

Introduction

When my dad first asked me to help him with this book, I was immediately struck by a sense of disbelief. I thought, *He probably hasn't prayed about this yet*. Frankly I did not see myself as a worthy candidate. In fact, thinking about his request caused my stomach to flare like it was in the middle of a breakdancing competition.

I respectfully asked my dad to consider a few alternatives and to spend some serious time praying over the matter (maybe a year or two). Yet after a day of prayer, he was confident that I was the one for the task. It is important to him that the Holy Spirit does not become taboo amongst the younger generations, and he values my input as someone in his mid-twenties. My father and I know that many people—both young and old—will avoid this topic if they don't understand who the Spirit is and how He functions.

So, despite my apprehensions, how could I refuse my father's request? I was compelled to agree. What then transpired can only be described as a life-transforming journey. I began to see the Scriptures in a new light as God opened my eyes to many wonders of His Spirit. I soon discovered that the Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood Person in the Church. Countless labels and stereotypes have been assigned to Him, but too few of us know Him as He really is.

The purpose of this book is to facilitate an introduction to the Person of the Holy Spirit by taking you on a journey through the Scriptures. Aspects of this book may be challenging, but I promise you that the journey is worth your time and energy.

As you read the words on these pages, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. He will remove any beliefs that are not grounded in His Word. You will discover that He does not “belong” to a denomination or a movement—and that He cannot be confined to a generation or

an age. He has been sent to reveal Jesus and empower the entire Body of Christ. He has made our hearts His home, and He has promised to make good out of our lives. All we have to do is give Him control.

A better friend and companion cannot be found. The Holy Spirit will faithfully accompany you through all of life's struggles and joys. He has promised to never leave or forsake you because you are His passion and delight. Get ready to discover the One who is the definition of awesome!

—Addison Bevere, COO, Messenger International

Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

(Ephesians 2:18 NLT)

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

*But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), **the Holy Spirit**, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.*

—John 14:26 AMP

Day 1

It was the eve of a new year. An urge to fast and pray stirred within. I asked the Lord, “What book of the Bible should I read?” To my surprise I heard, “The book of Acts.”

Why was I surprised? Because my previous time of extended fasting and prayer had also been met with this exact directive: “Read the book of Acts.” During my previous fast, what stood out in Acts was a conflict of purpose and direction in the life of the apostle Paul, and its resulting consequences of hardship. Allow me to explain.

Paul was chosen by God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He said, “I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Timothy 1:11). This is a specific and focused directive. He repeated this mandate several times throughout the course of his life. Early in his first apostolic journey he stated to the Jews, “We turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles’” (Acts 13:46-47). During his second journey, he boldly

stated, “From now on I will go to the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6). To the Romans he wrote, “I am an apostle to the Gentiles” (11:13). These statements continue throughout his writings.

However, out of his love and desire to see his Jewish countrymen saved, he repeatedly sought out the synagogues in almost every city he visited. He habitually approached the Jews before attempting to reach the Gentiles; in fact, it was often the Jewish rejection of his message that drove him to the Gentiles. As it turned out, the Jews were the source of Paul’s greatest persecution and trouble. They stirred up the populace and created animosity between the apostle and the Gentile leaders. Their divisive schemes were behind most of the riots, arrests, beatings, and trials Paul faced. An important note: God cares deeply for the Jews. This is why James, Peter, and John were sent to them: “James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church...encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews” (Galatians 2:9 NLT).

The message revealed to me during my previous fast was abundantly clear: “Son, stay within the sphere of grace that I’ve called you to walk in. Don’t allow your natural affections or love to pull you away from the divine assignment on your life.” Remembering this encounter with such clarity, it was surprising that God asked me to read through Acts again. After all, there were sixty-five other books to choose from!

I’m so glad I obeyed, for this time as I journeyed through Acts, something completely different stood out to me (demonstrating that the Word of God is truly alive). This time, what jumped off the pages was how much the leaders and members of the early Church looked to, interacted with, depended on, and spoke of the Holy Spirit. He was a vital part of their lives and involved in everything they did. He was preeminent in their ministry outreaches, team gatherings, and strategy meetings, and He was always involved in their activities. Here’s a sampling of the statements that stood out:

