

PNEUMATOLOGY

Understanding and Living by the Holy Spirit

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The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

Alex Bauman, editor

Pneumatology: Understanding and Living by the Holy Spirit

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Contents



Lesson 1	Meet the Holy Spirit	7
Lesson 2	Picture the Holy Spirit	17
Lesson 3	The Holy Spirit of Old	27
Lesson 4	Holy Spirit Inspired	37
Lesson 15	The Spirit-filled Christ	47
Lesson 6	The Holy Spirit and Salvation	57
Lesson 7	The Baptism of the Spirit	67
Lesson 8	The Spirit's Temple	75
Lesson 9	The Spirit-filled Christian	83
Lesson 10	Sinning against the Holy Spirit	93
Lesson 11	Valuable, Invisible Gifts of the Spirit	101
Lesson 12	The Gift of Tongues	109
Lesson 13	Behind the Scenes of a Local Church	119

Preface

Phones, pads, computers, and watches give people instant access to the world, making today's common person more powerful than at any other point in history. A few words sent into cyberspace has the potential to reach millions of people almost instantly. That is quite empowering.

But most of those same empowered people are ignorant of the greatest power connection of all—the connection to the Holy Spirit. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit in us. He is waiting for us to tap into His power. And He is far more powerful and influential than anything bouncing around in cyberspace.

So what are we waiting for? There are no new upgrades to the Holy Spirit. No new features coming out. He has always been wireless, and He needs no batteries, charger cords, or adapters. He is infinitely powerful and always present in us. He is ready to influence this world through us if we will but plug into Him.

This study seeks to reconnect you with the Holy Spirit by teaching you the basics of Who He is, what He is like, and what He does. The truth presented in this course will confirm that greater is He Who is in you than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

Pay attention to the Spirit in you. He makes your potential to make a lasting mark on this world almost unbelievable. Pray that you might know and live by the power of the Holy Spirit as you get to know Him better.

Meet the Holy Spirit

Theme

God the Holy Spirit is a person Who blesses people with God's grace.

Memory Verse

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

GETTING STARTED

Hello! I am a person. Nice to meet you.

Such a greeting when meeting someone for the first time could be a little disturbing. Perhaps you would question the person's mental stability.

1. What would you say in response to such a greeting?

2. What might you conclude about someone who felt compelled to tell you that he is a person?

The fact that the Holy Spirit is a person is actually a good starting point in getting to know Him. There is much confusion about the Holy

Spirit and His relationships with people. This study introduces the Holy Spirit as a person Who is both divine and personal. Such an introduction will reveal just how vital the Holy Spirit is to your Christian walk.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Because the word *spirit* seems impersonal to many, it is difficult for them to understand that the Holy Spirit truly is a person. Several false concepts about the Holy Spirit share the common idea that He is not a personal being. Some think He is merely a force like magnetism or an influence like gravity. Others believe that the title *Holy Spirit* simply describes the power of God in a picturesque manner. But such views are incorrect. The Holy Spirit is a personal being. God is one God, but He exists in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Spirit Has the Attributes of a Person

Three prominent aspects are included in the concept of personality: intellect, emotion, and will. That means if the Holy Spirit is a person, then there will be evidence in the Bible showing the Holy Spirit has intellect, emotion, and will. That is exactly what we find.

3. Read Romans 8:27. What phrase shows that the Holy Spirit has intellect?

An influence does not have a mind and is incapable of rational thought. While gravity is difficult to fully understand, gravity itself has no intellect. Gravity does not think about keeping us from floating off into space.

The Holy Spirit also demonstrates emotion. He is not an unfeeling power, remote from the emotions with which we humans are familiar. A true person possesses sensitivity, emotions, feelings. If the Holy Spirit were not personal, what sense would Paul's exhortation to *grieve not the holy Spirit of God* (Eph. 4:30) make? The apostle's warning reminds us that the Spirit is extremely sensitive to sin. All sins cause Him grief.

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:11. How are spiritual gifts dispensed to believers?

The Holy Spirit also has a will, meaning He is more than just a power emanating from God. He personally decided which believer would get which spiritual gift. That is why ignoring our spiritual gifts or wishing we had different ones is so offensive to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's abilities to know, feel, and make decisions form an important part of the Biblical evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person.

The Spirit Works as a Person

5. Read Romans 8:26. What work of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in this passage?

6. Read John 14:26. What work did Christ say the Holy Spirit would carry out?

The Holy Spirit prays, or offers petitions, to the Father, an exercise which only a person could accomplish. Prayer involves knowledge, orderly thought processes, and purpose. The Holy Spirit *helps our infirmities*, or weaknesses (Rom. 8:26). When we don't know what to say, He does. He serves us as a wonderful prayer companion.

