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# The Third Person of the Trinity: How the Holy Spirit Facilitates Man's Walk with God

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THE THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY:  
HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT FACILITATES MAN'S WALK WITH GOD

By Jimmie H. Evans III

GETTING TO KNOW THE HOLY SPIRIT

In modern times, as in the past, there is a lack of knowledge concerning the Holy Spirit, His work, and His role. Not only is there a lack of knowledge, but there is a lack of reliance upon Him, and much misunderstanding regarding His person. Ultimately, these deficiencies comprise a detrimental impact creating weak faith, inhibition of power, and rigid relationships with the Lord. This distortion of grace is unnecessary. The Lord has instituted a way for man to be restored, working in partnership with Him, and living in conformity to His will. Man is able to walk daily with God because of the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit who, as the third person of the trinity, represents the actual presence of God in the life of the believer. Knowing this, learning to live it in partnership with God, is the solution to the issues of ignorance and neglect among believers and the problems that arise from those issues.

In order to understand sufficiently the Holy Spirit, it is necessary initially to look at the Scripture's descriptions of Him beginning with the Old Testament where He rests upon a single, or few individuals at a time. Then, in the New Testament, He is promised, and then poured out upon believers, who are instructed to walk according to His ways in the epistles. After a brief examination of the Scriptures concerning the Holy Spirit, an overview of the perspective of the early church fathers regarding His person and His indwelling of the believer will help to instruct the modern viewpoint. The main thrust of the paper will be to demonstrate that if the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and if the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, then the presence of God is manifested in the life of the believer. This should aid believers in walking by the Holy Spirit in daily life, furthering their relationship with God, living in His power, and expanding His kingdom.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

When attempting to discuss any aspect of God, it seems fundamental to begin with an examination of pertinent Scriptures. While the character of God does not change from the Old Testament to the New, the way in which He relates to people does. This is also true of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, He mainly rests upon a single or few individuals, yet in the New Testament, He indwells all believers. This interaction between the Holy Spirit and individuals in the Old Testament was often for a particular purpose and was intended for a specific duration. There was no guarantee that He would continue to indwell them after the intended purpose was completed.<sup>1</sup> The selective and temporary indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the Old Testament will be evident with an assessment of a couple of Old Testament individuals. In Exodus 31:2-5, the Holy Spirit filled Bazelel to increase his skill in craftsmanship and artwork.<sup>2</sup> He was filled with the "Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and

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<sup>1</sup> Elmer Towns, *Theology for Today* (Mason, Ohio: Cengage Learning, 2008), 284.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are from the NASB, New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995.

in all kinds of craftsmanship to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze” (Exodus 31:3-4). The use of “Spirit of God,” as opposed to “Holy Spirit,” is a distinctive result of the concrete Hebrew language, yet the concept is identical. It is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, which is working within Bazelel.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the Holy Spirit is acting to improve skill. The Holy Spirit would also indwell people for the purposes of prophecy. The story of Balaam exhibits this reason and demonstrates that the Holy Spirit would rest on unbelievers when necessary. In Numbers 24:2-9, he was called on to pronounce a curse upon Israel, but instead verse 2 reads, “And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.” Furthermore, in the subsequent verses he offered a blessing rather than a curse, as the Holy Spirit was dramatically affecting him. The instance of Balaam reveals a couple of dynamic attributes of Old Testament Holy Spirit activities.<sup>4</sup> His spiritual condition did not negate the Spirit’s authority to affect him, nor did it involve salvation from sins.<sup>5</sup> The activity of the Holy Spirit in terms of recognizable allocation to man was limited in its scope and duration. Nevertheless, there was anticipation of a future event whereby He would be accessible to all believers. In Joel 2:28-29, the prophet enabled by the Lord predicted a day when the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all people. His future intention was to pour out His Spirit on “all mankind,” and it is manifested in the New Testament.

#### RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

While not as many passages exist that directly describe the Holy Spirit as there are pertaining to the Father and the Son, there are still enough to gain an idea about who He is and what He does. In attempting to find the best New Testament Scriptures relating to His identity and purpose, four sections stand out as pertinent for this discussion. The first, John 14:16-17, 26, 15:26, is a promise from Jesus wherein He reveals the identity of and several roles of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. The second, Acts 1:5-8, 2: 17, 38-39, describes a reiteration of Jesus’ promise and the subsequent realization of that promise in a demonstration of power. The third, Romans 8:9-11, illuminates the relationship of the Holy Spirit to believers in terms of confirmation and as occurring with salvation. The fourth, Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25, involves a crucial instruction couched in contrasting terms between life cooperating with the Spirit and life corresponding to the flesh. Each requires a brief analysis to reveal the attributes and function of the Holy Spirit.

John 14 and 15 are important chapters for understanding the role of the Holy Spirit. Jesus makes a promise relating to the coming of the Holy Spirit and His future dwelling place. The context involves a discussion concerning love and obedience, and Jesus seems to make a leap when He introduces the future arrival of the Holy Spirit. However, He knew that the only way man could keep His commandments would be with divine help.<sup>6</sup> This aid would come in the form of the Paraclete, or the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, this helper will perform many

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<sup>3</sup> Millard Erickson, “*Christian Theology* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 789.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 272.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21* (Nashville: Broadman, 2002), 122.

<sup>7</sup> Borchert, 122.

functions in the life of the believer. The first is the actual indwelling aspect of His relationship with man. He will “abide with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). While with His disciples, Jesus was a present helper and teacher, but following His departure the Holy Spirit takes on those roles (John 14: 26).<sup>8</sup> He will also remind them of Jesus’ words, and He will testify about Jesus through the disciples (John 14:26, 15:26). Not only do these verses indicate His role, they also reveal His identity in terms of the progression of who sends Him. In 14:16, He will ask the Father to send the helper. In 14:26, the Father will send the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ name. Then in 15:26, Jesus refers to Himself sending the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. Each of these instances of sending reveals a unity and bond between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whereby the three comprising the Trinity are displayed working in cooperation.<sup>9</sup> These texts also reveal that cooperation spilling over into the lives of believers with assistance in teaching, testifying, and truth.

In John chapters 14 and 15, Jesus promised the forthcoming Spirit; in Acts, the anticipated ministry of the Spirit is established. Initially, Jesus reiterates the promise of the Holy Spirit, but in more immediate terms than in John (Acts 1:5. In 1:8, He describes the powerful impact the Spirit will have on the disciples, compelling them to be witnesses in ever increasing domains. Although the appearance of flaming tongues that follow may have been a unique aspect of the initial arrival, it serves as an inaugural moment of the now permanent administration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> After the disciples proclaimed the gospel in languages previously unknown to them, Peter began a sermon to explain the odd occurrence. He quoted Joel 28-32, linking the promised pouring out of the Spirit with what the people were currently witnessing. In Peter’s view, the last days of God’s saving history were initiated by the resurrection of Jesus, and this instance was the predicted outpouring.<sup>11</sup> In 2:38-39 after the conclusion of his sermon, Peter anticipated the further outpouring of the Spirit on those who repented and baptized, referring to His indwelling as a gift. Furthermore, the scope of this gift is universal being offered to “all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).<sup>12</sup> This text not only refers to the universal attachment of the Spirit to believers, it also demonstrates an awareness of the Trinity.<sup>13</sup> Peter refers to the “name of Jesus”, “receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit,” and “the Lord our God” displaying cooperation between the three (2:38-39). Thus, God calls, Jesus offers forgiveness of sins, and then the Holy Spirit comes as a gift. The Spirit’s relationship with man is an inseparable aspect of salvation, as the next text will explain.

Paul, in Romans 8:9-11, describes Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of Christ,” the “Spirit of God,” and as the “Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead.” All of these combine to demonstrate the identity of the Holy Spirit as one with the Father and Son, displaying the Trinity.<sup>14</sup> These verses serve another important role in revealing the dividing line between those

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<sup>8</sup> Erickson, 796.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>10</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 83.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>12</sup> Polhill, 117.

<sup>13</sup> Erickson, 300.

