

# a study of the *Holy Spirit*

## Lesson 11: The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1. ☞ The present lesson focuses upon "the great mystery" of the Holy Spirit. The fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within believers is a certain fact. But the "HOW" of this indwelling is not specifically explained.

Perhaps H. Leo Boles said is best: "We do not profess to know all the mysteries connected with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, yet we can know that he dwells in Christians."

2. Before continuing review some previous points which will give foundational knowledge to students about this lesson.
  - a. ☞ We have seen that the Holy Spirit was given in various "measures" to men. Note that the first three measures on the list have ceased. The last measure is the only permanent one because it satisfies the Holy Spirit's purpose.
  - b. ☞ We have also seen that the Holy Spirit's "gifts" can be grouped into two classes. The miraculous has ceased. The "ordinary" is the only class existing today.
  - c. ☞ **Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit does not operate in a miraculous way today. Today the Holy Spirit works ONLY in conjunction with and by the Scriptures to lead, direct, and sanctify believers.
  - d. Therefore: In whatever measure the Holy Spirit indwells in saints it must be consistent with the conclusions above. Any other conclusion is error.
3. ☞ Notice that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a certain fact:
  - a. ☞ Inspiration anticipated the indwelling (Ezekiel 36:27; Zechariah 12:10).
  - b. ☞ Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to obedient saints (John 7:38-39).
  - c. ☞ The Apostles taught the reality of the indwelling (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:19, 20; Galatians 4:6; 2 Timothy 1:14).
4. ☞ H. Leo Boles notes that we should observe four distinctions regarding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (p. 204). He observes that even though the "how" of the indwelling is not clear, we can know some definite facts about it:
  - a. ☞ **The "incarnation" of Christ is different than the indwelling.** It is not right to claim that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the same as when God was in the man Jesus Christ!


- b. 📖 **The "omnipresence" of God is not the same as the indwelling.** The Holy Spirit is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10) but this is different than the Holy Spirit dwelling in believers. He is present in another or different way to those who obey (Acts 5:32).
  - c. 📖 **The spiritual gifts are not the same.** They were of the miraculous while the indwelling is "ordinary."
  - d. 📖 **The Word of God is not the indwelling.** The Word of God is NOT the Holy Spirit! Ephesians 6:17 informs us that the Scripture is the "sword of the Spirit." In that metaphor, the soldier is the agent and the sword his instrument. So the Holy Spirit is not just the Word but uses the Word as an instrument to accomplish his purpose. Some may argue that the indwelling of the Spirit is nothing more than the presence of the Word in one's mind or memory. NOTE: If this argument is valid, then it can be argued that an infidel can enjoy the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for many of them "know" the Bible by memory!
5. How can we explain the Holy Spirit's indwelling within saints?

📖 There are about six theories suggested to explain how the Holy Spirit indwells in the Christian:

- a. 📖 **The Holy Spirit indwells only in our attitudes.** This is suggested by those wishing to deny the supernatural. They deny the Holy Spirit but agree that one can become "good" by fashioning his attitudes according to the "ideals" of the Scriptures.
- b. 📖 **The Holy Spirit indwells in the Church collectively but not in members individually.** Most will use 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 to argue this view; but they then ignore that Paul also says the Spirit dwells in individuals as well as the church (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). How can He dwell in the Church but not in each saint? Does this view portray Him like a puzzle that is "together" only as a whole but incomplete when apart?
- c. 📖 **The Holy Spirit indwells and is only evidenced by performing miraculous feats** (i.e. healing, tongues). This is wrong as our studies have already shown. The miraculous has ceased for it accomplished its purposes.
- d. 📖 **The Holy Spirit indwells personally separate and apart from the Word.** What our study of the Holy Spirit has shown is that the Spirit operates only in conjunction with the Word – never apart from it. This argument fails to follow this logical conclusion with looking at biblical evidence. The only way we know about the Spirit is from the Word, and the only way He operates is through non-miraculous ways which would logically be in conjunction with His word which He helped form for our needs.
- e. 📖 **The Holy Spirit indwells through the Word of God ALONE.** Many sound saints have accepted this view and are able to support their position very well. However, some

serious concerns come from the previous point about non-believers ability to know the Word.

