

Questions About Operation of the Holy Spirit

By Pastor Ed Anderson

How can we actually die when we have the Holy Spirit inside us?

What happens to the Holy Spirit inside of us when our physical body is dead?

How does the Holy Spirit interact with a human spirit? Does the Holy Spirit become One with our spirit? Or conversely, does the Holy Spirit and our human spirit remain separate inside our physical body?

How does a human being receive the Holy Spirit?

Answer:

These are profound and deeply spiritual questions that touch the very mystery of life, death, and God's indwelling presence. Let's take each one step-by-step, rooted in Scripture and biblical theology.

1. How can we actually die when we have the Holy Spirit inside us?

Yes, we can still physically die even when the Holy Spirit dwells within us — **because the gift of the Spirit guarantees eternal life, not necessarily freedom from physical death.**

Jesus said:

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

— *John 11:25*

The Holy Spirit is the **seal** and **guarantee** of future resurrection:

"...You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance..."

— *Ephesians 1:13-14*

So we may die physically, but **not eternally**. Death becomes **sleep** for the believer (1 Thess. 4:13–18), awaiting the resurrection.

2. What happens to the Holy Spirit inside us when our physical body is dead?

At death, the **Spirit of God does not die** — nor does it remain inside a lifeless body. Instead, the Bible teaches that:

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

— *Ecclesiastes 12:7*

This “**spirit**” refers to the **life-giving breath** or animating principle God breathed into us (Genesis 2:7), not a conscious ghost-like form. The **Holy Spirit**, being God, returns to Himself and continues His divine work. The body returns to dust. The person “sleeps” in death, unconscious, until the resurrection (see Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11–14).

3. How does the Holy Spirit interact with a human spirit? Does the Holy Spirit become One with our spirit?

The Bible teaches **intimate union**, but not a total fusing. The Holy Spirit **indwells**, **communes with**, and **empowers** the human spirit, but they remain distinct.

Paul says:

“The Spirit Himself bears witness **with our spirit** that we are children of God.”

— *Romans 8:16*

That means the Holy Spirit **speaks to**, **guides**, and **lives with** our spirit — but **does not override our individuality**. We are still us. He is still God. But there is **communion** — and yes, **oneness in purpose and heart**.

“But he who is joined to the Lord is **one spirit with Him**.”

— *1 Corinthians 6:17*

This “oneness” is spiritual unity, not loss of identity.

4. How does a human being receive the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is received through **repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and surrender to God’s will**. Here’s the biblical pattern:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; **and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**”

— *Acts 2:38*

We receive the Spirit:

- By **believing** in Jesus (Galatians 3:2)
- Through **repentance** and a **surrendered heart**
- Often symbolized or sealed at **baptism** (Acts 19:1–6)
- Through **prayer and desire** (Luke 11:13)

The Holy Spirit comes to **dwell in us, transform us, empower us, and seal us** for the day of redemption.

Summary:

Question	Biblical Answer
Why do we still die if we have the Spirit?	Because eternal life is future, not freedom from physical death now
What happens to the Spirit at death?	The Holy Spirit returns to God; the body returns to dust; the person “sleeps” in death
Do the Holy Spirit and human spirit become one?	They unite in spiritual communion, but remain distinct
How do we receive the Spirit?	Through faith, repentance, and surrender — often at baptism