

A NEW HEART & A NEW SPIRIT*

From the beginning of mankind, it was God's design to have a heart to heart relationship with us so that we could be and do all the things He intended for us. Unfortunately, Adam messed this up for all of us by eating from the wrong tree because of his nature of rebellion against God. As descendants of Adam, we are just like him because we were born with the same rebellious heart. In our human minds, we can never figure out what God would do or what He wants us to do in any given situation. No matter how godly we try to be, our Adam-like hearts are selfish, deceived, wicked, and constantly in error against God.

*Jeremiah 17:9: The **heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.** Who can understand it?*

*Genesis 6:5: The LORD saw how **great the wickedness of the human race** had become on the earth, and that **every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.***

Even if we managed to figure it out God's will in any given situation, it would not be in our nature to do it the way God wanted. As such, even if we tried to do it to the best of our ability, we would eventually fail. We are totally unable to do the will of God with our own mind, will, and heart.

God knew this about humanity. He foresaw the solution and promised to bring it to fruition.

*Ezekiel 36:26: 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.*

*Jeremiah 24:7: I will **give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD.** They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.*

*Ezekiel 11:19: I will **give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them**; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.*

God fulfilled these promises through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the new heart and the new spirit which God has given us and places within us when we believe Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Jesus, whose only desire and agenda is to see the will of God fulfilled. When we believe Jesus, we are born again as a new type of people on the earth who have the very nature of God inside of us. In generations past, God kept this hidden as a mystery but now, the promise is revealed and realized in us. Jesus is inside of us!

*2Peter 1:4: Through these [God's power, glory, and goodness] he has given us **his very great and precious promises**, so that through them **you may participate in the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

*Colossians 1:26-27: the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the **glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

The Holy Spirit gives us direct and constant connection to God at all times to know His will and also supplies the strength for us to do it. The Holy Spirit gives us the very life of God in our mortal bodies and the same power which raised Christ from the dead. Therefore, when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit over our own inclinations and preferences, we become like

Jesus. This is how God transforms our hearts, renews our minds, changes our character, and gives us moral fortitude to walk in righteousness as our own genuine response in whatever situation we face. Christ is in us!

In fact, the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christ's first followers made them so much like Christ that this is how they became known as Christians, which means little Christ's. The word Christ is the Greek equivalent used to express that Jesus is the "Messiah" or anointed King, and also means "Anointed or Anointed One." To anoint means "to smear," typically with oil, and it is symbolic of consecration or being set apart for a special assignment from God. In the same way that Jesus was God's Anointed One, now, we are His anointed ones. He has anointed us with the Holy Spirit. I like Thayer's Greek Lexicon definition of Christ: "who by His holy power and Spirit lives in the souls of His followers, and so moulds their characters that they bear His likeness giving them a mind conformed to the mind of Christ."

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

Let's take a deeper look at the Spirit of the Lord which now dwells inside of us because we believe Jesus.

*Isaiah 11:2-3a: The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- **the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD-- and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.***

This passage describes the Spirit of the Lord that rested upon Jesus and now dwells within each one of us who believe. This is the Spirit of the Lord, the self-existent one who has no beginning and no end, and the only one Creator of the Universe. The Spirit of the Great I AM dwells inside of us. The God whose unapproachable presence and power caused sinners and men to be struck down in an instant can now dwell inside of us because the sacrifice of Jesus cleanses our sin to give us access to God. Amazing!

The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding. Wisdom could be defined as is the right application of knowledge at the right time and understanding could be defined as the accurate perception of circumstances, people, and the dynamics involved in whatever situation we face.

The Holy Spirit gives us counsel and might. When Jesus was with His disciples, He counseled them in the will of God but now that He has ascended to God, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide us from within as our Counselor who reminds us of all that Jesus taught and demonstrated so that we stay in alignment with God's will. (See John 14:26.) Along with the counsel, the Holy Spirit gives us the might, meaning the strength, bravery, moral fortitude, or supernatural power, to put the counsel into practice.

The Holy Spirit gives us knowledge. This includes the knowing God directly and experientially for ourselves; plus the knowledge of God's will and ways in order to do what He desires; and the knowledge of things which are to come. (See Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9-10; John 16:13.) Without this knowledge, we perish. (See Hosea 4:6.) Moreover, with the intelligence of the Creator of all things and the author of all truth, the Holy Spirit can give us a higher level of intelligence than we could ever attain in our own natural minds.

The Holy Spirit gives us the fear of the Lord. At the end of the age, every person will stand before God and give account for what they have done – good or bad. The fear of the Lord is to live today with reverent recognition of God's supremacy and authority in our lives by following His ways and turning away from evil. (See Proverbs 8:13; Job 28:28; Psalm 11:10.)

CHOOSING THE TREE OF LIFE

Now that the Spirit of the Lord dwells inside of us, we should be the wisest, most intelligent, powerful, and honorable people on earth, right? Well...yes! The problem is that we do not always choose to listen to the Holy Spirit and even if we listen, we do not always do what He says. Hmmm... This sounds like the problem of all mankind from the beginning.

