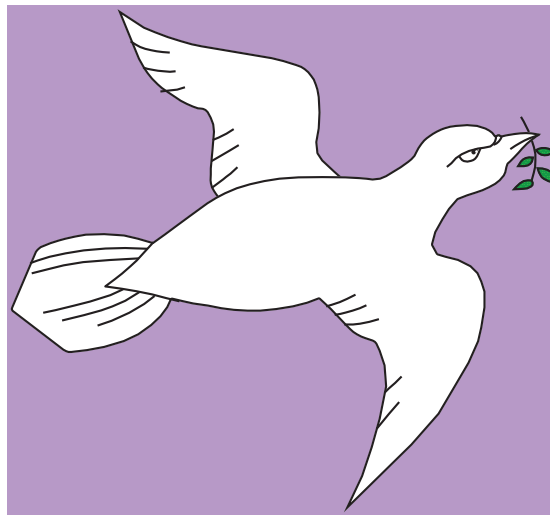


# **LIVING A 'SPIRIT-FILLED' LIFE...**



**...AN 'EVERYDAY' EXPERIENCE?**

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## INTRODUCTION

In broad terms this research assignment concerns the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Due to the enormity of the subject, I've chosen to focus on one particular aspect ~ **Living a 'Spirit filled' life: An 'everyday' experience?** In other words: ~

1. **What does it mean to live a 'Spirit-filled' life?**
2. **Is it possible to live this life everyday?**

Before I explain the structure and aims of this assignment, let me provide some background, which will explain my choice of research topic.

I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit when I was 18, and confess that other than praying in tongues, I didn't feel particularly different, even if something remarkable had occurred in my spirit. Since then God has increasingly impacted my life through the power of His Spirit, but the fact remains that although I pray in tongues more than ever, and even operate some of the spiritual gifts, I don't feel particularly 'Spiritual'. I don't have prophecies for people; left, right, and centre. People don't fall over when I pray for them. I don't seem to be tuned-in to the same 'Spiritual' wavelength, or have this 'sixth sense'. Not yet anyway! I sense I'm missing out on something. Surely I should be expecting more from my Christian life! What does the term 'Spirit-filled' mean anyway?<sup>1</sup>

This assignment provides an ideal opportunity for me to find some answers, because surely it's impossible to 'research' God the Holy Spirit without being impacted in some way? This is a chance for me to experience and encounter God: To grow in understanding and maturity: To progress from head knowledge to heart knowledge: To explore the mysteries of the Holy Spirit: To tune my spirit to the Spirit of God: To study the principles, but far more importantly, to see the practical outworking of this journey in my life even if it means making a few mistakes along the way. Knowledge applied is wisdom, and that leads to maturity.

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<sup>1</sup> Terms such as 'baptism' and 'tongues' will be explained in due course.

I believe it's God's will for every Christian to live an effective and victorious life through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to be more like Jesus. That statement sums up my mission in ministry. However, there is often a vast difference between belief and experience, and so the question remains, "How do we achieve this 'everyday' experience?" To find the answer, I'm going to explore the following areas. I believe there is a natural link between each section, which continues until a conclusion is reached.

▶ ***Part One: The Person and function of the Holy Spirit: The personhood, deity, and relationship within the Trinity of the Holy Spirit: the function of the Holy Spirit. In simple terms, who He is, and what He does.***

***Aim: 'To know the person and function of the Holy Spirit.'***

▶ ***Part Two: Living a Spirit filled life: What does this mean? How we receive the Holy Spirit: being filled with the Spirit: character and fruit: becoming more like Christ.***

***Aim 'To know and apply what it means to live a Spirit-filled life'.***

▶ ***Part Three: Partnering with the Holy Spirit: What does this mean? Tuning-in to God's Spirit: worship/waiting: obedience/ disobedience: the 'gifts': accountability and balance.***

***Aim 'To know and apply what it means to 'partner' with the Holy Spirit.'***

An insurmountable task lies ahead: Augustine of Hippo said: "If you can understand it, it's not God!" McGrath, (1987:9). Even if we can't understand the Holy Spirit we should at least try to know who He is and what He does. Therefore, using the term cautiously, what does it mean to know the Holy Spirit? McGrath states, "Knowing means encountering and experiencing someone." (1987:17.) I believe that to 'know the person and function of the Holy Spirit', is to encounter and experience His personal reality in our lives: to balance factual knowledge (knowledge 'about') with experiential knowledge (knowledge 'of').

My 'macro' objective is to encounter and experience God's Holy Spirit, but my 'micro' objective is to demonstrate that this amazing 'Spirit-filled' life isn't just for a select few, the ostensibly 'spiritual' ones, it's for every believer, 'everyday'.

**NB:** To explore fully this vast subject would require a lifetime of study. My objective is to focus on what it means to live a Spirit-filled life, whilst exploring some specific areas where relevant. On matters pertaining to the Holy Spirit, there are many doctrinal differences. Whilst I don't want to engage in too much debate, I will endeavour to deal with pertinent issues when they arise.

I am aware that it is standard practice to write such essays using the indefinite pronoun. However, due to the personal and practical nature of this assignment, I have chosen to write using more personal pronouns.



*"For the human mind to capture God in all his fullness is about as probable as being able to put the entire Atlantic Ocean into a bucket!"*

McGrath (1987:46.)

## PART ONE ~ THE PERSON & FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### *To know the person and function of the Holy Spirit*

My aim is to provide a Biblical foundation on which to build a Spirit-filled life: It is vital to know something of the purpose and function of the Holy Spirit before progress can be made. By way of introduction, it's important to note: ~

- ▶▶ Any attempt to comprehend the Godhead is severely restricted by human intellect and human language. Analogies and models, be they Biblical or contemporary, will only ever scratch the surface of the mystery of the Godhead.
  
