



The Holy Spirit

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| The Indwelling Holy Spirit

2.1 Introduction

As we saw in session 1, the Holy Spirit is the mighty Third Person of Trinity. He is the ‘executive agent’ of the Godhead. He is the One who **completes** the Father’s work; **manifests** God’s Presence in the world today; and **imparts** the power of God to the believer. He has been and will be active in our world from beginning to end. The Bible tells us that at the very beginning, He was hovering over the waters, waiting to create life ([Ge 1:2](#)); and that at the very end, He will be calling people to take the free gift of life! ([Re 22:17](#)). From start to finish He brings dynamic life!! As Jesus said, “The Spirit gives life...” [[Jn 6:63](#)]

It’s vital that we get to know the Holy Spirit as personally and intimately as possible. It’s not enough to *know about Him*. He wants us to *know Him*. Many believers are either robbed of a personal relationship with Him altogether (because they think He’s an “it” – an impersonal influence, power, energy), or else are experiencing only a fraction of what God has for them (because they understand so little of the His actions and activities).

Our principle theme in this session, therefore, is threefold:

1. The Holy Spirit is a **divine Person** of infinite majesty and glory
2. Who comes to **dwell in our hearts**,
3. And longs to have a lifelong, intimate **relationship and friendship** with us.

2.2 The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Foundational to all our teaching and experience of the Holy Spirit is the understanding that He is a PERSON! It is impossible to properly understand the work of the Holy Spirit – let alone to be in a right relationship with Him - without first coming to know Him as a Person. Merely seeking to know the *works* of the Holy Spirit can lead to error, misconception and fanaticism. We must first come to know the Holy Spirit Himself¹.

Those who think of Him merely as an influence or power will be concerned with trying to discover how they may get hold of the Holy Spirit and use this power in their life and ministry. But for those who seek to know Him as a divine Person, our concern will be discovering how the Holy Spirit can get hold of us and use us in *His* glorious ministry: He wants to take possession of us and use us as He wills. There's a world of difference between these two approaches! Am I seeking to get more of Him? Or am I concerned with how He can get more of me? The former lead to pride: self-confidence and self-exaltation². The latter leads to humility.

There are several distinct Biblical proofs of the *personhood* or *personality* of the Holy Spirit.

2.2.1 HE IS REFERRED TO WITH PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Although the word “Spirit” is in the neuter gender, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself used personal (masculine) pronouns when speaking about Him. [eg [Jn 14:17](#), [Jn 15:26](#), [Jn 16:7-14](#)], as did Paul [[Ro 8:16](#), [Ro 8:26](#)].

2.2.2 HE HAS PERSONAL QUALITIES

The three marks or characteristics of personality (mind, will and emotions)³ are shown to be possessed by the Holy Spirit:

¹ In 1901, following nights of prayer for worldwide revival at the Moody Church in Chicago, Dr Reuben Archer Torrey (1856-1928) began a worldwide preaching trip, holding evangelistic campaigns in many nations. At the insistence of his colleague DL Moody, in every place he visited Torrey taught a series of sermons for Christians on the Holy Spirit and His Work (and a second series on Prayer). This teaching and ministry is believed to have been used by God to spark the revivals in Wales, India, Korea and other places....

² Regarding the Holy Spirit as a ‘power’ to be used as a sign of his ability was the mistake and sin of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8:18-24

³ Being a ‘person’ is a matter of having a *personality*, not of having a *physical body*. Thus, when we die and leave these bodies behind we will not cease to be persons. Therefore, to say that the Holy Spirit is a Person does not in any way imply that he has a body; rather, that He has a personality.



- He has a mind [Ro 8:27]; He knows things, especially the thoughts of God [1Co 2:10-13] and is able to instruct us [Neh 9:20].
- He has a will [1Co 12:11]; He decides and determines things.
- He has emotions. The Holy Spirit loves us [Ro 15:30], and has many other feelings and emotions (see 2.2.5 below).

2.2.3 HE HAS PERSONAL TITLES

Jesus described the Holy Spirit as “the Counsellor” [NIV: Jn 14:16, 26, Jn 15:26 and Jn 16:7]. The word used here is *parakletos* and has the meaning of ‘one called to come alongside another’. Other versions translate the word as “Comforter” or “Advocate” and the same word is elsewhere used to describe Jesus Himself [1Jn 2:1].

