

# The Work OF THE Holy Spirit



Neville Bartle

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

Many people have questions about the Holy Spirit.

- What does the Holy Spirit do?
- How does He help us?
- What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- How can we use the gifts to strengthen and bless the church?
- How can the Holy Spirit make us strong in our Christian lives?

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**You will find the answers  
to these and many other  
questions in this book**

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Dr. Neville Bartle was a missionary in Papua New Guinea for 30 years where he was involved in church planting, Bible teaching and training of pastors. He and his wife Joyce are missionaries with the Church of the Nazarene, currently ministering in Fiji. Neville has a Doctor of Missiology degree from Asbury Theological Seminary.



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*The Work of  
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Holy Spirit*

**Neville Bartle**

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## Contents

1. The Holy Spirit and the Disciples ..... 5
2. Who is the Holy Spirit? ..... 16
3. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament ..... 28
4. The Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus ..... 36
5. The Holy Spirit our Helper ..... 43
6. Be Filled with the Holy Spirit ..... 54
7. The Holy Spirit Helps us Overcome  
the Sinful Nature ..... 61
8. What Must I do to be Filled with the Holy Spirit? ... 68
9. The Fruit of the Spirit ..... 75
10. The Holy Spirit - Living Water ..... 85
11. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit ..... 95
12. The Fire of the Holy Spirit ..... 105

## **THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

There is a big interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. People in many churches sing songs such as:

Come, Holy Spirit I need thee;  
Come, sweet Spirit I pray.  
Come, in your strength and your power;  
Come, in your own gentle way.

But there are many questions also.

Who or what is the Holy Spirit?  
Do all Christians have the Holy Spirit or just some Christians?  
If the Holy Spirit comes into my life what will happen to me?  
What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?  
How can I know that I am filled with the Holy Spirit?  
What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?  
How do we receive the gifts and how should we use them?

In this book, we will look at the answers that are found in the Bible. We can rely on the Scripture to give us clear teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit is like the wind. We cannot see where the wind comes from or where it goes to, but we can see the wind at work, blowing across the water or blowing the leaves of the coconut palm. We do not see the wind itself, but we see what it does. In the same way we can learn much about the Holy Spirit by seeing what the Holy Spirit does in people's lives. We will look at the Holy Spirit at work in the Old Testament, and in the lives of the disciples before and after the day of Pentecost. We will look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus and what he said about the Holy Spirit.

Our goal is to help you understand the work of the Holy Spirit, but even more importantly, we want you to experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in your own life.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DISCIPLES

The Holy Spirit makes a big difference in people's lives. We see this very clearly in the lives of the disciples of Jesus. When we look at their lives *before* they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and then look at their lives *after* they were filled with the Holy Spirit, we see that the Holy Spirit made a tremendous change.

Many people followed Jesus. Some followed him to see the miracles he performed. Some enjoyed listening to him speak, others had been healed and they followed Jesus because of their love and gratitude. Some people were curious and followed Jesus to see what would happen. Jesus knew that he was here on earth for a short time and then would return to heaven. He decided to choose 12 men to be with him all the time. He would concentrate on training them and they would carry on his work after he left earth.

Jesus spent all night in prayer and the next day he chose 12 men to come and stay with him and learn from him. The disciples were twelve very ordinary men who left their various jobs to follow Jesus. They were



with Jesus for three years. They ate the same meals, walked the same dusty roads, slept outside under the trees with Jesus or stayed in the same house. They were Jesus' best friends and closest companions.

The disciples heard everything he said and saw everything he did. They were there when Jesus cast out evil spirits. With their own eyes they saw him heal the blind, the crippled, the deaf and lots of people with other diseases. They saw him walk on the water and when he fed 5000 people, they gave out the bread and fish. They listened, they saw and they believed that Jesus was no ordinary person. Peter spoke for the group when he said, "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God!"



(John 6:69 NIV). He also said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16 NIV). But there were many times when Jesus was very disappointed with the disciples.

## **SELF-CENTRED DISCIPLES**

Although the disciples loved and followed Jesus, he was very disappointed in the disciples at times. One day Jesus was walking along the road and a group of disciples were following him. As Jesus listened, he heard a heated discussion as the disciples argued over who was the most important. Perhaps it went something like this. One said, "When Jesus becomes King, I think he will make me the Governor of Judea." Another broke in "I think he will make me the Governor of Galilee." Perhaps another wanted to become the Minister of Finance. Another disciple may have said, "No way! Why would he choose you? He would choose me before you, after all, my mother and his mother are cousins." Before long, they were all arguing about who was the greatest.

Later on, Jesus asked, "What were you all arguing about on the road? They were so embarrassed they said nothing. Jesus said, "whoever wants to be first must be the servant of all" (Mark 9:33-35). The disciples loved and followed Jesus but selfish ambition was still a part of their lives. Today, in many churches, there are Christians who love and follow Jesus, but sadly, selfish ambition is a big part of their lives. People want the most important places on church committees and they want to get recognition.

More than once Jesus had to teach them this lesson; leaders must also be servants. Right before his death the disciples were once again arguing about who was the most important (Luke 22:24). Jesus said to them, "The greatest among you must be like the youngest, and the leader must be like the servant" (Luke 22:26).

## **ANGER AND REVENGE**

Some of the disciples had a problem with a very quick temper. If something displeased them they were likely to get angry very quickly. One day when Jesus was going from Galilee to Jerusalem he passed through Samaria. The Samaritans and the Jews did not like each other.

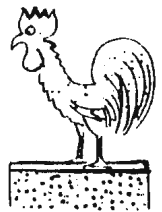
The Jews thought that they were superior to the Samaritans. Jesus asked James and John to go ahead to one of the Samaritan villages and to arrange a place where Jesus and his disciples could stay. The Samaritan people, however, did not want Jesus to stay in their village and would not give them accommodation. James and John were very angry. They said to Jesus "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?" Jesus rebuked them and they went on to another village (Luke 9:54-56).

James and John were called "sons of thunder" because they got angry so quickly. There are many Christians like them today. There are people who get upset real easy if things do not please them. Some Christians refuse to speak to other Christians. Some think of getting even with others, and doing things to hurt them, rather than forgiving them.

## PRIDE

Pride is a problem that affects many people. Some people are proud of their good looks. Others are proud of their education, wealth or position in society. Some are proud of their position in the church. Peter was proud. He thought he was a better and stronger Christian than any of the other disciples. On the night before Jesus died, he ate a special meal with his disciples. Jesus knew he would be arrested and would be nailed to the cross and he tried to warn his disciples. He said "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered'" (Mark 14:27 NIV). But Peter thought he was better than the others. Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not" (Mark 14:29). Jesus knew what Peter was like on the inside and said to Peter, "Today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times" (Mark 14:30 NIV).

Peter disagreed. He said he would die before he ever denied Jesus. Yet a few hours later, Jesus was arrested and Peter was standing outside the courthouse wondering what would happen to Jesus. A servant girl asked him if he was a follower of Jesus and he instantly denied



it. Two other people asked him similar questions, and every time he denied that he even knew Jesus. Then the rooster crowed and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, and he went out and wept bitterly. Years later Peter wrote, “God resists the proud but shows favour to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). Spiritual pride was Peter’s downfall.

## **WEAK AND FEARFUL**

When the disciples were with Jesus they were confident, full of joy and felt they could overcome any problem. Jesus knew better, and he told them that they would all desert him and run away. The disciples were like Peter, and they felt sure they would never run away or desert Jesus. However, a few hours later, in the middle of the night, they got a big shock when soldiers come to the garden of Gethsemane with the chief priests and other officials. They were armed with swords and spears and arrested Jesus. Suddenly, fear filled the disciples. Their courage and bravery disappeared and they ran for their lives.

Today many people are the same way. When they are at church or youth group with Christian friends, they appear to be bold and strong. They are happy to sing or share their testimony. But a few days later, when they are with non-Christians at work or at school, they become fearful and say nothing. Some people are fearful that others will laugh at them or ridicule them and so they join in doing things they know to be wrong. Later they are ashamed of their actions. They are weak, fearful Christians. They know what they should do but they lack the strength to do the right thing.

## **THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Jesus knew his disciples were not very strong in their faith. He also knew that he would soon leave them and return to heaven. He said to them on the night before he died, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. . . I will not leave you as orphans” (John 14:16-18). We will now look at the big changes that came about in the lives of the disciples when they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

## WAITING FOR THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

After Jesus had risen from the dead he spent 40 days teaching his disciples. He was not with them all the time like he was before his death, but he came and went. The disciples never knew when they would see him. Jesus was getting them ready for the time when he would leave them permanently. One day they left Jerusalem for the Mount of Olives, which was not far from the city of Jerusalem.

The disciples stood there surrounding Jesus, and he gave them his last words. He said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift I told you about, the gift my Father promised. . . . John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit . . . . When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4-5,8).

When Jesus had finished saying these things and while the disciples were still watching, he was lifted up into the sky. They stood there watching him going up into the sky until the clouds hid him from their sight. They remembered Jesus' instruction and so they left the Mount of Olives and went back to Jerusalem. They all gathered together in the big house where once they had the Passover feast and the last supper meal with Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus, some other women, and also his brothers were there with the disciples. There were about 120 people who believed in Jesus who met together to pray.

They stayed in that house for ten days. We do not know everything they talked about or what they did during this time. We only know they prayed. The Bible doesn't say, but many people think that they must have confessed to one another whatever burdens and feelings they had against each other. Jesus had told them, "If you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother and then come back and offer your gift to God" (Matthew 5:23-24). The disciples had many things they needed to straighten out.

Maybe Peter said, "When we ate the Passover, I said that I had stronger faith than all of you. But I was lying. Three times I denied the

name of Jesus and said that I did not know him. I was wrong. I repented and have confessed to Jesus, but I want you to forgive me too.”

Maybe others confessed that they had been arguing about being the most important among the other disciples. I think Thomas may have said this, “I am sorry for not believing you when you said that Jesus had risen from the grave. My faith was not strong and I am ashamed of that.”

Maybe some disciples told the women, “We are sorry for not believing you when you came and told us that Jesus had risen from the dead. We made fun of you and thought that you were crazy. We are ashamed of our little faith. We were wrong. Please forgive us.”

For ten days, they shared and prayed together. I think they must have done some Bible study and thought about the Old Testament teaching about the Holy Spirit. They obviously thought about the writings of Prophet Joel, for Joel had written that in the last days God would pour out his Holy Spirit upon his people.

## **THE DAY OF PENTECOST**

One Sunday morning, they came together in worship. It had been 50 days since Jesus had risen from the dead. It was known as Pentecost and it was a time to celebrate the beginning of the harvest season. Maybe they thought back to seven Sundays before when Jesus had risen from the dead. They were filled with joy, they praised and worshipped together and suddenly they heard a loud noise which came from heaven. It sounded like a rushing wind that came and filled the house where they were. Then they saw tongues of fire falling and spreading upon each one of them.

The Holy Spirit filled each one of them like liquid fire in their hearts. They received new power in their lives. Fear was gone. They no longer feared the Jewish leaders and Pharisees and did not lock the doors as they usually did. Instead, they opened the doors, rushed outside into the city streets and started praising God. They started preaching the Word of God and telling about Jesus. People were surprised, for the disciples were not speaking their normal language but were preaching in many different languages. They were speaking languages that they had not learned before. One preached in the language of Crete, another preached in Latin, others preached in Greek so the Greek-speaking people would understand.

All of this was done through power of the Holy Spirit, as he enabled them to speak.

Many people who were in Jerusalem at that time were amazed to see what was happening to these people. They were confused, for the way the disciples dressed showed that they were people from Galilee; but they were speaking in fifteen different languages. They were speaking these languages clearly and people could understand them easily. But others made fun of them and said, "These people are drunk."

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and had no fear. He stood up and spoke. "These people are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only nine o'clock in the morning. Instead this is what the prophet Joel spoke about: 'This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour out my spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. Yes, even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will proclaim my message'" (Acts 2:15-18).

Peter preached how Jesus had been killed, but God had raised him from the dead. The people were convicted by the Holy Spirit and said, "Brothers, what shall we do now?" Peter said to them, "Each one of you, must turn away from your sins and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's



*Fellow Jews, listen to me! (2.14)*

gift, the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Many people believed the message and turned away from their sins. They believed in Jesus and three thousand were baptised. They joined with other believers in worshiping together, praying, sharing in fellowship meals and learning from the Apostles.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGED THE DISCIPLES**

When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and other believers on the day of Pentecost, many changes took place in their lives. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be their Helper. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled their hearts, and their lives were completely changed.

### **Loving Others**

Before the day of Pentecost, the disciples often argued as to which one was the greatest among them all. Everyone wanted to have the most important position and looked down upon all the others. But when the Holy Spirit filled them on the day of Pentecost, their selfish ambition and pride changed instantly. They loved and cared for others. There was no more arguing and quarreling among the disciples. Acts 4:32 says, "The group of believers were one in mind and heart. None of them said that any of their belongings were their own, but they all shared with one another everything they owned." Their selfishness was gone. They no longer exalted themselves and despised others. They loved others and had the desire to help and support each other. They humbled themselves and exalted the name of Jesus. This is one of the big changes the Holy Spirit did in the lives of the disciples.

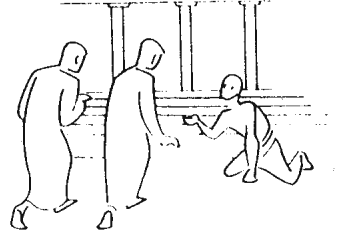
### **Forgiving Others**

James and John often lost their temper and got angry. They were brothers and were called the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). As we saw earlier on, they were angry with people of one Samaritan village and they wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy the people of that village (Luke 9:51-55). But the Holy Spirit took away the hot-tempered behaviour. Later, John wrote, "Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God" (1 John 4:7). And also he says, "Our love should not be just words or talk; it must be true love which shows itself in action" (1 John 3:18). Quick temper, anger and revenge had disappeared from John's life.

The Holy Spirit took away their hot temper, anger and unforgiving attitudes and gave them a new attitude. He gave James and John a forgiving spirit. He strengthened them and enabled them to show the same kind of attitude that Jesus had shown.

## Humility

Peter was proud and thought he was stronger than other disciples. But he failed Jesus and three times said that he did not know Jesus. He repented, and the Holy Spirit changed him and removed his pride. Peter knew that he could not rely on his own strength, but he also knew that the Holy Spirit would enable him to stand up strong in the name of Jesus. In Acts 3, we read the story of Peter and John going to the Temple gate. A crippled man saw Peter and John and asked them for some money. Peter and John had no money but they had a strong faith in Jesus. So Peter said, "I have no money at all, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I order you to get up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Peter took the man's hand and helped him to stand. At once his legs and knees became strong. He stood up and began to walk. He was so excited he started running and jumping in the Temple.



*I give you what I have (3 6)*

People came running to see what was happening. They saw the man who had been crippled, but he was no longer sitting down begging for money. Instead, he was jumping up and down, praising the name of the Lord. People crowded around Peter amazed that this man could have done such a great miracle. But Peter did not become proud and take any of the credit for what had happened. He said, "Why are you so surprised at this, and why do you stare at us? Do you think that it was by means of our own power or godliness that we made this man walk? . . . God . . . has given divine glory to his servant Jesus . . . It was the power of his name that gave strength to this lame man" (Acts 3:12,16). Peter did not accept any praise for himself. He knew all the power came from Jesus and therefore he praised the name of Jesus.

## Perseverance in Times of Trouble

When the soldiers came and arrested Jesus, the disciples were afraid and ran away. But when the Holy Spirit came and filled them, their fear disappeared. They did not run away from troubles, but faced them with



calmness and confidence. They even rejoiced when they were beaten and persecuted.

The apostles were preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Temple and on the streets and in people's houses. This made the High Priest and the Pharisees very angry. They arrested the apostles and put them into prisons. But this did not stop them from preaching. Peter told them, "We must obey God, not men" (Acts 5:29). But Peter's words caused the Jewish leaders to become very furious. They took the apostles and had them whipped until the skin on the apostle's backs was torn and bleeding. The high priest and Jewish leaders warned the apostles that they must stop preaching in the name of Jesus. But, what did the apostles do? They did not give up preaching the good news about Jesus.

The Bible says that the apostles left the meeting of the council and went outside. They rejoiced and praised God that they were able to bear shame in the name of Jesus. Every day they went to the Temple; they also visited the houses of people and taught them the word of God (Acts 5:41-42). The Holy Spirit took away their fear and gave them strength to stand up and face the persecution and beatings. They rejoiced in bearing shame in Jesus' name.

## **THE TRANSFORMING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We have looked at the lives of the disciples before and after the Day of Pentecost. We see that the Holy Spirit made a tremendous change in the lives of the disciples. From these stories we can learn some important truths about the Holy Spirit and his work.

- Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to strengthen them and to be with them.
- He told the apostles not to start doing ministry, but to wait until the Holy Spirit came on them.
- He said that the Holy Spirit would give them power and make them witnesses.
- They obeyed Jesus' words and went back to Jerusalem. They prayed and waited for the Holy Spirit to come.
- When they had been filled with the Holy Spirit, God gave them new power and they were no longer fearful, but started proclaiming the

message of Jesus.

- They preached boldly with the power of the Holy Spirit and the people felt the Holy Spirit convicting them of their sins. Three thousand men and women repented from their sins and were baptised on the first day. Day after day new people were added to the number of believers.

This story shows us some of the great things the Holy Spirit does in the lives of Christians. The disciples believed in Jesus and followed him, but their faith and actions were not strong. When the Holy Spirit came and filled them on the Day of Pentecost, many great changes took place in their lives.

- The Holy Spirit cleansed them from their proud and selfish ways, and instead gave them a humble attitude so that they strengthened and helped others.
- The Holy Spirit cleansed them from a quick temper and unforgiving attitude and gave them a heart of compassion, humility and a desire to forgive others.
- The Holy Spirit cleansed them from self-centeredness and gave them a heart of humility. They did not seek to get glory and honour for themselves but to give glory and honour to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit cleansed them from fear and shame and cowardly behaviour during the times of testing. Instead, he gave them power to stand up strong and rejoice in times of trouble and persecution.

The Holy Spirit made these changes in the lives of the disciples and he wants to make the same type of changes in the life of every Christian. The Holy Spirit is God's best gift, but he does not want to give the Holy Spirit to just a small group of special Christians, but to all Christians.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

A man once said to me, “When I was baptised, I was baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But then I did not hear much about the Holy Spirit. I began to wonder if the Holy Spirit was real, and if he was important. I wasn’t really sure of the Holy Spirit.” There are probably many people who are like this person. Many have questions like:

- What is the Holy Spirit or who is he?
- Is the Holy Spirit like a person who can think and talk, or is the Holy Spirit some sort of power like the wind?
- We know about different kinds of spirits at home in the village but where does the Holy Spirit live? What does he do?
- If people are filled with the Holy Spirit does this mean that the Holy Spirit takes over their lives and they lose control of their lives? Does the Holy Spirit make a person act crazy like a man filled with an evil spirit?
- What does the Holy Spirit do to a person?