God has given us freewill to choose to obey Him or not. Back in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had constant access to the Tree of Life at any time they desired in addition to eating from any other fruit bearing tree. All things were permitted for them, except for one tree: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good

and Evil. This tree was very appealing to look at and seemed to promise great rewards of strength, wisdom, and prosperity. But it had no ability to give life and, in fact, brought only death. Adam and Eve chose to eat from the forbidden tree and were subsequently banished from the Garden of Eden, losing their access to the Tree of Life in the process.

Interestingly, Biblical references to the Tree of Life can only be found in the Genesis, the beginning, the book of Revelation, the end, and the book of Proverbs, which is a collection of God's wisdom right in the middle. In the beginning, God gave humans full access to the Tree of Life and in the end, after God has judged the earth and restored it, we will again have full access to the Tree of Life. But in the meantime as we wait for total restoration, through faith in Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit, God has given us spiritual access to the Tree of Life again.

*Proverbs 3:18: **She [wisdom] is a tree of life** to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.*

*1 Corinthians 1:30: It is because of him that **you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.***

God's wisdom is a Tree of Life. Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. Therefore, with the Spirit of God's wisdom dwelling inside of us, we have Tree of Life is within us! The life of God gives us wisdom and vitality from within to know God's will and to do it. Figuratively speaking, this means that we can choose every day to eat from the Tree of Life by obeying the Holy Spirit, or we can choose to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil by following our own inclinations, desires, and fleshly passions.

Jesus is our example of one who lived this way. Jesus never did anything to try to be a good person or do good things. Jesus never did anything that was evil. He never functioned from a "principle" or "theology" or "teaching" about what was right/good and what was wrong/evil. He obeyed God by obeying the Holy Spirit that was within Him. He always did what the Father desired for Him to do and only said what God said. (See John 5:19, 8:48, 12:49.) For certain, Jesus could discern good and evil very clearly, but all of His actions were based on God's will and guidance in each situation because He was always being led by God, not by His flesh.

For us, this means submitting to the promptings of the Holy Spirit inside of us rather than caving into the cravings of our flesh. This includes dying to ourselves and our own ideas. If we are truly dead in Christ's death then, what right do we have to have thoughts of our own about what we should be doing? The truth is that even when we do "good" things, they can be wrong things when they are not God-directed things. Our aim is not to be "good" but to be like Jesus. To be like Him means to do it the way He did, by the indwelling Holy Spirit rather than the knowledge of good and evil that comes from principles, theologies, and our own ideas about things.

If we persist in living by our fleshly desires, we may as well be eating from the wrong tree, like Adam. We have a bad spiritual diet and it will show in our lives. Typically, this results in us becoming frustrated and having a wrong view of God because He didn't bless the mess that we chose to get ourselves into, or because we are dealing with the consequences of our own self-directed choices. (See Galatians 6:7.) This also evidences itself when we are always searching for the next great teaching that is going to fix our lives or the most anointed preacher or teacher who can solve all our problems. When we won't look to the Holy Spirit within, we will look for the Holy Spirit in others. Our spiritual growth will be stunted or stagnated and we will be confused.

*Ephesians 4:13-14: until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and **become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will **no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.***

Hebrews 5:14 NASB: But **solid food is for the mature**, who because of practice have their senses trained to **discern good and evil**.

Part of the good news is that unlike Adam in the Garden of Eden, we do not lose our access to the Tree of Life (or Holy Spirit) if we choose to eat from the wrong tree. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for our mistakes and self-willed choices. His love covers over our errors as we grow but His grace is not an excuse for our willful disobedience.

When we cooperate with the Holy Spirit by allowing ourselves to be led by Him, we become the children of God. We no longer have to be enslaved to trying to earn good standing with God through trying to be good. Jesus purchased good standing with God for us so that we can be children of God. Now, we cry out to God as our Father who loves us and always leads us on the path of righteousness to the most blessing. Our heart to heart connection with God has been restored!

Romans 8:14-15: For **those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God**. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, **the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."**

If we truly appreciate what Jesus has done for us, we desire to grow up in Him by learning how to hear and obey God's voice. When we have a good spiritual diet through obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance, we grow spiritually to maturity and Christ's likeness – the full measure of sonship. We also become like a Tree of Life. As we do the things that Jesus does and say the things that Jesus says, we become like branches of Christ and we produce life-giving fruit which supplies wisdom and strength to others while drawing them to Jesus.

Proverbs 11:30: **The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life**, and the one who is wise saves lives.

ROLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

While we walk with God in deeper and deeper levels of dependence on Him, it can be helpful to know the job descriptions of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit does not do His job then God is a liar. Since God is not a liar, we can trust Him to do these things, especially when we cannot see with our eyes or in our circumstances that He is at work. For starters, Jesus said this about what the Holy Spirit does:

John 16:8-11 ESV - And **when he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

The Holy Spirit is the only one who can truly change a human heart. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can prove to anyone that Jesus is their Lord, Savior, and eternal Judge. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can convince anyone that they are a sinner in need of a Savior or that what they have been doing or believing is wrong. No matter how persuasive an evangelist or apologist is, they have no power to change anyone's heart. Only God can do that, and He does so by His Spirit.

Equally so, for those who do believe Jesus, the Holy Spirit is the only one who can expose the areas of unbelief in our lives in a way that brings lasting change and releases us to receive God's blessings. The Holy Spirit helps us to know that we have victory over the evil one who has been defeated through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Our salvation and growth to spiritual maturity is the Holy Spirit's job from start to finish. Our role is to believe God and let the Holy Spirit do His job by listening to Him and obeying Him when He speaks rather than resisting Him or thinking that we know better. This means that we can stop telling God how to do His job in our lives and we can stop bossing other people around and manipulating them to get our own way because we trust that our Father is working it all out for us and for them in His way, in His timing, and for His purposes. He has been God for a very long time and He knows what He is doing!

Here is a chart of the various roles and job description of the Holy Spirit.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	
Holy Spirit Job Description	Scriptures
Births us as children of God, cries out “Abba, Father” in our hearts. Gives us life, seals us for redemption.	John 3:5-8, 6:63 ▪ Romans 8:11,16 ▪ 1 Corinthians 12:13 ▪ 2 Corinthians 1:22, 3:6, 5:5 ▪ Galatians 4:6, 6:8 ▪ Ephesians 1:13, 4:30
Regenerates, purifies, sanctifies, washes and transforms us. Gives us fruit of the spirit, the character of Christ, and joy.	John 16:8-11 ▪ Romans 15:16 ▪ 1 Corinthians 6:11 ▪ 2 Corinthians 3:18 ▪ Galatians 5:22-23 ▪ 1Thessalonians 1:6 ▪ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ▪ 1 Peter 1:2 ▪ Titus 3:5
Brings liberty from law of sin and death. Pours love into our hearts, dwells in us, fills us, and helps us know Jesus is in us.	John 14:17 ▪ Acts 2:4, 4:8,31, 9:17 ▪ Romans 5:5, 8:2,9 ▪ 1 Corinthians 3:16 ▪ 2 Corinthians 3:17 ▪ Ephesians 5:18 ▪ 2 Timothy 1:14 ▪ 1 John 3:24, 4:13
Teaches, reveals mysteries of God, and reminds us of the teachings of Jesus.	Luke 12:12 ▪ John 14:26, 16:13-15 ▪ Acts 6:10 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 ▪ Ephesians 1:17, 3:5 ▪ 1 John 2:27
Speaks to us and through us. Confesses that Jesus is Lord who came in the flesh. Says “Come, Lord Jesus.”	Matthew 10:20 ▪ John 15:26-27, 16:13-14 ▪ 1 Corinthians 12:3 ▪ 1 Timothy 4:1 ▪ Hebrews 3:7 ▪ Revelation 2:11, 22:17 ▪ 1 John 4:2 ▪ Acts 2:4, 4:31, 8:29, 10:19, 11:12,28, 21:4,11
Comforts, encourages, and helps us. Intercedes for us teaches us to pray.	John 14:26 ▪ Acts 9:31 ▪ Romans 8:26-27 ▪ 1 Corinthians 14:14 ▪ Jude 1:20
Knows and guides us in the ways and will of God. Gives us access to God. Bears witness to truth.	Mark 1:12 ▪ John 16:8,13 ▪ Romans 8:14, 9:1 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:11 ▪ Galatians 5:18 ▪ Ephesians 2:18 ▪ Acts 1:2, 8:29, 10:19, 11:28, 13:4, 16:6-7, 20:22-23
Gives power for life, to obey truth, in our bodies. Battles against flesh. Empowers for ministry, and with spiritual gifts, prophecy/dreams/visions, etc.	Matthew 12:28 ▪ Luke 4:18-19, 24:49 ▪ Acts 1:8, 2:4, 17-18 ▪ Romans 1:11, 8:11, 15:19 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:4, 12:7-13, 14:2 ▪ Galatians 5:16-26 ▪ Ephesians 3:16 ▪ Hebrews 2:4 ▪ 1 Peter 1:12 ▪ 2 Peter 1:21 ▪ Revelation 19:10
Appoints and guides ministry. Unites and builds us into house of God.	Acts 13:2,4, 16:6-9, 20:28 ▪ 1 Corinthians 4:21 ▪ 2 Corinthians 1:17 ▪ Ephesian 2:14-22, 4:3

All of this means that because you believe Jesus, God has given you a new heart and a new spirit. The Holy Spirit will change your life by changing your heart. You have nothing to fear because Christ is in you!

*2 Timothy 1:7: For the **Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.***

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