- ▶▶ In Scripture, the Hebrew designation for Spirit is 'rûah 'elohîm' (Spirit of God), or 'rûah YHWH' (Spirit of Jehovah). The English language needs at least three words, 'wind', 'breath', and 'spirit' to translate the Hebrew word *ruach*. As McGrath states, "*This important Hebrew word has a depth of meaning which is virtually impossible to reproduce in English: We lose much of the richness of the original image*" (1987:64.)
  
- ▶▶ The Greek designation is 'to pneuma to hagion' (Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit). Other terms used are 'the Spirit', the 'Spirit of the Lord', (Lk 4:18) the 'Spirit of God', (Mt 3:16) or the 'Spirit of Jesus Christ', (Phil. 1:19).



## WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

### ***The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: his personhood: his deity: the Trinity***

*“The Holy Spirit is the third divine person of the eternal Godhead, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with the Father and the Son. It is His ministry to convict and convert man as well as to reveal the Son and Father to the believer. Since the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit in all His glorious operations is working through all who believe on the Father through the Son.” Connor (1980:71)*

To answer this question, I want to look at the following facets of the Holy Spirit: -

1. **HIS PERSONALITY:** Scripture clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person. *“Many believers are robbed of a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit because they consider the Spirit to be an impersonal influence, power or energy.”* Conner (1980:73.) Although ruach means 'breath' or 'wind', the Spirit's activity is not limited to these methods. There may be a mystical element to the Spirit's work, but this does not negate His personhood. Scripture clearly bestows on the Holy Spirit: ~
  - ◆ **Personal distinction:** Scriptures that give distinct personality to the Father and the Son also give equal distinction to the Holy Spirit, (Mt 3:16-17) (Mt 28:19) (Jn 14:16-17) (Jn 15:26).
  - ◆ **Personal pronouns:** The pronouns used with reference to the Holy Spirit are invariably personal, (Acts 13:2). In John 16:13-14, the Holy Spirit is referred to as 'He', not 'it': Jesus is talking about a person.
  - ◆ **Personal attributes:** He can be grieved, (Eph 4:30) quenched, (1 Thess. 5:19) and resisted, (Acts 7:51).
  - ◆ **Personal relationship:** Scripture emphasises the personal relationship of the Spirit with mankind: He contends with man, (Gen 6:3). He teaches, (Jn 14:26) regenerates, (Jn 3:5-6) sanctifies, (1 Peter 1:2) and comforts believers, (Jn 14:16).

2. **HIS DEITY:** Many of the Scriptures that establish the Spirit's personality also establish His deity, (Mt 3:16) (Gen 6:3). In addition the Bible gives further proof: ~

- ◆ **Divine name:** The Holy Spirit is distinctly called God: Names are given to Him, which properly belong to God, (Acts 5:3-4) (Heb 10:15-17).
- ◆ **Divine attributes:** Knowledge, (1 Cor. 2:11) sovereignty, (1 Cor. 12:11) and eternity (Heb 9:14) are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ **Divine works:** Creation, (Gen 1:2) (Job 26:13) and the new birth, (Jn 3:3-8) are attributed to Him.
- ◆ **Divine Worship:** belonging only to God, is also paid to the Holy Spirit, as demonstrated by the Trinitarian benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14.

3. **HIS RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE TRINITY:** Thomas Jefferson referred to the Trinity as, "*Incomprehensible jargon of Trinitarian arithmetic.*" (Cited in McGrath: 1987:110) McGrath responds by describing the doctrine of the Trinity as: "*An attempt to bring together the incredible richness of the Christian understanding of God.*" (1987:116). The Trinity is an enigma, but we must never dismiss God just because we don't understand Him. In fact, the Trinity is rather like an iceberg: from our position above the surface we may only see 10% of the total mass, but beneath the surface is another 90% we can't see! So, here's my 10%!

God is one being and yet three 'real' persons, each one being fully God. This means that the Holy Spirit is fully God. He possesses the whole being of God in himself. He is not just another way of looking at God, neither is He one-third of God. This is hard for us to grasp, because as different persons we are also different beings. "*God's being is so much greater than ours that within his one undivided being there can be an unfolding into interpersonal relationships so there can be three distinct persons.*" Grudem (1999:120.)



We often think of the Holy Spirit in terms of his personal role, but this doesn't mean He has additional exclusive attributes for that role. Each person of the Trinity has the same attributes, but differing roles. In short, the Holy Spirit is the same in substance (being) and equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son. (Adapted from 'Bible Doctrine': Grudem: 1999)

To conclude: *"Only if the Spirit is fully person, the very personal Presence of God with us, does the Spirit's presence in us mean that we have fellowship with the living, personal God."* Grenz (1998:163.) I believe this is who the Holy Spirit is ~ God's personal 'Presence', active within the life of every believer ~ that blows my mind!



