



Where the seed brings forth fruit  
one hundred fold in Jesus name  
Luke 8:4-11



Christian Fellowship Church  
Houston, Texas



## THE ROLE AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Objective:** Understand how to receive God's spirit?  
And how the Holy Spirit's ministry works in the life  
of a Christian?

**Question:** Exactly what is a Christian? How  
does the Bible define a Christian in the most  
accurate sense?

The Scriptures clearly identify who belongs  
to Christ—that is, who we might term a true  
Christian. Notice the apostle Paul's teaching  
in **Romans 8:9**: "Now if anyone does not  
have *the Spirit of Christ*, he is not His"  
(emphasis added throughout). The Holy  
Spirit, then, is an essential aspect of the  
biblical definition of a Christian. Further,  
only those who are led by God's Spirit have  
access to eternal life.

Paul continues in **verse 11**, "But if the *Spirit*  
of Him who raised Jesus from the dead  
dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the  
dead will also give life to your mortal bodies  
through His Spirit [which] dwells in you."

It becomes abundantly clear to me that the  
Holy Spirit plays a major role in the lives of  
Christians. In verse 14 Paul defines the

Christian very clearly: "For as many as are  
led by the *Spirit* of God, these are sons of  
God." The Holy Spirit identifies us with  
Christ (**verse 9**), it makes immortality  
possible to human, mortal beings (**verse**  
**11**), it makes possible an obedient,  
overcoming Christian life (**verse 13**), and it  
truly leads (guides, empowers and  
motivates) the sons of God. In short, God's  
Spirit—also called the Spirit of Christ—is  
what makes one a Christian, a Spirit-led  
follower of Jesus Christ.

If the Holy Spirit is what defines a Christian  
and makes one a child of God, it is most  
vital that we learn and understand more  
about that Spirit and its role.

### A FORCE FOR CHANGE

The Holy Spirit is described in the Bible as a  
*power* at work in the lives of people, dealing  
with them and revealing more fully God and  
His will for mankind.

In **Galatians 5:22-23** we have a  
description of the fruit the Holy Spirit  
produces in a person's life—"love, joy,  
peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,  
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." The  
Holy Spirit is associated with God's divine



...from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation... - 2 Timothy 3:15



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character. It serves in the capacity of a "Comforter" or Helper" to a Christian (**John 16:7**)—assisting in helping us to develop the righteousness of God.

In **Romans 5:5** we read, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit [which] was given to us." Here the Spirit is described as God's gift to us, God's love flowing to us and through us toward others. The overwhelming and majestic truth is that God promises this to us, and we can have access to this matchless and priceless gift.

How do we receive the Holy Spirit? What will the Spirit do in our lives?

#### HOW TO RECEIVE GOD'S SPIRIT

In **Luke 24:45** Jesus "opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." He had just explained that the Law, the Prophets and the Writings prophesied of Him, and the disciples had just witnessed the fulfillment of many of those prophecies. He explained His death and resurrection and told them that they were witnesses to these things and that repentance and remission of sins would be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (**verse 46-47**).

But to be able to play their part they needed something they didn't have. After all, just a few days earlier they all had forsaken Him and fled in fear for their lives. Jesus knew this and reassured them: "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but

tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are *endued with power from on high*" (**verse 49**). The same writer, Luke, again picks up that admonition in **Acts 1:4-5**, where Christ told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2** records the miraculous giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost after Christ's death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit was given with mighty power to inspire and motivate the 120 disciples assembled in Jerusalem—and later that day thousands more. As Peter's first inspired sermon drew to a close, the people hearing him were "cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' " (**verses 37**). They wanted to be forgiven of their sins and to receive the Holy Spirit, which they witnessed at work in the lives of Christ's followers!

The same condition applies today. We all need forgiveness. We all need God's Spirit. Peter's answer to the people's question was: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; *and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (**verses 38-39**).