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND OTHER SPIRITS**

Many people have heard about different kinds of spirits. They have heard stories about ghosts and the spirits of the dead people. Some people say that the spirits of the dead help us and take care of us. But sometimes when the spirits get angry, they can really make us suffer. People tell about the spirits who look after gardens and domestic animals. They say there are spirits that control the fish in the sea. Some talk about spirits that live up in the mountains, or in lakes and swampy areas, or those that live in the forest. There are many stories and often they are scary.

When the people hear about the Holy Spirit, they sometimes have confusing thoughts. Some think that the Holy Spirit must be like one of the spirits of the dead. Should we be afraid of the Holy Spirit? Will he harm us?

Some people think back to the stories they heard from their grandparents. When a person was possessed by a spirit, then this person's body began to shake, this showed that the spirit had come. Will the Holy Spirit do the same sort of thing? How can we know when the Holy Spirit comes?

Some think in a different way. Some people are known as fortune-tellers. These are the people who tell the future for someone, or reveal the future by some special ritual or by talking to the spirits. Sometimes they fall unconscious like a dead person and then later, they wake up and tell everyone what they had seen or heard from the spirits. Many people think that the Holy Spirit will do something like this.

There are many questions like this and many people are not too sure about how the Holy Spirit really works or what he wants to do in our lives. Some people are a little afraid of the Holy Spirit because they do not know what he will do to them.

## **SPIRITS AND ANGELS**

The Bible tells us that there are a lot of spirits. God's angels are spirits. Hebrews 1:14 says, "Angels ... are spirits who serve God and are sent by him to help those who are to receive salvation." The angels of God guide and protect us. "God will put his angels in charge of you to protect you wherever you go" (Psalm 91:11). Psalm 34:7 says, "His angel guards those who honour the Lord and rescues them from danger." These angels are good spirits who care for us and protect us, and there are thousands and thousands of them. Hebrews 12:22 (NIV) talks about "thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly." But the Holy Spirit is different from these angels. The Holy Spirit is not one of the angels. He is completely different and is like God himself, for he is the Spirit of God.

In the past, some of God's angels rebelled against God and there was a big fight in heaven. God's angels removed those rebellious angels from heaven, and those angels are now evil spirits and they are under Satan's power. Satan was one of the highest of angels and is now the head of those rebellious angels which were removed from heaven. These spirits are under Satan's power and Satan uses them to deceive many people.

Sometimes, those evil spirits come in a form of a dead person's spirit to deceive and put fear into people's lives and bring them back under Satan's control.

Sometimes, evil spirits come to deceive Christians. They give false messages to Christians and try to confuse them. We must be very careful, because they want to deceive us also.

The Holy Spirit is completely different from the spirits of this world. The Holy Spirit is not the spirit of a dead person, and he is not a spirit that lives in the village or in the sea or up in the forest. The Holy Spirit has the same character as God. His thoughts are exactly the same as God's thoughts. The Holy Spirit lived in Jesus and today he lives in us to help us to live like Jesus and do what Jesus wants us to do.

The Holy Spirit inspired the people who wrote the Scriptures. Every word of the Holy Spirit must agree with the Bible. The Holy Spirit will never tell anyone to do anything that disagrees with the Bible. If a person prophesies, but his prophecy does not agree with the Scripture, then this prophecy is not from the Holy Spirit. It comes from his own imagination or from one of the evil deceiving spirits.

If someone is filled with the Holy Spirit, then he will show the fruit of the Spirit in loving and caring for others. If a person does not demonstrate the fruit of the Holy Spirit, then that person is not walking in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LIKE A PERSON WHO CAN THINK AND TALK**

Some Christians were talking together and were discussing the work of the Holy Spirit. A lady said, "I thought that the Holy Spirit was some kind of a supernatural power like a special wind or fire. Now, I see that the Holy Spirit is like a person, but he does not have a physical body like we have. He is like a person that can think, talk, rejoice and can also grieve and feel sad." This lady is right, the Holy Spirit has a personality like a real person.

When Jesus wanted to leave his disciples and go back to heaven, they were very sad. They had been with Jesus for three years and he was their best friend and teacher. They talked with him and he with them. But

Jesus told them, "I will send a Helper to comfort you." The Holy Spirit is the best partner or helper that we could possibly have. Jesus said, "I will be with you always" (Matthew 28:20). We do not see Jesus with our own eyes, but we know he is with us. The Holy Spirit has taken over Jesus' place and he has become our partner or friend. The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts. He tells us what is right and what is wrong. When we disobey him, he speaks to us and we feel guilty and burdened in our hearts. When we read the Bible, he helps us to understand the meaning of the Bible clearly. Therefore, we must walk with the Holy Spirit and do nothing to grieve him. He wants to be our best friend, teacher and companion.

## **ONE GOD OR THREE GODS**

Some people were having a debate about different beliefs and styles of worship. Someone asked, "How many Gods do you worship? The Scripture says that there is only one God. But you say, God the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit too is God, so that means you worship three Gods."

How many Gods are there? Is Jesus Christ really God or not? Is the Holy Spirit really God or not? One person replied, "We are not worshipping three Gods. There is only one God, but we call God by three different names, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity means three persons in one God.

Which statement or understanding of God is right? Do we worship one God or three Gods? Some say God is three in one, but what does this word "Trinity" really mean? Does the word "Trinity" appear in the Bible or not?

## **THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD**

There are not many Gods, but there is only one God and he is the creator of everything. The Bible speaks clearly about this. In the Old Testament, God spoke about this:

I, and I alone, am God; no other god is real.  
I kill and I give life, I wound and I heal,  
And no one can oppose what I do.  
As surely I am the only living God . . .

Deut. 32:39-40

I am God, the first, the last, the only God; there is no other god but me.

Isaiah 44:6

Jesus said, "The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart. . ."

Mark 12:29-30

Paul said, "There is one God and Father of all people, who is Lord of all."

Ephesians 4:6

The Bible clearly says that there is only one God. He is Lord and creator of all things and he is the only heavenly Father that we have.

## **JESUS CHRIST IS GOD**

We have looked in the Bible and it tells us that there is only one God. But the Bible also tells us that Jesus is also God. Read the following Scripture verses.

In the beginning, the Word already existed; the Word was with God and the Word was God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory he received as the Father's only Son.

John 1:1-3, 14

In the creation story God speaks and everything happens. Every one of the stages of creation begins with the words, "And God said." These words occur at the beginning of 9 different verses in the first chapter of Genesis. The Word of God is very powerful. God simply spoke and the various parts of the universe came to exist. John used "WORD" as another name for "JESUS." Jesus is this "Word" that existed in the

beginning, became man and came to the world. If we replace “Word” with “Jesus”, then the Bible verse will read like this:

In the beginning, *Jesus* already existed; *Jesus* was with God and *Jesus* was God. From the very beginning *Jesus* was with God. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. *Jesus* was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. *Jesus* became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory he received as the Father’s only Son.

These Scripture verses agree with other Bible verses.

*He (Jesus Christ) always had the nature of God*, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness.

Philippians 2:6-7

*Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God* . . . superior to all created things. For through him God created everything in heaven and on earth.

Colossians 1:15-16

God has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe . . . He reflects the brightness of God’s glory and *is the exact likeness of God’s own being*.

Hebrews 1:2-3

Jesus said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” John 14:9

All these Scripture verses tell us clearly that before God created heaven and earth and everything that is in them, that Jesus already existed and was with God the Father and involved in the creation of the world. We cannot see God but we can see Jesus Christ. He left heaven and became a person like us in order to show us the ways of God. Jesus has the same ideas, desires, feelings and thoughts as God the Father. Jesus isn’t one god and God the Father another god. They are both one.



## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD**

The Bible gives some other names for the Holy Spirit. These names or titles show the power and glory of God. He is not an ordinary spirit. See the names below:

Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2)

Spirit of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2)

Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20)

Power of the Most High (Luke 1:35 NIV)

Spirit of the Son of God (Galatians 4:6)

Eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14)

Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11)

The glorious Spirit (1 Peter 4:14)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Most High God. He is not some lesser being. Just like God the Father, the Holy Spirit lives forever and has the same power and glory as God himself. The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of Jesus. He has the same thoughts, and desires as Jesus. Jesus and God are one. The Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus.

In Acts Chapter 5, we can read the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Ananias sold his land and gave the money to the church. But he and his wife hid some money for themselves. Peter knew he was lying and so he said, "Ananias, why did you let Satan take control of you and ... lie to the Holy Spirit ... You have not lied to people—you have lied to God" (Acts 5:3-4). Ananias thought he was deceiving the apostles, but Peter pointed out that he was lying to God. He lied to the Holy Spirit and by doing this he lied to God. Both are same. The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit and he is God.

## **GOD IN THREE PERSONS**

We believe there is only one God. But we also say:

God the Father is God

Jesus Christ is God

The Holy Spirit is also God.

But that does not mean that we have three Gods for there is only one God. We talk about God being a Trinity. Trinity is made up of two words, “tri” and “unity.” When put together it means three in perfect unity.

This is a bit hard for us to understand, for God is so much bigger and more complex than we are. He is the Almighty Creator and we are his creation. There is no way in which we can fully understand all there is to know about God.

Let us think of some illustrations that will help us to understand. Think of two people who have been married a long time and who have a really wonderful marriage. The Bible says that in marriage the two become one. They are still two separate people but they become one couple. As they live together they learn each other’s ways of thinking and so they become one in thought, one in spirit and one in mind. Two have become one. If we were to multiply this a million times, we get a pale picture of the Trinity. In the Trinity, Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit exist in perfect unity. There is constant communion, interaction and fellowship. There is diversity in the midst of the unity. There is one God who reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **The Trinity made the heavens and earth**

In the beginning, God created the universe (Genesis 1:1).

Through him (Jesus) God made all things (John 1:2).

Everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water (Genesis 1:2).

### **The Trinity was involved when Jesus came into the world**

God sent Jesus into this world (John 3:16-17).

Jesus was equal with God but of his “own free will gave up all he had,” and left heaven and came down (Philippians 2:6-8).

The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and God’s power rested upon her and she became pregnant and gave birth to Jesus (Luke 1:35).

### **The Trinity is evident when Jesus was baptised**

When *Jesus* was baptised by John, heaven was opened, and the *Holy Spirit* of God came down like a dove and rested upon Jesus' shoulder. And a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

### **Evangelism is done in the name of the Trinity**

Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples, baptise them in the name of *the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 28:19-20

### **The Trinity is involved in sending the Holy Spirit**

The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the *Father will send* in my name, will teach you everything. John 14:26

The Helper will come—the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God . . . *I will send* him to you. John 15:26

The Holy Spirit is sent by both the Father, and the Son.

### **The Trinity is involved in our salvation**

You were chosen according to the purpose of *God the Father* and were made a holy people by his *Spirit*, to obey *Jesus Christ* and be purified by his blood. 1 Peter 1:2

### **Blessing in the name of the Trinity**

The grace of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the love of *God*, and the fellowship of the *Holy Spirit* be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:13

God is a Trinity: three persons in full and complete unity. God the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is also God. But they are one, and have one mind, one thought, and work together in perfect unity.

The Trinity is not like a committee. Sometimes we form a committee, but when the members of that committee come together, every member has a different idea. But God is not like that. God is not a committee, where Jesus has his own agenda and the Holy Spirit has another. The

Holy Spirit cannot change Jesus' words. God is one in thought, in words and in behaviour.

Although God is one, yet the Father is different to the Son, and the Son is different to the Holy Spirit, and yet all three are one. Let us look at the different tasks of the members of the Trinity.

## **THE WORK OF GOD THE FATHER**

All things were created by him (Romans 11:36).

He knows all things (Romans 11:33).

He is all powerful (Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37).

He is everywhere (Psalms 139:7-10).

He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).

God comes in awesome majesty. The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power (Job 37:23 NIV).

To the eternal King, immortal, invisible, the only God—to him be glory and honour for ever and ever (1 Timothy 1:17).

## **THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST**

He is God (John 1:1).

He created all things that are in heaven and on earth (Colossians 1:16).

He became man.

He became like an ordinary servant.

He humbled himself and obeyed God.

He died on the cross.

He rose up from the grave.

He is placed in the highest place.

He is given the name that is above every name.

Every being in heaven and on earth and in the world below will fall on their knees before him (Philippians 2:6-11).

## **THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

He is sent by the Father and also by the Son (John 14:16).

He makes us to become God's children (Romans 8:16).  
He lives within us (John 14:17).  
He is our teacher (John 14:26).  
He convicts people of their sins (John 16:8).  
He speaks about Jesus and glorifies him only (John 16:14).  
He empowers Christians to proclaim the gospel (Acts 1:8).  
He gives gifts to Christians (1 Corinthians 12:1).  
He makes us holy and God's own people (1 Peter 1:2).

God is three in one (Trinity). The work of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit are a little bit different but he is still the same God. They work together in absolute perfect harmony.

Some Bible college students were studying about the Trinity and the teacher asked them to think of some good illustrations to show that God is one but has three parts. One student from the coastal area said, "I think of a coconut. When we open a coconut, we see that there are three parts to it. It has some good water for drinking, nice white meat that is good for eating, and a good strong shell. These three parts are different and each has its own special job, but it is one coconut."

One girl said, "I think of water. Water can be solid, liquid, or a gas. When frozen we call it ice, when it is liquid it is water, and when we boil it, then we call it steam, but it exists in three different forms but it is still water."

Another student said, "When I think about God, I think of the sun. God is completely holy. He is like a blazing light that is all powerful. He has no beginning and ending. The sun too is very powerful. It is the source of light and we cannot look at it for it is too strong and bright for our eyes. If we were to go too close to it we would burn up. In the same way, God the Father is so powerful and holy that we dare not look at him."

The student continued, "But when I think of Jesus, I think of the work of the sunlight. During the night, it gets dark and gets very cold in mountainous areas. But in the morning, the sun rises and clears the darkness away. When we see the sun rising, we like to go outside and let the sun warm our bodies. This illustrates the work of Jesus. The light rays of the sun come all the way from the sun to our planet earth.

Likewise, Jesus is God but he left heaven and came down to the world to show us God's ways. We do not fear Jesus, and we draw near to him and we sense God's mercy and love for us. Jesus is like the rays of the sun that come and warm us up when we feel cold. Jesus removes the darkness and gives us light and joy."

The student went on to say, "When I think about the work of the Holy Spirit, I remember something a teacher showed us. He took a magnifying glass and held it in such a way so that the glass caused the rays of the sun to come together into a small point of light. Very quickly those rays of sunlight started a fire and soon paper and grass were burning. This illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit. He brings the light, love, and power of God and starts a fire in the lives of Christians. Just as the magnifying glass brings the light of the sun to create or cause fire, the Holy Spirit also brings God's power and causes it to burn within our hearts."

## SUMMARY

Now think about all the major topics in this chapter.

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and is very different from the angels or any other spirit.
- Angels are God's servants who are sent by God to do his work and to care for and protect us. Evil spirits are rebellious angels that are under the power of Satan.
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and has the same personality as God. He talks, teaches us, helps us and gives us the sense of direction. He wants to be our closest friend. When we obey him, the Holy Spirit is happy, but when we disobey God we grieve the Holy Spirit and make him sad.
- We believe that God is a Trinity. There is only one God, but he exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is one and there are not three gods. God the Father is God. Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is God. There is one mind, one heart, one direction, one purpose and one goal. There is constant harmony, unity, fellowship and communion between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The first reference to the Holy Spirit is found in Genesis 1:2. The last reference is in Revelation 22:17, which is the last chapter in the Bible and almost the last verse. The Holy Spirit is therefore found through out the Bible from beginning to end. Although most of what we read about the Holy Spirit is found in the New Testament, the Old Testament has much to teach us about the Holy Spirit and his work.

#### **THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES LIFE**

In the first chapter of the Old Testament, we read, “In the beginning when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water” (Genesis 1:1-2).

The earth and sea had nothing in it. There were no fish, no birds, no plants or anything that had life. It was all covered with darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving above the water like a strong wind. God spoke into the chaos and darkness and created life and order. The Holy Spirit was there in the creation of this world and gave life to creation.

When God created Adam, the Bible says, God “breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live” (Genesis 2:7). In the Hebrew language, “wind” and “spirit” are the same words. The person who breathes air stays alive and his spirit gives him life. When a man does not breathe in air, he dies and his spirit leaves him. Therefore, wind or air is a picture of the spirit. “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4 NIV).

In the Bible a strong wind is sometimes a symbol of God’s Spirit. One time God’s Spirit took Ezekiel to a valley where the ground was covered with the dry bones of people who had been dead for a long time. The Lord commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to these bones and tell them that they would be covered with flesh and would live again. Ezekiel did as he was commanded and while he was speaking to these bones, they started to move and join back together again. While Ezekiel watched, the

bones were covered with flesh and tissue, and then the bodies were covered with skins, but they stayed like dead bodies. Then the Lord told Ezekiel to command the wind to come and breathe into these bodies and bring them back to life. Ezekiel told the wind to come. It came and breath entered the bodies, they came to life, they stood up, and started moving about. God said, “I will put my Spirit in you and you will live” (Ezekiel 37:14 NIV).

We read about a strong wind from God at other times. After the flood in the time of Noah, God sent a wind over the earth and the flood water started to go down (Genesis 8:1). When Moses had the Red sea in front of him and Pharaoh’s army behind him, God sent a strong east wind to make a path through the water (Exodus 14:21). Was this just a wind, or was the Holy Spirit a big part of these miracles? We do not know. We do know that on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with the sound of a strong wind blowing (Acts 2:1-2).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES POWER FOR SPECIAL TYPES OF WORK**

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came to individual people to give them power to do some special kind of work.

### **Wisdom**

In Genesis 41:38, Joseph interpreted the dream of King Pharaoh, and Pharaoh said, “We will never find a better man than Joseph, a man who has God’s Spirit in him.” King Pharaoh told Joseph, “God has shown you all this, so it is obvious that you have greater wisdom and insight than anyone else” (Genesis 41:38-39). Joseph had used this wisdom God had given him and he became an outstanding leader, administrator and the Prime Minister of Egypt. Other leaders such as Moses and Joshua had unusual wisdom that was given to them by God. We read that Joshua was “filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him” (Deuteronomy 34:9 NIV) as God had told him to do.



## Artistic ability and skill

When they made the tent of the Lord's presence, God told Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel . . . and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts--to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship" (Exodus 31:3-5 NIV). Bezalel used this gift that God had given him and he created many beautiful things for the house of worship.

## Leadership

The people of Israel were oppressed and treated cruelly by another country for eight years. The people cried to God for help, and God chose Othniel to be their deliverer. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel and he became the leader of Israel. He fought against the king of Mesopotamia and with God's help he defeated the king. Under Othniel's leadership Israel had no war for 40 years (Judges 3:9-11).

Gideon was an ordinary man, but one day, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and Gideon blew the trumpet to call the men to follow him. (Judges 6:34).

God used Gideon to defeat the enemies and brought peace again to Israel for the next forty years.



## Unusual Strength

Samson is known as one of the strongest men of all times but his strength was not because he was bigger and had more muscles than

anyone else. His enemies tried hard to find out the secret of his strength, but that strength came from God. Judges 14:6 says, “The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands” (Judges 14:6 NIV). Samson knew that his power came from God but he seemed to take this lightly. Samson played around with sin and became involved with prostitutes. One day he woke up thinking that he would have his usual strength, but “He did not know that the Lord had left him” (Judges 16:20). He became just like an ordinary person.