*"Being filled with the Holy Spirit doesn't mean that you suddenly become immune to life's hurts, or that there will not be times when you feel overwhelmed by life's difficulties. How comforting it is though, to know that when we hit rough times in life, the Holy Spirit comes alongside to comfort as well as advise."* (Unknown source)

## WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DO?

### *The personal function of the Holy Spirit: God's personal Presence*

*"The great problem with the fall is that we lost not only our vision of God, but also our relationship with God, and thus no longer knew His abiding presence. For Paul, the coming of Christ and the Spirit changed all of this forever." Fee (1996:9)*

The perception of the Holy Spirit as God's active personal Presence is crucial to our understanding, both in terms of who the Spirit is and what He does. I've found it helpful to understand this in terms of the Spirit's role, as follows: ~

#### **1. GOD'S PRESENCE ~ BEFORE CHRIST**

God's active Presence was manifest in many ways: a cloud, a pillar of fire, (Ex 13:21) the tabernacle, (Ex 40:35) and the temple, (1 Kings 8:11) but it was never a permanent indwelling. God's Spirit empowered specific individuals for specific purposes, (1 Sam 10:6&10) (Ex 31:3). However, in Numbers 11:29 we glimpse a foretaste of the future, as Moses reveals his desire that all God's people have His Spirit on them.

The significance of God's presence is demonstrated in His covenant relationship with His chosen people. Remember God's anger at their idolatry, (Exodus 32)? He told Moses that although the people would still enter Canaan, He would only send an angel with them, not His personal Presence, (Ex 33:3). The Israelites understood the significance of this, and were devastated. Moses, their mediator, cried out to God: *"What else will distinguished me and your people from all other people on the face of the earth?"* (Ex 33:16) Fee comments: *"Whatever else, the people of Israel understood themselves to be the people of the Presence, the people among whom the eternal God had chosen to dwell on earth."* (1996:10.)

## 2. GOD'S PRESENCE ~ WITH CHRIST

In Christ, God's Presence dwelt amongst His people in a most wonderful and unique way: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood." (Jn 1:14, The Message.) "Jesus came as the Anointed One, the one uniquely endowed by the Spirit awaited by the prophets. From conception to resurrection, the Spirit was at work in Christ's life." Grenz, (1998:157-8).

Jesus ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, He promised to send this same Spirit, to be a well, or spring of living water flowing from within the life of the believer, (Jn 4:14 & 7:37-39). Christ's triumphant resurrection and ascension, His 'glorification' (Jn 7:39&16:7) established a new age of the Kingdom of God, and unleashed a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the earth, (Joel 2:28-32).

## 3. GOD'S PRESENCE ~ AFTER CHRIST

At Pentecost the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on all those gathered, (Acts 2) not just to a select group. In Acts 8:17 & 10:44, the Holy Spirit was poured out on both Samaritans and Gentiles, thereby demonstrating that the Spirit is available for every believer who confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Holy Spirit came to complete all the ministries delegated to Him by the Father.

Whilst exploring the summary of the Spirit's role, (overleaf) note that the Holy Spirit never draws attention to Himself; rather, He points to Christ. However, I disagree with those who state that subordination of role equates to subordination of being. I believe that the Holy Spirit is in no way inferior, simply that there is a difference in the way the three persons of the Trinity relate to one another, because all three are distinct beings within the Godhead. The Holy Spirit does the Father's will, by bringing glory to the Son, (Jn 16:14-15).

## THE FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- ◆ **He Regenerates:** *“The radical spiritual change in which God brings an individual from a condition of spiritual defeat and death to a renewed condition of holiness and life.”* HBD, (NavPress CD Rom 1998) (Jn 3:3-13)
- ◆ **He Baptises:** The distinctive ministry of the Holy Spirit for this age is His baptising work, (Acts 1:5 & 11:15-16).
- ◆ **He Counsels:** Greek: *Parakletos*, meaning: intercessor, consoler, advocate, and comforter: Strong’s, (CD Rom 1998) (Jn 14:16).
- ◆ **He Teaches:** He reminds us of Christ’s instructions, and leads us into all truth, (Jn 14:25-27 & Jn 16:12-15).
- ◆ **He Convicts:** *“The Spirit works on the minds of the unsaved to show them the truth of God for what it is,”* BKC, (NavPress CD Rom 1998) (Jn 16:7-11).
- ◆ **He Empowers:** He enables us to be witnesses for Christ, (Jn 15:26-27).
- ◆ **He Intercedes:** He stands with us and helps us in our weaknesses. He helps us carry our load, (Romans 8:26).
- ◆ **He Reveals:** He speaks and reveals the words of Christ, and reveals the future concerning God’s kingdom, (Revelation 2:7) (Jn 16:13).
- ◆ **He Guarantees:** He guarantees our salvation now, and the fact that we will receive much more when Christ returns. He is the deposit of all the benefits of eternity spent with God ~ part of the ‘now and not yet’, (2 Corinthians 1:22).

Above all, Spurgeon declared, *“It is the chief office of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ. He does many things, but this is what he aims at in all of them: to glorify Christ.”* (2000:52)

The Holy Spirit brings life, liberty, and power to every believer: He produces ‘fruit’ and gives ‘gifts’ so that as individual believers and members of His church, we will glorify Christ. In short, that’s what living a Spirit-filled life is all about.

In closing, I believe we need to echo Moses’ impassioned cry, because without doubt it is the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit, His very personal presence, which sets us apart as God’s people. The question is how hungry are we for His Presence to transform our lives?

## PART TWO ~ LIVING A 'SPIRIT-FILLED' LIFE

*To know what it means to live a 'Spirit-filled' life.*

*"God isn't an idea we can kick about in seminar rooms ~ he is a living reality who enters into our experience and transforms it." McGrath (1987:13)*

How does this 'Living Reality' enter our experience and bring about transformation? The answer lies in understanding how we receive the Holy Spirit, and what it means to be filled with the Spirit, (Ephesians 5:18). This will enable us to understand the chief role of the Holy Spirit ~ to glorify Christ by conforming us to His likeness. This transformation process produces evidence in the form of character, fruit, and holiness.



