

The Work of the Spirit in Relation to Sanctification

From the point of salvation and on, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer. The Spirit was not only involved in the process of our salvation, but He is also involved in the process of our sanctification. The Holy Spirit plays an active role in our daily lives assisting us with our spiritual growth. How does the Holy Spirit work in relation to our sanctification?

The Spirit assists believers in worship.

- **Philippians 3:3**, *“for we are the {true} circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”*

The indwelling Holy Spirit generates true worship. The word, “worship” [LATREUO] refers to religious service offered to God and is not limited to just praise and thanksgiving. This verse is not just speaking of singing in church, but really emphasizing a worshipful way of life. All of our lives should render worship to God and it is the indwelling Holy Spirit, who moves us to worship. That is why true believers are those who worship “in the Spirit.”

The Spirit assures believers of salvation.

- **Romans 8:16**, *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”*

The indwelling Holy Spirit is constantly present in the believer's life to provide inner testimony of our faith in Christ. The indwelling Holy Spirit gives evidence that we are truly children of God; that we are truly believers in Christ. And as such, we are given assurance of our own salvation.

The Spirit empowers believers in their walk.

- **Acts 1:8**, *“but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

After Christ's resurrection, prior to His ascension into heaven, Jesus informed His disciples that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit, which will move them to be witnesses for Christ. Certainly, this is what the book of Acts describes in the foundation of the early church. The Holy Spirit indwelled the early believers at Pentecost and then moved them to proclaim the gospel first in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria and eventually throughout the known world of that time.

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- **Ephesians 3:16**, “*that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.*”

For God to give *according to the riches of His glory* is absolutely a staggering thought since His riches are completely limitless. The term *strengthened* in the Greek is the opposite of *discouraged* in Ephesians 3:13. The source of this strength is the Holy Spirit. God sent the Holy Spirit to comfort us, to guide us in the truth, and to help us. The Holy Spirit provides power for our new lives in Christ.

The Spirit fights the believer's sin nature.

- **Romans 8:13**, “*for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*”

The “deeds of the body” is a reference to the sinful desires and ways of the flesh. The indwelling Holy Spirit will fight against that sin nature and aid us in putting off sin and putting on righteousness. (cf. Colossians 3:1-17)

- **Galatians 5:17**, “*For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*”

Very clearly the Holy Spirit is at odds with our sinful nature and therefore fights against that sin nature in order to help us live according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us to strive for righteousness and strive against sin.

The Spirit fills believers.

This is often referred to as “the filling ministry” of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians speak of living a “Spirit filled” life. The filling ministry is distinct from the regenerating, baptism, indwelling and sealing ministries of the Spirit in that it has to do with sanctification, while the others are associated with salvation.

There are several special instances of the “filling ministry” of the Holy Spirit during the initial stages of the church (Cf. Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9). The Holy Spirit played a special and important role in the foundation of the early church. However, many of these references speak of the initial coming of the Holy Spirit to the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles; or they speak of a special filling or empowerment of the Holy Spirit involving the apostles during in the early stages of the church. One must be careful in their application for believers today.

The key verse that applies to believers today is that of **Ephesians 5:18**, “*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.*”

In Paul's statement, “*but be filled with the Spirit,*” it is best to understand the Greek construction as “*by the Spirit*” The Spirit is not the content of the filling. Instead “the filling” is being done **by** the Spirit. When we are Spirit-filled, we are filled **by** the Spirit or in other words we are controlled by the Spirit. The idea behind the Greek term, “filled” [PLEROUSTHE] is control.

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Paul is making a contrast here. He is insisting that the believer not be controlled by other things or substances such as wine; but instead the believer should be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We are to relinquish our own fleshly and selfish control and allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives.

This is in the imperative, so it is a command! As we submit to the control of the Spirit, He will produce His fruit in our lives (cf. Galatians 5:22-23). This is also in the present tense in the Greek and emphasizes that this control by the Spirit should be a habitual or continual action. We are commanded to continually give up the control of our lives to the Holy Spirit indwelling us.

A glove gives us a good illustration. It can do nothing on its own. Only as the hand controls the glove can it accomplish anything.

Filled also carries the connotation of being carried or moved along. It is like a sail, which allows the wind to fill it and carry the ship along. We need to be moved along in our lives by the Holy Spirit Himself!

