



Understanding the Holy Spirit

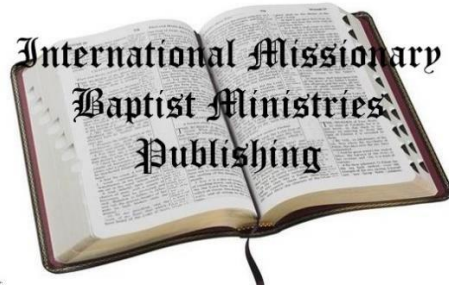
A Basic Guide to the Work of the Holy Spirit

Understanding The Holy Spirit

A basic guide to the work of the Holy
Spirit

Joseph F. Roberts, ThD, PhD

International Missionary Baptist Ministries Publishing



Copyright © 2022 Joseph F. Roberts, ThD, PhD

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

Title Page	1	Copyright Page	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Introduction			4
Chapter One			5
Chapter Two			9
Chapter Three			13
Chapter Four			18
Chapter Five			24
Chapter Six			28
Chapter Seven			37
About the Author			41

Understanding the Holy Spirit

Introduction

In the 21st Century, there is much misunderstanding concerning the Holy Spirit. Many things are attributed to the Holy Spirit that are not necessarily His doing. Some people even say that they speak to the Holy Spirit or pray to Him. All of these things are because of a misunderstanding of Who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. This book will explain Who the Holy Spirit is and what His function is in connection to the saints of God.

Dr. Roy W. Culley, long-time Instructor at the Texas Baptist Institute and Seminary in Henderson, Texas, wrote in 1978, in his book *The Holy Spirit*,

Ignorance of the Third Person of the Godhead is dishonoring to God and mighty harmful to man. Dishonoring works, immoral activities, and soul damning heresies are boldly carried out by men who in turn attribute them to Holy Spirit leadership. Under the pretense of His holy Name, great abuses have issued from each generation.¹

I trust that by the time that the reader finishes this book, a better understanding of the Holy Spirit will be attained.

CHAPTER ONE

Who Is The Holy Spirit?

Understanding the position and the power of the Holy Spirit is an especially important teaching for us to fully grasp. There is a great need to know Who He is, why He is to be followed and how to submit to His power.

The identity of the Holy Spirit has never been in doubt in the Scriptures.

The deity of the Holy Spirit has been a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith from the beginning. The Scriptures unequivocally teach that there are three co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal Divine Persons Who comprise the One true Godhead.²

Many have tried to say that the Spirit is only a power. Others have spoken boldly and declared Him as only a manifestation of God. In reality He is all God, just as Jesus is all God. Jesus, in John 14:16, declared that He would send another Comforter of the same kind or just like Himself. Jesus is completely God in the flesh and is now in glory. If then He was to send another like Himself and that other Person is the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit must of necessity be fully God also. This fact enables us to fully realize that the leadership of the Holy Spirit is the direction of God.

To illustrate that the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead, several passages of Scripture will be noted that show they are the same. These Scriptures will point out clearly that the Holy Spirit has the same attributes as God.

God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, the Alpha and Omega and has no beginning or end. This fact is noticeably clear in the Bible. The Holy Spirit in Hebrews 9:14 is called eternal. This classification sets Him equal with God, for God is eternal.

Hebrews 9:14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through **the eternal Spirit** offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

God is all-present in the universe and so is the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 139:7-10: 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

God is all-powerful and so is the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 3:18 relates to us that the Spirit is the energizing force behind the resurrection of Jesus.

1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

The Greek word for “quickened” simply means “make alive, give life, quicken.”

God has all-knowledge and I Corinthians 2:9-11 points clearly to the fact that the Spirit allows us to know God. The Spirit must have all-knowledge to have the ability to reveal it to the believer.

1 Corinthians 2:9-11: 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now that it has been established that God and the Holy Spirit exist on the same level and that They are equal, why is it so important for us to know this? How can we apply this to our personal lives? Let us look at the practical use of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The principle is set forth that the Holy Spirit has a definite work in the life of a believer. If we realize that the Holy Spirit is God, then His leadership must be followed. If the Holy Spirit is not God or does not possess the same attributes as God, then a believer should refuse to follow. However, the Bible leaves no room for doubt that God and the Holy Spirit are One and the Same.