*"I like to think of life in Christ in terms of 'spiritual breathing'.  
I exhale by confessing any known sin. Then I inhale, surrendering control of my life to  
Christ and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith."*

*Bill Bright, (Cited in 'Go And Sin No More' 1999:12)*

## 'RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT'

***How we receive the Holy Spirit: The baptism, or 'infilling' of the Holy Spirit.***

*"Baptism, like birth, is something which should occur only once. It is initiatory in that baptism is not an end in itself, it is not an experience to be enjoyed and then remembered, rather it is the doorway to a new way of living: baptism is essentially the start of something entirely new." Dye (1997:53.)*

In my research I've noticed how much disparity of belief there is on how and when we receive the Holy Spirit, and how much we get! A tad flippant, but true! In Scripture, I believe the term 'baptism' is used in three ways: ~

1. **Water Baptism:** 'Baptism', derived from the Gk 'baptizo', means: *"to make fully wet, (immerse): used only in NT of ceremonial ablution, especially the ordinance of Christian baptism,"* Strong's (NavPress CD Rom 1998). 'Water' baptism is symbolic of renewal and change: a believer demonstrates death to the old life and resurrection to the new life ~ eternal life in Christ, (Acts 2:38, 41).
2. **The Baptism of the Holy Spirit:** When you become a Christian the Holy Spirit takes up residence and you are baptised, (born of the Spirit) into the body of Christ through faith in His redeeming work, (John 3:5 & 1 Cor. 12:13). On this essential truth the church finds unity: in effect we cannot belong to Christ unless we have this baptism of Holy Spirit, (Rom 8:9).
3. **Being Baptised in/Filled with the Holy Spirit:** The traditional Pentecostal/charismatic view is that 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' is not the same as being 'baptised in', or 'filled with' the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> The latter is a unique encounter: a gift, (blessing) promised by Christ, and given at Pentecost, (Acts 1:8 & Acts 2). In simple terms to be 'baptised in', or 'filled with' the Holy Spirit means to be 'immersed' in the power and presence of God's Spirit.

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<sup>2</sup> This is sometimes called the 'second blessing'.

To receive this gift, (Acts 2:38) we must simply come to God, ask in faith, and believe that we have received the gift, (even if at first we don't feel any different). Finally, we give thanks to God. Acts 8:15-17 describes how Peter and John prayed for the believers, laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19:6, Paul likewise, "*Placed his hand on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.*"<sup>3</sup>

Every experience is different, but if we earnestly seek this gift from God, He will respond, because He loves giving gifts, (Luke 11:13). The awesome fact is that the life-changing power and presence of God's Spirit is no longer in a cloud or pillar of fire, it's available to every believer. What's more, I believe that we cannot live a victorious Christian life without this Power and Presence in our lives, and I trust that you soon see why.



*"We cannot effectively do anything, even witness for Christ, without the enabling and power of the Holy Spirit."* Bill Bright, (Cited in 'Go And Sin No More' 1999:11.)

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<sup>3</sup> It's my belief that 'tongues' is usually the initial evidence of this 'infilling'. In Acts there are five specific accounts of baptism in the Spirit. Of these five, three mention speaking in tongues: Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-46 & 19:6, but two don't: Acts 8:15 & 9:17f.

## **'UNDER CONSTANT CONTROL!'**

### ***What it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit***

*“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ”*

(Ephesians 5:18)

Scripture commands that we should be filled with the Spirit, but how can you fill someone who's already full? Are Christians like cars: the Holy Spirit like petrol? Does the Christian life so empty our tank that we need a daily refill? Do some people get Premium fuel: others only unleaded? (*Selah*) This analogy, albeit a little far-fetched, has an element of truth: we need to be full of the Holy Spirit everyday. So, what did Paul mean by this directive, 'be filled with the Spirit': ~

- ▶ The Greek present tense implies this 'filling' is not a once-for-all experience, but the Spirit empowers us repeatedly (daily) for acts of worship and service, *Vs 19f.*
- ▶ Wuest translates the verse: *“be constantly controlled by the Spirit.”*
- ▶ In comparing the Spirit to wine, the difference is obvious: wine produces a temporary 'filling', which only leads to sinful living, but the Holy Spirit produces lasting joy, which always leads to fruitful living.
- ▶ The common factor is control: we're under an influence that controls us, whether it's wine or the Holy Spirit. *“Each Christian has all the Spirit, but the command here is that the Spirit have all of him. The wise walk, then, is one that is characterized by the Holy Spirit's control.”* (BKC: NavPress CD Rom 1998)

If the chief function of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, then the extent to which we allow the Holy Spirit to control or influence our lives will be the extent to which we become Christ-like. It sounds straightforward, but in reality it will cost us our lives: Paul confessed: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ now lives in me.”* (Galatians 2:20) The Holy Spirit will not fight for control, but as we submit to the Lordship of Christ everyday, we can walk in the fullness of His Spirit and allow Him to transform our lives. *“He must increase, but I must decrease,”* Jn 3:30 (NKJV).



## 'TO BE LIKE JESUS!'

### ***How the Holy Spirit transforms us: a Christ-like nature: character, fruit & holiness.***

*"The Spirit's activity in effecting our salvation is a process. And salvation remains incomplete until that process reaches its goal, until that great day when the Spirit has fully transformed us into our ideal and model ~ the Lord Jesus Christ." Grenz (1998:178.)*

As we submit to Christ and die to self, the Holy Spirit produces evidence of Christ's nature in us: the process is sanctification, the evidence is Christ-likeness. This is painful at times, but David Jeremiah declares, *"You cannot faithfully study the Scriptures without being challenged by the opportunities and excitement of growing into Christ-likeness. The Word of God paints a strikingly beautiful portrait of what a Christ-like person looks like, acts like, and feels like when they walk around the world."* (1998:124) We should crave this portrait.

