

# **North Dallas Community Bible Fellowship**

## **Wednesday Bible Study**

**Fall, 2008**

### **Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

#### **Section 4**

## **The Primary Ministry and Purpose of the Spirit**

### **The Principle of Focus**

As we may need light to bring the printed page into focus, so we need the illumination of Scripture to shed light on the primary ministry of the Spirit in connection with all His ministries. Getting the Spirit in focus means (a) thinking rightly about Him and (b) thinking rightly about our relationship to Him: what He is to believers, and how this relates to Jesus Christ. Great emphasis is often given to the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit, but unfortunately, it is very often not in accord with the clear teaching of the Word.

### **Scripture's Focus on the Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

Some see the chief purpose of the Holy Spirit as power, some as performance, some as unity, some as the administration of the gifts of the Spirit, some as teaching, some as His miraculous workings, and so on. All of these either are or have been ministries of the Spirit and are important to the body of Christ. However, to emphasize any one of these while minimizing the others and ignoring the chief emphasis of the Word is to go off into error.

This is vitally important because Jesus Christ is our life. He is the hope of glory and the focus of the Bible.

[Colossians 1:27-28](#) God wanted to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ.

[Colossians 2:10](#) and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

[Galatians 2:20](#) I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So the life I now live in the body, I live because of the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Therefore, the chief focus given to us in the Word is that the Holy Spirit in all His ministries is given to mediate the presence of Christ. He is given to manifest the person and work of Jesus Christ, to make us aware of all He is to us, and to enable us to experience Christ's life in ours.

[John 16:13-15](#) But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. 15 Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.

[Ephesians 3:16-19](#) I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, 18 you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

[Galatians 5:16-25](#) But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is our Enabler and the power for the Christian life, and we are to walk by faith in dependence upon the Spirit's control ([Gal. 3:3](#); 5:5; 16-25 quoted above).

However, [Galatians 2:20](#) when considered in light of [Galatians 4:19](#) and 5:1-5 gives us the primary focus—Christ living in believers or being formed in them by the power of the Spirit of God. Even when we are trusting in the Holy Spirit to empower our lives, our faith is ultimately in the Son because the Spirit proceeds from the Father through Jesus Christ at His request as one of His gifts to us. But the purpose is that we might share in the life of Christ.

[John 14:16-20](#) Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does

not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. 19 In a little while the world will not see me any longer, but you will see me; because I live, you will live too. 20 You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.

## **The Christ-Centered Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

The ministry of the Spirit is Christ-centered. It is neither man-centered with an emphasis on our gifts, personalities, and experiences, nor Holy Spirit centered with an emphasis on Him and His miraculous activities or ministries, as important and rich as they are. This scriptural focus is seen in the following passages:

### **(1) [John 7:37-39](#)**

On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Jesus stood up and shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and 38 let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, ‘From within him will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Concerning the promise of the Spirit, the text says He was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. The Spirit is promised as a gift from God to indwell believers, empowering and energizing them, but the focus here is on the glorification of the Savior. This is a reference to Christ at God’s right hand following His finished work on the cross, the resurrection, and ascension into glory. The basis for the gift of the Spirit is the glorification of Christ. He proceeds from the Father, through the Son to believers because Jesus has accomplished our justification.

[John 15:26](#) When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me,

### **(2) [John 14:16, 26](#); [15:26](#); [16:7-15](#)**

[John 14:16](#) Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever—

[John 14:26](#) But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

[John 15:26](#) When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me,

[John 16:7-15](#) But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong concerning sin and righteousness and judgment— 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning

righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. 12 “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. 15 Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.

In each of these passages the Spirit is called “the Advocate,” (*parakletos*) which, due to the nature of His ministry, might better be rendered, “the Enabler.” *Parakletos* contains the ideas of comforting, exhorting, encouraging, interceding, advising, and strengthening. He strengthens or enables us through His various ministries. But in none of these four passages does the gift and ministry of the Holy Spirit overshadow the person and work of the Son, the Lord Jesus. Rather, the focus is on how the Enabler (a) is sent *in the name of Christ*, (b) brings to remembrance *what Christ taught* the disciples, (c) bears *witness of Him*, (d) is sent by the *Savior Himself*, (e) does not speak *on His own* initiative, (f) *glorifies the Savior*, and (g) takes of the *things of Christ* and discloses them to us.

The Holy Spirit calls attention to neither Himself nor to man, but focuses all attention on the Lord Jesus Christ and what God has done in and through His Son. His purpose via all His ministries is to develop our faith, hope, love, adoration, obedience, fellowship, and *commitment to Christ*.

