

The Holy Spirit and God's Word

by Zac Poonen

A balanced Christian life requires both the steam of God's Spirit and the rails of God's Word to make spiritual progress and avoid stagnation.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1

Topics: "God's Word", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the essential relationship between the Holy Spirit and God's Word, asserting that the Holy Spirit operates in harmony with Scripture, which He authored. He illustrates this by referencing the creation account in Genesis, where the Spirit and the Word worked together to bring light from darkness. Poonen explains that both the new birth and sanctification are results of the interplay between the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, highlighting the need for balance in the Christian life. He warns against the extremes of overemphasizing experience without grounding in Scripture or adhering strictly to doctrine without the Spirit's empowerment. Ultimately, he calls for Christians to embrace both the Spirit's fullness and the guidance of God's Word for true spiritual progress.

Transcript

We need to remember that the Holy Spirit always operates in line with the Word of God - for He Himself has written that Word, and He does not change. We see this truth in the very first paragraph of Scripture. When darkness covered the earth, the Spirit of God brooded upon it, and the Word of God went forth - "Let there be light." And the joint operation of that Creative Word and of the Holy Spirit brought light where there was formerly darkness; it brought fulness and form where previously there were emptiness and shapelessness (Gen. 1:1-3).

The new birth is attributed to the implantation of the Word of God in us (1 Pet. 1:24), as well as to the operation of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Sanctification, likewise is the result of the working of God's Word and of the Holy Spirit in our lives (John 17:17; 2 Thess. 2:13). In the same manner, the fullness of the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Word of God go together. This becomes clear when we compare Ephesians 5:18 to 6:9, with Colossians 3:15-21. In the Ephesian passage, we are told that giving thanks, praising God and submitting to one another in Christ-like home relationships, is the result of being filled with the Spirit. Whereas in the Colossian passage, these same things are said to be the result of being filled with the Word of God.

We need to recognise this truth if we are to be balanced Christians. A steam-engine needs not only steam in order to move forward, but also rail-tracks. We need the steam of God's Spirit if we are to make spiritual progress, but we also need the rails of God's Word to keep us from going astray. One is not more important than the other. Both are equally important. Some who claim to be full of steam, have ignored to rails and got stuck in the mud. Placing a premium on experience, they have not been careful to test everything by God's Word, and as a result have gone off the track. Like a derailed engine blowing its whistle furiously, many of them make a lot of noise in their meeting, but there is no spiritual progress - no growth in Christlikeness - in their lives.

Some others have gone to the opposite extreme. Although they have kept on the rails, they have despised the need for fulness of steam in the engine (or have imagined that they have the fulness when they haven't), and they are stuck too. They emphasise the importance of the Word of God and are careful about every jot and tittle in it - they keep admiring and polishing the rails. But they don't recognise that they need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. They are fundamental in their doctrines, all right - the rails are perfectly straight - but there is not sufficient steam to move the engine. They are dead right in their doctrines, but they are also both dead and right!

Let us avoid both extremes.

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