### **Leadership of a country**

David was a young boy who took care of his father’s sheep, but one day, the prophet Samuel came and anointed him with oil and chose him to become king of Israel. “Immediately the Spirit of the Lord took control of David and was with him from that day on (1 Samuel 16:13). The Holy Spirit strengthened David and gave him a lot of wisdom and leadership ability. He became the best king that Israel ever had.

### **Prophecy**

The Holy Spirit enabled some people of the Old Testament to know what was going to happen in the future. These people were known as prophets and they became God’s messengers or spokesmen. David was a king but he sometimes spoke like a prophet. He said, “The Spirit of the Lord speaks through me; his message is on my lips” (2 Samuel 23:2). Micah was another prophet. He said, “I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin” (Micah 3:8 NIV).

We can see from these examples that the Holy Spirit came to a few chosen people to give them understanding, strength or some special ability so that they could become leaders, prophets or kings of the Israelites. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit did not come upon many people. He came upon a few people to enable them to do some special work.

## **PROPHECIES ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT**

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was present in the lives of only a few people. The Holy Spirit did not come to ordinary people. Sometimes, many years went by and there was no prophet or strong leader, and it seemed as if the Holy Spirit had left them. God showed some prophets that in the future he was going to do something very different.

God spoke to prophet Joel, “Afterwards, I will pour my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions. At that time, I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women” (Joel 2:28-29). This is an amazing promise. God announced that instead of the Holy Spirit being given to great leaders like Joseph, Moses, Gideon and David, now God would give the Holy Spirit to all sorts of people. Instead of just kings and priests receiving the Holy Spirit, in the future, even servants, both men and women would receive the Holy Spirit.

### **Ezekiel’s Prophecy**

The Israelites had forsaken the Almighty God and had followed false gods. So God allowed their enemies to come and defeat them. Many were taken away into captivity to a foreign nation. They stayed there for over 70 years. God showed Ezekiel what would happen in the future and so Ezekiel sent this message to them. God said, “I will take you from every nation and country and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you and make you clean from all your idols and everything else that has defiled you. I will give you a new heart and a new mind. I will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart. I will put my Spirit in you and will see to it that you follow my laws and keep all the commands I have given you. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

God promised the Jewish people that he would do five important things

- The Jews were scattered over many different countries but he will bring them back to their own land.
- God will cleanse them from their evil ways and make them holy in his sight.
- God will remove their stubborn hearts of stone and will put his Spirit in their hearts.
- God will remind them to follow his laws and commands.
- They will become God's own people.

This prophecy of Ezekiel has two meanings. First, he talks about the people of Israel. God will bring the people of Israel back to their own land. This prophecy has been fulfilled, and the Israelites came back from their captivity to their own land. They gave up the worship of false gods and have never gone back to it.

But this prophecy of Ezekiel also talks about what the Holy Spirit wants to do in the lives of Christians.

- We too have been far away from God and have been following the ways of sin, but God in his love has brought us back to himself.
- God wants to cleanse us and remove any false gods from our hearts. False gods are anything we trust and rely on, or which we put first in our lives.
- God wants to remove the stony stubbornness from our hearts.
- Many times in the New Testament this is referred to as the sinful nature. God wants to remove the sinful nature from our lives.
- God wants to fill our hearts with his Holy Spirit so that we will obey his laws and commandments.
- Then we will be his children and he will be our God.

During the time of Moses, God wrote the ten commandments on two flat stones. But many times the people of Israel did not obey these laws. The laws were written on the stones but they were not written on their hearts. God promised to remove all the things that defiled them and put his Spirit in their hearts.

God gave a similar promise to Jeremiah. "I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33). Instead of laws written on stone, they

will be written on people's hearts and the Holy Spirit will help them to faithfully obey God's laws and commands.

### THE MESSIAH WILL COME.

The prophets of the Old Testament prophesied that God would send a special person who will be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. They called him Messiah in Hebrew and Christ in the Greek language. This word means, "the one who has been anointed with oil, and so consecrated for special service." Normally only priests and kings were anointed with oil.

God showed the vision of a coming king to the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah says that a descendant of King David will arise who will be truly anointed with the Holy Spirit.

*The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him*— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.                      Isaiah 11:2 (NIV)

The Lord says, "Here is my servant whom I strengthen—the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. *I have filled him with my Spirit*, and he will bring justice to every nation."                      Isaiah 42:1

*The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit.* He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to announce release to captives and freedom to those in prison. He has sent me to proclaim that the time has come when the Lord will save his people and defeat their enemies.                      Isaiah 61:1-2

These prophecies were fulfilled when Jesus was born and began his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus began his ministry and was asked to read the Scriptures in the synagogue in Nazareth he opened the scroll to Isaiah 61:1-2 and read this prophecy. He told the people, "This passage of Scripture has come true today as you heard it being read" (Luke 4:21).

## SUMMARY

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God who gives life.
- In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit came to a few individual people to give them special power, knowledge or ability to do God's work.
- The prophets said that in the last days, God would pour out his Holy Spirit upon all people. Men and women, young and old people alike, and even servants would receive the Holy Spirit.
- God promised that he would put his Holy Spirit in the hearts of people and he would write his laws on their hearts and cause them to obey all his commands.
- God promised to send a special anointed messenger, the Messiah, who would be full of the Holy Spirit.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF JESUS**

The Old Testament prophets foretold that God would send the “anointed one,” the Messiah or Christ. This person would be truly anointed with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Messiah, the one who was anointed by God and whose life demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is very important in the life of Jesus, for Jesus did all his work through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke much about the Holy Spirit and promised to send the Holy Spirit to strengthen Christians.

#### **THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS INVOLVED IN THE BIRTH TO JESUS**

The angel of the Lord told Mary that she was going to give birth to a boy. Mary was wondering how this could happen because she was still a virgin. But the angel said, “The Holy Spirit will come on you and God’s power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

We saw that in the story of creation the Holy Spirit was there giving life to the new creation. In the story of Mary giving birth to Jesus, the Holy Spirit in an unexplainable and miraculous way, formed new life. The Bible speaks clearly that Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary before Jesus was born. God performed a wonderful miracle through the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **THE BAPTISM OF JESUS**

When Jesus was about the age of 30, he left his home and family and started his ministry. John the Baptist had started preaching and telling people to repent from their sins and be baptised. Many people went to be baptised, and Jesus also went to the river Jordan where John was baptising. He had not committed any sin and did not need to repent.

John felt very unworthy to baptise Jesus. Jesus wanted to show the people that he identified himself with John's ministry, and so he asked John to baptise him. When he was baptised, he came up out of the water and was praying. The Bible says that heaven opened and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and landing on him. Then a voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you" (Luke 3:22).



Although Jesus was the Son of God, he did not do his ministry in his own strength. He knew he must do everything in God's power. It is significant that he did not begin his ministry until the Holy Spirit came down upon him at the time of his baptism. Jesus was baptised with the Holy Spirit and then started his ministry. He did everything in the power of the Holy Spirit.



Later, when he was ready to leave his disciples and return to heaven, he instructed them that they must wait for the power of the Holy Spirit. "I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised. But you must wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you" (Luke 24:49).

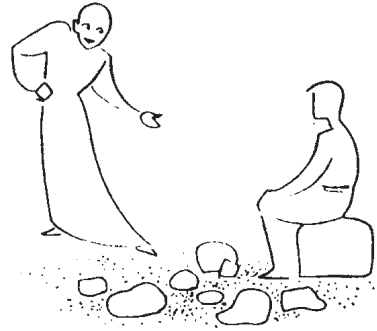
Our own strength is not enough. Jesus carried out his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, and he gave his Holy Spirit to us, so that we too can work in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **JESUS DEFEATED SATAN IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Some people think that if they are filled with the Holy Spirit, then Satan will not tempt them any more. But this idea is completely wrong. The Holy Spirit came on Jesus when he was baptised, and immediately the Holy Spirit led him into the desert. Jesus stayed in the desert for 40 days and Satan tempted him (Luke 4:1-2). People who are filled with the Holy Spirit will still be tempted.



Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit but temptation from Satan still came to him. Sātan tried his best to tempt Jesus but Jesus defeated him with God’s word from the Scriptures. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. These two belong together. We can defeat Satan when we stand against him in the power of the Holy Spirit and with the Word of God.



*Order these stones to turn into bread (4.3)*

After Satan had tried his hardest to defeat Jesus, we read an important verse. “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14 NIV). Yes, temptations came but Jesus overcame them all through the power of the Holy Spirit. We must do the same. “Build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against all the Devils evil tricks . . . So put on God’s armour now. Then . . . you will be able to resist the enemy’s attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground” (Ephesians 6:10-11,13).

## **JESUS PREACHED IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Jesus overcame the temptations of Satan and returned to Galilee and to his hometown, Nazareth. He went to the synagogue and was asked to read from the Scripture. He opened the book and read from the book of the prophet Isaiah. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people” (Luke 4:18-19). He closed the book and told them, “This passage of Scripture has come true today as you have heard it being read” (Luke 18:21).

Jesus announced that this prophecy, which had been given by Isaiah 600 years before had just been fulfilled. Jesus is the one whom God had chosen and anointed with the Holy Spirit to do his work. Jesus was conscious that everything he did must be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. He said to his disciples, “The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:10 NIV). Everything that Jesus did was done in obedience to his heavenly Father. “I love the Father; that is why I do everything as he commands me” (John 14:31). Jesus was obedient to his heavenly Father and this gave authority to his preaching, for he spoke only that which his Father told him to speak.

Jesus was committed to obeying God’s will, and he did everything through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **JESUS CAST OUT EVIL SPIRITS THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

When Jesus left heaven and came to this world, he left all his power, his strength and his glory in heaven. He humbled himself and became as an ordinary person. Jesus did not switch back and forth between being God and human. Jesus humbled himself and obeyed God and so the Holy Spirit was able to work mightily through him. Jesus did not do miracles because he was the Son of God, but because he was obedient to God and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus did four main things. He proclaimed the gospel, healed all types of diseases and sickness, cast out evil spirits, and all the time he was training his disciples. Although the religious leaders did not believe in Jesus, the evil spirits knew Jesus very well. They knew that he was the Son of God and they feared him. When Jesus commanded them to leave a person, they obeyed.

The people were amazed at the authority of Jesus and his power over the evil spirits, but some Jewish leaders were not happy and spoke evil things about Jesus. They said, “He drives out demons only because their ruler Beelzebul gives him the power to do so” (Matthew 12:24). Jesus replied, “No, it is not Beelzebul, but *God’s Spirit, who gives me the power to drive out demons*, which proves that the Kingdom of God has

already come upon you” (Matthew 12:28).

Jesus made an amazing promise. “I am telling you the truth: those who believe in me will do what I do—yes, they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father’s glory will be shown through the Son” (John 14:12-13). When Jesus returned to the Father he sent the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the church is to carry on and do the same work that Jesus did: proclaiming the Gospel, healing the sick and driving our evil spirits.

### **JESUS GAVE HIMSELF AS AN OFFERING FOR SIN**

Every part of Jesus’ life was guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. He faced his death in the power of the Holy Spirit. “Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice to God. His blood will purify our consciences from useless rituals, so that we may serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14).

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to live a life of perfect obedience. This meant giving his life as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Jesus had one desire, and that was to obey God completely and do whatever God wanted him to do. The Holy Spirit will help us in the same way. He will give us the strength to be totally obedient and to do whatever God wants us to do. With the help of the Holy Spirit we can take up our cross of obedience and follow Jesus.

### **JESUS PROMISED TO GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE DISCIPLES**

Jesus had demonstrated the importance and the power of the Holy Spirit through his own ministry. When it became time to leave this earth and return to heaven, the disciples were worried. But Jesus gave them these wonderful promises.

It is better for you that I go away, because if I do not go, the Helper will not come to you. But if I do go away, then I will send him to you.

John 16:7

I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. John 14:16-17

Jesus was not going to abandon the disciples and leave them without any help. He promised to send them a special Helper, the Holy Spirit, who would be with them everywhere they went. He would be their teacher, guide, helper, and encourager. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples would also be able to do miracles just like Jesus did.

On the day of Pentecost these promises were fulfilled. The disciples received the in filling of the Holy Spirit. In the power of the Holy Spirit they went out into the streets of Jerusalem proclaiming the story of Jesus in many different languages. People were amazed and wondered what was happening. Peter said, “God has raised this very Jesus from death and we are all witnesses of this fact. He has been raised to the right-hand side of God, his Father, and has received from him the Holy Spirit, as he had promised. What you now see and hear is his gift that he has poured out on us” (Acts 2:32-33).

The gift of the Holy Spirit was not just for the apostles. It is also for us. “God’s promise was made for you and for your children, and to all who are far away—all whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (Acts 2:39).

### SUMMARY

In this chapter we have looked at the close relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ ministry from the start to the end was done in the power and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and, in a miraculous way that we do not understand, the life of Jesus was formed within Mary.
- The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in the visible form of a dove at the time of his baptism.

- Through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the use of Scripture, the sword of the Spirit, Jesus was able to defeat all the temptations of Satan.
- Jesus preached with authority in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus cast out evil spirits and did many other miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus said that He would go away, but he promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to live within the apostles and give them power. This gift is not only for the apostles but for all those who believed their message and trusted in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT – OUR HELPER**

The night before Jesus was to die he spent a lot of time with his disciples. He told them that he would be leaving them and this made them very sad. Jesus knew that he would be killed the next day, and later he would leave his disciples and go back to heaven. So he took this opportunity to teach them about the great work the Holy Spirit would do in their lives and in the world. Jesus told them that it was important that he leave them and go away, because then he would send a special Helper who would be with them all the time. This Helper is the Holy Spirit. Jesus spent much time telling the disciples about the Holy Spirit and how he would help them. This important teaching is found in John 14- 16. We will look at the things Jesus told them about the Holy Spirit and how he helps us.

#### **THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS PEOPLE OF THEIR SIN**

The first thing the Holy Spirit does is to work in our hearts and draw us to God.

Many people think that they live good enough lives and that they are fine the way they are. They do not feel they are lost in sin or that they need a Saviour. The Holy Spirit helps people realize that they are sinners and need a Saviour. Jesus said that he would send the Holy Spirit who "... will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8 NIV).

Many people are far away from God. They ignore God and live their own lives, often following their selfish pleasures without any thought of God. God loves them and he wants to forgive them and accept them back into his family as his children. The Holy Spirit speaks to people's hearts and makes them aware of their sin and their lack of joy and peace. Sometimes God speaks through dreams, making people aware of their need to repent from their sins and turn to God. Sometimes he uses the testimony of someone, or books, magazine articles, a Christian radio

program, or open air preaching in a market or street corner, to convict people of their sin and their need to repent. God uses many different ways and events in people's lives to cause them to open their hearts, repent of their sins, and believe in Jesus.

We cannot convince people of their sins by just our persuasive words or preaching. It takes the Holy Spirit to bring true conviction to a person's life. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to bring conviction to a person's heart and he feels guilty of his sin. Often a person fears God's judgment and then repents from his sins and believes in Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave Peter great power in his preaching. People heard Peter's words and they were convicted of their sins. The people asked Peter and the other apostles; "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). This is an example of the Holy Spirit speaking to people and making them aware of their need to accept Jesus as their Saviour.

Paul started a church at a place called Thessalonica. These people accepted the message that Paul preached to them. Paul later wrote to them and said, "We brought the Good News to you, not with words only, but also with power and the Holy Spirit" (1Thessalonians 1: 5). As a result people abandoned their false gods and their idols and turned to God. They suffered many hardships but they did not give up their faith.

The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and directs it like a sword that pierces the hearts of unbelievers. This makes people feel uncomfortable, but this is one of the important tasks of the Holy Spirit. Because God loves us so much he often has to make people uncomfortable, before people see their need to repent. Only then can they can experience the joy and peace of having their sins forgiven.

God doesn't want anyone to perish. He wants everyone to repent from his or her sins (2 Peter 3:9). The Holy Spirit follows people and works in their hearts and minds until they turn back to God. King David knew this and he said;

Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalms 139:7-10 (NIV)

David knew very well that there was no place where a person could hide from God's Spirit. The Spirit of God is everywhere and searching for sinners and wants to bring them back into harmony and fellowship with their heavenly Father.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES US NEW**

Nicodemus was a Jewish leader. He came and talked with Jesus and asked him some questions. Jesus answered him directly; "No one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again" (John 3:3). This puzzled Nicodemus for he had never heard such a thing before. Jesus said again, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). Being born of water refers to our physical birth. Being born of the Spirit refers to a spiritual birth. Our spiritual lives are reborn and we become new in our hearts, with new ways of thinking. We no longer like the things we used to enjoy doing, and we start desiring spiritual things that we never did before.

When we repent from our sins, confess them, and believe in Jesus that he died on the cross for our sins, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and makes us totally new. We may look the same but we have a whole new way of thinking and living. God loved us so much that he sent his son Jesus Christ, who willingly gave up his life on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus died to forgive us from all our sins through his blood that flowed from the cross. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. But that is not all that God does. The Holy Spirit enters into our lives and gives us a new life. He lives within us and helps us to obey God's ways. Old habits disappear for we are now the children of God. The Bible says, "Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children" (Romans 8:14). It also says, "Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Christ)" (Romans 8:9).

When a person repents from his sins and believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit makes him a new person. He has a new mind and thinks differently



to the way he thought before. He feels very ashamed of the old ways of his sinful life, and does not want to do them any more. The Holy Spirit lives within him and now he wants to follow God's righteous ways. The Holy Spirit helps and teaches him daily. This person has assurance that Jesus has received him and has forgiven him. The Holy Spirit tells him that he is forgiven, accepted, and given new life by Jesus Christ. "God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16).

"We are sure that we live in union with God and that he lives in union with us, because he has given us his Spirit" (1 John 4:13). We have become children of God and part of the family of God. We are not fearful of God but can call him "Father" for he loves us better than the best earthly father could ever do.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BE OUR CONSTANT COMPANION**

The disciples were very sad when they heard that Jesus would be leaving them. They loved Jesus, and he had been with them constantly for the past three years. They had been going around with him, living with him, talking and eating together. He was their best friend, and they felt very sad when they thought about him leaving them. But Jesus told them, "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God" (John 14:16-17).

Jesus wanted the Good News of forgiveness of sins to spread to all parts of the world. He told the disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them that they would receive power and be his witnesses to the ends of the world. They could only do this through the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was on earth, he had a physical body like we have, and so he could stay in only one place at a time. The Holy Spirit is different because he does not have a body. There is only one Holy Spirit, but just as God is able to be everywhere at the same time, so in the same way the Holy Spirit is able to stay with all Christians everywhere at the same time. He won't leave us. No matter where we go, the Holy Spirit is with us, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God himself.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVES WITHIN US**

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will be with you and he will live within you. There are two parts to this statement. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will be with us forever and he will stay in our hearts. This is a new message. In the past, the Israelites usually thought that the Holy Spirit stayed in heaven or lived in a special room in the Temple known as the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place. But now Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will stay inside every believer. "You are God's temple and God's Spirit lives in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

This promise of God is amazing. Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem and covered it with gold. It was the most magnificent building in the whole of Israel, perhaps the whole world. The inside of the building was also covered with gold. The Temple was the place of God and was absolutely beautiful and completely holy. People from many countries came to see the beautiful Temple. But now, instead of some huge beautiful building, our bodies have become God's temple. The Holy Spirit of God lives in us. This means that we too must live righteous and holy lives in God's sight. This word agrees with the prophecy of prophet Ezekiel. "I will put my Spirit in you and will see to it that you follow my laws and keep all the commands I have given you (Ezekiel 36:27).

