

#158 “Ministries of the Holy Spirit”

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The Holy Spirit is not just some invisible, abstract being that plays a secondary or tertiary role when it comes to the Godhead. He is God, the third Person of the Trinity, and He is powerful and intimately involved in our lives as believers. We need to know just how involved He is lest we underestimate His power and provision in our lives. Here is a list of the many things that He is busy doing even this very moment:

- Regenerating

John 3:5-6

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’” (see also John 7:38-39, Romans 8:11)

Central to the gospel message is the truth that people must be born again of the Spirit in order to enter heaven. This requires a faith in the truth that the old sinful man must die with Christ on the cross along with his sins so that a new holy creation in Christ can be generated, being raised to new life with and through Christ.

- Renewing

Titus 3:5

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

Renewing is a total renovation of the heart, mind, and soul. By God’s mercy, at the point of salvation, the Holy Spirit brings forth a new creation in Christ, leaving the old behind (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- Justifying

1 Corinthians 6:11

“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

The Spirit is involved in our cleansing from sin through justification in Christ as we are declared righteous in Him.

- Baptizing

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

John the Baptist used water baptism as a visible picture of repentance in preparation for the Messiah. Jesus, however, baptizes converts in the Spirit (Luke 3:16).

- Indwelling

Romans 8:11

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” (see also 1Corinthians 3:16, 2 Timothy 1:14)

The power of the God Who is bigger than the universe is working in us to sanctify us and bear eternal fruit. That extremely wonderful and very humbling truth ought never to grow old, but rather it ought to be a constant reminder of God’s presence and help.

- Empowering

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (see also Romans 15:13, 1 Corinthians 2:4, Ephesians 3:16)

We do nothing of true and lasting spiritual value on our own power but only by the Spirit’s. It is not by our might, wit, or strength but His alone.

- Teaching

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.”

That the Holy Spirit continually teaches us is a great comfort. When we don’t understand a passage or need instruction in the ways of the Lord, He is there. Without Him, we would be bound to perpetual ignorance, for only through Him can true wisdom be gained.

- Sanctifying

Romans 15:16

“To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” (see also 2Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2)

The Spirit’s work does not end at salvation, for He continues to work in and through us to make us more like Christ throughout the rest of our lives. He does not sleep or slumber when it comes to our sanctification.

- Leading

Romans 8:14

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

For the true believer, there will always be an inner source of direction as to what God wants as opposed to what He does not want. As we yield to the Spirit’s direction more and more, we will see more evidence that we are indeed sons and daughters of God.

- Guiding

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.”

There will be many times in life where we will need help bringing the truth of Scripture to bear upon various decisions and challenges in our lives. The promise from our Lord is that He has given the Spirit expressly for that purpose.

- Convicting

John 16:8

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

The Spirit has never encountered a sinful heart that He can tolerate or ignore. He will unceasingly convict and create guilty feelings until a sin is dealt with. Unbelievers who blaspheme Him by spurning His convicting will never find forgiveness leading to salvation (Luke 12:10). Believers who have responded to the drawing of the Spirit will still find that His ministry of conviction is alive and well should they harbor sin in their hearts.

- Filling

Ephesians 5:18

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”

Believers can be full of the Spirit when they are empty of serving their own fleshly interests and fleshly lusts. A heart fully surrendered and submitted to God is a heart that can be filled with power and strength to do God’s will.

- Interceding

Romans 8:26

“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as

we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”
(see also Ephesians 6:18)

Without the Spirit’s enabling and teaching, we wouldn’t even be able to pray as we ought. He is there to help us know what to pray for and how to pray. He will even take the intention of our words, poorly expressed as they might be, to God with utmost clarity and definition.

- Testifying

Romans 8:16

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.” (see also John 15:26, Galatians 4:6)

Sometimes the devil will try to get us to doubt our salvation. It is the Spirit alone who can remind us that we are changed from the inside out, crying out with love and joy to our Father in heaven. Only believers have this love for God and His Word, and the Spirit reminds us of this when we need reminding.

- Helping

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 will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

The word translated “helper” could also be translated “advocate,” “comforter,” or “one who comes to another’s aid.” The Holy Spirit has been summoned of the Father to be the One Who aids us in our walk in Christ. No matter what we encounter, we are at an advantage because we have the Spirit.

- Reminding

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.”

The Holy Spirit will remind us what we need to know from the Scripture when we need to know it as we walk by faith. The more we study and meditate upon the Scripture, the more there will be to recall to remembrance.

- Sealing

Ephesians 4:30

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (see also Ephesians 1:13, 2 Corinthians 1:22)

God has given us the Holy Spirit as a pledge of our guaranteed future glorification and entrance into heaven. Since He has already given us His Spirit, we can be sure that He will give us heaven as well.

- Speaking

Mark 13:11

“When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.” (see also Luke 12:12, Acts 4:31)

Not just any words of clever human wisdom will suffice when it comes to matters of the kingdom of God. The Spirit can be relied upon to give us the words that we need to speak so that God can accomplish His plan in and through us. When we don't know what to say but we need to say something, the Spirit is there to help.

- Rejoicing

Luke 10:21

“At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.’”

As we learn things by the Holy Spirit and see more and more the wonder and wisdom of God, we won't be able to help but rejoice in the Spirit. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit that, by definition, only those with the Spirit can possess.

- Freeing

Romans 8:2

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (see also 2 Corinthians 3:17)

Only through the grace of God can the shackles to sin and the devil be broken. The Spirit is there to remind us that we are indeed free and to empower us to live free. Life in the Spirit is not about earning God's favor but rather living as those who are favored, enjoying freedom, and walking according to His lead.

- Loving

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.” (see also Colossians 1:8)

Only those who love the Lord can truly love as God loves (1 John 4:7-8). The Spirit

blesses His people with the fruit of being able to love with a selflessness and freedom that the world desperately needs to know.

- Searching

1 Corinthians 2:10

“For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.”

The Spirit will give us access to everything that we need to know when we need to know it. He searches out all truth so that He can help us do the same.

- Gifting

1 Corinthians 12:7

“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

The Holy Spirit purposefully gifts each member of the body of Christ with gifts for the use of serving others. As such, there is no reason to boast because, as we find our niche in God’s kingdom, we will see God’s power in our weakness all the more.

- Unifying

Ephesians 4:3

“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (see also Jude 1:19)

The Spirit does not bring division to the people of God. That is the devil’s work. The Spirit points His people to truth which unifies. This unification might require a removal of the chaff, but this is not division, rather cleansing leading to unification. Where there is unity, there can be peace, another fruit of the Spirit that only He can bring.

- Establishing, Defining, Proclaiming, and Advancing Truth

1 John 5:6

*“It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”
(see also Matthew 12:18)*

The Holy Spirit cannot and does not exist apart from being the truth. All that He does is to advance the truth and to guide people into it. It is because of a single absolute truth that unity, peace, joy, freedom, and sanctification even make sense and are possible.

We are not alone, for God has given us His Spirit to be our ever-present and constant help. We are fully inadequate of ourselves yet fully adequate through the Spirit. May God create humility in His people so that He may fill us with His Spirit and accomplish great and wonderful things for His glory.