



in
us

In Us

The Holy Spirit at Work
in Each Believer Today



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In Us: The Holy Spirit at Work in Each Believer Today

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INTRODUCTION

The Scripture tells us that *“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”* (John 4:24). We cannot see nor touch God, but we know that He is present everywhere at all times. But what is more important for us to understand is that the Spirit of God—the third person in the Trinity—is not only present around us; He is present in the lives of every believer.

Towards the end of His ministry, Jesus promised to send a Helper, the *Spirit of truth* who will help His disciples and dwell in them (John 14:16–17). It is clear that He will play a vital role in their lives. Who is the Spirit of truth, and how will He help Jesus’ disciples?

As Christians, we know the depth of God’s love for us. When our relationship with Him was broken because of sin, God promised to send a Savior who will bring us back to Him, which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for sin by dying on the cross for us. In Christ, we can receive the fullness of God’s grace and mercy. After Jesus resurrected, He promised to send the Holy Spirit, who He said will *“teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I [Jesus] have said to you”* (John 14:26). We see that the Holy Spirit will be actively engaged in a Christian’s life.

The sacrifice of Jesus brought us back to a relationship with God and the power of the Holy Spirit guides and empowers us to live for God. Because of the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives, it is crucial for us to understand who He is and what He does. Why did Jesus have to send the Holy Spirit? What exactly does having the Holy Spirit in our lives look like?

A lot of Christians may associate the Holy Spirit with powerful signs and wonders. We know that He empowers people to perform miraculous deeds. But the Holy Spirit does more than display God’s power. He makes God real to each of us in a very personal way. He confirms who we are in God. He transforms us more and more into the image of Christ. In this material, we will get to know the person of the Holy Spirit and the importance of

His presence and power at work in our lives. We will also look at the lives of some people from the Old Testament and New Testament and how the Holy Spirit revealed Himself to them, accomplishing the purpose of God in and through their lives.

We hope that this material will not only make us understand how the Holy Spirit moves in the lives of Christians, but also make us excited and eager to experience Him more every day. May it encourage us to know Him more, listen to Him more, and yield to Him, knowing that He is guiding and empowering us to live the victorious life God wants us to have here on earth.

1 The Person of the Holy Spirit

WARM-UP

- Do you have a hard time asking for help? Why or why not?
- Have you recently experienced overcoming something very challenging and seemingly impossible? Share your experience.
- Have you ever had or witnessed a supernatural experience? Tell us about it.

WORD *¹⁶“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” JOHN 14:16-17*

In developing a personal relationship with God, understanding the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit is very important. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to live with us and dwell in us. The Holy Spirit’s ministry in and through a disciple is so crucial that the manifestation of both the character and power of Christ will depend on Him. The degree of willingness of the believer to surrender and rely on the Holy Spirit will determine the extent of the demonstration of the grace of God in his or her life.

Who is the Holy Spirit and why do we need to grow in our relationship with Him?

1 | The Holy Spirit is God who lives with us and in us.

*¹⁶“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and **will be in you.**”*

JOHN 14:16-17

The Holy Spirit is not a force, ghost, an “it,” a power, or an impersonal influence. Most cults falsely teach that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal divine influence, but the Bible teaches that He is a real person. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as *him*. He can speak (Acts 13:2); He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30); He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). The Bible also describes the Holy Spirit as omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10–12), omnipotent (Job 33:4), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7–10), and eternal (Hebrews 9:14).

So, who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. All the attributes of the Father and Jesus are also attributed to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, The Holy Spirit should be worshiped as we worship the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers and continues to minister and work through them and in them, resulting in Christlikeness and a Spirit-empowered life.

Because He is holy, He empowers believers to share a new life in Christ and live holy lives as He lives in us and transforms us inside out. He is the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4–5) and the One who provides power from God that enables believers to become His witnesses (Acts 1:8) as we live for Him.

What is the difference between someone living with us and in us? Why is it important that the Holy Spirit is both *with you* and *in you*?

2 | The Holy Spirit is another Helper, like Jesus.