1 John 5:7: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Based on this fact, how do we know Who He is and how to follow Him? Jesus said when He departed this earth that another One like Him would come. The Comforter came with the express purpose of helping all believers, most especially those of the New Testament Church.

The only Persons Who have access to the very presence of God are Christ and the Holy Spirit because of their sinlessness. Again, this shows that the Holy Spirit is God.

The practical use of this is the great comfort and knowledge that a believer is not approaching God on his own merit, but through the Spirit. This should enable us to use more faith and trust in life than personal merit.

Normally people tend to put God and the Holy Spirit into two separate beings. Because God the Father is unseen by the human eye and the Spirit is unseen, but felt by the emotions and our spirit, there is a desire to separate them. It is vital

to the life of every child of God that a proper understanding exists. This comprehension allows the believer to enjoy the full benefits of a Spirit-filled life.

To illustrate the fact that this is true, let us look at Acts 5:1-4:

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

This is the negative view of what will happen when there is a failure to recognize the Holy Spirit as God. The early church had many who were making contributions of all they had and possessed. Barnabas had just done this and was lauded highly by the church. Then two people, a husband and wife, Ananias and Sapphira, decided they wish to contribute of all they own. This appears to be a commendable act; however, their motive is tainted with sin. These two decided to keep back part for themselves unbeknown to anyone else. Thinking that this would harm no one, they completed their evil deed. However, they failed to understand one thing, that God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. Even though God was not bodily present, His Spirit was there. Acts 5:3 says they lied to the Holy Spirit, and verse four says they lied to God. This fatal act cost them their lives.

One thing stands clear in these verses, that the Holy Spirit and God are One and the Same. The consequence was the same, and their failure to realize this made no difference.

The positive view of the fact that the Holy Spirit and God are the same can be seen in the inspiration of the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 relates to us that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17: 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Peter 1:21 relates to us that the prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Is there confusion on the issue? The Bible does not indicate any. The harmony of the Bible shows that there is no difference between God and the Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The same principle also applies to finding God's will for our lives. The saved, Spirit-filled child of God who studies the Bible will not be lead astray from God, but rather into total harmony with Him.

To best understand the power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, we must understand the need for God in our lives. We must never downplay the importance of the of the leadership of the Spirit as the direct leadership of God. The leadership of the Spirit is the way we discern the will of God and therefore know what to do in our lives. As we follow the Spirit, faith will increase and more can be done for the cause of Christ.

The Bible gives the promise that the Spirit will help all who believe to understand the Word of God. Since the Scriptures are fully inspired and they are God's revelation of His will to the believer, they must be followed. One thing stands clear, the Holy Spirit will never lead contrary to God's will or Word.

In view of this fact, we then must through prayer and study discern the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The fact that the Holy Spirit and God are the same should enable us to know definitely what God's will is and what He expects of us. This does not mean that we will always obey, but only that we have the ability to discern and know what to do.

With the Holy Spirit having all the attributes of God, we must not make the mistake of thinking He is another God. The complexity to trying to understand the Trinity may tend to cloud the clarity of this great truth. The Trinity is not three separate gods but rather One God Who in His infinite power can make Himself know as Father, Son, and Spirit. This must be accepted by faith alone. The faith that will allow us to accept this will also allow us to understand that the Holy Spirit is indeed God.

CHAPTER TWO

The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:14: For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

One description of the Trinity says that all you will ever know of God is the Father. All you will ever see of God is the Son. All you will ever feel of God is the Holy Spirit.

Feelings, conviction, or guidance are all terms used in relationship to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is also necessary to be able to distinguish between them. Just what is it that enables us to know what the Holy Spirit wants in our lives? What method does the Holy Spirit use to make known the will of God?

The question may of whom the Holy Spirit guide will come to mind. The Holy Spirit will guide only those who are qualified to be lead and be under the leadership of the Spirit. So then, the question is, what must a person do to then qualify for His leadership? Like any other spiritual aspect of a person's life, God has set the requirements, and they must be met. Salvation of the spirit of man and through the forgiveness of sins can only come through the blood of Jesus. The rebirth of the spirit of man can only be by grace through faith. Romans 8:2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. This freedom allows us to be led by the Spirit of God.

The guidance of the Holy Spirit is immediately present in our lives, John 5:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. This guidance begins with the assurance of salvation and then is followed with leadership to the waters of scriptural baptism. This immediate guidance is particularly important to the newly saved individual and all should take advantage to teach new Christians in these areas.

