

X. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The HELPER, THE COMFORTER, THE GUIDE, THE SEAL

Who is he and what does he do?

As we read in the last chapter, this moment of conversion is not the end of our salvation, it is only the beginning! We should be so grateful that our righteous Judge does not just simply acquit me “just as if I’d” never done it, declaring me “not guilty” and saying “you are free to go, good luck and see you on the other side!” No, we have a Father who initiated a Covenant of Redemption by sending His Son, we have a Son who willingly humbled Himself and became our sin, but we also have the Holy Spirit who, for His part of this covenant, becomes our Helper, applying the redemption to our lives.

So who is this Helper? What is His role, what does He do? First and foremost, the Holy Spirit is not the Wild God of the Trinity. We seem to picture the Father as the stern, angry, old gray-bearded Father, the Son as the compassionate, hippie, tea-drinking, obedient Son with a flower in His hair, and the Holy Spirit as the emotional Kamikaze Dove who creates ruckus and makes everything messy.



No.



No.



No.

Rather, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love, power, and self-control and discipline.⁶⁸⁴ As we saw back in **Chapter II: the Trinitarian God**, we know that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He is eternally equal as God with the Father and the Son. They are one God, yet three distinct Persons. In their distinction, they also have different roles and responsibilities in regard to Their interaction with creation, especially our salvation. As we have seen, it was the Father’s initiative to seek and save the lost,⁶⁸⁵ and it was the Son’s willingness to be sent of the Father.⁶⁸⁶ Additionally, it is the Holy Spirit’s willingness to be sent in order to testify of the Son, glorify Him,⁶⁸⁷ testify to the lost,⁶⁸⁸ and most importantly for us, indwell in the redeemed children of God to give us power, wisdom, understanding of His Word, and, of course, a seal for our redemption.

Let’s quickly review some of the things we looked at when we looked at the Trinity in **Chapter II**.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁴ 2 Timothy 1.7

⁶⁸⁵ Luke 19.10

⁶⁸⁶ 1 John 4.14 // John 5.23, 30, 57

⁶⁸⁷ John 16.12-14 // Acts 2 // 1 Corinthians 2.9-14

⁶⁸⁸ Matthew 11.4-6 // Luke 3.18, 4.43 // John 6.33 // Ephesians 5.18, 19, 6.17 // Colossians 3.16

⁶⁸⁹ pg. 25 and 26

The Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit is not an “It.” He is a “He,”⁶⁹⁰ and He is part of the “Us” as He, too, is 100% God.⁶⁹¹ He is not a force, such as wind or a power (though He is *described* using both those words⁶⁹²), but He is a Person, and He has been sent by the Father and the Son to help us,⁶⁹³ guide us,⁶⁹⁴ testify of the Word to us,⁶⁹⁵ seal us,⁶⁹⁶ empower us,⁶⁹⁷ and replace our old, sinful soul.⁶⁹⁸ What we mean by Him being a Person is that He has a mind, a will, desires, a personality, He can be grieved, and He has a distinct role and purpose. A “force” or “thing” cannot have these things.
- Likewise, the Holy Spirit is neither the Son nor the Father, but He is also all God all the time and is also not 1/3 God.

2 Corinthians 3.17

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

The Distinct Trinitarian Roles and Responsibilities of the Spirit:⁶⁹⁹

- He is also a “good and perfect gift” from the Father.⁷⁰⁰
- He is also simultaneously sent from the Son.⁷⁰¹
- His mission is to glorify the Son.⁷⁰²
- He does not speak of His own authority.⁷⁰³
- He is sent to be our Helper.⁷⁰⁴
- He is sent to teach us about Jesus.⁷⁰⁵

The Spirit enjoys glorifying the Son and the Father. The Holy Spirit’s aim is to glorify the Son and ultimately, the Father. On top of that, even, He serves Himself to us, *not at all in the sense of having lower authority*, but in meek and loving service to us, being our Helper, our Guide, and our Teacher.

The Spirit upholds all the things that the Father planned. When the Father chose us for the Son, it was the Holy Spirit who came into our lives to uphold and secure our salvation to be the gift given to the Son by the Father. It is by His power that we are sanctified and will eventually be glorified to the praise and glory of God the Father.

The Seal of the New Covenant

So far, we have seen much of the work of the Holy Spirit in the last couple chapters specifically as we looked at the atonement and salvation. We should recall that in light of the Covenant of Redemption made between the Trinity, it was the Father who chose those to be purchased by God’s grace out of death, it was the Son who agreed to be the One to come to earth to do the work of the atonement by propitiating the just wrath of God by becoming the sufficient sacrifice and redeeming those that the Father had chosen, and it was the Holy Spirit who agreed to then apply that purchase by living in those people, sealing them and guaranteeing them as the promised and ransomed people for God’s glory to be praised.⁷⁰⁶

⁶⁹⁰ John 14.15-17, 16.13 // 1 Corinthians 12.11 // Hebrews 10.15-17

⁶⁹¹ Acts 5.3, 4

⁶⁹² John 3.8 // 2 Timothy 1.7

⁶⁹³ John 14.16, 17 // John 14.26 // John 15.26

⁶⁹⁴ John 16.13

⁶⁹⁵ 1 John 5.6 // John 15.26 // Romans 8.16

⁶⁹⁶ Ephesians 1.13 // 2 Corinthians 1.22

⁶⁹⁷ 2 Timothy 1.7 // Acts 1.8, 10.38 // Romans 15.13, 19 // Galatians 4.29 // Ephesians 3.16

⁶⁹⁸ Ezekiel 36.26, 27 // Galatians 2.20, 21, 4.6

⁶⁹⁹ pg. 29 and 30

⁷⁰⁰ Acts 1.4, 2.33 // John 14.25, 26

⁷⁰¹ John 15.26

⁷⁰² John 14. 25, 26, 16.14

⁷⁰³ John 16.13

⁷⁰⁴ John 14.16, 26, 15.26, 16.7

⁷⁰⁵ John 16.12-14

⁷⁰⁶ pg. 133

So before moving on, we should also review the *ordo salutis* and see how the Holy Spirit was involved so far:

- **Election:** the Father, in His sovereign grace, indiscriminately chooses for Himself a people for His Son to purchase. Upon completion of the ransom and redemption, the Spirit applies and seals those whom the Son redeemed.
- **Effectual Calling:** The Spirit, in God's timing, draws us and intrigues us toward the Gospel. He reveals the Son to us, which for some is instantaneous and "out of nowhere," and for others it is a process, maybe through growing up in a Christian home or hearing sermons or reading the Word over a period of time. This is all the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Regeneration:** This is what is called being born again, or as also the Word says "being made alive" or the "opening of our eyes." Though we may resist and "kick against the goads" when it comes to this inward call, this moment is when the Spirit "wins the arm wrestling match" and opens our eyes to see who Jesus is and see our need. This, too, is the work of the Holy Spirit who was sent to magnify, glorify, and testify of the Son.
- **Saving Faith:** This is believing the truth and being converted in our heart; understanding and admitting our need for Jesus as Savior and turning to Him as Lord; this is most often seen as being simultaneous with regeneration, however it is distinct. This is the choice we make to repent and confess our need for Him. But rather than this being a simple act of our own newly found spirituality, this too is a work of the Holy Spirit. It is again by God the Father's gracious and loving choice of us that the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of repentance and faith.
- **Justification:** This is the moment upon conversion when we are declared "not guilty." This is the moment when the Holy Spirit applies the purchase that Jesus made for us.

But this is just the beginning, and though He was a part of these initial works of our salvation, now we should look at His *ongoing* part in our salvation.

Upon the regenerating work of the Spirit and the gift of justification being applied to us by Him, we see a very significant thing that the Scripture teaches us about His work in our salvation: He becomes the "seal" or "sign" of our salvation.

Remember in the chapter on the covenants that we saw that every covenant is accompanied by a sign? For the Noahic Covenant, the rainbow was a sign, or evidence, of God's promise to never destroy the earth by flood again. For the Abrahamic Covenant, the sign of internal faith was circumcision, which was to signify that there is something faith driven going on inside the heart. For the New Covenant, the sign that we are partakers of the New Covenant is the faith that we exhibit due to the indwelling Holy Spirit in our lives.⁷⁰⁷ It is by this that we can know we are God's covenant people.

Ephesians 1.11-14

In him we have obtained an *inheritance*, having been *predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will*, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were *sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*, 14 who is the *guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it*, to the praise of his glory. [emphasis mine]

2 Corinthians 1.21, 22

And *it is God* who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also *put his seal* on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a *guarantee*. [emphasis mine]

Ephesians 4.30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

In this day, a seal was something of great importance. A great King, when issuing a decree or sending a message of importance, would place melted wax over the seam of the document and then press in what was called his "signet ring," which was a ring that bore his unique design, often times a family coat of arms.



⁷⁰⁷ pg. 135

When the document would be taken to its destination, the recipient, when seeing the wax seal, would know that it is a legitimate message from the great King. This was its guarantee of authenticity. For us, when the atonement of Christ is applied to us, it is the Holy Spirit who is our seal, and His existence in and on our life is the “evidence” and “guarantee of authenticity.”

ADOPTION AS HEIRS IN HIS KINGDOM

As we have seen, our sin has alienated us from our Creator. This means that we don't have a unique Father/son or Father/daughter relationship.⁷⁰⁸ Now, this should give us further insight into the fact that we are not just “undeserving” but “ill-deserving” law breakers. Oftentimes, the question is asked “why would God allow any of His children to be condemned?” But in the Word, we, before our salvation and as unrepentant sinners, are never called “God's children.” Though He indeed has created us and were created by Him and in His image, the very personal, intimate, communal relationship of what it means to be an actual child, son, or daughter is *not* something that we are as humans *before* our regeneration.

Again, we must guard ourselves from the opinion or persuasion that says we are neutral, simply as victims of sin, rather than the actual enemies of God. In opposition to the view that we are “all God's children,” even before repentance, the Word actually says this about our sonship:

- **We are “sons of disobedience”:**

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”
Ephesians 2.1, 2

- **We were “by nature children of wrath”:**

It continues by saying that we, as believers, “among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” **Ephesians 2.3** [emphasis mine]

- **Natural children are not God's children, spiritual ones are:**

“It is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.” **Romans 9.8**. This specifically speaks of the fact that not only are unrepentant people not considered God's children, but in speaking specifically of Israel, not even those who are Jewish by birth are actually God's children, because they are not Jewish in their hearts. God is Spirit, and to be His children we must be born of the Spirit.⁷⁰⁹

- **Born in sin, not in Christ:**

Rather than being born as God's children, we are born in sin as enemies of God. **James 4.4, Psalm 51.1**

- **God is not everyone's Father:**

Jesus *actually* says of who our father is *not*, speaking to the unbelieving Pharisees, “*If God were your Father* [saying that they are not], you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.” **John 8.42** [emphasis mine]

- **Unbelievers' father is the devil:**

He then told the Pharisees (who were very religious and moral, by the way) that rather, they “belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.” **John 8.44, 1 John 3.8**

- **There is a distinction between God's children and the devil's children:**

John also shows the difference between when he says “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.” **1 John 3.10**

⁷⁰⁸ Ephesians 2.2, 3, 5.6 // Colossians 3.6 (NASB, NKJV) // John 8.44

⁷⁰⁹ John 3.3

Now, this should give us a much clearer picture of where we stood in our sin. We should see that God is not punishing His children, but that He is punishing people who are *truly* enemies, objects of wrath, and as Jesus and the Apostle John say, are children of the devil. We must, once again, see that we are undeniable not simply undeserving, neutral, victims that God should feel sorry for, but we are ill-deserving, self-seeking, prideful, God-rejecting, Jesus-crucifying, Spirit-denying enemies of God, not innocent, helpless children.

**In our pride and ego, we say, “okay, I’m a sinner, but this is a harsh exaggeration.”
But if God showed us the inside of our heart, we would say,
“oh Lord, why didn’t You tell me how bad it was?”**

Deception is a powerful thing. And while we were unrepentant sinners, our father, the devil, whose native language is lies, sold us into the belief that we’re not as bad as it seems, that God exaggerates, and that we are “basically” good people. This, as we know, is contrary to the Word of God.

Through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, we can not only ask Him to make our adoption known, but we can also *clearly see from what we were adopted from!*

If this picture of being a child of wrath and son or daughter of disobedience does not resonate in you, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal this depth in you, for without this revelation, you will never know what it means to be a son or daughter of God, and you will miss out on so much that He, as your Father, offers you.