Jesus therefore encouraged His disciples with the fact that after He has left them another Person just like Him would come alongside them to help them. Jesus was not promising them merely a power or an influence! He was promising them another Person. The Holy Spirit was able to take the place of Jesus personally; He has come to relate to us just as personally as Jesus related with his disciples.

2.2.4 HE PERFORMS PERSONAL ACTS

The actions and work of the Holy Spirit are numerous, and will be considered in further detail in 2.5 below. At this point, however, we can note that the Holy Spirit performs acts that can *only be performed by a Person*, eg:

- He prays [Ro 8:26]
- He teaches [Jn 14:26]
- He searches and reveals [1Co 2:10]
- He speaks [Ac 13:2, Heb 10:15, Rev 2:7ff]

2.2.5 HE HAS PERSONAL FEELINGS

As we’ve seen, the Holy Spirit has emotions and feelings. The Bible shows that He can experience the following personal emotions:



- He can be blasphemed [Mt 12:31-32]
- He can be lied to [Ac 5:3]
- He can be resisted [Ac 7:51]
- He can be grieved [Eph 4:30, Isa 63:10]
- He can be quenched [1Th 5:19]
- He can be envious [Jas 4:5]
- He can be insulted [Heb 10:29]

The overwhelming evidence of the Bible is that the Holy Spirit is a Person – and we can therefore have a personal relationship with Him. The glorious reality for New Covenant believers is that He has been poured out into our hearts. He is God indwelling and working within the believer to fulfil the will of God.

2.3 The Holy Spirit in the New Covenant Age

As we saw in the first session, the Holy Spirit was present and active in the OT: in creation itself [Ge 1:3ff], in inspiring prophecy and the Holy Scriptures [2Pe 1:21, 2Ti 3:16], and in empowering men at particular times for particular tasks [eg: Judges 3:10, 6:34, 13:25, 1Sa 16:13, 2Ki 2:15, etc]⁴. However, this latter action was, as we have seen, usually a *temporary* empowering - not a permanent *abiding* of the Spirit. However, God had purposed that this administration of the Spirit would be transformed after Jesus had been glorified!

2.3.1 SOMETHING BETTER!

The New Covenant is “better” than the Old Covenant in every way! [Heb 7:22, 8:6]. In relation to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, the new covenant is better because the Holy Spirit is now *abiding within* believers. Firstly, He is ABIDING (not visiting); secondly, He is WITHIN (not merely influencing externally).

Thus we see that Jesus explained this better dispensation of the Holy Spirit in the following ways:

- First, He promised that the Holy Spirit would be **given to all believers** (“those who ask”, “anyone who is thirsty”), not just to a select few:

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Luke 11:13

Jesus stood and said in a loud voice “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams of living waters will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 7:37-39

⁴ See session 1, section 1.2.3

- Second, He told His disciples that it was good (best) that He was soon to ascend and return to the Father, because (only) then the Holy Spirit would come to us.

Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:6-7 NIV

Instead, you are very sad. But it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Counselor won't come. If I do go away, he will come because I will send him to you.

John 16:6-7 NLT

The incredible implication here is that it is better for us to have the Holy Spirit than to have the Son! What could be better than life alongside Jesus the Son of God? The only theologically possible answer and explanation for this is that the ministry of the Spirit in our lives is permanent/abiding and indwelling (see XX below) – it is even better to have God living on the inside!

- Then, He promised that we would be **baptised with (or in) the Holy Spirit**:

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:4

The fulfillment of this promise a few days later at Pentecost marked the beginning of the new era of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the gathered believers [Ac 2:1ff] and from that point onwards the normal Christian experience has included a baptism in/with the Spirit that results in a filling with His life and power.

- Finally, He said that this experience would result in a new dimension of **power in our lives** – power to be Christ's witnesses in all the earth:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

It is therefore the fulfilment of these promises which characterises "life in the Spirit" [Gal 5:16] for new covenant believers.

2.3.2 THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT – CLOSER THAN EVER!

It is the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is the unique and distinguishing feature of the New Covenant. Repeatedly, the Scriptures speak of this *indwelling* ministry of the Spirit. Eg:

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow **from within him.**" By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 7:37-39

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.