As a Police Officer, I used to record antecedents to present before Court as evidence of a person's lifestyle and character: good or bad! Galatians 5:16-26 contains two such antecedent records. 5: 19-21 records the lifestyle of a person who lives to *"gratify the desires of the sinful nature,"* (5:16) whereas 5:22-23 records the antecedents of someone who belongs to Christ, (5:24). The two lifestyles are contrary to one another, but Paul's explanation, (5:17) is no excuse for passivity or sin, rather we must actively, *"Walk in the Spirit,"* 5:16 (NKJV) and *"Keep in step with the Spirit,"* 5:25 (NIV). There is responsibility and choice on our part to pursue this Spirit-filled life.

Paradoxically we can only do this with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives in the first place. In considering this second record of antecedents, (fruit of the Spirit: Gal 5:22-23) I'm simply going to make some relevant observations.

- ◆ **Fruit can be of one kind, or of several**, (Gk 'karpos'): There are several kinds of fruit, love, joy, etc., but in reality, only one fruit ~ that which represents the life of Christ.
- ◆ **Fruit is evident, not hidden**: As we allow the Spirit to work spontaneously in us, fruit will be the visible and recognisable evidence of a Christ-like nature.
- ◆ **Fruit characterises the believer's life**: Being filled with the Spirit brings about change. Even if our previous antecedents read more like the first list, we are now being transformed: we're getting Christ's antecedents! (Wow)
- ◆ **Fruit is not produced by our efforts**: No striving is involved, (Gal 5:18). The Spirit works in us and through us when we remain connected to Christ, (Jn 15:1-8).
- ◆ **Fruit represents type**: Paul did not intend this list to be exhaustive, simply representative of the Christ-like nature of a Spirit-filled believer. Cf 2 Cor. 6:6, Colossians 3:12-15, Ephesians 4:2 & 5:9.
- ◆ **Fruit is evidence of character**: The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of a Christ-like nature. We can't pick and choose the fruit we like: we need the whole basket.
- ◆ **Fruit is produced to feed everybody**: *"The Spirit bears fruit in our individual lives for the same purpose, to be toward one another the way God is toward us."* Fee, (1996:115).

The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of a life surrendered to the sovereignty of Christ, and the Holy Spirit working in our lives to transform us, producing his character of holiness, and preparing us for eternity. (Philippians 3:20-21)

*"The evidence that you are being saved is that: - You begin to look with the eyes of Christ. You begin to love with the heart of Christ. You begin to think with the mind of Christ. His character begins to express itself through you."* Alan Redpath (source unknown)

## PART THREE ~ 'PARTNERING' WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

*To know and apply what it means to 'partner' with the Holy Spirit."*

Finally we come to the 'nuts and bolts' of living a Spirit-filled life. If we partner with the Holy Spirit and submit to His presence in our lives everyday, what sort of impact can we expect? We've already looked at one aspect; the Spirit's role in making us Christ-like, and of course this will dramatically impact the way we relate to other people, but what else does God's Spirit want to do in us and through us? My objective is to paint a picture of what daily partnership with the Holy Spirit looks like.



*"It is of the highest practical importance that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is a power that we, in our weakness and ignorance, are somehow to get hold of and use, Or whether the Holy Spirit is a personal being, infinitely wise, infinitely holy, infinitely tender, who is to get hold of us, and use us."*

RA Torrey (source unknown)

## 'TUNING IN'

### ***A hunger for God's presence: worshiping & waiting: tuning in to the Holy Spirit***

*"There are no shortcuts to the anointing. There are no hasty methods to acquaint yourself with the Lord. If you want gold, you dig. You dig 'until'. Time spent with God yields this discovery of him."* Pringle (1994:12)

These last few months have been a journey of personal discovery: now it's time for the climax! God has watched and waited, but all along He's been whispering, *"Come on Judith, hurry up and get to the best bit!"* It's no coincidence that in recent weeks I've become so hungry for more of God's presence in my life. It's not that I'm empty, but I want to experience the Spirit's 'fullness' in a greater measure. Thomas Aquinas wrote, *"When Scripture speaks of the 'coming' of divine persons it does not refer to a moving from absence into presence, since diving persons are always present, but a moving from one mode of presence into another mode of presence."* ('Summa Theologiae': Cited By Lawrence, 1992:44). I want to experience another 'mode' of that Presence!

One Sunday afternoon, as I 'lingered' in God's presence, He spoke to me: ~

*"When you linger in my presence, and incline your ear to hear my voice, you listen to my heartbeat: you find out what pleases me: you become more like Christ: you display fruit, receive gifts ~ you honour me. If you will daily go to that secret place in my presence, your life will never be the same again: I will transform your life, reveal my will, guide you, empower you, and equip you to live a Spirit-filled life. The key is worship. When you worship me, I am exalted: I increase, and you decrease. Learn to linger in my presence, and worship me until my presence is so thick, you are transformed. When Solomon brought the Ark to the Temple, My presence filled the place: it was overwhelming. Watch and wait in my presence until my Holy Spirit fills your life, and the place where you worship me."*

This is the father heart of God: He yearns for His children to come into His presence, and spend time communing with Him. There are no shortcuts, but many blessings! As we worship, wait, and listen, we fine-tune our Spiritual hearing to the voice of God, speaking through His Spirit. What's more, we "*Find out what pleases the Lord,*" (Eph 5:10) as the Holy Spirit partners with us and empowers us to live 'God-glorifying' lives.