We also saw that the Holy Spirit teaches. John 14:26 refers to special revelation of truth which would be given to the apostles in order that they might pen the Holy Scriptures. Obviously, only a person could instruct other persons. Teaching requires knowledge, logic, and the ability to communicate intelligently.

There are other examples of the Spirit's work as a person. The Biblical evidence is not at all lacking.

The Spirit Is Referred to as a Person

The Greek word for *spirit* is *pneuma* from which we get such words as *pneumonia* and *pneumatic*. Since this word is in the neuter gender in the Greek language, pronouns referring to *pneuma* would normally be in the

neuter gender as well, following the grammatical laws of the language. However, sometimes in the New Testament, masculine pronouns are used to refer to the Holy Spirit. Those pronouns should be translated by the English pronoun he rather than it. An example is found in John 15:26 where Christ stated, *But when the Comforter is come . . . he shall testify of me.* The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is addressed as a person, he.

In another passage conveying the same truth, Christ said, *It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* (John 16:7, 8). The repetition of the masculine personal pronouns emphasizes the Spirit's personality.

7. Why do you care that the Holy Spirit is a person?

The fact that the Spirit is a person means that He can understand and minister to us as persons. It also is comforting to know that when believers are led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14), they are not directed by some impersonal force, but by a warm, compassionate, and all-wise heavenly friend. The Holy Spirit knows all about our lives and feels our deepest longings.

We have examined some of the Biblical evidence demonstrating that the Holy Spirit is a person. But what kind of a person is He? Perhaps He is a created person, finite and operating within limitations, like human beings or angels. The Scriptures answer clearly. He is God. Three lines of thought serve to prove this.

The Spirit Has the Attributes of God

By attributes we mean those personal qualities that are essentially God's, the characteristics that make Him the unique person He is. If qualities that only God possesses in perfection are the qualities of the Holy Spirit, then we can conclude that the Holy Spirit truly is God.

8. Read Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Titus 3:5. Why do we call the Spirit the *Holy Spirit*?

The Holy Spirit is indeed holy. While man may possess a relative holiness given to him by divine grace, only God Himself is holy in the absolute sense. The Holy Spirit, as a member of the Trinity, is absolutely holy.

9. Read Isaiah 6:1–7. What did God’s holiness cause Isaiah to recognize about himself?

The holiness of the Spirit is very important in relation to the believer. *Holy* immediately identifies Him as One Who is utterly and absolutely opposed to all that is wrong. He is the foe of dishonesty, cheating, filth, and all other wicked things that are spawned in the human heart. When a believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he will begin to note the Spirit’s influence in his life. Negatively, the Holy Spirit will produce guilt and feelings of regret or uneasiness when the believer sins. Positively, the Holy Spirit will help the believer to have holy motives, thoughts, words, and deeds as the Spirit empowers the believer to be holy as God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent. *Omnipresent* means that He is everywhere present at the same time. The psalmist appropriately asked, *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?* (Ps. 139:7). The writer expressed overwhelming confidence that the Holy Spirit was present everywhere. He would not be absent from the Spirit in any conceivable place.

The Spirit’s attribute of omnipresence helps us understand why it is possible for Him to be present always with each believer on earth. It gives us confidence that no lonely, needy, suffering, tempted, or troubled believer is ever alone. The blessed Comforter is always with him. *Even the darkness hideth not from thee* (Ps. 139:12). The Holy Spirit is everywhere all the time. Why? Because He is God.

10. Of what help is an awareness of the Spirit’s omnipresence to the imprisoned believer in Iran?

The Holy Spirit is also omnipotent, meaning He possesses unlimited power. The book of Job speaks of *the spirit of God as the breath of the Almighty* (Job 33:4), equating the Holy Spirit with the Almighty God. There is nothing that is outside of the Spirit's ability to perform so long as it does not violate His holiness. That is amazing when we consider the omnipotent Spirit lives in all believers. That's why John could say, *greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world* (1 John 4:4).

The Spirit Works as God

The Holy Spirit does things that only God can do. For instance, Who but God can create? This is an exclusively divine activity, yet the Holy Spirit is stated to have participated in the original creation (Gen. 1:2).

11. Read Psalm 104:30. What did the psalmist say about the Spirit's involvement in creation?

The mighty Spirit Who can create something out of nothing must be God.