Romans 8:9

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that **God's Spirit lives in you?***

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that your body is a temple of **the Holy Spirit, who is in you,** whom you have received from God?

1 Corinthians 6:19



set his seal of ownership on us, and **put his Spirit in our hearts** as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 1:22

Because you are sons, God **sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts**, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

Galatians 4:6

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through **his Spirit in your inner being**

Ephesians 3:16

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of **the Holy Spirit who lives in us**.

2 Timothy 1:14

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And **this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us**.

1 John 3:24

As we can see, the overwhelming evidence - and the experience of multitudes of believers - is that the Holy Spirit indwells our lives. If the OT picture was of *going to* the waters to drink, then the NT picture is of drawing and drinking from the waters *that are within*. If you are a Spirit-baptized believer then **you have been filled with the Holy Spirit and He abides within [1Jn 2:20,27]**

It's so vitally important that we grasp this. Being "filled with the Holy Spirit"⁵ is not so much about an *external visitation* as about an *internal occupation!* It's not something that usually happens *from outside*. It happens *from within!* Why? Because the Holy Spirit abides within - and He wants to swell up, to fill us up, fill us out, expand His influence, extend His manifest and felt Presence within our lives.

⁵ Here we are referring to the *ongoing Spirit-filled life*, not to the *initial infilling*, which we may term the "baptism in the Spirit"

2.3.3 THE ABIDING HOLY SPIRIT – WITH US FOREVER!

The Holy Spirit not only indwells believers; He abides within us forever! Jesus promised that the Father “will give you another Counsellor *to be with you forever* – the Spirit of truth.” [Jn 14:16].

John’s epistle speaks of “the anointing” (being the power of the Holy Spirit⁶) as follows:

As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, [NASB: “abides”, Msg: “deeply embedded within you”] and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in him.

1 John 2:27 NIV

The Holy Spirit is with us forever; He abides within us; He remains; He is deeply embedded in our lives!

⁶ see session 5 for a detailed discussion of anointing



2.4 The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ – the Anointed One⁷ – is our perfect Example [1Pe 2:21, Ro 8:29]. He never sinned nor grieved the Spirit in any way [Heb 4:15]. The Holy Spirit therefore functioned in His life freely and without any hindrance whatsoever. This therefore becomes the pattern we should seek to follow.

We can outline the workings of the Spirit in Christ’s life and ministry as follows:

1. He was **filled** with the fullness of the Spirit (Jn 3:34)
2. He was **led by** the Spirit (Mt 4:1, Lk 4:1)
3. He was **empowered by** the Spirit (Lk 4:14)
4. He was **anointed by** the Spirit (Lk 4:18)
5. He **spoke** and **taught** by the Spirit (Lk 4:18)
6. He **healed** the sick by the Spirit (Lk 4:18)
7. He **cast out devils** by the power of the Spirit (Mt 12:28)
8. He was **justified** (vindicated) by the Spirit (1Ti 3:16)
9. He was **offered up on Calvary** by the eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14)
10. He was **resurrected** by the Spirit (Ro 8:11, 1Pe 3:18)
11. He **gave commandments** to the disciples by the Spirit (Ac 1:2)
12. He **empowered** the church by the Spirit (Ac 1:5,8)
13. He was **resurrected** by the Spirit (Ro 8:11, 1Pe 3:18)
14. He directs and **governs** the Church by the Spirit (Rev 2:7,11)

Jesus lived and moved by the direction and anointing of the Holy Spirit. They functioned in perfect unity and harmony together. And, if Jesus relied upon the ministry of the Spirit, how much more should we do so!...

⁷ ‘Christ’ (Gk: *Christos*) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word meaning “Messiah”. It literally means “Anointed One”. That Jesus was the Christ was the pivotal revelation that the Father gave first to Peter [Mt 16:16]

2.5 The Holy Spirit in the Life of a Believer

We can now consider how the indwelling Holy Spirit – the Divine Person – works in and through the life of a believer.

