

Foundational Truths Of The Faith

Who Is The Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the most mysterious member of the Trinity, which includes God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Spirit (or the Holy Spirit). Many struggle with the idea of God being three persons, yet one. Quite honestly, we will never fully grasp the concept this side of heaven.

Some, however, have wrongly thought of the Holy Spirit as more of an "it" than a "him." That is probably due in part to biblical descriptions of him as being like or coming upon Jesus in the form of a dove, among other comparisons.

Yet these descriptions must be balanced with the descriptions of the other members of the Trinity. For instance, Jesus referred to himself as "the bread of life" and "the good shepherd." In the same way, God the Father is referred to as "a refuge" and "a consuming fire." Does this mean that Jesus is a loaf of bread or a sheep farmer, or that the Father is a pile of rocks or a blast furnace? Of course not! These are simply metaphors used in Scripture to help communicate God's character. Likewise, the unique descriptions attributed to the Holy Spirit do not imply that the Holy Spirit is merely some "force" or "power." Jesus said this about the Holy Spirit: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth . . . He will tell you about the future" ([John 16:13](#)). Note the use of the pronoun *he*. The Holy Spirit has a distinct personality, and he also has specific work that he wants to do in our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. Explore what the Bible says about him.

1. [Who the Holy Spirit Helps](#). The Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers followers of Christ (see [Acts 2:1-40](#)).
2. [How the Holy Spirit Works with the Father and the Son](#). The Holy Spirit works alongside God the Father and Jesus, God's Son, to make our lives pleasing to God (see [1 Peter 1:2](#)).
3. [Why God Gives Us the Holy Spirit](#). The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives is God's mark of ownership (see [Ephes. 1:13-14](#)).
4. [How the Holy Spirit Works in Our Lives](#). The Holy Spirit draws us to Christ, enters our life at conversion, and empowers us as we allow him to work in our life (see [John 14:15-17](#)).
5. [When the Holy Spirit Can Be Sinned Against](#). There are six specific ways we can sin against the Holy Spirit (see [Acts 5:1-10](#)).
6. [Why Christians Need the Holy Spirit](#). Living the Christian life is impossible without the Holy Spirit's help (see [Galatians 5:16-26](#)).

Who Is The Holy Spirit?

Who the Holy Spirit Helps

Read [Acts 2:1-41](#)

Who is the Holy Spirit here to help? The Holy Spirit has been given to all believers to deepen their spiritual walk and to enable them to make an impact upon their world for Jesus Christ. This passage illustrates three aspects of the Holy Spirit's unique work in the lives of believers:

1. The Holy Spirit Fills All Believers. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was given only to a select few to perform specific tasks. This chapter indicates a change in that pattern. The Holy Spirit was poured out on all the believers in the house that day ([Acts 2:4](#)), and he continued to be present in each of their lives from that day forward. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was used by God to establish the church—and to spread the message of the gospel around the world (see [Acts 2:39](#)).

2. The Holy Spirit Draws Attention to the Savior. Notice that Peter did not focus on the unique happening that had just taken place but turned the crowd's attention to the message of Jesus Christ and their need for repentance. Likewise, the Holy Spirit does not draw attention to himself but to the Savior. And when he fills your life, he radically increases your ability to share the gospel with others.

3. The Holy Spirit Inspired Peter's Message. Peter's sermon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, led many in the crowd to a point of decision: "What should we do?" ([Acts 2:37](#)). The people were not attracted to Peter but to his message. As stated in point 2 above, one of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit is to draw people to God. As stated above, the Holy Spirit worked powerfully this day, and three thousand people responded to the message.

The Holy Spirit is promised to all who repent and receive Jesus Christ into their lives. Many people fail to understand who the Holy Spirit is and what dimension of power is available to them through him. It may help to examine what took place after the disciples received the filling of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised (see [Acts 1:8](#)).

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How the Holy Spirit Works with the Father and the Son

Read [1 Peter 1:2](#)

The Holy Spirit has the distinct honor of being one of the three members of the Trinity—the other two members being God the Father and Jesus Christ, his Son. This particular verse shows how the Holy Spirit works with the Father and the Son in the life of a believer:

- The Father chooses us and makes us his children.
- Jesus redeems us, having died for us while we were still sinners.
- The Holy Spirit draws us to the Lord and continues to work in our lives to make us pleasing to God.

As you can see, all three members of the Trinity work in concert to bring us into a relationship with God. For that reason, we see that the Holy Spirit is indeed an integral part of what has been called "the Godhead."

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Why God Gives Us the Holy Spirit

Read [Ephes. 1:13-14](#)

You might say that the Holy Spirit is our "identifying mark" as a Christian. In this text we see three specific reasons God gives us his Holy Spirit:

- 1. The Holy Spirit Is a Promise.** Once again, Scripture reminds us that God has promised to send the Holy Spirit to all those who have heard the good news of the gospel and trusted Christ as Savior.
- 2. The Holy Spirit Is a Seal.** The Holy Spirit serves as a mark of ownership, showing that we belong to God.
- 3. The Holy Spirit Is a Guarantee.** The Holy Spirit also represents God's pledge to bring us to our final spiritual inheritance. This word could also be translated as a "first installment" or "deposit," signifying that his sealing in our lives is a foretaste of much more to come!