- “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” (Acts 5:3)
- “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?” (Acts 5:9)
- “We are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 5:32)
- “You always resist the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 7:51)
- “The Spirit told me to go with them.” (Acts 11:12)
- “One of them...showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine...” (Acts 11:28)
- “Being sent out by the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 13:4)
- “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us...” (Acts 15:28)
- “They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.” (Acts 16:6)
- “They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.” (Acts 16:7)
- “Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified...” (Acts 18:5)
- “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2)
- “Paul felt compelled by the Spirit to go over to Macedonia.” (Acts 19:21 NLT)
- “The Holy Spirit tells me in city after city...” (Acts 20:23 NLT)
- “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.” (Acts 20:28)

Words like these jumped off the pages repeatedly. What became painfully clear is the reality that we are not seeing this same pattern in the Church today. What was common among the believers in Acts seems rare now. I am not just addressing this lack in the lives of others, but first and foremost the lack in my own life. As I read, I realized I had

drawn back from enjoying, seeking out, and depending on the leadership, camaraderie, interaction, and powerful influence of the Spirit of God. Once this became clear to me, how could I keep from sharing it with you?

Upfront Statements

Allow me to make some upfront statements that will become clearer the more we delve into this important discussion:

First, there is virtually no Christian life without the Holy Spirit.

- Without the Holy Spirit, Christianity is dry, monotonous, and mundane.
- Without the Holy Spirit, our labor is draining and wearisome.
- Without the Holy Spirit, there is no fellowship with God.

Remove the Holy Spirit from a church and one of two things will happen:

- It will morph into a social club.
- It will become a religious institution.

The truth is...

- There is no revelation without the Holy Spirit. In fact, without the Spirit Scripture becomes lethal; for we are told, “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- There is no vision without the Holy Spirit.
- There is no joy without Him.
- There is no peace without Him.
- There is no freedom without the Holy Spirit.

The Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17 NLT)

Look at the words “wherever the Spirit of the Lord is.” Let’s think this through. God’s Spirit is omnipresent—He’s everywhere at all times. David states, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?” (Psalm 139:7). The answer is emphatically, *nowhere*. David continues to write, “If I climb to the sky, you’re there! If I go underground, you’re there! If I flew on morning’s wings to the far western horizon, you’d find me in a minute—you’re already there waiting!” (Psalm 139:8-10 The Message). It’s crystal clear, He is *everywhere* at all times.

So the next question we must ask is, “Is there freedom *everywhere*?” Look again at Paul’s words: “Wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” We have proven that He is *everywhere*; so again, is there freedom *everywhere*? The answer to this is, absolutely no. There isn’t freedom in brothels, bars, prisons, and hospitals. I’ve been to neighborhoods, schools, homes, and even churches where there is no freedom. So what is Scripture declaring here? I suggest that this would be a more accurate translation:

Wherever the Spirit is *Lord*, that’s where there is freedom.
(2 Corinthians 3:17, author’s paraphrase)

The Greek word *lord* is *kyrios*. It is defined as “supreme in authority.”¹ The Holy Spirit is not permitted to be in authority in most bars, prisons, hospitals, or homes, and even in many churches. Where He is welcomed as supreme in authority, that is where you will find freedom and justice for all.

The Purpose of This Message

The purpose of this message is to introduce you to the *Person* of the Holy Spirit. Volumes and volumes could be written about Him. Days, months, even years could be spent speaking of Him.

I have been married to my wife, Lisa, for over thirty years. As well as I know her, I am still discovering aspects of her personality, interests, desires, and mannerisms I have never known. Recently we spent a few days alone together celebrating our thirtieth wedding anniversary. During that time, I learned aspects of her dreams, preferences, and even abilities that I never knew existed.

In regard to abilities, I had no idea how naturally talented Lisa is in golf. She knows how much I enjoy the sport, so she offered to accompany me on the back nine of a beautiful golf course. (I only played one round because it was our time together.) There was a huge chasm on the seventeenth hole. My wife always loves a good challenge, so I asked her if she wanted to attempt to get the ball over. It would take a 150-yard shot to clear the 200-foot deep chasm; if the shot fell short, the ball would be lost in the ocean. I found an old ball for Lisa to use (because I didn't think I would ever see it again). She stood up on the tee box and cracked it 175 yards into the fairway on the other side. Alas, after thirty years of marriage, a new talent had been discovered.

During our dinner each night, Lisa shared knowledge, wisdom, interests, and longings that she had not shared with me before. In short, I was in awe of how much depth there is to this amazing woman whom I get to call my wife.