For example, as we read and meditate on God's Word, the Holy Spirit reveals, (illuminates) the hidden things of God, (1 Corinthians 2:10) (Eph 1:17-19). "*The Holy Spirit is the one who shines His light on the pages of God's Word, so that we can find wisdom and direction in a fallen world.*" Jeremiah (1998:92) Our role in this 'partnership' is to read God's Word in the first place so that the Holy Spirit can bring illumination.

The Holy Spirit wants to partner with us everyday: He wants to sanctify us, produce fruit, give gifts, speak God's word into our lives, and empower us to live a victorious Christian life; everyday. However the connection for this partnership can only be found when we learn to linger in His presence: only there can we find fullness of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis and experience his active presence in our lives.



*"I will lay me down at your feet in worship, and listen to the sweetest sound of all.*

*Oh God you are my God: How my heart it longs for you.*

*I'm thirsty for your presence in my world."*

M Stevens & S McPherson (2000: Hillsong Publishing)

## **'TO OBEY, OR NOT TO OBEY; AS THE CASE MAY BE!'**

### ***Obedience/disobedience: quenching the Holy Spirit: ministry and gifts.***

*"The greatest sin of the Church today is grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit,"*

Pringle (1994:30)

The Holy Spirit is the senior partner: when He speaks, or 'prompts' us to do something, we must obey! A few years ago God told me to give away a large sum of money. I was debating whether this was God's voice, when I heard Him say, *"Don't you know my voice by now? How many times have I spoken to you that you don't recognise my voice?"* I was floored! As a child learns to recognise their father's voice, so we learn to recognise God's voice by fine-tuning our spiritual hearing. However, we must obey God's voice, and the 'promptings' of His Spirit, because there are consequences if we don't.

The Holy Spirit is often symbolised by fire, (Mt 3:11) (Acts 2:3-4). Fire brings warmth, light and power, but can also be extinguished, (quenched). In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Paul warns against such conduct: *"Do not put out the Spirit's fire."* Consider the role of the Holy Spirit again<sup>4</sup>, and it's clear why this is such a serious matter. Here are two ways we can quench the Spirit: ~

1. **By grieving His 'Holiness'**: Matthew Henry wrote, *"We must be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit, by indulging carnal lusts and affections, minding only earthly things. Believers often hinder their growth in grace, by not giving themselves up to the spiritual affections raised in their hearts by the Holy Spirit."* (NavPress CD Rom 1998) The Spirit is 'Holy', and we grieve Him by living an unholy, impure life, and by resisting His sanctifying work in our lives. Again Paul warns against this, (Eph 4:30). Furthermore, he reveals that living as 'children of light', (Eph 4:17-5:20) is only made possible by living a 'Spirit-filled' life, (Eph 5:18).

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<sup>4</sup> Refer back to page 10-12 for role of the Holy Spirit.

2. **By rejecting His gifts:** The second part of Paul's warning says, "*Do not treat prophecies with contempt.*" (1 Thess. 5:20). In other words we mustn't stifle the Spirit's work in our lives or anyone else's, rather we should encourage the full expression of these gifts to benefit the whole body of Christ. Let me briefly explain these spiritual gifts.

- ◆ **What are Spiritual gifts?** "... Any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the Church," Grudem (1999:396). This broad definition includes gifts related to natural abilities; teaching, mercy, (Rom 12:6-8) as well as gifts that appear more supernatural; prophecy, tongues<sup>5</sup>, healing, (1 Cor. 12:8-10). There are 'gifts' of ministry for the church, (Eph 4:11-12) as well as more specific gifts, 1 Cor. 7:7. (Cf also 1 Cor. 12:28).
- ◆ **Who gives spiritual gifts?** God gives gifts through His Holy Spirit to empower believers to serve Christ and His body, (the Church), (1 Cor. 12:4-6).
- ◆ **What are Spiritual gifts for?** They equip the church to fulfil its ministry until Christ returns. Furthermore, just as the Holy Spirit is a deposit/guarantee in this age, likewise the gifts are a foretaste of the Spirit's work in the age to come.
- ◆ **Who are Spiritual gifts for?** According to 2 Cor. 3:6, God has made us all competent to be ministers of the Spirit. We can all operate spiritual gifts.
- ◆ **How do we operate Spiritual gifts effectively?** Realise that God graciously gives all gifts and abilities: discover our gifts and abilities, and operate them for His glory: recognise that not everyone has the same gifts: desire gifts and abilities in order to be a blessing to the body of Christ, (1 Cor. 14:1): operate our gifts in love, (1 Cor. 13).

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<sup>5</sup> There is often confusion over this gift: an explanation may help. 'Praying in tongues' is supernatural communication between my spirit, and God's, (1 Cor. 14:2): every 'Spirit-filled' believer has the ability to do this. 'Speaking in tongues' is supernatural communication between God's Spirit and the church, which always requires interpretation, (1 Cor. 12:10 & 14:13). The latter is thought of as a separate gift, but in effect there's no reason why believers can't do both, although using the gift in public may require more faith. NB: People often say 'speaking' when referring to the practice of 'praying' in tongues: this is just a slip of the tongue over terminology!

So, how does this relate to living a 'Spirit-filled' life? The fact is that if we quench God's desire to 'partner' with us through His Spirit, we grieve Him. The Spirit will not fight for control; partnership is our choice. Surely though if we have made it our goal to love Christ and imitate Him, then we cannot live without the power and presence of His Holy Spirit to sanctify us and equip us for ministry in God's service. Consider Ananias and Sapphira, whose deceit Peter deemed to have tested the Holy Spirit, (Acts 5:1-11): a stern reminder that disobeying God, and quenching His Spirit has consequences.

