

# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

LESSON  
FOUR

In the Believer  
Discussion Forum



THIRD MILLENNIUM  

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# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

## Lesson Four: In the Believer

### Discussion Forum

With

Dr. Danny Akin  
Dr. Greg R. Allison  
Dr. Uche Anizor  
Pastor Pierre Bitar  
Dr. P. J. Buys  
Rev. Larry Cockrell  
Dr. David Correa, D.Min.  
Dr. Joseph D. Fantin

Dr. Dana M. Harris  
Dr. Alan Hultberg  
Dr. Dennis E. Johnson  
Dr. Craig S. Keener  
Dr. Dan Lacich  
Dr. John McKinley  
Dr. Dinorah Méndez  
Rev. Mike Osborne

Dr. Charles L. Quarles  
Dr. Ramesh Richard  
Dr. Philip Ryken  
Pastor Ashraf Sara  
Dr. Mark Saucy  
Dr. Glen G. Scorgie  
Dr. Imad Shehadeh  
Dr. Simon Vibert

### Question 1:

#### How is the Holy Spirit involved in our salvation?

##### **Dr. Dennis E. Johnson**

The Holy Spirit is the applier of our salvation. He's the one who brings our stony hearts to life, makes them tender to God's word, who gives us the ability to believe and trust in Christ and so to be united vitally to Christ. Peter speaks of this in the opening of his letter, 1 Peter 1, when he speaks of our being chosen according to the foreknowledge, that is, the advance love of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit to obey Christ ... and to be sprinkled with his redeeming blood. Paul in Ephesians 1 gives us even more detail in that glorious opening benediction from 1:3-14, speaking of the Father's choice of our being redeemed through the beloved one, forgiven of our sins, and then being sealed by the Holy Spirit as the pledge, the down payment, the first installment of our final inheritance.

##### **Dr. Glen G. Scorgie**

The mission of God in our salvation originates in the heart, the Father's heart, and is implemented through the ready obedience of the Son. And yet, there's a role that remains for the Holy Spirit who comes to bring to bear in our own lives the merits and achievements of Christ. He is the one who takes what Christ has achieved and glues it, in a sense, to us, unites us to Christ, makes that link so that what Christ has done becomes ours, and ever after becomes God with us, the one who guides us through the journey, the pilgrim's progress to the celestial city, renewing us into conformity to the image of Christ.

## **Question 2:** **What is the Holy Spirit's role in conversion?**

### **Dr. Greg R. Allison**

Conversion is the human response to the mighty work of God in saving us... It consists of two aspects: repentance or turning away from our sin, and faith, trusting Jesus Christ to save us. So, repentance and faith, that's conversion. That's the human response to God's work of calling us to himself, regenerating us, justifying us, uniting us with his Son, adopting us into his family. Does the Holy Spirit play a role in our conversion? Absolutely. I believe that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the grace, who prompts repentance and faith so that, certainly repentance is a human response, certainly faith is a human response to God's work in our life, but that's not a *merely* human response. It's a response that's prompted by God's grace that's enabled by the Spirit of God. So, we repent, we trust Jesus Christ, we are converted. And that's not just on our own effort, but that's guided by and empowered by the Spirit who is at work in our life.

### **Rev. Mike Osborne**

If we define conversion as "repentance plus faith," the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is behind both of those things... Ephesians 2:1 says that we are dead in trespasses and sins before we are regenerated. So, the Holy Spirit's gifts of repentance and faith are instrumental in our salvation, otherwise we would remain dead in sin. We would just remain unable. You know, our wills are bound. Our wills are unable to respond to God apart from something that God does to us. So, we believe that the Holy Spirit is the one who is actively at work convicting the heart. You know, there is this concept of effectual calling. That's where the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind, sort of turns on the light bulb. For example, I remember in my life — I know that not everybody has this experience — but I can actually remember a key moment in my own spiritual journey where I sensed that the light bulb came on. I was a college junior talking to a Christian who was sharing the Scriptures with me, and I really felt in that moment that the light bulb came on. I believe that's the work of the Holy Spirit.

