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How Can I Get the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 5:18: (NASB) *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.*



How would you like access to power? This power can change your life, give you things, protect you and even heal diseases! This power is from a source that is unlimited, a source that is generous and a source that truly has your best interest in mind. Sound intriguing? For many Christians this power is the Holy Spirit, and these enticing claims come across as very real. But are they real? Is this what the Holy Spirit is about or does the truth of the matter look entirely different? Who "gets" the Holy Spirit? When you get it, what does that mean? What does it change? Can we, should we, be trying to have the Holy Spirit working in our lives?

How does the Bible describe the Holy Spirit? **Here is the first scriptural look at the Spirit of God: Genesis 1:1-5: (Please see CQ Rewind Full Edition for the details on the Hebrew and Greek words discussed.)**

When we think of holy, we think: Righteous, pure, being in tune with God; set aside in such a way God can use you to do things. When we say, "God is holy," that means God's purposes are so far above and beyond what we can see or imagine, we need to look up to Him with honor, praise and great reverence. Holiness should produce reverence.

The phrase *Holy Spirit* means "sacred breath" or "sacred power."

One of the seven uses of this root word: Matthew 7:25:

When we see the awesome power of wind, we often make it personal. We give it a character, i.e., "That was one mean and nasty storm!" We even name hurricanes and typhoons. It is easier to describe them in this format.

But when we look at God's Spirit and how it is described in Genesis, we see it was His power and influence. We will see this in the New Testament as well. The New Testament is built upon the foundation of the Old Testament.

By the definition of the words involved, we can see the Holy Spirit would be - in its most literal sense - a sacred blast or breath, an unseen, powerful moving force. Because we understand sacredness to be from God, it would not be unreasonable to label the Holy Spirit as the *sacred* power and influence of God. Just as the wind has power which itself is unseen but its results are obvious, so God's influence is also unseen, yet its results are undeniable.

Let us trace the Spirit becoming a centerpiece of Christianity. **Jesus' words to Peter the night before his crucifixion would have left a mysterious little hint: Luke 22:31-32:** Was Peter not already a follower? Yes, but not fully. *When thou art converted* - Something was yet going to happen to Peter. He would respond to it and then be in the place he was supposed to be. He did not yet have the ability to do what was in his heart to do. We can only assume Peter would not have understood what this meant.

Jesus before crucifixion unequivocally told his followers to wait for the Spirit:

John 16:5,7: *...for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you* - Jesus knew his death would be painful for his followers, but without the sacrifice of Jesus being completed, the door could not be opened to have God's power and influence be a part of their lives. That sacrifice allowed him to be the *Advocate* described in 1 John 2:1. But we know the Holy Spirit was around in the Old Testament, so why would this be different? More on this soon!

Now we go to the risen Lord appearing to his disciples with further instructions before his ascension: Luke 24:45-49: *Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem* - this would be their mission. They needed to be in the right place at the right time to be able to know the right action to take. *Power from on high* - the Holy Spirit. They would receive the power and strength needed to carry forth the message of the Gospel. From this point on, the most important thing would be for them to remain in Jerusalem. *Opened he their understanding* - He made sure they had the ability to understand something special was coming.

They obeyed and now it is Pentecost, right after the Spirit came and the Apostles spoke in tongues: Acts 2:12-16: Here was the fulfillment from the Luke 24:45-49 we discussed. "When



the *power on high* comes to you, now you can go to work, knowing what to do and how to do it." Peter spoke as a representative of God through Jesus. He spoke about Jesus, the ransom and following in Jesus' footsteps. He tied in the Old Testament prophecies proving Jesus was the Messiah. What an effect that would have had on the audience! Peter was never able to communicate like this before. Peter transformed from follower to leader, from questioner to teacher, from human-mindedness to spirit-mindedness. This baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost was a one-time event, signifying the birth of the body of Christ. It would never again be repeated, as the Spirit would abide with, comfort and teach those chosen followers throughout the entire age of the Gospel.

Can all Christians have the Holy Spirit? **The Spirit is for followers of Jesus, but at what cost?** Hebrews 10:26,29,31: *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God* - God's power and influence should not be taken lightly. This is life-altering power with consequences. The Spirit is for followers of Jesus, but not just casual followers. The Spirit is only for those called out ones who answer the call to a life of selflessness, sacrifice and humble acquiescence to the will of God.

Being a follower of Christ is a life of serious dedication, not a life of ease. The fear would be: You have a relationship with the Heavenly Father and you believe in Jesus and his sacrifice. You are blessed and receive the power and influence of God, but then life gets challenging. There are too many distractions. You want to have more fun and you say, "Why did I make this commitment? I could have all these things and I don't think I really believe it now based on this book I just read." After all was good, something changed. We do not believe God arbitrarily gives His Spirit to just anyone who professes to believe in Jesus. A profession of belief is not necessarily belief that changes you, so there is mercy involved in God not making everyone liable to *falling into the hands of the living God* if they backpedal on their professions.