Points made for this argument:

- 1) The Spirit dwells in Christians.
  - 2) The Scripture asserts that God the Father, Christ the Son also dwell within Christians (2 Corinthians 6:16; Colossians 1:27; 1 John 4:15).
  - 3) Since God the Father and Christ the Son cannot be divided, there cannot be a personal dwelling of them inside Christians. Consequently, the same references made to the Spirit cannot be a personal indwelling either.
  - 4) Paul settled the discussion in Galatians 3:2 when he told the brethren they “received the Spirit by the hearing of faith.” This inherently points to the fact that our acceptance and obedience of the gospel, leading to salvation, is what brings us the Spirit. Thus it is the Word of God which is received in our hearts and dwells within us as Christians (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Ephesians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 12:3).
  - 5) The parallel passages of Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16 help underscore this indwelling through the Word. To be “filled with the Spirit” was to “allow the word of Christ to dwell in you richly.” The Spirit and the Word are not the same but the Word is what the Spirit uses to dwell inside each Christian today.
- f.  **The Holy Spirit indwells personally in conjunction with the Word.** This is the other position that is generally accepted. The drawback here is the inability to explain exactly how the Holy Spirit indwells and how this affects the saint.

Points made for this argument:

- 1) The Spirit dwells in Christians.
- 2) The Scriptures require that there be some personal indwelling because it is not possible for the Word alone to satisfy the things the Spirit does inside us.
- 3) The Spirit was promised AFTER repentance, baptism and remission of sins; the Word was to be received BEFORE salvation or remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Non-Christians can read and study the Word and know it as well as Christians. If Peter had meant that the “gift of the Holy Spirit” and the Word were the same thing, why did he not just say that?
- 4) Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18 do not refer to the same thing. Instead of allowing the heathen traditions of wine and strong drink to give them religious enthusiasm and excitement, Paul encouraged them to get their enthusiasm from

Spirit as they were to let His word dwell in them. They had already received the gift of the Holy Spirit (It was given to them when they obeyed the gospel), but Paul was encouraging them to find a proper source of enthusiasm for their spiritual service.

- 5) Galatians 3:2 is clarified as not pertaining to the ordinary measure of the Spirit but rather the miraculous measure of the spirit. When you look at the context of the passage, Galatians 3:5 specifically refers to "He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you." This would not apply to the current discussion since the miraculous measure no longer is needed or present.

**Note:** These theories, and any others, that attempt to explain the Spirit's indwelling can be divided into the two classes discussed earlier (miraculous and ordinary). Since the "miraculous" has ceased, any theory falling into that class must be rejected. All theories which fall into the "ordinary" or "non-miraculous" class should be considered and accepted as possible as long as no error is found. The ambiguity of Scripture on this point must allow latitude for accepting different explanations as long as Scripture is not violated.

6. ☞ Our understanding of the Spirit's indwelling can be helped by considering it from a negative aspect. Romans 8 gives us an explanation of what those are like who "hath not the Spirit" (8:9b). Look at the chapter and see what one misses if he does not have the indwelling Spirit:
  - a. ☞ **Does not have the mind of the Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:5-8). Note the contrast between "flesh" and the "Spirit." Those who fail to have the Holy Spirit fail to demonstrate a proper attitude in life (Philippians 2:5-11; Galatians 5:22-23).
  - b. ☞ **Does not belong to Christ** (Romans 8:9). This characteristic points to salvation (Galatians 3:26-29). Without the indwelling Spirit one does not belong to Christ and is therefore not in a saved relationship.
  - c. ☞ **Has not been raised from the dead** (Romans 8:11). The Holy Spirit indwells only in those who have been spiritually resurrected (baptized). Romans 6:3-4; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 3:1. Those who have not been baptized do not have the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:38). Those who have been baptized unscripturally do not have the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-12).
  - d. ☞ **Is living according to the flesh** (Romans 8:12, 13). This is the consequence of failing to have the Holy Spirit's mind. Those in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell are practicing the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).
  - e. ☞ **Does not share in the family of God** (Romans 8:14-15). Those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells are God's children (1 Timothy 3:15).
  - f. ☞ **Does not have the witness of the Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:16). The Holy Spirit has given us the Bible to follow. When we obey the Inspired Scriptures the Holy Spirit **plus** our spirits confirm our devotion.