Lastly, filled carries the idea of permeation. It was used of salt's permeating meat in order to flavor and preserve it. God desires that we allow the Holy Spirit to permeate our lives in all that we think, say and do. This is really the same idea as "Walk by the Spirit" in **Galatians 5:16**. "Walk" means to conduct one's life. Rather than living in the sphere or under the domination of the old nature, believers are exhorted to conduct their lives in the sphere of or under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit guarantees future blessing for believers.

o **Ephesians 1:13-14**, "*In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of {God's own} possession, to the praise of His glory.*"

The Holy Spirit guarantees our future inheritance in Christ. He is the pledge of our future inheritance. The term *pledge*, [ARRABON] a word borrowed from the commercial world originally referred to a down payment on a purchase. In later times it came to refer to any kind of pledge in general and it eventually came to be used for an engagement ring. The Holy Spirit is a divine pledge of our inheritance. He is given as a down payment guaranteeing our future inheritance. He is given to the church, Christ's bride as a divine engagement ring.

The Spirit guides believers in their walk.

- **Romans 8:14**, "*For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*"
- **Galatians 5:18**, "*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*"

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Both of these verses refer to the Holy Spirit's role in leading believers. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to lead believers today. We will not be recipients of direct revelation from the Holy Spirit! We will not have some form of emotional experience (warm fuzzy)! God's Spirit leads us in our lives today, by illuminating the Word so that we understand it and He moves us to obey it.

The Spirit prays for/with believers.

- **Jude 20**, *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; **praying in the Holy Spirit.**”*
- **Ephesians 6:18**, *“With all prayer and petition **pray at all times in the Spirit...**”*

Believers are to pray in the Spirit. To be in the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit (cf. Ephesians 5:18). The idea is not walking according to the flesh, or according to the ways of the world, but according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is on allowing ourselves to be controlled by the Spirit of God so that when we do go before God in prayer then our prayers will be in the Spirit.

- **Romans 8:26-27**, *“And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but **the Spirit Himself intercedes for {us} with groanings too deep for words;** and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to {the will of} God.”*

Paul makes it clear that we have an inability to pray as we should. “Because of our imperfect perspectives, finite minds, human frailties, and spiritual limitations, we are not able to pray in absolute consistency with God's will. Many times we are not even aware that spiritual needs exist...” [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary on Romans 1-8, p. 466]

It is clear from this passage that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence that moves us to pray, not merely an illumination that teaches us how to pray, but a person who Himself prays in and through us. [Torrey, p. 17]

The Holy Spirit's intercession is described as “*groanings too deep for words.*” These groans are not audible; they are not utterances; they are inexpressible in words. They are infinitely beyond our understanding as the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf.

The Spirit teaches believers.

Before Jesus departed from the disciples He encouraged them by telling them that He would send them “another helper” (John 14:16). The Greek term [ALLOS] “another” stresses that the Holy Spirit would be a helper of the same kind as Christ. Just as Jesus had taught the disciples (Matthew 5:2; John 8:2), so the Holy Spirit would teach them. The Holy Spirit would perform and carry on the same kind of teaching ministry as Christ did. The Holy Spirit would cause them to remember the things Christ had previously taught them. So the Holy Spirit would be confirming Christ's

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teaching, [cf. Paul Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology, p. 246-247] There are several verses that refer to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit:

- **Luke 12:12** “*for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.*”

This clearly emphasizes that the Holy Spirit would be very instrumental in teaching the disciples what to say when they faced opposition from the Jewish leaders.

- **John 14:26** “*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 said to you.*”

It was in light of His anticipated departure that Jesus provided this instruction on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would be sent to teach the disciples all things and reminding them of everything that Jesus taught them. “The Holy Spirit energized the hearts and minds of the apostles in their ministry, helping them to produce the New Testament Scripture.” [The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1614]

- **John 16:13** “*But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes. He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but what ever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.*”

“Anticipating the Spirit's work at Pentecost (Acts 2), Jesus announces that the “Spirit of Truth” will “guide you into all truth.” The word “guide” [HODEGEO] is actually made up of two words, “to lead” [HEGEOMAI] and “way” [HODOS]. The word indicates that the Holy Spirit, who is a source of truth, will lead the way into the truth as a guide.” [J. Carl Laney, Moody Gospel Commentary on John, p. 290-291] This once again is referring to the Spirit's teaching ministry to the disciples.

