

## “The Role Of The Holy Spirit Before We Come To Christ”

It has been my experience that as we continue to grow there are a lot of people who are coming into the church and they're very curious about the Holy Spirit. They want to know who He is and what He does.

Even those of us who have been in the Pentecostal experience for a long time may have questions about this third member of the Trinity. Some think that when you come to an A/G church that all we talk about is speaking in tongues. Well, if you've been around RCC very long you know that that is simply not true. There is so much more to the ministry of the Holy Spirit than simply tongue talking!

Most of us are not fully confident in our ability to describe the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. For a lot of us the Holy Spirit is a mystery. **(My story – Methodist, Jesus, Salvation & Discipleship)**

By way of introduction I want to make sure that we understand that the Holy Spirit is a person. He is not an “it” but is a person. Just as God the Father is a person and Jesus Christ is a person ... so the Spirit is a person. He is not a lesser God nor is He a part of God. Rather, He is God Himself ... co-equal ... co-eternal ... co-existent!

The Holy Spirit did not just show up in the Book of Acts. He's been there since the beginning ...

“The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness.  
And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface.”

**Genesis 1:2 (NLT)**

Hebrew Word for Spirit - rûah; Phonetic Pronunciation: **roo'-akh** (ruwach); wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figurative life —Strong's

“I have filled him (*Bezaleel – craftsman designing the Tabernacle*) with the Spirit of God,  
with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts ...”

**Exodus 31:3 (NIV)**

“I will come down and speak with you (*70 Elders*) there,  
and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them.  
They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.”

**Numbers 11:17 (NIV)**

“The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him.”

**Judges 3:10 (NIV)**

“Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet,  
summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.”

**Judges 6:34 (NIV)**

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“The Spirit of the LORD came upon him (*Samson*) in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.”

**Judges 14:6 (NIV)**

The Holy Spirit was with Saul for a time and then He left Saul and came upon David. The pages of Scripture record in vivid detail how amazing He is. He is in Genesis and He’s in Revelation ...

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.”

**Rev. 22:17 (NIV)**

Greek Word for Spirit: pneuma; Phonetic Pronunciation: pnyoo’-mah, breath, breathe, wind, a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; —Strong’s

“But it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Counselor won’t come. If I do go away, he will come because I will send him to you.”

**John 16:7 (NLT)**

Greek Word for Counselor – paraklētos; Phonetic Pronunciation: par-ak’-lay-tos; comforter, advocate, an intercessor, consoler—Strong’s Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary

The Holy Spirit is the part of God who is actively working in our lives today. The Father and the Son do things in our lives but they do them through the Holy Spirit. He is God working in our lives today.

Let’s explore what the Holy Spirit does in a person’s life BEFORE they come to Christ. I believe it is critically important that we understand the ministry and the work of the Holy Spirit during this time in a person’s life so that we can partner with Him in reaching our generation.

When we comprehend just how powerful He is prior to a person crossing the line of faith (salvation) it will help us understand how amazingly powerful He is after a person has entered a personal relationship with Christ.

I want us to consider four things the Spirit of God does in our lives to bring us to the point of understanding our need for someone to forgive us and become our leader.

### **1. The Holy Spirit Shows Me My Sin**

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

**John 16:8 (NASB-U)**

Conviction is an awareness of guilt regarding my personal sin. When you are convicted you feel guilty. The Spirit of God brings us to a personal awareness of our own sinfulness.

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Only God can make you truly aware of your own guilt. Deep conviction is a work of the Holy Spirit to bring us to God ... it's not an effort to Condemn!

*“One of the things I love about the Holy Spirit is that sometimes His conviction is just a gentle grain of sand that settles into our hearts where it scratches and irritates until we finally do something about it.”*  
(Nancy Ortberg, pg. 48, *Unleashing The Power of Rubber Bands*)

### **2. The Holy Spirit Helps Me To Repent**

Repentance is the desire to turn from sin and to turn to God. It's not enough to simply turn from sin ... that's **reformation** (e.g. alcoholic turns from alcohol but not to God he's only reformed himself.). Peter's report concerning Cornelius ...

“When the others heard this, all their objections were answered and they began praising God. They said, ‘God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of turning from sin and receiving eternal life.’”  
**Acts 11:18 (NLT)**

“Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth ...”  
**2 Tim. 2:25 (NIV)**

Before you and I ever came to God ... He was working on us. He was bringing conviction and shortcomings became obvious to you. He began to put a desire within you to repent. Jesus knew that this was the way it works ...

“For people can't come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them from the dead.”  
**John 6:44 (NLT)**

“It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But some of you don't believe me.’ (For Jesus knew from the beginning who didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Then he said, ‘That is what I meant when I said that people can't come to me unless the Father brings them to me.’”  
**John 6:63-65 (NLT)**

If you have committed your life to Christ and are a genuine follower of Him then you have already responded to the Holy Spirit's working in your life!

There is a third way the Spirit of God works in our lives prior to salvation ...

### **3. The Holy Spirit Opens The Truth To Me**

He empowers preaching and His Word to begin to penetrate your mind and your heart so that you begin to soften your heart and your life begins to change.

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“And Jesus Christ was revealed as God’s Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit also gives us the testimony that this is true.”

**1 John 5:6 (NLT)**

In other words, when I’m listening to a sermon ... a podcast ... watching a DVD ... or simply reading in the privacy of my home ... the Spirit of God is working to help me understand what the truth is. Let’s look at some examples of this ...

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’”

**Acts 2:37 (NIV)**

“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! <sup>52</sup>Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him-- <sup>53</sup>you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.” <sup>54</sup>*When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.* <sup>55</sup>But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”

**Acts 7:51-55 (NIV)**

“The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup>News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. <sup>24</sup>He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.”

**Acts 11:21-24 (NIV)**

There is a fourth way the Holy Spirit works in our lives to bring us to God ...

### **4. The Holy Spirit Changes My Heart**

The Holy Spirit is the one who brings about regeneration. When you say that Jesus lives in your heart that is actually the Holy Spirit who lives within you. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father and the Holy Spirit is the one who lives inside of you.

*“Life in the Spirit is the exchange of breath.”*  
(John Wesley)

“Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God.’ <sup>4</sup>‘What do you mean?’ exclaimed Nicodemus. ‘How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?’ <sup>5</sup>Jesus replied, ‘The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven.”

**John 3:1-6 (NLT)**

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“But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. <sup>5</sup>He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. <sup>7</sup>He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life.”

**Titus 3:4-7 (NLT)**

I want us all to understand that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is a lot more than people simply talking in tongues. **He is involved in redeeming people’s lives! And that is the whole purpose of why we seek to be filled with the Spirit. It is ultimately so that we might be witnesses to this lost world!**

The Holy Spirit is not just about a tingling feeling ... He’s about rescuing souls from eternal separation from God ... and you and I need to be about His business!

*“The Spirit transforms human liabilities and transcends human abilities.”*

Let’s Pray!

- Convict us of sin.
- Grant us a repentant heart.
- Show us the truths we’ve been missing or avoiding.
- Change us from the inside out.