

CHAPTER 5 THE WONDERFUL HOLY SPIRIT

God the Spirit

The Spirit as a Person

Driving to college one particular winter morning, my car broke down. My car died at a busy section of Dallas during morning rush-hour traffic. Embarrassed, frustrated, and alone, I sat there for several minutes trying to start my car.

Then, to my surprise, I spotted a classmate approaching my car. He had recognized me and stopped to help push my car out of traffic. Before we could get my car into a nearby parking lot, another classmate also came by to help us. How incredible!

Likewise, the Holy Spirit assists and encourages believers through life, and especially through times of crises. When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He sent the Spirit to glorify God the Father and to help believers in this life (John 14:17). Maybe we could say the Spirit came to glorify God *by* helping believers.

Jesus said to His disciples, ". . . I will send [the Spirit] to you" (John 16:7). The Spirit comes to live in believers, not to take them out of difficult times, but to help them through difficult times. Because of the Spirit, believers have intimacy with God and the ability to live out the truths found in God's Word.

The Holy Spirit is God.⁶³ He is identical, or equal in character, with the Father and the Son. He has, however, a separate function from the Father and the Son. Some people refer to Him as "the third Person of the Trinity."⁶⁴ Although He has no physical body, the Holy Spirit is a Person like Jesus (John 14:16). He can comfort, and be resisted, grieved, lied to, and quenched.⁶⁵

The Spirit's Work

The Indwelling of the Spirit

The indwelling of the Spirit refers to Him residing within all believers.⁶⁶ He resides in you in order to testify of Christ (John 15:26; 16:13-14). He also functions as the ultimate source of comfort for believers (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).

⁶³ Notice what the Old Testament says about the Holy Spirit: Genesis 1:2; 1 Samuel 11:6; Psalms 51:11; 139:7; Isaiah 48:16; Joel 2:28-29.

⁶⁴ Though Scripture does not use this phrase, see Matthew 3:16-17; John 14:16; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:18.

⁶⁵ John 14:16-17, 26; 16:8, 13-14; Acts 5:3-4; 13:2-4; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19.

⁶⁶ The indwelling of the Spirit is often called the "baptism of" or "baptism by" the Spirit. This transpires when the Spirit comes to live within believers when they ask Christ to save them.

How comforting to know you have a friend, God Himself, dwelling in you. The Spirit will help you talk with God the Father when you do not know what, or how, to pray (Romans 8:26). The Spirit also makes you aware of right and wrong, and lets you know you are God's child.⁶⁷

During the Old Testament period before Christ, the Spirit did not necessarily dwell permanently within believers. He would often manifest Himself in people's lives only at special times.⁶⁸ However, in Joel 2:28-29, God promised to one day "pour out the Spirit" upon His followers, meaning that eventually the Spirit would dwell permanently within believers. In Acts 2:33, 38-39, God fulfilled this promise:

Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. . . . Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.'

The Filling With the Spirit

The believers' *filling with* and *indwelling of* the Spirit are not necessarily fuzzy, ooey-goey, ecstatic, tingly feelings. Some Christian groups pressure new believers to have an emotional experience at conversion. Granted, crying or shouting might accompany salvation, but they may not. One might experience high emotions (e.g., feeling good, crying) and still not be saved. And one might be saved without feeling much emotion. Nonetheless, joy, peace, and happiness should accompany salvation.

The believer's *filling* with the Spirit is linked to the *indwelling* of the Spirit.⁶⁹ However, do not confuse the two.

	<u>Indwelling</u>	<u>Filling</u>
When?	Once at conversion	During conversion and many other times

⁶⁷ See Romans 8:16 John 16:11; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. The sealing of believers by the Spirit seems to be imagery for His work of securing believers in the family of God and authenticating them as God's property (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5).

⁶⁸ Judges 16:20; 1 Samuel 11:6; Psalm 51:11.

⁶⁹ The indwelling of the Spirit is also closely connected to the *baptism by the Spirit*. The baptism by the Spirit is the act whereby the Spirit brings believers into the family of God by indwelling them (see the following section in main text).

How?	Repentance unto salvation	Submission unto closer fellowship with God
What?	Spirit resides in believer	Spirit's power resides in believers
Why?	To bring believers into God's family	To enable believers to obey God's Word and bear spiritual fruit
Results?	Gifts imparted	Fruit manifested
Hindrances?	None	Sin ⁷⁰

How do you get this filling of the Spirit? Even though Scripture does not specifically state how, it might be inferred that the Spirit will fill you with Himself when you submit to God's Word (see Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18-19). As a Christian, you need to confess to God any unconfessed sin in your life and turn from specific sin. Ask God to fill you, trust that He did, and then obey His Word.

Receiving the Spirit After Conversion

Some Christians believe that a person can be saved without immediately receiving the indwelling of the Spirit. At least partial reason for this belief is that a group of Gentiles in Acts 8:15-17 seemingly received salvation but did not receive the Spirit immediately. "When [Peter and John] arrived, they prayed for [the group of Gentiles] that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." This group of Gentiles received the Spirit only after the Apostles Peter and John had prayed and placed their hands on them.

The occasion in Acts 8 seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. Some teach that this passage provides a norm for thinking that new believers do not necessarily receive the Spirit at conversion. Yet, a careful reading of verse 16 might indicate that the Spirit's delay would not be typical--"because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." In other words, this was a rare occasion after the "pouring out of the Spirit," as Acts 2 records, in which the Spirit did not immediately indwell believers.⁷¹

⁷⁰ The original source of this chart is unknown to me. For further study on the Spirit, see Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 16-41, 52; Galatians 5:16, 25; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:17.