<sup>14</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 31.

who belong to God and those who do not. Those who know “have the Spirit of Christ” are not of the flesh, but are alive with Christ’s righteousness (8:9-10). The defining characteristic of God’s people is that they have His Spirit.<sup>15</sup> Hence, those who know God and place their faith in Christ have been given His Holy Spirit. The residence of this Spirit is the actual person of the believer. James Gray referred to this union of believer and Holy Spirit as the “privilege and the indescribable honor of presenting your bodies to the Holy Spirit, to be His dwelling place on earth.”<sup>16</sup> If the believer is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, he must learn to walk accordingly.

In the fifth chapter of Galatians, Paul implores believers to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh and attain the available benefits. In 5:16-18 and 22-25, he uses four distinct verbs to denote a life in the Spirit. These four are listed by Timothy George as, “to walk in the Spirit (v. 16), to be led by the Spirit (v. 18), to live by the Spirit (v. 25a), and to keep in step with the Spirit (v. 25b).”<sup>17</sup> While they are similar in meaning, they each provide a nuance to the dynamic interaction between the indwelling Spirit and the believer. If believers learn to walk, follow, live, and keep in step with the Spirit, he will reap significant benefits. Walking in the Spirit means not having to give into sinful desires which cause harm.<sup>18</sup> Not only does the indwelling Spirit keep believers from sin, He compels them towards righteousness and goodness. In 5:22-25, Paul lists the beneficial gifts of the Spirit which result from the guidance the believer receives producing a reflection of the ethical character of God.<sup>19</sup> When believers learn to walk according to the Spirit, they enjoy the benefits of the accompanying presence of God in their lives.

## EARLY CHURCH FATHERS AND THE INDWELLING THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY

Considerable credit is owed to the early church Fathers for their integrity and insights in the process of combating false doctrine and establishing the parameters of orthodoxy. The crucial issues relating to the role and person of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity are among the elements preserved by their labors. A brief sampling of some of the early Fathers will suffice to demonstrate the early view of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, two questions are in view. The first is did the early Fathers consider the Holy Spirit as an established part of the Trinity? The second; what was their interpretation of the indwelling?

What was the overall perspective of the early Fathers regarding the concept of the Holy Spirit’s role within the Trinity? The answer is documented in the written contributions of several of the early Fathers. Ignatius couched it in terms of “three divine persons,” stating that there is “one God and Father, and not two or three.”<sup>20</sup> To further his argument, he quotes the baptismal instructions of Matthew 28:19 as a proof for the three personhood of the Trinity. He wrote, “the

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<sup>15</sup> Fee, 89.

<sup>16</sup> Raymond V. Edman, *They Found the Secret* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 154.

<sup>17</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians* (Nashville: Broadman, 1994), 386.

<sup>18</sup> Fee, 128.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>20</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philippians* 2.

Lord . . . Commanded them to ‘baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ not unto one person having three names, nor into three persons who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honor.”<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Justin Martyr, while refuting the charge of atheism levied towards Christians, referred to the Father, Son, and the prophetic Spirit, as all equally worthy of worship and adoration.<sup>22</sup> In discussing the fourth day of creation, Theophilus points to the structure of the heavens as an image of the Trinity.<sup>23</sup> Athanasius was severe in his treatment of those against Trinitarian thought pronouncing anathema upon anyone who denied the personhood of the Holy Spirit, and upon anyone who separated the three into different gods.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, anyone who viewed the Holy Spirit as a creature separate from the essence of Christ was to be anathematized, as he considered this intrinsically similar to the Arian heresy only applied to the Spirit.<sup>25</sup> He implicitly states the idea of the Trinity as “One Godhead, and one Beginning, and that the Son is coessential with the Father, as the fathers said; while the Holy Spirit is not a creature, nor external, but proper to and inseparable from the Essence of the Father and the Son.”<sup>26</sup> Boethius, nearly two centuries later, wrote a treatise on the Trinity whereby he denoted the orthodox understanding of the Trinity:

