

# The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

## Introduction

**PURPOSE:** To learn who the Holy Spirit is and His unique work within the Godhead and The People of God.

Even though Father, Son and Spirit are equal in substance and glory, there is a differentiation in their roles or work among the Godhead. While we must always be careful not to draw too strict a dividing line, we can accurately generalize in saying that the Father primarily initiates, the Son primarily accomplishes and the Spirit primarily applies the work of God among us. This is particularly true of the work of redemption.

**WAYNE GRUDEM** – “From the very beginning of creation we have an indication that the Holy Spirit’s work is to complete and sustain what God the Father has planned and what God the Son has begun.” (*Systematic Theology*, 635)

**WAYNE GRUDEM** – “The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.” (*Systematic Theology*, 634)

We will break down this teaching into two sections:

- ◇ The Person of the Holy Spirit
- ◇ The Work of the Holy Spirit

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## Part 1

### The Person of the Holy Spirit

#### He is God

*Crossway's description of the Holy Spirit*

*The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshipped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.*

#### He has equally divine status With the Father and the Son.

Matt 28:16-20

*The Great Commission (Jesus Words)*

*<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

#### He is not one to be trifled with. Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God.

Acts 5:3-4

*"But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."*

#### Other Passages

*1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:1:2; Jude 20-21.*

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## The Holy Spirit has Divine Attributes

- ◇ Omnipresence: The state of being everywhere at once.

Ps 139:7-8

*7Where shall I go from your Spirit?*

*Or where shall I flee from your presence?*

*If I ascend to heaven, you are there!*

*If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!*

- ◇ Omniscience: The state of having infinite knowledge.

1 Cor 2:10-11

*“10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

- ◇ Present at the beginning of Creation.

Gen 1:2

*“2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”*

## The New Testament reflects The Holy Spirit as distinct from the Father and the Son.

- ◇ Personal activity.
  - He functions differently than the Father or the Son
  - Jesus came in the flesh
  - The Holy Spirit is Spirit
  - The way He relates
  - He speaks (Acts 1:16, teaches John 14:26), witnesses (John 15:26), Searches (1 Cor 2:11), Determines (1 Cor 12:11), Intercedes (Rom 8:26-27), is lied to (Acts 5:3), Grieved (Eph 4:30)

## What Jesus said about the Holy Spirit

- ◇ Holy Spirit played such a role in the fulfillment of Jesus coming.

Matt 1:18

*Mary was “was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.”*

- ◇ Another Helper

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- ◇ Paraclete
- ◇ Gk: One who gives support, Counselor

John 14:16

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.”*

- ◇ Another comforter, encourager, helper, exhorter

John 16:1-14

*“I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: 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 go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”*

John 14:26 ESV

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”*

- ◇ The Holy Spirit Helps us in the following ways:
  - ◇ Teacher
  - ◇ Reminder
  - ◇ Interactive
  - ◇ Sanctifier
  - ◇ Interpreter of Scripture
  - ◇ Application of the Gospel
  - ◇ Teaches us to endure
  - ◇ Teaches us to love
  - ◇ Teaches us to forgive
  - ◇ Teaches us to trust

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John 15:26 ESV

*"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 16:7

*"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; 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 go, I will send him to you."*

### **Conclusion of Part 1**

The Holy Spirit was sent to us, for us, for the purpose of the Church to build the church.

What that entails is the involvement of the Holy Spirit in our lives-working in us and using us to bring the Gospel to the world but also to prepare us to one day become the Bride of Christ and to be taken to the place that Jesus has been preparing for us.

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## Part 2

### THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

How does the Holy Spirit works for us, with us, and in us?

*“The central imperative is to develop a personal relationship with him, allowing him to be the initiator of any experiences, enjoying them when they occur and enjoying him in their absence.” Keith Warrington  
“The Message of the Holy Spirit”*

John 16:7

*“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; 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 go, I will send him to you.”*

**NICENE CREED** – “We believe in...the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver.”

### The Holy Spirit Enlivens

John 6:36

*“It is the Spirit who gives life...”*

This entails the work of God in us:

- ◇ The opening our eyes to the Gospel
- ◇ The sanctifying life of the Spirit or the making us more like Christ in conduct and character
- ◇ All done by the Holy Spirit

*John Owen - There is no good communicated to us from God but it is bestowed on us or wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. No gift, no grace, no mercy, no privilege, no consolation, do we receive, possess, or use, but it is wrought in us or manifested to us, by him alone Nor is there any good in us towards God, any faith, love duty, obedience, but what is effectually wrought in us by him, by him alone “Discourse on the Holy Spirit”*

### Creation

- ◇ Of the world

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Genesis 1:2

*“the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”*

The Holy Spirit is pictured here as providing energy and motion, bringing order and the potential for life into the universe.