⁷¹ To be fair to those who contend that the Spirit does not always immediately indwell believers at conversion, there is at least one other possible passage to support their view, found in Acts 9.

Acts 9 records the conversion of Saul, who would later be named Paul the Apostle. On his way to persecute Christians, he was struck blind as he encountered a special vision of Jesus. Even though many who believe that the Spirit *does not* immediately indwell Christians at the moment of salvation use Acts 9 as their proof text, one of several possible options is that while Paul was converted on the Damascus road,

Scripture shows in Romans 6:3, 1 Corinthians 12:13, and Galatians 3:27 (and possibly Colossians 2:12) that the Spirit is the one initiating the believer into the family of Christ.⁷² The Spirit baptizes believers by indwelling them. The above verses make it clear that all saved people receive the Spirit. Scripture gives no evidence that someone could be saved and not receive the Spirit (Romans 8:9). In addition, Ephesians 1:3 and 2 Peter 1:3 stated that all believers receive everything needed for the Christian life. This would seem to include the Spirit. Romans 5:5 says, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us."⁷³

his conversion was an exceptional case in which the Spirit did not immediately indwell him at the moment of conversion.

The word "filled" in Acts 9:17 seems to be a unique case in which it is used synonymously with "indwelt" (also see Acts 2:4). Not every thing that transpired at Paul's conversion will necessarily take place at the conversions of believers today. Therefore, since Paul's conversion experience differed vastly from usual conversions, it must be said that just because he did not immediately receive the Spirit does not mean that it is a norm for Christians today.

Furthermore, at first glance, Acts 10:44-45, seems to support those who say that believers do not immediately receive the Spirit when saved. But, look closely. In verses 39-40, the gospel is proclaimed (because these people were not yet saved). Thus, the "pouring out of the Spirit" in verses 44-45 was immediate with salvation. (Chapter 11:15-16 refers to the same event.)

Some may argue that Acts 19:2-6 supports their view that believers do not always receive the Spirit immediately at conversion. However, Acts 19:2-3 and verse 6 record, most likely, a situation in which these Gentiles had not yet been saved. For a clear and balanced presentation of these and other Spirit-related issues from a more charismatic perspective, see Craig Keener, *Three Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

⁷² Compare with Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16 where it appears that Jesus is baptizing (i.e., initiating into the family of God) the believer *with* the Spirit. In other words, the substance, or person, into which they are baptized is the Spirit.

⁷³ Although Ephesians 1:3, 2 Peter 1:3, and Romans 5:5 say nothing about when believers receive all that is needed for the Christian life, these passages can be better understood when linked with Romans 8:9. In other words, Romans 8:9 indicates that those without the Spirit are not Christians. Therefore, the inference is that Christians receive the Spirit at conversion.

Gifts From the Spirit

With the indwelling Spirit comes spiritual gifts.⁷⁴ God fully enables you to utilize your spiritual gifts by filling you with the Spirit. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others . . ." (1 Peter 4:10).

The Bible doesn't teach that any one person receives every gift. Rather, it says the opposite in Romans 12:4, 6-8:

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

You need other believers and they need you. Beware of Christian groups who minimize the importance of gifts or those that say everyone should have the same gift(s) (e.g., speaking in tongues).

God has given you a spiritual gift or gifts that someone else does not have and vice versa. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 that:

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines.

God gave you gifts to equip you to serve others. He has equipped you for a specific ministry in your local church. He has equipped you to serve with other believers so the church functions in unity like a healthy physical body.

Fruit Produced by the Spirit

You possess a God-given responsibility to *bear* fruit. John 15:8 says you do not have to *produce* fruit; the Spirit will do that. But you do have to *bear* fruit. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit means your life will demonstrate that God controls you (Ephesians 5:9).

The Apostle Paul lists the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Note the fruit:

<u>love</u>	<u>joy</u>	<u>peace</u>
<u>patience</u>	<u>kindness</u>	<u>goodness</u>
<u>faithfulness</u>	<u>gentleness</u>	<u>self-control</u>

⁷⁴ For references dealing with spiritual gifts and functions, see Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-12.

I suspect that the fruit of the Spirit makes up for any spiritual gift you may lack. Your life might not show all of the above nine characteristics right now, but your life will bear more of each fruit as you obey God's Word.

Summary

Because of the ministry of the Spirit, believers can have constant fellowship with God. The Spirit is God and indwells all believers at conversion. He imparts spiritual gifts to every believer. The Spirit fills believers with His power when they submit to Him. Because of the Spirit's filling, believers should utilize their gifts and bear fruit.

Assignments

1. Memorize Romans 8:9, "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."
2. Write about the connection between God sending the Spirit and John 14:27.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the Spirit indwelling and filling believers?
2. What does John 14:16 call the Spirit?
3. Is it possible for believers *not* to have the Spirit dwelling inside them? (See Romans 8:9.)
4. What does Ephesians 5:18 command?

Answers to Chapter 5 Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the Spirit indwelling and filling believers? *The Spirit's indwelling is when He comes to live in each believer at conversion. His filling is when believers live in the light of His indwelling.*
2. What does John 14:16 call the Spirit? *He is called the "Helper" or "Comforter."*
3. Is it possible for believers *not* to have the Spirit dwelling inside them? (See Romans 8:9.) *According to this passage, it is not possible to be a Christian and be without the Spirit.*
4. What does Ephesians 5:18 command? *Don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.*