- **1 Corinthians 2:12-13** “*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*”

Very Clearly in this passage the Apostle Paul is making the point that the Apostles have received God's revelation through the teaching of the Holy Spirit: It is not their own human wisdom being passed on, but the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

In each of the above verses the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit has to do with the foundational stages of the church. The book of Acts clearly records the Holy Spirit's role in the foundation of the church. As discussed in previous lessons, the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the giving of revelation and in using the human authors to record the very Word of God.

Today, the Holy Spirit teaches us through the Revealed and Inspired Word of God. He illuminates our minds to understand the teaching of Scripture. So it is through the teaching of the Scripture that the Holy Spirit is able to lead and give instruction to believers today.

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The Spirit produces fruit in the believer's life.

- **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.*”

A result of the indwelling Holy Spirit is that He produces fruit in the believer's life. Fruit here is singular and indicates one kind of fruit that manifests itself as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are not fruits, but a fruit. This is the evidence that the Holy Spirit indwells you. It is the evidence that you are a genuine believer in Christ. Jesus said in **Matthew 7:16**, “*You will know them by their fruits...*” Indicating that you can identify believers by their works. One of those identifying marks is the fruit of the Holy Spirit recorded for us in Galatians 5:22-23.

The Spirit provides spiritual gifts for believers.

Teaching on spiritual gifts is extremely popular in churches today. Yet, most teachings on spiritual gifts is confused and abused as well. There are seminars, videos lectures, guest speakers, and surveys offered in many churches to teach about the gifts and to help you discover what gifts you have. Many churches get so carried away that teaching on spiritual gifts is overemphasized and the pursuit of holiness in one's life is ignored. The following is an attempt to briefly and biblically address the topic of spiritual gifts.

THE DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

There are several Greek terms used in 1 Corinthians 12 that seem to speak of spiritual gifts.

1- *spiritual gifts* [PNEUMATIKON]

- **1 Corinthians 12:1**, “*Now concerning spiritual {gifts} brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.*”

The term here means, “things pertaining to the Spirit” and speaks of the spiritual ability/giftedness given to believers.

2-*gifts* [CHARISMA]

- **1 Corinthians 12:4**, “*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.*”

This term means, “grace gifts” It is simply translated “gifts” but is built off the Greek term for “grace.” If it is a grace gift, then it is something that cannot be earned or deserved, just freely bestowed.

3-*ministries* [DIAKONIA]

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- **1 Corinthians 12:5**, “*And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord.*”

The root of this term speaks of service. It is the same basic Greek term as serve, servant, and deacon (one who serves). In this context, it would give the idea of a service-oriented gift.

4-effects [ENERGEIMA]

- **1 Corinthians 12:6**, “*And there are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all {persons.}*”

This term literally means, “what is worked out or energized.” It emphasizes that the one who gives the gifts provides the energy or power to make the gift effective.

5-manifestation [PHANEROSIS]

- **1 Corinthians 12:7**, “*But to each one is given the **manifestation** of the Spirit for the common good.*”

This term has the basic idea of making known, making clear or evident. So spiritual gifts are not hidden or private. Rather they are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. They put Him on display as He works through the believer's life.

So a spiritual gift is a freely bestowed spiritual ability given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of service to the body of Christ. As John MacArthur describes. Spiritual gifts are “the special equipment for ministry that the Holy Spirit gives in some measure to all believers; and they are to be wholly under His control and used for God's glory.” [John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians Commentary, p. 282]

- THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

1 - Who gives out these spiritual gifts?

- **1 Corinthians 12:11**, “*But **one and the same Spirit** works all these things, **distributing** to each one individually just as He wills.*”

Very clearly the supernatural and sovereign source behind the giving of spiritual gifts is none other than the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. He is the one who distributes spiritual gifts to each believer individually just as He wills.

2 - Who is given these spiritual gifts?

- o **1 Peter 4:10**, “*As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*”

Peter is speaking to believers. In this verse he says that each one has received a gift. Peter has in mind spiritual gifts. The idea is that each believer in Christ has been given a spiritual gift and should therefore employ it as a good steward of God's grace.

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- **1 Corinthians 12:7**, *“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*

Once again the idea here is that each individual believer has been given a spiritual gift to put to use for the benefit of the church as a whole.

The best conclusion is that every genuine believer in Christ has been gifted by the Spirit. We all receive a spiritual gift to employ in service.

3 - Why are these spiritual gifts given?