The Spirit partners with us to empower us as witnesses and to produce fruit and holiness, (evidence of a Christ-like nature). Similarly, He partners with us to produce a community of believers, (the church) who are equipped with gifts for ministry in order to fulfil the Great Commission, but at the same time, will one day be presented pure and holy as a perfect bride, (Rev 19: 7). How awesome!



*“Being led by the Holy Spirit involves the desire to hear, the readiness to obey God’s Word, and the sensitivity to discern between your feelings and his promptings. Live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit. Then the words of Christ will be in your mind, the love of Christ will be behind your actions, and the power of Christ will help you control your selfish desires.”*

(LAN NavPress CD Rom 1998)



## 'ALL TRUTHS IN BALANCE!'

### ***Accountability: balancing the Word and Spirit.***

*"Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil," (1 Thess. 5:21)*

If the tendency of some is to disobey Paul's directive by quenching the Spirit through the rejection of spiritual gifts, the tendency of others has been to disregard the rest of his injunction to the point where anything goes. I'm sure that both parties would be able to convincingly defend their particular view. Scripture is always open to personal emphasis and interpretation, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is no exception. The problem is that, *"Heresy develops when too great an emphasis is placed on one truth at the expense of another."*<sup>6</sup> So, how do we avoid 'heresy'?

The first principle is to keep truth in balance, which I believe means balancing the Spirit with the Word. *"Any claim to the Spirit's presence, leading or blessing which bypasses the Word, or minimizes its authority, is clearly foreign to all God-honouring faith,"* Milne (1998:251).

The second principle is to conduct a 'Spiritual balance' test. It appears that 'extremes' were just as prevalent in the Early Church as they are now. John writes, *"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God..."* (1 John 4:1-6). Both Paul and John instruct us to be spiritually discerning. Here's a simple 'Spiritual balance' test we can follow: ~

- ▶▶ **The 'Plank' Test:** Don't 'judge' those with differing views: it's dangerous to scoff at people who, after all may be speaking the truth, (1 Thess 5:20).
  
- ▶▶ **The 'Bible' Test:** Not everything you read or hear will be truth: Verify every message, even if the speaker says it's from God: have faith, but don't be gullible: examine what people say and do: accept truth and reject falsehood, (Acts 17:11).

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from Hillsong Conference: 'Biblical Studies Faculty' lecture notes 2002: Amanda Fergusson: used with kind permission.

- ▶▶ **The ‘Unity’ Test:** Is the person a ‘Lone Ranger’, advocating a new teaching, or are they part of an established and trustworthy body of believers, (1 John 2:19)?
  
- ▶▶ **The ‘Character’ Test:** Do words and actions match with each other? (James 2:14-25)
  
- ▶▶ **The ‘Fruit’ Test:** Is their evidence of fruit in their ministry, (Mt 7:15-23)?
  
- ▶▶ **The ‘Jesus’ Test:** Most importantly, what do they believe about Christ? If their teaching is truly from God, it will be consistent with Christ’s teachings, (Gal 1:6-9).

Our world is filled with all sorts of ‘spiritual’ teaching claiming to be truth. It’s vital that we learn to balance Word and Spirit; wisely testing everything we read or hear, then we will be free to embrace the Spirit-filled life, neither quenching the Spirit, nor falling into error. Rather our lives will bring glory to God, as we become more like Christ, through the power and partnership of His Spirit.



*“The idea of birth through a Holy Spirit, of the death of a divine being, of the forgiveness of sins, or the fulfilment of prophecies, are ideas which...need but a touch to turn them into something blasphemous or ferocious... If some small mistake were made in doctrine, huge blunders might be made in human happiness...The Church had to be careful, if only that the world might be careless.” GK Chesterton<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> From ‘Orthodoxy’: Ignatius Press: San Francisco: 1995: p 106,107

## CONCLUSION

### *Living a Spirit-filled life ~ an 'everyday' experience for every believer?*

*“The power of the Holy Spirit will help us walk in glory and victory. The pattern of carnality is struggle ~ defeat ~ struggle ~ defeat. But the pattern of the Spirit-led life is struggle ~ victory ~ struggle ~ victory! Scataglini (1999:69)*

At the outset I posed two questions: Firstly, ‘What does it mean to live a ‘Spirit-filled’ life?’ I believe that a recap of aims and conclusions from each part will reveal a clear answer.

▶▶ **Part One ~ Aim:** *To know the person and function of the Holy Spirit.*

**Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is God’s personal ‘Presence’, active within the life of every believer. His function is manifold, but His chief office is to glorify Christ.

▶▶ **Part Two ~ Aim:** *To know and apply what it means to live a Spirit-filled life.*

**Conclusion:** A Spirit-filled life involves being ‘immersed’ in the power and presence of God’s Spirit, constantly submitting to Christ, thereby enabling the ‘fullness’ of His Spirit to produce evidence of sanctification; a Christ-like nature, character and fruit,

▶▶ **Part Three ~ Aim:** *To know and apply what it means to ‘partner’ with the Holy Spirit.*

**Conclusion:** Partnership is a choice: to linger in God’s presence, tune-in and obey the voice of His Spirit, refusing to quench the Spirit by embracing His power and presence, gifts and fruit: protecting the partnership with wisdom; Word and Spirit.

In essence, this is ‘Spirit-filled’ living, but what about the second question ~ *‘Is it possible to live this life everyday?’* The answer is a resounding ‘yes’; it has to be. The fact is that if we truly want to experience the presence of God’s Holy Spirit and His transforming power in our lives, then why not experience it everyday, rather than just once a week!

