewarmed, establishing new gods and tearing down the True—and will look to you to help them. What will you do?

These things I heartily recommend:

**1. Read your Bible daily.** In the time spent reading, you walk with God. Take time to contemplate what you have read, for in your contemplations comprehension of heavenly things are born.

**2. Pray often.** Pray not just when you worship but when you work, when you play, when you need special intervention, and when you need nothing. Pray to your Savior constantly and He will respond to your soul constantly—for the times will demand such.

**Do not worry about your response when confronted.**

As you do these things, the Holy Spirit will bring you peace and lead you to others struggling to find Him. Do not worry about your response when confronted, but remember the words of Luke 12:11, 12: “When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say,” (NIV).

And finally, I leave you with these profoundly wise words from a God-inspired woman to guide us in the final days:

“We are not to make less prominent the special truths that have separated us from the world, and made us what we are; for they are fraught with eternal interests. God has given us light in regard to the things that are now taking place, and with pen and voice we are to proclaim the truth to the world. But it is the life of Christ in the soul, it is the active principle of love imparted by the Holy Spirit, that alone will make our words fruitful. The love of Christ is the force and power of every message for God that ever fell from human lips.”\*

\**Reflecting Christ*, p. 216.



# The Missing Ingredient

## EVIDENCE

John 5:39

Jesus' words in John 5:39 suggest there is much more to our heavenly path than mere religious gymnastics, i.e., memorizing Scripture. The Pharisees mastered this, often memorizing entire books of Scripture! Admirable? Yes. But according to Jesus, this does not ensure heaven. Jesus reminds His religious audience that He gives eternal life; it is not something to be earned. It's relationship with Him that saves. So, what was the ingredient these devoted religionists missed in their heavenly quest?

In John 16:7, Christ addresses the need for the Counselor and then tells His disciples that it was for their own good that He leave! Jesus knew the power and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the New Testament we see that the Spirit's role is to guide us into all truth about Jesus. He now represents a transition in God's relationship with humanity from God with us to God in us (John 14:17). Then how can a highly religious person not find salvation!

The danger of religion is that it can become bad religion. This phenomenon occurs when a religion develops systems and programs so finely detailed that it leaves no room for the Spirit to move and influence.

In the book of Acts, well-intended disciples have a committee meeting, concluding that Judas must be replaced. A prayer, then, is put forth along these lines: " 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen' " (Acts 1:24, NIV). God did choose a successor for Judas, but it wasn't from the nominating committee's two choices. This lesson is for us as well: to allow latitude for God to work, through the Spirit, in ways we cannot foresee. We can achieve this by a daily dose of God's Word. " 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' " (Matt. 4:4, NIV).

Any religion that does not point to a relationship with the true Christ is bad religion.

The Holy Spirit is vital in our salvation, yet many Christians do not understand His role, and often His gifts are abused. Christ invites us to find Him in Scripture. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! No one makes it to heaven without Him. As we search God's Word daily, let us prayerfully open our hearts to receive His Gift, the Holy Spirit. Let us be open to His leading and not contain the Spirit with our religious prejudice.

**It wasn't from the  
nominating committee's  
two choices.**

# The Ultimate Transfer of Power

## HOW-TO

Joel 2:28, 29; Zech. 4:6; Acts 2:14–24; 3:19, 20

Do you long to be on fire for Christ and share Him with others? Are you trying to get fired up through Bible studies, churchgoing, fellowship? This may work for a while, but if you're like me, it soon fades. Why? Because we're relying on ourselves and others, and not on the Holy Spirit to put the fire in us—and keep it there! If we think we have all the answers and the power to be able to do it on our own, we are kidding ourselves.

Until we conduct a transfer of power from ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we will wander in the desert of life. God's love for us is sure, but He will allow us to wander until we realize our need for Him and invite the Spirit to work in our daily lives. Only then can we truly live a life victorious in Christ instead of living a life lacking true power, and resulting in defeat.

The same mighty Spirit of Truth that supplied David with a heart for God, gave Esther the courage to stand for her people. And Jesus, with the strength to do the Father's will, is ready to give us everything we need! His power is as strong today as it was thousands of years ago. There is no excuse to be weak in our Christian life when we

**We are kidding ourselves.**

can be strong in the power of the Spirit!

Consider the following points. Ask God to help you apply them in your life today and see the Spirit's power set your heart on fire!

**1. Know** that the Holy Spirit is alive, working, interested, and involved and that He loves you! (Job 19:25; Eph. 3:19).

**2. Believe** what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. His promises are true and reliable. His Word comes directly from God through the Holy Spirit (John 20:31; Acts 2:17; 2 Pet. 1:21).

**3. Trust** in the fact that God means what He says and will do what He promises! He is at work on your behalf through the Spirit—to build you up in Him and bring honor and glory to His name! Come to the Lord—He is trustworthy! (Zech. 4:6; Acts 3:19, 20; Rom. 8:6, 9).

**4. Depend** on Him 24/7; 365 days a year! Call on Him in all things! Lean on Him at all times. God is ready to pour out His Spirit on all people, and that includes you! (Exod. 14:13, 14; Ps. 40:1–3; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14–24; Rom. 8:5).

# The Dismissal Bell

## OPINION

Isa. 30:21; James 5:7

The dismissal bell had rung. Ten students sat slumped in their chairs, there only because of the “D” or “F” glaring from their report card. Then, midway through their once per week meeting for students on academic probation, the math teacher entered the room and motioned for my attention. “We need to talk with Julie before she goes home,” he whispered. “It’s serious.”

Julie had not had a good day. In the morning another teacher had sent her to the office to remove her dramatic black eyeliner and matching skull-embellished black fingernail polish. She was already pushing the edge, I reasoned, as I braced for the worst. When the class ended, and all the students except Julie had left, we somberly made our way to my office. What happened next was a typical school discipline matter, but with a new chairperson, the Holy Spirit.

