

GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS SPIRIT

Affirming the Personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Personal Indwelling – What Do We Mean?

- Google AI definition: *“The personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the New Testament concept of God ... residing within every believer in Jesus Christ.”*
 - Notice in this definition that God dwells representatively in believers through a means other than Himself – the Holy Spirit.
 - **1 John 3:24** Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.
- **By “personal,” we simply mean non-figuratively / non-representatively, i.e. the Spirit Himself dwells in the believer.**
 - I agree with brethren who say the Holy Spirit dwells in us representatively, but I contend He **also** dwells personally in believers.

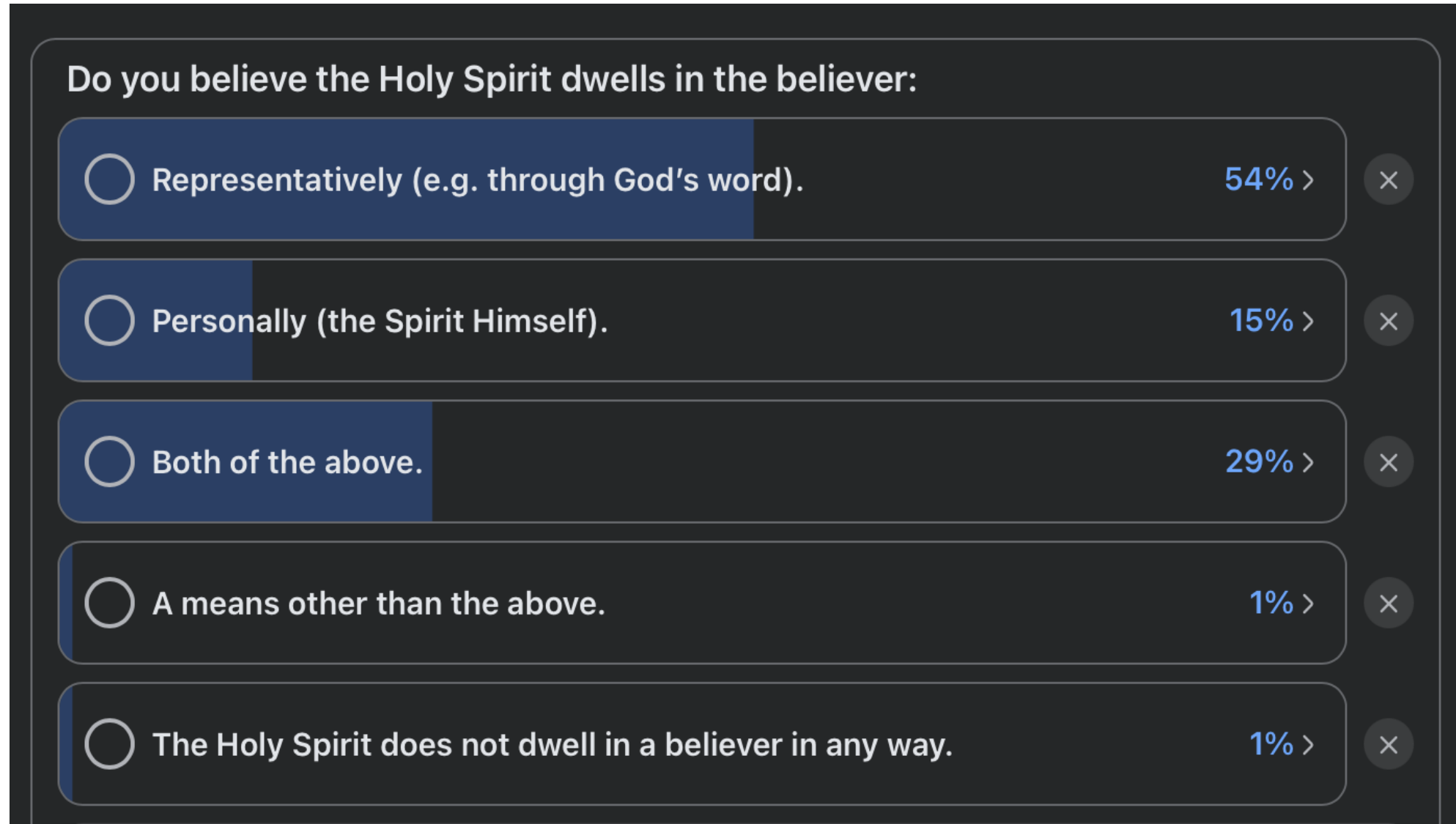
This “Sounds Pentecostal”

