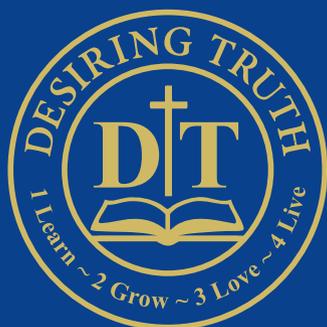


The Biblical View of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Honoring the Holy Spirit



Excelling in the Christian Life
through the knowledge of the Truth

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The True Ministry of the Holy Spirit: Exalting Christ Through the Word

In many churches today the ministry of the Holy Spirit is presented primarily through dramatic spiritual experiences. Great emphasis is often placed on confronting demons, performing miraculous healings, and speaking in tongues. These practices are frequently portrayed as the primary evidence that the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work.

Yet when we carefully examine the teaching of Scripture, we discover that the central ministry of the Holy Spirit is quite different. The Holy Spirit does indeed possess all power and is fully capable of miracles, but the New Testament consistently shows that His primary mission is not to create spiritual spectacle. Rather, His work is to **exalt Jesus Christ, illuminate the truth of the Word of God, transform believers into Christlikeness, and build up the church through the gospel.**

When the Spirit is truly at work, the focus shifts away from experiences and toward **Christ, truth, holiness, and the edification of the body of Christ.**

The Holy Spirit Came to Glorify Christ

Jesus Himself clearly defined the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit. On the night before His crucifixion, as He prepared His disciples for His departure, He explained that the coming of the Spirit would not result in attention being drawn to the Spirit Himself.

Instead, the Spirit would direct all attention toward Christ.

Jesus said:

John 16:14

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.”

This statement is foundational. The Holy Spirit does not seek to glorify Himself or produce experiences that become the center of attention. His mission is to **magnify the person and work of Jesus Christ.**

In the same discourse Jesus also said:

John 15:26

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth... he shall testify of me.”

The Spirit testifies of Christ. He reveals Christ. He illuminates the truth about Christ. For this reason, whenever the Holy Spirit is working powerfully, Christ becomes the central focus of preaching, teaching, worship, and devotion.

The early church demonstrates this pattern clearly. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the apostles did not build a ministry around spiritual experiences. Instead, they **proclaimed Christ.**

Acts 2:22–24 records Peter’s sermon:

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God

hath raised up...”

The Spirit's power was displayed through **bold proclamation of Christ and the gospel**, not through an obsession with spiritual manifestations. The same pattern continues throughout the book of Acts. The apostles consistently preached Christ crucified and risen.

Acts 5:42 says:

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

This is the true emphasis of the Holy Spirit's ministry.

The Holy Spirit Reveals the Truth of the Word

Another central ministry of the Spirit is the illumination of truth. Jesus described the Spirit as **“the Spirit of truth.”**

John 16:13

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”

The Spirit guides believers into truth by illuminating the Word of God. He opens the understanding so that believers can grasp the meaning and power of Scripture.

The apostle Paul explains this further.

1 Corinthians 2:12–13 says:

“Now we have received... the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak... which the Holy Ghost teacheth.”

The Holy Spirit teaches believers the truth of God's Word.

Therefore, the Spirit's ministry is deeply connected with **Scripture, doctrine, and understanding**. When the Spirit is active in a church, there will be a strong emphasis on the teaching of the Word of God.

This is why Paul instructed Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:2

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

The answer to spiritual confusion is not emotional experiences but **the clear proclamation of Scripture**.

Spiritual Warfare Is Primarily a Battle of Truth

Some modern teachings emphasize direct confrontation with demons as a normal part of Christian ministry. However, the New Testament presents a different emphasis regarding spiritual warfare.

Paul explains the nature of the battle in 2 Corinthians 10:4–5:

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God...”

Notice that the battle is described as a struggle against **false ideas, arguments, and thoughts that oppose the knowledge of God.**

The enemy deceives through lies. Therefore, the primary weapon against darkness is **truth.**

Jesus demonstrated this principle when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Each time Satan attacked, Jesus responded with Scripture.

Matthew 4:4

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Three times Jesus answered the enemy with the phrase **“It is written.”** He defeated deception through the Word of God. This same principle continues in the ministry of the church. False teaching is confronted not by dramatic spiritual encounters but by the **faithful proclamation of biblical truth.**

The True Evidence of the Spirit Is the Fruit of the Spirit

In many places today the presence of the Holy Spirit is associated with outward manifestations such as tongues, miracles, or ecstatic experiences. Yet Scripture identifies the true evidence of the Spirit in a very different way.

