

Chapter 6

HOLY SPIRIT

POWER SOURCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!

The Holy Spirit is a very important yet controversial topic. Opinions vary widely about the role of the Spirit, from various forms of traditional orthodox and different levels of charismatic beliefs.

However, Christians often lack knowledge of what Scripture teaches about the Holy Spirit.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE SPIRIT

Let's look at what the Bible itself says about the Spirit to better shape our thinking, based on the true word of God. The general structure of scripture's teaching about the Spirit for the New Testament church is into three basic areas:

**The Spirit's role in
salvation**

**The Spirit's role in our
Christian walk**

**The Christian's duties
to the Spirit**

AREA 1

THE SPIRIT'S ROLE IN SALVATION

Indeed, the Spirit in salvation is key. He performs the following vital functions:

CONVICTS THE WORLD OF SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JUDGMENT

John 16:8

This role is vital because left to our own resources, as fallen man both physically and mentally, we would not come to faith and salvation by our own efforts ([Romans 3:10-12](#)). Therefore, the Spirit helps unbelievers recognize their faults, the coming judgment, and God's demand for righteousness.

BAPTIZES

Romans 6:2-9; Ephesians 2:4-7; Colosians 2:12-13

In the epistles, the word 'baptism' signifies spiritual baptism which occurs at our salvation by the Spirit. The actual meaning of the Greek word for baptism (βαπτίζω, baptizoo) is 'to identify with'. Therefore, the Spirit baptizes us by identifying us with Christ's death and resurrection. The Spirit accomplishes this by putting to death our old person and resurrecting us into a new living person.

'Regeneration' and 'born again' are other concepts in Scripture signifying this important event (Titus 3:5; John 3:9). These wonderful verses demonstrate to us the profound importance of the resurrection because there is no eternal life without the resurrection and regeneration (1 Corinthians 15:13-19). The incredible fact of spiritual baptism (which water baptism may symbolize) gives us surety for our great salvation. As a new creature, we cannot be slain and re-created into our old dead self.

SEALS TO REDEMPTION

2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5;
Ephesians 1:13-14

This promise assures that every believer possesses the Holy Spirit upon accepting Christ's sacrifice until passing and joining God. A Christian is defined as having the Holy Spirit; without it, one isn't yet a believer (Romans 8:9).

PLACES BELIEVERS INTO THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 12:13

Upon salvation, the Spirit places believers into Christ's universal church (body), where Christ serves as the head (1 Corinthians 12:13).

As you can see, the Spirit is integral in bringing believers to salvation, completing salvation and beyond to eternal life. What a fantastic blessing that believers have such a gift from God as the Holy Spirit!

AREA 2

THE SPIRIT'S ROLE IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK

Scripture states that the Spirit plays a vital and active role in believers' lives is roughly divided into two basic types: constant and variable roles.

CONSTANT ROLES

The Spirit has several continual roles not dependent on believers.

- **Indwells** – As mentioned above, the Spirit lives in the believers until the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14). Therefore, believers have full access to His power and help.
- **Prays for believers** (Romans 8:26) – This great truth indicates the Spirit prays on behalf of believers to God. What better source of prayer could one have?

Just as the Holy Spirit played essential roles in our salvation—convicting, regenerating, placing us in the church, and sealing us—similarly, in our Christian life, He consistently fulfills crucial roles independent of our behavior or merit.

These constant provisions by the Spirit are important to remember. Some people might tell us that we receive God's Spirit, or have a heightened power of the Spirit, after our salvation by receiving a "second filling." Further, some may teach that as Christians we could lose the Spirit.

There is no solid scriptural basis for these believers. The Bible is clear we have the Spirit at salvation until we are with God forever. Nothing can diminish or remove His presence from our lives. Further, we have full access to the Spirit's power from salvation and only we can diminish it (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

We have a great God with wonderful promises and abundant provisions to help us live our lives in a fruitful manner, not only in service to Him but providing joy and peace in our own lives.

VARIABLE ROLES

There are variable roles for which the Spirit assists believers and depends upon obedience (Romans 8:1-8). Two passages are critical to understanding the Spirit's help, Romans 8:13-16, 26 and Ephesians 6:10-17:

Romans 8:13-16

- ***Stops sin*** (v.13) – As believers are obedient, the Spirit helps put to death the deeds of the flesh.
- **Leads us** (v.14) – Many Christians believe this biblical concept but may not understand how He leads. In short, the Spirit uses a believer's knowledge of God's word to them (please see below passage in Ephesians 6). Indeed, the Bible often tells believers to be people of knowledge and understanding, for example in Paul's prayers for others (Ephesians 1:17, Colossians 1:9). Please see the chapter over God's leading.
- **Comforts believers that they are God's children** (v.16) – The Spirit encourages Christians that they belong to God and should not be anxious about eternal security.