*¹⁶“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper**, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”*

JOHN 14:16-17

When Jesus was about to leave the disciples, He spoke to them, saying that He will not leave them (John 14:18) and that the Father will send them another Helper to be with them. The title *Helper* (in Greek, *parakletos*) means the one called alongside—a helper, a comforter, and an advocate. The term *another* (literally, another of the same kind) suggests that Jesus Himself had been a *Paraclete* for the disciples, and that this new *Paraclete* will be like Jesus. Just like what Jesus did for His disciples while He was here on earth, so the Holy Spirit will be to the disciples everywhere. He helps us grow in Christlike character and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and to move in power as we fulfill Christ’s Great Commission through the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Moreover, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses by interceding for us according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-28).

How do you think Jesus’ announcement about *another Helper* encouraged the disciples at that time? How do you think it is still encouraging to believers today?

3 | The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

*“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, **the Spirit of truth**, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.” JOHN 15:26*

*“When **the Spirit of truth** comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” JOHN 16:13*

The Holy Spirit is the Helper sent from the Father. He is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, bearing witness about Jesus. He will guide us and teach us. As the Spirit of truth, He will testify about God, guide us in truth, and tell us what is yet to come.

How have you experienced the power and presence of the Holy Spirit? What do you think would happen if we followed Christ but did not have the Holy Spirit?

APPLICATION

- What has been your understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit? How is this growing and what kind of a relationship would you like to have with the Holy Spirit?
- What are some of the hindrances to being in fellowship with the Holy Spirit? How can you grow in fellowship with the Holy Spirit this week?
- What are some of the names used to describe the Holy Spirit? Take some time this week to study Scripture and ask God for the relevance of these names and descriptions in our world today.

PRAYER

- Thank God for all the Persons of the Trinity and how we have everything we need in God. Pray for a greater revelation of the Holy Spirit beginning this week.
- Ask God for a growing relationship with, awareness of, and dependence on the Holy Spirit every day.
- Pray that your life would be marked by the work and power of the Holy Spirit. Pray that more people would come to know God through your life, character, and testimony.

2 The Presence of the Holy Spirit

WARM-UP

- Recall a time when you were afraid to do something because you were all alone. What did you feel at that moment?
- Tell us about something you have wanted to do but have not yet because you feel unprepared. What makes you feel unprepared?
- Name one person who has always been with you in the highs and lows of your life.

WORD *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

ROMANS 8:9

One of the greatest blessings that God has given us is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is a gift that God's Spirit lives in us and dwells with us. As we walk in this life as believers, we are given the assurance that in Christ we are never alone. What gives us that confidence is the truth that God makes His presence felt and known through His Spirit. The Christian life is not easy—it is not a walk in the park. The Bible tells us that we will face trials of many kinds, yet God does not leave us alone in this journey. Knowing the Holy Spirit more and how His presence empowers us in this life will enable us to walk with confidence—in this life and the life to come.

So what does it mean for the Holy Spirit to be present in our lives?

1 | The presence of the Holy Spirit in us gives us life.

¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. **ROMANS 8:10-11**

The moment we put our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells in us. When the Bible tells us that the Spirit gives us life, it simply means that He constantly sustains the spiritual life gained by the believer in this life and the new bodily life we will gain in the age to come. This truth powerfully reminds us of the important role of the Spirit's presence in our life. Without His presence, we are left alone, with no hope in the present or the future. God's Spirit is here with us to sustain us even with lost hope, weakened faith, or dry area in our relationship with God. And even when we die physically, through the power of the Spirit, we will be resurrected and given immortal bodies that will be free from the stains of sin and corruption. Truly, the presence of the Holy Spirit gives and imparts life to every believer.

In what area in your life does the Holy Spirit sustain and help you?

2 | The presence of the Holy Spirit in us confirms our status as children of God.

¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God . . . **ROMANS 8:14-16**

In our relationship with Christ, one of the things that change is the way we are led by God. Before we encountered Christ, we were usually led and guided by our own nature, desires, and flesh. Yet now that we are in Christ, the presence of the Spirit leads us and guides us. Although our flesh could confuse and distract us at times, we are assured that the Spirit is continually speaking in us, leading us, and guiding us. This reality, no matter how it looks like for us, confirms that we are no longer on our own. As His children, we belong to our heavenly Father. Because we know and are walking in our true identity, we are no longer driven by slavery to sin or fear of punishment. The role of the Spirit is to constantly remind us of our divine adoption as God's children.

