

Holy Spirit: A Luxury or a Necessity?

by R. Stanley

The Holy Spirit is a Person, equal with the Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus, who gives us the power to overcome sin, live a successful family life, be super at workspot, overcome relationship problems, praise and pray jubilantly, evangelize the world, fight the enemy, and bear suffering and persecution.

Scripture: John 14:26, Acts 1:8, Acts 4:31, Romans 8:9, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, Ephesians 6:17, 1 Peter 4:14

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

R. Stanley emphasizes the importance of recognizing the Holy Spirit as God, equal with the Father and the Son, not just a force but a divine Person present on earth. He highlights the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit in overcoming sin, maintaining successful family relationships, excelling in work, resolving conflicts, praising and praying fervently, understanding the Bible, evangelizing, fighting spiritual battles, and enduring suffering and persecution.

Transcript

Because the Holy Spirit is mentioned third in the Godhead, He is treated as a "third" person by Christians. We do not realize that He is God -- equal with the Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus. He is not a mere force or power, but a Person. God the Father is in Heaven. God the Son is seated at the Father's right hand in Heaven. It is God the Holy Spirit who in all His personality is here on earth. This is the era of the Holy Spirit. Ignorance of this truth will be the greatest loss in Christian life. The Holy Spirit is the divine Energiser, Equipper and Enabler so we may accomplish God's purposes in our lives.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is not a luxury but a necessity. It is the norm of Christian life. Let's see why we need the Holy Spirit in our day to day life.

1. To overcome sin!

"You are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you... For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live!" (Rom 8:9,13) "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:16).

We have to live with our sinful nature till we die but we must live above it and not under! Decisions and determinations not to yield to temptation and sin are good but don't guarantee victory. The Holy Spirit is

the Answer. He keeps us holy. That's His primary ministry. Seek God for a fresh filling of His Spirit each morning and stay full of Him throughout the day. When we are full, there is no vacant room for the devil to enter. It was when the evil spirit found the house unoccupied, it brought seven other spirits more wicked than itself! (Mt 12:44,45). Sin has abounded everywhere and the very air we breathe is contaminated. Days are becoming more and more difficult to live pure. "No-to-sin" is not popular. Friends, take a stand. Don't stand with the devil's majority but suffer with God's minority. Your every effort to resist temptations will be rewarded. God has made full provision for a victorious life in giving us His Spirit. The Spirit applauds every effort we take to overcome sin (Rev 2:7,11,17,etc.)

2. To live a successful family life!

"Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). Following this exhortation are the instructions to wives, husbands, children and parents (5:22 to 6:4). Yes, when the family members are filled with the Holy Spirit, there is a happy home. It's heaven on earth! There is submission, love, obedience, respect and honour. John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power" of Elijah to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal 4:5,6; Lk 1:17). Yes the Holy Spirit sets families in order.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were a beautiful couple, known for their devotion to the Lord, blameless behaviour before men and an enviable oneness among themselves (Lk 1:5,6,60,62,63), though they were childless (v 7). The secret was that they had been filled with the Holy Spirit (vv 41,67). What a consistent married life for so many years! (v 18).

The family of Evangelist Philip was an attractive one. The missionary team of Paul could stay with them "many days!" The secret was that the family members were filled with the Holy Spirit. Philip was Spirit-filled and also his four daughters (Acts 6:3,5; 21:8,9). It was a tabernacle of the righteous resounding with shouts of joy and victory, and not quarrels and jazz music! (Psa 118:15).

The Holy Spirit can make the husband a lamb and the wife a dove. What a combination! Discussions but no divisions, differences but no disunity! Home sweet home! The devil comes these days fullsteam against this basic unit called family. He began his attack with that first family in the Edenic bliss and now he is accelerating as we approach the end of endtime. The Holy Spirit is the insurance against this demonic invasion.

3. To be super at workspot!

The young man Joseph was in a strange land which was hostile to his holy convictions. The Egyptian culture was to glance this way and that and sin if no one saw! (Ex 2:11,12). They looked around but Joseph looked above! His question was, "How can I sin against God?" (Gen 39:9). He was shot with arrows of hatred and envy. But his bow remained steady! Because, the Spirit of God was in him (Gen 49:23-25; 41:38). He walked from prison to palace with state honours!