We will see that the Holy Spirit is involved in our lives from beginning to end – from regeneration to glorification! Everything about the Christian life is spiritual: it is to be a life inspired, sustained, empowered, quickened and anointed by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures show many specific ways in which the Holy Spirit works in our lives:

Firstly, then, it is the Holy Spirit who draws us to Christ and gives us new birth:

2.5.1 HE REVEALS JESUS TO US. In the first place, it is the Holy Spirit who “testifies about Jesus” [Jn 15:26]; we cannot confess Jesus as Lord without the revealing work of the Spirit [1Co 12:3]. The underlying motivation and ministry of the Spirit is to bring glory to Jesus [Jn 16:14] and He does this first in our lives by beginning the process that leads us to conviction and repentance – that is, by opening our eyes so that we begin to see who Jesus really is!...

2.5.2 HE CONVICTS US. Having revealed Jesus to us, it is the Holy Spirit who “convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” [Jn 16:8-11]. That is: He is the One who produces in us a deep sense of personal sinfulness and the need for a Saviour; He is the One who convinces us of the righteousness and sufficiency of Christ’s and His atoning sacrifice; and He is the One who convinces us that there is a coming Day of Judgment. This threefold conviction – and the repentance and faith it produces – is the basis for the miracle of regeneration!...

2.5.3 HE REGENERATES US and brings new birth. Having revealed Jesus to us and convicted us of our need for Him, the Holy Spirit miraculously brings life to our own spirits; He makes us spiritually alive through a new birth! “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” [Jn 3:5-6]; the spiritual death that resulted from sin [Ge 3:3] is itself put to death and we are born again. As Paul says, “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” [Tit 3:5]. Nobody on earth is beyond the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit!



Having enabled our salvation, the Holy Spirit is the One who is at work in our ongoing life and walk with God. As we shall see, the Christian life is impossible without the work and ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit:

2.5.4 HE COUNSELS US. Indeed, as we have seen, He is “the Counselor” [Jn 14:15-16, 26, Jn 15:26, Jn 16:7]. As such, He is the One who is alongside us at all times to give instruction, encouragement and guidance. He speaks to us! [Ac 8:29, 1Ti 4:1, Rev 2:7ff]. Specifically, the Bible tells us that He will “**teach us** all things and **remind us** of Christ’s teachings” [Jn 14:26], and will “**guide us** into all truth” [Jn 16:13]. The permanently abiding and indwelling Anointing of the Holy Spirit “teaches us about all things” [1Jn 2:27], including everything written for us in the Word. We cannot understand the Word without the illumination of the Spirit; but we have received the Holy Spirit “that we may understand what God has freely given us” [1Co 2:10-12]. He **reveals** the deep things of God to us [1Co 2:10-14] – we cannot understand spiritual truths with natural minds alone! He is also ever-ready and willing to guide us in the details of everyday life and ministry [eg see Ac 8:27-29, Ac 16:6-7, Jas 1:5]

2.5.5 HE FREES US from striving - trying to succeed in our own strength - by bringing a new jurisdiction into our lives! We now live according to the “law of the Spirit of life” and can therefore be totally free from “the law of sin and death” [Ro 8:2]; if we are “led by the Spirit”, we “are not under the law.” [Gal 5:18]. This enables us to “put to death the deeds of the flesh” [Ro 8:13]. By His indwelling Presence and Power we no longer need to struggle and strive to try and live right in our own strength. As we surrender all to Him, the mighty Spirit enables obedience and victory in our lives! This reliance upon and surrender to the Holy Spirit brings us into a new dimension of **life and peace** [Ro 8:6]!

2.5.6 HE ASSURES US of our salvation and sonship: that is, “the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” [Ro 8:16]. “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out ‘Abba, Father’” [Gal 4:6]. And, as we are “led by the Spirit of God” in our daily life and walk, we are ever re-assured that we are “sons of God” [Ro 8:14]; the true mark of ‘sonship’ is being led by the Spirit.

2.5.7 HE PRAYS FOR US and through us. That is, when we do not know how or what to pray, “the Spirit himself intercedes for us”; He “intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will” [Ro 8:26-27]. The apostles urge us to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions” [Eph 6:18] and to “build ourselves up and pray in the Holy Spirit” [Jude 1:20]. In particular, as a result of the baptism in the Spirit, He enables us to **speak in tongues** [Mk 16:17, Ac 2:4, Ac 10:44-46, Ac 19:6], so that we can communicate with God



from ‘spirit-to-Spirit’. The Holy Spirit, who “searches the deep things of God” and “knows the thoughts of God” [1Co 2:10-11] enables us to pray with our spirits rather than with our minds, so that no natural thoughts can impede our prayers [1Co 14:14-15].

