

10 Practical Steps in Following Jesus

Bob Gordon with David Fardouly



Step 8: The Power of the Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God. There is one God who has three parts:

God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit.

To help you see how this is possible consider an apple. It has a skin, the flesh and a core. One apple with three parts. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or a vague mist-like influence. We should always refer to the Holy Spirit as 'He' and not 'it'.

"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

(John 14:15-17)

Why do we need the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit will show us our sinful state and our need of God (see John 16:7-11).
2. He will also enable us to be born into God's family by making our spirits alive to God when we are born again. (see John 3:5-8; II Corinthians 3:6).
3. Jesus wanted His work to be continued in the world after He had died, was resurrected and He went to be with His Father in heaven. Jesus Himself did not start His work on earth until He had received the Holy Spirit (see Luke 3:21-23). He needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit to empower Him to do all the work that God had asked Him to do.

Jesus told those whom He trained to continue His work, that they also needed the same power to do this work. They were to wait until they were clothed with power from on high, that is, be filled or baptised with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4,5,8).

This was a promise from God the Father that would come as a result of Jesus going to the Father and being glorified (see Luke 24:46-49; John 16:7). Being filled or baptised with the Holy Spirit is an experience whereby the believer is completely clothed with the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to do the works of Christ and to live the Spirit-filled Christian life. It is the doorway leading from a natural realm of Christianity to a more supernatural realm of life in the Spirit.

Is this power available today?

The Holy Spirit wasn't just given to the generation after Jesus left the earth, it was a promise to all who are true Christians. This power is still available today for those who will ask. The Holy Spirit comes, not only for our salvation, but also to enable us to serve God more effectively and fruitfully.

"Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all the Lord our God will call."

(Acts 2:38,39)

What will the Holy Spirit do to me?

The Holy Spirit is not going to force you to do anything. Before we are born again into God's Kingdom we are like a marionette puppet with

strings that satan has a hold of to manipulate us. After we are born again these strings are cut. God, however, does not then pick up the strings to manipulate us. He gives us His Holy Spirit and He will show us God's way if we let Him. He will not force us to do God's will. We have to decide. We are given control of ourselves by God and therefore we must choose: God's way or our own. God not only wants to guide us but also to fill us and empower us with the Holy Spirit.

How do we get filled or baptised with the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is likened to the wind (see John 3:8). No one can create or control the wind but we can put ourselves in a place where we can experience the wind when it blows. We can throw open the windows and doors to let the breeze come in and we can also do the same thing with our lives by opening them to the Holy Spirit. We need to yield every area of our lives over to God and allow Jesus to be Lord of them for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God will not come where He is not wanted or not asked or where there is sin.

Jesus said,

“If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

(John 7:37-39)

Jesus also said,

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of your fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

(Luke 11:9-13)

What about tongues?

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, it is quite common to find yourself speaking in another language (known as tongues) that you have not learned. There is no need to fear this. It is the Holy Spirit speaking through you to God. When you speak in tongues, the Bible says you will be edified (or built up) (see I Corinthians 14:1-5).

Are you only filled once?

When the Apostle Paul wrote “Be filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians 5:18, the tense he used implied that we should go on being filled with the Spirit. It should be a continuous, daily, ever-fresh renewing. Our lives need to be constantly open to the Spirit of God.

What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

He gives us:

1. Power to belong to Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God (see John 3:5-8; Romans 8:9,16,17).
2. Power to live as Jesus wants us to live (see Ephesians 3:16; Romans 8:11,14).
3. Power to be witnesses for God (see Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:4,5).
4. Power to understand God and His ways (see Ephesians 1:17-21; I Corinthians 2:9-16; John 16:13-15).
5. Power to pray to God (see Romans 8:26,27).
6. Power to fellowship with God and other Christians (see Philippians 2:1,2).
7. Power to overcome our old sinful nature, sin, death, satan, and the world (see II Corinthians 3:17; I John 4:4; Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:16).
8. Power to love and hope (see Romans 5:5; Romans 15:13).

Questions and tips:

1. Who will baptise or fill you with the Holy Spirit? (Mark 1:7,8)
2. What are three things the Holy Spirit will do for us? (John 14:26; John 16:13)
3. What should be the result of receiving the promise of the Father? (Acts 1:8)
4. Where does the Holy Spirit choose to live (I Corinthians 3:16) and how should we live as a result? (I Corinthians 6:19,20)
5. What are the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and who decides what each man's gift will be? (I Corinthians 12:8-11)
6. To whom are the gifts given and what is their purpose? (I Corinthians 12:7)
7. What are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit? (Galatians 5:22,23)
8. What type of worshippers is the Father seeking? (John 4:23,24)
9. Read Galatians 5:16-18,25 and answer the following:
 - a. Do the desires of the sinful nature and the Spirit lead us in the same direction?
 - b. Who should we be led by?
10. What are three ways we can hinder the work of the Holy Spirit? (I Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 7:51)

Prayer

Almighty God, I thank you for your precious gift of the Holy Spirit. I see my need to be filled with your gift. I ask you to forgive any sin I may have committed against you and I thank you for your forgiveness. I yield my life afresh to you. I ask you now to fill me with your Holy Spirit in order to empower me for the work you want me to do for you. Thank you Lord that you have promised to give the Holy Spirit in this way to all who ask. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.