The belief of this religion [catholic or universal] concerning the Unity of the Trinity is as follows: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Therefore Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, not three Gods. The cause of this union is absence of difference: difference cannot be avoided by those who add to or take from the Unity, as for instance the Arians, who, by graduating the Trinity according to merit, break it up and convert it to Plurality.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, as the need arose for clearer descriptions and refinements of the aspects of the Trinity, a more comprehensive understanding was developed and written by the early Fathers. The foregoing examples, albeit not exhaustive, should serve to demonstrate the classical viewpoint regarding the Holy Spirit’s position within the Trinity. The goal of the second question is to understand the phenomenon of indwelling, and to assess accurately its aspects according to the early Fathers. Ignatius, referring to the work of the Spirit in believer’s lives, considered the manifestation of gifts as being possessed by believers.<sup>28</sup> In his view, believers attained gifts of the Spirit as a possession, theirs to hold and use. Barnabas is rather comprehensive in his approach to the indwelling benefits writing:

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<sup>21</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philippians* 2.

<sup>22</sup> Justin Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin* 6.

<sup>23</sup> Theophilus, *Theophilus to Autolytus* 2.15.

<sup>24</sup> Athanasius, *On the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia* 2.27.

<sup>25</sup> Athanasius, *Synodal Letter to the People of Antioch* 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Boethius, *The Trinity is One God: Not Three Gods* 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philippians* 2.

Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placed our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning. Wherefore in our habitation God truly dwells in us. How? His word of faith; His calling of promise; the wisdom of the statutes; the commands of the doctrine; He Himself prophesying in us; He Himself dwelling in us; opening to us who were enslaved by death the doors of the temple, that is, the mouth; and by giving us repentance introduced us into the incorruptible temple.<sup>29</sup>

His summary of the benefits of the Spirit's indwelling are couched in terms of cooperation between the Spirit and the believer. The Spirit recreates the believer allowing him to exhibit faith, calling, wisdom, life, and the like. Furthermore, the assistance of the Holy Spirit allows the believer to assume the capacity and responsibility of being the temple of God. Irenaeus considered the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus a means of preparing the Spirit for the accommodation of human beings, so that He could help renew them from old habits to newness in Christ.<sup>30</sup> He describes the Spirit as the comforter who "joins us to God" bringing tribes far removed into a foundation of unity.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps his most beautiful evaluation of the relationship is summed up in the following statement. "[The Lord] has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, *imparting indeed God to men* by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God."<sup>32</sup> Note the "imparting of God to man" as attachment is a role of the Holy Spirit corresponding to His indwelling. Tatian, coordinating with this idea of attachment, saw separation from God as the consequence of the fall, whereas uniting with the Holy Spirit as a chance to access union with God.<sup>33</sup> Hence, man lost his close relationship with God, but the Spirit ultimately facilitates their reuniting via His residence within the believer. Each of these early Fathers demonstrates an expectation of unity between God and man resulting from the indwelling presence of the Spirit producing new life and various beneficial gifts.

#### MODERN PERSPECTIVES ON THE THIRD PERSON

Increasingly, modern scholarship has directed its collective attention towards the Holy Spirit. This is presumably due to an increased interest and has resulted in a more "Spirit inclusive" mindset, albeit still less focus than is allocated to the Father and the Son.<sup>34</sup> It is fundamentally necessary to refocus attention towards the Holy Spirit in the Trinity and in the life of the believer, thereby deepening modern conceptions of, and reliance upon, God within man. Although there are no longer the "Pneumatomachi or 'enemies of the Holy Spirit,'" and few

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<sup>29</sup> Barnabas, *The Epistle of Barnabas* 16.

<sup>30</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.17.1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.17.2.

<sup>32</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.1.1. (italics mine)

<sup>33</sup> Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 15.