## **Question 3:** **What is regeneration?**

### **Dr. Charles L. Quarles**

I think that regeneration is a much more robust term than we sometimes consider as Christian theologians or students of the Bible... The most extensive discussion of regeneration in the New Testament is 1 Peter 1:3–2:3, almost an entire chapter unpacking the doctrine of regeneration. There the apostle Peter, with reference to John 3, tells us several important points about regeneration. Number one, he teaches us that regeneration results in a new relationship with God. In the new birth, we who were the enemies of God become the children of God. When he gives us spiritual

birth, he becomes our Father; we become his children — an amazing truth. Because of that new relationship with God, we also have new rights with God. Peter says that we now have a right to the Father's protection. Fathers protect their children. Now the heavenly Father protects his spiritual children. He says that we have a right to a heavenly inheritance. Every child has a place in their father's home. Now we have a place in our Father's home by virtue of the new birth. But in addition to the new relationship and the new rights — there's a very important point to emphasize — we have a new resemblance to God. When you think about it, the Lord Jesus and the apostle Peter could have emphasized our new relationship to and rights with God by simply using the imagery of adoption, but they prefer the language of new birth, regeneration, instead. Why? Because there's an important distinction between an adoptive child and a child that you conceived and to whom you gave birth. What's the difference? Well, the child that you gave birth to has your own DNA, your own make up, and so that child resembles you as his parent in many remarkable ways. And so the Lord Jesus and the apostle Peter say God didn't just adopt us as his children, he gave us new birth. As the apostle John will say in 1 John, God's seed is in the believer — his spiritual DNA, if you will — not so that we become God as he is God, obviously, but so that we partake of his holy character. The new birth emphasizes that truth, "like Father, like son." And finally, I might add, though we could go on, that the new birth results in new responsibilities to God. As Peter unpacks the doctrine of new birth, he describes believers as, "obedient children." It's the responsibility of a child to honor father and mother and obey father and mother. And now that we have become God's children through the new birth, our responsibility to submit to his authority and obey him is heightened all the more. So, new relationship, new rights, new resemblance, and new responsibilities are all entailed in the new birth doctrine.

### **Rev. Mike Osborne**

Regeneration is a change of heart. Probably the simplest and most familiar way of talking about regeneration is to quote Jesus in John 3 where he speaks to Nicodemus about being born again. And that's really what regeneration is. It is like a rebirth. Before we are regenerated we have hearts, and the heart is the center of our being, the seat of our emotions and will. It is really who we are. The heart is dead in sin, unable to say "yes" to God. No matter how often we might hear the gospel, we can't believe. We can't repent. So, what must happen is that the Holy Spirit causes us to have new life. He imparts life to a dead heart. The way that I have sometimes said it is that it's like going into a morgue and breathing life into a dead body. That's what regeneration is. What it looks like is a radical break from the old, a breach with sin. It's something that is an amazing change. "This is a new creation," Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5. We are no longer who we used to be. And, now, it might be lived out later, but there is a moment or a period of time in which the Holy Spirit is breathing life into the dead heart and causing us to then be able to respond in repentance and faith... Regeneration comes first. I won't be saved unless God first comes into my heart. We love because he first loved us.

### Question 4:

## Is regeneration solely an act of the Holy Spirit, or do humans play a part as well?

### Dr. Danny Akin

You know, when we talk about the doctrine of regeneration, we're talking about a doctrine that deals with the work of God in our life in bringing us to faith in Christ. So, you could raise the question, "Well, then is the Holy Spirit the only one acting in the area of regeneration?" The answer would be, "Yes, *but...*" Yes, it is the Holy Spirit that regenerates us, that gives us the new birth, that makes us new. Paul said, "... not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit." That's Titus 3:5... Having said that, is there a human part that is also played in the work of regeneration? The answer is, yes. We do, as a result of the work of regeneration, repent and exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, will regeneration always involve our repentance and faith? Yes. But our repentance and faith is indeed the spiritual response to the work of regeneration. I mean, after all, we are born again; we are regenerated; we are made new because we're dead, and dead men and women can't do anything but be dead. And so, without the Spirit making us alive, we would not have the capacity to respond, we would not have the capacity to repent and exercise faith.

### Dr. David Correa, D.Min. (translation)

Regeneration is a monergistic work. That means that it's a work that only God performs, through his Spirit, in the sinner. Although some church traditions insist that human beings play a role in their regeneration, the Bible tells us otherwise. We read in Ephesians 2:1 that in our condition as sinners, we're spiritually dead... To use an analogy, we are not in the intensive care room in the hospital because we have a deadly disease. As far as Scripture is concerned, sinners are in the morgue. And the Holy Spirit doesn't put medicine next to our hospital beds so that if we want it, we take it to heal ourselves. What the Holy Spirit really does is apply defibrillator paddles to our dead heart. The reason, then, why the work of regeneration is an exclusive work of the Holy Spirit is because the sinner, as I said, is spiritually dead and is unable to save himself.