- g. ☞ **Does not have the assurance of eternal reward** (Romans 8:16-17). The Holy Spirit is a guarantee of our covenant with God. He is described as a "seal" and a "pledge" (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 5:5). The indwelling is a "legal" claim upon eternity's reward.
  - h. ☞ **Does not have assistance in prayer** (Romans 8:26, 27). The indwelling Spirit overcomes our inabilities in praying. Those in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell fail to have this divine help.
7. ☞ Obviously those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells will enjoy the reverse of all the above, but the Scriptures tell us that the following positive points come to those who have the Holy Spirit indwelling:
- a. ☞ **They possess an "earnest" of inheritance** (Ephesians 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:5). In contemporary language—a "down payment." It is a commercial term that indicates agreement or an act which will lead to an even greater event. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is thus a promise of the eternal reward that is coming.
  - b. ☞ **They possess a family union** (Galatians 4:6). They have proof of sonship with God (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit is the bond of brotherhood unity (Ephesians 4:1-4). The basis upon which God can be called "Father" is the possession of the Holy Spirit. This comes when we obey (Acts 5:32).
  - c. ☞ **They possess the mind of the Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9). Their thought and attitudes reflect that they are God's child (Galatians 5:22ff; Philippians 4:8, 9).
  - d. ☞ **They possess assurance** (Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).
  - e. ☞ **They are strengthened with divine power** (Ephesians 3:14-20; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18). The Holy Spirit works within and is able to do great things!
  - f. ☞ **They possess a strong deterrent to sin** (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). The indwelling Spirit will not mystically keep us from sin. Our knowledge of His indwelling will cause us to keep ourselves from sinful practices (this was the Apostle's argument to the Corinthians). We will think it absurd to engage in sin while the Holy Spirit dwells with in us!
  - g. ☞ **They possess great comfort** (John 14:26; Acts 9:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). The term is used to describe someone who goes to court to plead for a friend. The Latin word comes from terms meaning "to fortify; strengthen with aid." He does not lessen grief but He provides the strength to endure. See Lesson #4 for more details.
  - h. ☞ **They possess verification of a covenant union with God** (Ephesians 1:13). The "seal" was used to validate the truthfulness of a contract. The Holy Spirit is the "seal" that believers are in a covenant union with God.

8. ☞ How can we know that the Holy Spirit dwells with in us? This is a vital question because of the points just discussed.
- a. ☞ Notice some improper ways that are often suggested to those asking if they have the Holy Spirit indwelling—
- 1) Feelings/emotions
  - 2) ☞ Hearing voices speak to them
  - 3) ☞ Miraculous (?) signs
  - 4) ☞ The word of some mortal
- b. ☞ There are some ways we can know. These are true ways that are not error.
- 1) ☞ Romans 8:14—Those who have the Holy Spirit dwelling within are those who have been "led" by God. How is one thus "led"? The answer explains how the Holy Spirit indwells with in Christians today.
  - 2) ☞ Acts 5:32—I must obey God's Word.
  - 3) ☞ Romans 8:16—Upon obedience the Holy Spirit and my spirit will confirm my Sonship with God (Galatians 4:6).
  - 4) ☞ Galatians 4:6—Sonship with God means that the Holy Spirit dwells in my life.
  - 5)  Galatians 5:22-24—The indwelling of the Holy Spirit will become clear in my thoughts, words, and deeds.

**Note:** The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not something that can be known through emotional experiences; it can only be determined by objective commands that are found in Scripture. Only obedience to these commands will enable us to judge whether we have the Holy Spirit indwelling our lives! The ONLY way to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is to allow the Word of God to dwell in us. And this means we must obey God's Word! (1 John 2:3-6).