- Some object to the personal indwelling because it “sounds Pentecostal,” but many truths “sound Pentecostal:”
 - Women having long hair. **1 Cor. 11:15**
 - Emphasizing modesty. **1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-4**
 - Opposing homosexuality. **Rom. 1:26-27; etc.**
- **Should we reject these truths too since the Pentecostals accept them?**
- We should accept / reject something strictly based on scriptural merit (**i.e. is it what the Bible says?**), not because we may have a better chance at “winning” an argument against a denominational believer.

*“I greatly felt the need of a work, the sole aim of which should be, to determine precisely what Paul means, regardless of what that meaning favors or disfavors ... I have never seemed to think whether my expositions were favoring Calvinism, Arminianism, or any other -ism. And this is strictly true. **Indeed, I have been concerned solely with the sense of Paul, and with neither the sense nor non-sense of others**” (Moses Lard, “A Commentary on Romans,” p.v-vi).*

Most Christians Reject the Personal Indwelling

Jan. 2026 Facebook Survey (Members of Non-Institutional Churches of Christ)



Most Christians Reject the Personal Indwelling

- Some Christians argue that since most Christians do not accept that the Holy Spirit dwells personally in a believer, **the majority must be correct.**
 - The **majority** of Christians support institutionalism. **Are they correct?**
 - The **majority** of Christians say “yes” to the war question. **Are they correct?**
 - The **majority** of Christians support mental divorce. **Are they correct?**
 - The **majority** of Christians don’t practice withdrawal. **Are they correct?**
- Even if the majority of Christians hold the correct view, they are not correct simply because they are the majority. **Matt. 7:13-14**
- **Accepting / rejecting the personal indwelling should have everything to do with what the Bible says and nothing to do with what the majority thinks.**

Parallel – **John 12:42** Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; **43** for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God ... **48** He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

The Holy Spirit Only Dwells Representatively Through the Word?

- It is undeniably true that the Holy Spirit does dwell in believers representatively through God's word.
 - **Eph. 5:18** ...be filled with the Spirit
 - **Col. 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...
 - However, notice that these verses are **commands to be obeyed**.
- The Holy Spirit is elsewhere described as a conditional **promise to be received**.
 - **John 7:39** ...the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...
 - **Acts 2:38** ...repent, and be baptized... you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - **Acts 5:32** ...the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.
 - **1 John 3:24** Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him ... And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.
- **A command to be obeyed is not equivalent to a promise to be received.**

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- **A command to be obeyed is not equivalent to a promise to be received.**
- Letting the “**word of Christ dwell in**” us is equivalent to obeying God’s word; it is not the same as being given a reward for obeying God’s word.
 - Illustration:
 - **Command** – Dad tells Timmy, “Read your science book.”
 - **Promise** – Dad tells Timmy, “Read your science book and I will take you out for ice cream.”

Acts 2:38 ...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... **41** Then those who gladly received his word were baptized...

- One indwelling (letting the word of Christ dwell in a person) began **before** water baptism. **v.41**
- Another indwelling (the promised gift) began **after** water baptism. **v.38**
 - Thus, two different types of indwelling.

The Holy Spirit Only Dwells Representatively Through the Word?

“Everything the Spirit Does for Man is Accomplished Through the Word of God.”

Romans 8:26-27 – Human Spirit or Holy Spirit?

“The ‘spirit’ of Romans 8:26-27 refers to the human spirit ... If the Holy Spirit is making intercession for us in groanings which cannot be uttered, we now have the Holy Spirit performing a work separate and apart from the word of God ... The Holy Spirit, everything He does in the life of a Christian, is done through or by instrument of the word of God” (Brett Hogland, “The Intercession of the Spirit,” Gospel Meeting, June 10, 2025, Pepper Road church of Christ in Athens, AL).