Could any instructions be clearer? To receive His Spirit God calls on us to repent—to change our frame of mind, our entire outlook on life, surrendering our wills to Him. Then He tells us to be baptized. In **Acts 8:12-22** we find that, once one



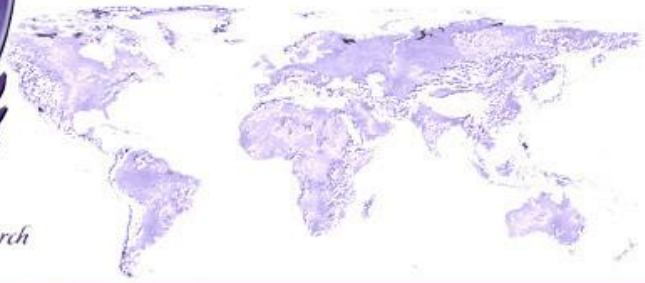
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repents in faith and is baptized, he receives the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

Notice what Paul instructs Timothy, an evangelist and Paul's "son in the faith," in **2 Timothy 1:6-7**: "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." To have that sound mind—the mind of Christ (**Philippians 2:5**; **1 Corinthians 2:16**)—we must have God's Spirit.

#### CHRIST'S INSTRUCTION ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have briefly covered how God's Spirit comes into our life. But what will the Spirit do in our life? What is its role?

The apostle John was inspired to record much of Jesus Christ's description of the role of the Holy Spirit. Knowing that He would soon die and thereby leave them, Jesus instructed the disciples about the power soon to come on them. "If you love me, keep My commandments," He told them, "and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [the Holy Spirit is to help, strengthen, nurture us], that He may abide with you forever" (**John 14:15-16**).

**Verses 17-18** explain that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth that would dwell in them and be with them. In verse 26 Christ said of this Spirit, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, [which] the Father will send in My name, [it] will teach you all things, and bring to your

remembrance all things that I said to you." The Spirit, then, would make the writing of the Gospels possible and guide Christ's followers in spiritual understanding.

**John 16** records more of Christ's instruction about the role of the Holy Spirit. "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send [it] to you" (**verse 7**).

#### HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT FUNCTIONS

Christ showed three distinct workings of the Holy Spirit. "And when [it] has come, [it] will convict the world of sin . . ." (**verse 8**). When some were "cut to the heart" on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:37**), how had they come to be in that condition, recognizing their true spiritual state and knowing they needed help? It was through the convicting power of God's Spirit.

This same Spirit prompted the Ethiopian eunuch to beg of Phillip, "What hinders me from being baptized?" (**Acts 8:36**). It brought Paul to his knees, crying out "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (**Acts 9:6**). It caused the Philippians jailer, who had earlier beaten and chained Paul and Silas, to fall down trembling before them, pleading, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (**Acts 16:30**).

Paul tells us that "the goodness of God leads you to repentance" (**Romans 2:4**). Through His Spirit, God helps us to see our true spiritual condition and recognize our need for repentance—to change and begin living



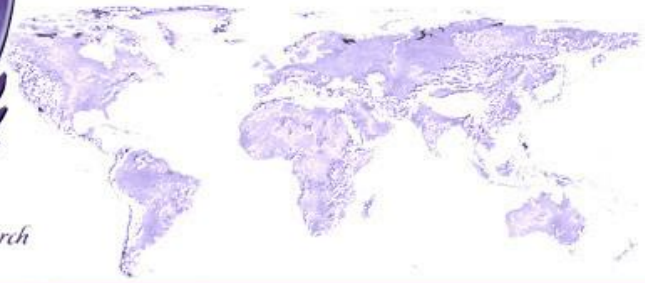
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God's way. Then we must act on that conviction: repent, be baptized and receive God's Spirit through the laying on of hands of God's ministry, as discussed earlier.

A second function of God's Spirit, as recorded in **John 16:8**, is to "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness." After we are forgiven of our sins, can we just go back into sin? Paul clearly explains that we can't. In Romans 6 Paul describes the transformed life of a Christian being truly led by God's Spirit. Having once served sin, we now serve a new master: God's righteousness.

"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin [until the Holy Spirit convicted us to repent and come out of sin], yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin [forgiven and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ], you became slaves of righteousness [right doing and adherence to God's laws]" (**Romans 6:17-18**).

Leaving a life of sin and beginning a new life of humble obedience to God's laws marks the life of those led by God's Spirit (**Psalm 119:172; 1 John 3:7-10; 1 John 5:17**).

The third function of God's Spirit mentioned in John 16 is that it would "convict the world . . . of judgment." The Holy Spirit keeps us aware that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" and that "every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (**Romans 14:10-11**). It regularly reminds us that "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (verse

**12**). How great is our loving God and Father who has made all things possible through His Son Jesus Christ! (**Matthew 19:26**). His work within us is accomplished through the greatest gift that could ever be made available for human beings: the power, love and mind of Christ through the Spirit of God at work in our lives. *GN*



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