THE WORK OF ADOPTION

We, again as His image bearers, have also become sin bearers. A wedge was driven between us and our Maker, but the cross rebuilds the bridge that we have burned, and breaks down the wall that divides us.⁷¹⁰ It is this great truth that not only does the holy and righteous Judge declare us “not guilty,” but He also then calls us His own through *adoption*.♣

At the moment of His death, the Scriptures state that the veil of the Temple was torn in half by a great earthquake.⁷¹¹ This would be the great symbol that showed that “it is finished,”⁷¹² the divider between God and man has been destroyed, Jesus broke the back of sin and death by becoming the curse for us and atoning for our sin and therefore reconciling us with God.⁷¹³

Romans 8.12-17

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Titus 3.4-7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He *saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7* so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

In addition to this, adoption also is rooted in eternity past. Our adoption, as with every other part of our salvation, is rooted only in God’s grace, and is nothing of ourselves.

⁷¹⁰ Ephesians 2.14-22 // 2 Corinthians 5.18 // Matthew 5.24 // John 10.16 // 1 Corinthians 1.10, 12.25

⁷¹¹ Matthew 27.51

⁷¹² John 19.30

⁷¹³ Galatians 3.13 // Romans 5.10 // 2 Corinthians 5.18-20

Ephesians 1.5, 6

...he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

The only thing we have to contribute to our salvation is our sin.

-Paul Washer

God's sovereign choice to adopt us, though we were ill-deserving enemies and sons of disobedience, was made long before we were even born. We didn't choose to be adopted, much how a physical orphan does not have the ability to choose to be adopted, but our adoption is based simply and only on the sovereign grace and choice of God, which He, as the Word we just saw says, "predestined...according to the purpose of *His will*, to the praise of His glorious grace."

Let's look at some of the benefits of adoption that the Holy Spirit brings us:

- **We get a new name and position.**

It is at this point that we are given the "title" of "children of God." We are no longer slaves⁷¹⁴ or strangers and aliens,⁷¹⁵ but His children!

1 John 3.1

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

Galatians 3.25, 26

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

- **We are given the Holy Spirit as the seal on our adoption papers.**

We will look at this more soon, but in this adoption we are given a guarantee of our adoption. In other words, we are "signed, sealed, delivered!" This seal is the Holy Spirit who was given to us and dwells inside of us to testify as the proof of our redemption.

Galatians 4.4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

We only get the Spirit once we are adopted, and it is only by the Holy Spirit, through the Son's righteousness and sonship which we now have, that we can rightly call God our Father. We are now no longer slaves of sins and sons of disobedience, but sons and daughters of God the Father.

- **We have the right and privilege of entering *boldly* into His presence because we are His kids!**

Our Father will not turn us away! We are accepted, not by our own works, but by His grace we have been saved, justified, and adopted. It's by His will, choice, and grace that He chooses to call us "accepted!"

Hebrews 4.16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- **We get to partake in the inheritance of God's heavenly kingdom.**

Because we are *now* sons and daughters, we have been written into the inheritance of God. As a natural child gets willed the estate of his parents, we spiritual children have gotten willed, through the death of Jesus, the estate of God. We will look at this more in depth in the chapter on the church and heaven, but for now, we can know that all of the blessings and promises of the unconditional covenants that God had made with His people (the Adamic Covenant, Noahic Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant and Davidic Covenant) will be given to us to have forever!

⁷¹⁴ Philemon 6 // Galatians 4.7

⁷¹⁵ Ephesians 2.19

**Jesus entered the family of humanity so that we could enter the family of God.
The Son of God became the Son of Man to enable the
sinful sons of men to become the sons of God.**

-Philip Ryken⁷¹⁶

- **We are adopted into God's family.**

Not only are we being reconciled back to God, but we are also reconciled unto one another, and into the family of God, the body of Christ.⁷¹⁷ Yes, salvation, as procured by the cross, is not only about "me and God," but it is about "we and God." To be made one with Christ is to be made one with His body, as He is the head.⁷¹⁸ It is the blood of Christ that unites us as previously bitter, divisive, and prideful people. This is one of the greatest joys of salvation, that God designed us to be in community with one another, encouraging one another, challenging one another, and being a body with one another.

In addition to this, but we find that both our inheritance and adoption into the family means that we are *specifically* adopted and grafted into the commonwealth of Israel.

Ephesians 2.12-22

Remember that you were at that time *separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise*, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been *brought near by the blood of Christ*. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the *dividing wall of hostility* 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself *one new man in place of the two*, so making peace, 16 and might *reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross*, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have *access in one Spirit to the Father*. 19 So then you are *no longer strangers and aliens*, but you are *fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Talk about an incredible text full of so many great promises and truths! Notice it mentions that as unbelieving Gentiles, we had no part in not just *the* Covenant of Redemption, but the *covenants*, plural, of promise (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, and Davidic)! But now we are able, because Christ fulfilled the "law of commandments" (Mosaic Covenant), so that we could be made into "one new man" and "one body" with believing Israel! And so *now*, we are "no longer strangers and aliens, but you are *fellow citizens*" with Israel!

Such incredible promises brought forth and applied to us! We will see more on this in the coming chapters.

SANCTIFICATION THROUGH A FAITH THAT WORKS

Once we receive justification and are adopted as sons and daughters, we immediately step into a whole new process that the bible calls *sanctification*.♣ Sanctification means to "be made holy." It shares the same root for the word "saint," which means "holy one."

When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, He gives us the power and ability to be free from sin.⁷¹⁹ Now, through His empowerment, we are able to crucify our flesh,⁷²⁰ flee any lusts we have,⁷²¹ shake off the sin that has entangled us,⁷²² and put to death anything sinful, and pursue righteousness.⁷²³

⁷¹⁶ *The Message of Salvation*, pg. 211

⁷¹⁷ Ephesians 2.14-17 // 2 Corinthians 5.18-20

⁷¹⁸ Romans 12.4, 5 // 1 Corinthians 12.12-31 // Ephesians 5.22-33 // Colossians 1.18, 2.18, 19, 3.15

⁷¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 3.17 // Romans 8.2

⁷²⁰ Romans 6.6 // Galatians 2.20, 5.24

⁷²¹ 2 Timothy 2.22

⁷²² Hebrews 12.1

Justification has opened the door to our prison cell. Sanctification is walking out of it.

1 Peter 1.1, 2

To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

1 Thessalonians 5.23, 24

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

2 Thessalonians 2.13, 14

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God *chose you* as the firstfruits to be saved, *through sanctification by the Spirit* and belief in the truth. 14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But there are a few things that are important to understand when it comes to this life of sanctification. It is different in many regards when compared to justification. Let's look at a few elements of sanctification.

1. **It is not automatic:** The first thing we have to realize is that our spiritual life does not perfectly reflect natural life. In our natural life, barring sickness and disease, we are born as babies, we cry and poop, we learn to crawl, talk, and then walk. As we get older we lose the baby fat, get taller, and most of us will then get wider (usually in the form of a spare tire), and we eventually get shorter. Eventually we get shrivelly, and then we die. This automatically happens.

But this is not necessarily so with our spiritual life. You can know the Lord for 20 years and still be spiritually immature. You can still be an infant, even though you should be mature by now.⁷²⁴ Likewise, you can be a wise young Christian who has only known the Lord for a couple years.⁷²⁵

2. **It does not happen overnight:** We also have to realize that this growth, unlike justification, is not instant and final in one moment. It is a lifelong process. Learning the ways and will of God, learning to know His heart, and walking in freedom from sin, often takes a lot of time. It takes mistakes, victories, correction, rebuking, times of glory and times of humbling. It is sometimes fun but also sometimes painful. We take each day step by step, and we *have* to be *content* with where God has brought us to that point. God is working out *in His perfect timing* the proper design for our life. Now, this is not to say we should be apathetic. No, we should always desire more of God and less of sin, but we should also not find ourselves being frustrated with where God has us.

Martin Luther put it this way:

This life therefore is not righteousness but growth in righteousness;
not health but healing; not being but becoming; not rest but exercise.

We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it.
The process is not finished, but it is going on.
This is not the end, but it is the road.
All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.

3. **It takes discipline:** This word shares the root word for "disciple," as I'm sure is pretty obvious. Disciples are disciplined followers of Jesus. We seek balance, foundation, solidarity, maturity, and growth. **1 Timothy 4.7** says we should "discipline [ourselves] for the purpose of godliness." It is interesting to me that godliness is something that we discipline or train ourselves in. No, godliness does not automatically come with our justification. It doesn't come out of the sky and fall in our laps, it doesn't come automatically just by asking God to make us godly, and it doesn't come because we exercise our spiritual gifts. Godliness comes from discipline. Discipline that comes from submitting to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

⁷²³ Colossians 3.5-10 // Romans 8.12-14

⁷²⁴ Hebrews 5.12

⁷²⁵ 1 Timothy 4.12

A HOME RENOVATION PROJECT

Consider this simple analogy. Let's say a once beautiful house goes into disrepair. The owner of the house has leased it out to some people that don't take care of it that well. The carpet is nasty, the plumbing is leaking, the weeds are overgrown, and the garage is packed with all sorts of junk. Then one particular day a prospective buyer comes along and purchases the old home and evicts the terrible tenants. In time, he renovates the house and not only brings it back to original form, but makes it even better than new!



Don't worry, this is not the Holy Spirit.

Now, as you can see, the house is our bodies, the tenant is our sinful nature that has ravaged the property, and the new owner is Christ who now has a new tenant living in the home, who is the Holy Spirit. What's interesting, too, is that when we do purchase things like homes, usually the first thing we fix up is either the front yard or main living area, because that's what everyone sees. Last will always be the closets, attic, garage, basement, and backyard. This is the same with us, often, as we usually willfully start "working on" the outward appearances that everyone sees. This isn't necessarily bad, as some people have some very unhealthy "outer" issues. However, oftentimes, we never care to continue.

A renovation project like this usually occurs over a period of time; it doesn't happen overnight. Though we may see big advances early on (particularly in the big "outer" areas of life), but we must realize that sanctification is a lifelong process that takes discipline and commitment for the entirety of the work, not just the visible parts.

A FAITH THAT WORKS

So here we have an interesting contrast, yet compliment, to justification. Justification is "by grace through faith." It is the gift of God, and there is nothing we can do to earn it, deserve it, keep it, or lose it. It is all on God's grace and the work of the cross that we are justified. We can know, therefore, by the sealing of the Holy Spirit, that we are saved for all eternity, as we will soon look at.

However, sanctification is a little different. As we saw in the three items above, there is an element of our own obedience, decision making, choices, and works. Now, to be clear, works has nothing to do with the *justification* part of our salvation, in other words, "getting saved," nor "'remaining' saved." Notice that **1 Timothy 4.7** doesn't say "discipline yourself for the purpose of getting saved/staying saved/being forgiven/earning God's love or grace/etc." You are eternally justified and secure. Rather, it says "for the purpose of godliness." But the "working out" of your salvation does, in fact, include our works.⁷²⁶

We are not saved *by* good works, but *for* good works.

Ephesians 2.10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Hebrews 13.21

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Notice something important in these verses. The walking out of our sanctification is also foreordained and predetermined; even more, it is guaranteed! God, in His foreknowledge and predetermination, sees it all so clearly that He even speaks of sanctification being something that is *already done*, even though we are all, in our temporal lives, still going through the process! Look at these verses:

1 Corinthians 6.9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

⁷²⁶ Philippians 2.12

Hebrews 10.9, 10

Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

How can God say already that we all have been sanctified if we haven’t finished the race yet? Because it is guaranteed! Jesus did not just purchase the *opportunity* to *hopefully* go to heaven if *we* did good enough, *He purchased the whole thing!* Salvation, for Jesus, is a package deal, batteries included!

Sanctification is not sold separately.

In this process of sanctification, the Holy Spirit comes into us and invites us into a partnership. We are made one with God through our justification, and now we embark on a journey together. Now, it would be impossible to say what “percentage” of our sanctification is the work of the Spirit and what part is the work of us. That said, if I may offer an opinion, I think that it could be said that it is 100/100.

To me, it seems as though sanctification is 100% the working of the Holy Spirit (in its “eternity past” predestined origin, for sure, but it is also His work due to it being His prompting, revealing, empowering and inspiring for us to even *do* the actions of obedience in the first place!). Yet on the other hand, it seems as though it is 100% up to us to respond to Him and His unction through daily repentance, worship, and submission to Him and the Word.

Sanctification is happening where the words of Jesus are being obeyed.

-John Piper

One of my favorite sections of Scripture that speaks of this interesting partnership is **2 Timothy 1.6-2.7**. Paul admonishes Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God.” The phrase “fan into flame” is a single word in Greek, *anazopureo*, which means to “re-ignite” or “stir up.” It seems as though Timothy either allowed the gifts that God sovereignly gave him to die out, or that the gifts God gave him were still yet young and undeveloped and that Paul is encouraging Timothy to put in some self-discipline and stir up this gift. Though all gifts are given from God alone, there is a part of responsibility on our end to be diligent. We are to be stewards of God’s gifts.