This truth and this focus becomes a criterion by which we may judge any spiritual movement and its biblical authenticity. Swindoll writes:

Let me pass along something I hope you *never* forget. If you get involved in a ministry that glorifies itself, instead of Christ, the Spirit of God is not in that ministry. If you follow a leader that is getting the glory for that ministry, instead of Christ, the Spirit of God isn't empowering his leadership. If you're a part of a Christian school or mission organization or a Christian camping ministry in which someone other than Christ is being glorified, it is not being empowered by the Spirit of God. Mark it down: THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST. I'll go one step further; if the Holy Spirit Himself is being emphasized and magnified, He isn't in it! *Christ* is the One who is glorified when the Spirit is at work. He does His work behind the scenes, never in the limelight. I admire that the most about His work.<sup>57</sup>

## The Work of the Spirit

As a matter of clarification and in preparation for what the Spirit is to believers, it would be helpful to note the following facts:

**Negatively:** The believer is never told to seek or commanded to be (a) baptized with or in the Spirit, (b) or to be indwelt with the Spirit, (c) or to be anointed with the Spirit, (d) or to be sealed with the Spirit, (e) or in our age to even pray for the Spirit ([Luke 11:13](#) was

pre-Pentecost). Rather, these are all presented by the New Testament as accomplished facts during the Church Age.

**Positively:** The only commands in the New Testament given to believers in relation to the Holy Spirit deal with the filling of the Holy Spirit or with walking by means of the Spirit who already indwells us. There are only four direct commands that relate to the Spirit and the believer's life. Two are positive and two are negative.

**(1) The Positive Commands:** We are commanded to be “filled with the Spirit” and to “walk by the Spirit.”

[Ephesians 5:18](#) And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit,

[Galatians 5:16](#) and 25 But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh...25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

**(2) The Negative Commands:** We are commanded to “not grieve the Spirit” and to “not extinguish the Spirit.”

[Ephesians 4:30](#) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

[1 Thessalonians 5:19](#) Do not extinguish the Spirit.

In addition, the following are some passages one might view as commanding the filling of the Spirit indirectly or by implication because the need of His ministry in the issue involved.

[John 4:24](#) God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

[Ephesians 6:18](#) With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.

[Philippians 3:3](#) For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials

[Romans 8:4-13](#) so that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh have their outlook shaped by the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their outlook shaped by the things of the Spirit. 6 For the outlook of the flesh is death, but the outlook of the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you,

your body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is your life because of righteousness. 11 Moreover if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit who lives in you. 12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh 13 (for if you live according to the flesh, you will die), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

### **What the Spirit Is to Believers in His Indwelling Presence**

In anticipation of the coming of the Spirit, in [John 14:17](#) Christ spoke of the unique change that would occur in the Spirit's relationship with believers when He said, "... because he resides **with** you (Old Testament economy) and will be **in** you (New Testament economy)." *Through this universal indwelling of all believers, the Spirit becomes a seal, an anointing, a pledge, and our enabler.* All of this stems from the fact of His indwelling presence from the moment of salvation.

#### **(1) A Seal**

[2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#) But it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who anointed us, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.

[Ephesians 1:13-14](#) And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.

According to [2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#), God the Father (the subject of the verb) does the sealing. The Holy Spirit is the seal, and believers are those who are sealed with God's seal (the Spirit). The seal suggests the ideas of **ownership** and **security**.

A further consequence of the Spirit's presence is the **seal of ownership** (cf. [Eph. 1:13-14](#)) which also is accomplished at the moment of faith. A seal on a document in New Testament times identified it and indicated its owner, who would "protect" it. So too, in salvation, the Holy Spirit, like a seal, confirms that Christians are identified with Christ and are God's property, protected by Him (cf. [1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)). It was probably this thought that caused Paul to describe himself as a slave of Christ. ([Rom. 1:1](#); [Phil. 1:1](#)).<sup>58</sup>

#### **(2) An Anointing**

[1 John 2:20](#) and 27 Nevertheless you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know...27 Now as for you, the anointing that you received from him resides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, it is true and is not a lie. Just as it has taught you, you reside in him.

Again, God the Father, as the subject of the verb in [2 Corinthians 1:21](#), does the anointing; the Holy Spirit, as [1 John 2:20](#) and 27 make clear, is the anointing; and we as believers in Christ are the ones who are anointed.

Persons and things were anointed, in the OT, to signify holiness, or separation unto God: pillars ( cf. [Gen. 28:18](#)); the tabernacle and its furniture (Ex. 30:22ff.); shields (2 Sa. 1:21; Is. 21:5: probably to consecrate them for the ‘holy war,’ see [Deut. 23:9ff.](#)); kings ([Jdg. 9:8](#); 2 Sa. 2:4; 1 Kgs. 1:34); priests (Ex. 28:41); prophets (1 Kgs. 19:16). ... Fundamentally the anointing was an act of God ([1 Sam. 10:1](#)), and the word ‘anointed’ was used metaphorically to mean the bestowal of divine favour ([Psa. 23:5](#); 92:10) or *appointment to a special place or function in the purpose of God* ([Ps. 105:15](#); Is. 45:1). Further, the *anointing symbolized equipment for service, and is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit of God* (1 Sa. 10:1, 9; 16:13; Is. 61:1; [Zech. 4:1-14](#)). This usage is carried over into the NT ([Acts 10:38](#); [1 Jn. 2:20, 27](#)).<sup>59</sup> (Emphasis mine.)

The identification of the Spirit as our anointing is a portrait of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as an act of God which separates us, appoints us, and equips us for ministry in the purpose of God. Strictly speaking, then, it is doctrinally incorrect to ask God to anoint a believer today with the Spirit in preparation for a particular task. A more accurate prayer would be that the one involved in the task at hand be truly under the power of the Spirit, or that he or she might experience the work of the Spirit in a marvelous way because the Spirit is already present as God’s anointing.