### Question 5:

## Why must the Holy Spirit make us aware of how sinful we really are?

### Dr. P. J. Buys

The Bible makes it very clear that every human being coming into this world, without a relationship with Christ, the person is deaf and blind and dead. And the whole of creation has been tainted by sin, and ourselves, our emotions, our feelings, our understanding, everything is tainted by sin. And only when the Holy Spirit opens our eyes and we are redeemed in Christ, we have developed a whole new understanding

of what the meaning of life really is all about, and our whole value system is then changed.

**Dr. Philip Ryken**

There is no part of us that is not tainted and affected by sin. There's no part of our minds, there's no part of our wills, there's no part of our affections where we can point to and we can say, now that part of me is perfect and that part of me is sinful. No, it's: what I think is affected by sinful thoughts; what I choose is affected by a sinful will; the things that I love are affected by sin because some of the things I love are not the things that God wants me to love, and that's because of a sinful heart. And sin really runs through the whole of us, which is one of the reasons we need a complete salvation and a complete cleansing, a complete forgiveness through the cross, but also a complete work of the Holy Spirit, which ultimately will cleanse us from all that sin. But it goes all the way through us.

**Question 6:**

**Why are we incapable of pleasing God through our own efforts?**

**Dr. Simon Vibert**

Well, as a result of humanity's fall into sin, we find a tension within all of us. There is a sense in which we want to do good. We want to do things which please God, but we also have a contrary nature within us which wants to rule our own life without reference to God. And so, consequently we find, as Paul describes it in Romans, that I know the good that I want to do, but I find another power at work in me which means that I can't do that which I know I should. So, we're torn creatures in that respect. We have a desire to do good, but actually we cannot do it outside of Christ.

**Rev. Larry Cockrell**

Our human nature hinders us from trying to do good first and foremost because, obviously, this nature is a fallen nature. Sin impacted it, and because of that our nature is really in rebellion against God. And that being the case, even as Christians, when we have been born again, we see now that there is this inner conflict that takes place. And Paul speaks of it well in Romans 7 when he talks about the war between the flesh and the spirit... He recognized that there was a law in his members warring against the law of his mind so that he would not do the will of God in that respect there. And so, as a Christian, we have to appreciate and recognize this great battle that takes place within, this great tension that really hinders us and keeps us from trying to really live and do what's right in the sight of the Lord. But Paul does go on to say thanks be to God for our Lord Jesus Christ who gives us the victory in that respect there. And so, while we do struggle, we can rejoice in knowing that ultimately we do have victory in Christ and that we don't have to be defeated nor allow our natures to dominate us as it did in times past when we did not know Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.



**Question 7:****What does it mean that the Holy Spirit guarantees us an eternal inheritance?****Dr. Danny Akin**

You know, one of God's great gifts at salvation is the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the Bible speaks in so many different ways about how the Spirit ministers in our lives as Christians to ultimately bring us to conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1 talks about the fact that we're sealed by the Holy Spirit, which gives us the assurance that our salvation is a permanent reality. I didn't do anything to earn it, I can't do anything to lose it, and God gave the Spirit as a down payment to ensure that my salvation will reach fruition. I am going to be like the Lord Jesus Christ because of the promise of the Holy Spirit.

**Dr. Dana M. Harris**

When Jesus came, he ushered in the kingdom of God. For us right now this is a spiritual reality in the present time on earth, but one day it will be a physical reality when Jesus returns. So, as believers, we're caught in a tension, which is sometimes described as "the already-not yet." Part of the "already" is the fact that we have the Holy Spirit as a down payment. This is what Paul talks about in Ephesians 1:14. This down payment is an assurance that we will one day have our eternal inheritance. We also experience this in the reality of spiritual gifts and the spiritual bond that we feel between believers around the world. But we also know that we live in a world that is wracked by evil and is still under the effects of a world in condemnation. So, we look forward to that day when we will see Jesus face to face and when he will return and bring about the complete and total eradication of evil.

**Dr. Craig S. Keener**

Paul says in 2 Corinthians and Ephesians 1, he uses a term that often appears in business documents for a down payment. He says that we have received the first installment of our future inheritance by receiving the Spirit. We have received a foretaste of the future world, because we're not just expecting a future resurrection and a future Messiah, a future king, but we're expecting a king who has already come, who has already been raised from the dead and, therefore, for us, we have a foretaste, and we need to live like the people of a future age. We need to live for the future in this present age to let the world have a foretaste of what heaven is going to be like.