The Spirit of God entirely changes our direction and allegiance in life: Galatians 5:16-21: If you have God's Spirit, you are no longer allowed to do whatever you want. That is harsh, but you have committed to doing HIS will and not your own. The world teaches we can do whatever we want if it feels good. This is contrary to our walk. There are 17 acts on this list, and there are at least a few of them we would say, "That could never apply to me!" But look closely - many of these could easily apply to us. We are called upon to live up to an extreme depth of character. God's Spirit changes what is important to us. Why did Paul see a need to add such a nasty list? Because we are human and we can easily take that which is spiritual and lofty and apply it to that which is base and earthly. Unfortunately throughout much of Christianity, this is exactly what has happened with our claims to God's holy power and influence. This list - *and things like these* - are to be avoided at all costs.

The following account serves as an example of what can go wrong and has gone wrong within Christianity: Acts 8:9-23: Simon was an egotistical street performer and sorcerer set on appearing powerful and mysterious. Things holy and sacred always come from God. Magic, be it "white" or "black," while they have a spiritual tint to them, is not holy and is instead satanic. Simon's audience looked at him as a powerful man of God, but he was not. He had a really good thing going, but along came Philip, a baptized, Holy Spirit-filled believer in Jesus. Now a baptized believer, Simon followed Philip because he saw REAL miracles and was himself amazed at what Philip was capable of doing. Philip could perform miracles but without the showmanship of Simon. Crowds began to form. Philip was purpose driven, while Simon was performance driven. Simon wanted the power of the Spirit for himself, because it would surely captivate the imaginations of the people in a way beyond his previous endeavors! We need to be careful not to get caught up in emotion and the desires of our own will. Simon was showing his true colors, and they were not the colors of holiness and sacredness.

²⁰*But Peter said to him, may your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God's gift with money!* (Sounds like a lot of Christianity today - trying to obtain God's gift with money! Money-based worship - asking you to pay for spiritual happiness - is contrary to what is correct.) ²¹*You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God.* (Appearance and heart can be two VERY different things.) ²²*Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.* (Peter could see his heart was evil and dark. The abuse of Christian privilege



requires repentance.) ²³*For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness. The gall of bitterness - numb to what the Spirit of God really is and bound to the wretchedness of sin. The Holy Spirit does not put on a show, drawing crowds to raise money. It never has been and never will be. Acts 8:24: Was this an act of repentance or was it just a fearful plea for help?*

The Old Testament prophets could use God's Spirit as God directed them. **The Apostle Peter, comparing the Old Testament prophecies with his personal experience at the Mount of Transfiguration: 2 Peter 1:19-21: *We have, more firm, the prophetic word - "Even more sure than what happened to me at the Mount of Transfiguration are the Old Testament prophecies."* He explains those prophecies are not *self-solving* - you do not just decide you know what they mean. It involves a detailed study process.**

They were borne along - carried along to write what they wrote - not because they had an idea or thought out the words - but because God was sending a message through their minds to their pen. This was how the Holy Spirit worked in the Old Testament. God's power and influence had the prophets say, do or write certain things to accomplish His will whenever a message was needed. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament worked in a more mechanical way. The New Testament followers are given power and influence to have it dwell within them. The Old Testament prophets did not have God's Spirit dwelling within them like the Christians of the New Testament. They had mechanical use of the Spirit.

The operation of the Holy Spirit changed after Jesus died: 1 Corinthians 6:15,19-20: The Holy Spirit dwells inside of us - our physical bodies are referred to as a temple. *For ye have been bought with a price! Therefore, glorify God in your body* - Christians who have the Spirit are bound to keep themselves from sin wherever possible. We are to now to be about something higher. Everyone who professes the name of Christ does not fit into this category, nor do they want to abide by its strict requirements of sacrificing the old will for the new will of God. There are many people who are Christians "in name only."

This experience with the Spirit was new and different from anything that had previously happened: 2 Corinthians 5:16-18: *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature* - There was nothing like this described in the Old Testament. The manifestation of God's Holy Spirit was totally different in the New Testament. It was now going to dwell in and with the individual as the power and influence of God. This would now be the true Christian's driving force every day and every moment. Having the Spirit means you see differently, think differently, speak differently and act differently. **The Spirit is only for those who are called and have answered: John 6:65 *Having been called out and bought with a price, we can now be given comfort and direction: Romans 8:26-28: The Spirit helps us in our weaknesses by guiding us, even though we did not understand what was happening while we were going through an experience.***

God's Spirit teaches us what to do and shows us the way Luke 12:11-12: Does this mean that we are miraculously infused with knowledge and understanding about spiritual things? No! Let us not confuse the early church's gifts of the Spirit (which were sporadic at best and are no longer a needed commodity) with the Gospel Age receiving of the Spirit, which is inclusive of all body members. Do NOT expect you will receive a miraculous understanding of something you never sought to understand. The Holy Spirit will not suddenly grant you the ability to speak fluent Spanish when you have never studied it. You will not suddenly know the Bible without having read and studied it.