Many people want to receive blessings or gifts from God. But the most important gift we can receive from God is the gift of the Holy Spirit himself. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God himself and he wants to stay within us, give us direction, strengthen us, and empower us to live a life that is pleasing to God. The Holy Spirit wants to remove all our evil ways and fill our hearts and minds with all the beautiful, kind and righteous ways of Jesus.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR TEACHER**

The Holy Spirit is our best teacher. Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit. . . will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you" (John 14:26). Again he said, "When . . . the Spirit comes, who

reveals the truth about God, he will lead you into all truth ... He will take what I say and tell it to you” (John 16: 13-14).

Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would be their teacher and would remind them of all the things he had taught them. When Jesus had gone into heaven and the disciples started teaching the people, the Holy Spirit reminded the disciples about all the things Jesus did and preached. The Holy Spirit is our teacher too.

- Noki is a new Christian and doesn't know very much about the Bible. He wanted to read the Bible but before reading he prayed, “Lord Jesus, I am a new Christian and I do not know much about the Bible. Please help me to understand these words clearly.”
- Monica is a person who does not have much education. She became a Christian and wanted very much to know what was written in the Bible, but she did not know how to read well. She prayed and asked God to open her eyes and help her to read. She asked a friend who had gone to school to help her. Sometimes she read her Bible, but did not understand fully some of the words she had read. When that happened she would pray and ask God to help her understand. God did help her. God answered her prayer and soon she could read her Bible well. Monica was very happy and stood up in the church and testified to the people that, “the Holy Spirit is my teacher and he has taught me to read and understand the Bible.”
- Pepe saw many people in his village who did not know the Word of God. He felt very burdened in his heart and wanted to help them. He had not gone to Bible College, but he remembered this Bible verse, “The Holy Spirit will teach you everything”(John 14:26). He believed this promise of God. He prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to help him to understand the Bible so that he could preach it to his own people. The Holy Spirit became Pepe's teacher and he understood God's word well and helped many people in his village to repent, turn from their sins, and believe in Jesus.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO PREACH GOD'S WORD**

The Holy Spirit teaches us to understand God's word and also to preach it. John 15:26-27 says, "The Spirit who reveals the truth about God...will speak about me. And you, too, will speak about me..."

Jesus also said, "But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This is another major task of the Holy Spirit. He fills us and empowers us to preach the gospel of Jesus. If we preach the word of Jesus in our own strength, it has no power. We must do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts, there are many stories that show how the Holy Spirit strengthened Christians to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ.



On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples and the other believers, and at once they started telling about the great things God had done. Later, when the Jewish leaders brought Peter and John before the Jewish council to be judged, Peter was not at all fearful. Instead, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, stood up and spoke to them with great boldness (Acts 4:8).

Stephen is another man who was filled with the Holy Spirit. He did many great miracles and preached the Gospel of Christ to many people. Some people argued with Stephen and tried to prove him wrong. But the Holy Spirit gave real wisdom to Stephen and so these people could not defeat Stephen's word (Acts 6:10).

Paul was well educated, but he did not rely on his education to convince people. He said, "My teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:4).

God does not call everyone to be pastors, but he wants all Christians

to tell their friends and relatives about what Christ has done in their lives. But many Christians fear to speak to their friends and relatives. You must ask the Holy Spirit to tell you what to say, and give you courage to share it with others. Timothy was a man who was sometimes fearful. Paul told him, “The Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid (shy and fearful); instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love and self control. Do not be ashamed, then, of witnessing for our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7-8).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US GUIDANCE**

The Holy Spirit knows all of God’s will and thoughts. 1 Corinthians 2:10 says, “The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God’s purposes.” If we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he will help us walk in the right path. “We have received the Spirit sent by God, so that we may know all that God has given us” (1 Corinthians 2:12). Romans 8:14 says; “Those who are led by God’s Spirit are God’s children.” The Holy Spirit guides us and shows us the right path to follow and also will show us which paths we should not follow. Read these stories below.

- God gave guidance to the church to select the workers. One day while people were fasting, praying and worshiping God, the Holy Spirit said to them, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, to do the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2).
- At first only the Jews believed in Jesus. One day Peter saw a vision and was wondering what it meant. The Holy Spirit told Peter, “Three men are here looking for you. So get ready and go down, and do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them” (Acts 10:19-20). Peter followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit and went to the house of Cornelius. Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army. Peter had never ever been to the house of a Roman until this day. But now the Holy Spirit directed Peter to go with them. Many people in Cornelius’s house repented and believed in Jesus Christ and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Later, many people from other races believed in Jesus, but their cultures and lifestyles were not the same as the Jews. Jews had many laws about food, about keeping the Sabbath day, and other forms of worship. People of other nations did not follow the laws of the Jews. The Jews who believed in Jesus got together in Jerusalem and discussed what to do with these new believers who did not follow the Jewish laws. After much discussion they reached an agreement. They sent out a letter to the various churches. They wrote, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you . . .” (Acts 15:28 NIV). They said the people of another race did not need to follow the Jewish laws. The Holy Spirit gave guidance to the church leaders and the leaders gave this instruction to the churches to follow.
- Sometimes the Holy Spirit can close our way and stop us from going where we want to. Paul, Silas and Timothy went out preaching the Good News and started new churches. But Acts 16:6 says, “...the Holy Spirit did not allow them to preach the message in the province of Asia.” Later, they wanted to go out to another province, but the Holy Spirit again did not permit them. Later still, Paul saw a vision that a man was calling him to go to Macedonia, so they went to Macedonia.

The above stories show us that the Holy Spirit can open the door for us, and also can close the door so that we do not go the wrong way. Therefore, we must always pray and think carefully with open hearts and listen carefully to hear the Holy Spirit’s direction in our lives.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO PRAY**

In the book of Acts we see the Holy Spirit at work in the church. Many miracles happened and the church grew and spread to many places. We also see that the apostles and Christians spent a lot of time praying. The life of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit go together.

The Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. Romans 8:26

Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. Ephesians 6:18

Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jude 1:20

Prayer is a very important thing for Christians. But many Christians do not give enough time to prayer and so their Christian lives grow cold. If we do not pray much, then our work will not bear fruit. Prayer is very important, and so we must ask the Holy Spirit to help us to pray. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God, so it is better for us to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us to pray according to God's will. He can guide our hearts and teach us to pray, and open our minds so that our prayer will be right and pleasing to God.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO WORSHIP GOD**

Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24 NIV). Worship should not come just from our lips but from our hearts. Worship should be a major thing in the life of every Christian. When we worship God, we come into his presence with praise and thanksgiving. God draws himself near to us and we feel his presence and love.



God is powerful and holy. In heaven the angels call out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). But God does not want

to hear the songs of just the angels. We are his special children and he wants to hear our songs too. As we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit helps us to worship and praise God. "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" (Ephesians 5:18-20 NIV).

On the day of Pentecost the believers met together to worship God and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Many new people became Christians and worship became a very important part of their lives. Everyday they met in the Temple. They were glad and ate together in each other's homes and rejoiced together. They praised God and every day new people were saved and joined the group of those who believed in Jesus (Acts 2:46-47)

When Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit, they are filled with the joy of the Lord. This joy does not come only in good times, for the Holy Spirit helps them to rejoice in bad times too. Once, Paul and Silas were whipped and put into prison. The Holy Spirit filled their hearts with the joy of the Lord, and in the middle of the night they prayed, sang songs, and praised God. While they were praising God, an earthquake struck the prison and they were set free.

## SUMMARY

We have seen some of the important things that the Holy Spirit does to help us.

- The Holy Spirit makes people aware of their sins and leads them to repent.
- When we repent from our sins and believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives us a new life. We are born again.
- The Holy Spirit lives within us and we become a holy temple.
- The Holy Spirit teaches us the truth from God's word.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to witness and speak God's word to others.
- The Holy Spirit guides us and shows us the right things to do.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to pray.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to worship God.



## CHAPTER 6

### BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the last chapter we talked about some of the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the important things he does is to make us new people when we place our trust in Jesus. This happens when a person turns away from his sins and believes in Jesus. Jesus said, "No one will enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the spirit" (John 3:5).

The Spirit of God makes us God's children. We do not become God's children by our own good deeds. The Bible clearly says, "It was not because of any good deeds that we ourselves had done, but because of his own mercy that he saved us, through the Holy Spirit who gives us new birth and new life ... God poured out the Holy Spirit abundantly on us through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5-6).

The Bible is clear. When a man or woman repents from his or her sins and believes in Jesus for forgiveness, the Holy Spirit makes that person totally new and a child of God. The Holy Spirit comes into his or her life. Therefore, Romans 8:9 says, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ." All Christians who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are "born of the Spirit," but not all Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit.

***All Christians have the Holy Spirit within them,  
but  
Not all Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit***

We can say that the Holy Spirit is already in the life of every Christian. The Bible tells us that some Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit and in this chapter, we want to know the meaning of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

## **BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Bible tells us about some people who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).
- The apostles and other believers were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4).
- Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8).
- The apostles were again filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).
- Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55).
- Ananias prayed that the Holy Spirit would fill Saul (Acts 9:17).
- Barnabas was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:24).

We have already said that the Holy Spirit is in the life of every man or woman who believes in Jesus and has become a true Christian. These Bible verses above tell us that some Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? What qualities show that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit? We will study the life of Stephen, for Stephen was a man who was filled with the Holy Spirit. His life shows us many of the qualities that result when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **STEPHEN—A MAN WHO WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Stephen is an exciting example of an outstanding Christian leader who was filled with the Holy Spirit. The early Christians collected money and food to distribute among widows and the poor people. This was a good practice among the Christians and it helped many poor widows, but then some problems arose. There were two groups of widows: some women came from the Aramaic or Hebrew speaking group and some spoke Greek. The Greeks complained that there was some favouritism and that the Greek speaking widows did not get as much food as those widows who spoke Aramaic. The apostles heard the complaints and decided to appoint one group of people to take care of this work. They said,

“Brothers, choose seven men among you, who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we will put them in charge of this matter (Acts 6:3). The first man they chose was Stephen. The Bible says that Stephen was a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. Stephen was not one of the twelve apostles, but he was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, “Stephen a man richly blessed by God and full of power, performed great miracles and wonders among the people” (Acts 6:8).

### **Stephen Was a Willing Worker**

Stephen had a strong faith and God used him to do many miracles, however he was given the work to take care of providing food for the widows. Some people love to have important positions where people will see them, and they would not be interested in taking care of food for old people. But Stephen did his work willingly and gladly and he put his energy into doing this work. God had given Stephen great gifts, but he did not think he was better than others. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and he had the attitude of humility. People who are filled with the Holy Spirit do not compete or fight against each other to win a high position or a big name. Instead, they are happy to do any kind of work to serve others and lift up God’s name. As Jesus said, “The greatest among you must be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt 23:12 NIV).

### **Stephen Had Power to Proclaim God’s Word**

Stephen had a great desire to preach God’s word to the people. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me...” Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit who gave him power to preach God’s word. Some people tried to argue with Stephen, but the Holy Spirit gave Stephen great wisdom so that no one could defeat him (Acts 6:10).

### **Stephen Stood up Strong During Trials**

People wanted to defeat Stephen’s words but they could not. So they persuaded some people to make false accusations against Stephen. They wanted to find a way to kill Stephen, but Stephen was not fearful, and did not attempt to run away or hide from his accusers. He stood strong and

preached the word of God fearlessly. He did not think of protecting himself, but thought of being a bold witness for Jesus Christ. This is one of the important signs in the life of a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit. They have the strength to stand up and endure hardship for the sake of Jesus. They are glad to pick up their crosses and follow Jesus regardless of what others might do.

### **Stephen Loved the Word of God**

Many people falsely accused Stephen as he stood before the Jewish council. The High Priest asked Stephen, "Is this true?" Stephen stood to give his reply. But he did not try to defend himself, instead he took this opportunity to speak boldly to the leaders of the Jewish people. He started with the stories of the Bible. He spoke about Abraham, Joseph, Moses and the stories of the kings and prophets of Israel. It was obvious that Stephen was a man who loved the whole Bible and knew it through and through. This is another sign of a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit: they have a love for the Word of God. Stephen had read the Bible and his heart and mind was filled with the truth of God's word.

Some people decide that because they are filled with the Holy Spirit, that they no longer need to study their Bibles. They say, "We have the Spirit already and he will tell us what to say, so now we do not need to study the Bible." This is completely wrong. The Holy Spirit himself inspired the people who wrote the Bible. Ephesians 6:17 says that the Bible is the sword of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Word of God and the Holy Spirit belong together. Men or women who are filled with the Holy Spirit have a love for the Word of God and want to study it.

### **Stephen Was Filled with God's Joy and Peace**

Stephen was falsely accused with many lies, but in the midst of all the hatred and anger he was filled with God's joy and peace. When the council saw Stephen, "They saw that his face looked like the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15). Galatians 5:22 says, "The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience kindness goodness ..." These wonderful qualities were found in Stephen's life and his face shone. Jesus told his disciples, "You are like light for the whole world ... your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in

heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the love, joy, and peace of Jesus shone out in his life.

### **Stephen Forgave the Wrongs of his Enemies**

Some people were very angry with Stephen because the words he preached convicted them of their sins. Their anger became greater and greater as they listened to Stephen. Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit, he looked up to heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Stephen spoke out, “Look, I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand side of God” (Acts 7:56). When they heard this they dragged him outside and started throwing large stones and rocks at him. They wanted to kill Stephen so they kept on stoning him. Stephen called out, “Lord Jesus receive my spirit.” Stephen knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not remember this sin against them.” He said these words and died (Acts 7:60). He did not lose his faith during these difficult trials. Stephen demonstrated the character of Jesus for he forgave the wrongs of his enemies even while they were throwing stones at him.



*Saul approved of his murder (8.1)*

### **Stephen Lived and Died Like Jesus**

When Stephen was about to die, he said two things. First he said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” This is very similar to the words Jesus said when he died. Jesus said, “Father! Into your hands I place my spirit!” (Luke 23:46). Later, Stephen prayed, “Lord! Do not remember this sin against them!” (Acts 7:59). This reminds us of the prayer of Jesus while he was on the cross. He said, “Forgive them, Father” (Luke 23:34).

Many things in Stephen’s life had given glory and honour to Jesus. He did many miracles that glorified Jesus. He preached and glorified Jesus. His face shone with the glory of Jesus. He held on to his faith during the time of his death and gave glory to Jesus. When he died, he

spoke just like Jesus did. Stephen demonstrated the qualities and character of Jesus in his life and in his death. He lived a Christ-like life.

While Stephen was being killed a young well educated man was standing there watching and supporting everything that happened. His name was Saul. Later he became a follower of Jesus and became known as the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote, "All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord ...and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness with an ever greater degree of glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit. The glory of God was with him and when he was stoned to death, his face was like that of an angel. In that moment of time Stephen was like the picture of Jesus himself.

Many people have debated about which signs show whether or not a person is filled with the Holy Spirit. Many of these arguments have not helped the church. If we are like Stephen and show the same Christ-like qualities that Stephen showed, there will be very few arguments.

## **GOD WANTS TO FILL US WITH HIS SPIRIT**

In this chapter we have seen some important truths about the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Everyone who repents and believes in Jesus Christ becomes a new person through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Some Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit does greater things in their lives.
- Stephen is a person who was filled with the Holy Spirit and his life shows us some of these things:
- Stephen was glad to do God's work.
- The Holy Spirit gave him power to preach God's word.
- Stephen stood up strong during the time of trials.
- The joy and peace of God shone in his face.
- Stephen's mind was saturated with the Word of God.
- He forgave the wrongs of his enemies.
- He showed the same attitudes that Jesus had, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus.

When you see such signs in a fellow Christian's life, then you know that he or she is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians and told them, "I ask God ... to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love" (Ephesians 3:16-17). This is a wonderful prayer. God wants every Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that the love and purity of Christ will be demonstrated in our lives just as it was in the life of Stephen.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US OVERCOME THE SINFUL NATURE

We have looked at the story of Stephen and have been impressed by his triumphant victorious Christian life. Unfortunately many Christians are not like Stephen. Their Christian lives are weak and often they allow themselves to be defeated by temptation. What causes the problem and what can we do about it? Many Christians are like the Christians at Corinth who were like “children in the Christian faith” (1 Corinthians 3:1).

Corinth was a large city and people from many countries had moved there, and it was a city that was known for sexual immorality. Paul went to Corinth, started a church there, and stayed there for one and a half years, preaching and teaching the people. Then Paul went on to preach the gospel in other cities. Paul heard however that there were problems in the Corinthian church. People were divided and in conflict with each other.

Paul wrote to them and said, “My friends, I could not talk to you as I talk to people who have the Spirit; I had to talk to you as though you belonged to this world, as children in the Christian faith . . . You still live as the people of this world live. When there is jealousy among you and you quarrel with one another, doesn’t this prove that you belong to this world, living by its standards?” (1 Corinthians 3:1, 3).

These people at Corinth had repented of their sins and believed in Jesus. They were baptised and met regularly to worship the Lord Jesus, and yet they were not living the way God wanted them to. Although they sought to demonstrate various gifts of the Holy Spirit, their lives showed that they were not filled with, or controlled by the Holy Spirit. Today there are many Christians who go to church on a regular basis, they have been baptised, they sing in the choir, and yet their lives are spoiled by things such as jealousy, gossip, anger, and bitterness towards others. Some spend their time chasing after money and material things and give only part of their hearts to Jesus. Their Christian lives are not strong and



they are only partly committed to God instead of being fully committed.

Paul says the problem is caused by the sinful nature. “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want” (Gal 5:17 NIV). When we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives. New Christians soon discover that although the Holy Spirit is in their lives, there is another power in their hearts that is pulling them toward evil.

There is an internal war going on inside the heart of the Christian with the sinful nature fighting against the Holy Spirit. This was the problem with the people at Corinth and with many Christians today. The Holy Spirit tries to lead them closer and closer to God, but the sinful nature is self-centred and resists the Holy Spirit. Instead of following the leading of the Holy Spirit, this person has a desire to follow after worldly pleasure. As the Bible clearly says, “the sinful mind is hostile to God” (Romans 8:7 NIV).

## **WHAT IS THE SINFUL NATURE?**

The sinful nature is a deep seated desire in people’s hearts that pulls them away from God and towards self-centeredness and selfishness. “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature” (Gal 5:17 NIV). Where does this sinful nature come from? Do we receive it from God? If not, then where does it come from?

Adam and Eve were originally pure and holy for they were created in the image of God. They had no sin or selfishness in their lives. “God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased” (Genesis 1:31). But, when Adam and Eve sinned, everything was changed. Sin brought shame, judgment and separation from God. Sin became like a sickness that was passed down from father to son and mother to daughter. Adam and Eve’s sin did not just affect them, but it affected everyone who descended from them. “Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned” (Romans 5:12).

