

How Can I Experience The Holy Spirit?

Few things are as puzzling or raise as many questions for us as Christians as the Holy Spirit. If we were honest, some of us would have to admit that we believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the "Big Gray Blur." We just don't "get" the Holy Spirit!

The Bible certainly can help, since it says a lot about the Holy Spirit. For example, Jesus always referred to the Spirit as "He" and not as "It" (Jn. 14:15-17) This tells us that the Spirit is a person and not some kind of intangible force like electricity or gravity - He is someone with whom we can relate. If you are a Christian, according to the Bible you have been "born of the Spirit" (Jn. 3:8) and you have the Spirit, because "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." (Romans 8:9).

But the Bible also refers to the Spirit as the breath of God, wind, fire, a dove, counselor, helper, bringer of truth, giver of gifts, source of power. The Spirit is said to "fill" people, "come on" people, "speak through" people, even "move" people. It can all become very confusing. How should we today relate to God the Holy Spirit?

A simple way to think of the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives is as the experienced or "felt" presence of God. Paul said that Jesus was the [visible] image of the invisible God (Co. 1:15). "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father," Jesus said (John 14:9). The Spirit, on the other hand, is the felt presence of the invisible God, which means the Spirit is meant to be experienced.

(see John 7:37-39; Acts 2:1-4, 17-21; Romans 8: 1-16)

Here are a few practical suggestions to help you begin to experience the Spirit of God in your life.

1. Ask God for an experience of the Holy Spirit. James tells us quite simply that sometimes we don't have because we don't ask God. (James 4:2) And Jesus encourages us to ask God specifically for the Holy Spirit, saying that if we "who are evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13) Begin praying that you will experience the Holy Spirit in your life.
2. Actively participate in worship. Psalm 22:3 tells us that God inhabits the praises of His people. The Holy Spirit is especially present and therefore can be uniquely experienced during times of worship at church. You can begin to experience His presence by actively focusing your heart and mind on God when you worship, both at church and when you are alone.
3. Receive prayer ministry. There is a pattern in the New Testament of the Holy Spirit "coming on" people when the apostles laid their hands on them (e.g. Acts 8:17; 2 Tim. 1:6). As we pray for one another by "laying on hands," we our following a Biblical model through which the Holy Spirit can be felt and experienced.
4. Have a daily devotion. The Bible tells us that we will find God when we seek Him with our whole heart (Jer. 29:13). Taking time to be alone with God every day for prayer and Bible reading is an indispensable part of the life a disciple. It is also one of the primary ways God through His Spirit interacts with us, enabling us to sense His presence.

The Bible encourages us as Christians to both seek and expect an experience of God's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit. David challenges us in Psalm 34 to "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Jesus told His disciples that it was better that He leave, because then He could send them (and us) the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). If you are a Christian and are longing for an experience of God's presence through His Spirit in your life, we believe these suggestions mentioned above will be helpful.