Then in **chapter 2** he begins by speaking of three analogies to show the manner in which we are to stand strong in faith and by God’s grace. Even with the great knowledge and truth that God the Father, through the purchasing sacrifice of Christ, sanctifies us by the power of the Holy Spirit, in all these things there is still a responsibility required of us to make the effort and choice to live a disciple’s lifestyle of devotion.

1. First of all, Paul says that a good soldier remains focused on the goal so that he can please his commanding officer.⁷²⁷ Our “commanding officer” is **God the Father** (our Father in heaven, above all things).⁷²⁸
2. He then says that a good athlete doesn’t cut corners, but only gets the crown of victory when he plays by the rules. Our “rules” are according to the Word, who is **God the Son** (the Word made flesh).⁷²⁹
3. Lastly, he says that a good farmer works hard to yield a worthy harvest. Our “hard work and resulting fruit” is empowered by **God the Holy Spirit** (the Spirit of power and His fruit).⁷³⁰

I’ve always loved these verses, probably in large part due to the idea that, as I see it, these verses are very Trinitarian in nature. They speak of our devotion as disciplined people to be committed to the Trinity. But in addition to this, it shows a great deal of our partnership in the working out of our salvation.

⁷²⁷ Hebrews 12.1-3 // 2 Corinthians 4.16-18 // Luke 21.34 // Matthew 5.16 // Philippians 3.13, 14 // Colossians 3.2 // John 12.49, 50

⁷²⁸ 1 Corinthians 15.27, 28 // John 5.27, 17.1, 5 // Philippians 2.9-11 // 1 Corinthians 15.28 // 1 Peter 1.18-21

⁷²⁹ 2 Timothy 4.6-8 // Galatians 5.7, 8 // 1 Corinthians 9.24-27 // John 1.1, 14 // John 4.23, 24 // 1 John 5.6

⁷³⁰ Matthew 9.37, 38 // Galatians 6.7-10 // Hebrews 12.5-11 // 2 Timothy 1.7 // Proverbs 20.4 // Proverbs 14.23

So no, we do not just sit around twiddling our thumbs and waiting for God to bless us or change us. So often, I will hear people speak of being “led by the Spirit” or saying “I’m just gonna let the Lord do it” when all they really mean is “I don’t want to do any of the work myself.” In other words, “I’d rather just be lazy and rub the genie in the bottle.” Additionally, we are neither simply robotic androids who walk around mindlessly and are being controlled from heaven via remote control.



Waiting on the Lord

No, we neither of these; we are disciples, believers who are “disciplined.”

A.W. Pink spoke passionately about sanctification when he wrote this:

The Salvation which Christ purchased for His people includes both justification and sanctification. The Lord Jesus saves not only from the guilt and penalty of sin, but from the power and pollution of it. Where there is genuine longing to be freed from the love of sin, there is a true desire for His salvation; but where there is no practical deliverance from the service of sin, then we are strangers to His saving grace. Christ came here to "Perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:72-75). It is by this we are to test or measure ourselves: are we serving Him "in holiness and righteousness?" If we are not, we have not been sanctified; and if we are unsanctified, we are none of His.⁷³¹

Does this seem harsh? Does Pink seem to say that if you don’t have evidence of salvation then you aren’t saved? Consider these words by Deitrich Bonhoeffer:

Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. It remains an abstract idea, a myth which has a place for the Fatherhood of God, but omits Christ as the living Son... There is trust in God, but no following of Christ... He wants to follow, but feels obliged to insist on his own terms to the level of human understanding. The disciple places himself at the Master’s disposal, but at the same time retains the right to dictate his own terms. But then discipleship is no longer discipleship, but a program of our own to be arranged to suit ourselves, and to be judged in accordance with the standards of rational ethic.⁷³²

Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ.

James said it even more succinctly in **James 2.14-26** when he said “faith without works is dead.” He called people onto the mat when he said “you say you have faith? Show me your deeds!” Do you call yourself a Christian? Show me your discipleship! We will look at this more later on, but it should be made clear that professed faith is *proved* to be authentic by the fruit that follows.

Matthew 12.33

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.

So let us not “blame God” for our shortcomings or faults post-salvation. We shouldn’t take responsibility for our sins we committed pre-salvation, only then to point the finger at Him for His perceived lack of sanctification post-salvation. We are commanded to be doers of the Word, not just hearers.⁷³³

⁷³¹ *A Fourfold Salvation* by A.W. Pink, Chapter 3. Many of his teachings can be found online at www.pbministries.org

⁷³² *The Cost of Discipleship*, pg. 63-66

⁷³³ James 1.22, 23

☪ SPIRIT-LED DISCIPLESHIP ☪

If the fruit and effect of justification is being made children of God, the fruit and effect of sanctification is being made disciples of God. The word “disciple(s)” exists in the New Testament 294 times. The word “Christian(s)” exists in the New Testament 3 times. Now, I’m not suggesting that we abandon the word “Christian,” but it must be noted that to be a Christian in New Testament times *was to be* a disciple. Many can claim to be a Christian, but how many can claim to be disciples? In the first century church, there was no difference. Today, particularly in the West, and even more particularly in America, the ratio of Christians to Disciples, sad to say, is greatly out of proportion. Deitrich Bonhoeffer said it correctly when he said:

**Christ’s desire is not that we would simply add Him to our life.
His desire is that we would die to ourselves and that He would *become* our life.**

But again, this simple “addition” of Christ into our life, neatly compartmentalized for private or for Sundays should not be the case. We do not simply add Christ into our life like He’s an ingredient to a cake. We have been justified by the blood of Christ and we are now being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit. It His Christ’s desire to now *be our life*. In light of discipleship and struggling through life, 16th century Christian Madame Guyon said:

Let us not be only given to Him when we’re in a season to be cared for by Him, only to wrestle ourselves back when it comes time to be in a season to be crucified with Him. It is impossible to love God without loving the Cross of Christ.⁷³⁴

We don’t neatly tuck away the cross of Christ when the going gets tough. Rather, we have been crucified *with Christ*, and it is no longer we who live, but it is *Christ* who lives in us!⁷³⁵ We are to take up our cross and follow after Him, denying self and making Him our everything!⁷³⁶

**Radical discipleship begins with radical transformation,
And radical transformation begins with radical repentance.**

To walk in this lifestyle of discipleship, we must start with repentance. We have got to start calling sin “sin.” What I mean by this is to say that we have to stop having cute little nicknames, pet names, and excuses for our sins. Sin is sin. If we would start “calling it like it is,” we would be much quicker to be on a life transforming journey of sanctification. Consider some of these reality checks:

- We call our sin a “struggle” or “slip up” rather than “sin” or “disobedience.”
- We say “I’m too busy/too tired” when we should call it laziness, apathy, or selfishness.
- We call it self-protection, but it’s really bitterness and fear.
- We say we don’t have time to read the Word, when the reality is that we don’t care enough to read the Word.
- We say “I’m gonna pray about it,” even though we really want to say no but don’t want to seem selfish, so we say this because we’d rather look godly (a.k.a. prideful).
- We say we’re just trying to fit in, but we’re really just idolizing our own image and worshipping self.
- We’ll say to a friend, “I just need to vent.” It’s really just gossip.
- We live in “disappointment” of ourselves, our friends, our spouses, our kids, or our jobs, but it’s really a mixture of worshipping self, ungratefulness, selfishness, and coveting.
- We say we can’t afford to give, but what we really should say is “I’m a terrible steward of my money” or “I love my money too much.”
- We’ll claim, “I just need to relax,” when what we are really doing is partaking in gluttony or drunkenness when we overeat or drink too much.
- We love authenticity, so we say, “I’m just being real,” but again, we’re really just gossiping and being rude, undiscerning, and unloving.
- We’ll see others fail and say “they deserve it, what goes around comes around.” We should, however, recognize our pride and desire for revenge fueled by unforgiveness.

⁷³⁴ *A Short Method of Prayer and Other Writings*, pg. 23, 24

⁷³⁵ Galatians 2.20

⁷³⁶ Luke 9.23 // Mark 10.17-31

Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for?

-Leonard Ravenhill

Seeing sin for what it really is definitely falls under the divine work of the Spirit. It is He that must reveal to us our sin, particularly when we have nicknamed it and are being duped by it. But we, as God's image bearers *must be willing* to see our sin for what it is! This is part of *our partnership* in our sanctification. We have to be, first of all, open to real truth as revealed by Him, and secondly, as He reveals it, we have to be willing to accept it and pursue it!

We have a strange power of exaggerating our imaginary virtues and losing sight utterly of our defects.

-R.A. Torrey⁷³⁷

R.A. Torrey goes on to say this in his book, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, "One of the worst mistakes we can make in our efforts to bring men to Christ is to try to convince them of sin in any power of our own."

One thing I hear a lot after someone says something without thinking is, "I'm so sorry, I didn't mean that. You know that isn't my heart!" But the truth of the matter is that it *is* our heart! We are in the midst of being sanctified, and our hearts are still producing sin!

Matthew 12.33-37

[Jesus said to the Pharisees] "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jeremiah 17.9, 10

[the LORD says] "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? 10 I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

THE OLD MAN IS DEAD, BUT THE DEEDS OF THE BODY MUST BE KILLED CONTINUOUSLY

Now it is true that in Christ all things are made new and that we are new creations in Christ,⁷³⁸ but until our mortal bodies are resurrected and redeemed, the new life that Christ gives to us will be inhabiting this mortal, sin-infested body, just like the tenant in our home renovation project.

Because of this truth, we can *know* we are dead to sin (whereas we used to be dead *in* sin), but our *physical bodies* are still dead because of the residual sin that dwells in it. Now, don't hear me say that your body is evil, because it's not, it is part of God's creation, and we were made in His image. But as we have seen, it has been corrupted and needs to be renewed. It is the heart that still produces sin, but as Ryken notes, "There is a total difference between surviving sin and reigning sin, the regenerate in conflict with sin and the unregenerate in complacency to sin. It is one thing for sin to live in us: it is another for us to live in sin."⁷³⁹

Therefore, our body, well trained in the war against righteousness, does what it does best: producing unrighteousness.

Romans 8.10-17

If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery

⁷³⁷ *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, pg. 70

⁷³⁸ 2 Corinthians 5.17 // Galatians 6.15

⁷³⁹ *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, pg. 145, 146, as quoted by Philip Ryken in his book, *The Message of Salvation*, pg. 248.

leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

The picture that **Romans 8** is giving us here is that our old self has *indeed* been crucified with Christ, as Paul echoes even to the Galatian church as well.⁷⁴⁰ So why do we still sin? Because of the mortal bodies we still live in. There will be a day when these bodies are glorified and purged once for all time, but until then, like the home renovation project, our bodies are wasting away by sin.

You could say that it is similar to the age-old adage that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks." That may be true in our natural selves, but we have the Holy Spirit now, who gives us the strength and ability to teach the old dog new tricks. Again, it may not be overnight, and make no mistake, it is a bloody war, but *He* is able to complete the work that He started!

Be killing sin or it will be killing you.

-John Owen⁷⁴¹

Therefore, Paul tells the Romans then that they are now *not* slaves to sin, bound to it and compelled to perpetually sin, but that Christ has become our Ransom and sent us the Spirit of adoption to be sons and daughters of the living God! What's more, is that Paul says we have now even become slaves of Christ!⁷⁴² What this means is that Christ has taken the shackles of slavery to sin off of us, put them around Him and around us, bound us together, locked them, and then *threw away* the key! We are bound to Him and are *only* obligated to serve Him! Our flesh has been crucified, and we are now unified with Christ and free to glorify Him alone!

Now, by the power and freedom of the Spirit of God, when our heart, the idol factory as Calvin called it, continues in what it has been trained to do by producing more sin and lust, we are able to "put to death the deeds of the flesh."

Here are some of the ways the Holy Spirit helps us put to death the deeds of the flesh:

- He exposes sin.⁷⁴³
- He convicts us of sin.⁷⁴⁴
- He teaches us the Word, and the Word is what sanctifies us.⁷⁴⁵
- Reveals truth to us, giving us eyes to see and ears to hear.⁷⁴⁶
- Empowers us live by faith.⁷⁴⁷

Until you have given yourself up to Christ you will never have a real self.

-C.S. Lewis

Until we learn to continually surrender to the Spirit of God, we will constantly be struggling against the flesh and living a meager, frustrating, unsatisfying life. We will never, in this lifetime, know who we truly could have been and know who we were designed to be and designed to do.