The Good News Bible uses the phrase “human nature.” Other translations use the expression “sinful nature” (Galatians 5:17) which is more accurate. Adam had a “human nature” before he sinned. After he sinned his “human nature” was tainted and spoiled by sin and became a “sinful nature.” Each of us is born with a sinful nature, as David said, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5).

Think about little children. Who teaches them to be selfish, or to hit out at others when they are angry? Where did they learn to tell lies, to disobey their parents, or to cheat or blame others? These sinful attitudes seem to come naturally. This is because they are born with a sinful nature. Instead, parents work hard to teach children, “You must not tell lies.” “You must obey and do what you are told.” “You must share with other people and not be greedy.”

Jesus said the problem lies deep inside the heart. “From the inside, from your heart, come the evil ideas which lead you to do immoral things, to rob, kill commit adultery, be greedy, and do all sorts of evil things; deceit, indecency, jealousy, slander, pride and folly—all these evil things come from inside you and make you unclean” (Mark 7:21-22).

The good news is that Jesus not only died to “forgive us our sins” but also to “purify us from all our unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NIV). We will always have a human nature, but when we surrender ourselves completely to God, he will transform our lives and purify our hearts from evil and selfishness, so that our human nature can now reflect the image and beauty of Jesus. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians, “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NIV).

## **THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WE CAN HAVE VICTORY OVER THE SINFUL NATURE**

The Holy Spirit wants to set us free from the bondage of the sinful nature. See the contrast between the Holy Spirit and the desires of the

sinful nature.

Those who live according to the *sinful nature*  
have their minds set on what that nature desires;  
but those who live in accordance with the *Spirit*  
have their minds set on what the *Spirit* desires.

The mind of sinful man is death,  
but the mind controlled by the *Spirit* is life and peace;

For if you live according to the *sinful nature*,  
you will die;

but if by the *Spirit* you put to death the misdeeds of the body,  
you will live . . .

Romans 8:5-6, 13 (NIV)

The one who sows to please his *sinful nature*,  
from that nature will reap destruction;

the one who sows to please the *Spirit*,  
from the *Spirit* will reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:8 (NIV)

Both of these passages teach the same truth. If we follow the desires of the sinful nature it will lead to spiritual death. On the other hand, if we deliberately put to death the desires of the sinful nature then we will have life and peace that is eternal for it never ends. It is obvious that the Holy Spirit and the sinful nature are greatly opposed to each other. They are opposites and as different as life and death. Each one wants to control our lives. We can yield ourselves to one or to the other. God will not force himself on us. He allows us the freedom to make the choice. We can reap destruction or we can reap eternal life. The choice is ours.

## **DO NOT BE CONTROLLED BY THE SINFUL NATURE BUT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Bible is very clear. We must not allow the sinful nature to control us for that will lead to spiritual and eternal death. The Bible uses a number of word pictures to show us what we should do. We must not allow the sinful nature to destroy us, instead through the power of the Holy Spirit we are to put the sinful nature to death. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and

desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:24-25 NIV)

The sinful ways of the old sinful nature are like filthy rags that we need to strip off and throw away, so that we can be clothed in God's righteousness.

Now *you must get rid of these things*: anger, passion, and hateful feelings. No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. Do not lie to one another, for you have discarded the old nature with its habits and have put on the new nature. This is the new being which God, its creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of himself. Colossians 3:8-10

*Get rid of your old nature*, which made you live as you used to—the old nature that was destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new nature, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy. Ephesians 4:22-24

Be obedient to God and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had . . . Instead be holy in all that you do, just as God who called you is holy. . . *Rid yourselves then of all evil*; no more lying or hypocrisy or jealousy or insulting language. Be like new born babies always thirsty for pure spiritual milk. 1 Peter 1:14-15, 2:1-2

The message of all these verses is very clear. We must not allow our lives to be controlled by sinful desires. Instead we are to get rid of all of these evil desires from our hearts. Look at these wonderful promises of God.

You are stained red with sin, but *I will wash you as clean as snow*. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool. Isaiah 1:18

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and make you clean from all your idols and everything else that has defiled you. I will give you a new heart and a new mind. *I will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart.* I will put my Spirit in you and see to it that you follow my laws and keep all the commands I have given you. Ezekiel 36:25-27

He will come to judge like one who refines and purifies silver. As a metal worker refines silver and gold, so the Lord's messenger will *purify* the priests, so that they will bring to the LORD the right kind of offerings. Malachi 3:3

These are wonderful promises. God uses three different word pictures to show how deep the cleansing will be.

1. Though our sins are like a deep stain that soap cannot remove, yet God promises to make us as white as snow.
2. Even if our hearts are as hard as stone and we are stubborn and resistant, yet God can take out the stony heart and give us a heart that is soft, gentle and obedient.
3. Finally God promises to purify our hearts like a person who purifies gold or silver in a furnace with a very hot fire.

## **THE CLEANSING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

John the Baptist said, I baptize you with water, but someone is coming after me who is greater than me, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11). When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, he came as a fire that descended from heaven and then broke into individual flames that rested on each person's head. The fire was more than just a visual symbol, it was like a burning fire that went deep into their hearts, totally changing and transforming their hearts and lives. Some years later when Peter was describing what happened on the day of Pentecost and also at the house of Cornelius, he said, "God, . . . showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. . . for he purified their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9 NIV). The Holy Spirit does a purifying work in our lives.

It was a fulfilment of the promise of Malachi 3:3, “He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.” Gold and silver are both very valuable. They are dug out of the earth and first they are washed with water to get rid of all the dirt and rubbish. This is done very carefully until only gold is left. But often the gold is mixed with other metals and water cannot get rid of the impurities. It takes fire to remove the hidden impurities. To get pure gold or pure silver the metals must be heated in a very hot furnace until they melt. They are no longer solid but liquid, and any impurities float to the top where they can be removed. Once all the impurities have been skimmed off the top then only pure gold or pure silver is left behind.

This is a picture of how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. God wants to set us free from wrong actions such as immorality, theft, and drunkenness. He also wants to set us free from wrong attitudes such as selfishness, bitterness, pride and jealousy. These wrong attitudes can be cleansed from our hearts by the burning purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. There is a very good song which says:



*Purify my heart. Let me be as gold, as precious silver  
Purify my heart. Let me be as gold - pure gold  
Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire is to be holy,*

*Set apart for you Lord  
I choose to be holy,  
Set apart for you, my master.  
Ready to do your will.*

*Purify my heart.  
Cleanse me from within and make me holy  
Purify my heart  
Cleanse me from my sin—deep within.*

(Brian Doerkson, Mercy Publishing 1990)

## CHAPTER 8

### WHAT MUST I DO TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

A young man by the name of Miki said to his pastor, “Pastor, you preach a lot about the Holy Spirit and say that God wants to fill us with the Holy Spirit. This is good but when will he fill us with his Spirit? How does he fill us with the Holy Spirit? Is there anything we have to do before he fills us? I want God to fill me with the Holy Spirit but what must I do?”

The pastor replied and said, “Miki, I am very pleased with your questions. I know the Holy Spirit has been working in your heart and has given you this desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There are six important steps that you must take in preparing yourself so that God will fill your life with the Holy Spirit. Maybe you have already taken some of these steps.”

#### **Confess All Known Sins**

When Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit, he said, “The people of the world will not receive him” (John 14:17). The people of the world are those people who follow the way of sin, and they still live in the darkness. Their hearts are closed, and they are not listening to the Holy Spirit, or to the Word of God, and they can’t be filled with God’s Spirit. “Miki,” the pastor said, “I know you have repented of your sins and turned away from them. You know that Jesus died to forgive all your sins. You have given your life to Jesus and now you are following him. And so you have taken the first step. You really know in your heart that you have been forgiven of your sins and that Jesus Christ has cleansed your heart and made you a child of God. That is great. Now, I will tell you the second thing you must do.”

#### **Hunger for the Filling of the Holy Spirit**

The pastor opened his Bible and read, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6 NIV).

There is no greater or better gift than the gift of the Holy Spirit. But God will never give his gifts to anyone who is double minded. The Holy Spirit will only fill those who are totally committed to him. They must really hunger to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The pastor said, "Miki, you must desire for God to fill you with his Spirit and this hunger must come from deep down in your heart." The pastor read another Scripture verse to Miki. "Whoever is thirsty, should come to me and whoever believes in me should drink. As the Scripture says, 'Streams of life-giving water will pour out from his side.' Jesus said this about the Spirit" (John 7:38-39 NIV).



This is a wonderful promise of God. We come to Jesus absolutely thirsty. We are desperate for a drink of water, like a person dying of thirst in a hot dry desert. We cannot satisfy our thirst through our own efforts or with anything else. When we are desperate for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, God not only fills us, but allows the Holy Spirit to flow from us to others so that we become a stream of water to others who are thirsty.

The pastor also read from Psalm 63:1-2, "O God, you are my God, and I long for you. My whole being desires you; like a dry worn-out and water less land. My soul is thirsty for you. Let me see you in the sanctuary; let me see how mighty and glorious you are." This is the attitude that we must have if we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. We must be eager to follow what God wants us to do. We must hunger and thirst to be filled with God's righteousness. If we do that, God will fill us with his Holy Spirit. The half hearted and the uncommitted will never be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Miki said, "Pastor, this has been a big help to me. These verses that you have read describe the way I feel. I want more than anything else to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Night after night I lie awake thinking about these things. I want God's power to work in my life, and I want to be filled with the righteousness of God."



## **Totally Reject the Sinful Nature.**

The pastor told Miki, “When you repented of your sins and believed in Christ, God forgave your sins and gave you his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives within you and gives you direction. But sometimes you may feel two thoughts at the same time and you have a conflict within yourself. Your sinful nature wants to defeat the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit wants to defeat your sinful nature. Have you ever felt that in your life or not?”

Miki said, “This is true. Many times I want to stand up strong in my Christian life and overcome temptations, but my sinful nature pulls me back towards sin. It makes it so hard to stand strong. Many times I fall in my Christian life. And many times I have thought about that and I have asked myself, ‘How can I overcome my sinful nature and live a victorious Christian life?’”

The pastor said, “You must forsake the desires of your sinful nature at work in you and don’t allow it to control you. You must forsake every kind of evil desire that is in your heart. And you must ask Jesus to remove or cleanse you from coveting, anger, quarreling, hatred, disobedience, pride, lying, gossiping, laziness, selfishness and all other things that seek to weaken or destroy your Christian life. These things are very evil in God’s eyes and they will easily destroy your Christian life. You must confess each of these to God and let him cleanse each one of these from your heart. You must pray like this, ‘Father God, my Christian life is not what it should be. Many times I am jealous of other people who are better off than I am. I don’t want this jealous attitude to be in my life. Many times it pulls me back to my old ways and is trying to destroy my Christian life. I don’t want this to be found in my life any more. Cleanse me completely and may it no longer be found in me.’”

The pastor continued, “You must say this prayer and confess each one of these sinful attitudes that works to defeat your Christian life. This matter of prayer and confession is very important. Do not rush it. Take your time and ask God to search every corner of your heart and mind. Bring everything out into the open and lay it at the foot of the Cross and he will set you free. Those who work with gold take a lot of time to refine it and make it pure. In the same way let the Holy Spirit purify and burn out everything from your life that is not pleasing to God until your

heart is pure. You must let the Holy Spirit take time to do his work in your life. You must carefully examine your heart and mind and ask God to reveal to you anything that is evil in his sight. You must confess it, forsake it and God will cleanse your heart and make you holy.”

### **Consecrate Yourself with All That You Possess to God.**

The pastor said, “We have been talking about getting rid of all the evil from our lives. There is something else you must do. If you want the Holy Spirit to fill you, then let God be Lord, master and boss of everything you own. You do not control the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit must control you, all your gifts, talents and abilities and all that you own. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and he has all power. He doesn’t want to be number two. He wants to be number one. Likewise, we must consecrate everything that we own to God and let him take control of it all.”

The pastor read Romans 12:1-2. “Offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. . . Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.”

Do not “surrender any part of yourselves to sin to be used for wicked purposes. Instead, give yourselves to God . . . and surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes” (Romans 6:13).

Jesus said, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind” (Luke 10:27).

Many Christians are very glad that Jesus died on the cross for their salvation. But they do not let Jesus become King of their lives. You must humble yourself and let Jesus become King or Lord of your life.

### **Ask God to Fill You with His Holy Spirit.**

The pastor read from Luke 11:11-13. The last part of verse 13 says, that the Father in heaven will “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” The Pastor said, “This is Jesus’ own word. Jesus himself said the Father would be glad to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Therefore, you cannot be afraid to ask God, for the Bible clearly tells us

that God is glad to fill you with the Holy Spirit.”

Then the Pastor read “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” (Acts 2:38-39 NIV). The Lord our God had promised to give the Holy Spirit to everyone who asks him. This word is the promise of God and God never lies

### **Believe and Pray**

Matthew 21:22 says, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

Mark 11:24 says, “When you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and you will be given whatever you ask for.”

The pastor told Miki, “We have read the promise of Jesus. He said God is happy to give his Holy Spirit to everyone who asks him. So you don’t fear or worry. He wants his Holy Spirit to fill your heart and life. He will give the Holy Spirit to anyone who obeys his word and asks to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you promise to obey his word and ask him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, then you can believe God will fill you with the Holy Spirit.”

Miki thought for a while and then looked up to his pastor and said, “I am willing to give myself totally to God. For many weeks now I have thought about this. I do not want to be controlled by my sinful nature. Instead, I want to be free from the sinful nature. I want to give my whole life, my heart and thoughts to God and I want him to fill me with his Holy Spirit.” The pastor said, Miki, that is wonderful, “I am very glad you have decided to do this, because I have been praying for you. We can pray right now.”

Read Miki’s prayer on the next page.

Lord Jesus, I thank you for buying me with your precious blood that was shed on the cross. Thank you for receiving me and changing me. But still I feel burdened in my heart because many times I don't stand up strong in my Christian life. Many times the things of this world have attracted my attention and led me astray. I have not always obeyed you completely. Lord Jesus, I am really ashamed of the many evil things I have done. Please forgive me now. I have been very covetous of other people, always wanting the things they have. So I am asking you to remove this problem of covetous from me so that my life shall be right and holy in your sight. I have been envious of other people's property. Many times evil thoughts have filled my mind. I want you to wash my mind with your blood and cleanse me from all the evil that is in my heart. I want you to be Lord over every part of my life and I am ready to obey your word. You must take control of my money, my education, my school and my work. I surrender everything I own to you so that you can control it. I'll do anything you ask me to do. I want to follow you and serve you. I want you to control every part of my life.

Lord Jesus, I ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. I want to be a strong Christian and live a holy life. But I don't have power to do that in my own strength. Please come and cleanse my heart and mind and fill me with your Holy Spirit. Give me power to stand strong and overcome every trial and temptation. Please give me the power of your Holy Spirit so that I may not be ashamed to share your gospel to other people.

Jesus, you have promised to give your Holy Spirit to people who ask you. I ask you to pour your Holy Spirit into my heart, as you did to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Please, come like a fire and purify my heart from all sin and evil desires. I want to be clean and holy in your sight. Jesus, I ask you to become King of my life. I give myself completely to you now. Jesus, this is the cry of my heart. I don't want any other thing. All I want is you and only you to be my King and fill me with your strength and power. Lord, I believe you have heard my prayer today. Thank you for hearing my prayer and thank you for filling me with the Holy Spirit. Amen."

When Miki had finished praying he was very quiet and thoughtful. The pastor asked him, "Miki, what has God done in your life?"

Miki said, "Pastor, I believe God has filled me with the Holy Spirit. While I was praying, tears rolled down my eyes and my heart was about to be crushed. I felt such a great desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and while I was praying, the peace of God and joy came into my life. This joy and peace is much greater than what I had before. The burden of my sins is gone. I am sure the Holy Spirit has filled my heart."

The pastor said, "I am glad to hear this testimony of yours. Now let us pray and thank God for answering your prayer and filling you with his Holy Spirit."

What about you? Do you really have a desire or hunger for the Holy Spirit to fill your life and give you power to walk upright in your Christian life or not? You must follow these six steps we have discussed if you want to be set free from the sinful nature and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- You must know that Jesus has forgiven your sins.
- Turn away from evil desires of your sinful nature.
- You must have a deep hunger and desire for the Holy Spirit to fill you.
- Surrender yourself with everything you own to God.
- Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit.
- Believe God will fill you with his Holy Spirit and help you to walk in his holiness.

You can pray just like this man Miki did, and God will fill you with his Holy Spirit. Then thank God for doing it.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

What are some of the changes that take place in people's lives when they are filled with the Holy Spirit? What are the qualities and characteristics that demonstrate that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit? Jesus said, "Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit . . . Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:18-20). We have looked at the life of Stephen and seen his godly life and character. Stephen's life was full of good fruit that demonstrated the presence of the Holy Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV).

Paul also gives us another list that shows many of the qualities, or fruits of the Holy Spirit. "By our purity, knowledge, patience and kindness we have shown ourselves to be God's servants—by the Holy Spirit, by our true love, by our message of truth, and by the power of God" (2 Corinthians 6:6).

The picture of big juicy fruit growing on a tree is a beautiful description of the qualities and characteristics of the Holy Spirit. A tree does not struggle to bear fruit. The branches are simply joined to the trunk of the tree, and they drink in the sunshine and rain. The life of the tree simply flows into the branches and they bear fruit. Jesus described himself as being like the trunk of the tree and we are the branches. He said, "Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can only do so if it remains in the vine. In the same way you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:4). As we remain closely joined to Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to flow through every part of our lives, the Holy Spirit will cause the fruit to grow and mature in our lives. We will now look deeper into each of those beautiful fruits of the Holy Spirit.

## **Love**

Love is the most important of all the fruits of the Spirit. Many people are hungry for love. Many people think they love others, but often their love is rather selfish. They only love their own children, brothers, sisters, or relatives of their own family, clan, or tribe. They don't love people from other families, races or groups, but the Holy Spirit's way is different. Think about God's mercy. God's mercy is unique for he "makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil" (Matthew 5:45).

Many people love only their friends, their relatives and those people who help them. They think they will return the favour to them later when they are in need. But God has shown us a different way altogether. "God has shown how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

When the Holy Spirit fills us, God places his very own Spirit within our hearts. This means that we begin to think and act more and more like God. "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us" (Romans 5:5).

We must think again about the way of loving others shown in the life of Stephen. See Acts 6:8-15 and Acts 7:54-60. The enemies of Stephen surrounded him and threw stones at him to kill him. But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit and did not get angry with them. He demonstrated real love, and prayed for God to help them. He said, "Lord! Do not remember this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). These were his final words before he died.

Stephen truly obeyed Jesus' instructions, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Stephen received this power to love his enemies from the Holy Spirit and he obeyed the teaching of Jesus.

## **Joy**

Many people search for joy and happiness. Some think that nightclubs and discos will give them happiness. Others work hard to earn a lot of money and think money will give them happiness. Others strive to be popular and think that if they have lots of friends they will be happy. But these things do not last and do not satisfy for very long.

The joy that God gives us is very different. The source of this joy does not come from money or popularity or big parties. Jesus said, "My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11). The joy God gives us is far greater and deeper than the superficial happiness of this world. Once Jesus taught his disciples about the source of true joy or happiness.

Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor,  
the kingdom of heaven belongs to them!  
Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!  
Happy are those who are humble;  
they will receive what God has promised!  
Happy are those whose greatest desire is  
to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!  
Happy are those who are merciful to others;  
God will be merciful to them!  
Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!  
Happy are those who work for peace;  
God will call them his children!  
Happy are those who are persecuted  
because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of  
heaven belongs to them! Matthew 5:2-10

These words of Jesus are opposite to the ideas of most people. Most people think, "Happy are the famous, the rich, and the powerful." But Jesus teaches about a totally different form of happiness. This joy does not come from things, high position, and power but from being submissive and obedient to our heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit lives within us and he is the source of our joy.

We can see this joy that comes from the Holy Spirit demonstrated in the lives of the apostles. One day the Jewish leaders arrested the apostles. They made them stand in front of the Jewish council but the apostles did not fear these leaders who had crucified Jesus. They spoke



boldly to the leaders, “We must obey God not men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from death, after you had killed him by nailing him to a cross. God raised him to his right hand side as Leader and Saviour, to give the people of Israel the opportunity to repent and have their sins forgiven” (Acts 5:29-31). The members of the council were very angry when they heard these words. They whipped the apostles and ordered them to never again speak in the name of Jesus. The whipping was extremely painful. But the Bible says that the apostles left the council and as they walked out the doors they rejoiced and praised God because he had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 5:41).

At one time the disciples had run away when difficulties came and they had denied Jesus, but now they were different. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and he had given them spiritual strength to stand up and testify for Jesus. They rejoiced that they had endured suffering and shame in the name of Jesus.

Their attitudes were the same as the new Christians in Thessalonica. Paul wrote to them, “You imitated us and the Lord; and even though you suffered much, you received the message with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. So you became an example to all believers” (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7). This joy or happiness that the Holy Spirit gives springs up within our hearts and flows out during good and also bad times. The joy of the Holy Spirit helps us to stand strong in difficult times, for as the Bible says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10 NIV).

## **Peace**

Many people think that if they have a good job and earn a lot of money they will find peace. Some think if they have a nice house, plenty of food, no sickness, and if they can educate their children well, then they will have real peace. Others think that they will find peace if they have a better job, or are married to a different person, or move to another country. But none of these things bring lasting peace. Many people struggle to find peace but they never find it. Why? Because real peace comes only from God. “God’s peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ

Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

We can see the peace of God demonstrated very clearly in the story of Peter’s imprisonment in Acts 12. King Herod had put the Apostle James to death by cutting his head off with a sword. This made the Jews happy, so King Herod put Peter in jail and was planning to kill him too. Peter was in prison and he knew that Herod was planning to kill him on the following day. Then we read a surprising thing. “The night before Herod was going to bring him out to the people, Peter was sleeping between two guards” (Acts 12:6). He is not crying or worrying. He is relaxed even though he is chained to two soldiers who are guarding him. Peter has such a deep sense of God’s peace that he is fast asleep. He knew that Christians were praying for him and he knew that he was in the hands of God, and so he was at peace.

The Lord answered the prayers of the Christians and sent an angel. The angel walked into the prison cell and the cell was filled with light. Peter was so fast asleep that the angel had to shake Peter by the shoulder to wake him up. Peter woke up and the chains fell off his wrists. The angel then opened the prison door and brought Peter out. This story not only shows God’s ability to deliver a person from prison, but it also shows that God is able to set us free from worry and fear. Many Christians will never go to prison because of their faith, but we all experience things in our lives that make us worry or fearful. The good news is that the Holy Spirit can fill us with the peace of God in the midst of the biggest problems in our lives. The peace of God is greater than any other trouble or problem of this world.

We can see the peace of God at work again in Acts 16. The judges had Paul and Silas beaten severely and locked up in a prison cell. Their backs were sore and bleeding badly. Their hands were chained and their feet were fastened between heavy blocks of wood so that they could not move. It looked like a hopeless situation. They had no idea when, or if, they would



*Sirs, what must I do to be saved? (16:30)*

ever get out of prison, but they were not complaining and blaming God. They were not sad or angry. In the middle of the night, when everything seemed totally dark, they were praying and praising God. They were full of the joy of the Lord and God's peace was very real to them. God answered their prayer and did a mighty miracle. He sent an earthquake and shook the prison until all the chains fell off and all the doors sprang open. God had set them free.

The peace of God can be with us in good times and bad times. Even in the worst of times when there seems to be no hope or help, the Holy Spirit can still fill us with his peace.

### **Patience**

We see patience and quietness in the life of Jesus. When Jesus was arrested, the soldiers whipped him until his back was raw and bleeding, they cursed him, spat on him, and treated him cruelly, but Jesus remained calm and quiet. He did not get angry. "Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps. . . . When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God the righteous judge" (1 Peter 2:21,23). He knew he was doing the will of his heavenly Father and so endured the sufferings of the cross. "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus . . . He did not give up because of the cross . . . Think of what he went through; how he put up with so much hatred from sinners! So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up" (Hebrews 12:2-3). The Holy Spirit wants to work in our lives and make us patient and more like Jesus.

### **Kindness**

Kindness is love in action. It is showing the love of God to others in little ways. During Jesus' time, people with leprosy and other skin diseases were greatly feared. They lived outside the city and were not allowed to visit their friends or families or even go close to other people. Once there was a man with leprosy who came to Jesus and begged him to heal him. Everyone was afraid of him and moved away from him. No one would go close to him. Probably years had gone by and no one had even touched him, he felt unclean and unwanted. Jesus was filled with

pity for him. Jesus could have spoken to him and said, "Be healed," but instead Jesus touched him. Then he said, "I do want to (heal you). Be clean" (Mark 1:41). Jesus demonstrated the power of God in healing the man with the horrible skin disease, but he also demonstrated the love of God by being kind and compassionate to the man. The Holy Spirit can help us to have the same attitude.

You are the people of God . . . So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:12

Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Jesus told a story about the judgment that will happen when he returns to this earth as King of kings. In the story people were divided into two groups. To one group he will say: "Come and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you. . . . I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me. . . . I tell you, whenever you did this for the least important of these followers of mine, you did it for me!" (Matthew 25:34-35, 40). But to the other group he said, "Away from me . . . Away to the eternal fire . . . I was hungry but you would not feed me, thirsty but you would not give me a drink; I was a stranger but you would not welcome me in your homes, naked but you would not clothe me; I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me. . . . Whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me" (Matthew 25:41-45).

The Holy Spirit helps us to do such things as helping sick people because this is what Jesus wants us to do. "What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world" (James 1:27).

## **Faithfulness**

Faithful people are obedient to God in both good and bad times. Some people do live like Christians when they are at home or when they are with fellow Christians, but when they go to other places, they do whatever the other people are doing. Joseph is an excellent example of a person who was faithful. As a young man he was obedient to his father, but then his brothers, who were jealous of him, sold him as a slave. Joseph ended up in a foreign country, but he maintained his faith in God, and God blessed him. A woman tempted him again and again to come and sleep with her, but he refused. He said, "How could I do such an immoral thing and sin against God" (Genesis 39:9). Even though she tempted him day after day, he would not go to bed with her. Eventually she told lies against him and accused him of trying to rape her. Joseph was put into prison even though he was innocent, but still Joseph kept his faith and trust in God. After many years in prison, God did a miracle and Joseph was released and became the Prime Minister of Egypt. God was able to use Joseph in a very responsible position because Joseph had demonstrated that he was faithful to God in good times and bad times.

This Bible verse describes the way we should live. "...Do not give yourself in to bodily passions, which are always at war against the soul. Your conduct among the heathen should be so good that when they accuse you of being evildoers, they will have to recognize your good deeds and so praise God" (1 Peter 2:11-12). Peter also said, "The Scripture says, 'Be holy because I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15).

The Holy Spirit sets us free from sinful desires and he gives us the power to be faithful to God and live a life of holiness that is pleasing to God.

## **Gentleness**

A person who is gentle is not pushy and does not try to force other people to follow his ideas. Instead he is kind, patient and gentle. Jesus described himself as the “good shepherd who is willing to die for the sheep” (John 10:11). Jesus also said, “Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. . . . Learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit: and you will find rest” (Matthew 11:28-29). The gentleness of Jesus was also seen when he welcomed the children to come to him. Although many people crowded around him he had time for the little children and they were not afraid of him but gladly came close to him.

## **Self-control**

Self-control is very important for we will always face temptations. Temptations often appeal to the desires of our bodies. Therefore it is very important that we control our physical desires. “It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities” (Proverbs 16:32).

As human beings we have a number of different desires. We desire food to eat, shelter and housing, approval from our friends, a sense of peace and security. It is normal to have sexual desires and they are not bad desires but we must properly control our bodily passions and minds. If we lack food or clothes, we feel burdened because the body needs them, but we must not steal to get them.

We must control our sexual passions or desire. Sometimes a man will look at a woman and he may have some evil thoughts come to his mind, but he must control his body and say, “No”. We must not let the physical desires of our body control us. Instead, we must control the thoughts of our minds and the desires of our bodies. “We take every thought captive and make it obey Christ” (11 Corinthians 10:5). A person who is filled with the Holy Spirit is not controlled by evil thoughts or desires. Instead, through the power of the Holy Spirit he or she controls the thoughts and rejects all thoughts that are not pleasing to God.

## CULTIVATING THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

How can these good and beautiful qualities of the Holy Spirit grow and develop within our lives. Some people look at this list and the description of the fruit that are produced by the Holy Spirit, and feel that they are not adequate. They say, "We are not able to follow all these things." But we must remember that these good attitudes or "fruit of the Spirit" do not come by our own effort or strength. These things are produced by the power of the Holy Spirit. When we repent and believe in Christ, these things start to grow. But they cannot really mature in our lives if the sinful nature is still dominating or seeking to control our lives. When we ask God to remove our sinful nature and fill us with his Holy Spirit, these fruits of the Spirit grow and become mature in us.

Galatians 5:22(NIV) calls these good qualities the "fruit of the Spirit." We know that when a tree bears fruit it does not bear fruit immediately. The fruit starts as a very tiny fruit and grows into a big fruit. Likewise, all the fruits of the Holy Spirit may be quite small at first, but they can grow and become big and mature in our lives. The Holy Spirit will give us direction in our lives and show us what kind of things must be changed in us so that the fruit of the Holy Spirit can grow and become strong.

In John 15 Jesus said he is like a vine and we are like the branches of the vine. God wants us to bear fruit just like the vine bears its fruit. The branch does not have strength of its own. If a person breaks a branch off the tree, then it will shrivel up and die. It will no longer bear fruit because the branch gets its life and energy from the vine alone.

In the same manner, we cannot do anything in our own strength. We must remain in close contact with Jesus and allow the Spirit of God to take control of our entire lives. If we do this, then the life and power of Jesus will flow into our lives, just like the sap of the vine flows into the branches. When the Holy Spirit fills us, then, he produces these lovely perfect qualities in our lives.

Jesus said God prunes the branch of the vine so that the branch can bear lots of fruit. Likewise, God will work in our lives and reveal to us those things in our lives which are not good or holy. God wants to cleanse us so that the fruit of the Holy Spirit can grow and develop to its fullest in each one of us. As we obey the Lord, then the fruit of the Spirit will continue to grow and we will become even more fruitful in our lives.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **HOLY SPIRIT – LIVING WATER**

The Bible uses a variety of word pictures to help us understand the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes as a rushing mighty wind, or as a cleansing fire, or as a gentle dove and or as a stream of living water. Living water refers to sparkling clean water that comes bubbling up out of rocks, in contrast to water that is ‘still water’ like that in a pond or a puddle which can become stale or stagnant.

#### **JESUS GIVES LIVING WATER**

Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles. This festival lasted a whole week and it was a special time to remember the pilgrimage of the Israelites through the wilderness. People made shelters of palm branches and camped out in these to remember the 40 years they spent camping in the wilderness. Each day during the feast, one of the priests would go to the pool of Siloam with a big golden jug and fill it with water. The people from the Temple would blow trumpets and make a big procession and bring the golden jug of water back to the Temple. The priest would stand beside the altar and pour the water into a special bowl. The water flowed through a special tube down to the base of the altar. By pouring out the water, the priests were symbolizing the water coming out of the rock when the Israelites were in the desert (Exodus 17:1-7).

This was done everyday for 7 days. On the last and final day of the festival, the eighth day, no water was poured out. On this day, Jesus stood up and called out, “If a man 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” (John 7:37-38 NIV).

This is the second time Jesus spoke about the living water. In John 4, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become a spring of living water welling up



to eternal life.” Jesus never says that he is the living water but that he gives living water as a gift.

In John 7:39, John explains that Jesus is referring to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only satisfies our own thirst but also transforms us until we become a river of living water that flows from us to others. When we receive the Holy Spirit and allow him to fill us, we receive God’s love, joy and peace along with many other blessings. These blessings are not just for our own enjoyment, for we must share them with others. Water that is flowing stays fresh but water that sits still in one place becomes stale and stagnant. God wants us to be water pipes not buckets. Living water is flowing water.

It is significant that Jesus talked about living water while he was in the Temple. Ezekiel also talks about a stream of living water that flows out of the Temple and brought transformation to the land.

## THE RIVER BRINGS LIFE

God showed Ezekiel a vision of the Temple and water was coming out of the Temple. Ezekiel went to find its source and found it started at the altar. The water flowed out of the Temple and as it flowed it got both wider and deeper even though no other streams ran into it. At 500 metres, it was ankle deep. They measured another 500 metres further downstream and the water was knee deep. They went another 500 metres further and it was waist deep. A further 500 metres indicated that it was deep enough to swim in (Ezekiel 47:1-12).



What is the meaning of this picture? The river started at the altar which is the place where sins are forgiven and relationships are put right with God. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who have repented of their sins and trusted in Christ as their Saviour.

This is a picture of abundance – the river became deeper and wider

all the time. The same should be true of people filled with the Holy Spirit. The blessings of the Holy Spirit should get deeper and fuller year after year.

Wherever the river ran, it brought life. There were beautiful fruit trees growing on the banks of the river. The river ran through the burning dry desert to the south of Jerusalem and down into the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is below sea level and is the saltiest water in the world. The Dead Sea is really a huge lake for although the river Jordan runs into it, no river flows out of it. Yet it never fills up. It is so salty that no fish can live in it, no trees are on the banks and no birds live there. That is why it is called the Dead Sea.

In Ezekiel's vision, a wonderful miracle takes place. The river that come from the Temple flows into Dead Sea and it brings life. "Where the river flows, everything will live" (Ezekiel 47:9). Ezekiel describes multitudes of fish of all shapes and sizes. Fruit trees that bear fruit every month grow along the banks, and their leaves bring healing to the nations. This is a beautiful picture of the life giving Spirit who not only satisfies people's thirst but transforms the most dry and desolate area bringing abundant life, fruitfulness health and healing. There is a very well known gospel song that expresses this idea:

*Flow through me. Flow through me.  
I need your Spirit to flow through me  
Like the river that flows from the mountain to the sea  
I need your Spirit to flow through me.*

We are not merely to receive the Holy Spirit – but we should allow the Holy Spirit to flow through us to others. In this vision, the river began in the Temple and flowed out into a dry and dying world bring new life and hope. This picture makes us think about the Holy Spirit and the mission of the church.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

Jesus told the disciples – "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon 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). The Holy

Spirit was poured out on the disciples in Jerusalem but Jesus said very clearly that it would not stop there. The life-giving living water would reach thirsty people in all of Judea and Samaria and the river of life would keep on flowing until it reached the ends of the world.

We see this pattern in the book of Acts. The first six chapters talk of the church in Jerusalem. "The word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in *Jerusalem* grew larger and larger, and a great number of the priests accepted the faith"(Acts 6:7).

The next three chapters tell about the church spreading through Judea and Galilee and into Samaria. Acts 9:31 summarizes what has happened. "And so it was that the church throughout *Judea, Galilee, and Samaria* had a time of peace. Through the help of the Holy Spirit it was strengthened and grew in numbers, as it lived in reverence to the Lord."

These verses are summary statements showing the spread of the church from Jerusalem to Judea and to Samaria. The rest of the book of Acts shows the spread of the gospel to other places of the world especially to Rome the capital of the Roman Empire. We see the Holy Spirit as the one who initiates and directs the evangelistic mission of the church.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT DIRECTS THE MISSION**

Peter was quite content ministering to his fellow Jews but God has other plans. An angel appeared to a Roman soldier named Cornelius and instructed him to send a message to Joppa and ask for Simon Peter to come and speak to them. God then gave a very dramatic dream to Peter, which was repeated three times. Peter wondered what the dream meant. The Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them"(Acts 10:20).

Peter obeyed the Holy Spirit and went with them. He met Cornelius and went into his house which was full of people. While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit interrupted the message, and the people were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues (Acts 10:44-46). It is significant that this first major outreach to the Gentile people was initiated by the Holy Spirit.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT SENDS OUT MISSIONARIES**

Some time later there was a Gentile church in Antioch and it was this church that first sent out missionaries. Again the Holy Spirit took the lead. While the Antioch church leaders were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul to do the work to which I have called them. . . . Having been sent by the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Saul . . . sailed . . . to Cyprus" (Acts 13:2,4). The Holy Spirit was the driving force behind this first missionary journey. In Acts 16:6-10 we see the Holy Spirit directing Paul concerning which cities he should go to start churches. The Holy Spirit is very involved in the missionary and evangelistic outreach of the church.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES WORSHIP**

Psalm 46:4 says, "There is a river that brings joy to the city of God." Whenever the Holy Spirit comes in revival power upon the church there is an outburst of joyous praise. We can think of the river of life as it runs from the Temple down the mountain side to the dry thirsty desert. As it rushes down the hillside, the river leaps, jumps, hops and skips, it splashes in the shallow places and jumps over rocks. The river is laughing, bubbling, shining, leaping, singing and dancing as it takes life wherever it goes. David said, "Let the rivers clap their hands." The same is true of the Holy Spirit in the church. The Holy Spirit inspires the music and worship of the church. Immediately after Pentecost, we read that the new believers were praising God. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

One of the fruits of the spirit is joy. When the Apostles were whipped and commanded never to speak in the name of Jesus again, they rejoiced and praised God that they were worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of Jesus (Acts 5:41). They did not stop, but continued teaching the people publicly and from house to house.

When Paul and Silas were in prison, they sang songs of praise at midnight and God sent an earthquake. The Holy Spirit inspires the music and worship of the church.

Sometimes the church become dead and lifeless. There is no

outreach, and no deep hunger for the spiritual things. Worship often becomes an empty ritual. But when the Holy Spirit comes in time of revival he brings new life. Services become alive, people give themselves to prayer. There is a desire to study the Scriptures. There is a new joy in the lives of believers. This results in joyous singing and praise to God. People compose new songs. Often the music of the church attracts people to Jesus Christ and they give their lives to him. The Holy Spirit inspires true worship. Paul said, “. . . be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts” (Ephesians 5:18-19).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND COMPASSION**

The Holy Spirit is like a river making its way through a dry desert bringing life wherever it goes. It is like a fountain of water springing up within our hearts and then affecting others. The Holy Spirit encourages Christian fellowship and motivates Christians to show kindness and generosity to those who are not Christians. “You have fellowship with the Spirit, and you have kindness and compassion for one another” (Philippians 2:1).