### ◇ Of man

Genesis 2:7

*“Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”*

Job 33:4

*“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”*  
*(See also Psalms 139:13 and Acts 17:25)*

In this way the Spirit has been intimately involved with every person since the beginning. This involvement is never ending. In a sense He is the preserver of physical life as well. This means that the Spirit, while seeming strange and powerful is familiar and loving toward us as individuals.

Job 34:14-15

*“If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.”*

### ◇ Incarnation

Luke 1:35

*“And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”*

Matthew 1:20

*“But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”*

### ◇ Resurrection

Romans 8:11

*“If 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.”*

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## ◇ Regeneration

Regeneration can be defined as the work of the Holy Spirit whereby he initially brings persons into living union with Christ, changing their hearts so that they who were spiritually dead become spiritually alive, now able and willing to repent of sin, believe the gospel, and serve the Lord. John 3 refers to this as being born again or born of the Spirit.

Col. 2:13

*“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses....”*

Titus 3:5

*“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit....”*

## ◇ Revival/ Spiritual Awakening

To revive means to bring back to life and health. In the history of the church there have been many revivals. Ezekiel 37:1-14 gives us a picture of revival where the valley of the dry bones are revived by the breath (ruach or spirit) or God.

Ezekiel 37:14

*“And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”*

History of revivals

*J. Edwin Orr - An Evangelical Awakening is a movement of the Holy Spirit bringing about a revival of New Testament Christianity in the Church of Christ and in its related community. Such an awakening may change in a significant way an individual only; or it may affect a larger group of believers; or it may move a congregation, or the churches of a city or district, or the whole body of believers throughout a country or a continent; ... The outpouring of the Spirit effects the reviving of the Church, the awakening of the masses, and the movement of uninstructed peoples towards the Christian faith; the revived Church, by many or by few, is moved to engage in evangelism, in teaching, and in social action. “The Flaming Tongue”*

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Revivals can be brief or may last years.

List of revivals

- Welsh
- Scottish
- Boston
- Asbury College 1970

◇ INSTRUCTS

Instructs is a bit of an inadequate word. Perhaps a better thing to say is that He makes God known. This is vital when we understand that God is unknowable by any human ability or effort. Even in our pre- and post-sinful states we are finite and mortal, He is infinite and immortal. We are sinful and darkened in our hearts and minds.

*JOHN CALVIN – “His essence is incomprehensible; so that His divinity wholly escapes all human senses.”*

And yet Christianity is a religion of personal relationship with God. The scriptures themselves say...

John 17:3

*“And this is eternal life that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”*

How can this be then? It is because God has graciously chosen to reveal Himself to us through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

*R. C. SPROUL – “Everything we know about Christianity has been revealed to us by God...If we wish to know Him in truth, we must rely on what He tells us about Himself.”*

◇ The Word

God has given us a complete and infallible record of all He wishes to reveal to us through His written word. His nature, plans, and commands. The Holy Spirit is intimately involved in this process.

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## ◇ Revelation/Inspiration

Revelation means that God personally discloses Himself to man. The problem is how does He do this with complete clarity and accuracy? The answer is that He worked in certain men, through the Holy Spirit to ensure these things. This working is known as inspiration.

2 Timothy 3:16

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness....”*

2 Peter 1:21

*“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

*“But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.”*

## ◇ Illumination

Illumination is the action of the Holy Spirit especially in relation to scripture, by which the meaning of scripture is made effectively to shine upon the heart and mind of the reader or hearer.

1 John 2:27

*“But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything—and is true and is no lie, just as it has taught you—abide in him.”*

1 Corinthians 2:12

*“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”*

Ephesians 1:17-18

*“...the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints....”*

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### ◇ Fellowship

2 Corinthians 13:14

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

In an unexplainable way we experience God outside of our physical senses or intellect – “I felt His presence” or “He told me”, etc. We don’t just read about and mentally understand Him but we experience Him. (Remembering that these things must be judged by the normative revelation of the Scriptures.) But in this caution I don’t intend to limit the Holy Spirit’s ability and creativity to speak to us in many ways.

**J. RODMAN WILLIAMS** – *“The coming of the Holy Spirit is the coming of God Himself. He comes to those whose sins have been forgiven and whose lives have been made new. He comes from the exalted Christ to be dynamically present in and among His people. Those to whom He comes are thereby more deeply aware of the presence and reality of God.”* (Renewal Theology, Vol. 2, 307)

### ◇ Awareness

By the Spirit at regeneration we become alive to God, i.e. sensitive to and aware of His presence in and with us in a way that we were not before.

John 14:17

*“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.”*

1 Corinthians 2:10-14

*“These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”*

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## ◇ Communication

We have been reconciled, brought to God, come into His presence, etc. We speak to God and He speaks to us. The Spirit helps us to pray, we worship “by the Spirit of God (Philippians 3:3), and “In spirit and truth” (John 4), we experience words of prophesy, knowledge, wisdom, we hear the still small voice. He guides us, councils us, comforts us, encourages us, convicts us, rebukes us, etc. All without audible words.