Galatians 5.17, 18

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The beautiful part of sanctification is that it is the work of conforming us into the image of Christ.⁷⁴⁸ It is restoring us to 'original factory spec,' if you will: the image of God. This is why **Matthew 16.25** says "whoever wants to save his life

⁷⁴⁰ Galatians 2.20, 21

⁷⁴¹ *Mortification of Sin in Believers*

⁷⁴² 1 Corinthians 7.22

⁷⁴³ Hebrews 4.12

⁷⁴⁴ John 16.8

⁷⁴⁵ Colossians 3.16 // John 17.17, 19

⁷⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 2.9-14

⁷⁴⁷ Acts 1.8 // Romans 1.4, 15.13, 19 // 1 Corinthians 2.4 // Ephesians 3.16 // 1 Thessalonians 1.5 // 2 Timothy 1.7

will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it.” It is in this ‘abandonment of self,’ that is, the corrupted, distorted, and fallen self, that we truly find our ‘real self,’ in other words the original, glorious, fearfully and wonderfully made self. The choice to disregard this denial of self and to shirk back from discipleship is very costly. Dallas Willard said, “Non-discipleship costs far more than discipleship,” meaning that non-discipleship maintains that we are choosing to forfeit the fruit of the Spirit that comes through discipleship, such as love, grace, and peace, as well as having fulfillment and real purpose. To set our hearts on discipleship is to set our hearts on our true purpose, which as we saw stated in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, is that “the chief end of man is glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

✪ PERSEVERANCE ✪

One of the greatest promises we get because of the work of the Holy Spirit that has been given to us through the work of the Son is what many call the *perseverance of the saints*, ✪ or just simply *perseverance*. Other ways we can say this are *preservation* or *eternal security*. What all these mean to say is that the blood of Jesus, when applied to our life by the Holy Spirit, not only purchases our justification, adoption, and ongoing sanctifying aspects of our salvation, but also the *finishing* work of our salvation. That it is the Spirit of God that, by the grace of God, will “preserve” us by enabling us, in His grace and power, to “persevere” until the very end, thus guaranteeing our “eternal security” in His power, ability, promise, and desire.

Of course, there is much to be said about this, and much to ask about this. The first thing that must be said is that this doctrine cannot be systematically accepted if one rejects the notion that it is God alone that chooses us before the foundation of the world in His sovereign grace and choice. If your view on “how to get saved” is synergistic in nature, meaning that your own choice, willpower, or decision to repent is what procured salvation after God offered it to you, then you’re also bound to the belief that the *keeping* of your salvation is procured by your partnership.

Your eternal security is as secure as your election.

Many people want to maintain their “personal freedom,” and autonomous, self-governing rights as humans by saying “I don’t like the idea that God chooses me. That seems to make me a robot. I don’t think God would do something against my will.” But then they see the doctrine of perseverance and say, “hey, I like that; once saved, always saved? That sounds cool!” And this, of course, is us reverting back to what I call “buffet theology” where we just pick and choose, according to our feelings and thoughts, what we deem as right. But this is not only unhealthy and unbiblical, it can be terribly destructive, as we will see.

The thing is, you would scarcely find an Arminian that believes that we choose God for salvation by our own will and then He holds you and keeps you against your will. Their systematic theology necessitates that they are in concert, and to their credit, this is exactly necessary. But many in today’s day and age, are “neither” Reformed nor Arminian in their soteriology, but they have simply self-imposed their own soteriologies.⁷⁴⁹ Many Christians simply seem to adopt their own personal “brand” of soteriology, be it Bobology, Rufusology, Beatriceology, or Flandersology.

What we essentially try to do is fit a round peg in a square hole. And we typically just pick from what we like; we want our cake and we want to eat it too. Rather than put in the time, effort, and hard work to seek after God objectively, apart from our feelings and subjective pre-conceived notions, we’d rather just say, “well I think it’s this.”

With that in mind, as you will see, as we look at this beautiful promise of perseverance, we will be very clearly seeing that the basis for our preservation is rooted in God’s gracious and loving election of us. They are inseparable. Let’s first look at an extensive list of great promises from the Scriptures:

1 Peter 1.3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! *According to his great mercy* [unconditional election], he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 *to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you*, 5 *who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* [perseverance, glorification, etc.]

⁷⁴⁸ Romans 8.29

⁷⁴⁹ I’m not saying that there are “only” two ways of viewing soteriology. This is quite obvious, as there are indeed many others; what I mean to say is that most people are not systematic in the “how” and “why,” by just simply base our theology on what we think or feel it should be.

John 6.37-40

All that the Father gives me *will come to me*, [effectual call, irresistible saving grace, unconditional election, by grace through faith, etc.] and whoever comes to me *I will never cast out*. [sanctification, preservation, unconditional election, etc.] 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that *I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day*. [preservation/perseverance, glorification, etc.] 40 For this is the will of my Father, that *everyone* who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

John 10.27-30

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they *will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand*. [unconditional election, perseverance] 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and *no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand*. [perseverance] 30 I and the Father are one.”

1 Corinthians 1.8

[Jesus] *will sustain you to the end, guiltless* [justification] *in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ* [glorification]. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Philippians 1.6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you *will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ* [sanctification, glorification, etc.].

John 17.6-11

[Jesus praying to His Father:] “I have manifested your name to the people whom *you gave me* [election] out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they *have kept your word* [sanctification, glorification, perseverance]. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but *for those whom you have given me, for they are yours* [unconditional election]. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, *keep them in your name* [preservation], which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

Romans 8.28-39

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are *called according to his purpose*. 29 *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son* [unconditional election, sanctification, etc.], in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom *he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified* [all of them!].

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, *who can be against us?* 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, *how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* 33 *Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies* [unconditional election, justification].

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?* 36 As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us*. 38 For I am sure that *neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*. [sanctification, perseverance/preservation, glorification, limited atonement]

Romans 8.1

There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death [justification, perseverance].

2 Corinthians 1.21

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts *as a guarantee* [perseverance].

Jeremiah 32.40

I will make with them an *everlasting covenant*, that *I will not turn away from doing good to them*. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that *they may not turn from me* [sanctification, perseverance].

Hosea 2.19, 20

And I will betroth *you to me forever*. I will betroth *you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy*. 20 I will betroth *you to me in faithfulness*. And you shall know the LORD [sanctification, perseverance, glorification].

2 Timothy 2.13

If we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself [sanctification, perseverance].

So here we have a pretty clear case, in very plain language, which proves that it is not up to us to choose or reject God, for if it was that case, *no one* would choose God, as it is, indeed, against our will and desire to even want God. For this reason, God intercedes, because of His love and grace, and saves us. Since it is God's grace alone that saves us, it is up to His power and desire to keep us. Furthermore, even as we saw in **2 Timothy 2.13**, He is obligated to keep us.

Now, if you remember from the last chapter, we said if grace becomes an obligation, it ceases from being grace and turns into a reward or a response. But here, God is not obligating Himself to us or our decision, He is obligating Himself to His own self. He is obligated to keep His own promises, because His promises are holy, pure, righteous, and, of course, God glorifying. Therefore, as Paul says to Timothy, "He cannot deny Himself."

What is He worth as a Mediator of the Covenant, if He had not made the promises sure?

-C.H. Spurgeon

The Holy Spirit's Role in Our Perseverance and Glorification.

Getting back specifically to the work of the Holy Spirit as the one who makes able our perseverance, let's recall back a few chapters when we talked about the covenants God made with His people.

As we remember, every covenant God made with His people had a sign, or seal, as proof of the legitimacy of the covenant. Let's quickly review what these were.

- **Adamic** (conditional): internal sign/seal was works; external sign was the Tree of Life.
- **Noahic**: internal sign/seal was faith; external sign was the rainbow.
- **Abrahamic**: internal sign/seal was faith; external sign was circumcision.
- **Mosaic** (conditional): internal sign/seal was faith; external sign was the Law, as well as sacrificial system.
- **Davidic**: internal sign/seal was faith; external sign was David's throne.
- **The New Covenant**: internal sign/seal is the indwelling Holy Spirit; external sign is baptism and communion

So as we remember, the sign and seal of the New Covenant is the Holy Spirit Himself. Earlier, when we were discussing what a seal exactly was in biblical times, I mentioned that this wax seal was placed on a document and taken to its intended recipient. One thing I didn't mention is the ramifications around the seal.

If a seal didn't only testify of the authenticity of the document (since it bore the seal of the sender), but it was also *completely protected*. *No one else* was allowed to open the letter *except for* the intended recipient. If a document was sealed, it could only be received by its intended recipient.

This is exactly why the Holy Spirit is called our seal, because the seal gives us the guarantee.

2 Corinthians 1.21, 22

And it is *God who establishes us with you in Christ*, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also *put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee*.

2 Corinthians 5.5

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1.13, 14

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were *sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*, 14 who is the *guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it*, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4.30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you *were sealed for the day of redemption*.

Hebrews 6.13-20

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. 17 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, *he guaranteed it with an oath*, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

So this Seal cannot be broken. It is a guarantee of purchase. The word that the Greek used for "guarantee" is *arrabon*, and it speaks of a "deposit" or "down payment" that will be paid in full. Because God has established His down payment, this is His guarantee that we are His. There is no going back on His Word, and He will not, He even cannot, be untrue to His commitments. He went so far as to swear by Himself in order to *prove* how serious He was about His commitment to keep His covenant promise!

Do you remember, even, when we spoke of Abraham's covenant with God? The two pieces of meat were placed on the ground, and traditionally the two covenanting parties would walk through, making an oath to each other that they will remain faithful to the oath. What did God do? He caused Abraham to sleep, and it was God alone who walked through the covenant. Why? Because it would be God alone, by His own ability, faithfulness, and grace, that this covenant would be established and kept. He knew we could not keep it, that's why He gave the Law *and* the sacrificial system. And this is why our faith is only "by grace through faith...not of ourselves, it is the gift of God."

When Jesus purchased you on the cross, He gave you His Holy Spirit as a guarantee and proof of His purchase.

Can Believers Lose Their Salvation?

Okay, so in “theory,” we see that somehow, supernaturally and by the Spirit inside of us, God will preserve us in our life and until the end. But what about people who seem to walk with the Lord, profess to be Christians, and then completely turn their backs? Does God still accept them? Does He make exceptions for extreme cases and extreme blasphemy?

This is quite an interesting topic, and one that I would encourage you to look into more. But if you are not yet convinced of eternal security and the God’s ability, desire, and *promise* that He will keep every single person who has been saved by grace through faith, then I encourage you *first* to re-read the chapter before and all the way up until here again. If God has elected, called, and justified, He will sanctify, preserve, and glorify.

So if we are agreed on that (or if you can at least go along with me for now), let’s look at some very sobering stories and warnings that the Word gives us concerning this subject matter.

First of all, our instant adoption into Christ’s body and family makes God’s rejection of us, even amidst the most blatant sins, completely impossible. We actually *become* His body and become *unified* with Christ. We are now *in* Christ. If the Father were to reject us, He would have to reject His Son. We are now, amidst true and genuine salvation (which was God’s choice to begin with!), united with Christ.

There are neither abortions, abandonments, nor putting up for adoption in the Kingdom of God.

I use this phrase very seriously and purposefully. If we are born of God, God will not reject us, either right at spiritual birth or at any point in our spiritual life as His children. God is a loving, committed, protective, and righteous Father. And we know that He will “never leave us nor forsake us.”

1 Peter 1.23-25

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

We also see that the *instantly given*, not the *eventually earned* gift of faith by God’s grace is eternal life. We are given the *gift*, not the *privilege or reward*, of eternal life right upon new birth.

John 3.36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 6.47

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

Romans 8.38, 39

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3.15, 16

Whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 4.13, 14

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 5.24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

This last verse, **John 5.24**, is particularly cool because the phrase “crossed over” is the verb *metabaino* in Greek and is in the perfect tense, which means that it is accomplished and final. There is no going back once you have crossed over.

There are many more verses, but we are getting the picture.⁷⁵⁰

THEN WHAT ABOUT PROFESSING BELIEVERS WHO WALK AWAY?

This is where it gets tricky, and I said earlier, very sobering. I would guess that nearly 100% of all of us know someone who has walked away from their faith. Whether they grew up in a Christian home, got saved and became on fire for the Lord for a long time, were serving in ministry, or were even pastors, we have all seen it in some degree. You may even be one of those examples. This is something that happens. We saw it in the bible, and we see it today. So if we cannot break the eternal seal of the Holy Spirit, and if it is by the power of the Holy Spirit and His determination, according to the will of the Father, to preserve us and keep us, then what do we make of the things we see?

Salvation is not just fire insurance, nor is it a “Get Out of Jail Free” card.

1 Corinthians 3.12-15

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

This, along with the verses we will see in the next section, give us severe warning. If you have professed Christ in your life, but have not shown any evidence of it, the Word has a lot to say about the fine line that you are walking.

KNOWING A TREE BY ITS FRUIT

The first thing that comes to mind for us as we see these tragedies is the question, “were they really believers in the first place?” The reason we can rightly ask this is because the New Covenant, like the other covenants, has a “built in” seal or sign. Without the evidence of these signs and seals, one cannot be sure if the covenant (or document in the example of a king’s message being sent) is authentic. For believers, their seal, of course, is the Holy Spirit.