• Are Translators and Scholars Wrong?

- ASV, CSB, ERV, ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, etc. all agree that “**Spirit**” (Grk, pneuma) in **Rom. 8:26-27** refers to Holy Spirit. **Are they wrong?**
- Arndt and Gingrich, Thayer, Vine, Robertson, Barnes, Gill, Cambridge, etc. all agree “**the Spirit**” refers to the Holy Spirit. **Are they wrong?**
 - *“We know not what we should pray for ... but the Holy Spirit knows”* (Moses Lard, “A Commentary on Romans,” p.277).

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• Is a Person Interceding for Himself?

- The claim is that a human (spirit) is interceding for himself (flesh) due to a misapplication of **v.12-25**.
- However, a person doing something on his own behalf is, by definition, **not** intercession: *“The action of intervening on behalf of another”* (Oxford Dictionary). **Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25**

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• Only One Intercessor?

- Jesus is our intercessor (**Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25**), but He is **never** described as our **only** intercessor. **Rom. 8:26-27** teaches the Holy Spirit **also** intercedes.
 - It is possible to have multiple intercessors:
1 Tim. 2:1 ...supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority...
- **Don't make the same mistake as our faith “only” friends!**

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• The Language of the Text

- If the human spirit is under consideration, then “**the Spirit**” (singular) should instead be translated as “spirits” (plural).
- Hogland’s Translation reads as, “Our spirits help in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but our spirits themselves make intercession for us.” **Hogland’s Translation is not what the text says!**

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- **The Language of the Text**

“The disposition of our mind surely cannot help the infirmities of our mind ... how can it be said that our own spirit, our filial disposition, bears witness with our own spirit; that our own spirit helps the infirmities of our own spirit; that our own spirit teaches our own spirit that of which it is ignorant; and that our own spirit maketh intercession for our own spirit, with groanings unutterable? This would have been both incongruous and absurd” (Adam Clarke's Commentary, Matthew - Revelation, p.100).

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• Let the Context Explain the Meaning

Rom. 8:9 ...you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His ...
11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you ... **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

- Human spirit or Holy Spirit?

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- Paul is clearly talking about the Holy Spirit in **Rom. 8:26-27**, which brings us back to this question – is the above argument actually true?

Rom. 8:9 ...you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His ...
11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you ... **26** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

- How can the indwelling of **v.9-11**, if only representatively via the word of God, accomplish what **v.26-27** says? Intercession = personal, just like with Christ:
 - **Rom. 8:34** ...Christ ... also makes intercession for us
 - **Heb. 7:25** ...He always lives to make intercession for them

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- Prayer comes from the heart (**1 Sam. 1:13; Ps. 66:17-18; see also Matt. 15:18**); the Spirit is given to dwell in our hearts (**Gal. 4:6**); therefore, intercession is made from within the heart.

Gift of the Holy Spirit is Not the Gift from the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38 ...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.

- Some contend the “gift of the Holy Spirit” refers to the gift **from** the Holy Spirit (salvation), but that does not work because Peter already mentioned the gift of salvation (“remission of sins”) before promising the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - **It makes no sense to promise something already received.**
 - “Remission of sins” = purpose & result #1; “gift of the Holy Spirit” = result #2.
- The “gift” is the Holy Spirit Himself. Compare **Acts 2:38** to the below verses:
 - Rom. 5:5** ...the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
 - 1 Thess. 4:8** ...God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.
 - 1 John 3:24** ...He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.
 - 2 Cor. 1:22** ...has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts...
 - 2 Cor. 5:5** ...God, who also has given us the spirit as a guarantee.

Gift of the Holy Spirit is Not the Same Thing as Holy Spirit Baptism / Miraculous Measure of the Holy Spirit

- One can possess the Holy Spirit & not perform miracles. **Luke 1:15; John 10:41**
- Furthermore, the “gift of the Holy Spirit” in **Acts 2:38** is conditioned upon water baptism; **it cannot be received before water baptism.**

Gal. 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ... **4:6** And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts...