**Question 8:****What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?****Dr. Gregg R. Allison**

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul commands us, "Do not be drunk with wine. That leads to debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit." What does it mean to be filled with the

Spirit? It means to be commanded, to be directed and guided, controlled by the Spirit in all aspects of our life. If we look at Paul's command, we do see that it's an imperative, it is a command, which means we can obey it or we can disobey it. Now, we certainly are to obey it, but it is a responsibility of ours to respond to this command and exercise obedience to be filled. It's also an ongoing imperative, an ongoing command. We could paraphrase it: *keep on* being filled, *keep on* being controlled or guided by the Holy Spirit, moment by moment. So, it's a command that draws our attention to obedience, being controlled by the Spirit moment by moment. It's also a passive command. It's not an active, "throw the ball" command. Rather, it's a passive command — *be* filled. And the step of obedience that is required is that we put ourselves in a position of yieldedness; we adopt a posture of yielding to the Spirit's control and guidance in our life. So, what does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? It means to be consciously obedient, submitting to, yielding to the Spirit's direction and control, guidance in our life, moment by moment.

**Dr. Imad Shehadeh (translation)**

Being filled with the Spirit differs from the indwelling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer. The presence of God is in his life. But being filled is different. It means that the Holy Spirit controls man's life so that he has the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the attributes of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In other words, the attributes of Christ now control a person so that he lives a totally different life than if he lived by his own natural power... I become sure that I am filled with the Holy Spirit when I become sure of what Christ did for me on the cross. Every time I become more sure of what Christ has done for me, there I find the Holy Spirit, because this is what he cares about. All these things lead me to be delivered from dependence on myself to dependence on what he has done. He has forgiven me and clothed me with his righteousness. And every time I became more sure of what he has done, I find the Holy Spirit present in front of me... This is what it is meant by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Dr. Craig S. Keener**

When we read that Moses laid hands on Joshua, Joshua is filled with the Holy Spirit in Deuteronomy 34. He's filled with the spirit of wisdom, and that's so that he can lead God's people. We also read elsewhere in the Pentateuch that God filled someone with the holy spirit of wisdom so that they could do artwork and exquisite work on the architecture of the tabernacle. So, in Acts 6, we also read of those who are going to be leading in terms of caring for the poor, that they are filled with the spirit of wisdom. So, we have this language used in various places. Now, elsewhere in Luke and in Acts we read about being filled with the Spirit to prophesy. In Ephesians 5:18, in the context, it says don't be drunk with wine, but instead be filled with the Spirit and then describes what that is to look like, where you're praising God, you're thanking God for all things, and you're serving one another. So, there are a number of different expressions of the way that the Spirit fills us for a number of different things, for our particular callings, and then the kind of thing that we all need to be filled with the Spirit for — to praise God and to serve one another.

**Rev. Mike Osborne**

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul uses the term “be filled” or “keep on being filled” with the Holy Spirit. “Don’t be drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit,” and then he goes on to describe what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit by singing and so on, like that. To be filled with the Spirit means that a believer is walking with the Spirit or is keeping in step with the Spirit, to refer to what Paul says in the book of Galatians. It is to be obedient. It is to be filled with joy. It is to be, really, I would say, it’s to be in our experience what we already are in our position. And this is something that is determined to some degree by the choices and the actions of the believer of himself or herself. If we choose to take off the old self and put on the new self, if we choose to worship and trust God and repent of known sin and those types of behaviors, then the Holy Spirit is free to fill us with himself. And he is the source of our power for obedience. So, as I put to death, or mortify, the deeds of my flesh, the Holy Spirit finds that attractive. As I repent of sin, as I confess, as I love my brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit finds those behaviors attractive and fills us with his Spirit. We’re able to quench the Holy Spirit. We’re able to grieve the Spirit by our bad choices and bad actions. So, to be filled with the Spirit means to walk in conformity with his will and his expectations. What it results in would be the fruit of the Spirit. As we are filled with the Spirit we exhibit love, joy, peace, patience and so on.

**Question 9:****What do we mean by an inward leading of the Holy Spirit?****Dr. Craig S. Keener**

When we speak of an inward leading of the Holy Spirit, we’re not speaking of something like ... like something that would compete with Scripture. This is, you know, the Spirit can lead us through Scripture, but sometimes the Spirit also leads us in personal ways. For example, in Romans 8 and in Galatians 4 the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we’re God’s children, so reminding us that we belong to God. Romans 5:5, in the context, God’s love is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, pointing to the cross, so reminding us that God loves us. Romans 8 and Galatians 5 speak directly of the leading of the Spirit but especially in the context of moral empowerment, leading us to do what’s right and not to do what’s wrong. The book of Acts tends to emphasize more especially power for evangelism, so in Acts 8:29 the Spirit speaks to Philip and says, “Run up to this chariot and let this person know...” in other words, about Christ. In chapter 10 ... the Spirit tells Peter to go down and meet with these Gentiles who have come to see him, so again, crossing barriers to bring people the gospel. The Spirit can lead us in evangelism. Nehemiah speaks of a plan that he had. He says, “God put it in my heart,” and so we can also speak in those terms. Or the psalmist saying, “God, please lead me in your ways.” Sometimes the psalmist might not even know how, like in the language of Proverbs,

God is ordering the psalmist's steps. But the idea is that we're trusting God to lead us and guide us, even in our personal lives.