Daniel was another young man with the excellent Spirit of God on him (Dan 5:11;6:3). He was on the King's service in Babylon. He also could not escape envy. Yes, no man is fully accepted until he is totally rejected. Daniel dared to stand and stand alone, not fearing the king of the country or the king of forest! Every time he knelt down with praise, alone or alongwith his friends, the Spirit of the Lord came on him to grant him fresh courage and firm conviction. So he prospered under two pagan kings without compromise (Dan 6:28).

Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God and so he became an extraordinarily skilled craftsman. He engaged in all kinds of craftsmanship to make artistic designs in gold, silver and wood (Ex 31:2-5). A Spirit-filled doctor will treat better; a Spirit-filled engineer will build better; a Spirit-filled professor will teach better; a Spirit-filled artist will paint better; a Spirit-filled student will study better!

Mental or physical exhaustion leads to tension in office, factory or school. Get a fresh filling of the Spirit each morning! Use the gifts of tongues regularly. "This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest and this is the refreshing!" (Isa 28:11,12; 1 Cor 14:21). Both during my student days and while practicing engineering, I would often resort to speaking in tongues, and invariably find a release.

4. To overcome relationship problems!

Interpersonal relationship problems stem from a lack of love, pleasant temperament, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. But the Holy Spirit supplies all these abundantly because they are His "fruit" -- His very nature and manifestation! (Gal 5:22,23). Submitting to one another is an immediate outcome of being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18,21). Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph 4:2,3). The Spirit produces unity and we are to preserve and protect it!

The Pentecostal outpouring achieved this seemingly impossible thing: "All the believers were one in heart and mind!" (Acts 4:32). Most of the problems in relationship are due to the tongue which "no man" can tame (Js 3:8). But God can! Is this the reason why the Holy Spirit captured the tongues of the hundred and twenty at the first instance? The tongues of holy fire from Above sanctified the tongues of those Galileans! (Acts 2:3,4; Js 3:6).

The Holy Spirit melts rocklike hearts and fills the eyes with tears of reconciliation and restitution. He undercuts the ropes of suspicion and misunderstanding. He convicts and comforts. He liberates and lubricates. He is the precious cream and the refreshing dew to make us "live together in unity!" Oh how good and how pleasant! (Psa 133:1,2).

5. To praise and pray jubilantly!

The Holy Spirit is called "Paraclete" in Greek, meaning a Helper (Jn 14:26). One of His primary helps is in the area of prayer, because we are all "weak" in it. We know not what to pray and how. The Holy Spirit not only helps us in our prayer but also intercedes for us "with groans that words cannot express" (Rom 8:26). One of the first signs of those baptized with the Spirit is the desire and depth in prayer. The early disciples following Pentecost received a renewed interest in prayer and cherished the sweet hour of prayer! (Acts 2:42; 3:1).

"Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" burst forth from a Spirit-filled heart. The Holy Spirit excites us to sing and to make music in our hearts to the Lord, "always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:18-20). All church leaders agree that one of the greatest contributions of the charismatic movement to the church is the restoration of "worship" which A. W. Tozer calls "the missing jewel of evangelical Christianity!" Several Scripture passages are set to music and the traditional and conservative forms of worship give way to spontaneous and joyful worship. Hallelujah is no more a denominational shout!

Speaking in tongues has a tremendous devotional value in praise and private prayer. It bypasses the mind and boosts our spirits (1 Cor 14:4, 14-17). I spend some time daily in private prayer speaking in tongues since 1962 when I was baptized with the Spirit. It's refreshing! Of the nine gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, the one primarily directed to God is "speaking in tongues." Hence its value in communing with God.

6. To understand the Bible!

Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit will teach you all things" (Jn 14:25). Paul wrote, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him; but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (1 Cor 2:9-13). This is the function of the two gifts which top the list in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, "Word of Wisdom and Word of Knowledge."