Julie looked nervous, her eyes locked on her teacher. From my experience, and what I knew of Julie, I imagined one of two outcomes. Either Julie would admit her poor choices, and begin the process of the 3 Rs (accept responsibility, show regret, and make repairs), or, depending on the severity of the situation, she would be channeled directly to the discipline committee for more serious consequences, even to expulsion from school. However, something different was happening. The teacher calmly, yet filled with emotion, said, “Tell her what you told me, Julie,” and she began relating a story of disappointing high-risk behaviors, altogether inappropriate, especially for a student enrolled in a school with high behavioral expectations. I dreaded hearing more, knowing this information could force her immediate dismissal from school. Yet as she spoke, her eyes were fixed on her teacher, and she seemed to know she was safe.

**Julie looked nervous, her eyes locked on her teacher.**

Earlier in the teacher’s classroom, after he learned of Julie’s at-risk behaviors and had demanded the truth from her, the situation could have gone either way. But the teacher had made no snap judgments. He was not alone. The Holy Spirit had joined him and had infused this no-nonsense individual with wisdom. It didn’t come with a trumpet blast, but in the old words the teacher remembered as he patiently listened to her. If you are going to err, err on the side of mercy. And he told her, “You are God’s child. You, as my student, are also one of my children. We will get through this.”

## EXPLORATION

Eph. 3:16–18

## CONCLUDE

When the world around us falls apart, the Holy Spirit is our one clear channel with heaven. He's like a powerful two-way signal making it possible for us to communicate with God and He with us. It is this communication lifeline that strengthens our relationship. And without a real, personal relationship with God, we'll be caught in the world's dying chaos. We will be lost.

With the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we experience the reality of "God with us." We will not be diverted by Satan's tricks or the world's apathy. It is our relationship with the Holy Spirit that will see us through the last days of earth.

## CONSIDER

- Standing in the rain. Think of the refreshing nature of God's Spirit (Ps. 72:6). Imagine being filled with the "latter rain" of the Spirit.
- Singing or playing songs inviting the Holy Spirit into your life. Some to try include "Come, Holy Spirit," "Spirit of the Living God," and "One in the Spirit."
- Holding a prayer vigil. Either alone or with a group, spend a concentrated time praying for God's Spirit in your life and in the church worldwide, especially in these last days.
- Putting together a disaster-readiness kit (water, food, clothing, radio, etc.) for your home or car. How does the Holy Spirit prepare us for the coming world disaster?
- Giving a gift. Consider the significance of the Holy Spirit being referred to as a "Gift" in Acts 2:38, 39.
- Tracking and graphing the annual rainfall in your region. (Try [www.vathena.arc.nasa.gov](http://www.vathena.arc.nasa.gov) or a local weather Web site.) Make a similar graph tracking the rain of the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible. What happened during the greatest outpouring of the Spirit?

## CONNECT

Glen Robinson, *If Tomorrow Comes*, chap. 17; G. Edward Reid, *Battle of the Spirits*, chap. 15; Morris L. Venden, *Never Without an Intercessor*, pp. 57–69.



## Next Quarter's Lessons

# The Gospel, 1844, and the Judgment

If you have not received a copy of *CQ* for third quarter 2006, here is a summary of the first two lessons:

### Lesson 1: "Principalities and Powers"

**Logos:** Ps. 51:1–4; Zech. 3:1–4; Matt. 22:11, 12; Rom. 3:4; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 2:14; 13:2; Rev. 12:7–13.

One of the most amazing discoveries of the past century was, literally, astronomical: the realization that billions of galaxies exist, each one containing billions of stars. Though new galaxies are being discovered every day, the latest estimates are at about 125 billion . . . and counting. When one considers that each galaxy contains billions of stars and that these stars could have planets revolving around them, it's not hard to understand why some people believe that life must exist elsewhere in the universe.

### Lesson 2: Judgment Must Begin

**Logos:** Eccles. 12:14; Dan. 12:1, 2; Matt. 8:12; 22:1–13; 25:31–33, 46; John 3:18; 2 Cor. 5–10.

This week, while realizing our inherent limitations, we're going to be as objective as we can as we look at what the Bible says about judgment. Let's forget for the moment about 1844, the pre-Advent judgment, Ellen White, Hiram Edson in the cornfield, etc. Instead, let's just let the Bible speak for itself on this important topic. And, as it does, let's see what answers it gives to the following questions: How are judgment and the gospel linked? What are the final results of judgment? Are Christians judged? What role do works play in judgment? When is the judgment?

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### Paulo Käffler

Paulo was a Brazilian growing up in Portugal. He loved soccer; and like many boys, he sometimes dreamed of becoming a soccer star. Then when he was 13, a scout recruited him for a junior professional soccer team in Portugal. The next year he signed a contract to play professional soccer. For three years he combined school, church, and soccer into a heady mix of activities. He faced teammates who were jealous that he did not have to play on Sabbath.

Then, just before his 16th birthday, Paulo was offered a contract to play for a world-famous team. But he knew that if he signed the contract, he would have to, in the coach's words, "forget family, forget education, forget religion." And Paulo had another dream, a dream to become a doctor.

Read about Paulo's decision in this quarter's Teen Mission. Or log on to [www.adventistmission.org](http://www.adventistmission.org) for Paulo's, and other, stories.



### South American Division

Where legally possible, offerings will go to these projects; otherwise special arrangements will be made with the General Conference for distribution of funds based on the laws of the countries where these offerings are collected.

**The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering** this quarter will help build chapels in eastern Brazil and northwestern Argentina and fund renovations at two boarding schools in Brazil.



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