**Dr. Glen G. Scorgie**

A very familiar phrase and experience for Christians is the inward leading of the Holy Spirit. First of all, I don't think we should be afraid of this phrase out of fear of excessive subjectivity. Of course, the inward leading of the Holy Spirit must always resonate with and be anchored in the historic truths revealed to us in Scripture. That's the anchor for the inward leading of the Holy Spirit. But the wonderful good news is that the experience of a Christian is not purely memory of historical events, but a living present-tense experience of God with us. And this inward leading of the Holy Spirit, this inward presence that we sense is resonant with the past, but it's also something that comes to us often in the form of wisdom, where the Holy Spirit dismantles all the rationalizations, all the evasions, and we are confronted with what really is the way. And that voice of wisdom in the consecrated Christian's mind can be the form the inward leading of the Holy Spirit takes. And it's such an exciting adventure to know that we not only have the past to anchor our Christian experience, but the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit to guide us forward day by day in this intensely personal and immediate way.

**Question 10:**

**If the Spirit regenerates us at conversion, what does Scripture mean when it says that believers can grieve or quench the Holy Spirit?**

**Dr. John McKinley**

Christians worry about two statements in the Bible where we're warned not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit, so we wonder, what are these things? Grieving the Spirit comes from Ephesians 4:30 where the program of the Spirit to unify the church is described as something that we destroy, we fight against, by lying to one another and tearing apart that unity. So, we grieve the Spirit when we ruin his work, and it's something where we affect his project, and it's distressing to him. Quenching the Spirit is from another passage where we're warned to be open to what the Spirit is doing in us. Some people associate that with denouncing prophecies, but I think that's not the case. Quenching the Spirit is just talking about the Spirit according to the metaphor of fire, and you put out fire with water. And it's just a general recommendation to be open to the Spirit's work in us, that we still have some freedom to resist God and be less open to him, like a kinked hose, and instead be a hose that doesn't have that kink in it and the water flows through freely.

**Dr. Dinorah Méndez (translation)**

The Bible teaches two major offenses against the Holy Spirit. One is quenching the Spirit and the other is grieving the Holy Spirit. An easy way for me to explain it would be that we quench the Spirit when we don't do what he tells us to do or inspires us to do as Christians. The Holy Spirit is the one who guides us in the

Christian life and enlightens us to understand the truths that are in Scripture. But he also dwells in us as believers. He moves in us to act in a Christian manner, but if we deny this influence, the leading of the Holy Spirit is like a flame. One of the metaphors that the Bible uses for the Holy Spirit is that he is like a flame, like fire, but the flame begins to quench. So, we quench the Spirit when we do not do what we should. We grieve the Spirit, that is, we sadden him. And that is proof that he's a person. You cannot sadden a force or an energy, but a person, yes. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we do what we should not do. That is to say, when we sin, when we disobey, when we do something wrong deliberately.

**Dr. Alan Hultberg**

Paul warns his readers not to grieve the Holy Spirit, not to quench the Holy Spirit, and he doesn't actually explain what he means by that, and so it's left to us to try to piece that together. But it seems to me, because the Holy Spirit is our connection to God, is God's presence in our life, who guides us, who chastises us, etc., that when we neglect to pay attention to what the Spirit of God is telling us, or when we outright oppose or sin against whatever the Spirit is telling us, that we're quenching the Spirit and that we grieve the Spirit.

**Pastor Ashraf Sara (translation)**

As we discuss the topic of, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption," let us begin by talking about in the beginning about the concept of the Holy Spirit as a person... We know that God is a jealous God, a loving God; God grieves; God rejoices. We grieve God when we do not follow after God's heart ... and we act against God's will in our lives. When we talk about God, God is holy. His Spirit is holy, is he not? Why is that? It's because if we want to define God in one word, it would be "holy." God *is* holy... So, as a church, as the body of Christ and as the bride of Christ, we should pay attention to these points in order not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

**Question 11:**

**What did Paul mean when he said that the Holy Spirit is at work in us to will and to act according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:13)?**