You may be surprised to find that Jesus doesn’t accept these.

How does this look for us? If our seal is the Holy Spirit, how can we discern whether the Holy Spirit has sealed someone? Look at this Scripture about the entry of Jesus’ ministry:

Matthew 3.10-12

Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Here, John the Baptists, Jesus’ cousin, says that every tree which doesn’t bear fruit will not survive the fire. He then adds that outward signs, such as water baptism, aren’t enough for salvation, but that we need to be baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus then later says this in one of His parables:

⁷⁵⁰ John 6.40, 47, 51, 11.25, 26 // 1 John 5.11-13

Matthew 7.17-23

So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Here, not only does Jesus reiterate what His cousin said earlier, but He adds that “you will recognize them by their fruits.” Additionally, He says that “*not everyone*” who *claims* to be a Christian and even *does things in His Name* are true believers! Look what John says in his epistles:

1 John 2.19, 20

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. 20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

2 John 9-11

Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

We can think of some, such as Judas, who had a “form of godliness but denied its power.”⁷⁵¹ Some of these people have taken part in many of the great blessings of Christ even. They have been involved in churches, fellowship, and have seen God move in their life. Indeed, as we have all observed, and oftentimes to the similar chagrin that Solomon bore, when he noticed that good things indeed happen to “bad” people and bad things happen to “good” people. He says that, “It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath.”⁷⁵²

The bible speaks of “wolves in sheep’s clothing,”⁷⁵³ “false teachers,”⁷⁵⁴ and people who preach “another Jesus.”⁷⁵⁵ All of these people may look like they have faith on the outside, but as Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”⁷⁵⁶

It is a good, healthy thing for us to recognize this very real possibility. Professing “Lord, Lord” does not make someone a Christian. Going to church does not make someone a Christian. Being brought up in a Christian home does not make you a Christian. Saying the sinner’s prayer does not make you a Christian. Living a life of biblical obedience does not make you a Christian.

The only thing that makes you a Christian is the regenerating work and indwelling of the Holy Spirit who adopts us, permanently, into the body of Christ.

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now, you may be thinking, “so, if someone who confesses to be a Christian begins to live in sin, they are automatically considered to have never been saved?” The answer is no, though some hyper-Calvinists would declare that to be true and would say “yes” to this question. But let’s consider a few sections of Scripture.

⁷⁵¹ 2 Timothy 3.5

⁷⁵² Ecclesiastes 9.2

⁷⁵³ Matthew 7.15

⁷⁵⁴ 2 Peter 2.1 // Acts 20.28-32 // Galatians 5.9 // 1 Timothy 1.3 // Titus 1.11 // Matthew 7.15

⁷⁵⁵ 2 Corinthians 11.4

⁷⁵⁶ Matthew 23.27, 28 (NKJV)

First of all, we know that we are currently being sanctified. So while we have indeed been justified and purified in Christ, we are still in the “process” of sanctification; in other words, we still will sin. This is kind of a “duh” statement, but needs to be said. **1 John 1.8, 10** says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

There are plenty of others, but I think that is agreed upon. But what about complete rejection and walking away? First, we should simply just mention the names David, Solomon, and Peter. David killed his friend so he could steal his wife after he got her pregnant. Premeditated murder! Solomon, who had the wisdom of God like no one other and wrote parts of the **Psalms**, most of the **Proverbs**, all of **Song of Solomon**, and all of **Ecclesiastes**, eventually gained 700 wives and 300 concubines and started worshiping their false gods! This is the guy that built the Temple! Peter actually *denied* knowing Jesus three times!

Yet all three of these were God’s sons until the end.

In **Ephesians 4.30** it tells us something that we as believers can do, which is that we can *grieve the Holy Spirit*.♣ It says, “do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” We are able to resist the working of the Holy Spirit, ignoring His conviction, ignoring His leading. We can pile on mire and garbage and bury Him like a needle in a haystack. Some, as I said, would deny this, saying that true believers wouldn’t and couldn’t do this, that an unrepentant lifestyle of sin is impossible. However, even a look at **Matthew 18** shows otherwise. In this section, Jesus says that if a *brother*, an actual believer sins, he should be confronted. Let’s look at the rest of the section:

Matthew 18.15-17

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Later, Paul tells the Corinthians church concerning someone who claims to be a Christian who was unrepentant in their lifestyle of sexual sin that they should do this:

1 Corinthians 5.5

...you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

In both cases, we have someone who at very least claims to be a believer who has unrepentant sin and is living in this lifestyle willfully and unapologetically. They won’t listen to counsel, they won’t submit to the Word, and they won’t submit to the Holy Spirit, but rather are following after the flesh. The church, who is God’s hands and feet on the earth, is to deal decisively with this person (after gracious times of offered opportunities for repentance). They are given the authority and mandate to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

ONE OF THE GLORIOUS BENEFITS OF ADOPTION

This sounds crazy and sounds harsh, but let us be very clear about what is going on here. *If you indeed* are a true believer with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and you are so tragically grieving Him by your lifestyle of sin, if you have people who love you and love God in your life, they will take biblical action. As part of the family of God, and as a son or daughter of God, this is one of many incredible *rights* you have as an adopted child of God.

You have a Father who *will discipline*♣ you.

Yes, as a believer, you can run from Him. And if you do so, God, through the church, will hand you over to Satan. Your covering of the fellowship of the covenant people that you are intertwined with will be cut off. God will allow Satan to have his way with you. So yes, you can be as the prodigal son who goes and spoils your life on your own selfish desires. You can defame the Name of God in your life and make a mockery of faith. You’ll have fun, you’ll have good time, but eventually, Satan will have his way, and your flesh will be destroyed. He (either Satan or God in this case) will ruin our life, bringing calamity, hardship, pain, and torment. Life will become empty

When a child of God runs away, the Father will make their life miserable.

This is the sweet discipline of God, that He won't let us remain in our disobedience forever. Yes, He will bring you low make life nearly unbearable, but just as in your initial calling, the Holy Spirit will win the arm wrestling match, because this purpose isn't to destroy *you*, it is to destroy *your flesh*. God wants to strip you of everything that gives you pride, ego, and independence. If you don't believe that your faith and all that you have is by grace alone, He will make it known to you.

But let's be *very* clear, this is *not God's punishment for our sins!* Jesus Christ has already taken all the punishment for our sins upon the cross! *This* is quite different, as this isn't an angry God pouring out His wrath upon law breakers (even though we are breaking the Law!), but this is a merciful, patient, and loving Father who is bringing discipline because He has made a promise to us that *He* will be faithful to finish the work that *He* started and *will* finish. *He* will keep us to the end, glorifying us in the great Day of the Lord for all eternity!

Hebrews 12.4-11

In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Jesus also speaks of His pursuit of us as He speaks of Himself as a Good Shepherd:

Luke 15.4-7

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

Now, let's be a little more specific with His pursuit of His lost sheep as the Good Shepherd. When a sheep would go astray, away from the flock and into a place of danger where the wolves, the cold, the thieves, and starvation can lead to its permanent loss, the shepherd would go after it to find it before any of this could happen. When the sheep was found, the rejoicing would happen, but sure discipline would take place.

The shepherd would break the legs of the sheep! Then, the shepherd would then put the sheep on his shoulders and carry the sheep wherever he went while the disabled sheep would heal. When it could finally walk a little, the shepherd would let him on his own, back into the flock.

Why such harsh discipline? A few things would happen:

- While on the shepherd's shoulders, the sheep would learn the voice of his shepherd.⁷⁵⁷
- The sheep would be dependent on the shepherd, rather than its own rebellion.
- When it got better, it could be on its own, but it wouldn't venture very far from then on.
- It found the necessity of being close to the shepherd and within the flock, something it didn't appreciate before.



Doubtful that sheep would be smiling. Matter of fact, I don't think sheep *ever* smile. Kinda creepy.

⁷⁵⁷ John 10.27

Isn't it oddly wonderful to know of this great assurance? The fact that we have a Father who will discipline us and a Good Shepherd who says that He will lay His life down for His sheep,⁷⁵⁸ He won't *lose any* of His sheep⁷⁵⁹ and that He will go after us is simply incredible!

How Do I Know I Have The Holy Spirit?

So here, then, is the big question. This is one of the most important questions you can ask yourself. We have spoken of the assurance of our salvation based in God's grace when He chose us before the foundations of the world.⁷⁶⁰ We have read that our justification is "by grace, through faith."⁷⁶¹ But now, upon looking at some of these verses, how can I have confidence in my salvation?

James' words should be sobering for us, but should also shed some light.

James 2.14-20, 26

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Earlier I said that we are not saved *by* our good works but *for* good works. Here, as James declares, our works also have the task of *proving* that we are saved.

The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit will produce evidence.

Let's take a look at some of the evidences that the Holy Spirit will produce in our life.

The Fruit of The Holy Spirit

Paul first tells the Galatian church, who had a tendency towards religious deeds to appear godly, what the deeds of the flesh are. He then contrasts that with the *fruit of the Holy Spirit*,[♣] or evidence, of a regenerate life.

Galatians 5.19-26

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

And what does Jesus say about the tree that *doesn't* bear fruit? It is to be chopped down and burned. If your "faith" doesn't produce fruit, it's not real faith, and you remain dead in your sins and trespasses.

⁷⁵⁸ John 10.11-18

⁷⁵⁹ John 10.28

⁷⁶⁰ Ephesians 1.4

⁷⁶¹ Ephesians 2.8

The scary part is that many people believe they are Christians because they raised their hand at a rally, were raised in a Christian home, go to church, or even read the bible every once in a while. Some, as I stated earlier, have had tremendous blessings from the Lord, and even believe in God! But as James said, “good for you, you believe! But guess what, even the demons believe, and they tremble! You, however, don’t tremble because you think you can just say you have faith but not prove it! *The demons* have more fear and respect of God than you do!”

This is like the **Hebrews 6** man that the author speaks about. Now, I know many people would point to this as “evidence” that we can lose our salvation, but upon looking in context, we will see that this is not the case.

Hebrews 6.4-6

For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

At first glance, this seems like a perilous future for a believer who has rejected God. But the next two verses give us much needed insight into who this person is.

Hebrews 6.7, 8

For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. 8 *But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.*

For those that have been near to God’s blessings, even partaken in them, they walk on thin ice when they continually harden their hearts toward God. Here, they are likened to a field which has been rained on repeatedly. It has received and partaken in plenty of the blessings that can produce fruit. They taste the goodness of God, but they don’t eat it as their daily bread. They have shared in the Holy Spirit, but they have never been filled and owned by Him. They have been enlightened to see that God is good and Jesus is Lord, but they refuse to submit to Him. This field does not ever yield fruit, but rather produces thorn and thistle.

In addition to that, in **verse 9** Paul specifically says “we [speaking of himself and other believers] feel sure of *better things*- things that *belong to salvation*.” [emphasis added] So apparently Paul is noting that the experience the person in **verses 4-8** were inferior to that of salvation. They may look like things that “belong to salvation,” but they are not.

So what about us? Do we walk this thin line? Is there evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling in your life? Going back to the fruit of the Spirit and some of the things the Holy Spirit does for us, let’s consider some of the evidences that give us an idea of His presence in our life.

- Does He expose and convict you of sin?
- Do you have desire for the Word?
- Does He teach you things when you read the Word?
- Do you see things totally different than before you were a Christian?
- Do you have faith for things that are beyond you?
- Do you love more than before?
- Do you have joy? Or peace, even in difficult situations?
- Do you have patience? Do you have kindness?
- Do you operate in goodness? Do you have gentleness?
- Are you faithful to God and others?
- Do you have self-control?
- Are you winning in your war against sin?
- Is your sin “less enjoyable?” In other words, are you in conflict with it within yourself?
- Do you love the body of Christ?
- Do you love to take communion?
- Have you been baptized?
- Do you know His voice?
- Has your life dramatically changed since you got saved?

Now, I don't want this to be a "checklist" that you have to do in order to be saved or remain saved. That is religion, and it's legalism. What this should be for us is a thermometer or an inventory. If you answer "no" on most of them, it's time to do some soul searching. You are either not a Christian, though you thought you were, or you are in serious sin. Regardless, you need to do something about it.

REPENTANCE AND THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

If you are a true believer and your life is not producing spiritual fruit (not simply religious actions), it's time to either admit your fault, pride, and stubbornness, or continue hardening your heart and wait for the Lord's discipline, which will in fact come. The Word speaks of being "filled" with the Holy Spirit. Of course, at the very beginning of our justification, we are given the Holy Spirit to indwell in us, but the Word speaks of His filling as an ongoing even as well.

Ephesians 5.18

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...



