



LIFE IN THE SPIRIT: IN YOU

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The Apostle Paul had been instrumental in planting churches throughout the region of Galatia in Asia Minor (now known as Turkey).

But just a short time after he had moved on to plant churches in other areas, he became aware of other teachers who had stepped into the leadership vacuum created by Paul's absence—teachers whose method depended on fear and human control, rather than dependence on the power of God's Spirit. That's not right.

The Gospel message which Paul preached, had released the people from a slavish dependence on religious rituals, and taught them to listen to and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. But the persuasive pressure of the false teachers intimidated the believers, who began again to live out of fear of failing God, rather than depending on His love and grace. Have you ever been snared by that trap?

Paul's Letter to the Galatians called them to shrug off the yoke of spiritual bondage to do's and don'ts and return to the unfettered attentiveness to the Spirit's leading.

Galatians 5:25 *Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.*

In other words, since the life we now enjoy in Christ comes from the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, let's give to Him alone our obedient attention, in every part of our lives.

This weekend and next, we'll examine this concept and the practice of *"living by the Spirit,"* or experiencing life in the Holy Spirit.

Let's begin by clarifying His identity. Who is the Holy Spirit?

He is a Person

In John 16, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit 12 times with the masculine pronoun (and no other term). So, our first answer is that He is a person, and demonstrates the four essential elements of personality—intellect, feelings, will, and actions.

Moreover, He is not merely a person, but a divine Person.

He is God

We first encounter the Holy Spirit at the very beginning of the first book of the Bible (Genesis), where we find Him active in the creation of the world as we know it.

Genesis 1:2 And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

This is the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which refers to the supreme God. And so, we discover that the Holy Spirit is Himself God our Creator.

Much later, when the nation of Israel asks for a king, God sends the prophet Samuel to identify and anoint a king for them.

1 Samuel 16:13 So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on.

Here the word used is *Yahweh* or Jehovah—Israel's covenant name for God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jehovah.

Jesus confirms this when He assures His disciples that they will not be left to their own intellect when testifying of Christ.

Matthew 10:20 For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

So, most importantly, in answer to our quest to know who the Holy Spirit is, the Bible clearly and repeatedly answers: He is God. He bears the attributes of God—He is eternal, holy, all-knowing, all-powerful, and present everywhere at the same time.

He is our Maker

As we may read in the Book of Job:

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the Breath of the Almighty gives me life.

The Holy Spirit is the Source of our physical life.

He is the source of the Scriptures

He is also the Source of the Holy Scriptures, as Peter asserted clearly:

² Peter 1:20 Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, ²¹ or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

Paul affirmed this truth in his Second Letter to Timothy:

² Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.

This word “inspired by God” literally means “divinely breathed,” and the Holy Spirit is the “breath” of God. Both the Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek word *pneuma* translate as breath or wind or spirit.

He is the source of our new birth

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us new life when we surrender our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was conceived in Mary “*by the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 1:18), and Jesus is born again in you by the same Spirit.

Jesus taught:

^{John 3:6} Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.

Paul affirmed this, too:

^{Titus 3:4} But—When God our Savior revealed His kindness and love, ⁵ He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.

He is our life (the eternal life)

And now, He sustains that life (that eternal life) within us, day after day.

^{Romans 8:2} For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

^{Galatians 6:8} Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

He is the presence of Jesus Christ WITH US

Jesus was called Emmanuel, which means “God with us,” for He was (and is) God in human form. Now, He has ascended to Heaven until it is time for His return as King and Judge of the whole world. While He is gone, He has sent the Holy Spirit as His representative—“another Comforter” exactly like Himself—the Spirit of Jesus.

Acts 16:7 When they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to do this, ^{16:8} so they passed through Mysia and went down to Troas.

Here’s what we know about Him: He is a Person, He is God, He is our Creator and Recreator, our very life, and the perfect Representative of Jesus here and now.

But do you KNOW Him? Do you have a growing, personal relationship with the Holy Spirit? Is He becoming your familiar Friend?

With You, In You

Jesus shared with His disciples two major lessons emphasizing their relationship with the Holy Spirit; these are found in John 14 and 16.

John 14:15 “If you love Me, obey My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn’t looking for Him and doesn’t recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you.”