**Dr. Joseph D. Fantin**

Philippians 2:13 is a great verse, often difficult coming after 2:12, which has another difficult passage in there as well. It doesn't explicitly say the Holy Spirit, but I think it is implied there... But in order to understand that passage, I think you need to see the entire context. The chapter starts out with an exhortation for people to be unified, to care for one another — very crucial. Then he gives an illustration, using the life of Christ, who sacrifices more than any of us will, and he's a solid example of fulfilling what was commanded in the beginning of 2. And then after this hymn, in verse 12 he tells us we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling... He's talking about those being saved, how they should actually live and then that's going to

demand obedience; saved people should be obedient. And then he tells us in the next verse that God provides the actual resources in order to accomplish that obedience. And he doesn't just give us the help to do it, but he also gives us the will as well. This is not just slavish following orders. But yet, God, through the Holy Spirit in the sanctification process, if you will, actually provides the resources to do it as well as to want to do it. It's part of that transforming relationship that we have with Christ.

### **Dr. Ramesh Richard**

There are different kinds of theories of how the Spirit of God and you are interacting for the sake of becoming holy. One view is to say, you "let go and let God." This is a very famous view. It sounds good on the surface because it addresses matters of control and the need for surrender, where you let go and let God. But on the other side, it could mean that you don't take any responsibility for your spiritual life, and therefore, there's no culpability attached to it. So, instead of "let go and let God," my usual suggestion is to *get going* and let God. On the adverse side of that passivity is a whole bunch of self-effort, that everything depends on the self to produce holiness. And when it depends on the self to produce holiness, it assumes that you have power to do what only God can do inside you. It can become manipulated; it can even fall into a whole degree of legalism. So, between license and legalism is what I am going to call a "grace-operated interactionism," or a "Spirit-stimulated interactionism." Philippians 2:13 is a tremendous balance in how God's Spirit works in you in order to produce a spiritual life as you interact with him — I call it "interactionism" rather than cooperation, but an interaction with him. He initiates it, and you respond. You don't manipulate him in any way. You don't persuade him. You don't intercourse him. You don't have to obligate him in any way. It is a response — not a reaction — a *response* to what God is working in you... So, the best way to look at it is to think of God the Spirit providing the power; we don't provide the power, but we present the willingness. As we present the willingness, he provides the power by which we can follow what God expects of us. So, the Spirit of God works in us, he provides the power, he inspires the will, he allows us to be responsive enough so when we present the willingness, his prescriptions, his expectations, his claims are accomplished. So, we present the willingness; we don't *provide* the willingness. He works in us, but he provides the power because we don't have any power.

### **Dr. Uche Anizor**

Paul in Philippians 2 speaks to the Philippians, exhorting to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Then he says, here's why and here's how: "because God is at work in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." So, what does he mean by "God is at work in you"? Two things. The Spirit is the one that enables us to actually will, to want to do the very things that God commands. And so, this is a strong emphasis on God's action, that it's God that enables a believer to do his will, but it's not only that God the Spirit enables us *to want* to do these things, God the Spirit enables us to actually carry them out. So, this is what Paul is meaning when he says the Spirit is at work, or God is at work in us to will and to act. It's the "both/and," that from start to finish the Spirit is the primary reason why we actually are able to act. And so, the exhortation, "work out your salvation with fear and

trembling,” isn’t Paul saying work out your salvation, pull up your boot straps, and do it all by yourself. It’s Paul saying you can work it out; you’re not a victim. You can work it out because the Spirit is already at work in you, enabling you to want and to fulfill your want.

### **Question 12:**

**Is sanctification solely a work of the Holy Spirit, or do believers play a role as well?**

#### **Dr. Dan Lacich**

When it comes to growing in holiness — “sanctification” — this is really a process that is a cooperative effort between us as followers of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. There really is a “both/and” that’s involved in all of this. You know, on the one hand, you have the Holy Spirit does work to, in incredible ways by his power, change us and cleanse us and make us more holy. I think back on when I first came to Christ I had a fairly foul mouth. I came to Christ and that seemed to disappear almost overnight, without any effort on my part. And I look at that as the work of the Holy Spirit graciously removing that from me. Yet, at the same time, Paul says to the Philippians that we need to work out or to work *at* our salvation with fear and trembling. He says it in the same context of, “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.” So, there’s this ongoing sense the Holy Spirit is working, the Holy Spirit will sanctify us, but we also need to put in the effort, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be disciplined and make that happen. Growing in holiness is not a passive thing. We can’t just sit back and say, “Oh well, you know, the Holy Spirit didn’t clean up my life yet.” But at the same time, we can’t do it all on our own. There has to be this cooperative relationship of relying on the Holy Spirit, yet being as diligent as we can with perseverance to press ahead, knowing that we’re also only able to do it because of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Rev. Mike Osborne**