God gives us the Holy Spirit not only to enable us to live out the Christian life but to prove that we are precious in his sight.

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How the Holy Spirit Works in Our Lives

Read [John 14:15-17](#)

The Bible uses three different Greek prepositions in the New Testament to describe the different ways in which the Holy Spirit works in our lives. This verse shows two of these ways, and a third can be found elsewhere in Scripture:

1. He Works with Us as Nonbelievers (*para*). Prior to our conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and reveals Christ as the answer (see [John 16:8](#)). Some might dismiss his working as the prodding of one's personal conscience. Yet it is the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to our terminally sinful condition, exposing our lack of righteousness so that we will see the need to turn our lives over to Jesus Christ.

2. He Comes into Our Lives When We Turn to Christ (*en*). Once we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and invite him into our lives, the Holy Spirit moves into our lives and sets up residence, so to speak. First, he produces the process of salvation in our heart. As Jesus said, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of . . . the Spirit" ([John 3:5](#)). Second, he assures us that we have done the right thing. For Scripture tells us, "For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children" [Romans 8:16](#). He gives us the inner knowledge that Christ is living in us. Now he can begin changing us from the inside out and develop the new nature within us.

3. He Will Come upon Us to Empower Us as Believers (*epi*). This aspect of the Holy Spirit's work is described in [Luke 24:49](#), where Jesus says, "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised." Here Jesus describes the dynamic empowering of the Holy Spirit upon our lives. This is what the early Christians experienced in [Acts 2](#), and it dramatically emboldened their witness for Jesus Christ. This power is available to believers today, for Scripture says of the giving of his Spirit, "This promise is to you and your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God!" ([Acts 2:39](#)).

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When the Holy Spirit Can Be Sinned Against

Read [Acts 5:1-10](#)

One way Scripture supports the concept that the Holy Spirit is a person rather than a force is by showing how one can sin against him. It is important to understand that the Holy Spirit is indeed God at work and that to commit a sin against him is to commit a sin against God. In this passage we see one way in which we can sin against the Holy Spirit. But other passages inform us of at least five additional ways in which a person can sin against the Spirit.

1. Lying to the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit by pretending to be thoroughly devoted to God when they really were not. One way people continue to do this today is by "going through the [spiritual] motions" without really meaning it in their hearts.

2. Grieving the Holy Spirit. Only believers can grieve the Holy Spirit (see [Ephes. 4:30](#)). We grieve the Holy Spirit when we carry anger in our heart, slander others, or do things that we know go against the new nature that is inside of us.

3. Quenching the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of something we need to change in our life and we ignore his promptings, we are extinguishing his power in our life ([1 Thes. 5:19](#)). He is still in our life, but we are holding back from giving him complete control.

4. Resisting the Holy Spirit. When Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr, spoke to his persecutors, he shared the message of Jesus Christ but closed with the words: "You stubborn people! . . . Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit?" [Acts 7:51](#). People who commit this sin may know that the Holy Spirit is trying to bring them to Jesus, but their pride keeps them from acknowledging Christ as Savior and Lord. The danger with this sin is that every time a person resists God's Spirit, he or she makes it more difficult for him or herself to come to Christ.

5. Insulting the Holy Spirit. To insult the Holy Spirit means to treat "the blood of the covenant as if it were common and unholy" ([Hebrews 10:29](#)). The person who commits this sin essentially dismisses the great price that Jesus paid for him or her at the cross of Calvary. This person has refused to accept the tremendous gift of salvation that God has offered to him or her.

6. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The two sins listed above, resisting and insulting the Holy Spirit, can lead to what is termed the "unforgivable sin": blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (see [Matthew 12:31-32](#)). Since the Bible tells us that Christ is the only way of salvation, and the Holy Spirit's initial work in our life as a nonbeliever is to draw us to Christ, to blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to reject Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. That is the point of no return. Every time a person resists the Spirit and insults him, he or she gets a step closer to this ultimate sin.

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Why Christians Need the Holy Spirit

Read [Galatians 5:16-26](#)

This text lays out four important reasons we need to let the Holy Spirit have full control of our lives as believers:

- 1. The Holy Spirit Helps to Conquer Our Sin Nature.** The Holy Spirit will help us make the right decisions if we listen to his advice.
- 2. The Holy Spirit Makes It Easier to Follow God's Guidelines.** The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live by God's guidelines. If we listen to and follow the Holy Spirit's promptings, then we won't have to force ourselves to obey the Lord. That is because we will want to obey him.
- 3. The Holy Spirit Will Produce Godly Qualities in Our Lives.** When we live by the Holy Spirit, he develops godly qualities (known as the fruit of the Spirit) in our lives.
- 4. The Holy Spirit Encourages Us to Seek God's Approval above Man's.** We will seek God's glory above our own when we follow the Holy Spirit's leading.

In essence, the Holy Spirit enables Christians to live lives that are pleasing to God—something that is impossible to do on our own. He makes following Christ a joy rather than a duty.