



The
Work
of the
HOLY SPIRIT
Today

This age of grace, also known as the Church age, is characterized by the presence of the risen and glorified Savior in heaven, and the presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling all believers on earth.

HIS WORK FOR ALL BELIEVERS

The Holy Spirit regenerates, indwells, seals and baptizes every sinner who receives Christ as his personal Savior.

• **Regenerating:** Before the sinner receives Christ, the Spirit goes to work to: melt his stony heart, open his eyes, dispel his darkness, destroy his enmity against God, subdue his rebellious will, and work faith in his heart. By this regenerating work believers become “children of God,” “partakers of the divine nature,” and “joint heirs with Christ” (Jn. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:17).

Jesus spoke about this ministry of the Spirit: “You must be born again” (Jn. 3:7). New birth is solely the work of the Spirit. Birth excludes the idea of any effort on the part of the one born. This is true of physical and spiritual birth: “It is the Spirit who gives life” (Jn. 6:63).

• **Indwelling:** Jesus’ words in John 14:16 tell us that the Spirit indwells every believer forever: “The Father ... will give you another Helper, that

He may abide with you forever – the Spirit.”

• **Sealing:** The sealing with the Spirit shows that the believer is God’s child for eternity. The Spirit is the seal, and all who have the Spirit are sealed (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). This ministry represents the Godward aspects of salvation – authority, ownership, and a final transaction.

• **Baptizing:** First Corinthians 12:13 unfolds this ministry: “For by one Spirit we were *all* baptized into one body ... and have *all* been made to drink into one Spirit.” The meaning is clear. Errors* concerning this truth come from a lack of understanding of Scripture. All believers are baptized with the Spirit, whether they know it or understand it. The Spirit’s baptism places the believer in union with Christ, and makes him a member of the “one body” of Christ.

No other work of God for the believer seems to accomplish so much as the baptism of the Spirit. It brings the believer into the sphere of all heavenly and eternal possessions provided for him in grace. “In Christ” the believer is a partaker in all that Christ is, all that He has done, and all that He will ever do – His honors, glories, and privileges.

* Some teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second work of grace accompanied by speaking in tongues and other manifestations.

HIS WORK OF SPIRIT-FILLING

While all believers are *regenerated, indwelt, sealed, and baptized* by the Spirit, not all are *filled* with the Spirit. The first four take place at salvation and can neither be lost nor repeated. But Spirit-filling takes place after salvation and may be lost and repeated, again and again.

Ephesians 5:18 presents this exhortation: “Do not be drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit.” The drunken man is under the control of alcohol, while the spiritual believer is under the control of the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit may be the most important exhortation in the New Testament. Divisions in the Church are the activity of the flesh, not the Spirit. Christians are miserable because they are not filled. Many are weak in faith and lacking in love, meekness and patience because they are not Spirit-filled.

There are three conditions for Spirit-filling. The *first* is that we “not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph. 4:30). The only thing that grieves the Spirit is sin. We should say “No” to sin, but if we sin, we should confess it immediately. The *second* condition for Spirit-filling is that we “do not quench the Spirit” (1 Th. 5:19). We do so when we say “No” to God. Yieldedness is the prerequisite for Spirit-

filling. The *third* condition for Spirit-filling is that we “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16), relying upon Him to do what He has come to do and what He alone can do.

To be Spirit-filled is to be Spirit-controlled – not us getting more of the Spirit, but the Spirit getting more of us. It is gradual and progressive, until all areas of our outer and inner life come under His control. Then the Spirit can manifest the character of Christ in us.

MORE WORKS OF THE SPIRIT

• ***Developing Christlike Character:*** More than anything else, the indwelling Spirit wants to make the believer more like Christ. The most comprehensive statement of this is in Galatians 5:22-23: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Together these attributes define what Paul meant when he said, “For to me, to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21).

• ***Manifesting Christian Service:*** Jesus spoke about Christian service when He said, “He who believes in me ... out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit” (Jn. 7:38-39). The outflow of living water is said to be produced by the Spirit.

Christian service includes the exercise of spiritual gift. In 1 Corinthians 12:3-13, Paul mentioned the Spirit seven times as he described each gift as “the manifestation” produced by the Spirit. Also, a desire to win souls characterizes the Spirit-filled life (Acts 2:41; 5:14; 6:7).

- **Producing Power:** Scripture says the believer’s only source of spiritual power is the Spirit: “I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord” (Mic. 3:8). “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8). Paul prayed that we might “be strengthened with might through His Spirit” (Eph. 3:16).

- **Teaching:** Jesus said that the Spirit is our teacher: “The Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you” (Jn. 14:26). In 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, Paul wrote that the Spirit “reveals,” “searches,” “knows” and “teaches” us “the deep things of God.”

- **Leading:** The Lord told us, “The Spirit of truth ... will guide you into all truth” (Jn. 16:13). Paul verified this by writing, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). One of the wonderful works of God is the leading of His children, because “it is not in man ... to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23).

- **Producing Unity:** Unity is an important characteristic of the Spirit-filled believer. It was evident in the early Church: “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication ... continuing daily with one accord ... breaking bread ... with gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 1:14; 2:46). Paul says we should be “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). We can never make such unity, but we are exhorted to keep it.

- **Witnessing With Our Spirit:** Paul tells us that “the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). We need this ministry of the Spirit to make unseen things real to us. None of us has seen God by our physical eyes, but the Spirit makes us capable of “seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). Truth must become real to us.

- **Interceding:** “The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for ... but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us” (Rom. 8:26). We all need the Spirit’s help because we have many weaknesses.

- **Praising, Worshiping, Giving Thanks:** The command to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18 is followed by three characteristics of the Spirit-filled life: *praise*, through “speaking to one

another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”; *worship*, through “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”; and *thanksgiving*, through “giving thanks always for all things” (vv. 19-20). Thanksgiving is an all-inclusive attitude that should apply for all things.

• **Submitting:** “Be filled with the Spirit ... submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:18, 21). Wouldn’t our fellowship and our testimony be more Christ-like if we lived lives of Spirit-led submission?

The work of the Holy Spirit began in the Church at Pentecost, and it will continue until the Rapture, when the Lord comes to take the Church to Himself (1 Th. 4:16-17). Until that time, let’s endeavor to “live in the Spirit” and “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). — *Maurice Bassali*

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