<sup>34</sup> S. H. Webb, "How Revolutionary is the Holy Spirit?," *Reviews in Religion & Theology* 21 (2014): 2.

believers would question the personhood of the Holy Spirit, it seems important to a proper perspective to establish the fact.<sup>35</sup> The Christian concept of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity is contrary to other modern conceptual perspectives on spirit. Welch sets the context for discussion of the Spirit in relation to common spiritual notions:

The Christian conception of the Holy Spirit [is distinct] from all other notions of Spirit, viz., the assertion that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. When the Christian speaks of the Holy Spirit, he does not refer to just any spirit or spirituality, certainly not to the spirit of man, or merely to a general immanence of God, but to a *Holy* Spirit consequent upon the event of objective revelation and reconciliation in Jesus Christ the Son.<sup>36</sup>

The Christian should identify the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the Christ. He is comprehensively part of the Trinity as are the other two persons. Whenever the integrity of this relationship is rejected or relaxed, a distorted “unitarianism of the Spirit” occurs inevitably leading towards “deification of the human spirit.”<sup>37</sup> As a result, the Holy Spirit has even been viewed as a conflation of joined human spirits into a “team spirit” of sorts.<sup>38</sup> Hence, it is crucial to maintain an appropriate perspective concerning the significance of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity. Given the assumed agreement that the Holy Spirit is fundamentally attached to the concept of the Trinity, the indwelling and its relevance becomes the area of focus. Reliance upon Jesus for salvation is foundational to the indwelling of the Spirit. The two coincide as “being in Spirit” begins with the “realization of the truth in Jesus.”<sup>39</sup> Once converted, the believer is aware of the Holy Spirit, not merely as a concept, but rather as someone operating within the believer yet differentiated from them.<sup>40</sup> This differentiated presence, not of the believer but in the believer, is not possessed by the believer, but rather possess the believer, whereby they belong to God.<sup>41</sup> The implications of God’s residence within the believer are inherently vast. God resides in the believer. According to Welker, “In the Holy Spirit, God becomes present to human beings. In the Holy Spirit, the communication of human beings with God becomes reality.”<sup>42</sup> The presence of God ensures open lines of communication and thus community with God. Welker continues, “God’s Spirit, the Holy Spirit is God Himself, so far as He cannot only come to human beings, but be in them, and so open up human beings for

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<sup>35</sup> Ralph Del Colle, “The Holy Spirit: Presence, Power, Person,” *Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (06, 2001): 323.

<sup>36</sup> Claude Welch, “Holy Spirit and the Trinity,” *Theology Today* 8, no. 1 (April 1, 1951): 29.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Michael Mawson, “The Spirit and the Community: Pneumatology and Ecclesiology in Jenson, Hütter and Bonhoeffer,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15 (2013): 455.

<sup>39</sup> Del Colle, 328.

<sup>40</sup> Alfred Otto Piper, “Power of the Christian life,” *Theology Today* 11, no. 4 (January 1, 1955): 496.

<sup>41</sup> Welch, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Welker, “The Holy Spirit,” *Theology Today* 46, no. 1 (04, 1989): 5.



Himself, make them ready and capable [of serving Him].”<sup>43</sup> The inevitable result of this communication and cooperation between God and man produces a multiplicity of benefits in the believer’s life.

What are the apparent, or perhaps somewhat unapparent, beneficial aspects stemming from the allocation of God’s Spirit to man? A comprehensive assessment of their true scope is beyond the capacity of this paper to illuminate. However, a brief overview is sufficient to demonstrate the benefits of living in cooperation and communication with God. Initially, there is a renewal of life within the Christian, whereby his goals are transferred from selfish ambition to God-centered directives. God’s will and purpose become the determining factors in the individual’s conduct.<sup>44</sup> The believer’s capacity for good is intrinsically raised, whereas his previous orientation towards evil is offset by God’s presence within him. The believer’s reorientation towards God’s good results in holiness, while it increases his potential for ministry and mission according to the power inhabiting him.<sup>45</sup> God’s Spirit allows man to function within the framework of His kingdom, commissioning him for service. Welch explains, “In Short, when the New Testament speaks of the Holy Spirit, it refers to God granting to man personal participation in the work and word of Christ, God not only giving Himself to men objectively but imparting Himself to them.”<sup>46</sup> God’s presence establishes the opportunity for participation with Him in good works and service. God’s goal is not merely an experience of Him, but a life lived for Him as Piper suggests, “God does not simply want that we should have an experience of the presence of His Spirit; He also wants us to experience the Spirit’s transforming power.”<sup>47</sup> Exposure to that transforming power is perhaps the crucial need of modern ministry. The culture needs to see the indwelling Spirit impacting believer’s lives and conforming them to God’s will. In Galatians 5:16, Paul admonishes his readers to “walk by the Spirit.” “Walking” in this verse carries the sense of living life in the presence and under the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit. How does one actively walk by the Spirit? A great portion of the answer to that question lies in the identity of the indweller Himself. He is the powerful Spirit of God who resides in the believer and leads “the way one lives – that is, it generates obedience.”<sup>48</sup> The result of the very presence of God’s Spirit in the lives of believers is that He attenuates their propensity for sin while simultaneously increasing their desire for righteousness and obedience. The believer is responsible for surrendering to the Holy Spirit regardless of their fear of the mystery, or of His overwhelming presence.<sup>49</sup> Surrendering to something which is so far outside the normal realm of human understanding would be impossible without help from the one to whom the submission is due; the residing Spirit of God. This is the challenge for the believer, but it is not one that God

