

Explaining Christianity

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Part 4: Explaining the Holy Spirit

A. Challenge Questions

If the Holy Spirit is God and lives inside believers, why do so many Christians struggle to sense His presence, power, or guidance in daily life? Why do so many people misunderstand who the Holy Spirit is?

B. Introduction



Many people can clearly explain God the Father and God the Son, but when it comes to the Holy Spirit, things can feel mysterious, abstract, or even confusing. Yet the Holy Spirit is central to the Christian life—He comforts, teaches, empowers, convicts, guides, and produces spiritual growth from within. To understand Christianity without understanding the Holy Spirit is to miss the power and presence at the very heart of a relationship with God. This study will explore who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and why He matters so deeply for everyday life.

C. Four Common Misunderstandings of the Holy Spirit

- **“The Holy Spirit is just a force or energy from God.”** Response: The Holy Spirit is a Person, not an impersonal force. He speaks (Acts 13:2), teaches (John 14:26), grieves (Ephesians 4:30), and determines (1 Corinthians 12:11).
- **“Only special Christians have the Holy Spirit.”** Response: Every believer receives the Spirit at conversion (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19). The difference is not *possession* of the Spirit but *yielding* to Him (Galatians 5:16).
- **“The Spirit’s work is mostly emotional experiences.”** Response: Emotional experiences may occur, but the Spirit’s primary work is transformational, producing growth (Galatians 5:22–23) and guidance (John 16:13).
- **“If I don’t feel the Spirit, He must not be working.”** Response: The Holy Spirit works whether you feel Him or not. Spiritual maturity rests on trust and obedience, not emotion (2 Corinthians 5:7).

D. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit vs. the Filling of the Holy Spirit

Understanding these two concepts prevents confusion and helps believers grow confidently in their walk with God.

1. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

- **Definition:** The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs once, at the moment of salvation, when a person places their faith in Christ.
- **Purpose:** It places the believer into the Body of Christ (the family of God, the Church).
- **Key Scripture:** “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...” — 1 Corinthians 12:13
- **Important Note:** The baptism of the Spirit is a spiritual reality that happens to every believer at conversion. Scripture is clear, there are no Christian “haves” and “have nots.”

2. The Filling of the Holy Spirit

- **Definition:** The filling of the Spirit happens continually, as believers yield themselves to God.
- **Key Scripture:** “Be filled with the Spirit.” — Ephesians 5:18
(The grammar means “keep on being filled.”)
- **Purpose:** To empower believers to live obediently and reflect Christ.
- **How It Works:** We are filled when we surrender, obey God, confess sin, and walk in dependence on Him (Galatians 5:16–25).
- **Filling of the Spirit** = Ongoing / Daily surrender / Leads to spiritual power and Christ-like living.

E. Discussion Questions

1. Galatians 5:25 says believers are to “keep in step with the Spirit.” What does this mean and how does a believer “keep in step”? (Hint: See [How do we keep in step with the Spirit \(Galatians 5:25\)? | GotQuestions.org](#))

2. Is it appropriate to pray directly to the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

3. Why do many churches avoid teaching about the Holy Spirit?

F. Five Amazing Facts About the Holy Spirit

1. He was present at the _____ (**Genesis 1:2**).

Genesis 1:2 (NIV) "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

2. He inspired the _____ (**2 Peter 1:21**).

2 Peter 1:21 (NIV) "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

3. He dwells in _____ (**1 Corinthians 6:19**).

1 Corinthians 6:19 (NIV) "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own."

4. He transforms us to become _____ (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV) "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

5. He intercedes when we don't know how to _____ (**Romans 8:26**).

Romans 8:26 (NIV) "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans."

G. Two Practical Ways to Apply this Lesson

1. _____ the Holy Spirit into your day—intentionally.

Instead of rushing into the day, pause each morning and say something like:

“Holy Spirit, guide my thoughts, words, and actions today. Help me see what You want me to see, say what You want me to say, and love how You want me to love.”

Why this matters: The Spirit is already present, but *awareness cultivates responsiveness*. Starting your day with this prayer shifts your focus from self-effort to Spirit-empowered living.

2. Practice _____.

Set aside 5–10 minutes where you aren’t talking in prayer—just listening.

- Ask: “*Holy Spirit, is there someone I should encourage today?*”
- Ask: “*Show me where I need to grow.*”
- Be quiet and notice the gentle nudges or impressions that come.

Why this matters: Spiritual transformation doesn’t happen by striving—it happens by remaining connected (John 15:5). Listening is how we tune our hearts to His voice.

H. Summary

The Holy Spirit is not distant or mysterious—He is God living within His people. He saves us, shapes us, strengthens us, comforts us, and empowers us to live the Christian life. We receive Him fully at salvation, and we grow in Him daily as we surrender to His leading. To understand and walk with the Holy Spirit is to experience Christianity as a living relationship, not merely a belief system.

Where to Get More Information

- Francis Chan, *Forgotten God*
- J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*
- R.A. Torrey, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*
- John R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*
- Charles H. Spurgeon, *Sermons on the Holy Spirit*
- The Bible – John 14–16; Romans 8; Acts 1–2; Galatians 5; 1 Corinthians 12