Galatians 5:22–23 says:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...”

The Spirit produces **character transformation.** His work is seen in the development of Christlike virtues within the believer. This fruit reflects the character of Christ Himself. As believers yield to the Spirit, their lives increasingly display love, patience, humility, and self-control.

Paul also commands believers:

Ephesians 5:18

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

The results of being filled with the Spirit are described in the verses that follow: worship, gratitude, humility, and godly relationships (Ephesians 5:19–21).

The Spirit-filled life is not defined by emotional excitement but by **spiritual maturity and godliness.**

The Spirit Gives Gifts to Build the Church

The Holy Spirit also distributes spiritual gifts to believers. However, the purpose of these gifts is clearly defined.

1 Corinthians 12:7 states:

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

Spiritual gifts are given for the **benefit of the entire church**.

They are not intended to elevate individuals or create spiritual spectacle. Instead, they strengthen the body of Christ. Paul emphasizes this repeatedly in his discussion of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 14:12 says:

“Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

Every spiritual gift should function in a way that **builds up believers and strengthens the church**.

Teaching, encouragement, service, leadership, giving, and other gifts all play important roles in the growth of the body of Christ. When the Holy Spirit is working properly within the church, believers use their gifts not to draw attention to themselves but to serve one another in love.

Signs and Miracles Had a Specific Purpose

The New Testament does record miracles and signs, particularly during the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. However, Scripture indicates that these signs had a specific purpose.

Hebrews 2:3–4 explains that the message of salvation:

“...was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles...”

Miracles served as divine confirmation of the apostolic message during the foundational period of the church. Once the gospel message was established and recorded in Scripture, the emphasis of the church’s ministry remained the proclamation of that message. The New Testament epistles, which provide instruction for the church, consistently focus on **teaching, doctrine, holiness, and spiritual growth**, not the pursuit of miraculous experiences.

Conclusion

When the full testimony of Scripture is considered, the true ministry of the Holy Spirit becomes clear.

The Spirit came to:

- Glorify Jesus Christ (John 16:14)
- Reveal the truth of God’s Word (John 16:13)
- Empower the preaching of the gospel (Acts 1:8)

- Transform believers through the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)
- Equip believers with gifts that build up the church (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Where the Holy Spirit is truly at work, Christ is exalted, Scripture is proclaimed, truth replaces error, believers grow in holiness, and the church is strengthened.

The greatest evidence of the Spirit's presence is not dramatic experience but a **church filled with the truth of God's Word, believers growing in Christlike character, and the gospel of Jesus Christ being faithfully proclaimed.**

Where Christ is lifted up and His Word is faithfully taught, the Holy Spirit is actively at work.

The Holy Spirit and the Miracle of Christlike Character

Much attention today is given to dramatic demonstrations of spiritual power. Many people measure the work of the Holy Spirit by outward experiences—miracles, emotional manifestations, or deliverance encounters. While Scripture certainly records miracles and acknowledges the reality of spiritual warfare, the New Testament repeatedly emphasizes something far greater and far more enduring.

The greatest miracle the Holy Spirit performs in the life of a believer—after the miracle of the new birth—is the transformation of a sinner into a person who increasingly reflects the character of Jesus Christ.

This work of transformation is not loud, sensational, or theatrical. It is deeper than that. It is the quiet, powerful, lifelong work of the Spirit conforming believers to the image of the Son of God.

A powerful way to summarize this truth is in the statement:

“God is most glorified in us when Christ is most exemplified through us.”

When the character of Christ is seen in the life of a believer, God receives glory. That transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Purpose of Salvation: Conformity to Christ

Scripture teaches that God's ultimate purpose for believers is not merely forgiveness, nor merely escape from judgment. Salvation is designed to bring believers into conformity with Christ.

Romans 8:29 declares:

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...”

God's goal is that believers become increasingly like Christ. This transformation is

not instant. It unfolds throughout the Christian life as the Holy Spirit works within the believer. From the moment of the new birth, the Spirit begins reshaping the believer's thoughts, desires, attitudes, and conduct. The result is a life that progressively reflects the character of Christ.

The Fruit of the Spirit: The Evidence of Transformation

The clearest description of this transformation is found in Galatians 5.

Galatians 5:22–23 says:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...”

Notice that Paul does not describe the evidence of the Spirit as spectacular experiences. Instead, he describes **character**.

The fruit of the Spirit reflects the very nature of Christ Himself.