2.5.8 HE EMPOWERS US to witness and communicate to others. Indeed, Jesus specifically said that the disciples would “receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...” [Ac 1:8]. Paul’s “message and preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” [1Co 2:1-5]; and again the gospel spread not “simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction” [1Th 1:5].

2.5.9 HE IMPARTS GIFTS TO US. That is, the Holy Spirit gives supernatural **gifts of the Spirit** to Spirit-filled believers. These gifts are “manifestations of the Spirit”, and are “given for the common good” [1Co 12:7], just as He determines [1Co 12:11]. There are nine such “spiritual gifts” [1Co 12:1]: the message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues [1Co 12:7-10].

2.5.10 HE INSPIRES US to true **worship**. Jesus said that the Father seeks those who “worship in spirit and in truth” [Jn 4:23]. How wonderful, therefore, that the Holy Spirit enables us to bring pleasure to the Father! For we are to be those “who worship by the Spirit of God...and put no confidence in the flesh” [Phil 3:3]. That is, we must surrender and abandon all our self-effort, realizing that nothing of the flesh will ever please the Father. He seeks those who worship in spirit; and we can indeed worship in the power and enabling of the Holy Spirit. Immediately after urging the Ephesians to be “filled with the Spirit” [Eph 5:18], Paul instructs them *how*: “speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” [Eph 5:19-20]. Thanks, praise and worship that bring pleasure to the Father are both inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are themselves the environment in which the Spirit expresses Himself most fully in our lives.

2.5.11 HE CHANGES US and brings forth Christ-like character in our lives – the “**fruit of the Spirit**”, namely “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” [Gal 5:22-23]. Note here that these things are solely the work of the Spirit: they are His fruit. Any inward beauty in our lives is the work of the Spirit. We can never attain such things by the flesh – they are the fruit of the Spirit and the Spirit produces them in us as we abandon all self-effort and allow Him to make



us what He wants us to be. We will discuss the Fruit of the Spirit fully in unit 3.

2.5.12 HE REFRESHES US. Jesus promised that “streams of living water will flow within him” who believes, making clear that this was a description of the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit in our lives [Jn 7:37-39]. Earlier, He had said that whoever drinks the “living water” (of His Spirit) would never thirst again [Jn 4:10-14]. As we yield ourselves to the up-springing of the Holy Spirit in our lives we find refreshment and abiding satisfaction. The Holy Spirit refreshes, satisfies and strengthens believers. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be strengthened with “power in their inner being” [Eph 3:16].

And, finally:

2.5.13 HE WILL RESURRECT US at Christ’s return; just as He has already “raised Christ from the dead” [Ro 8:11]

The indwelling Holy Spirit is surely our most precious possession in this life. Without Him we have nothing. He is the source of all peace, provision and power. He is the One who ministers to us “everything we need for life and godliness” [2Pe 1:3].

2.6 The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church

When we grasp the magnitude and magnificence of the work of the Spirit in the life of an individual believer, we can then begin to see the endless possibilities for the church as a whole! For the Body of Christ is the corporate expression of multitudes of believers!...

But the work of the Holy Spirit in the church is more than simply the sum total of His work in its individual members. He also operates in and through the church corporately, as follows:

2.6.1 HE UNIFIES US. On the day of Pentecost multitudes of individual believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and began experiencing His indwelling ministry. But these individuals were also formed into a unified, corporate whole: the Body of Christ. The *crowd* of thousands who gathered to hear Peter explain the manifestations of the Spirit [Ac 2:6, 14] were gathered together to become a devoted and growing *community* [Ac 2:42-47]. Paul writes that “we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...and were all given the one Spirit to drink” [1Co 12:13]: the baptism in the Spirit joins us together in Christ’s body. He does not have many bodies – He has one! The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to unify us with all other believers as part of Christ’s body. And we are urged to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” because “there is one body and one Spirit” [Eph 4:3-4].