Share about a time when the Holy Spirit led and guided you, reminding you that you are God's child.

3

The presence of the Holy Spirit in us assures us of help in our weakness.

*²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. **ROMANS 8:26-27***

As Christians, we remain prone to moments of weakness in our everyday lives. Even when we don't know what to pray for or what to tell our heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit knows us intimately and perfectly, including our deepest needs. The Spirit prays for exactly what we need *according to his will*, and therefore, God hears (1 John 5:14). In our weakness, the Spirit helps us connect with God so we should not lose heart. The Spirit's presence enables us to overcome these moments of weakness with hope and a sense of victory, knowing that God is always with us and for us. It is in that moment of weakness that the presence of God's Spirit is made even more real. When we tap into and walk in His presence, we find strength and courage to face whatever will come our way. What would you consider to be your moment of weakness? How did the Holy Spirit help you?

APPLICATION

- How can you be more aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your daily life? Find time this week to pause and allow yourself to connect with your heavenly Father through the help of the Holy Spirit.
- How can you find more time to be in fellowship with the Holy Spirit every day? What would that look like for you?
- In what area of your life do you need the help of the Holy Spirit the most? What specific help do you need?

PRAYER

- Begin to thank God today that the Holy Spirit is always present and available to help you in every circumstance.
- Ask God to help you be more aware of the Spirit's presence in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in overcoming your struggles and weaknesses.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit's presence would overflow in your life and that others would also encounter and follow God.

3 The Power of the Holy Spirit

WARM-UP

- Who is the most powerful person you know? What is the source of his or her power?
- What is one of the most important events you have witnessed? Why was it so memorable?
- What is a recent discovery you have made that you are excited to share with others? Tell us about it.

WORD *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

ACTS 1:8

Before Jesus called and commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel, He promised to send a Helper, the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). As His followers, we are not left on our own to do God’s mission and follow His call. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be effective witnesses. As you know, the Holy Spirit is not just a force or power. He is the living God who is present within us and fellowships within us. The Holy Spirit’s presence in us empowers us to be a witness and follow God’s call, fulfill His mission, and will for our lives as Christ’s followers.

Today, we will look at how the Holy Spirit empowers us.

1

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses with our lives.

*17*So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." . . . *20*And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." *21*And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" **ACTS 9:17, 20-21**

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

The apostle Paul used to be a persecutor of the church (Acts 22:3-5), but Jesus appeared to him and called him. He was later filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17) and immediately proclaimed Jesus to others. What astounded his hearers was that he used to be a persecutor and was now proclaiming the very One he was persecuting—Christ. We, too, are called to be witnesses of who God is—showing others who He is and honoring Him, not just with our words, but also with our lives. The Holy Spirit helps us and empowers us as we live godly lives and as we obey God’s call and leading in every area of our lives. The Spirit helps us be more Christlike as we look to Him (1 Corinthians 6:11). How has the Holy Spirit helped you in living a godly life?

2

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses as we proclaim the gospel.

29“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,
*30*while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” *31*And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. **ACTS 4:29-31**

. . . and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power . . .

1 CORINTHIANS 2:4

The disciples were mostly uneducated and ordinary (Acts 4:13) men, but they proclaimed the gospel with boldness and with power. The religious leaders threatened them to prevent them from preaching the gospel (Acts 4:18, 21), but they prayed to God and asked for boldness and power to do so. God answered by filling them with the Spirit and granting what they had asked for. The apostle Paul also affirmed how he did not rely on his own wisdom and ability to speak in proclaiming the gospel. Rather, he relied on the Spirit and His power (1 Corinthians 2:4).

Most of the time, looking at our own limits, skills, or capacities is what prevents us from preaching the gospel. But our ability to proclaim the gospel is not based on our own ability or capacity. It is based only on the power of the Holy Spirit in us. Our effectiveness as ministers of the gospel is based on God's power in us. In what aspect of your life do you need the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit? How

will the Holy Spirit enable you to boldly and effectively preach the gospel?

3

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses of Christ's love to one another.

*³²Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. **ACTS 4:32-35***

*⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. **1 CORINTHIANS 12:7-11***

(Read also **ROMANS 12:3-8**.)