The verb tense for the word to "be filled" speaks of an ongoing filling that occurs multiple times. Indeed, even, Paul here is speaking to believers who already had the indwelling Spirit. And it isn't that He comes and goes in and out of our life, but that He fills to a higher capacity. Grudem compares this filling not to a cup filled with water, which can't be filled any more, but to a balloon. A balloon, filled only a little bit, is full. But there is always room for more.⁷⁶² He notes that Jesus was the only one to have the Spirit without measure.⁷⁶³



It is *only* by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can put to death the deeds of the flesh, see fruit, and then *know* that are eternally sealed for salvation! And this assurance *is* available to us! So how do we get more filled by the Holy Spirit? First things first: repentance.

Remember talking about the sin that still dwells in our hearts, and that is that heart that spills out corruption? We have to first acknowledge our sin and recognize that our hearts are clogged and taking up space that could and should be inhabited by the Holy Spirit. If you remember back in **Chapter III** I mentioned that our hearts are like clogged drains in need of Drano. They need to be flushed clean. It's time to get on our faces, admit our sin, pride, stubbornness and self-confidence and humble ourselves before God. It would be good to be as specific as you can, confessing and admitting where you have been worshipping self.

Have you been making up excuses for sin? Have you been nicknaming your sin? Tell God plainly where you have been in rebellion. We have to remember, though our eternal security is secure, the enemy is still bent on doing whatever he can to us. He is after us because he hates God. And he hates us because God loves us. Peter says he "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."⁷⁶⁴

We must be as violent against our sin as our sin is violent against us.

When we are honest about our sin, ask for the Holy Spirit to fill you. His filling can and will do a number of things, as a matter of fact it will do all of the things in the list above. But most of all, it is in this time of repentance and honesty that we are able to let go of the sin that entangles us and has deceived us, and we are transformed, through the work of sanctification, from being sin's image bearer back to being God's image bearer. This filling is what transforms and conforms us. Without it, we will live frustrated and empty, knowing we are missing out.

**Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord,
and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.**

-Augustine

One very special and *highly* important way to pray this prayer is to accompany it with the reading of the Word. After all, the Holy Spirit Himself is the one who authored it, and it is His *very weapon* that He wields in order to do battle against sin! R.A. Torrey says it this way:

⁷⁶² *Systematic Theology*, pg. 782

⁷⁶³ John 3.34

⁷⁶⁴ 1 Peter 5.8

[To be led by the Spirit does not] mean that when we are taught of the Spirit, we are independent of the written Word of God; for the Word is the very place to which the Spirit, who is author of the Word, leads His pupils and the instrument through which He instructs them.⁷⁶⁵

It is the inseparable union of the Holy Spirit and His Word where we are taught and shown the mind and will of God. It is in that same union where we encounter the power of God to walk out His will! It is through this filling of the Holy Spirit, that especially comes through His teaching us of the Word, that sanctifies us, bears fruit, conquers sin, and gives us the assurance of our salvation as His presence is made clearly known in us and through us.

I love, again, how John Murray says it:

Indeed, the more sanctified a person is, the more conformed he is to the image of his Saviour, the more he must recoil against every lack of conformity to the holiness of God. The deeper his apprehension of the majesty of God, the greater the intensity of his love to God, the more persistent his yearning for the attainment of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the more conscious will he be of the gravity of the sin which remains and the more poignant will be his detestation of it.⁷⁶⁶

Yes, the spiritual battle of our faith and against sin is a ferocious one. It is imperative that we are constantly taking spiritual inventory of our lives, lest we fall into deception and idleness. Take inventory, and count your losses, for "it is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell."⁷⁶⁷

Die before you die, there is no chance after.

-CS Lewis

Ultimately, if we know people who are not walking with the Lord or don't show the fruit of the Holy Spirit or any evidence of Him, and they claim to be a Christian, it is impossible for us to truly know if they are true believers or not. And quite frankly, that isn't our job. Our job is to pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to them, and it is our job to share the love and grace of Christ in word and in deed, speaking the truth in love.

⁷⁶⁵ *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, pg. 122

⁷⁶⁶ *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, pg. 145, as quoted by Philip Ryken in his book, *The Message of Salvation*, pg. 249.

⁷⁶⁷ Mark 9.43-47

His Gifts

One other role of the Holy Spirit is to impart particular gifts to the church. As you may be aware, there are *wide varying* opinions and convictions on what this means and how it works out in our lives. As we begin looking at spiritual gifts, calling, roles, ministry, and all that fun stuff, a few things must be addressed. Firstly, this life, this world, this Gospel, this body of Christ, *is not about us*. This is for God's glory and for His fame to be declared in our lives. As we explore our place in the Kingdom, it is of paramount importance that we seek as selfless, humble servants submitting ourselves to God and each other. **1 Peter 4.10** says that "each of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." Furthermore, **1 Timothy 4.12-16** tells Timothy not to neglect his gift, but to pursue it so that others are blessed by it.

Secondly, before we go any further, let's agree to a few things:

- I am not in this for my glory, but I am in this for the glorification of Christ and edification of the body.
- I don't need security in my personal ministry, I have security in my place in Christ.
- I don't need to gain significance through my place or contribution to the body, I already have significance within my relationship with Christ.
- I don't plan on "discovering" my gifts, I plan on "discovering" more of Christ, His Word, and the work of the Holy Spirit in my life. Through this, I know that God will "reveal" various gifts to me. We can pray and desire them, but it is all up to God concerning the distribution of the gifts.
- I am open to *whatever* is given to me, whether I like it or not; I want to willfully submit to *what* God has for me, *when* He has it for me, and *for what purpose* He has given it to me.
- I am submitted to the body of Christ as well. I willfully submit myself to the leadership, trusting that God has given them the wisdom to lead for the benefit of His glory, the health of the body (including myself), and the vision of the gospel being ministered through our church.

Here are a few general Scriptures on gifts, our motive, and the need for each other and our gifts.⁷⁶⁸

Hebrews 10.24

Let us think of one another and how we can encourage each other to love and do good deeds.

Galatians 6.1-2

Brothers, if someone is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should **restore** him gently ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Isaiah 45.9-12

"Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'? 10 Woe to him who says to his father, 'What have you begotten?' or to his mother, 'What have you brought to birth?' 11 "This is what the LORD says — the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? 12 It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.

2 Timothy 1.6-9

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but of power, of love and self-discipline. 8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

⁷⁶⁸ Ecclesiastes 4.9-12 // Proverbs 27.17

There are six distinct lists in the New Testament specifically given to what are explicitly called “spiritual gifts.” These are different than natural gifts or functioning gifts, in that there is a specific element of divine enabling. That said, these gifts can accompany natural talents, such as leading worship, a musical talent that is coupled with the spiritual gift of leadership, encouraging, teaching, or prophecy.

Here is a breakdown from Wayne Grudem’s “Systematic Theology”⁷⁶⁹ of the six different lists of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12.28

1. apostle
2. prophet
3. teacher
4. miracles
5. kinds of healing
6. helps
7. administration
8. tongues

1 Corinthians 12.8-10

9. word of wisdom
10. word of knowledge
11. faith
- (5) gifts of healing
- (4) miracles
- (2) prophecy
12. distinguishing spirits (discernment)
- (8) tongues
13. interpretation of tongues

Ephesians 4.11

- (1) apostle
- (2) prophet
14. evangelist
15. pastor-teacher

Romans 12.6-8

- (2) prophecy
16. serving
- (3) teaching
17. encouraging
18. contributing
19. leadership
20. mercy

1 Peter 4.11

- Whoever speaks (covering many gifts)
- Whoever renders service (many gifts)

1 Corinthians 7.7

21. marriage
22. celibacy

First, a few key things about spiritual gifts:

- Wayne Grudem also defines spiritual gifts as “any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.”⁷⁷⁰
- Spiritual gifts can be completely *supernatural* (healing, miracles) or a *mixture of natural and supernatural* influence (teaching, mercy, leadership). The key is that they are empowered by God, not solely natural.⁷⁷¹
- Sometimes expressions of spiritual gifts will be “obviously” God (incredible healings, divine insights), and other times they may be what we call “naturally supernatural.” For instance, words of wisdom, faith, leadership.⁷⁷²
- Spiritual gifts are meant to equip the church and glorify Jesus.⁷⁷³
- Spiritual gifts also give us a “foretaste” of the Kingdom to come.⁷⁷⁴
- Gifts will vary in strength and effectiveness. This is seen in texts where Paul reminds Timothy to persist in his gift and not neglect it, assuming that it can become weaker or stronger.

1 Timothy 4.13-14

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

⁷⁶⁹ pg. 1020. A whole reading of chapters 52 and 53 is recommended.

⁷⁷⁰ pg. 1016

⁷⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 12.11, 4.7

⁷⁷² Some words of wisdom or encouragement could come over coffee with someone. You can be speaking something that spontaneously came to mind, came out very naturally in the conversation, and neither of you took much notice. Other times, certain gifts simply become your “second nature,” and you don’t give much thought to it but you automatically do it, such as being an encouragement or humble servant.

⁷⁷³ Ephesians 4.11 // 1 Corinthians 14.12 // Acts 1.8

⁷⁷⁴ Hebrews 2.3, 4

2 Timothy 1.6-7

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

- We are to be faithful with the gifts we have.

Luke 19.16-23

16 "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' 17 "'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' 18 "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' 19 "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.' 20 "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth....' 23 Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?"

VARYING VIEWS

Lastly, as we mentioned that there is a wide range of varying opinion on whether or not the gifts are for today, there is even further opinion amongst those who do believe it is for today concerning how to facilitate them, their value, their place, and even their defining of particular terms. I should remind you, as you are hopefully considering already, to check Scripture and do your own research as you seek to come to your own conclusions. I wish to humbly offer my own findings as I see them in context with each other and other Scriptures.

Let me give you a brief overview of some of the varying beliefs. And as I do this, though we do consider this topic to be an “open handed” issue, we also must realize that even open handed issues can have a dramatic consequence in your life and ministry. Much more study and research should be done on this topic beyond this writing. Please check the resources at the end of the chapter for further study.

TO-ΔAY, OR NOT TO-ΔAY...THAT IS THE QUESTION

Clearly, we see many varying “spiritual gifts” used and encouraged in the Word of God. So on first glance, it would seem that it should be obvious that they are still in effect today. However, the answer is not so simple.

Many of the greatest theologians in church history are what we call *cessationist*♣. A cessationist believes that the “sign gifts,” meaning the supernatural “signs and wonders” types gifts, such as tongues, prophecy, words of knowledge, healing, etc., have “ceased,” hence the name *cessationist*. They would argue, based on various Scriptures, that the early church needed these “sign gifts” to prove the authority of the teaching of the Apostles, but that once the church had the canon of Scripture, we would now only need the Word as our guide, as the church saw the Scriptures as completely sufficient for our spiritual life and direction. Therefore, the Holy Spirit ceased from giving those supernatural gifts.

That said, there are others who do still believe that the supernatural gifts are for today, and these people would call themselves *charismatics*♣. The Greek word for “gift” is *charis*, hence the name “charismatic.” These people believe that the Lord still gives these gifts for various God-glorifying reasons.

On the far end of the scale are what are somewhat harshly called *charismaniacs*♣. As you can probably ascertain, these folks go into the weird world of supernatural pursuit. They are kind of like those relatives at a family reunion that you are shocked that you actually share blood with.

Due to some of the imbalances that have been perceived in the charismatic and especially charismaniac circles, some folks have more or less derived a fourth “stream” of thought and practice. These people would identify themselves as *continuationist*. Continuationists believe that the gifts “continue” for today, but would have even more “strict” guidelines on how exactly these gifts are given and for what purpose than even the charismatics. I identify myself with the continuationists.

Mark Driscoll playfully calls a continuationist a “charismatic with seatbelts.” A continuationist is very cautious when it comes to spiritual gifts, because he or she wants to uphold the Word of God at the highest possible level for their faith and life. A continuationist aims to protect the sufficiency of Scripture, and so then is careful not to call some kind of perceived “special revelation” that they may believe they have received as being “the Word of God” and on par with

the real, unquestioned Word of God. This is also the main, and right, concern of the cessationist. After all, what do we do when a believer says, “well, I was praying and the Lord spoke to me and said, ‘go move to Detroit.’” Now that believer feels obligated when he or she pulls the ol’ “the Lord spoke to me” trump card. Is that “word from the Lord” to be obeyed as the infallible Word of God. Clearly, it should not.

So, how should we proceed? As a continuationist, I can offer a few parameters that I use to navigate through this.