2.6.2 HE INDWELLS US. Not only does the Holy Spirit dwell in every individual believer and member of Christ’s body – but He also dwells in us corporately. The Bible describes the church as “the temple of the living God” [2Co 6:16], a “holy temple...a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” [Eph 2:20-22]. The church corporately – as well as its members individually – is the principal dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit on earth.

2.6.3 HE DIRECTS US. Jesus is the Head of the Body [Eph 1:22, Col 1:18] and has promised to build His church [Mt 16:18]. He directs the affairs of the church by means of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is the Holy Spirit who **distributes His gifts and graces** amongst the members [1Co 12:11], who **calls people into ministry** and special service [Ac 13:2-4] and who **empowers our evangelism** and mission [Ac 1:8, 1Co 2:4-5].

2.6.4 HE FLOWS OUT FROM US. As we’ve seen, the Bible describes the indwelling life of the Spirit as being like “*streams* of living water” in



individual believers [Jn 7:37-39]. The Bible also contains an image of a “river of living water” that flows from the Presence of God to bless and refresh the world. This image begins in the garden in Genesis [Ge 2:10ff], and recurs throughout the OT [eg Ps 46:4, Joel 3:18, Zech 14:3 and (especially) in Ezekiel 47:1-12]. The fulfillment is seen in the final chapter of the Bible, Rev 22, where “the river of the water of life” is seen to flow “from the throne of God” [22:1] which is “in the city” [22:3]. The city, we know, is the “bride beautifully dressed for her husband” [21:1-2], that is, the restored Church. Thus, the river of life (which can be understood as the coming together of the multitudes of individual streams of living water!) is pictured as flowing from the church to the world⁸ - carrying refreshment and life [Ez 47,8-10], food [Ez 47:12] and healing [Ez 47:12, Rev 22:2] for the nations .

⁸ This is consistent with the detailed description of the river in Ez 47, where the source of the river is the Temple

2.7 A Personal Relationship with the Holy Spirit

The fact that the Holy Spirit is a Person who abides within us to enable us to live fruitfully in this life should lead us inevitably to a desire for a deepening and more intimate relationship with Him. Indeed, just as He abides in us, so we should make it our singular goal to abide in Him!

As for you, the anointing you received from him **remains in you**, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, **remain in him**.

1 John 2:27, NIV

“you must abide – live, never to depart [rooted in Him, knit to Him”]

AMP

The word used here for “abide” is the Greek word *meno* which means “to not depart; to continue to be present; to last or endure, remain, to be held or kept continually; to wait for or await.”

Developing a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit means abiding in Him in just the same way that He is committed to abiding in us! It means that in our relationship with Him we must be unchanging; ready and waiting; ever-present and ever-waiting - ever-ready to be quickened, to be drawn upon!... It may mean re-ordering our whole lives around the priority of intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Learning how to do this in the midst of a busy 21st Century life will be our key to being filled with the Spirit and enjoying Life in the Spirit every day.

So, how can we enjoy this personal, abiding and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit? The following principles and practices will help:

2.7.1 REALIZE IT'S A FRIENDSHIP

The Holy Spirit is your Friend! He loves you; He wants to be close you; He wants to help you; He wants the best for you. HE IS YOUR BEST FRIEND! The Message version translates Counsellor/Comforter as – simply – the Friend!

“I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth,

John 14:16-17

But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is.

John 16:13

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit - “life in the Spirit” - is to be a friendship! There need be nothing sterile, professional, or distant about it. Rather, it’s to be a close, intimate friendship. He wants to be your Best Friend.

2.7.2 SPEND TIME ALONE WITH YOUR FRIEND EVERY DAY

In the light of this, it is imperative that we set aside quality time every day to be alone with Him. We must regard this time as precious and sacred, and must guard it jealously and passionately - because our very life depends upon it. It’s in these times that you will develop an intimate relationship with YOUR FRIEND.

Christians cannot survive on corporate gatherings alone, on tapes, paperbacks and Christian TV channels. We simply must take time to be alone with Him. Jesus needed to spend time alone with the Holy Spirit and the Father [**“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed”, Lk 5:16**]; how much more do we need to! Jesus urged His disciples: “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” [**Mk 6:31**].