After the disciples were filled with the Spirit in Acts 4:31, they proclaimed the gospel with boldness and power. However, it did not stop there. They shared their talents, spiritual gifts, and resources for the benefit of the church community. They

helped one another and gave to meet the needs of others. There were those who testified and taught about Christ's resurrection, and then there were those who worked great miracles among them.

God, too, has called us today to use our gifts for the common good of the church. We have been given gifts that will empower us to fulfill God's calling in our lives. We each have gifts that will build the church, minister to other believers, and cause His kingdom to advance. What spiritual gifts has God given you? How have you been able to serve the church and others with these gifts? According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, as we use our gifts, what should our motivation be?

APPLICATION

- In what aspect or area of your life do you need the power of the Holy Spirit? What are you asking the Holy Spirit to do in your life?
- Are you part of a local church community? How can you use the spiritual gifts God has given you to serve your local church or campus ministry, as well as your community?
- How has the Holy Spirit empowered you to be a witness for Jesus? Who can you present the gospel to this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit that transforms you and empowers you to live a godly life that reflects Christ to others.
- Surrender yourself in service to God. Ask God for opportunities to serve Him with the gifts He has given you.
- Ask God for open doors to preach the gospel in your home, school, workplace, and community. Pray that you will be an effective witness of His word and gospel.

4 The Spirit of God on Bezalel and Oholiab

WARM-UP

- Do you have a hard time remembering names, especially those that are not familiar to you? Recall an instance explaining this.
- Think of a family member or friend who has a very specific skill set. What is he or she so good at?
- Share an unusual skill that you have developed through the years.

WORD ³⁰Then Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, ³²to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, ³³in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. ³⁴And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.” **EXODUS 35:30-35**

When we think of being empowered by the Holy Spirit to minister to others, we may think of people who preach, teach, heal, and do extraordinary and supernatural things for the Lord. We wouldn't think of a carpenter, craftsman, or mason in the forefront of what God was doing in the life of His people.

But they are who God chose and filled with His Spirit, as we see in the book of Exodus. God chose Bezalel (a craftsman from the tribe of Judah) and Oholiab (from the tribe of Dan). Both of them

were filled with the Spirit of God. In this lesson, we will look at how and for what purpose the Spirit empowered them.

1 | **God called and filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God to accomplish a certain task.**

³⁰. . . "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹and he has filled him with the Spirit of God . . ." **EXODUS 35:30-31**

In the Old Testament, God would empower certain individuals with His Spirit to accomplish a certain goal or mission. After the task was done, the Spirit would depart from the individual.

God called Bezalel by name to play an important role in the Old Testament. He did not go to battle like Joshua or become a king like David. God used him, along with Oholiab, to be the creative heads in the building of the Tabernacle as God sought to establish worship in the life of the Israelites. This was the place where the people would encounter God.

Even as Bezalel was called by God to help the Israelites to encounter God, He desires every believer to do the same. He chose and called you, filling you with His Spirit, to help others encounter the Lord. What does it mean to be called "by name"? Why do you think it is important to note that God called Bezalel this way?

2

God filled Bezalel with His Spirit to enhance his natural artistic skills and impart supernatural and creative abilities.

31". . . he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, 32to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft." **EXODUS 35:31-33**

Bezalel means "in the shadow of God" and it is reflective of how his creative talents point to the Creator. His artistic skills were enhanced by the Holy Spirit because of all the requirements of the Lord. God had detailed instructions for the building of the Tabernacle and these instructions were so comprehensive—including dimensions, specific materials, and all the colors to be used which required a high level of skill and creative artistry to realize. That is why God imparted to them *"with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship."*

These instructions were to be followed explicitly—as the Lord said. In other words, God was the Designer, and Bezalel and Oholiab were the creative heads who would execute the plans. This is a good model for every artist and every follower of Christ to emulate.

Let us ask the Lord to fill us with His Spirit and empower us with creative talents and with knowledge and skill so that like Bezalel, we can be the shadow of the Lord, pointing people to Him through the things He has called us to accomplish. What do you think can happen if we don't understand that God is the Designer, and we are to execute His plans?

3

God empowered Bezalel so he could empower others to help in God's work.

"And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan." **EXODUS 35:34**

As great as Bezalel and Oholiab were as creative artists, and as skillful as their talents were, God knew that the task would be too great for them to finish by themselves. He therefore empowered them to teach others, in order for more people to be involved in God's work. That is why we need God, and we need others to do the work He has called us to do.