- The “gift of the Holy Spirit” in **Acts 10:45** was received by Cornelius and his family **before** they were baptized in water: **46** For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, **47** “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord...
- Thus, the “gift of the Holy Spirit” in **Acts 2:38** and **Gal. 4:6** cannot be the same as the miraculous “gift of the Holy Spirit” in **Acts 10:45-48**.

Gift of the Holy Spirit is Not the Same Thing as Holy Spirit Baptism / Miraculous Measure of the Holy Spirit

- A miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit **was not** promised to all believers.
1 Cor. 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? **30** Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?
Acts 8:18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, **19** saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." **20** But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! **21** You have neither part nor portion in this matter..."

Gift of the Holy Spirit is Not the Same Thing as Holy Spirit Baptism / Miraculous Measure of the Holy Spirit

- A miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit **was not** promised to all believers.
- The non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit **is** promised to all believers.

Acts 2:39 ...this promise is to you [**Jews**], and to your children [**Jewish descendants**], and to all who are afar off [**Gentiles Eph. 2:13,17**], as many as the Lord our God will call [**all called by the gospel 2 Thess. 2:14**].

Acts 5:32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.

- We know this is talking about the non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit since it is conditioned upon **obedience**. The miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 10:45** was given to Cornelius and his family **before they obeyed** the gospel in **v.46-48**.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit Was Not Limited to the First Century

- The miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit was only available for a limited time.
1 Cor. 13:8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **10** But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.
- But this text is strictly discussing miraculous gifts from the Holy Spirit, not the non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this passage does not help us determine the duration of the non-miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit Was Not Limited to the First Century

- Do these passages teach the non-miraculous gift of the Spirit was limited to the first century?

Acts 2:39 ...this promise is to ... as many as the Lord our God will call.

- If limited, so is the command to “repent and be baptized” in **v.38**.

Acts 5:32 ...the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.

- If limited, so is the promise of **Heb. 5:9** that says Jesus became the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him.

1 Cor. 6:18 Flee sexual immorality ... **19** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

- If limited, so is the command “flee sexual immorality” and the statement “you are not your own.”

The Gift of the Holy Spirit Was Not Limited to the First Century

- Do these passages teach the non-miraculous gift of the Spirit was limited to the first century?

John 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...

- If limited, so are the promises of:

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not condemned...

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life...

John 5:24 ...he who ... believes in Him ... has everlasting life...

John 6:35 ...he who believes in me shall never thirst...

John 6:47 ... he who believes in Me has everlasting life...

John 11:25 ... he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

“This Makes No Sense By Human Reasoning”

- Some object to the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit because it seems unexplainable how the Holy Spirit Himself can dwell inside a person.
- I have many questions about the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit that I can't answer either. However:
 - Do all of the details regarding the flood of Noah's day make sense?
 - Does it make sense how the walls of Jericho fell down?
 - Does it make sense how God the Son could be born a human via a virgin?
 - Does it make sense how Christ's earthly body did not decompose?
 - Does it make sense how baptism puts you in contact with Christ's blood?
 - Does it make sense how a person's body will be resurrected even if the body was destroyed?
 - **See the point?**

“This Makes No Sense By Human Reasoning”

- God does not expect us to understand the details. He expects us to accept what He has revealed (**He has given us His Spirit to dwell in us, both representatively and personally**), and then accept the details by faith.

Deut. 29:29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- **Don't limit God just because we don't fully understand the details!**

Eph. 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think...

Ps. 78:41-42 ...they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power...

Conclusion

- God promises the gift of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit Himself) to all believers!

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God ... **5** Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us ... **8** God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. **10** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. **11** And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Conclusion

- God promises the gift of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit Himself) to all believers!
- God gifted us His Spirit as a means for knowing we are in fellowship with Him!

1 John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

“God has given the Spirit to believers, and it is this fact that gives believers assurance of their relationship to God ... the fact that the Holy Spirit has been given to believers ... is the primary source of the believer’s assurance”
(NET Footnotes).

- We should be grateful for our guarantee of salvation (**Eph. 1:14**), intercessor in prayer (**Rom. 8:26-27**), and motivation for holiness (**1 Cor. 6:19-20; Ps. 51:11**)!
- We should rejoice knowing God, through His Spirit, is with us!

Ps. 139:7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ... **9** If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, **10** Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.