

# Q&A: The Issue of the Holy Spirit and His Role

By Jeremy Lucas

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**Question: What does the Holy Spirit do? Are the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit the same? Does the Holy Spirit work in a different way, in this age of grace, than it has in time past? Why does it seem like the Holy Spirit is talked about less in the NT than in the OT?**

First of all, let me say that the "role of the Holy Spirit" has been the #1 question of my wife for years and she has yet to hear an answer that truly addresses the reality of the things she has seen. Being grace believers, one of the things that we've both seen consistently is a pattern of belief against ANY emotional connection to the Holy Spirit that we may have. Surely there are those who deem themselves "Pentecostal" and wander into some pretty twisted philosophies that are FOUNDED on emotion. No doubt even you would admit that there is foolishness to the things that we often see in how many try to "use" or "beckon" the Holy Spirit toward revivals, altar calls, etc, etc. But it is not these extremes of foolishness that have caused my wife to make this her #1 unanswered question.

Let's jump into a passage as an opening:

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:18-19

The analogy of comparison that Paul draws is in the action of what happens when someone is "drunk." They appear to be extremely happy and without a care in the world. Perhaps even fearless. One might say that they are "unusually" pleasant and seem to be lost in another world that's not of this earth. As a caterer who often bartends, I can assure you that the "drunk" are very much happy people. But don't take it from me...

"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness." Jeremiah 23:9

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Proverbs 31:4-7

Notice in the first passage quoted what this man is physically experiencing. His bones are shaking and he seems unstable on some level.

Then look at the second to note the condition of what sweet wine is actually MEANT to do. People drink usually for one reason (unless they are overtaken by it to become a drunkard/alcoholic)... to escape the real world that they experience every day. To experience a little glimpse of happiness by drinking of something that helps them to drift into another frame of mind contrary to the normal mind.

This is what it's like to be drunk. To have escaped the frustrations, the hustle and bustle, and the cares of the world.

So let's go back to what Paul said in Ephesians 5.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:18-19

You may or may not have ever seen the way that I view God's image before, but hopefully this will be straightforward.

God, as we know, consists of three aspects: A head, a body, and a spirit. The head is the Father, the body is the Son, and the Spirit is... well... the Spirit. In the likeness of God we were created. Unlike the animals, we received an aspect that they do not have. It is our spirit. They each have a head (mind) and a body, but lack a spirit such as ours.

The human spirit is defined as, "the vital principle or animating force." Through our spirits we can be both sad or happy, hurt or excited, passionate or apathetic. Basically, this is human nature. And in that human nature, we fluctuate as our experiences often dictate these shifts in our emotions. When someone close dies, we experience an emotion contrary to the emotion that accompanies graduating college.

So what then, do we know of the HOLY Spirit? Surely while we have our own ups and downs of human imperfection, we ought to understand what it is like to know and experience a spirit that is without flaw, right? With all of our roller coasters of emotion that we KNOW has to come from our sinful flesh affecting that spirit... wouldn't we want to comprehend a spirit that has no roller coasters?

Let's look at a few descriptions of what the HOLY Spirit is like and what accompanies this flawless One.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3:17

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:" Ephesians 1:17

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became

followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."  
I Thessalonians 1:5-6

The last passage addresses a couple of valuable points.

1. As you asked, the Holy Ghost is indeed the Holy Spirit and the reason we can be assured of it is the final result of verse 6... that those who have followed the Lord have received the word through the "joy of the Holy Ghost"... this same joy that we know to be a fruit of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:17.

No doubt there are probably reasons to conclude the the Holy Spirit is a more modern term for what the King James refers to as the Holy Ghost, but we ought not focus tremendously on the technical wording that might distract us from the initial points in question.

2. The gospel is not solely understood or comprehended on the basis of mental knowledge, but on the power of the Holy Spirit. Meaning? We can MENTALLY see the whole puzzle come together when we see the Scripture rightly divided, but we can't necessarily experience the joy of it apart from the Spirit. To simply know it does very little if there is no joy, peace, or most importantly... faith.

Going back to Ephesians 5 and the comparison to a drunk individual, we certainly don't need to draw extremes that the "filling of the Holy Spirit" is somehow like being an alcoholic. That's just foolish.

On the other hand, what are the very simple things that we know about the reasons why someone would drink? An escape from this world or from the concerns of this world. And in what manner does "drinking" do that? It makes people happy and peaceful. That is, when we're talking about wine and not the fool who smashes beer cans on his head.

When we look at Ephesians 5, consider what follows the theme of being filled with the Holy Spirit...

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:18-19

Making melody in your heart to the Lord. That's the sweetness of being filled with the Holy Spirit, Beethoven. It is not something to be feared solely because there are those in this world who turn it into foolish nonsense.

At different stages in our lives individually, my wife and I use to take "walks with the Lord" in our respective colleges. Meaning? I would go into the backwoods behind the school and begin singing some choruses of worship as I walked. Along the way, my spirit would be lifted and there might even be tears that filled my eyes. No audience. No circus. No claim to fame. Just a simple peace, joy, and reminder of who I was in the Lord Jesus Christ through "speaking to myself" through "spiritual songs." These would be times of prayer, "escape," and great joy.

The older I've gotten, these walks have become less and less as my mind has become the more focused tool that distracts me from the joy that truly ought to accompany the walk (Ephesians 4:1). I passionately adore the Word of Truth and am reminded solely through my reading and studying of it just

how confident I am in my Lord and Savior. But what I do not often allow myself to do is be "filled with the Holy Spirit" through the manner by which Paul describes here. It is not a mystical, elusive secret. It's simply taking the time to "make a melody in your heart" for the purpose either edifying another in the Body or bringing your own weak (human and fallible) spirit to the place it needs to be in HIS Spirit.

A melody is known as, "A pleasing succession or arrangement of sounds." That which makes someone smile. That which might even make someone's heart beat with joy.

Academically speaking, we could strictly address the other roles that the Holy Spirit has in our lives.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," Ephesians 1:13

"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Galatians 5:5

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:25

He seals us. He is the promise of our inheritance. He gives us reason to hope. He maintains our faith. He guides our walk.

The unfortunate thing about looking at these things and seeing NO emotion leaves us believing (as many grace believers are often forced into believing) that there isn't much joy beyond this knowledge that we've received. Joy is indeed an emotion that stems from that which makes us happy. But joy itself is what ought to give us reason to hope. You know? Who wants to hope for an eternity in a place that's just about KNOWING a bunch of information? Isn't the entire point of aspiring and finding passion for the journey of hope in the belief that we will "experience" our eternity with the Lord Almighty?

**ABSOLUTELY!**

The Holy Spirit is our confidence, our joy, our reason to hope, our faith, our guide, and our observer. He ought not be seen as an academic feature of God, for He is not the mind or the body, but literally... the spirit... the vital principle or animating force in our lives.

Has He (the Spirit) stopped working in this age of grace? Not remotely. For if He had, then we would no longer have reason to hope, reason to be joyful, reason to sing, reason to speak, reason to be confident... and worst of all... no reason to share this joy with the unsaved... for they could not receive the seal that the Spirit gives (work of action) when they might believe.

Be assured and be confident that the Holy Spirit has not ceased to exist or work in the lives of believers. But be assured that He is not to be mocked and thus does not make Himself a show or a point of entertainment. All peace, joy, patience, faith, meekness, gentleness, and self-control are individual evidences of He who has instilled Himself in your life and continues to work.