God imparted to Bezalel and Oholiab the ability to multiply themselves by inspiring them to teach others how to accomplish this great work. This is true for any endeavor that God asks us to do. It usually is so much bigger than what we can do on our own.

Let us ask God to fill us with His Spirit so that we can inspire and help equip others to partake of God's work. Share about a God-given task that is too big to accomplish on your own. Who is in partnership with you in accomplishing this?

This story shows us how God empowers His people to build His temple, which now in the New Testament is the body of Christ, the Church. Bezalel and Oholiab did not ask for the Holy Spirit to empower them with special abilities, but God sovereignly endowed them with specific special gifts. Though it is the Holy Spirit who apportions gifts to each individual believer as He sovereignly wills (1 Corinthians 12:11), we are exhorted in Scripture to *earnestly desire spiritual gifts*, especially for the

building up of the church (1 Corinthians 14:1, 12). Therefore, we could ask God with confidence, since it is God's word that instructs us to desire spiritual gifts. We can also have peace and security because God knows which gifts best suit us for what He has called us to do.

APPLICATION

- What is an endeavor God is calling you to do that is so much bigger than what you can accomplish on your own?
- Which spiritual gifts do you eagerly desire to have? Why?
- How can your life and work be a shadow of the Lord, helping point people to Jesus? How can you help others encounter God?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit that empowers, inspires, and speaks to us to do His work.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will empower you with skill, intelligence, knowledge, and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs.
- Pray for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ask God for opportunities for people to connect with God and His purpose for their lives.

5 The Holy Spirit in Stephen

WARM-UP

- What is your family or hometown known for? Describe it as best as you can (e.g., your province is known for the best *lechon kawali*).
- Who is the most courageous person you know? What do you think gives him or her courage?
- Name one of your closest or long time friends in church. How would you best describe him or her?

WORD *And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ACTS 6:5*

One of the descriptions of Stephen—a deacon and eventually the first martyr of the Church—is that he was *a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*. How is this exemplified in his life and how can this be true in our lives as well?

1 The Holy Spirit empowered Stephen to faithfully serve.

²*And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."* **ACTS 6:2-3**

As the church grew, the responsibilities and tasks of serving the people also multiplied. When the need to have people oversee the distribution of food arose—basically the administrative needs of the church—seven capable men were chosen. One of them was Stephen. While some

may consider administrative work as purely managerial in nature, we see from these men the vital role of spiritual empowerment in serving. It is encouraging to think that the Holy Spirit can and will empower us not just in Bible reading, prayer, and preaching the gospel, but even in routinary and behind-the-scenes tasks, such as administrative work.

How does the Holy Spirit's empowerment in our serving adjust the way you view your volunteer ministry work? How about in your studies or corporate work?

2

The Holy Spirit granted Stephen grace, power, and supernatural wisdom to minister.

⁸And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. . . . ¹⁰But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

ACTS 6:8, 10

Stephen was not an apostle, yet the Spirit empowered him to minister to people through signs and wonders, and by teaching and proclaiming God's word. There was no mention that Stephen was a great communicator. Nor was it mentioned that he was smarter and better educated than others. Yet, when he was caught in a debate with some Jews from the Synagogue of Freedmen, they were not able to withstand the wisdom with which he was speaking. The upper hand Stephen had in Acts was that he was simply empowered by the Holy Spirit as he spoke. What a comforting truth for us who may not necessarily be adequately trained, thoroughly informed, or eloquent in speaking. The Holy Spirit is the Difference-Maker! God gives

us grace, power, and wisdom through the Holy Spirit as we minister to others.

How does this truth encourage you as a small group leader? Cite instances in your life when you experienced the Holy Spirit's grace, power, or wisdom in your life.

3

The Holy Spirit enabled Stephen to courageously preach the word.

And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran . . ." ACTS 7:2

[For the Victory group leader: Read also Acts 7 to have a greater grasp of the event and how the Holy Spirit emboldened Stephen.]

