

Luke 11:13 — Asking for the Holy Spirit

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

It is common knowledge that members of the Pentecostal sect believe that God is constantly pumping miraculous surges of the Holy Spirit into them in response to their prayers. With hands uplifted, they beseech, “Lord, send the power just now,” which petition is usually followed by violent jerks somewhat resembling an electrocution.

One of the passages employed to buttress this concept is Luke 11:13. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.”

The Scriptures do not teach, here nor elsewhere, that the Lord, in answer to prayer, supernaturally infuses His children with the Holy Spirit. In fact, numerous biblical texts conflict sharply with such a view. What, then, does this passage mean?

The answer is found in the parallel reference in Matthew’s account. There, the apostle records these words: “... how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give *good things* to them that ask him” (7:11).

A comparison of these passages reveals that Matthew’s emphasis is upon the *blessings received*, while Luke is stressing the *divine source* of Heaven’s benevolence. The Holy Spirit *providentially* operates in the lives of Christians to enhance their spiritual service. Hence, underline “Holy Spirit” in Luke 11:13, and in the margin write: *The Source*; see *Matthew 7:11 for the result*.

Preachers might wish to note that T. H. Horne has shown that “Holy Spirit” in Luke 11:13 is an example of *metonymy* — the cause being put for the effect, i.e., the Spirit named in place of the blessings He bestows (**Critical Introduction**, Vol. I, p. 359).

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Scripture References

Luke 11:13; Matthew 7:11

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