It would be impossible to share the full knowledge of Lisa in a few short chapters. It couldn't be done in volumes. However, what I can do is tell you how to contact and converse with her. I can share what she enjoys, her interests, and how to work and interact with her. I can tell

you her strengths, weaknesses, and what she loves or doesn't care for. This introductory knowledge would serve as a catalyst to a great relationship with her.

If it's impossible to completely tell you about Lisa, who's only decades old, then how could I come close to fully telling you about the Holy Spirit, when He is from everlasting to everlasting? I simply could not! But what I can do is introduce you to who He is. I can tell you about His personality, what interests Him, and what He loves. I can define our relationship with Him and share some ways that we can engage and interact with Him. I can tell you why our relationship with the Holy Spirit is so important and how He empowers us to fulfill God's desires for our lives. These basic insights could propel you into a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Him.

Day 2

A Serious Misconception

There is an error that many make: they have attempted to understand the *work* and *power* of the Holy Spirit without first coming to know Him as a *Person*.

It is crucial that we establish in our hearts and minds whether we believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person—One who is infinitely holy, infinitely wise, and infinitely mighty, yet wonderfully tender, sensitive, and compassionate. Do we believe He is One who is worthy to receive our reverence, affection, faith, love, devotion, and complete surrender? Or do we instead believe that the Holy Spirit is simply an influence proceeding from God—some sort of divine mystical power, not unlike what we think of when we refer to “the spirit of generosity” or “the spirit of competition”?

This latter view is shallow, crude, and even cultic. If we believe this way, we are easily susceptible to spiritual haughtiness or pride, which would lead us to strut about as if we belong to some higher order of Christianity.

However, if we see Him as infinite in majesty, glory, splendor, wisdom, knowledge, and holiness, and if we believe that He, as a Person, has an accord with the Father and Son to take possession of our lives and make good out of them, then we will fall on our faces in holy awe.

Someone who sees God's Spirit as an influence or supreme power will constantly say, "I want more of the Spirit." On the contrary, someone who sees Him as a wonderful Person will say, "How can I give more of myself to Him?"

Our Perception of Him

One of the reasons many perceive the Spirit of God as a mere influence, rather than as a Person, is the way He's been spoken of. Have you ever heard anyone refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it"? I have been in ministry for thirty years; if I were given a dollar for each time I've heard the Spirit of God referred to as an "it," I would be very wealthy. Unfortunately, so many of us miss out on the fullness of the Spirit's presence because we refuse to honor Him as a Person. The Spirit of God will not manifest where He's not honored (see Matthew 13:54-58; Psalm 89:7).

I want to note that in calling the Holy Spirit a "Person," I am not calling Him human. What I am simply saying is that He possesses attributes of what we would consider to be personality. The Holy Spirit is Deity, not a human being. But we must remember, humans were created in God's image. So He's not like us; rather, we are like Him.

As a Church, we've chosen to view Him as a "holy entity" rather

than as One who is *most holy*. His desire is to be our closest friend, yet we have limited His involvement in our lives. The sad truth is we have inadvertently rejected the most fulfilling relationship available to us.

Let's take a look at some scriptures that will perfectly illustrate the personality of the Holy Spirit:

- He has a mind (see Romans 8:27).
- He has a will (see 1 Corinthians 12:11).
- He has emotions, such as love and joy (see Romans 15:30; Galatians 5:22).
- He comforts (see Acts 9:31).
- He speaks (see Hebrews 3:7); in fact, He speaks clearly (see 1 Timothy 4:1).
- He teaches (see 1 Corinthians 2:13).
- He can be made to feel sorrow (see Ephesians 4:30).
- He can be insulted (see Hebrews 10:29).
- He can be resisted (see Acts 7:51).
- He can be lied to (see Acts 5:1-11).

If these attributes are so apparent in Scripture, then we must ask, why is the Holy Spirit so misunderstood?

The Dove

When many people think of the Holy Spirit, their minds immediately draw an association with a dove. Why is this often the first association? Did the Holy Spirit ever manifest as a dove? The answer is an emphatic *no*. In all four Gospels we read that the Spirit of God descended on Jesus *like a dove* (see Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32).

But don't we often make comments like "she runs like the wind" or "he is strong like an ox"? If I say that my son is strong like an ox, does that make him a four-footed animal? Absolutely not! Similarly, to say that the Spirit descended like a dove is not to say that He is a dove.