Acts 2:42-46 (NIV) describes the lives of the new believers. “They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking up of bread and prayer. . . they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.” This describes the fellowship they had with each other as believers. They enjoyed eating, worshipping and having fellowship together. But this is not all. They also sold their possessions and goods and gave the money to those who had need. They were a stream of living water bringing life and hope to those in need.

The church had a program of food distribution for widows (Acts 6:1). They cared for the people of the community who were oppressed, poor, or needy. There was a woman named Dorcas who made clothing and gave it to widows and their children (Acts 9:36-39). When a prophet named Agabus, predicted that there would be a widespread famine, the church at Antioch took up an offering and sent it to Jerusalem to help the poor people that were there (Acts 11:28-30).

This is the Holy Spirit at work. Love and kindness flow like a river of life from the heart of God through the church to people who are suffering. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of love. "God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us" (Romans 5:5). The Bible also says, "What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world" (James 1:27).

## **THE HEALING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Jesus was a man of compassion and this was revealed through his preaching and healing ministry. When Jesus saw "the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36 NIV). Jesus preached the Good News about the Kingdom and healed every kind of disease and sickness (Matthew 9:35). Jesus' ministry of healing was not to attract attention to himself or to increase the crowds, but because he had compassion on the people. When the leper called out to Jesus and begged him for healing, Jesus was "filled with compassion." He touched the man and healed him.

When Jesus sent out his disciples he told them to heal the sick, make the lepers clean, cast out demons and even raise the dead. This ministry of healing continued after Jesus ascended to heaven. Peter and John healed the cripple who sat outside the Temple doors (Acts 3:1-8). Peter describes it as an "act of kindness" (Acts 4:9). This ministry expanded and Peter had a powerful healing ministry. Sick people were laid in the streets so that his shadow would fall on them as Peter walked by. Crowds of people brought their sick relatives and friends and those tormented by demons and they were healed (Acts 5:16).

Philip went to Samaria and paralytics and cripples were healed and many were set free from demons (Acts 8:7). Often these miracles of healing opened people's eyes to the gospel and many believed in Jesus as a result of seeing cripples healed and even the dead raised to life. In Lydda, Peter healed a man who had been in bed for 8 years and as a result many people of that area turned to the Lord (Acts 9:35). Peter

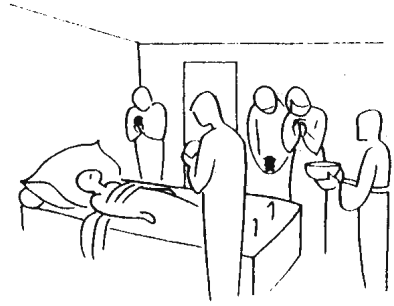
raised Dorcas to life and this became known all over Joppa and as a result, “Many people believed in the Lord” (Acts 9:42).

God continues to do miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit. God has given gifts of healing, faith, and miracles to Christians in the church. These gifts are to be used to show God’s love and power to people who are hurting. The Bible says, “Are any among you sick? They should send for the church elders who will pray for them and rub olive oil on them in the name of the Lord. This prayer made in faith will heal the sick; and the Lord will restore them to health, and the sins they have committed will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15).

The church is the body of Christ and so it must respond in love and compassion to those who are sick and hurting just like Jesus did. Jesus promised his disciples that although he was going away and leaving him, that he would give them the Holy Spirit. He said, “Those who believe in me will do what I do—yes, they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12). We who have received the Holy Spirit are to be channels of blessing, so that the Holy Spirit may flow through our lives like a stream of living water. We must reach out in compassion and heal the sick, bring release to those in bondage to evil habits, and freedom to those oppressed by the devil.

## THE UNITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

If the church is to be like a river of living water that brings the life giving Spirit of God to a thirsty world, then it needs to be united. God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit live together in unbroken unity. Jesus prayed that Christians would live in the same type of unity, for a divided and disunited church can never be a true picture of God. Jesus prayed, “May they be one, so that the world may believe. . . . Just as you and I are one . . . they may be completely one, in order that the



*This prayer, made in faith,  
will heal the sick man (5. 15)*

world may know that you sent me” (John 17:21-23). Jesus knew that unless the church was united and people worked together, then the world would not believe what it said.

Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, “Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives. . . .There is one body and one Spirit. . . . There is one Lord one faith one baptism; there is one God and Father of all people who is Lord of all, works through all and is in all” (Ephesians 4:3-6). The church must not allow racial, political, or economic differences to divide us. We are all God’s children whether we are male or female, rich or poor, black, white or any other colour, businessmen, factory workers, or farm workers. We are “now citizens together with God’s people and members of the family of God” (Ephesians 2:19). As a family we must work together to share God’s love with the people around us. Satan seeks to divide us and break us into groups and if possible get us competing against each other rather than co-operating with each other. Satan’s policy is “divide and conquer.” Because of this we have to continually work towards unity.



Pastors and churches within cities, towns, and villages must find ways to work together instead of competing or even fighting against one another. When church leaders start praying together and working together within a community, revival has often broken out and God has brought healing to the city and the nation. Crime has dropped, drunkenness and drug abuse becomes less, suicide and domestic violence becomes less. In some places the land has been healed, and gardens produce bigger and better crops than ever before. The Holy Spirit really does bring life when there is unity among the churches.

We are all different and each of us has different skills and abilities. God has made us different but these differences should not divide us, but



actually help us to work together for God's glory. Unfortunately sometimes teaching about the Holy Spirit and an emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit has divided churches. This is sad, and it is not pleasing to God. God wants us to drink of the living water and then allow the river of living water to flow through us to others.

## SUMMARY

The Holy Spirit works through the church to bring life to a needy world.

- We bring the gift of eternal life to those who do not know Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
- Joyous enthusiastic worship brings joy to the heart of God, strength to the church and attracts those who are outside of the church.
- The church reaches out with compassion to help those who are poor, hurting and struggling.
- To be effective the church must be united.

In the next chapter we will look at the gifts of the Holy Spirit which he gives to Christians so that we can work together in bringing the clean, sparkling water of life to people who are drinking from muddy puddles that are contaminated by sin.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit gives different gifts or abilities to each one of us. These are often called the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A gift of the Holy Spirit or spiritual gift is a special power or ability that is given to a believer in Jesus Christ to strengthen others in the church and to help them reach out in love to the people around them. When spiritual gifts are used properly, people are strengthened in their Christian lives, the church grows and becomes stronger, and Jesus is honoured and glorified. Christians need to know which gift God has given to them and then use this gift to do his work.

#### ALL CHRISTIANS RECEIVE GIFTS

Some Christians feel they do not have any special ability or gift and so they think they are useless and not able to do anything, but this thinking is not right. The Bible tells us clearly that all Christians have received some gift from God. "The Spirit's presence is shown in some way *in each person* for the good of all" (1 Corinthians 12:7). Therefore, a Christian should not worry and think that he or she is useless. If you have repented of your sins and believed in Jesus Christ as Saviour, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life. The Holy Spirit has given all of us at least one spiritual gift. Every Christian needs to find out what spiritual gift he or she has received and use it.

#### NOT ALL GIFTS ARE THE SAME

Sometimes teachers give gifts to their students. But many times they give the same kind of gift to everyone. Everyone receives a pencil or a book or some other thing, but God's ways are different. He knows each one of us as individuals. He knows our potential, our minds, our strengths and weaknesses and he distributes his gifts to us accordingly. Paul lists some of the spiritual gifts in three places: they are found in

Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and Ephesians 4:11. Peter too, has mentioned some gifts in 1 Peter 4:9-11. Let us think about these gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 12: 6-8**

- Speaking God's message like prophets
- Serving others
- Teaching
- Encouraging others
- Giving generously to others
- Having authority over others or leading others
- Showing kindness and cheerfully helping.

**1 Corinthians 12:8-10**

- Speaking with wisdom
- Gift of knowledge
- Strong faith
- Healing
- Miracles
- Speaking God's message
- Discerning between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not.
- Speaking in tongues
- Ability to interpret different tongues/languages.

**Ephesians 4:11**

- He appoints some to be
  - Apostles
  - Prophets
  - Evangelists
  - Pastors and teachers.

These lists do not cover all of the gifts, for there are many gifts of the Holy Spirit and we are all given different gifts or different combination of gifts. "The . . . Spirit. . . gives different gifts to different people" (1 Corinthians 12:11).

God gives us the gifts according to who we are and what he wants us to do. "We are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us" (Romans 12:6). As we all work together, sharing our

gifts and using them to help each other, the church will grow and become strong and new people will be drawn to Jesus. Therefore we should be thankful that other people have gifts that we do not have. In this way we can work together as a team, and as we each use our different gifts, everyone is helped and strengthened.

“All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it. They are not all apostles, or prophets or teachers. Not everyone has the power to work miracles or to heal diseases or to speak in strange tongues or to explain what is said” (1 Corinthians 12: 27, 29-30).

Be glad! God did not make all Christians to be exactly alike. He made us all different. He gave us different faces, different sized bodies, and he also gave us different gifts. God himself gives gifts to each of us according to his own good will. Hebrews 2:4 says that God was performing all kinds of miracles and wonders and distributing “the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.” Therefore, we must not be upset when we don’t have the same gifts as some other brother or sister. Likewise, we should not despise others if they do not have the same gifts as we have. Each one of us must be glad of the gift God has given us.

## **GOD GIVES GIFTS TO STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH**

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul said that Christians are the body of Christ. Our physical body has many parts to it and every part does not have the same role to play. Hands are able to do different tasks from the legs. The ear has a different role to play than the mouth, but every part does an important work. Every part of our body helps the other parts of the body. We are very grateful for the work every part of our body does.

Likewise, Christians are not the same. We do not have the same gifts, neither do we have the same work to do. We should encourage and help each other as we work together to demonstrate Christ’s love.

Christ gave us these gifts to help us so that we are able to do his good work, and so the body of Christ becomes strong and grows bigger. “Each one, as a good manager of God’s different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God. . . so that in all things praise may be given to God through Jesus Christ . . .” (1 Peter 4:10-11).

The topics we have covered are:

- Every Christian receives a gift or gifts
- All gifts are not the same
- God gives gifts so that we can use them to:
  - Strengthen and help the church to grow
  - Do God's work so that people can glorify God.

Think of Sunday morning. Some people with the gift of teaching, teach Sunday school classes. Others with the gift of service clean up the church area and decorate the church with flowers. Others with the gift of encouragement and hospitality greet and welcome people who come to church. Still others use their gifts to provide music and songs. Maybe one testifies and so encourages other Christians in their faith. Later the pastor brings a message from God's word and his teaching gives the people good direction and advice for their Christian lives.

During the week, some Christians pray with sick people. One woman, who has the gift of service takes care of an elderly woman who has been sick. Another takes a meal to a sick woman and helps her by looking after her children. Another person who has the gift of teaching takes a Bible club for children after school, and other people lead home Bible study groups. One man who has the gift of evangelism visits a friend's house and tells him about Jesus. A woman with the gift of administration looks after the church finances and helps with the office work of the church.

## DIFFERENT GIFTS

The Holy Spirit gives different gifts to each Christian. We must find out what gifts we have, and we must be careful to use the gifts God has given us to help others and to strengthen the church.

**Apostle:** An apostle is a person who gives general leadership to a number of churches. Pastors and other leaders go to him for counsel and advice. Under his direction the churches grow and become strong in their faith. He speaks with God's anointing and people respect his

leadership. Paul was one of those who had this gift (1 Corinthians 1:1).

**Prophet:** A prophet is a person who is very close to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit uses him to speak to the church. The prophets in the Old Testament spoke to the people of Israel, telling them that they must repent of their sins and come back to God. The prophets were not afraid to rebuke people for their wickedness. Sometimes they spoke of things that would come in the future, but their primary task was to speak God's word.

**Teacher:** The gift of teaching helps a person to teach the Word of God clearly so that others will understand it and grow and become mature in their Christian lives. Many strong pastors have this gift and they use it to help the people in their congregations to grow strong in their Christian life. Some use this gift and become outstanding Sunday School and Bible class teachers.



**Evangelist:** This is the ability to present the gospel clearly and powerfully so that sinners repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Some evangelists preach in camp meetings, and crusades or other big gatherings, and many people come to repent of their sins. Others speak to individual friends and relatives and help many people to become Christians.

**Helping others:** People who have this gift rejoice in helping other people. They do not think of receiving any rewards, or praise, or to be paid back for whatever help they give. They get great satisfaction out of helping others. Some help others do garden work, or build a house, or fix a car, or cook some food.

**Encouraging others:** This is the ability to encourage others. For example: A Christian woman has a problem, but another Christian comes and shares some Bible verses and prays with her. This helps her to face

her problems, and gives her courage and strength in her Christian life. Barnabas was a person who had this gift (Acts 4:36, 9:26-27). Saul was a brand new Christian and many were afraid of him. But Barnabas went close to Saul and encouraged him. Later Saul changed his name and we know him as the Apostle Paul.

**Giving generously to those who lack:** All Christians should give one-tenth of their income to God. But some people give much more than one-tenth. God blesses their work, they make a lot of money, and they joyfully giving a lot back to God. They use their finances to strengthen the work of God

**Leadership:** People with the gift of leadership have the ability to discern God's will for the Church and to motivate people to follow them and help them finish the task. Other people are glad to work alongside such a man or woman and they willingly obey what the leader tells them to do.

**Compassion:** People with this gift like to help those who face sufferings and problems. If people are sick, they are happy to take care of them and help them. They help them to bathe, cook their food, and give them whatever other help is needed. Some people think it is the pastor's job to visit those who are sick and help them. But God has given this gift of compassion to many people in the congregation and so we must encourage them to use this gift to help the needy people in the community.

**Hospitality:** Peter said, "Open your homes to each other without complaining" (1 Peter 4:9). People who have this gift enjoy bringing other people into their home, feeding them and giving them a place to stay. "Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers" (Romans 12:13).

**Faith and miracles:** Some people have the gift of faith and God does amazing things through their lives. Many miracles are performed and God is glorified. Stephen and Peter are two people who had this gift (Acts 6:8).

**Healing:** God gives some Christians the power of healing. Through their prayers, many people receive healing from their sickness. This is one major gift God gave to his disciples (Luke 9:1). God often uses healing miracles to open people's eyes to the power of God.

**Knowing different spirits:** God gives some people the ability to be able to tell the difference between the Spirit of God and evil spirits. Many times, God uses these people to cast out demons or evil spirits.

**Speaking in Tongues and Interpreting Tongues:** This can be understood in two ways.

- A. Some people have a special ability from God that enables them to learn new languages. Others have the gift of interpreting the language so that others can understand what was said. Sometimes there is a special speaker from overseas. Some people have a wonderful gift of interpreting the message without losing any of the meaning. The Holy Spirit uses them to communicate the message effectively.
- B. Some people have the gift of speaking in tongues or languages that they do not understand. They feel that this helps them to talk with God. Others receive the gift to interpret this message so that others can understand it. Paul said a lot about this in 1 Corinthians 14. There were some problems arising in the Corinthian church, for some thought that the gift of speaking in tongues was more important than any other gifts. Paul wrote about this problem in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14. If we follow Paul's advice we will solve a lot of problems.

## **WHICH GIFT IS MOST IMPORTANT?**

We have seen that there are many different spiritual gifts, but unfortunately some people argue about which gift is the most important



gift. Some people think that speaking in tongues is the most important gift and that it is the sign that a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul gives us the answer to this question in 1 Corinthians 12. “In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others, or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues. . . . Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:28,31). Gifts are given so that we can be a blessing and a help to others. A person who speaks in tongues may feel happy and blessed, but if no one else understands what that person is saying then no one is helped. (1 Corinthians 14:4-5). It is more important to speak five words in church that will be a blessing to everyone, than to speak 10,000 words that no one understands (1 Corinthians 14:19). Paul emphasises that it is more important to show love to others than to have any special gift.

Every gift comes from God. He himself distributes them to us. Therefore we must rejoice and thank God for the gifts he has given each of us. We must desire to receive the gifts that help and encourage other people and which will help the church to grow. Paul said, “It is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your hearts on spiritual gifts, especially the gift of proclaiming God’s message” (1 Corinthians 14:1).

## **WHICH GIFT HAS GOD GIVEN TO YOU?**

God has given his Holy Spirit to all Christians and has given spiritual gifts that we can use to strengthen the church, but many Christians aren’t sure which gift they received. God wants you to know what your gift is and he wants you to use it to help his church. If you want to know your gift, we should follow these steps:

1. Pray and thank God for giving you a gift and ask him to show you which gift he has given to you.
2. Read carefully this list of different gifts. Think carefully about each

of them and ask yourself, “Do I have this gift or not?”

3. Experiment. You will not know which gift you have if you do not try and do some work. You will not know if you have the gift of evangelism if you do not help others to believe in Christ. If you pray for sick people and God heals them then you know you have the gift of healing. Spiritual gifts are given to strengthen the church. Get involved in the work of the church and in sharing the love of God with others. As you do this God will show you the gifts he has given you.

4. Examine your feelings. When you do something, how do you feel? Do you feel excited about it or not? For example: try conducting a Bible study or holding a night fellowship group in your home. Later take time and think about it. Examine your feelings. Do you really feel good about what you did? Did people enjoy the Bible study and fellowship time? If the message you shared has helped some people, then this could show that you have the gift of teacher or perhaps the gift of pastor. Do you feel excited about preaching the word of God to people? If you love to do this then this may show that you have this gift.

5. Evaluate. Does your work bear fruit or not? God gave you the gift to help you do his work. If you try one thing and if it doesn't have any fruit, and no one receives any benefit, then this shows that most likely you do not have that gift. But if you teach some people in a class, and they learn what you taught and their Christian lives were strengthened, then, it looks like you are gifted to be a teacher and help others with the word of God.

6. Expect confirmation from church leaders. God gives us spiritual gifts to help the body of Christ. The gifts are to be a blessing to others not just to make ourselves feel good. If you do have a gift, the work you do will help to strengthen and encourage other Christians. Probably some people will say to you how much you have helped them. This will confirm to you that you have a particular gift.

Read through the list of the various gifts. Think about each gift.

Think about the different tasks, both within and outside the church, that you have attempted. What things were successful? What things made you feel good? What things were a blessing and encouragement to others. As you think about these things, and ask for God's guidance, he will show you which gifts are yours. We do not all receive the same gift. God gives some people two or three gifts. Usually one gift will be stronger than the others. Think carefully about which gift is the most effective in your life. When you use this gift for God's glory, God will bless you and give you other gifts as well.

The Cassowary is a large bird in Papua New Guinea that belongs to the same family as the Emu and like the Emu is unable to fly. There is a legend about the Cassowary that goes like this. Long, long ago, the Cassowary used to have wings like any other bird, but he was very proud of his large strong legs. He walked everywhere and had no use for his wings. Many years passed and he never used his wings. Over the years his wings became smaller and smaller. Now his wings have become completely useless. Some Christians are like this Cassowary. God gave them some gifts but they have not used them. If we come to church and just sit there doing nothing, we will never discover the joy of using our spiritual gifts. We cannot expect God to give us other gifts if we do not use the ones we already have. We must thank God for every good gift he has given us and use them to help other people. If we do this, the church will grow and become stronger. God will be pleased with us and he will give us some other gifts too. This will continue to strengthen the church.