Jesus said seven significant things about the Holy Spirit in this passage. Let me highlight them for you:

1. The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Him.
2. The Holy Spirit is the Father’s gift to Jesus’ disciples.
3. The Holy Spirit advocates for His disciples, just like Jesus. (same)
4. The Holy Spirit has come to stay. (abides)
5. The Holy Spirit leads into all truth. (process)
6. The world doesn’t recognize the Holy Spirit. (spiritually blind)
7. You know Him because He lives WITH YOU now, He will live IN YOU later.

It is these last two which I want to emphasize today.

He is With You

Jesus Christ was our Emmanuel (God with us). His sacrifice for us cost Him His life. But, after His death, God raised Him from the dead. And then he returned to Heaven to be crowned with glory and honor, to receive His Kingship, and to prepare a place for us. He will return to the earth to gather us to Himself, that we may spend eternity worshipping and serving the King of kings.

However, He would not leave us alone in this broken world. And He would not leave the rest of the world without a witness of God's Good News. So He sent the Holy Spirit to take His place among us. Jesus called Him "*another Advocate (or Defender)*" (exactly like Himself).

And the Holy Spirit, unrestrained by a human body as Jesus is, can be with ALL of us, everywhere, at the same time! And since He is identical with Jesus—same understanding, same grace, same power—He is the way that Jesus remains with us—every one of us.

What can we expect Him to do while He is here with us?

He Convicts

Jesus said:

John 16:7 "But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment."

The Holy Spirit is with us to convict all the world of sin and God's righteousness and coming judgment. Why is this necessary? Because we don't naturally understand what those are.

Sin...

Its seriousness, from the perspective of Holy God.

Its deadliness to the human soul.

Its pervasiveness—human nature, human systems

God's righteousness...

We are quick to blame God for all that we do not understand, but He is faithful in all His ways, and one day we will all acknowledge His righteousness.

He is altogether worthy, perfect in all of His ways.

His plan of salvation is complete—perfectly just and perfectly merciful.

And the righteousness God puts on our account through Christ is real.

Coming judgment...

Without it, there can be no justice; sin must be punished or atoned.

Mercy is not the dismissal of justice; the debt must be paid.

Jesus Christ paid the debt He did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay.

Through this convicting work, the Holy Spirit grants us repentance—a gift from God—to relent from our unbelief and rebellious argument.

He Reveals

Every day, the Holy Spirit is revealing Christ to us—showing us His faithful love and mighty power.

John 14:25 I have told you these things while I am still with you. But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take My place. ²⁶ The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you.

John 15:26 “But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about Me.

John 16:12 “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring Me glory by telling you whatever He receives from Me.

The Spirit draws us to Christ, and gives us faith—a gift from God—to entrust our lives in each and every moment to the plan and power of our Lord Jesus, by which we are conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:16 But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.

⁶ And because we are [God’s] children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.” ⁷ Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child. And since you are His child, God has made you His heir. (Gal 4:6-7)

The Spirit’s aim while He is with us is to lead us to entrust ourselves to Jesus Christ, for that is the “narrow gateway” to eternal salvation.

He is In You

And God has something planned for those who trust Christ that goes far beyond having the Spirit with us! When we respond to His convicting revelation with faith, God does something on the *inside* of us. He gives us a new birth!

He Gives Life

The Holy Spirit changes your life (literally)!

Romans 8:10 Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, He will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

⁴⁵ The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. (1 Cor 15:45)

⁶ His new covenant... is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life. (2 Cor 3:6)

⁸ Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? (2 Cor 3:8)

A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death. (Ro 8:2; MSG)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life! There are two clear results of this newness of life within you: roots and fruit.

Taking Root Downward

Ephesians 3:17 Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

Romans 5:5 We know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

So because the life-giving Spirit is in us, we will become rooted in the marvelous love of Jesus. His love will nourish our souls and empower our actions. In this way, we will become fruitful.

Bearing Fruit Upward

The effect of the Spirit living in you is to produce the character of Christ in you and the works of Christ through you.

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

Galatians 5:22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, and self-control.

John 14:12 “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.

The Holy Spirit living in you will shape you into the likeness of Jesus, in heart and deed.

This is what Jesus promised, and what the Father gave us—the Holy Spirit, with us and in us. Therefore...

Galatians 5:25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.