As we spend time with Him, we learn not to rush in or rush out of His Presence; we learn to ‘soak’ in his Presence; to draw aside and communicate deep-to-deep [**Ps 42:7**], even in the midst of busyness. AW Tozer wrote: “Constantly practice the habit of inwardly gazing upon God...even when you are compelled to withdraw your conscious attention in order to engage in earthly affairs, there is within you a secret communion always going on” and again “Retire from the world each day to some private spot...Stay in the secret place till the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and a sense of God’s presence envelops you. Deliberately tune out the unpleasant sounds...Listen to the inward voice till you learn to recognise it”

These will be times of Prayer (talking with Him) and reading the Word (the Book He wrote and the sword He uses).



- Our **daily prayer-life** is the foundation of our friendship with Him. It's the source of all Holy Spirit power in our lives. RA Torrey wrote extensively on the power of prayer:

“Prayer can do today as much as it ever could. Prayer can do anything God can do; for the arm of God responds to the touch of prayer. All the infinite resources of God are at the command of prayer. Prayer is the key that opens wide the inexhaustible storehouses of divine grace and power. ‘Ask and it shall be given you,’ cries our Heavenly Father, as He swings wide open the doors of the divine treasure-house. There is only one limit to what prayer can do; that is what God can do. But all things are possible to God; therefore prayer is omnipotent.”

“It is manifestly prayer that brings the fullness of the Spirit’s power into our hearts and lives. One great reason why so many of us have so little of the Holy Spirit’s power in our lives and service, is because we spend so little time and thought in prayer.”

“There is mighty power in prayer. It has much to do with our obtaining fullness of power in Christian life and service. The one who will not take time for prayer may as well resign all hope of obtaining the fullness of power that God has for him.”⁹

We must learn how to press-through, prevail, travail, and persevere in our prayer-lives. Don’t give up! It is hard work at times: the devil will throw every resource at his disposal into trying to keep you off your knees in prayer! Nothing terrifies him more than the prospect of an army of Spirit-filled, prayerful believers!

- As we **read the Word each day** we can do so knowing that it’s the Book your Friend wrote. The Word of God is “the sword of the Spirit” [Eph 6:17]. The Word of God is also the seed the Spirit sows and quickens [Lk 8:11, 1Pe 1:23]. The Word of God is the instrument of all the manifold operations of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if wish the Holy Spirit to do His work in our hearts we must study the Word; we need to do all we can to get it inside us, so that the Spirit who lives in us can take hold of it and use it. We should ask Him to speak to us as we read the Bible, and to reveal the truth of contained therein (since this is specifically part of His ministry, Jn 14:26, 16:13). We can expect to receive His now-word for us for every situation we will face, and every person we may meet, during the day ahead.

⁹ RA Torrey, *How to Obtain Fulness of Power in Christian Life and Service*, p83, 89, 95

2.7.3 AVOID EVERYTHING THAT GRIEVES HIM

A growing intimacy with the Holy Spirit will have a profound effect on your sensitivity to Him; you will soon begin to have a fresh appreciation of the things He loves and the things He hates.

Paul instructs us not to “grieve the Spirit”

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:29-32

To “grieve” someone is to cause great sorrow or distress, to inflict injury. Anything that offends a Holy God will grieve the Holy Spirit. Here, Paul specifically describes 7 things that grieve Him

1. Unwholesome talk – flippancy, rudeness, filthy talk, swearing
2. Bitterness – holding a grudge, competition, status-seeking
3. Rage and anger – losing temper, sharpness
4. Brawling and slander – gossip, back-biting
5. Unkindness – prejudice, teasing,
6. Lack of compassion – being unmoved
7. Unforgiveness – not releasing things; holding on to hurts, pride

Many believers are never full of the Holy Spirit because their thoughts, words or actions block up the flowing waters of the river of life. When He is grieved He retreats or withdraws – often without us realising.