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<sup>43</sup> Welker, 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> James Alexander Farmer Jr., “Unshackling the Holy Spirit,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 16, no. 3 (March 1, 1961): 304.

<sup>45</sup> Del Colle, 324.

<sup>46</sup> Welch, 32.

<sup>47</sup> Piper, 499.

<sup>48</sup> Volker Rabens, “Ethics and the Spirit in Paul (1): Religious-Ethical Empowerment through Infusion-Transformation?” *The Expository Times* 125, no. 5 (February, 2014): 209.

<sup>49</sup> David Hein, “Saints: Holy, Not Tame,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 49, no. 2 (2006): 208.

leaves them to accomplish alone.<sup>50</sup> The Holy Spirit is present with them to help facilitate their dependence upon Him as they continue to practice walking with Him.

## CONCLUSION

God has dealt kindly with man in offering individuals who believe the opportunity to communicate and cooperate with God personally. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, has been sent from God, by the Son, to inhabit man. His Spirit, being an integral part of the Trinity, represents the actual presence of God in the life of man. A simple understanding of the Trinity, and of the Spirit's role within the Trinity, is not enough. What is needed is the unfettered reliance upon the Spirit's guidance in the life and ministry of believers. Only by consistent submission of the individual's will to God's, will the believer be capable of truly impacting the world for God's kingdom. This submission, and its corresponding benefits, should be the goal of every believer. Perhaps subsequent research can be conducted to bring clarity in the area of submission. Based on the apparent indwelling, how does one actually submit?

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

When given the opportunity to write on a theological subject that pertains to the doctrines of God, I was faced with a question. Should I write a paper about the Father God, the Son Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? As a Baptist, I am very familiar with the Son, as we are quick to point to Him in the process of sharing the gospel or expounding on the Scriptures. Perhaps I should write about the Father, as He is well known among us as well? However, sadly, as I considered writing about the Holy Spirit, I sensed an incredible lack of knowledge. Surely, I knew something about the Holy Spirit, but propositionally and experientially I realized I was lacking significantly. This is not to say that I, as most Baptists may affirm concerning themselves, was not aware of the passages in John, Acts, Romans, and Galatians which explain the person, presence, and purpose of the Holy Spirit. Yet, I did not grasp them the way I could confidently say I grasp similar passages pertaining to the Son. This led me to ask, "Why?" Why do we know so little about the Holy Spirit, especially in terms of experience? Perhaps part of that answer deals with reactions formed over time due to other denominations and their response to the Holy Spirit, but this is not a valid reason. Simply because others may not correctly understand and practice truth does not mean we must run and hide from that truth. Thus, I chose to write about the Holy Spirit.

This topic offered painful challenges in terms of research and practice. The challenge of the research was not in the quality of sources available, but rather in the quantity. There has been a longstanding dearth of information pertaining to the person of the Holy Spirit leading up to recent times. Many of the available sources were merely reconsiderations of former theologians' perspectives on this or that aspect of the Holy Spirit. Yet, there were surprisingly few modern papers written on the indwelling aspect of the Holy Spirit with a view towards how the individual believer interacts with His presence within them. This is the area I sought to expound upon. It needed to be uncovered, not only for my personal enlightenment, but hopefully for the church as a whole as well. When I turned to the Early Church Fathers to gain their perspective, it was refreshing to find an abundance written by them concerning the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>50</sup> Klaus Issler, "Six Themes to Guide Spiritual Formation Ministry Based on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount," *Christian Education Journal* 7, no. 2 (Fall, 2010): 375.

