

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

- Pneumatology is the study of God the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity
- The study of the Holy Spirit is vital to every aspect of the Christian life since He is essential to the entire experience as a believer
- There is really no area of the Christian life that is not touched in some way by the work of the Spirit
- So, we must not confuse or ignore the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives

The solution to the problems of the church today is to solve the individual Christian's problems, and the solution to those problems is a Person – the Holy Spirit. He is the antidote for every error, the power for every weakness, the victory for every defeat, and the answer for every need. And he is available to every believer, for He lives in his heart and life. The answer and power have already been given us in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Charles Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, Moody, 1965, 9.

- Unfortunately, however, too many Christians search for answers to their problems without ever considering the ministry of the Spirit in their lives
- They flock to seminars, books, counselors, and the latest fad for successful Christian living in order to discover the “secret” of living the Christian life
- But our problem is not a lack of information...it is often that we do not rely sufficiently on the ministry of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to apply the truth of God's Word with power in our lives
- Thus, it is essential that we learn to apply the Holy Spirit's resources and walk with Him on a daily basis as a means of our sanctification and growth
- To fail to do so is to short-circuit our spiritual growth and maturity
- The contemporary confusion regarding the ministry of the Spirit is evident in the fact that evangelical Christians tend to end up at one of two extremes:
 1. Exaggerating the Spirit – many in the charismatic movement have become obsessed with the Holy Spirit, tending to focus on Him exclusively...this danger results typically in elevating personal experience over the objective truth of Scripture
 2. Ignoring the Spirit – many believers who are wary of the charismatic movement and weary of the confusion and controversy surrounding it have responded by simply avoiding the Holy Spirit in their teaching and study...this danger results in failing to effectively appropriate the full resources of the Spirit in their lives
- Both of these errors are spiritually debilitating so getting our understanding of the Holy Spirit right is crucial since the Christian life begins and continues by the power of the Holy Spirit

THE MEANING OF “SPIRIT”

- Both of the terms for “spirit” in the OT and NT are onomatopoeic terms since their sound conveys a sense of their basic meaning: the expulsion of wind or breath, the idea of air in motion
- “Spirit” expresses in its most fundamental form (the breath of life) power, energy, and life

Old Testament

- The term for “spirit” in the OT is *ruach* which basically means “to breathe out through the nose with violence, air in motion, wind, breath”
- It is used to refer to the wind:

Psalm 135:7 ~ He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; Who makes lightnings for the rain; Who brings forth the wind from His treasures.

- It is used to refer to life:

Genesis 2:7 ~ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Genesis 7:15 ~ So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life

- Thus the dominant idea is that of vital power and life
- When used in the OT to refer to the Holy Spirit, it refers to the power and life of God

Psalm 51:11 ~ Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me.

New Testament

- The term for “spirit” in the NT is *pneuma* which refers to “wind, spirit, life, breath”
- It is used to refer to the wind and movement of air:

Matthew 14:30 ~ But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

- It is used to refer to the principle of life within a person...the power by which a person feels, thinks, decides

Mark 14:38 ~ Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

- It is used to refer to a being with the power of knowing, desiring, and acting (i.e. angels/demons):

Hebrews 1:14 ~ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

- It is used to refer to the source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc.:

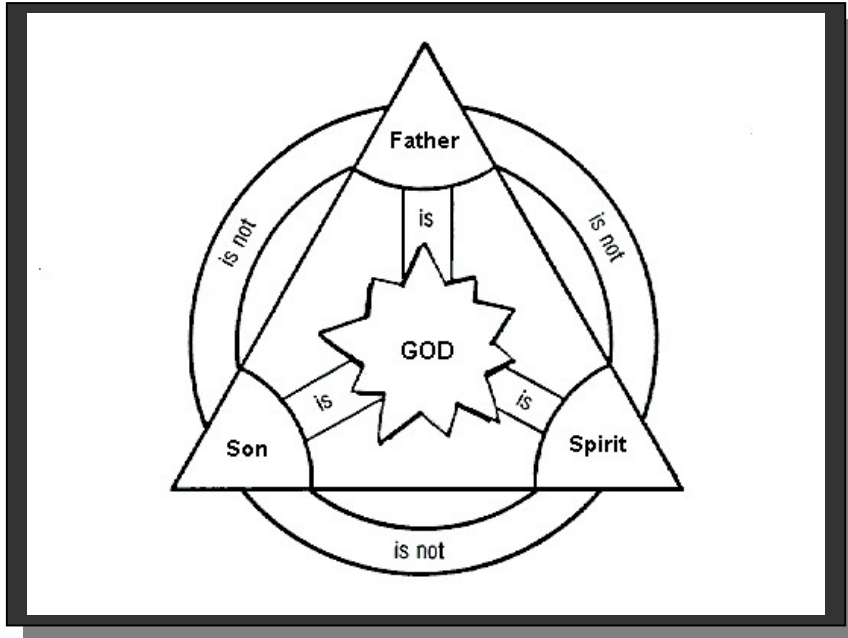
Ephesians 2:1-2 ~ AND you were dead in your trespasses and sins,2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