Romans 8:14

*“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”* (See also, Acts 8:29, 10:19, 11:12)

Ephesians 2:18

*“For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”*

## ◇ Assurance

How do I really know I am saved? How can I be sure that what I am thinking is of the Lord? None of this seems very concrete. These can be difficult questions and we must never discount leaders and Christian friends as means of grace to help confirm or question our thinking, but God intends us to gain much assurance from the Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:13

*“By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”*

Galatians 4:6

*“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!””*

Ephesians 1:13

*“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit....”*

## ◇ Affection

As the Holy Spirit reveals, He also stirs our affections. Our relationship with God is not a cold technical one, but one that reaches to the depth of our hearts. He particularly gives us a deeper understanding of the gospel that rightly motivates our affection for and obedience to the Lord.

Romans 5:5

*“Hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*

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## Empowers

John 14:15-16

*“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever....”*

◇ For Holiness

*CHARLES HODGE – “He is also predominately called the Holy Spirit, to indicate both his nature and operations. He is absolutely holy in his nature and the cause of holiness in all creatures.” (Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, 522)*

To be holy is to be separated or set apart and to be morally pure. It is used almost interchangeably in the Scriptures with words sanctify and righteous and all their derivatives. When we are converted, we are sanctified or made holy in the sense of being set apart for God, identified as one of His people. To be justified means we are declared not guilty or holy in God’s sight by virtue of our union with Christ and His saving work applied in our lives. This speaks of our judicial standing before God but not the actual state of our character. This is where the second aspect of holiness comes in.

Thanks to our conversion, union and justification, we enter into a lifelong process of being made actually holy in our character and conduct. This process is known as sanctification. Both aspects of holiness are works of the Holy Spirit. It is the second aspect that we are examining here. The new life of the Spirit living in us motivates and empowers our quest for holiness.

1 Corinthians 6:11

*“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

2 Corinthians 3:18

*“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.” (See also Romans 8:1-13)*

How does he do this?

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Philippians 2:12-13

*“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”*

◇ He affects our wills

He produces an awareness and conviction of sins, hatred for evil and love for good, delight in obedience, and a love for God which motivates our obedience. He is constantly influencing our hearts, minds and wills.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

*“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”*

◇ He affects our actions.

He is bearing spiritual fruit in our lives, He is the source of power to mortify (put to death) our sinful flesh and resist temptation. He is renewing us, transforming us into the image of Christ and imparting the life of Christ to us.

Romans 8:13

*“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”*

Galatians 5:22-23

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*

He does this in cooperation with us but we must realize that our cooperation is impossible without His work.

JERRY BRIDGES – *“His work lies behind all our work and makes our work possible.”* (*Transforming Grace*, 115)

LOUIS BERKOFF – *“Though man is privileged to co-operate with the Spirit of God, he can do this only in virtue of the strength which the Spirit imparts to him from day to day.”* (*Systematic Theology*, 535)

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1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

*“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.”*

◇ For Service

BRUCE MILNE – *“The deepest word which can be spoken about Christian ministry in all its forms is that it is nothing other than the ministry of the risen Lord among and through his people.”* (Know The Truth, 226)

Ephesians 1:22-23

*“And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”*

The significance of being Christ’s body is that we now act as his representative (His hands, feet, voice, etc.) here on earth. In order to do this effectively He gives us the Spirit to empower service.

◇ Outside the church – witness

Luke 24:45-49

*“Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”*

Acts 1:8

*“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.”*

Because of the Holy Spirit their witness was characterized by...

◇ Effective speech

1 Corinthians 2:4

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

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1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

*“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”*

◇ Mighty works

Hebrews 2:4

*“God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”*

◇ Guidance

Acts 16:6-10

*“And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”*

◇ Boldness

Acts 4:31

*“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.”*

◇ Inside the church – Spiritual gifts

Just as the Holy Spirit gives us power to witness, He gives us gifts to build up the church. Just as any holiness we have is a result of His work in us, any effectiveness we have, have had or will have in ministering is a result of His anointing in our lives.

1 Peter 4:10

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace....”*

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

*“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*

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## Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is living and active. He plays an important part in the building of Christ's Church and well as the building of our individual lives.

As believers we are called to get to know Him. We should:

- ◇ Pray
- ◇ Listen
- ◇ Dwell in God's Word
- ◇ Involve yourself in the church

## Suggested Resources

*Father Son and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles & Relevance Engaging with the Holy Spirit Real Questions, Practical Answers* Graham Cole

*The Beginners Guide to Spiritual Gifts* by Sam Storms

*Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* by Gordon Fee

*Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* (edited by Wayne Grudem)