In modern times, we have a tendency to value our more recent works over those of the Church Fathers, yet in this area, they were quite conversant. Their aid in my research has endeared them to me considerably more than before. Once I finished interacting with them in search of their view on the particulars of the relationship between the indwelling Spirit and the believer, I was faced with the lack of modern sources, which forced me to pull together what was available, recent, and not overly dependent upon Holiness theological perspectives. After working through these difficulties, the process of understanding the practice of walking with the Spirit was next.

As stated above, I was reared in a Baptist home, going to Baptist churches, and the result of that, in terms of knowledge of the Holy Spirit, is indicting. Many with whom I speak on a regular basis have expressed this same concern over their lack of understanding about the person and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now, as a pastor of several years, I have become concerned with this issue and am seeking to resolve it within my sphere of influence, making this paper, while an academic one, intensely personal. After conducting my research and writing this paper, I sought to implement my findings in practice throughout daily life with particular focus on my ministry roles. What I found as a result is exciting. The main thrust of my paper is that Almighty God, the creator of the universe, chooses to live within the believer. This is what I have attempted to be mindful of at all times. In so doing, my sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and reliance upon the power He offers, has improved immensely. I do not write this with the intention of sounding haughty, prideful, or holy, but to give honor and praise to the Lord where it is due (1 Corinthians 1:31; 4:7). In fact, I am a frail, weak, fearful person, who struggles with sin on a regular basis, yet it is God, who resides within me, who gives power. He has held true to His Word, and the more I give Him control, the more power and benefits are manifested. To be clear, I am not referring to some kind of outpouring of tongues phenomena or other sign related deeds, but rather to a noticeable increase in experiencing His guidance. This is felt most often during my preparation for sermons, during the worship service, and while preaching. The benefits of each have also been felt by my congregation. They are benefiting from what the Holy Spirit is doing in my personal walk with Him because when He takes the lead, and I am willing to follow, He is capable of accomplishing powerful things through even the weakest of vessels. Therein lies the benefit of this research for me, and I hope for all who read this paper. The God of the Universe is indwelling His people, and will lead them to do wonderful work if they will hand over the reins.

The process of handing over the reins to the Holy Spirit was not as cut and dry, or as easy as it may appear. It is actually an ongoing process, but it really started showing a change after a couple of months of praying to that end. My wife, my associate pastors, and myself prayed for the Holy Spirit to take over, reveal His will to us, and to rule in us as He saw fit. One can only pray this kind of prayer so long before their will begins to soften to the molding hand of the Lord. That is what happened with me. I began to notice a change in the application portions of my sermon preparation. Then, I noticed a change in how I related to the Lord during worship services; it became more personal, more interactive. Now, I am currently noticing His overwhelming presence while preaching. I write “overwhelming” on purpose because at times, it is quite overwhelming. The experience has caused me to fear while it was happening, not the fear of harm or damage, but the fear of awe and respect at the magnitude of what Holy God is choosing to do through me. It causes me to tremble, I reiterate, not the trembling of one who is overtaken by emotion, but the trembling of one who is in awe and fear of the Lord. This is currently what I am experiencing as a result of remembering that the God of the Universe is dwelling within me, and then asking Him to do as He pleases.

If my fellow Baptists will allow themselves to give the Holy Spirit more attention, more leeway in what He desires to do with them, the results will change the church as a whole and the world, as they have changed my church and my world. Surely, all who have trusted in Jesus as Savior have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them (Romans 8:10). Yet, not all who have believed are willing to hand over to Him the control He desires (Galatians 2:20). My hope in submitting this paper to *Fidei et Veritatis*, is that many of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ will awaken to the reality of God dwelling within them, and submit to His will as fully as they are able.

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