Unlike justification, which is solely the work of God upon our hearts, sanctification is a work of both the Holy Spirit and the believer. We cooperate with the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, for example, again and again... Let’s take the letters of Paul. He begins normally in letters telling us what God has done, and then he moves into the second part of his letter, telling us what we must do. And in some of those second sections of his letters, it’s really obvious that we have a role to play in our sanctification. For instance, in Ephesians Paul tells us to put to death our old nature. That’s our responsibility. We must put off the old “me,” I must put off the old “me” that I used to be, turn away from sin in repentant faith toward God, and put on the new self, which has been created to be like God in holiness and righteousness. Paul says in Philippians, for example, that we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. That’s our role. But we do so in hope and with confidence because it is God who works in us both to will and do his good pleasure. So, there’s definitely a cooperative role. We obey, we respond to God’s law, we pursue God, we turn away

from the past like Paul says ... the old has gone, the new has come; I'm a new creation. In Romans 8, the work that God has done in us is made real clear by the fact that we are raised with Christ to newness of life, but in the rest of Romans Paul says to no longer be conformed to the pattern of this world. So, there's that cooperative effort — the Holy Spirit giving us the energy, the identity, the indicative of who we are in Christ, and then we live out and obey the imperatives that we are given to do in the Scriptures.

**Dr. Uche Anizor**

Sanctification is both the work of the Holy Spirit and believers. So, on the one hand, we want to affirm that it's only God who makes us holy. God, the Holy God, is the only one who can sanctify us. On the other hand, you encounter much of the New Testament's teaching and, for instance, you read Colossians 3 and Paul exhorts the believers to put to death, right? Put to death. This is the language of moral effort or spiritual effort. They have to do something. In 2 Peter, the author says God has given everything that we need to live a godly life in Christ Jesus. So, God has given us everything that we need, but then the exhortation, then, is add to your faith all these things culminating in love. And so, we can see that sanctification, this process of becoming more and more reflective of who Jesus is requires a "both/and." It's recognizing that God is at work in us to will and to act according to his good purpose, recognizing that we can only act according to his good purpose because God is at work in us, but at the same time, there's work. We need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

**Question 13:**

**How does the Spirit intercede for us in our prayers?**

**Dr. Mark Saucy**

The Spirit's intercession for us in prayer is something we meet in that language in Romans 8:26-27, and that's where it concretely says that we, in our weakness, we need an ally. And that's where our weakness... We don't know how to pray as we should, and our ally, our Helper, our mediator, the Holy Spirit, is the one who intercedes for us with, and it says, "groanings that are too deep for words." When we understand what's going on there in that passage, the context is one of universal problem. It is a problem that all believers have. We all groan. We all suffer. We are all persecuted. And the Spirit, in prayer, is the answer to that condition. That starts up in verse 18. And so, he's an answer to weakness, and I think that the issue is what happens in the next verse about his searching the heart. I think the Spirit is the one there who is searching the heart, and he is at the level of where I groan, where I don't have words to put onto my experience, my impressions, my feelings. I know in my life that I'm not yet where I need to be as far as heaven is, and "this world is not my home" type of thing... And so, it is the Spirit who searches me and helps me in this time, and I think that he establishes a dialogue in prayer, and I think it's important that we be open to prayer as dialogue here. It's not me informing God, surely. He



doesn't need information from me about what my circumstances are that I might pray about, but it is a picture of relationship. I tell him what my heart is, even my laments and my heartaches, the hard things, even accusations I might have against him in my pain.

**Dr. Simon Vibert**

In Romans 8 it speaks about the Holy Spirit interceding for us in our prayers. There's a section in Romans 8 from verse 18 onwards where it speaks about groaning, so there's the groaning creation waiting for the fulfillment of God's work, there's the groaning Christian under the weight of suffering, and there's also the groaning Holy Spirit within us. And in verse 26 we read this:

**In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (Romans 8:26).**

It's a wonderful passage that speaks about the fact that our prayer, whilst a wonderful privilege, is also frail; we don't always know what to pray for or how to pray, but the Holy Spirit himself intercedes with and alongside us, so that as we pray he is praying too and groaning and empathizing with us.

**Pastor Pierre Bitar (translation)**

I think that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in our prayers. There is a verse mentioned in Romans 8:26, "For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." I think we, as believers and as human beings, do not know how to pray as we ought, and we need help from the Holy Spirit, because he is the one who helps me. He is the one who supports me. He is the one who speaks for me in prayer. He intercedes for us and speaks for believers "with groanings too deep for words." Sometimes I don't have the words — the words that agree with the heart of God — in my prayers. So, the Holy Spirit intercedes for me. The Holy Spirit speaks and gives me the words, and he prays for me, and through me for the people. He prays through me in order to pray the prayer that agrees with the heart of God.