- Christ demonstrated perfect love
- Christ displayed deep joy in obedience to the Father
- Christ embodied peace and trust in God
- Christ showed patience and gentleness toward sinners
- Christ lived in perfect goodness and faithfulness
- Christ modeled humility and self-control

When the Holy Spirit is working within a believer, these qualities begin to appear and grow. The believer becomes increasingly like Christ in thought, speech, and conduct. This transformation is far more powerful than temporary spiritual excitement. It is the miracle of a changed heart.

Transformation Is the Work of the Spirit

This change does not originate from human effort alone. It is produced by the Holy Spirit working within the believer.

Paul describes this process in 2 Corinthians 3:18:

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

The more believers behold Christ through Scripture, the more the Spirit transforms them into His likeness. Notice the phrase **“from glory to glory.”** This transformation happens progressively. The Spirit gradually shapes the believer's life so that Christ becomes increasingly visible. The Christian life is therefore not merely about religious activity. It is about spiritual transformation.

The Spirit Leads Us to Seek Christ

Because the Holy Spirit's mission is to glorify Christ, He always directs believers toward the person and work of Jesus.

Jesus said in John 16:14:

“He shall glorify me.”

The Spirit does not draw attention to Himself or create a ministry centered on manifestations. Instead, He leads believers to love Christ, trust Christ, obey Christ, and proclaim Christ. This is why the apostles consistently preached Christ as the center of their message.

Acts 5:42 says:

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

The Holy Spirit empowered them to proclaim the gospel. Their ministry focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Mission of the Church: Proclaiming the Gospel

Scripture also defines the mission of believers in the world. The church is not called to build ministries around dramatic confrontations with demons or deliverance rituals. The central mission given by Christ is the proclamation of the gospel.

Jesus commanded in Mark 16:15:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

The message of the gospel has the power to rescue sinners from darkness and bring them into the kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:13 explains that God:

“...hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

Deliverance occurs through the saving work of Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. When the gospel is preached and believed, people are rescued from sin and brought into new life.

Christlike Character Is the True Display of Spiritual Power

The world often looks for power in dramatic displays. Scripture, however, reveals a deeper kind of power.

The power of the Holy Spirit is most clearly seen when sinful people become Christlike in their character.

When pride becomes humility...

When anger becomes patience...

When selfishness becomes love...

When bitterness becomes forgiveness...

That transformation reveals the supernatural work of God. Jesus taught that believers would be recognized by their fruit.

Matthew 7:16 says:

“Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

Christlike character is the true evidence of spiritual life.

A Life That Glorifies God

When the Holy Spirit produces Christlike character in believers, God receives glory.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16:

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

The Christian life becomes a living testimony of God’s transforming grace. Believers who walk in the Spirit display the beauty of Christ to the world.

This brings us back to the statement that captures this truth so well:

“God is most glorified in us when Christ is most exemplified through us.”

When Christ’s character is visible in our lives, God is honored.

Conclusion

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not primarily about dramatic experiences or sensational manifestations. The Spirit’s greatest work—after the miracle of the new birth—is the transformation of believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Through the Spirit:

- believers are conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29)
- the fruit of Christlike character grows within them (Galatians 5:22–23)
- their lives are progressively transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18)

At the same time, the Spirit directs the church to proclaim the gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world.

The true evidence of the Spirit's power is not found in spectacle, but in **lives that increasingly reflect the character of Jesus Christ**. Where believers love Christ, proclaim His Word, and walk in the fruit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is actively at work.

And when Christ is clearly seen in the lives of His people, God receives the glory He deserves.

How We Are Filled with the Holy Spirit Following the Spirit by Following the Word

If the Holy Spirit's greatest miracle after the new birth is the transformation of believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ, then an essential question must be asked:

How does the Holy Spirit carry out this work in the life of the believer?

Scripture answers this with remarkable clarity. Believers are commanded to **be filled with the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and keep in step with the Spirit**. Yet these commands are not mystical instructions disconnected from the Word of God. In fact, Scripture reveals that the Spirit leads believers **through the truth of the Word of God**.

Therefore, keeping in step with the Holy Spirit is inseparably connected with **knowing, believing, and obeying the Scriptures**. The Spirit who inspired the Word of God guides believers by the very Word He gave.

The Command to Be Filled with the Spirit

The foundational instruction is found in Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:18 (JEN)

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be continually filled with the Spirit."

The verb here indicates a continuous action. Believers are to live in a state of ongoing dependence upon the Spirit's influence. The Spirit fills and directs the believer's life so that thoughts, attitudes, and actions are shaped by God. But the passage that parallels this command reveals something extremely important.

