

→ God in Us: The Transforming Power of the Spirit

*"In brief, his ministry is both to reveal Christ to us and to form Christ in us, so that we grow steadily in our knowledge of Christ and in our likeness to Christ. It is by the power of the indwelling Spirit that the evil desires of our fallen nature are retrained and the good fruit of Christian character is produced." (John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*)*

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in us?

- A. Revelation/Illumination- the ability to know, understand, and accept the truth of Christ and the conviction of sin to lead a person to repent and put faith in Jesus toward Salvation
I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Eph 1:17)
- B. Justification- the application or imputation of Christ's righteousness onto our lives so that we no longer stand condemned before God.
And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:13-14)
- C. Regeneration- the rebirth of the person so that they go from death to life and the reorientation of the heart from itself toward God by the activity of the Spirit.
I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ez. 36:26-27)
- D. Baptism or Filling- the activation of the Spirit's supernatural power in our lives to allow for sanctification and empowered Christian living and ministry.
On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:4-5)
- E. Sanctification (Spiritual Formation)- the process of molding us into Christ-likeness.
And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)

→ Some questions to ponder:

- Which is the greater miracle? The salvation of a person, the formation of a person into the image of Christ, or the healing of a person's terminal illness?
- Which of these miracles most stir our hearts toward awe and worship?
- Does our life and ministry reflect a particular value for one over the others?

→ Fruits of the Spirit: Galatians 5:16-26

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

→ The Cultivation of the Soul and the Demonstration of the Spirit in Us

- A. Although it is clear that salvation is by grace alone and received through faith alone, Scripture gives us signs and indicators that the Spirit of Salvation lives in us. In partnership with the Holy Spirit through the process of spiritual formation we must seek to daily crucify our old nature and put on the nature of Christ.
- B. When trying to produce good fruit we don't cultivate the fruit, but the plant! Remember that it is not simply about "living rightly" (that leads to legalism), but rather the transformation of the core of who we are (our will, character, thoughts, etc.) We must learn to partner with the Spirit in the cultivation of our souls.
- C. Instead of focusing on "sin management" focus on "soul cultivation" through identifying and redeeming our sinful nature through the love and truth of Christ. For example, instead of trying to simply not lie to your friends, try to identify through the guidance of the Spirit what motivates you to lie. You may discover a fear of being rejected that you can invite Christ to speak into thus cultivating the soul and correcting the action.
- D. Regularly ask yourself if you are seeing an increase of the fruits of the Spirit in your life. Again, it is not simply about demonstrating the fruit, but discovering what areas of our character need to be redeemed and restored by God.
- E. Although all demonstrations of the spirit are important and should be pursued (gifts, signs, and wonders), the ultimate demonstration of the Spirit in us is through our character and the way we live our lives in love and grace. It is possible to apparently sin less, have all the teaching right, operate powerfully in spiritual gifts, and do effective ministry without a demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit!

"Our gifting rests on top of our character. If character isn't in place, everything will topple over." (Jamie Wilson)

→ Some Questions to reflect on this Week:

- Where are areas in my life that I choose to practice "sin management" instead of "soul cultivation?"
- What is one fruit of the spirit that you feel like you lack and want to grow in? What are ways that you can practice demonstrating this fruit?
- HOMEWORK: Take the spiritual gifts inventory online before next week. Read the descriptions of your top 5 gifts and write down your top 5 spiritual gifts in order and bring it to Leadership Meeting.

Take this test (0- never; 4- always): <http://buildingchurch.net/g2s-i.htm>

Gift Descriptions: <http://buildingchurch.net/g2s-d.htm>