Someone might say, "Yes, but John, He's represented as flames before the throne of God" (see Revelation 4:5). Yes, this is the case, but the Bible also says, "I looked, and behold...in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as though it had been slain..." (Revelation 5:6). This is John's description of Jesus. You and I both know that Jesus is certainly not a four-footed animal. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is not a mystical fire burning in front of God's throne.

So, Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The Bible makes it very clear that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. Genesis 1:26 says, "Then God said, 'Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness.'" Notice that God did not say, "Let Me make man." The drama of creation required three distinct Actors playing three distinct parts; God was referring to Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Let's look at Acts 10:38 to see the distinct identification of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God anointed *Jesus* of Nazareth with the *Holy Spirit* and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for *God* was with Him.

In this verse, we witness the *Father* anointing *Jesus* with the *Holy Spirit*—three distinct Persons working together for one common purpose.

Let's look at another example:

When He had been baptized, *Jesus* came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the *Spirit of God* descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly *a voice* came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
(Matthew 3:16-17)

In this account of Jesus' baptism, you will notice once again the members of the Godhead manifest as three distinct Persons. First, *Jesus* was baptized by John, then the *Spirit of God* descended on Him, and finally *God the Father* declared from heaven, "This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased." Again, all three members working together for the same purpose.

Let me offer a basic example that will help illustrate this truth. Water (H₂O) can manifest as three different forms. Temperature determines whether H₂O will appear as a solid, liquid, or gas. Water's substance—its molecular structure—never changes one iota, but its expression will change based on its environment (the temperature). In the same way, God's central makeup doesn't change. When you see the Son, you see the Father; and the Spirit was sent to reveal the Son to us (see John 17:21; Ephesians 1:17-18). God is one in purpose, and yet He has three expressions (Persons) who perform unique functions. Though there are three Persons, there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one!" Romans 3:30 says, "There is one God who will justify." James 2:19 likewise says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well." This truth is a cornerstone for the rest of the book: there are three distinct divine Persons, but only one God.

Some pages not included in preview

GET TO KNOW THE SPIRIT

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever—The Spirit of Truth...

—John 14:16-17 AMP

The Holy Spirit is truly amazing! Next to our salvation through Christ, He is the best gift we will ever receive. Who is the Holy Spirit? Seasoned author and lifelong pastor A.W. Tozer shares...

“The Holy Spirit is not enthusiasm...He is a Person. Put that down in capital letters—that the Holy Spirit is not only a Being having another mode of existence, but He is Himself a Person, with all the qualities and powers of personality. He is not matter, but He is substance.... The Holy Spirit has will and intelligence and feeling and knowledge and sympathy and ability to love and see and think and hear and speak and desire the same as any person has.”¹

Before you began this study, who did you understand the Holy Spirit to be? How has this chapter expanded your understanding of who He is to you personally?

Carefully meditate on the list of names used for the Holy Spirit in Scripture (see page 17). What do these names show you about who He is?

Some pages not included in preview

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you are using this book as part of the Messenger Series on the Holy Spirit, please refer to video session 1.

- 1 | Our Christian life *without* the Holy Spirit becomes dry, monotonous, and powerless. So what should our lives be like *with* the Holy Spirit? Name as many positive manifestations and aspects as you can think of.

For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

—2 Corinthians 3:17 NLT

- 2 | The Holy Spirit is not an “it” or a divine, mystical power. He is the Person of the Godhead who carries the *fullness* of God the Father and the Son. What are some of the consequences of seeing the Holy Spirit as just an “it” or mystical power? What are the positive results of seeing Him as He really is: fully God?
- 3 | The involvement of the Holy Spirit was common among early believers, but it is rarer among believers today. What do you think are some reasons we have drawn back from enjoying, seeking out, and depending on the leadership and powerful influence of the Spirit of God?
- 4 | Where is the Person of Jesus right now? As a believer, is He living in your heart? What is a better, more accurate way of describing our salvation experience and the mystery of how God makes your heart His home?

Leaders: Have your class check out Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 10:12-13 for the first part of question and Romans 8:9-10; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 1 John 3:24 for the remainder.

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CHAPTER SUMMARY:

- The **Holy Spirit** is a member of the Godhead who carries the fullness of God the Father and the Son.
- He is not an “it” or a mystical power; He is God.
- He is not limited by time or space; He can communicate with and assist an unlimited number of people all at the same time.
- He was intimately involved in the lives of early believers, and He yearns to be involved in every area of our lives today.
- There is virtually no Christian life without Him, but there is an abundant life of adventure to those who embrace His awesome fellowship.
- Get to know Him personally!