After salvation and the administration of baptism and uniting with a New Testament church, the Holy Spirit will lead only as a child of God is willing to follow. The guidance of the Holy Spirit in no way stops us from making a wrong choice. Choices must still be made, and this brings up another qualification. Only those who are willing to live a Spirit-filled and submitted will be guided properly by the Spirit. The subjection of the flesh and its desires is a constant battle but can be overcome through and with the help of God.

To best understand what the guidance of the Holy Spirit is, it is best to see first what it is not. There are several occasions where the Holy Spirit spoke directly to people. Other occasions the Spirit spoke through an angel. These types of

revelations do not occur in our day and age. Today, there are no burning bushes, talking donkeys or some other miraculous manifestations of the Spirit to make His will known.

If these things do not occur today, how then does the Holy Spirit make known His will and guide us? To best discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we must know the inspired Word of God. With a knowledge of the Scriptures, then the Holy Spirit through conviction can let us know if the things being done are right or wrong. The power of prayer and its use should never be discounted in following the guidance of the Spirit. The need of communication with God is an imperative to know in which direction the Spirit is leading. However, please remember that the Spirit will never lead contrary to the Word of God.

Another important element in how the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit is made known is that of fasting. Today many look at fasting and do not stop to think of its unique spiritual importance. Fasting is generally thought of only in the light that Jesus condemned the Pharisees for doing it wrong. But fasting, when done properly, in private and for the purpose of cleaning the heart of man, and combined with confession of sin, can be very profitable. The early church used it often when discerning the Lord's will. When Paul and Barnabas were chosen, fasting played an important part in the guidance of the Spirit. The fasting allowed them to set aside the things of the world so that they would be given to the things of the Spirit. Today, if properly used, fasting would enable each child of God to be able to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit better because their hearts would be attuned to the things of the Spirit and not the things of the world.

Now let us consider the areas of leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One of the primary purposes of the guidance of the Holy Spirit is to teach.

John 14:26: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Teaching includes the imparting of knowledge from one source to another. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to take the Scripture and as the mind is open to direction, to discern the truth of God's Word. Through conviction and the revealing of Divine truth, the Holy Spirit gives to man the ability to properly serve God.

I Corinthians 2:9-16: 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit

searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

For the Spirit as He teaches, allows the believer to search all the truth and know all that he or she desires to know. John 14:6 tells us that Jesus is the Truth: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Since the revealing of truth is a primary concern of the Spirit, then it can be easily said that the guidance of the Spirit will direct the heart of man to Jesus.

Another area of concern in the guidance of the Spirit is that of bringing things to the remembrance of the child of God. The ability to use knowledge that we have learned and to use it properly can be accredited to the guidance of the Spirit. The unity of the four Gospels even though written by different men from different viewpoints, is one example. There may be some things that Baptists disagree on, but the basic and fundamental doctrines do not change or vary. This also can be attributed to the guidance of the Spirit. The understanding of the truth in the same manner as others can only be a divine way of sending the faith to all the world.

The daily life of the child of God is also an area that the Holy Spirit provides much guidance. The submission of the child of God to the conviction of the Spirit is the key to this area of guidance. The Spirit uses conviction to let us know right and wrong. Thank God for His concern and care for the children that belong to Him.

Let us consider discerning leadership over emotions and personal desires. How do we know which aspect of our lives is being governed by guidance of the Spirit or self-will? How do we overcome emotion with an understanding of God's will? These two questions pose for us the most difficult problems in life concerning the guidance of the Spirit.

If the individual is saved, has followed the Lord in scriptural baptism and is living a submitted Spirit-filled life, then he or she can determine the difference. When self-will is dominant, then the considerations of the Holy Spirit are placed in the background. If the door is closed, the person will go right on in. If, however, one is willing to follow God, then when a door is closed no matter how promising, the individual will accept this in his life.

Emotions are vital to our lives but are not to be overpowering to the Spirit. The key to knowing if it is emotion or the leadership of the Spirit is to be sure that it agrees with the Word of God. Judge your experience by the Word, not vice versa.