- It is used to refer to the third person of the Trinity:

Ephesians 4:30 ~ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A MEMBER OF THE TRINITY

- Any study of the Godhead would be incomplete if one member of the Triune God is left out or otherwise deemed less worthy of attention
- Thus, it follows naturally that any denial of the personality of the Spirit is a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity which constitutes theological error



Ancient Diagram of the Holy Trinity

There are passages that suggest the “threeness” is related to the Godhead

Genesis 1:1-2 ~ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Isaiah 48:16 ~ Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.”

Isaiah 61:1 ~ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

Isaiah 63:7,9,10 ~ I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, the praises of the LORD... 9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them... 10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit

The Father, Son and Spirit are associated as equals

Matthew 28:19 ~ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

- Very Important: the word “name” in the Greek is in the singular form, indicating clearly that there is one God, but there are three distinct persons within the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- “Jesus does NOT say, (1) “into the names (plural) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (2) “into the name of the Father, and into the name of the Son, and into the name of the Holy Spirit,” as

if we had to deal with three separate Beings. Nor does he say, (3) “into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” (omitting the three recurring articles), as if the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit might be taken as merely three designations of a single person. [What He DOES say is] (4), “into the name [singular] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” first asserting the three by combining them all within the bounds of the single name, and then throwing into emphasis the distinctness of each by introducing them in turn with the repeated article.” ~ Robert Raymond

- Clearly, we see the scriptures affirm that there is one God, but within the unity of the Godhead, there are three co-equal and co-eternal persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14 ~ *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*

1 Peter 1:2 ~ *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.*

Jude 20-21 ~ *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.*

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ~ *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

The Father, Son and Spirit are distinct personalities existing together

Matthew 3:16-17 ~ *And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*

John 14:26 ~ *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

John 15:26 ~ *When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,*

Ephesians 2:18 ~ *for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 ~ *varieties of gifts, same Spirit, ... varieties of ministries, same Lord... varieties of effects, same God*

THE ORDER OF THE TRINITY

Explanation

- This does not mean that one is of higher authority than the other: Same essence, but different roles
- The ideas of the “generation” of the Son by the Father and the “procession” of the Spirit from the Father and Son are approximate expressions of the truth
- The Point: The Father, by nature, eternally makes common His divine essence with the Son and the Spirit
- The Son is a form of the essence, not a form or mode of the Father
- The Spirit is a form of the essence, not a form or a mode of the Father
- 3 qualities of the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit:
 1. It is a necessary act of the Father
 2. It is an eternal act of the Father
 3. It is a spiritual (not physical) act of the Father

The Sending Order of the Different Persons

The Father sent the Son

John 3:17 ~ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

1 John 4:10 ~ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The Son sent the Spirit

John 15:26 ~ When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

Sometimes it is said the Father sends the Spirit

John 14:16 ~ And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

John 14:26 ~ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you

- So the Father is the source in that He begets the Son and the Spirit proceeds from Him

John 15:26 ~ When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

- The Son is the mediator in that He sends the Spirit

John 15:26 ~ When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

- The Holy Spirit is the applicator

John 15:26 ~ When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me

- This order is never reversed...it is a working, functioning order
- The term “generation” suggests the Trinitarian relationship in that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father
- The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son...the word “procession” suggests the Trinitarian relationship of the Father and the Son sending the Spirit.
- It is important to note, however, that these terms denote a relationship within the Trinity and do not suggest inferiority in any way

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Many people find the Holy Spirit confusing: Who really is the Holy Spirit? A person? A force? A ghost? An influence?
- Why is it important to get this right? → The Holy Spirit is a person, not a vague force or a metaphysical influence...thus He is someone with whom we can have a personal relationship and fellowship

2 Corinthians 13:14 ~ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

- The Holy Spirit is a person...as such, He is to be revered as God and serves in perfect unity with Father and Son to lead us in our spiritual lives.

Attributes of Personality

- Personhood has personality traits and personality includes intellect, emotions, and will....all attributes that are characteristic of the Holy Spirit

Intellect

- Intellect is the ability to reason or understand relationships

Romans 8:27 ~ *and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 ~ *For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.*

1 Corinthians 2:13 ~ *which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*

- The Holy Spirit has a mind...He knows the things of God...He is able to teach...thus because He has infinite intelligence, He must be a person

Emotion

- Emotion is the capability to have feelings aroused to awareness and the NT affirms that the Holy Spirit has feelings

Romans 15:30 ~ *Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me*

Ephesians 4:30 ~ *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...*

- A force can't be grieved and can't love!