Paul writes in Colossians:

Colossians 3:16 (JEN)

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

When the two passages are placed side by side, a powerful truth emerges.

In **Ephesians 5**, believers are told to **be filled with the Spirit**.

In **Colossians 3**, believers are told to **let the Word of Christ dwell richly within them**.

The results in both passages are nearly identical—worship, gratitude, and spiritual

maturity. This shows that the Spirit fills believers **as the Word of Christ fills their minds and hearts**. The Holy Spirit works through the Scriptures.

Walking in the Spirit

Paul then explains how believers live under the Spirit's influence.

Galatians 5:16 (JEN)

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you shall certainly not fulfill the desires of the flesh."

To walk in the Spirit means to live daily under His direction. Yet the Spirit does not guide believers through subjective impressions or mystical impulses. The Spirit leads believers **through the truth He has revealed in Scripture**.

Psalm 119:105 declares:

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

The Spirit who inspired the Word uses the Word to guide the believer's life. As believers obey the truth of Scripture, they are walking in the Spirit.

Keeping in Step with the Spirit Means Following Scripture

Paul gives another command in Galatians.

Galatians 5:25 (JEN)

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

The phrase "keep in step" carries the idea of marching in line or following a rule or standard. In the original language, the word refers to walking in an ordered line according to a guiding principle. What is that guiding standard?

Scripture itself!

The Spirit does not lead believers apart from the Word He inspired. Instead, He leads believers **through the Word of God**. Jesus Himself connected the Spirit's work with truth.

John 16:13 (JEN)

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."

The Spirit guides believers through **truth**, not through experiences detached from Scripture. Therefore, to keep in step with the Spirit means to align one's life with the truth of God's Word. When believers obey Scripture, they are following the Spirit's leadership.

Beholding Christ Through the Scriptures

The Spirit's work of transformation also occurs as believers behold Christ in the Word. Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (JEN)

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

The “mirror” in which believers behold the glory of Christ is the Word of God. As believers look into the Scriptures and see Christ revealed there, the Spirit progressively transforms them into His likeness. Transformation occurs as believers meditate upon Christ, study His Word, and conform their lives to what Scripture reveals. This is how the Spirit forms Christlike character.

Yielding to the Spirit Through Obedience

The Spirit’s work also requires surrender.

Paul writes:

Romans 6:13 (JEN)

“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

Yielding to the Spirit means offering our lives to God and choosing obedience over sin. This surrender is not vague or undefined. It is expressed through obedience to what God has revealed in His Word. Every time a believer obeys Scripture rather than the impulses of the flesh, he is yielding to the Spirit.

The Spirit Uses the Word to Renew the Mind

The Holy Spirit transforms believers by renewing their thinking through Scripture.

Paul writes:

Romans 12:2 (JEN)

“And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

The mind is renewed through the truth of God’s Word. As Scripture reshapes the believer’s thinking, the Spirit reshapes the believer’s life. Jesus prayed this very thing for His followers.

John 17:17 (JEN)

“Sanctify them in Your truth; Your word is truth.”

Sanctification—the process of becoming holy—occurs as the Spirit applies the truth of Scripture to the believer’s heart.

Christ Formed Within Us

The ultimate goal of the Spirit’s work is that Christ would be formed in believers. Paul expressed this desire when he wrote:

Galatians 4:19 (JEN)

“My little children, for whom I labor again in birth pains until Christ is formed in you.”

The Spirit shapes believers so that the character of Christ becomes visible in their lives.

Love replaces hatred.
Humility replaces pride.
Patience replaces anger.
Faith replaces fear.

This transformation is the Spirit's great work.

A Life That Glorifies God

When the Holy Spirit fills believers through the Word and shapes them into the likeness of Christ, God receives glory. This truth can be captured in a simple but profound statement:

God is most glorified in us when Christ is most exemplified through us.

The more Christ's character is displayed in believers, the more God's glory is revealed to the world.

Conclusion

The Scriptures teach that believers experience the Spirit's transforming power not by seeking dramatic spiritual experiences, but by living in continual dependence upon God through His Word.

Believers are called to:

- Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)
- Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)
- Keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)
- Behold Christ and be transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- Yield their lives to God (Romans 6:13)
- Let the Word of Christ dwell richly within them (Colossians 3:16)

To keep in step with the Spirit is to **align our lives with the truth of Scripture.**

As believers study the Word, meditate upon Christ, and obey what God has revealed, the Holy Spirit performs His abiding work. He forms the character of Christ within them. And when Christ is clearly seen in the lives of His people, **God receives the glory He deserves.**

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