

UNITED FAITH FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRIES
BIBLE STUDY: Holy Spirit and Christian Growth
Curriculum Outline: By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
Vines Expository Dictionary

I. Introduction.

The "Holy Spirit" is spoken of under various titles in the NT ("Spirit" and "Ghost" are renderings of the same word, pneuma; the advantage of the rendering "Spirit" is that it can always be used, whereas "Ghost" always requires the word "Holy" prefixed.)

In the following list the omission of the definite article marks its omission in the original (concerning this see below):

- "Spirit, <Matt. 22:43>; Eternal Spirit, <Heb. 9:14>; the Spirit, <Matt. 4:1>; Holy Spirit, <Matt. 1:18>;
- the Holy Spirit, <Matt. 28:19>; the Spirit, the Holy, <Matt. 12:32>; the Spirit of promise, the Holy, <Eph. 1:13>;
- Spirit of God, <Rom. 8:9>; Spirit of (the) living God, <2 Cor. 3:3>; the Spirit of God, <1 Cor. 2:11>;
- the Spirit of our God, <1 Cor. 6:11>; the Spirit of God, the Holy, <Eph. 4:30>; the Spirit of glory and of God, <1 Pet. 4:14>;
- the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead (i. e., God), <Rom. 8:11>; the Spirit of your Father, <Matt. 10:20>; the Spirit of His Son, <Gal. 4:6>; Spirit of (the) Lord, <Acts 8:39>; the Spirit of (the) Lord, <Acts 5:9>; (the) Lord, (the) Spirit, <2 Cor. 3:18>;
- the Spirit of Jesus, <Acts 16:7>; Spirit of Christ, <Rom. 8:9>; the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <Phil. 1:19>; Spirit of adoption, <Rom. 8:15>; the Spirit of truth, <John 14:17>; the Spirit of life, <Rom. 8:2>; the Spirit of grace, <Heb. 10:29>."

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

The gift of the Holy Spirit was promised to every saved person.

- "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:38

- "We are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him"
Acts 5:32
- "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13
 - a. Luke says the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.
 - b. Matthew, in a comparable passage says, your heavenly father shall "give good things to them that ask him" Matt.7:11
 - c. The Holy Spirit of Luke corresponds to the things of Matthew.
- "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body"
I Cor. 6:19-20
- For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" Rom. 8:14
- And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father"
Gal. 4:6

The Bible promises the leading and indwelling of the Spirit to all the saved.

1. It is not a question of does this happen. We know it does!
2. The question is how does it happen.

II. How Does the Holy Spirit Help the Child of God?

- A. We know the Holy Spirit convicts and converts the sinner by the power of the revealed word.
- B. There are at least two theories about how the Holy Spirit works in the life of the Christian.

One theory says the Holy Spirit works in the life of the child of God in a direct, abstract, immediate, inconceivable, independent, mysterious and supernatural way.

A second theory says the Holy Spirit works in the life of the Child of God in an indirect, immediate, understandable, dependent, and natural way.

- (a) The first group feels led or urged to do or say certain things.
- (b) The second group is instructed to do or say certain things.

The first theory--the idea of a direct and immediate leading of the Spirit--is mostly emotional.

The Bible warns us not to be guided by emotion, or to look within ourselves for leading.

- (a) "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death"
Prov. 14:12).
- (b) "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct
his steps" Jere. 10:23
- (c) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?"
Jere. 17:9

We are sometimes urged to make ourselves sensitive to the subtle influence of the Spirit as he works on us by hint and nudge.

- (a) The problem with this kind of talk is that you do not find it in the New Testament.
- (b) No Bible writers ever gave people such advice.

The second theory--the indirect leading of the Spirit through the revealed word--is emphatically taught in the New Testament.

- "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63).
- "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" 1 Cor. 2:13
- "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" Rom. 1:16
- "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness
- That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work"
2 Tim. 3:15-17

"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" Acts 20:32

How the Holy Spirit guided and instructed first century disciples.

1. *The case of Philip.*

- (a) The angel told Philip--spoke words--what to do Acts 8:26
- (b) The Spirit gave Philip specific instructions in words Acts 8:29
- (b) The Holy Spirit works through the medium of words.

2. *The case of Peter*

- (a) Peter saw a vision and heard words Acts 10:10-16
- (b) The Spirit told Peter in words what to do Acts 10:19-20
- (c) The Spirit told Peter in words to go with the men Acts 11:12

3. *The case of Paul--Acts 16:6,9.*

- (a) The Holy Spirit told Paul not to go to Asia Acts 16:6
- (B) A man of Macedonia, in a vision, spoke words to Paul telling him what to do Acts 16:9

The Holy Spirit works through the medium of words, either spoken or written.

"But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons . . . " I Tim 4:1

- (a) The Spirit speaks expressly.
- (b) The words of the Spirit warn and encourage.
- (c) First century saints were instructed and edified by words.
- (d) The redeemed today are also filled, guided, instructed, and edified by words--and in no other way!

Comments on the Outline

The Bible speaks of the edification of the children of God. Jehovah uses the medium of his revealed word to instruct the sinner in what he must do to be saved. God does not come down upon the lost person in some strange, weird and inexplicable way to overpower him and compel his salvation. Neither does God instruct his child in some

mysterious manner in the way of salvation. Edification is the result of words--understood and obeyed. Christian growth comes in the same way as saving grace--through the medium of words. Paul talks about the edification of the saints: "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation" (1 Cor 14:3). The teacher speaks words of edification and exhortation. The guidance of the Spirit does not come in exotic and marvelous waves of mysterious and inexpressible feeling, but in plain and understandable statements.

The purpose of edification is to help the church grow (1 Cor. 14:4). Growth comes by commands and prohibition. You teach your children by telling them in plain language what to do and what not to do. You do not say to them, Do what feels good and follow your leanings, and, if it hurts, don't do it!

Greater is the man who tells people what to do in words they can understand than the person who ventilates spooky sentiments (1 Cor. 14:5). The purpose of revelation is to teach the saved and encourage righteous conduct (1 Cor. 14:6). Senseless things cannot teach or exhort (1 Cor. 14:7). In teaching, reproving and exhorting "utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood" (1 Cor. 14:9).

"Howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue." The drift of the New Testament is toward precise teaching. The Bible warns against eerie demonstrations. Faith healers and soothsayers are always condemned in the Bible. Simon, the user of sorcery, does not have very good press in the New Testament. Sorcery means magic, bewitchment, conjuring, enchantment, incantation, necromancy, and witchcraft.

People of sense do not flounder in the bog of obscure sentiment, but walk on the high-road of sound judgment and reason. We need explicit instruction and plain prohibitions. We do not need hocus-pocus and mumbo-jumbo. The New Testament is terse in telling us what God wants us to do and what we are to avoid. We do not need things that go "bump in the night." We need clear instruction in what is right. Edification comes in the same way as salvation -- through the medium of words. "The gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that is believing; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."