What about the Holy Spirit's part in our Lord's human birth? Mary was told that her child would be produced by the power of the Spirit (Luke 1:35). Only God could produce a human embryo without human fertilization. Jesus' conception was a miracle, a divine work wrought by God the Holy Spirit.

One further testimony to the deity of the Spirit is His work in regenerating the sinner, bringing him to new life in Christ. Every child of God has been *born of the Spirit* (John 3:6). It is God Who brings us out of our death in sins and gives us life in Christ.

The Spirit Is Referred to as God

In the days of the apostles, a couple named Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceive their fellow church members. They brought an offering to God, pretending to give all the proceeds from the sale of some property, when in fact they were keeping some of the money.

12. Read Acts 5:3, 4. To Whom did Ananias and Sapphira lie?

As Peter uncovered the couple's religious sham, he presented the Holy Spirit's deity. Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit (5:3), Who is God (5:4). The Spirit is no less than God Himself.

We need an emphasis on the deity of the Spirit today when careless living is all too common among God's people. Believers' flesh-driven lives may be hidden from their pastor and other Christian friends, but God the Holy Spirit sees them as they really are.

The Spirit Is a Personal Blessing

The Holy Spirit is not to be thought of as some lonely, remote deity, hidden in celestial glory and oblivious to human need. He is the member of the Godhead Whose responsibility is to relate divine truth personally to people.

When referring to His sanctifying ministry, Paul called him the *Spirit of our God* (1 Cor. 6:11). This title for the Holy Spirit is used frequently in Scripture. By this title the Spirit is related to God the Father (*God*) and the believer (*our*). He is the Spirit Who interprets God to us. What does God want us to do? How does He want us to do it? The Spirit makes God our God in a very real, daily, and personal sense.

13. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11. What transformations are listed in verse 11?

This same Scripture indicates that the Holy Spirit works in perfect conjunction with the other Persons of the Trinity. Christ and the Holy Spirit both have a part in the sanctifying of the believer. No jealousy, no rivalry, no antagonism, and no conflict exists between the members of the Godhead, nor has there ever been from all eternity. The Holy Spirit does not seek to invade the work of God the Son, nor vice versa. The Holy Spirit accomplishes His work in perfect harmony with the other Persons. This serves as a stimulating example to believers in our ministries for Christ.

A personal designation for the Holy Spirit is found in Hebrews 10:29, where He is called the *Spirit of grace*. Between the sinner and an awful judgment (*without mercy*; Heb. 10:28) stands the Spirit of grace. He pleads

with men and unveils the riches of God's grace. He warns of Hell and points men to Calvary. He calls in grace, presents God's grace, and lifts up the Christ of grace.

14. What difference would it make in your life if the Spirit was void of any grace?

What a strong picture of God's concern for a lost world is painted for us in this title. The Holy Spirit works through the Word and faithful witnesses, pointing people to Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. He presents salvation by grace through the hearts and lips of God's people. But hardhearted men have insulted (*done despise*; 10:29) the Spirit of grace. They reject His gracious pleadings and ignore His solemn warnings. How grieved He is at their refusal.

Christians have always suffered in this world, and they always will because this world is not their home. Its ways, pleasures, ambitions, and methods are not compatible with a believer's heart's desires. In light of these facts, Peter encouraged suffering believers in his day not to despair (1 Pet. 4:12–19). As the Shekinah glory of the Lord hovered over the people of God in the Old Testament (Exod. 33:9, 10), so the Lord will hover over His New Testament saints as they suffer for Him in this world. He will bear them up and encourage them by reminders of the coming glory which they will share with Christ, the Head of the Church.

Peter's expression, *resteth upon* (1 Pet. 4:14), contains the thought of refreshment or strengthening. During fiery trials the Spirit Who lives in us will refresh and strengthen us. He is the witness to our present glory—to belong to God—and is the guarantee of our future glory—to live with and enjoy God forever.

15. Record a time when the Spirit encouraged you.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

16. Have you trusted in Christ as your Savior? If not, why not?

Only believers have their sins forgiven and the Holy Spirit indwelling them. If the Spirit is not in you, then you are lost in your sins and headed for an eternity separated from God. Don't hesitate to trust in Christ as your Savior. Start a new relationship with the Spirit today by believing in Christ for salvation (John 3:16; Acts 16:31).

17. When you think of the Holy Spirit, do you consider Him a stranger or a close friend? Explain.

18. What might you do to strengthen your relationship with and dependence on the Holy Spirit?