The introduction to this paper represents my thoughts back in March. Looking back over the last seven months I can now see how my journey has progressed. I understand more of who the Spirit is and His role in my life. I’m more conscious of His presence and have experienced His power in many ways.

I trust I've become more like Christ, displaying Spiritual fruit ~ love, joy, peace... and ministering Spiritual gifts ~ prophecy, tongues, wisdom, and knowledge. To be honest though, at times the opposite has also been true, and it feels as if Paul wrote Romans 7:7-25 just for me. So, *'How do I live a Spirit-filled life 'everyday'?*

The answer is found back in Part Three ~ choosing to live in God's presence everyday: lingering and listening, worshiping and waiting, tuning-in to the Spirit of God, not out of duty, but love: In that secret place, spending time with my Father, receiving the power and presence so fundamental to 'everyday Spirit-filled living'. What's more, this 'place' isn't just limited to time and space: I can live every minute of everyday empowered and enabled by God, through the indwelling of His wonderful Holy Spirit.

For every believer, the ball is in our court. We can choose to be filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit ~ everyday. We can choose to submit to Christ and walk in the fullness of His Spirit ~ everyday. We can choose to partner with the Spirit as He reproduces the nature of Christ in us ~ everyday, and we can choose to embrace the Spirit's gifts, enabling us to minister in power ~ everyday. Does that sound difficult? Probably, but it also sounds like the most exciting life imaginable, the sort of Spirit-filled life I want to live everyday. To conclude, in theory, the research may be over, but in practice the adventure has only just begun!



*“Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives.” Galatians 5:25 (The Message)*

## **APPENDIX ~ DECLARATIONS OF 'EVERYDAY SPIRIT-FILLED' LIVING'**

I was intrigued to discover what 'everyday Spirit-filled living' meant for other people in my life. Hence, these personal 'declarations' are mostly from friends and family, who represent people, from all walks of life, background, and experience: ~

*"For me, 'being filled with the Holy Spirit' is about power to live. I believe that when I am filled, which I decide daily, I am being empowered for my destiny. The way I maintain His 'infilling' and relationship is through the gift of speaking in tongues, which has been the foundation of my prayer-life for the last 28 years."* **Robert Fergusson < The wisest man I know >**

*"I declare that the Holy Spirit is resident in my spirit. By faith I release him into every area of my soul and body. I ask Him to regain possession of enemy-occupied territory, renew my mind, rule my decisions, choices, and behaviour, and generate Kingdom results through the engagement of my spiritual gifts with every person and situation that impacts my life today."*

**John Key < A man of integrity and excellence >**

*"... A daily submission to the Word and will of God: reading, meditating and applying the Bible and allowing the Spirit to speak through it, appreciating that it's the Spirit's role to assure us of our salvation and future hope, to enable us to live Christ-centred, holy lives and to conform us to the character of Christ."* **Paul Linnell < My dear brother >**

*"Freshness and familiarity: newness and reassurance. The Spirit who 'Renews the whole creation' makes the familiar remarkable in a world where others conspire to make the remarkable familiar. The Spirit brings warmth and an abundance of life, won in a world past, made new for me, in joy and beauty, in pain and confusion ~ God's action in my present(s)."*

**John Capper < Academic Dean, Tabor College, 'A joyful Theologian' >**

*"I rely on the Holy Spirit everyday! He is my friend and companion as I travel on the journey of 'life'. This means I need to know Him more personally, and have a relationship with Him. He leads me to the truth, and teaches me how to become more like Jesus."*

**Charlotte Dawson < Amazing friend & 'Warrior Princess'**

*"To me the Holy spirit is my life-line. Just as I need to breathe everyday, I must have contact with the Holy Spirit everyday. I can't begin to imagine what life would be like without my life-line."*

**Margaret Aghajanian < Mentor & Spirit-filled 'guru' >**

*"Every day I ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit because I know how empty I am without Him: My Bible reading is of little value without His life-application: I need Him to help me pray in a way that God wants to hear; to get results! To rule my thoughts, words, and actions so that I think, speak, and act as a child of God, not as a worldling"* **Tony Linnell < My Father & hero >**

*"...An ever-changing experience: From the comfort that protects me through attack, to the responsibility of His love that pushes me through hard times, and the convicting drive that pulls me with much pain through places I would never go. Without Him I wouldn't be anything, and to be more like Jesus I need Him!!"* **Thomas Hansen < The dangerous Dane >**

*"Daily I ask the Lord to fill me afresh with His Holy Spirit in prayer, as I read the Scriptures, and at times in everyday situations where I feel helpless and need the Lord's guidance and wisdom; this is very often. In difficult situations the Spirit brings me strength and comfort: His promised presence is so reassuring."* **Jennifer Linnell < My dearest Mother & friend >**

*"Living for the spectacular or living for the supernatural? I get a few opportunities to do things that feel spectacular, but I'm learning that the less I ignore the Holy Spirit, the more I can live a supernatural, 'everyday' kind of life. I used to think that living in the Spirit meant waiting for some 'voice' from above. I'm learning that He speaks constantly as I think, feel and experience life. The key for me is to ignore Him less."* **Mark Hirst < Awesome Pommie Pastor >**

*"To live a Spirit-filled life is to go into the place of prayer, where a stilling of self and an alertness to God is. From this place I enter the day and all that it throws at me, and am prompted to joy and delight, tears and compassion, in the places I enter and amongst the people I meet. He comes again and again to meet us in the situations we find ourselves, and it is wonderful, sustaining ~ encouraging even!"* **Jayne Ward < Friend & Anglican Deacon >**

**< My deepest thanks to you all >**

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