Spiritual gifts are given for the advantage of all: **1 Corinthians 12:7**, *“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*

Spiritual gifts are given so that we might serve one another: **1 Peter 4:10**, *“As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the church: **1 Corinthians 14:26**, *“What is {the outcome} then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”*

Spiritual gifts are given for the equipping of the saints: **Ephesians 4:7 & 12**, *“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ...”*

Spiritual gifts are given for the glory of God: **1 Peter 4:10-11**, *“As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, {let him speak,} as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, {let him do} {so} as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

4-When are these spiritual gifts given?

There is no direct statement that tells us when spiritual gifts are given. However, since they are only given to believers and there seems to be some link with the baptism of the Spirit being mentioned within the context of Spiritual gifts, then the best conclusion is that just as we are baptized with the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit and sealed by the Spirit, so also are we gifted by the Spirit at salvation.

- **1 Corinthians 12:13**, *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”*

The fact that this verse falls within Paul's discourse on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 gives evidence that it is at the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we are actually gifted by the Spirit.

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- THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

There are three passages that speak of or specifically list spiritual gifts:

- **Romans 12:6-8**, “And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, {let each exercise them accordingly} : if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

- **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**, “For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another {various} kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.”

- **1 Peter 4:10-11**, “As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, {let him speak,} as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, {let him do} (so) as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

There are several important points that can be noted from an examination of the above verses:

- o We each receive one spiritual gift. (1 Peter 4:10)
- That one spiritual gift is a combination or a variety of gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:4)
- Our gift differs from every one else's. (Romans 12:6)
- Our gift is a special gift so that we can employ it in service. (1 Peter 4:10)
- We cannot earn our gift; it is given to us unconditionally. (1 Corinthians 12:4)

There are three categories of spiritual gifts that can be identified:

- o **1 Peter 4:10-11**, mentions two categories of spiritual gifts that are give: **speaking** gifts and **service** gifts. “As *each one has received a {special} gift*, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **Whoever speaks**, {let him speak,} as it were, the utterances of God; **whoever serves**, {let him do} {so} as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

These two categories of gifts were given for the purposes of equipping the saints; edifying the body; and serving one another.

A third category of gifts are the **sign** gifts that are listed for us in **1 Corinthians 12:8-10** and were given for the purpose of authenticating the early messengers and the truth of God's Word as it was being revealed and recorded.

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- **2 Corinthians 12:12**, *“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”*
- **Hebrews 2:3-4**, *“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”*

These sign gifts were temporary gifts during the foundation stage of the church given until the completion of Scripture. Once Scripture was completed there was no longer any need for the miraculous sign gifts. (Cf. **1 Corinthians 13:8-10**) In addition to the sign gifts, Paul also mentions the ceasing of the gift of prophecy. Prophecy was once again a spiritual gift given for the purpose of completing Scripture. Once Scripture was complete prophecy was no longer needed as well.

So what gifts does the Holy Spirit give believers today? With the exception of the gift of prophecy, the gifts mentioned in **Romans 12:6-8** are the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives each believer today. Each believer will possess his own gift, which will be a unique variation of the gifts mentioned in this passage.

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The following charts effectively break down the various spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture: (Cf. Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

<i>Three Categories of Spiritual Gifts</i>		
SPEAKING GIFTS	SERVICE GIFTS	SIGN GIFTS
Prophecy Teaching Exhortation	Serving Giving Leading (Administration) Showing Mercy	Word of Wisdom Word of Knowledge Faith Healings Effecting of Miracles Distinguishing of Spirits Tongues Interpretation of Tongues
<i>Comparison of Permanent & Temporary Spiritual Gifts</i>		
PERMANENT GIFTS (Still for believers today)	TEMPORARY GIFTS (For the foundational stage of the church/ceased by the completion of Scripture)	
Teaching Exhortation Serving Giving Leading (Administration) Showing Mercy	Prophecy Word of Wisdom Word of Knowledge Faith Healings Effecting of Miracles Distinguishing of Spirits Tongues Interpretation of Tongues	

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THE DISCOVERY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

There are many creative ways that churches have developed in order to help people discover their spiritual gift. Countless lessons; seminars; video lectures and spiritual gift inventories have been given. However, the Scripture only suggests one way for people to discover their spiritual gift.. SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! We must actively serve in the church and through that service we will discover what our spiritual gift is.

- **Romans 12:6**, “*And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, {let each exercise them accordingly}...*”
- **1 Peter 4:10**, “*As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*”