

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is not merely a force, but a person - God, personally with us today. He was sent by Jesus to comfort, help, guide, teach, counsel, and empower us. There is no area of our lives in which we do not need the help of the Holy Spirit. It is vital for our relationship with God to know the Spirit, learn to relate to Him, and understand how He manifests Himself in and through our lives. Sadly, however, the Holy Spirit often remains largely unknown, misunderstood, or even controversial in the lives of many believers.

Just like our relationship with Jesus, we also have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and these misconceptions and unanswered questions can often keep us from experiencing the vibrant and life-giving relationship with the Holy Spirit for which we were created. Like all relationships, it takes intentional investment to grow and deepen over time. You might have lots of questions in the beginning, and that's ok! We've answered a few common questions in the following pages that might be helpful for you.

As you seek to cultivate your relationship with the Holy Spirit, we recommend starting by first gaining a clear and fresh understanding of who He is. There are many misconceptions about the Holy Spirit, but here are a few things that the Spirit IS and is NOT:

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS...	THE HOLY SPIRIT IS <u>NOT</u>...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• God (Genesis 1:2; Acts 5:3-4)• A Person (Revelation 22:17)• The Helper (John 16:7)• The Convictor (John 16:8)• The Guide (John 16:12-15)• The Teacher (John 14:26; I John 2:27)• The Empowerer (Acts 1:8)• The Sealer who marks us for total salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A power to be used for your own selfish gain (Acts 8:9-25)• Karma or an impersonal power source• Reserved for "super Christians" or a select few• A spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7)• Extra or optional (i.e. "If I know Jesus, I've got all I need") (John 16:7)

DIDN'T I RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT WHEN I PUT MY FAITH IN JESUS?

When you are saved, at that moment, the Holy Spirit SEALS you for Salvation (one experience). He puts the imprint of God upon you, securing your salvation and depositing in you various gifts and revelations of Jesus Christ. These are a down payment on everything you will receive when you are raised from the dead to live with in Christ in Heaven forever.

But there is more! The Holy Spirit also EMPOWERS you for service (Acts 1:8). The baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit is more than a one-time experience. Paul viewed the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a necessary qualification for walking out the Christian life. He even commanded the Ephesian Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). In the early church, the disciples:

- Received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them (John 20:22).
- Were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4).
- Were filled with the Holy Spirit after prayer (Acts 4:31).

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

There are different terms used in the Bible to describe the "Baptism" of the Holy Spirit, but they are referring to the same thing. Jesus says, "to wait for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 1:4-5. In Acts 1:8 He says, "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." You may also hear terms like "Spirit-filled," "lead by the Spirit," or "power of the Holy Spirit"; these terms are also referencing the same thing.

- He forms Christ's character in you (Isaiah 11:1-5; Galatians 5:22-23).
- He clothes us with Christ's power so that you can do the works that Jesus did, and even greater ones (Isaiah 61:1-3).
- He increases your faith (Jude 1:20).
- He enables you to pray even when you don't know what to pray (Romans 8:26-27).
- He allows you to receive spiritual gifts for the common good (1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14).
- He allows you to operate in specialized spiritual functions (1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11-13).

WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." One of the primary purposes of the Holy Spirit coming into a Christian's life is to change that life. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is simply the result of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of a Christian. It is the Holy Spirit's job to conform us to the image of Christ, making us more like Him.

HOW DID THE FIRST CHRISTIANS RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- Jesus received the Holy Spirit as a dove descending on Him, and heard the voice of God declaring His favor on Him (Matthew 3:16-17).
- The first Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit as they waited on the Lord in prayer and worship. They did this in accordance with Jesus' instructions (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).
- A blinded and humbled Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him. Saul received back his sight, arose, and was baptized (Acts 9:17-19). Saul later became Paul.
- Cornelius' household spontaneously received the gift of the Holy Spirit when Peter preached the gospel to them. They received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in water (Acts 10:44-48).
- Peter and John laid their hands on believers who had been baptized but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. For these Christians, getting saved and receiving the Holy Spirit were two separate experiences (Acts 8:14-17).
- Paul laid his hands on men who had just been saved, and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. These men told Paul, "We have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:1-7).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO QUENCH OR GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or a distant being. He directs and guides us, and our response to Him affects our relationship with Him. When we ignore or hide the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, we quench His presence in our lives. We quench the Holy Spirit when we do not allow Him to reveal Himself the way that He wants (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Grief is a different emotion. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we act sinfully. Both quenching and grieving the Spirit come from us choosing fear or selfishness over faith and love. Both damage our intimacy with God and slow the work the Holy Spirit sets out to do in us.

HOW DO I RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OR INFILLING OF THE SPIRIT?

Jesus said in Luke 11:13, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Jesus said... just ask! Eagerly desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit responds to your hunger, you respond to His presence in faith and with a sincere heart. It is important to remember that there is not a formula for being filled with the Holy Spirit; however, here are a few things to help guide you:

- Cultivate an eager desire for spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1).
- You may want to have someone more mature in the Lord lay his/her hands on you and pray (Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6).
- Approach the Lord with faith that He eagerly desires to give you the Holy Spirit when you ask Him (Luke 11:9-13).
- Ask and receive (Matthew 7:7-11).

With the Holy Spirit come new experiences in spiritual gifts and the process of being refined in God's cleansing fire (Matthew 3:11-12). We suggest you communicate with someone more mature in the Lord as you experience these things so that you can get answers to any questions you might have.

WHAT IF I STILL HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

One of the best things about walking with Jesus is that He never expected us to try to do it all alone. We each need consistent Godly community in our lives to encourage, support, and challenge us. If you are not yet in a discipleship relationship or haven't yet committed to going to a Lifegroup, we recommend starting there.