### **(3) A Pledge**

The Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence in believers’ lives is also viewed by God as His personal pledge (i.e., earnest or down payment) that God will fulfill His promises to believers and that our salvation will be consummated ([Eph. 1:14](#)).

[2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#) But it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who anointed us, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.

Present redemption is only a foretaste of what eternity holds (cf. [Rom. 8:23](#)), and the presence of His Spirit in our hearts (cf. [Rom. 5:5](#); [2 Cor. 5:5](#)) is like a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. These last seven words are a translation of one Greek word *arrabona*, a down payment which obligates the payer to make further payments. The same Greek word is used again in 5:5 and [Ephesians 1:14](#) (cf. “the first fruits of the Spirit,” [Rom. 8:23](#)).<sup>60</sup>

### **(4) An Enabler**

[John 14:16](#) and 26 Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever...26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

[John 16:7](#) But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.

In these passages the Lord promised the disciples He would give them “another Advocate.” “Another” is the Greek *allos* which means “another of the same kind.” This is a reference to the Holy Spirit who, as the third person of the trinity, is of the same essence and power as the Lord Jesus Christ. In His absence, there would be no lack. In fact, it would be for their advantage ([John 16:7](#)) that He leave so the Holy Spirit could come in His place and indwell their lives.

The Spirit is called “Advocate.” This is the Greek *parakletos* and refers to one who is called alongside on behalf of another as an intercessor, mediator, helper. It is translated variously, “helper,” “counselor,” and “comforter.” In view of the purpose and ministry of the Spirit along with the meaning of this word, perhaps “Enabler” is a better translation. He comes not just to give help, as a servant might help his employer or as one person helps another. Rather He comes and indwells us to enable—to empower us for the Christian life in witnessing, in prayer, in obedience, etc. The title “Enabler” not only teaches us what the Holy Spirit is to us, but what we are apart from His control and ministry—without ability or enablement.

## What the Spirit Does For Us

There is no part of the believer’s life for which the Spirit is not needed. The following illustrates just how complete is the work of the Spirit who is our Enabler.

### **(1) He convicts and reveals Jesus Christ to men.**

[John 16:8-11](#) And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong concerning sin and righteousness and judgment— 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

### **(2) He restrains sin in the world.**

[2 Thessalonians 2:6-7](#) And so you know what holds him back, so that he will be revealed in his own time. 7 For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way

### **(3) He regenerates to new life.**

[Titus 3:5](#) he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,

### **(4) He baptizes into Christ.**

[1 Corinthians 12:13](#) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we were all made to drink of the one Spirit.

**(5) He empowers and reproduces the character of Jesus Christ in those who submit to Him by faith.**

[Galatians 4:19](#) My children—I am again undergoing birth pains until Christ is formed in you!

[Galatians 5:5](#) For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait expectantly for the hope of righteousness.

[Galatians 5:16-23](#) But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

**(6) He promotes spiritual maturity.** (Cf. also [Gal. 5:1-5](#); [Heb. 5:11-6:6](#).)

[Galatians 3:1-3](#) You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you? Before your eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified! 2 The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? Although you began with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort?

**(7) He teaches: gives understanding in the Word.** (Cf. also [1 Cor. 2:9-16](#); [John 16:11-15](#).)

[John 14:26](#) But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

[Ephesians 3:16-18](#) I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, 18 you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

**(8) He applies truth to our experience.** (Cf. also [John 14:26](#); [Eph. 6:18](#).)

[Romans 8:16](#) The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children.

**(9) He gives power to our prayer life.**

[Jude 20](#) But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit,

[John 15:7](#) If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you.

[Psalm 66:18](#) If I had harbored sin in my heart, the sovereign Master would not have listened.

**(10) He promotes meaningful worship.** (Cf. also [John 4:23-24](#); [Eph. 5:18-21](#); [Isa. 59:1-2](#).)

[Philippians 3:3](#) For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials

**(11) He gives capacity, burden, and direction for witnessing.**

[Acts 1:8](#) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.”

[1 Thessalonians 1:5](#) in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you).

**(12) He gives capacity for ministry.** This refers to gifts of the Spirit which are to be exercised in the power of the Spirit from the motive of love—which is also a work of the Spirit.

[1 Corinthians 1:12-14](#) Now I mean this, that each of you is saying, “I am with Paul,” or “I am with Apollos,” or “I am with Cephas,” or “I am with Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Paul wasn't crucified for you, was he? Or were you in fact baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

[1 Peter 4:10](#) Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

The fact that the Holy Spirit is our Helper, indeed, our Enabler for these varied ministries demonstrates just how tremendously important the Spirit is to our daily walk. It shows how necessary it is that we walk by means of the Spirit, i.e., by constant dependence upon Him ([Gal. 5:5, 16](#); [Eph. 3:16-17](#)). The lessons that follow are devoted to more

biblical principles and promises that teach us more about the ministry of the Spirit and how to walk in His power.