## CHAPTER 12

### THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, but why do we say the Holy Spirit is like fire? There are two areas in the New Testament that talk about fire and the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said this about Jesus “. . . But the one who will come after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11).

When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. “Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. . .” (Acts 2:2-4). The prophecy of John the Baptist had been fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came like a fire on the day of Pentecost.

### FIRE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

On the day of Pentecost, the 120 believers heard the sound of the rushing wind and they saw fire coming down from heaven. Why did God send his Holy Spirit like fire from heaven? If we look in the Old Testament, we will find some answers. The Old Testament records three stories of God sending fire from heaven.

One famous story is the story of Elijah. During Elijah’s time, the country of Israel was in a very bad situation. King Ahab had married Queen Jezebel, a heathen lady. Ahab and Jezebel encouraged the worship of the false god, Baal. They were opposed to the true worship of God and had killed many prophets of God. Elijah told the King that God was very angry because of the idolatry and wickedness of the people of Israel. He said that God would punish the nation and that there would be no more rain until he said so.

For 3 years it did not rain as Elijah had said. Later God told Elijah to go back and see King Ahab. Elijah told King Ahab to bring all the prophets of Baal and gather them together on a mountain. On that

mountain, they piled up stones and built two altars. At each altar, they prepared firewood, killed a bull and put it on top of the altar to be burnt, but they were not allowed to make a fire. Each group had to pray that fire would come from heaven to burn their sacrifice.

The Baal worshippers believed that Baal was the lord of the sun, rain, thunder and lightning. They were sure Baal would send down lightning. They prayed and chanted from morning till late afternoon. They yelled and shouted and pleaded with Baal to send fire but nothing happened.

Then Elijah went to the altar he had prepared. The firewood was on it and also the bull that had been killed. Elijah was confident that God would demonstrate his power. He told the people to bring big containers filled with water and pour the water on top of the firewood. Everything was soaked with water. Then Elijah prayed and said, "Oh Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob prove now that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant and have done all this at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so that this people will know that you are bringing them back to yourself" (1 Kings 18:36-37). When Elijah had finished praying, God sent down fire from heaven and burned up the sacrifices, the wood, stones, water and everything else. People saw this and they threw themselves flat on the ground and spoke out, "The Lord is God; the Lord alone is God"(1 Kings 18:38).

This story shows us four very important things about the fire of heaven. These four things also relate to the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. Elijah obeyed God and did what God told him. In Elijah's prayer, he said, "I . . . have done all this at your command" (1 Kings 18:36). In Acts 5:32 we read these words, "The Holy Spirit . . . is God's gift to those who obey him." God gives the Holy Spirit to people who obey his words. The Holy Spirit will never come to us if we disobey him or his word.
2. Elijah prayed and asked God to show his power. We too must ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "The Father in heaven (will) give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).
3. Elijah had a strong faith. His faith was so strong he even poured

water over the firewood before he asked God to send the fire. He was certain that God would answer his prayer and send fire. Matthew 21:22 says, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." These two things work together: the act of prayer and faith. If you truly believe that God wants to fill you with his Spirit, and you ask him to send the Holy Spirit to fill your life, then you will see God answer your prayer.

4. When the fire came down, people felt and saw the power of God. They humbled themselves and called out, "The Lord is God." On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came like a fire and his power was demonstrated in public and many people believed in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit wants to do great things to awaken many people to repent and believe in the Lord. We must do the same as Elijah did. We must obey God's commands, believe in him and pray. God will show his power.

## **THE FIRE OF GOD CAME TO THE TABERNACLE**

In the story of Elijah, we saw the fire of God burning up the sacrifices on the altar. A similar thing had happened twice before. When Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, God gave the law to Moses and instructed him on how to worship God with animal offerings and sacrifices. Moses and the people of Israel built a very special tent for worship. In this tent, they made a big altar on which they would offer animal sacrifices to God.

When everything was ready the people gathered for the first offering. They killed a bull and poured its blood on the altar and put the meat from the bull on top of the firewood. Aaron, the High Priest, raised his hands and pronounced God's blessings over the people. "The dazzling light of the Lord's presence appeared to all the people. Suddenly the Lord sent a fire and it consumed the burnt offering. . . . When the people saw it, they all shouted and bowed down with their faces to the ground" (Leviticus 9:23-24). The fire from heaven showed that God was pleased with their worship, their offerings, and had accepted this Tent as being his house of worship.

## THE FIRE OF GOD CAME TO THE TEMPLE

Many years had gone by and the Tent of meeting had become old. King Solomon built a big Temple in Jerusalem. This Temple was extremely beautiful. They worked for many years using the best stones and timber. The Most Holy Room was lined with gold. It was a beautiful place to worship God. When everything was ready, they appointed a time to open this new Temple of the Lord.

Hundreds of animals were killed as a sacrifice to God. The priests were ready and they carried the Covenant Box that Moses had made and put it into the room called the Most Holy Place. Then 120 musicians started blowing trumpets, hundreds of Levites who were dressed in special clothing played other musical instruments and started praising God. They sang, "Praise the Lord, because he is good, and his love is eternal." Suddenly the Temple was filled with a cloud shining with the dazzling light of the Lord's presence and they could not continue the service of worship (2 Chronicles 5:14).

Now Solomon prayed a wonderful prayer and dedicated the house and everything in it to the Lord. When Solomon had finished praying, "Fire came down from heaven and burnt up the sacrifices that been offered, and the dazzling light of the Lord's presence filled the Temple . . . When the people of Israel saw the fire fall from heaven and the light fill the Temple, they fell face down on the pavement, worshipping God and praising him for his goodness and his eternal love (2 Chronicles 7:1,3).

These two stories are very similar. Moses made the first Tent to worship God, and on the dedication day, as they made their first sacrifices God sent fire down from heaven upon the altar and burned up the sacrifice. Hundreds of years later, Solomon built a magnificent Temple for worshipping God. On the dedication day as the people presented their first offerings, God sent down fire upon the altar and burnt these sacrifices. By sending the fire, God demonstrated that he accepted their worship and was pleased with the Temple.

## **THE FIRE OF GOD CAME TO THE BELIEVERS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST**

On the day of Pentecost fire descended from heaven, but this fire did not come into the big Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple in Jerusalem was very beautiful and well decorated, and there were priests performing their duties, offering animal sacrifices every day. People came hundreds, even thousands of miles to worship in the Temple. But the fire of God did not come into the Temple in Jerusalem.

The fire of God came to an ordinary house. There were no gold decorations. There was no animal laid on top of an altar. There were no priests in beautiful robes. Some of those people were fishermen, some were tax collectors, and some were women. There were no rich or famous people present. These people were just ordinary people from small country villages, but suddenly that morning, fire came down from heaven and the fire spread out and touched each person's head. This is just like the word of the prophet, Joel, "This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour my spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions and your old men will have dreams. Yes, even on my servants both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days (Acts 2:17-18).

God did something totally new. His Spirit is no longer confined to the special gold plated room in the Temple. Now the fire of God came and rested upon the heads of people and this shows that the people have become the temple of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit is living within them. The place of worship is no longer a building built with stone and covered with gold. Men and women are the temple of God. Our hearts are the altar, our lives are the sacrifice that we give to God, and the Holy Spirit is the fire that burns within our hearts.

The Most High God does not live in houses, built by human hands.

Acts 7:48

You are God's temple, and God's Spirit lives in you.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you.

1 Corinthians 6:19



On the day of Pentecost, God did something new. He sent his Holy Spirit like a fire from heaven, but the fire did not go to an altar that was built as part of a Temple. The fire went to an ordinary house and descended on the people. In this way, God showed us that people are the true holy temple of God. Our hearts are like an altar, and the fire of the Holy Spirit must stay within us just like the fire that burns on the altar.

The woman from Samaria asked which was the correct place to worship. Jesus replied, “The time is coming and is already here, when by the power of God’s Spirit people will worship the Father as he really is, offering him the true worship that he wants. God is Spirit, and only by the power of his Spirit can people worship him as he really is” (John 4:23-24). The focus is no longer on the building but on people’s hearts. True worship takes place when our spirits are in harmony with the Spirit of God. True worship can take place anywhere in the world, whether we are under a tree, in a shed or in a beautiful church.

Peter also spoke about us becoming the temple of the Lord. “Come as living stones and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). As Christians meet together to worship we form the temple of God. We are also priests who serve him and offer spiritual sacrifices to him. The most important sacrifice we can offer to God, is to offer ourselves wholly to God for his service.

## **WE MUST OFFER SACRIFICES TO GOD**

In the Old Testament, there were different ways of offering animal sacrifices to God. People who wanted to receive forgiveness for their sin would kill the animal, pour out its blood and burn part of the animal in the fire.

There was another type of sacrifice that some people made. When people wanted to thank God, and show that they loved him, they would take a sheep or a goat, kill it, and cook the whole animal in the fire. They did not take any part of it for themselves. None of it was eaten, but it was completely given to God and burned in a fire. This offering, which was called the “burnt offering” was pleasing to God (Leviticus 1:9 NIV).

Today, we do not kill animals and offer them as a sacrifice to God, but the Bible says that we must give ourselves as a sacrifice to God. “Because of God’s great mercy to us, I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer (Romans 12:1).

We do not kill ourselves, but we give ourselves as living sacrifices. This means that instead of insisting on our own desires and our own will, we let God take full control of our lives. When the Israelites burned an animal in the fire as a sacrifice, the Bible says, “The smell of this food offering is pleasing to the Lord ” (Leviticus 1:9). If we give ourselves as a sacrifice to God, Romans 12:1 says that this is “pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.” These two points are similar. God was very pleased with those people when they killed the animals and burnt them wholly on the altar. And God is very pleased when we give ourselves totally to him like a sacrifice. This is the type of worship that really pleases God.

Here are some other sacrifices that we offer to God.

### **Praise**

Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. Hebrews 13:15( NIV)

### **Good deeds of compassion**

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16( NIV)

### **Christian Service**

Paul says that our work for Christ is an offering that we offer to him. Paul described himself as “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God” (Romans 15:16). The people who believed Paul’s message and trusted in Jesus Christ then became a love gift that Paul gave back to the Lord.

## **DO NOT LET THE FIRE DIE**

We have talked a lot about the fire of God coming to the altar. Each of us must give ourselves as a sacrifice to God, and then the Holy Spirit will come to us like a fire, he will fill us, and the fire of the Holy Spirit will burn in our hearts. We will experience new joy and power in our hearts and we will love to share the good news of Jesus with other people.

In the Old Testament God gave regulations or laws concerning the burnt offerings and sacrifices and how to take care of the fire on the altar. "A burnt offering is to be left on the altar all night long, and the fire is to be kept burning . . . The fire on the altar must be kept burning and never allowed to go out. Every morning the priest shall put firewood on it, arrange the burnt offering on it, and burn the fat of the fellowship offering. The fire must always be kept burning on the altar and never allowed to go out" (Leviticus 6:9,12-13).

God gave this very important law to the priests of Israel. The priest must take good care of fire on the altar and must never let it die. God had sent fire down onto the altar at the time of the first sacrifice, but it was the work of the priest to keep putting more firewood on the altar so that it would not die out.

This is a good picture of our lives and the work of the Holy Spirit. Our heart is like an altar and the Holy Spirit is like the fire. We should not think that once we are filled with the Holy Spirit that we have nothing more to do. We are responsible to take care of the fire of the Holy Spirit so that it does not die out.

## **SIN CAN PUT OUT THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Just as falling rain can put out a fire, so the evil words and deeds of this world can place a heaviness on our spirits and can quench the fire of the Holy Spirit, and cause it to die. This happened to Lot in the Old Testament. Lot was living in an evil city called Sodom. The Bible says Lot was "a good man who was distressed by the immoral conduct of lawless people . . . day after day he suffered agony as he saw and heard their evil actions" (2 Peter 2:7-8).

Many Christians face the same problems. They live among people who are not Christians and every day they hear them insulting one another, arguing, dirty talk, jealousy and anger. Some Christians live in homes where there is worldly music on the radio and godless programs on the television. Others live in homes where incense is burnt to images of other gods. These things can weaken their spiritual lives like rain falling on a fire. It is very important that they keep close to the Lord and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In John 17, Jesus prayed for his disciples, "The world hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I am not of this world. I do not ask you to take them out of this world, but I do ask you to keep them safe from the Evil One" (John 17:14-15).

We must be careful to keep the fire of the Holy Spirit burning brightly in our lives. The sins of other people can suppress and dampen our Christian life and our spiritual zeal. However we can be glad because Jesus is praying on our behalf.

## **WE MUST PUT NEW FIREWOOD EVERY MORNING**

When we do the work of God, we use up power that is within us. There is a story in the Bible that demonstrates this. A woman had been sick for many years and had spent all her money going to various doctors and healers, but was no better. She heard about Jesus and wanted him to heal her, but she was ashamed to explain her situation in public. She hid in the crowd and said to herself, "If I can only touch his clothes, I know I'll be healed." She worked her way through the crowd until she was close to Jesus. Quickly, and with faith that she would be healed, she reached out and touched the edge of Jesus' clothes. Instantly she was healed from her disease. Jesus turned around to the crowd and asked, "Who touched me?" The disciples were surprised when Jesus asked this, because there were hundreds of people crowding around. Jesus replied, "Someone touched me for I knew it when power went out of me" (Luke 8:46).

This story has some important truths for pastors and church leaders. When we do God's work and help people we feel excited about it and are glad to help others. But in helping others day after day we find that our

spiritual strength will go down, unless we are continually getting new strength from God. Ministering to others will cause spiritual power to go out from us. If we do not give proper time to prayer and Bible reading, the fire of God in our hearts can die out. Moses commanded the priests to put more firewood on the altar every morning. We too must put new firewood on the fire everyday. Our firewood is to have a daily routine of prayer, Bible-reading, and having fellowship with other brothers and sisters as we worship God together. These Bible verses show how Jesus spent time in prayer, waiting on God so as to renew his spiritual strength.

- In the early morning, Jesus went out to a lonely place, where he prayed. Mark 1:35
- Crowds of people came to hear him to and be healed from their diseases but he would go away to lonely places, and pray there. Luke 5:15-16
- At that time, Jesus went up a hill to pray and spent the whole night there praying to God. Luke 6:12

Jesus did many miracles and helped hundreds and even thousands of people. Everyday he spent a lot of time praying, and so God was able to continue to do great miracles through Jesus' life.

Prayer is one of the main things to strengthen our Christian life. Another thing that strengthens our Christian life is Bible reading and memorising the word of God. Psalms 119:11 says, "I keep your law in my heart, so that I will not sin against you". When we read the Bible and study each verse, we are putting firewood on the altar and cause the fire to burn more brightly. Psalm 119: 105 says "Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path." Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3 which says, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." God's word is a lamp that shows us our path, and it is like food that gives us spiritual strength. By spending time in prayer and Bible study we are keeping firewood on the altar of our hearts, which makes the fire of the Holy Spirit burn strongly in our lives.

## **FELLOWSHIP STRENGTHENS THE FIRE**

If a person removes a burning piece of firewood from a fire it will burn for a while, but after a while it will start going down. If we take this one piece of wood, and put it together with another three or four pieces, then all of them will burn brightly. This is exactly the same with our Christian life. The practice of having fellowship and worshipping with other Christians is a very important thing to strengthen our Christian lives. The Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost and many people repented and believed in Jesus. These new believers spent much time in fellowship and this helped them grow in their Christian lives. "Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, praising God. . . . And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47).

Jesus himself said, "For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them" (Matthew 18:20). The habit of having fellowship together strengthens one another, but separation can cause a downfall in our Christian life. If we take firewood that is burning in a fire and separate them from each other, it will not be long before the fire will die. Likewise if we let anything separate us from our Christian brothers and sisters, the fire of the Holy Spirit will die.

## **BITTERNESS AND ANGER CAN PUT OUT THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Ephesians 4:30-31 says, "Do not make God's Holy Spirit sad: . . . Get rid of all bitterness passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort." If we allow any anger or bitterness in our hearts, this will make the Holy Spirit sad. As Christians we are part of the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit works to promote unity within the body. "Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together" (Ephesians 4:3). When we allow bad feelings, jealousy or anger to divide us we grieve the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our closest friend and helper, but if we are not careful with our words and attitudes, we destroy the unity of the body of

Christ and so make the Holy Spirit sad.

There are some the things that make the Holy Spirit rejoice. “Be kind and tender hearted to one another, and forgive one another as God has forgiven you through Christ” (Ephesians 4:32). “Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2). If we follow these things, then there will be unity in the church. Joy and gladness will be found among the people and God will do great and wonderful things in the church and in the community. Psalm 133:1 says, “How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God’s people to live together in harmony.” Jesus prayed for unity among his disciples before he went to the cross, “May they be one, so that the world may believe that you sent me” (John 17:21).

## **DO NOT ALLOW THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DIE**

Paul gave some good words of advice, “Do not put out the Spirit's fire” (1 Thessalonians 5:19 NIV).

There are two ways of putting out a fire.

1. Give it no fuel. If we do not add any more firewood, in a while the fire will go out.

2. Smother it. If we pour lots of water on it, then immediately the fire will die out.

This is the same with the fire of the Holy Spirit. If we simply do nothing the fire of the Holy Spirit will die out. If we don't read our Bibles or pray or go to church, our Christian lives will become powerless, we will lose the joy and peace we once had, and the fire of the Holy Spirit will die out. Our Christian life will grow cold and we will have no power or fire in our lives.

We can also put out the fire of the Holy Spirit if we disobey. Acts 5:32 says that the Holy Spirit is “God’s gift to those who obey him.” Everyday, we must obey the voice of the Holy Spirit. But, if we ignore or reject the leadership of the Holy Spirit, this will grieve the Holy Spirit. He will not leave us at once, for he wants to help us repent and come back to him. But if we continue to disobey him, then we will grieve the Holy Spirit and the fire will die.

If each day of our lives, we say, “Yes God”, to the directions and guidance of the Holy Spirit, then the fire of the Holy Spirit will not be quenched. He will continue to strengthen us and his power and purity will be revealed in our lives.

## CONCLUSION

In this book, we have seen a lot of things about the work and the ways of the Holy Spirit. Here are some very important points that we have looked at.

First, we must be born anew by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5).

We must allow the Spirit of God fill us (Ephesians 5:18).

We must let the Holy Spirit control us in every way (Galatians 5:25).

We must not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30).

We must preserve the unity which the Spirit gives (Ephesians 4:3).

We have looked at word pictures of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is like the breath of Almighty God that breathes life into us and transforms us even as the wind brought life to a valley of dry bones.

The Holy Spirit is like a fire that purifies our hearts and makes us holy.

The Holy Spirit is like a wonderful fruit tree that bears beautiful fruits of love, joy, peace, and many others.

The Holy Spirit is like life giving water that satisfies our thirst and then becomes a river that flows through us to others.

The Holy Spirit is God’s most wonderful gift to us, and the Holy Spirit also gives other gifts so that we may use them to be a blessing to others and bring glory and praise to God.

We are God’s children and he wants the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower our lives so that we will glorify God in all that we do and say.

We are to be a living sacrifice and give ourselves totally to God. As we give ourselves totally to God, and allow him to control every area of our lives he will fill us with his Holy Spirit.