Ephesians 6:10 - 17

The magnificent armor of God passage is critical to understanding the Christian lifestyle. It describes our access to God's power by arming ourselves as a Greek hoplite soldier and his armament. Often Christians wonder how they can know the power of God. These great verses describe it! However, it is also important in showing the role of the Spirit because His mighty actions are linked to each piece of armor in other scriptures.

- **Truth** (our belt to prepare us v.14) – Living in truth is a fruit of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:9) and provides mental preparation for making proper decisions and actions.
- **Righteousness** (our breastplate v.14) – A fruit of the Spirit is a holy heart that is set apart to serve God and perceives and rejects sin (Ephesians 5:9).
- **Share the gospel** (the shoes to carry us to battle v.15) – By telling others the message of salvation, Christians see the power of God to change others and positively affect society, which is assisted by the Spirit (Romans 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 1:7; John 16:8-11).

- **Faith** (our shield v.16) – Another result of the Spirit is faith by which we should make all decisions according to God's desires (Galatians 5:22,23; Romans 14:23).
- **Eternal security** (our helmet v.17) – The sound knowledge of security of salvation protects our mind in the face of trouble in this world; its function is from the Spirit (Romans 15:13).
- **The Bible** (our sword v.17) – The power of God in the Christian walk is through the action of the Spirit in accordance to the Bible.

Wow, what great truths! These passages tell us how the Spirit acts in believers' lives to cause them to please God and experience His power.

Therefore, in our Christian walk, the Spirit has several vital roles that He graciously provides to produce results, lead, and help us live by His power. However, as His children, we need to be obedient to His word to allow the Spirit to work and to attain full access to the Spirit in our lives. God wants us to know Him and be holy like Him. He graciously provides us with every avenue to help us accomplish His great goal.

AREA3

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO THE SPIRIT

A Christian's actions towards the Spirit are nicely divided into two subcategories, **what to do and what not to do**. According to scripture, the Spirit dwells in believers permanently from the time of belief until the day of redemption ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#)); the full use of the Spirit's power is available throughout life.

WHAT NOT TO DO!

- **GRIEVE THE SPIRIT** - Ephesians 4:30
- **SUPPRESS THE SPIRIT** - 1 Thessalonians 5:19

These verses do not explain how to avoid grieving or suppressing the Spirit. However, we suspect it's sin that would make the Spirit sad, or suppress His actions in a person's life because they are seeking their own desires.

WHAT TO DO

- **WALK IN THE SPIRIT** (Galatians 5:16, 25) - The word 'walk' (peripateoo, περιπατεω) indicates our manner of life, or lifestyle, especially in the moral realm. Otherwise, we walk in the spirit when we are obedient to what the Bible says.
- **BE MATURE IN THE SPIRIT** (Ephesians 5:18) -The illustration in this great verse is not to be drunk. Alcohol literally can control brain cells through its chemical effect. In contrast, Christians are to be filled with the spirit! The Greek word for 'fill' is πληρώ (Pleroo), which has an abstract meaning to be mature or complete. For born-again Christians, their old actions are no longer possible as we have been changed by the Spirit by our regeneration (Titus 3:5; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Corinthians 3:28). Further, as we allow the Spirit to work in our lives through our obedience to the Bible, He uses it to mature us in our Christian walk. Therefore, in contrast with being drunk when actions are controlled by alcohol, a mature believer acts according to the Spirit (i.e., the Bible; John 14:26; John 16:13-14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 6:17).
- **BE ZEALOUS TOWARDS THE SPIRIT** (Romans 12:11) - We should have an attitude of actively seeking the things of the Spirit, which are found in the Bible.
- **PUT TO DEATH THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH** (Romans 8:13) - The Spirit helps a believer defeat sin, but this verse indicates it is by obedience that a person facilitates the Spirit's gracious help.

How does a Christian accomplish the four actions above? Scripture is not specific, but based on the New Testament epistles, these commands seem to indicate it is by actively seeking and knowing God's word and being obedient to it.

By this process the Spirit can change a believer's mindset as they see God's working, the truth of His word, answered prayer, and power to change lives to a mature person ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)).

We have a great God who has given us wonderful promises and abundant provisions to help us live our lives in a fruitful manner, not only in service to Him but providing joy and peace in our own lives.

SPECIAL BONUS: UNFORGIVABLE SIN

Christ mentions not to commit the unforgivable sin by **blaspheming the Spirit** (Matthew 12:31-32). How does it apply to Christians?

Importantly, this verse often is taken out of context. In this passage, Christ is directing His wrath towards the Jewish Pharisees. At Christ's baptism, at the initiation of his ministry, the Pharisees had rejected the witness given by the Holy Spirit when He came down from heaven on our Savior.

Therefore, to blaspheme the physical manifestation of Christ on earth is forgivable but to reject God's approval (signified by the Spirit) of his spiritual mission to bring salvation to man is unforgivable, in other words by rejecting the salvation message.

Importantly, Christians are not in view in this passage as they have the Spirit's sealing until the day of redemption, having accepted Christ as Savior (Ephesians 1:13-14 and 4:30).

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