Given the accusations against Stephen in Acts 6, the high priest (most likely Caiaphas, who presided over the trial of Jesus) asked Stephen to explain himself. As a result, Stephen boldly preached God's word, starting from God's choosing of Abraham to the people's rejection of Christ and the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. What a frightening experience preaching to a hostile crowd must have been, yet Stephen unreservedly spoke and courageously confronted the people for resisting the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts (Acts 7:51–53). While the people did not yield to the work of the Holy Spirit, Acts 7:54 says that *they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him*. However, we see a beautiful encouragement and reminder, that in spite of the crowd's rejection, Stephen had a vision in Acts 7:55–56 of a standing ovation from Christ whom he boldly stood up for.

How does Stephen's boldness to preach God's word inspire you as a believer? Who do you want to please when you speak—the crowd or Christ? How does this truth help you in sharing to others about Christ and your testimony?

4 The Holy Spirit sustained Stephen to stay faithful to the end.

*⁵⁹And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. **ACTS 7:59-60***

It is comforting to know that the Holy Spirit's presence and work in us is not just for ministry-related instances but even in life's trying circumstances. Yes we appreciate the work of the Holy Spirit in us in grace, wisdom, power, signs and wonders, but we also love the fact that He is with us even in times of persecution and death. Jesus Himself was empowered by the Spirit to go through suffering and death in order to offer His life as a sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:14). Just like He sustained Jesus and Stephen all the way to the end, it is our hope to be empowered by the Spirit so we will all finish strong in the race God marked out for us.

How does this truth relate with what the apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 4:14?

APPLICATION

- In what areas of your life and ministry do you need the Holy Spirit's empowerment? How can you involve the Holy Spirit more in your day to day routine?
- What can you learn from the story of Stephen? How do you think the Holy Spirit can sustain you to stay faithful to the end?
- Name one person that God wants you to boldly share about Christ in the next few weeks. Pray with each other for the Holy Spirit's enabling grace and opportune time to preach the gospel to this person.

PRAYER

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's empowerment to serve in your family, ministry, school, or work.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit's sustaining grace to be upon each other to finish strong, even in challenging times and persecution.
- Pray for each other's personal prayer petitions.

6 The Holy Spirit in Paul's Ministry

WARM-UP

- If there's one thing you could change about yourself, what would it be? Why?
- If you could have a different name, what would you choose? Why?
- What would you do with your life if money and time were unlimited?

WORD *¹Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. **ACTS 13:1-3***

(Read also **ACTS 13:4-12**.)

Saul, more commonly known as the apostle Paul, was a man radically changed by God. From being a Pharisee and a persecutor of the church, he became an apostle used by God to preach the gospel and plant many churches. Half of the book of Acts is about Paul's life and work. He is also traditionally considered to have authored thirteen out of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament.

Today, we will look at how the Holy Spirit was at work in Paul's life and how the same Holy Spirit works in us as we live for God.

1 | The Holy Spirit brings guidance and direction for ministry.

²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ACTS 13:2-3

In the church in Antioch, the Holy Spirit gave specific instructions for Barnabas and Saul during a time of worship and fasting. They were to be *set apart* for the work to which they had been called and were to be sent off. As we seek God, especially during times of prayer, fasting, and worship, we can believe God to bring guidance and direction for ministry. We can also trust that the Spirit will guide us as we do the ministry (Acts 16:6–10). What do you think God has called you to do for Him? What are the things that you can do to be more aware of and in step with His guidance and direction?

2 | The Holy Spirit brings discernment and power for ministry.

⁸But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?”

*¹¹And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹²Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. **ACTS 13:8-12***

In this passage, Saul encountered a hindrance to and opposition against effective ministry. But being filled with the Holy Spirit, Saul was able to discern that the devil was behind this opposition and dealt with it effectively through the power of God. A miracle took place that made the proconsul believe and respond in astonishment at the teaching of the Lord. The Holy Spirit could empower us, too, with wisdom, discernment, and power to minister effectively and overcome opposition from the enemy. What are the hindrances or oppositions that have kept you from effective ministry? How did you respond to and overcome such challenges?

3 | The Holy Spirit opens doors for greater ministry.

*Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. **ACTS 13:12***

Through the demonstration and proclamation of the power of God, Paul confronted the evil works of the Jewish false prophet and magician Elymas (Acts 13:6) who was trying to turn the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, away from the faith. But the proconsul sought to hear the word of God. When he saw the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the life and ministry of Paul, Sergius Paulus was astonished and ended up believing in Christ. It appears that in Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Saul to Salamis not only to preach the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, but also for a divine appointment for the proconsul to come to faith. Why are greater doors for ministry something the Holy Spirit opens for us, and not something we can do for ourselves? How have you seen this to be true in your ministry and church?

APPLICATION

- What have you learned about the Holy Spirit's work in our lives today?
- In what areas do you need guidance, direction, discernment, or power from the Holy Spirit? Share your situation and lift this up in prayer today.
- How can God use your life for greater ministry? What are you willing to do to prepare for this? How can you be more aware of the spiritual aspects of serving God and making Him known to others?

PRAYER

- Ask the Holy Spirit for greater clarity, guidance, and direction in your life.
- Pray for greater wisdom and power, as well as for greater doors for more effective ministry.
- Pray for people you know who may be far away from God to encounter and turn to Him. Ask God for miracles to be done in your family and community, so that more people would surrender their lives to Him.

7 The Infilling of the Holy Spirit Today

WARM-UP

- Would you consider yourself an introvert or an extrovert? Why?
- Looking at your weekly schedule, what would you say it is filled with? What do you wish you had more time for?
- How does a person's attitude determine his or her actions? Think of a person you know very well and tell us about how this is true in his or her life.

WORD *¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. **EPHESIANS 5:18-21***

We have been called by God to live a godly life, to walk in wisdom, and to make the most out of the days He has given us. We do this as we are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is God's will that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. He is the source of power of every believer, and He is at work in and through us even today. In this lesson, we will look at what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day.

1 | God's will is for us to be filled with the Spirit not just once but continually.

¹⁵Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,

¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit . . . **EPHESIANS 5:15-18**

When the Bible talks about people being filled with the Holy Spirit, it is not about the quantity of the Spirit in a person's life. Rather, it is about yielding and surrendering to Him, and relying on His leading and power in our lives. The verb form of the original Greek word "filled" implies a continuous filling. Therefore, believers are exhorted to continually yield and surrender to the Spirit's work. We are to continually follow His leading and constantly rely on His power in our lives. What are some areas in your life that were at first difficult to surrender to God? How have you experienced God's power in that area after allowing the Holy Spirit to take control?

2

We experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit personally and communally.

¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:18-21


As we worship God, He is magnified and we know Him more. The intimacy we experience in our relationship with Him results in us wanting to yield even more to Him. As we surrender our lives to God, we experience more of Him and become filled by the Holy Spirit. However, this is not just a personal experience. As a church, we continually experience God as we walk in community—hear others praise God, proclaim His truth, and give thanks to Him. We are built up together as we are being filled with the Spirit. Why do you think being filled with the Holy Spirit cannot just be a personal experience? What is the value in encountering God in community?

APPLICATION

- What is your posture or attitude as you prepare to be filled with the Spirit? How do you think you can prepare for this in the coming week?
- How do you think you can be continually filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Think of some people you can connect with this week who will help you encounter God. How can you encourage one another to seek Him and be filled by the Spirit?

PRAYER

- Thank God that the infilling of His Spirit is not only experienced once, but continually. Thank Him that His Spirit empowers you to serve Him and help others know Him.
- Ask God to remove any obstacle that may be hindering the infilling of the Holy Spirit in your life. Pray for opportunities to be filled with the Holy Spirit and encounter Him in greater ways.
- Pray for your family, friends, and community to know God. Ask God to reveal His Spirit to them, that they would follow God and make Him known as well.



*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

The Holy Spirit may be the least discussed person in the Trinity. But the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer must be understood by all who have surrendered their lives to Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus brought us back to a relationship with God, and the power of the Holy Spirit guides and empowers us to live for Him. This material teaches us that the Holy Spirit does more than display God's power. He makes God real to each of us in a very personal way. He brings the presence of God in our lives and transforms us more and more into the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit enables us to live a victorious life and proclaim who God is to the world.

TOPICS

- The Person of the Holy Spirit
- The Presence of the Holy Spirit
- The Power of the Holy Spirit
- The Spirit of God on Bezalel and Oholiab
- The Holy Spirit in Stephen
- The Holy Spirit in Paul's Ministry
- The Infilling of the Holy Spirit Today



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