Will

- Will is having the volition and desire for certain things to come to pass

1 Corinthians 12:11 ~ *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*

- In the giving of spiritual gifts, the Spirit exercised His will - This is not haphazard, but is in accordance with His will and plan
- The Spirit would also not allow the apostle to preach in Asia and Bithynia but instead directed him to go to Europe and Macedonia

Acts 16:6 ~ *They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia*

- The Holy Spirit has all 3 attributes of personality....thus He is not an impersonal force or an influence but a real person that we should obey, love and adore

Actions of Personality

- The Holy Spirit exhibits the actions of a person and performs tasks that only persons can perform:

- He teaches:

John 14:26 ~ *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit...He will teach you all things.*

John 16:13 ~ *But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.*

1 Corinthians 2:13 ~ *not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit...*

- He speaks:

Acts 8:29 ~ *The Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."*

Galatians 4:6 ~ *Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*

- He intercedes:

Romans 8:26 ~ *but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings...*

- He leads:

Romans 8:14 ~ *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*

Galatians 5:18 ~ *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

- He appoints people to specific service:

Acts 13:2 ~ *While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

Acts 20:28 ~ *Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

- He convicts the world of sin:

John 16:8 ~ *And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment;*

- He performs miracles:

Acts 8:39 ~ *And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing*

- He bears witness to Christ and glorifies Christ:

John 15:26 ~ *When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,*

John 16:14 ~ *He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.*

- Conclusion: Forces can't do these things

Responses to Personality

- He is presented in Scripture as having certain acts done toward Him which could only fit a person:
- He is to be obeyed:

Acts 10:19-21 ~ *While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself." Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?"*

- He can be lied to:

Acts 5:3 ~ *Why has Satan filled your heart to **lie** to the Holy Spirit...*

- He can be resisted:

Acts 7:51 ~ *You men who... are always **resisting** the Holy Spirit...*

- He can be grieved:

Ephesians 4:30 ~ *And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God...*

- He can be blasphemed:

Matthew 12:31 ~ *Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.*

- He can be insulted:

Hebrews 10:29 ~ *How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has **insulted** the Spirit of grace?*

- He can be quenched:

1 Thessalonians 5:19 ~ *Do not **quench** the Holy Spirit.*

- Conclusion: These things can't happen with forces, but only with a Person

Terms of Personality

- Masculine pronouns are used to refer to the Spirit
- Since the word *pneuma* is neuter, and since pronouns are to agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender, we would expect the neuter pronoun (it) to be used to represent the Holy Spirit.
- Yet this is not the case in John 15:26; 16:13-14

John 15:26 ~ *When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, **He** will testify about Me,*

John 16:13 ~ *But when **He**, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He** will guide you into all the truth; for **He** will not speak on **His** own initiative, but whatever **He** hears, **He** will speak; and **He** will disclose to you what is to come.*

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Neuter Noun</u>	<u>Masculine Noun</u>
John 15:26	πνευμα (spirit)	εκεινος (He)
John 16:13	“	“
John 16:14	“	“

Relationships of Personality

- Because the Holy Spirit is a Person, it is logical to assume that He will have relationships with other persons

The Helper

John 14:16 ~ *And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;*

- “another” = another of the same kind (*allos*) not another of a different kind (*heteros*)
- The Holy Spirit was another of the same kind as Christ – He would be taking the place of the Son of God in relation to the disciples

John 14:26 ~ *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

- Jesus promised to send to His disciples “another helper”
- The counselor, from the Greek word *parakletos*, means one who gives support; a helper, adviser, encourager, ally.
- The term specifies that Jesus was promising a replacement who, after He was gone, would carry on the teaching/testimony that Christ had started.
- This ministry was to be personal and relational, implying a personhood of the one who will come to fill it

John 16:7 ~ *But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*

- In view of Jesus’ statements linking the Spirit’s coming with his own going away, it is clear that the Spirit is a replacement for Jesus and will carry on the same role.
- The similarity in their function is an indication that the Holy Spirit, like Jesus, must be a person.

Linked with the Father and the Son

- He relates to the other Persons of the Trinity as an equal Person:

Mathew 28:19 ~ *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*

2 Corinthians 13:14 ~ *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*

Jude 20-21 ~ *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.*

Linked with other Persons

- He relates to the apostles in a manner which shows His own distinct personality, yet He is His own Person:

Acts 15:28 ~ *For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:*