The Holy Spirit is the best Teacher of the Scriptures because He is its Author (2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16). This does not mean we need no human teacher or study aid. The Holy Spirit turns all information to inspiration. He takes the truth from the head to the heart. Study the Bible under the umbrella of the Spirit. Acknowledge His presence constantly while studying or meditating the Scripture. Everytime you open the Bible, remember to pray, "God, open my eyes!"

I once met some ordained ministers of a mainline Church who asked me whether I still believed in a literal Heaven and Hell. I answered yes and asked them whether they believed that the Bible was the Word of God. Several of them could not give a yes answer. Our pulpits are occupied more and more by this kind of seminarians. Empty head knowledge with no life of the Spirit! The very basic faith is lost because there is graduation and ordination but no unction! Beware!

7. To evangelize the world!

The last recorded saying of Christ before Ascension was the promise of the Spirit's power for worldwide evangelisation (Acts 1:8). About the early Christians we read, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31). Paul testified, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor 2:4). Result? Three thousand converts! Five thousand converts! Great crowds! A large number of priests! Many prominent women and men! It was a church explosion! All because they had received the dynamic power of the Spirit!

Let me quote one of my favorite authors, Dr. James A. Stewart: "If there is one thing which has broken my heart, one thing which has caused me to weep, it has been the shallowness of modern evangelism... Preachers and singers alike are so glamourised that Christ is not the centre of attraction... The old-fashioned method of evangelism was to make people weep, but the modern Hollywood way is to make people laugh. The Holy Spirit cannot work in a frivolous atmosphere... The solution to our problem is to honour the Holy Spirit and to put away all the nonsense of modern evangelism!"

It is the Holy Spirit who burdens us to weep and pray for the perishing souls (Rom 9:1,2; 10:1). It is the Holy Spirit who calls and sends forth missionaries to proclaim the Evangel (Acts 13:2,4). It is the Holy Spirit who convicts sinners and points them to the Cross (Jn 16:8-11). It is the Holy Spirit who places the believer in the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). And He joins the Church in calling sinners to Christ! "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" (Rev 22:17). Blessed work of the Spirit in evangelism and church

planting.

(For a broader treatment of this aspect of the Spirit's work, click: [The Purpose of Pentecost.](#))

8. To fight the enemy!

Of the sixfold armour of God five are meant for defense and only one for offense and that is the "Sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God (Eph 6:10-13). The Holy Spirit guides us to choose the right Scripture verse or passage to speak against the enemy. The reply of Christ to the temptations of the devil was supplied by the Spirit from the Old Testament. The quotation was so sharp and right that the devil could not gainsay! Jesus did it "in the power of the Spirit" (Lk 4:1,14). After mentioning the sixfold armour, Paul immediately writes about "praying in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18).

The devil primarily attacks our mind because true religion resides in the mind alone. He causes doubts, disturbance, distraction, depression and so on to wean the soul from God. "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretention that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor 10:4,5).

When we are possessed and obsessed with the Holy Spirit we are insured against demon possession or obsession. "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will put him to flight!" (Isa 59:19).

9. To bear suffering and persecution!

Our bodies are mortal but the Holy Spirit quickens and gives life (Rom 8:11). There is healing in the wings of the Spirit. His wind revives. He is the "Balm of Gilead." Christ healed people in the power of the Spirit (Acts 10:38; Isa 61:1-3). Healing is one of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:9). Jesus said, "I drive out demons by the Spirit of God" (Mt 12:28). The oil of anointing over the sick is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. How much we need comfort in sickbed! In all our distresses, the Holy Spirit is also distressed. He lifts us up and carries us like a mother carries her sick child (Isa 63:9,10).

Then there is persecution which none of us can avoid or escape. Here again the Holy Spirit is our Companion. "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified!" (1 Pet 4:14). The secret of the radiant face of Stephen under the pelting of stones was "the fulness of the Spirit" (Acts 7:54,55). The expelled missionaries were filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit (13:49-52). "The Church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria... was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit; it grew in numbers!" (Acts 9:31).

"Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit! I do not want to spend another day without Him!"

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