1. I do not believe that God will ever reveal, speak, impress, or give any kind of revelation that is contrary to His Word or His character, period.
2. I do not believe that God will ever reveal, speak, impress, or give any kind of new revelation about Himself that has not already been revealed in Scripture. Any new revelation, like the Book of Mormon, or something about God’s will, ways, or works, that might be “revealed” to us in a time of prayer, a vision, a dream, or anything else, should not be accepted as coming from the Lord. I believe that all we need to understand who God is has already been revealed perfectly in the written Scriptures and the Man, Jesus Christ.
3. I do believe that God does and can “speak” or “impress” things to or upon us. However, that said, these should never be used as “absolutes” or infallible or even in the same vein of authority as the Word of God. They should, however, be tested by Scripture⁷⁷⁵, and should also be seen as subject to fault for two primary reasons:
 - a. As the recipient, you have sin, misconceived notions, and are prone to misinterpretation. God did, however, guarantee us that He bypassed the potential for misinterpretation when He gave His revelation that would become the written Scriptures to those particular recipients who wrote the bible. We do not have that same promise.
 - b. If they were absolute, it would seem to be something that should be written down and studied as the Word of God, and this is clearly not the case.
4. Though I do believe God can and does give these varying “sign” gifts, I also believe that God gives them by His own sovereignty, not by any “practice” or “magic words” that we can do or say. They are simply given by His grace in His wisdom.
5. Some cessationists would argue that if someone has a “word from the Lord” or a “prophetic utterance” that they want to share, that it clearly is not from the Lord because the gift of prophecy and the gift of words of knowledge/wisdom are not for today. They would say that this would challenge the sufficiency of Scripture. However, we do have pastors and teachers who teach the Word of God, and yet we do rightly scrutinize their teaching, to make sure they are teaching biblically according to the Word. In my surmise, the same type of scrutiny can, and should, be put on anyone who believes that the Lord has impressed something upon their heart. Just like we don’t believe that pastors have the same authority as the first Apostles, I also don’t believe that anyone who believes they have received a certain insight from the Lord has the same authority as the Prophets.

This would fall in line with the most common view of most of the Puritans (such as John Knox, Richard Baxter, Samuel Rutherford, Cotton Mather, and others), many of the early Reformers, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and other “late Puritans” such as C.H. Spurgeon. Interestingly, all of these men would classify themselves as cessationists, however they would not fall into the category of cessationists that many today do. In some way, just like how John Calvin would not be considered a Calvinist by certain Calvinist teaching today, many cessationists of yesteryear would not be considered cessationists by much of today’s standards.

On this last point, allow me to share a couple stories of some of these people’s ministries.

C.H. Spurgeon, a Calvinist and cessationist, told a story in his autobiography of one time when he was preaching, and in the middle of a sermon he saw a man a few rows back in the congregation. In the middle of his sermon, Spurgeon pointed to the man and called him out in his sin of keeping his shop open on a Sunday and taking an unjust profit from his business. The man later recalled to a friend that it was totally accurate, and it led him to repent and be saved. In

⁷⁷⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5.20, 21

another story, Spurgeon called out a young man and said, “those gloves you are wearing are not yours.” After the sermon, the man came up and gave Spurgeon the gloves and repented and asked him not to tell his mom!⁷⁷⁶ The story is entertaining, but the question is, “how does a cessationist say that he does not believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit?”

The answer that Spurgeon would give, as well as many of the Puritans, such as Richard Baxter and John Knox, would be that no new information about God or His ways was revealed. God did not “directly speak” from His own mind, words that we would or should otherwise write down and study and take as the divinely inspired Word of the Lord, but simply revealed certain true things that could somehow otherwise been made known through natural ways. These revelations of true things were testable and able to be proved as either true or false.

Clearly, there is much more to be studied and pursued when it comes to knowing where we land on this theologically, and I would recommend that you do further study.

BREAKDOWN OF THE GIFTS

Though we all have at least one spiritual gift, we all undoubtedly also have some variant or evidence of other particular gifts. Gifts, as we saw, are to be nurtured and practiced. If you see evidence of any of these gifts in your life, ask God for opportunity to practice them in a healthy, humble way.

The following are the 22 specific gifts we find in the New Testament, as well as a few “apparent” gifts that we see. It is important to remember than any natural gift that is accompanied by the working of the Holy Spirit is a viable and important addition to the work of the gospel.

NOTE: Additionally, I feel it’s important to stress that sometimes we compartmentalize our “gifts” wrongfully. It is important to recognize that anything that God gives that is good is a gift.⁷⁷⁷ Though we are definitely speaking specifically about spiritual gifts that are “things we do,” we should also realize that in a broader sense, some “gifts” can include talents, skills, life experience, personality traits, hobbies, station in life (single, married, single parent, family, retired), family background (ethnicity, rich, poor, broken home), children, finances, etc. *All* of these gifts can be used for God’s glory.

Though there is no clear cut breakdown or categorization, for the sake of ease and clarity, we’ll look at these within the context of various uses. It’s also important to note that some of these gifting are multi-faceted and can’t fit into one category neatly.

⁷⁷⁶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec98ayNyuHs#t=12

⁷⁷⁷ James 1.17

GIFTS THAT COMMUNICATE

- **ENCOURAGEMENT:**

Acts 14.22 // Hebrews 3.13 // Romans 12.8

(This is sometimes called “exhortation”) This is the ability to motivate God’s people to apply and act on biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

- **TEACHING:**

Ephesians 4.11-13 // James 3.1 // Hebrews 5.12 // Titus 2.3, 4 // 2 Timothy 3.16 // Colossians 3.16
1 Corinthians 12.28 // Romans 12.7 // Matthew 28.20

This is the ability to educate God’s people by clearly explaining and applying the bible in a way that causes them to learn; the ability to equip and train other believers for ministry.

This has similarities with preaching/prophecy, as they are both rooted in bringing forward the Word of God. However, if you love to study, read between the lines, and if you love to see the light bulb go on for folks (and more importantly, *if indeed* the light bulb does go on for folks), you should continue pursuing the gift of teaching.

- **PROPHECY:**

1 Corinthians 12.8-10, 28 // Ephesians 4.11 // Romans 12.6-8 // 1 Peter 4.11 // 1 Corinthians 14.3

There is much debate over this gift, but thorough biblical study shows that it is when we put into words something that God has spontaneously shown us. It is not particularly teaching, preaching, future-telling, or speaking the actual words of God, but conveying something that God has revealed to you in order to edify the intended listeners.

For instance, when a pastor or teacher is not just “teaching” or reading notes but is more or less “preaching” from the filling of the Spirit and conveying truth, that would be prophesying as well. If people are encouraged by the things God shows you in His Word, you should continue doing so.

- **WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE:**

1 Corinthians 12.8, 14.6 // Luke 8.10 // Colossians 1.9-14 // Colossians 2.1-5 // John 4.16-18

The phrase “word of knowledge” is explicitly used only once in **1 Corinthians 12.8**. We see a partnership of “wisdom” and “knowledge” in other verses, specifically **Colossians 2.1-5**, and it seems to be divinely revealed knowledge that comes from a redeemed mind, not just worldly or human ability to study. That said, other theologians believe this phrase sometimes means that God will speak a very specific thing to an individual that could not be known unless divinely given. This is done for the correction of sin, an insight for a certain decision, or an answer to prayer.

If God gives you the ability to understand truths, details, and information that goes beyond just the ability to understand, He may have blessed you with words of knowledge to share with others. Also, if God shows you things that you could not have known unless you were told it, and that thing proves to be true, this could also be considered a word of knowledge.

- **WORDS OF WISDOM:**

1 Corinthians 1.25, 2.1, 6-16, 12.1-8 // Mark 6.2 // Luke 2.40, 52, 7.35 // Acts 6.3 // Ephesians 1.17, 18 // Colossians 1.9, 2.2 // James 1.5 // James 3.13-18

This is the ability to understand God’s perspective on life situations and share those insights in a simple, understandable way. It’s the ability to explain what to do and how to do it when God reveals a very specific bit of wisdom for you or others. This can be seen in either spontaneous wise words that you speak, words that go against logic but that you strongly feel are the Lord’s heart for a certain situation, or simply a lifestyle and character personified by the words of wisdom you speak. Knowledge tells you what a skunk is, wisdom tells you to stay away from it.

This often comes from the things that God has taught you, shown you in His Word, and you are able to relay those findings and truths to apply to people’s lives and situations. If it frustrates you (with compassion and humility) when you see people make poor decisions that seem “obvious” to you, and most especially if people seek you out

and ask you about your past circumstances and advice on how to deal with things, God may give you a word of wisdom, which is a very valuable gift.

- **PASTOR-TEACHER:**

1 Peter 5.2-4 // 1 Timothy 5.17 // Titus 1.5-9 // 1 Peter 5.1-5 // Ephesians 4.11

(This is sometimes called “shepherding,” and is synonymous with an “Elder” or “Overseer.” More on this later)

This is the calling and the ability to oversee a church body and equip them for ministry.

We will look more at this in detail in the next chapter.

- **EVANGELISM:**

Acts 8.26-40 // 2 Timothy 4.5 // Mark 13.10, 16.15 // Acts 14.21

This is the ability to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelievers; the ability to sense opportunities to share Christ and lead people to respond with faith.

If non-believers are drawn to you, or if you have a burning passion to share the Good News with the lost, study this gift in Scripture, and seek God’s wisdom and blessing in it.

- **APOSTLE:**

Romans 1.5, 15.20 // 1 Corinthians 12.28 // 2 Corinthians 12.12 // Ephesians 4.11

Though there are no more “capital A” apostles today, the ability to start new churches and works and oversee their development is an apostolic gifting.

If you start spiritual works or activities and people are drawn to what you are doing, you may possibly have some sort of apostolic gifting. A huge amount of fruit has to accompany a gift like this.

GIFTS OF SERVICE

- **SERVICE:**

Acts 6.1-7 // Romans 12:6-8 // Proverbs 22.29

This is the word “diakonos” in the Word, which is the word translated as “serve,” “deacon,” or “minister” depending on the use of the word. It is the ability to recognize unmet needs in the church family, and take the initiative to provide practical assistance quickly, cheerfully, and without a need for recognition.

If you like the background or are kind of shy, or you just really like to be the unsung, get it done, be a blessing to others kind of a person, you have the very important gift of service. Make yourself available in every way possible to others.

- **MERCY:**

Romans 12.8 // Matthew 5.7 // James 3.17, 18

This is the ability to manifest practical, compassionate, cheerful love toward those suffering. If your heart aches for those in pain, the lost, the elderly, the sick, the lonely, you have a big part to play in the church. Pursue this gift with everything you have. Often times, if you have had a deep hurt in your past, God may have deposited the gift of mercy deep within your hurts. If you are unaware of such thing, ask God to show you and unearth it for His glory (this can be difficult, as you often times first have to get through your pain, bitterness, un-forgiveness, or whatever it may be that is connected to that deep hurt in your past).

- **HELPS:**

1 Corinthians 12:28

This is a somewhat mysterious word, as it is only mentioned one time in the word (**1 Corinthians 12.28**). It is possible that Paul used a different word to describe the gift of service mentioned in **Romans 12.6-8**, however this

word gives a slightly different view of “service” as the word denotes “relief” and “help” rather than the more benign word “service.” In some ways, it seems that it is almost a mix of mercy/compassion and service. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* says “aid, help...the ministrations of the deacons, who have care of the poor and the sick.” If your heart aches for the broken, downtrodden, poor, or hurt and love to serve others to be a blessing, you should pursue this gift of helps.

- **HOSPITALITY:**

1 Peter 4.9-10 // 3 John 5-8 // Romans 12.13 // Acts 28.7

This is the ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable in the church family; the ability to coordinate factors that promote fellowship.

If you like to host or entertain or make people feel comfortable, you may have the gift of hospitality.

- **GIVING:**

Romans 12.8 // 2 Corinthians 8.1-7, 9.1-15 // Acts 2.42-47, 10.1, 2 // 1 Timothy 6.17-20 // Luke 21.1-4

This is the ability to generously contribute material resources or money so that the body may grow and be strengthened. It’s also the ability to earn and manage money so it may be given to support the ministry of others.

Giving generously is a much needed gift in the body. To have the gift of generous giving doesn’t mean you have to be rich or have much. The widow in the Gospels had the gift of generous giving, even though it was only one mite. Sacrificial investing into the Kingdom of God is a tremendous gift to possess.

- **LEADERSHIP:**

Hebrews 13.7, 17 // Romans 12.8 // Acts 6.1-6, 15.22

This is the ability to clarify and communicate the purpose and direction (“vision”) of a ministry in a way that attracts others to get involved. It’s the ability to motivate others by example to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal. If you want to know if you have the gift of leadership, just look behind you...is anyone following? If so, you may have the gift of leadership.

- **ADMINISTRATION:**

1 Corinthians 12.28, 14.40 // Acts 6.1-6

(Greek definition says pilotage, directorship, government. It is basically organization/structure.)

This is the ability to recognize the gifts of others and recruit them to a ministry; the ability to organize and manage people, resources, and time for effective ministry.

These are the people who are the backbone and workhorses of the church. If you love to organize, manage, and make things happen in an orderly fashion, you will have a major part to play in the ministry of the saints.