It is almost impossible to overestimate how easily the Holy Spirit is grieved. RA Torrey put it like this: “He is a Person who loves us, a Person who is holy and intensely sensitive against sin, a Person who recoils from sin in what we would call its slightest forms as the holiest woman on earth never recoiled from sin in its grossest and most repulsive forms. And He sees whatever we do, He hears whatever we say, He sees our every thought, not a vagrant fancy is allowed a moment’s lodgment in our minds but what he sees it; and if there is anything

impure, unholy, immodest, uncharitable, untrue, false, censorious, bitter, or unChristlike in any way, in a word or thought or act, He is grieved beyond expression. This is a wonderful thought, and it is to me the mightiest incentive that I know to a careful walk, a walk that will please this indwelling Holy One in every act and word and thought.”¹⁰

In the light of this, we should – if we want to develop a close friendship with the Holy Spirit – make it our daily aim to avoid everything and anything that grieves Him. And to ‘close the gap’ (in terms of the time taken) between grieving Him and putting it right to just a few seconds. That is, we should deal with things as quickly as possible. Doing so will have a marked effect on your ability to hear God and move in the Holy Spirit. **If you hunger for an unbroken relationship with the Holy Spirit, do all you can not to grieve Him.**

2.7.4 CHOOSE TO LIVE IN A WORLD OF WORSHIP

As we have seen, being filled with the Spirit requires that we live a life of song, music and thankfulness:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, **always giving thanks to God the Father for everything**, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:18–21

Developing a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit will involve choosing to live a life of worship: a life of humble thanks and praise. We must learn to be grateful for everything – and to make it known vocally, by singing, worshipping and “making music in our hearts” to Him.

2.7.5 USE THE LANGUAGE OF TONGUES

As we’ve already seen, when we speak in tongues we engage with God in the language of the Spirit. Deep calls to deep [Ps 42:7] and the natural mind (with its many distracting thoughts) is bi-passed. Paul urged the Corinthians to pray, speak and sing “in the Spirit” in this way [1Co 14:15] – and claimed to do so himself more than any of them! [1Co 14:8]

¹⁰ Dr Reuben Archer Torrey (1856-1928), *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does – How to know Him in all the Fulness of His Gracious and Glorious Ministry*, reprinted by Herald of His Coming, 1993

2.7.6 TALK TO HIM THROUGHOUT THE DAY

In addition to particular times set aside each day to be alone with Him, we can develop our relationship and friendship with the Holy Spirit by talking to Him throughout the day. Ask Him questions, tell Him you love Him (“I love you Lord”); share your concerns. Talk to Him about anything and everything. Ask Him questions; share your thoughts, ideas, fears and concerns.

2.7.7 APPRECIATE HIS PASSION AND LIVE FOR “AN AUDIENCE OF ONE”

The Holy Spirit is more passionate about us than we may ever realize! He is fiercely passionate to the point of jealousy. James tells us that He “envies intensely”:

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that **the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?** [see footnote: or “that God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us”; or “that the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously”]

James 4:4-5

Other translations help us to unfold the meaning:

He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us” [footnote: or “The spirit which He has made to dwell in us lusts with envy”]

NASB

the Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, jealously longs for us to be faithful”

NLT

“The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a jealous love”

AMP

“The proverb has it that ‘he’s a fiercely jealous lover’.”

MSG



The bottom-line is this: the Holy Spirit longs for our undivided attention; He's fiercely jealous of our affections; He wants us to want Him more than we want anything else; He wants to be our top priority. He's grieved and hurt when our priorities and affections wander elsewhere. He wants to be cherished by us; to be welcomed unreservedly in our lives. He wants the best of our time; He wants to be our most precious possession; He wants you to talk with Him every day. He wants us to long for more of Him with same passion and intensity that He longs for more of us. HE'S A FIERCELY JEALOUS LOVER - and He wants you to be totally faithful to Him.

We must make it our aim to please Him in every way, every day. The way we live in private will determine the anointing we experience in public. We can learn obedience to His voice and promptings by seeking to bring pleasure to our 'Audience of One'. Be obedient in the little things. He wants to know that He can trust us.



2.8 Summary

The Holy Spirit is a Person. And He lives within believers; God's permanently indwelling Presence. It is God's longing for our lives that we would come to know the Person of the Holy Spirit intimately. We are not to be concerned about how we can possess more of the Holy Spirit or use Him for the benefit of our lives and ministries. Rather, our concern should be how He can possess more of us and use us for the benefit of His life and ministry. Knowing Him, surrendering all to Him and being used by Him in this life is the most important thing we can do.