**Question 14:**

**How does the Holy Spirit enable us to persevere in the faith?**

**Dr. Simon Vibert**

The Holy Spirit enables us to persevere in the faith by giving us the resources we need to continue in loving Jesus and keeping going till the end. We have a personal relationship with the living God, and we know God truly by the Holy Spirit indwelling us, conforming us to the likeness of Christ and ensuring that those who truly grasp the Christian faith will continue until the end.

**Dr. Gregg R. Allison**

Peter, in 1 Peter 1:5, says that we are being “protected by the power of God through [our] faith for a salvation [that is] ready to be revealed in the last times.” And so, God is powerfully working through the Spirit, I believe, to hold us in Christ. But that doesn’t, that powerful work of God doesn’t operate apart from our faith but through our faith. And we learn elsewhere in Scripture that it’s the Holy Spirit who grants us faith. And so, as we go through the trials and tribulations, the persecutions of our life, the Spirit is our resource providing everything that we need, especially faith, to be able to engage with the powerful working God so that we will indeed persevere in Christ. And when we face persecutions, and we don’t know how to act or even what to say, we have the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit will give us the words to face our time of persecution in a proper way that will honor God. So, the Spirit gives us resources, faith, even words to testify to Jesus Christ. As we march through this pilgrimage on earth towards heaven, he preserves us in faith in Jesus Christ.

**Dr. John McKinley**

One of the things that the Holy Spirit does is he supports us and helps us to persevere in the faith. We know from Romans 8 that he cries out with our spirit that we are children of God. He also prays for us, and we are to pray in the Spirit. So, he’s closely involved with our spiritual life. And I think we can see implied that in Romans 8:28 that God works all things together for our good, and in context of the chapter, that’s especially focusing on negative things that we are experiencing. And the Holy Spirit is going to have the role to help us understand that these negative things we are experiencing are God’s works in us to propel us in sanctification. So, this fits with the larger idea of the Holy Spirit assuring us that we belong to God, that he is working out good things in us. And if we are open to his leading and his reminder of these things from Scripture, we can hang in the faith even when things get dark, knowing that God is meeting with us and that God is strengthening us by it and that there is a good purpose here. And so, that is the Holy Spirit’s role, to constantly be with us and be a comfort and assurance and encouragement and give us the confidence that this is not for nothing, that God is in control, and he’s doing good to us in it.

**Question 15:****What will the future glorification of our bodies be like?****Dr. Charles L. Quarles**

I would like to clear up a very important misunderstanding about the nature of our resurrected and glorified bodies that’s based on a confused interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15. I have encountered many believers who read Paul’s phrase “spiritual body” and assume from that that the resurrection body will be immaterial, that it will be nonphysical. And that’s not actually what Paul is teaching. There are two different terms for spiritual in New Testament Greek, one that means “made of” or “composed of” spirit, and the other that means “adapted to” the spirit. And it’s this latter term that Paul uses here. He’s not saying that our resurrection-glorified bodies will be *made of*

spirit, but that they will be perfectly adapted to the Spirit. What does he mean by that? Well, right now our physical bodies suffer the consequences and corruption of the Fall, and although we have been spiritually renewed, this body still has sinful longings. It wants to pursue pleasures that are forbidden, and so forth. And as long as we are in this body, we suffer that battle between flesh and spirit that Paul so frequently describes. But in the resurrection and glorification, the bodies that we receive will be perfectly adapted to the Spirit's control. All traces of our corruption will be removed from the physical body so that this battle that we're constantly engaged in now will at last be over. I long for that day.

**Dr. Gregg R. Allison**

Paul, in Romans 8:11, affirms that it will be the Holy Spirit who will powerfully work to give us our new glorified resurrection bodies. It will be the responsibility of the Spirit to provide that last step of our salvation. What will our bodies be like as glorified resurrected bodies? Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15 describes our resurrection bodies using four words. First, they'll be *imperishable*; they'll never wear out, they will never die. Secondly, they will be *glorious*, perhaps shining because of our full conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. They also will be *strong* and powerful, not in the sense of superhuman, but strong as we human beings, as embodied beings should be. And our bodies will also be *spiritual*, not immaterial, but completely dominated and controlled by the Holy Spirit. So, our great future hope is that we will be fully conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, we will have new resurrection, glorified bodies through the Spirit, and these bodies will be imperishable, glorious, strong, and dominated by the Holy Spirit.

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