2 Timothy 2:14-16: Here the Apostle Paul speaks of Timothy, who was like a son to him. Paul is turning over a lot of the responsibilities of ministry for certain churches to Timothy. Timothy needed to grow into the teaching role to be able to pick up where Paul was leaving off. One of the admonitions was *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.* This was hard work. Timothy did not receive "all knowledge" automatically without any effort. He was to study the word, focus on it, pray on it and immerse himself in it over and over again. Even though Timothy lived in the time of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, he was told he had to go to work. This is a great example to us. We must do the same.

Having God's Spirit carries with it the sober responsibility for grasping the truth of Scripture. *This requires time, effort, humility and God's blessing.*



This responsibility is especially given to those who are teachers - they are supposed to know the Gospel: 1 Timothy 4:6-7: Immediately following the responsibility of what to do and what to know, there always seems to be a serious reminder of what *not* to pay attention to.

The rest of the body of Christ is certainly not without their share of responsibility for truth: Hebrews 5:11-14: The Hebrew Christians had become *dull of hearing*. They were like babies and knew only the basic things about Christianity. *Solid food is for the mature* - not because they had been zapped with some miracle and suddenly they knew everything. The mature studied and applied the Scriptures. This is what the Holy Spirit helps us with. Again, learning what the Scriptures truly teach with the enlightened mind brings us an ability to discern good from evil and truth from error. Having God's Spirit is a tool for us to be able to do the work appropriate for self-sacrifice, to do the work of witnessing to others and to do the work of building each other up in the faith.

When we engage in all this work, the fruit of God's Spirit overseeing our development is thrilling! Galatians 5:22-26: This fruit produces a person with a strong character. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not about glitz and glamor, but rather about living a quiet, Christ-like life. Jesus never drew attention to himself except when preaching the word. No singers and dancers introduced him. The work and the Gospel spoke for itself. He was driven by God's Spirit to present the pure message of the Gospel. Ephesians 5:15-21: *Making the most of your time* - our world is about leisure, completely contradictory to what we are supposed to be doing. *Understand what the will of the Lord is* - by studying. If you immerse yourself in Scripture and scriptural principles and fellowship with those of like faith, you will discern the will of God much easier. You will also see overruling providences and the Lord's direction in your life which builds faith. You will hear of providence working in others and will understand better how God communicates through that Spirit. *Do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit* - when something dissipates it gets smaller. By filling up with wine, you make yourself smaller. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. That is how you make yourself grow into a larger person in Christ. *Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs* - there should be a significant aspect of praise in what we do. The Good News is exciting! We should want to share it with others. *Be subject to one another* - this has the thought of being accountable to one another in our spiritual family.

God's Spirit was and is a witness - a proof or record - of His plan being carried out

Acts 5:32: This does not mean we are a witness as a visual eyewitness, but instead our lives are a testament to His plan being actively carried out.

One other text as an example for the Spirit being a record or proof: 2 Corinthians 1:23: The giving of the Spirit was a record that God's plan was unfolding. We should be used as a witness so others - now or later - can see God working in our lives. Because God's Spirit is a record, a proof of truth, we should use fulfilled prophecy (like Israel being restored to their land) as a witness tool as well as the many other brilliant truths revealed in Scripture.

God's Spirit builds our hope Romans 5:5: Not only does God's Spirit build our hope for ourselves but our hope for all others. The calling to God is not just limited to the true Christians now. The Good News expands to everyone else in the future. **Peter quoted this prophecy at Pentecost: Joel 2:28-29**: God's Spirit is not just for now, it is not just for Christians; rather, it is a power and influence that is eternal in its affect and unshakable in its righteousness. **Just as the Spirit of God worked the creation of all things, so that same Spirit will work the restitution of all things: Micah 4:1-4**: God's government will be established on earth.

God's Spirit is applied to very few at this time who are trying to live a life of sacrifice to follow after Jesus. If we have been *called according to His purpose*, we want to put ourselves in a position where we can be blessed with the indwelling of God's Spirit. His power and sacred influence help us "grow up" into Christ so we can be *faithful unto death* (Revelation 2:10) and part of the *royal priesthood* (1 Peter 2:9) who uses God's Spirit to *bless all the families of the earth* (Genesis 12:3). God's Spirit is about love, blessing and goodness.

*So, how can I get the Holy Spirit?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*