CHAPTER THREE

The Holy Spirit and Assurance

Ephesians 1:13, 14: 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The Doctrine of Assurance or Security of the Believer is one that should be of utmost importance to all true Baptists. The role of the Holy Spirit in this doctrine is truly vital. The Spirit is the earnest and seal of the salvation of all who are born again. Yet even with many Scriptures to document this doctrine, there are some who still doubt its validity. What is the basis of assurance? Why is it so important to understand? What does it allow the believer to do? Is it a license to do anything that the flesh desires? In each of these questions lies an answer that can make the child of God understand the true meaning of assurance. The purpose of this chapter is to make sure that all understand the role of the Spirit and the joy of what assurance really is.

Let us first examine the meaning of assurance. It means that the believer has security.

Consider John 10:28, 29: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

It means the believer has the knowledge of eternal life.

I John 5:12, 13: 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

It means there is knowledge of being God's child.

I John 3:1-3: 1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our salvation. To best understand the fact that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of our salvation, we must understand salvation. The Bible is clear as to the doctrine of salvation. Let us note the following Scriptures as proof of that clarity.

Ephesians 2:8, 9: 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Acts 4:12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

John 3:3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

These are but a few of the Scriptures that can be cited to prove salvation to the heart of sinful man. Salvation is wholly dependent on the grace of God through Christ and security is in the hands of Christ and the Spirit.

John 10:27-30: 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.

The role of the Holy Spirit in assurance is that of both earnest and seal of the redemption given by Christ. The earnest is simply the role of grantor of the salvation granted to the child of God by Christ. The word that is translated "earnest" in our text is a real estate term. It simply means to place a binder on something so that nothing can go wrong or be backed out on by a party. The Holy Spirit is the One that through His indwelling power gives to the child of God the knowledge that nothing will happen to his salvation. The sealing plays almost the same role for the child of God as does the earnest. Both are designed so that each believer will know their position with Christ.

Let us consider the necessity of assurance. It is necessary to know the forgiveness of sins.

I Peter 2:24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Assurance is necessary to be able to please God.

Hebrews 11:5, 6: 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Assurance is necessary when facing life.

Romans 8:38, 39: 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us consider the purpose of assurance. Through the indwelling and revealing power that the Holy Spirit possesses the child of God can know they are saved, but even more so they can know their duties. The purpose of assurance is to allow the believer to be free from worry and anxiety over the condition of his spirit so he can do more in service for God. Spiritual growth and service through love and learning to trust God provide for the believer a purpose in life.

As we have seen, assurance comes by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

1 John 5:10: He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Assurance allows the believer to turn his attention away from Satan and worry over lapsing back to a state of separation from God and direct his efforts to better service for the Master.

Galatians 5:13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

The Holy Spirit provides this assurance through His presence in the life of the believer. This presence and power also enable the believer to develop talents that will honor our Lord, rather than trying to keep himself saved by only outward actions. It should be comforting to every believer to know that the Holy Spirit is aiding him to better serve the Lord.

Consider the joy of assurance. The Holy Spirit through His presence and power also brings joy through assurance to the life of the believer. The joy may not be

an outward display of excitement but more than likely will be a calm knowledge that there is protection given by the Spirit. The joy can be manifested in a number of ways. The knowledge that each person has that his particular life can be useful to the Lord. The realization that joy is an inner peace and tranquility that comes from a life of faith in God.

Part of that joy is because assurance produces the knowledge of Christ's presence.

Matthew 28:20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Another reason for that joy is because it produces the fearlessness of death.

John 11:26: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Assurance also produces the certainty of the resurrection.

Psalms 17:15: As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

In the life of each believer, the Holy Spirit brings an individual joy of knowing that salvation does not depend on what he has or has not done. This particular knowledge allows the believer to concentrate on the development of faith in his life. With the knowledge that salvation depends not on his works but rather on the grace of God and the blood of Jesus.

Without assurance there is no peace.

Colossians 3:15: And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Without assurance there is no blessedness.

Psalms 32:1, 2: 1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Let us see why assurance can help. The Holy Spirit provides many things that can aid the believer; assurance is one of them. Assurance allows the believer to look totally to God for all his needs. Assurance is the perfect setting for the display of God's power and strength in the life of His children.

Many people believe that security of the believer is nothing more than a license to sin. This is far from the truth. Assurance allows the Holy Spirit to convict the believer of his/her sin without the fear of eternal death. This then allows each child of God the opportunity to confess that sin or face God's discipline that is directed toward sin.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