GIFTS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

- **DISCERNMENT:**

1 John 4.1 // Acts 16.16-22

This is the ability to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

If people solicit you for good, sound advice, and the results are God glorifying, you may have this gift. This is not man's natural wisdom or intelligence, but a spiritual intuition that goes beyond things we can ascertain physically or emotionally. Wanting to give unsolicited advice or having a say in everyone's problems does not mean you have discernment (often times, probably the opposite).

- **INTERCESSION:**

Colossians 1.9-12 // 1 Timothy 2.1-4 // Romans 8.26, 27

This is the ability to pray for the needs of others in the church family over extended periods of time on a regular basis. The ability to persist in prayer and not be discouraged until the answer arrives.

If you are driven by prayer and constantly are heavy hearted for the needs of others around you, you have an invaluable gift for the body of Christ. To intercede through prayer, worship, and fasting to seek God's guidance and glory is something we are in much need of in the church.

- **HEALING:**

James 5.14-16 // Luke 8.43-56 // 1 Corinthians 12.9

This is when we pray in faith specifically for people who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God answer.

If you have faith and step out in prayer for healing and you have seen people legitimately get healed, God had sovereignly given you a gift of healing. That said, it *doesn't* indicate in the Word that He calls some to be healers, but rather that He gives gifts of healing at certain points for His purposes.

- **MIRACLES:**

Mark 11.23-24 // Hebrews 2.4 // 1 Corinthians 12.28 // Romans 15.17-19

This is a particular gift that God might give when we pray, in faith, specifically for God's supernatural intervention into an impossible situation.

If you've prayed for the ridiculous and saw it happen, you were blessed with the gift of a miracle!

- **TONGUES:**

1 Corinthians 12.10, 11, 14.2-27, 39, 40 // Acts 10.46

This is the ability to pray, sing, or give praise to God in a language understood only by God or one who is given the gift of interpretation.

This is a gift that takes an amount of faith. If you ever feel terribly overwhelmed in your spirit and you don't even know where to start when you pray, ask God to give you the faith to pray in tongues. It is a "faith language" that you may not understand, but since the Holy Spirit is in you and knows your desires and pains, He is communicating on your behalf to the Father.

- **INTERPRETATION of TONGUES:**

1 Corinthians 12.10, 11, 14.2-27, 39, 40

This is the ability to supernaturally interpret someone who is speaking in tongues.

If you have ever encountered a time when someone spoke or prayed in tongues and you could understand it, you were given the gift of interpreting tongues.

- **FAITH:**

Romans 4.18-21 // 1 Corinthians 12.9, 13.2 // Galatians 3.9

This is the ability to trust God for what cannot be seen and to act on God's promise, regardless of what the circumstances indicate; the willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.

If you have a strong belief in what God can accomplish, you have a tremendous gift. Your gift of faith will encourage people, glorify God, and see people around you come to the Lord. You will do things in your life that you never thought would happen. It is an amazing gift, continue to pursue the Lord and ask for more!

MISCELLANEOUS GIFTS

- **SINGLENESS:**

1 Corinthians 7.7

Singleness is a gift, according to God. Whether lifelong or in a season, use this time for God's glory, not for self-glory. You have a unique gift given to you to make the most of what you have.

- **MARRIAGE:**

1 Corinthians 7.7

In light of Paul's teaching that the married can be distracted by practical things, you are able to uniquely redeem the time and the gift of marriage as ministry (rather than being self-absorbed). Make your lives available to other struggling couples, model a healthy marriage and family, raise your kids in the Lord, both in word and by example.

Other Apparent Gifts or Talents Seen Elsewhere

- **CREATIVITY:**

Psalms 150 // 2 Chronicles 5.11-14 // 1 Chronicles 15.16 // Exodus 36.1-6

(In the Word this is sometimes called "artisans") The ability to celebrate God's presence through music, arts, design, imagery, ambiance etc., in order to lead the church family in worship and the presence of God.

If you like to make things, create things, build things, or design things, you may have a natural gift that God would desire to be glorifying for Him.

- **CONSTRUCTION:**

Exodus 31.1-5 // Exodus 35.10-36.38 // 1 Chronicles 28.21 // Proverbs 22.29

(In the Word this is sometimes called "craftsmanship" or "workmanship" and is relatively interchangeable with "artisans" depending on context) This is the ability to celebrate God's presence through building, creating, and making things. This natural gift, when empowered by certain spiritual gifts, such as service, leadership, evangelism, and hospitality, are greatly sought after gifts in the Kingdom. They can produce welcoming environments, bless the poor in the community or in missions, and dream up ways for more effective and efficient ministry.

If you are good at working with your hands, building, painting, and cutting, read these verses and ask God to show you how you can use this in a context of ministry.

- **MISSIONARIES:**

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 // Acts 13:2-3

This is the ability to adapt to a different culture in order to reach unbelievers and help believers from that culture. A person pursuing missions will have various gifts, such as mercy, leadership, apostolic gifting, evangelism, etc. This is really an “apparent” gift that is a mixture of these to pursue a specific goal. Church planters would fall into this category as well.

If you have the faith to be out of your comfort zone and enjoy the challenge, you may have the heart of a missionary. This heart can't be driven by the emotions of adventure or newness, that is what we call “sightseeing for Christ.” Rather, it has to be driven out of a passion for the glory of God.

 GLORIFICATION 

Though we won't look at this final stage of our salvation and the Holy Spirit's work in our life until the chapter on heaven, it should be noted that this is the last stage of our salvation and has also been guaranteed by the atoning work of Christ.

Ephesians 4.4-7

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Ephesians 1.16-18

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

Colossians 1.3-5

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

But this hope of our calling is not a hope that may or may not happen, it is a hope that does not disappoint.

Romans 5.5

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

Why a BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NECESSARY

Result #1: It teaches us true dependence on God.

When we see and understand the Holy Spirit's role in our salvation, it gives us a whole new perspective on what it truly means to "be free," "walk in the Spirit," and "live by faith." All of a sudden, when we see what His active role is, we are encouraged to put off religiosity, frustration, and striving.

Result #2: We know we can be assured of our salvation.

When we understand the great value that He is as our seal and guarantee, we finally and truly understand that it is by His strength and ability (and it is even His mandate and task from the Father!) to preserve us, keep us, strengthen us, lead us, and guide us. We get a much deeper understanding of the length that the Father went in order to ensure our redemption. He didn't want His Son's death to be in vain, and so to ensure that it would do what it accomplished, He even sent His own Spirit to indwell in us, seal us, and guard us for the great Day of glorification.

Knowing of this guarantee also gives us a deeper hope and faith in the truth of our election. When we struggle with the idea of God choosing us, for whatever reason it might be, His role and work as our seal and assurance sheds light on the truth and fact that have been chosen by God's grace from before time began.

Result #3: It gives us a greater confidence in our relationship with God.

The knowledge of our adoption to the Father and the Spirit's work of revealing that and making that real to us completely changes the way we interact with God. We pray differently, more boldly, and more confidently. It also changes *what* we pray for. When we start to understand, at least in part, what we have by being sons and daughters, it gives us a totally different perspective on prayer.

For instance, if you had certain needs, would you ask your parents differently depending on if they were rich or if they were poor? Of course you would. Would you ask differently if they were generous in their love or stingy in their blessings? Absolutely. Knowing that you are truly an adopted son or daughter to the King of kings changes everything about how you pray.

Result #4: It gives us a wake-up call.

The knowledge of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives also gives us a wake-up call. If we are not producing fruit or if we don't see evidence of Him in our life, it should provoke us to a deep repentance and personal renewal. Not seeing growth, fruit, faith, and life change should be alarming to us. We would take seriously the warnings given in the Word and ask the Holy Spirit to convict us, fill us, and empower us.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

♣ Definition of Terms ♣

Adoption: Adoption is the very real work of the Holy Spirit where He unites us with Christ as sons and daughters of God the Father. It is through His indwelling and sealing that the Holy Spirit does this, but also makes it known and real to us.

Sanctification: Sanctification is the growth process of our faith. It is every moment of our walk with God from the time we are saved until the day we go to be with Him. Our sanctification, though it may be up and down at times, has been pre-ordained and purchased as fact and imminent by the blood of Jesus.

Perseverance of the saints: Also called “preservation” or “eternal security,” this is the truth that if we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, we will be preserved by His strength and desire. God will cause us to persevere because we are His, chosen from the foundations of the world.

Cessationist: This is a person who believes that the “signs and wonders” gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased when we received the canon of Scripture.

Charismatic: This is a person who believes that the gifts are still for today.

Charismatic: This person puts an unhealthy amount of credence and pursuit and authority in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Continuationist: This person is a “charismatic with seatbelts,” meaning that they are “open but cautious” to the working of the gifts.

Grieve the Holy Spirit: This is the very real thing that we as believers can do to the Holy Spirit. We can ignore Him, suppress Him, and grieve Him. We do this every time we sin and turn to our own ways. Though we can do this for a time, and that time may even be long, He will always win the arm wrestling match.

Fruit of the Spirit: This is the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling in us. We can know He is in us when we see the various fruit of the Spirit in our life. Without it, we should take very seriously the consideration of our salvation being true or not.

Discipline: This is one of the great privileges of being a child of God. Though painful, this is not His punishment, because this is fueled by His love and desire to us repent and behold His glory again.

Recommended Resources

Theology Books

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem. Chapters 37-40, 52, 53 deal with adoption, sanctification, perseverance, baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine by Mark Driscoll. Chapter 9 deals with salvation.

Salvation Belongs to the Lord by John Frame. Chapters 12, 15, and 17 cover the themes in this chapter.

Books

Showing the Spirit: a Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14 by D.A. Carson, one of the greatest New Testament scholars today.

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit by R.A. Torrey

The Gift of Prophecy and the New Testament by Dr. Wayne Grudem

The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Cessation of Special Revelation by Garnet Milne

Fifty Reasons Jesus Came to Die by John Piper.

Religion Saves + Nine Other Misconceptions by Mark Driscoll. The book is the ten most frequently asked theological questions that Driscoll gets. In this book he covers, among other topics, the idea of grace and predestination.

The Cross and Salvation by Bruce Demarest.

The Doctrine of God by John Frame.

The Message of Salvation by Phillip Ryken

Sermons

www.lifemissionchurch.com

- “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” from the **Gospel of Matthew: the King and His Kingdom** sermon series.
- “Spirit Led Church” three part sermon series.
 - Who is the Holy Spirit?
 - Empowered with Spiritual Gifts
 - Weak Yet Strong

www.marshallchurch.org Type in “Holy Spirit,” Choose from a few sermons:

- **Luke** Series, which includes:
 - Asking for the Holy Spirit
 - Jesus Rejoices in the Holy Spirit
 - Jesus and the Holy Spirit
 - The Cost of Discipleship
- “Spirit and Flesh” from their **Galatians** series.
- “God the Holy Spirit” from their **John** series.
- “Filled with the Holy Spirit” from their **Trial** series.
- **1 Corinthians** Series, which includes:
 - Spiritual Gifts Part I
 - Spiritual Gifts Part II
 - Spiritual Gifts Part III
 - Spiritual Gifts Part IV
 - Spiritual Gifts Part V

www.christianessentialsbc.com/messages This is Wayne Grudem's sermons going through his book, *Systematic Theology*. Go to the sermons on Chapters 37-40, 52, 53.

www.desiringgod.org This is John Piper's ministry. Along with audio or video sermons, he has the transcripts as well. Type into the search field on desiringgod.org to find these audio sermons that have attached articles. Simply type in "Holy Spirit," "perseverance," etc. for tons of great articles and sermons.

- "How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit"
- "You will be Baptized with the Holy Spirit"
- "What does it Mean to Receive the Holy Spirit?"
- "How the Spirit Helps Us Understand"
- "The New Covenant and the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament"
- "How the Spirit Sanctifies"
- "Slaves to God, Sanctification, Eternal Life"
- "The Journey of Sanctification"
- "The Doctrine of Perseverance: the Future of a Fruitless Field"
- "The Roots of Endurance"
- "Perseverance and Eternal Security"
- "Can the Regenerate be Erased from the Book of Life?"
- "Is the Doctrine of Perseverance a Contradiction?"
- "The Necessity of Perseverance in Faith and the Assurance of Salvation"

Web Articles

fm.thevillagechurch.net This is the church where Matt Chandler, a gifted teacher, is the Teaching Pastor at. Go here, click on "Resource Library," select "Articles and Position Papers," and scroll down at articles on the Holy Spirit.

www.monergism.com is a great site in general, but this particular link has a lot of information on soteriology.

www.challies.com is a great website by Pastor and blogger Tim Challies. There he has an interview with Dr. Wayne Grudem on cessationism and continuationism. www.challies.com/interviews/continuationism-and-cessationism-an-interview-with-dr-wayne-grudem