

Biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit has suffered under the extremes of neglect and overemphasis. As a result professing Christians often have wrong beliefs about the Holy Spirit. But since we have the Word of God, we have no excuse for ignorance.

I. The Holy Spirit is a personal being.

We conclude that the Holy Spirit is a personal being on the basis of the way in which He is spoken of in the Bible as indicated in the following examples.

1. *The Bible attributes to the Holy Spirit those qualities which belong to personality:* life (Romans 8:2; 1 Corinthians 12:11), intelligence (1 Corinthians 2:11), purposefulness (1 Corinthians 12:11), activity (Acts 8:29; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 2:13; John 15:26), etc.
2. *Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as a person.* Calling the Spirit “another Counselor”, in which “another” implies “another of the same kind” (John 14:16, 26), puts the Spirit on the same level as Jesus Himself, i.e., a person. Using a masculine personal pronoun to refer to the Spirit (which is grammatically neuter), furthermore demonstrates the understanding of Jesus that He was talking about a person and not a force.
3. *The Bible associates the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son in a way that implies personality,* e.g., in Matthew 28:19 and Zechariah 4:6.

II. The Holy Spirit is God.

1. *He is treated as God in the Bible both directly and indirectly.* (Points 2 and 3 above apply here as well.) In Acts 5:3-4 Peter equates lying to the Spirit with lying to God. Paul equates the Spirit with God when referring to the distribution of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11, 18).
2. *The Bible also ascribes to the Holy Spirit attributes which belong only to God.* E.g., Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 139:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11.
3. *The Holy Spirit does things which only God can do:* creation & renewal (Psalm 104:30), regeneration (John 3:6, 8), physical resurrection (Romans 8:11).

The Spirit who dwells in the believer is a Person and that Person is God Himself. Should that not change how we act and speak?! We will avoid grieving the Spirit (Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30). We will not consider Him a resource to be used, but God whom we serve. We will keep in step with Him (Galatians 5:25) and not expect Him to follow our lead.

III. The Holy Spirit has been at work in the world since the creation of the world.

Teaching concerning the Holy Spirit has perhaps been neglected, because His role within the Godhead has been a quiet, supportive function.

1. *He was at work in the Old Testament period even though many times we must have the light of the New Testament to fully understand that activity.* E.g., in creation (Genesis 1:1-2), giving life (Job 33:4), inspiring of prophets and Scripture (2 Peter 1:21), striving with men against sin (Genesis 6:3), equipping people for special tasks (Judges 3:10; 14:6; Exodus 31:3-5; 2 Sam 23:1-1).
2. *The Holy Spirit continues to work in the world even in unsaved men and women.* In John 16:9-11 we see His role of convicting the world of its guilt. The Spirit exposes the rejection of Christ in the heart of people, the rejection of God’s righteous standard in Jesus Christ, and their just condemnation for following the world and its prince. (We should rely upon the Spirit to do this His work of conviction and not attempt it ourselves.)
3. *The Holy Spirit also works in many different ways with regard to believers as individuals and corporately, that is with regard to the Body of Christ.* For example, he works the new birth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5). He “seals” the believer (Ephesians 4:30) and indwells the believer (1 Corinthians 6:19). Jesus by the Spirit places every true believer since Pentecost into His Body (i.e., the baptism with the Spirit; 1 Corinthians 12:13). He gifts the members of the Body (1 Corinthians 12:4-11), He fills the obedient believer (Ephesians 5:18). He leads, teaches, intercedes, and produces those positive virtues which are called the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
4. *It appears that the primary purpose of the work of God the Holy Spirit is to bring glory to God the Son.*
 - a. This is explicit in John 16:14.
 - b. This is implicit in the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. All things were created for the Son (Colossians 1:16). The tabernacle whose workmanship was gifted by the Spirit foreshadowed Christ and His work. The Spirit-inspired O.T. Scripture spoke of Christ (John 5:39; Luke 24:27).
 - c. The work of the Spirit in believers has as one of its purposes, if not the main one, the glorifying of Jesus Christ: as firstborn among many brothers (Romans 8:29), as having the preeminence in all things (Colossians 1:18), in receiving as a bride the sanctified, radiant church (Eph 5:27), as the goal of spiritual gifting and growth in the church (Ephesians 4:12-15)

God the Spirit is carrying out the will of the Godhead to bring glory to the Son. It is not “of the Spirit” to draw attention to the Spirit. It is the purpose of God to exalt Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:9-11).

Therefore, we should be careful to live with regard for the fact that God personally dwells within us. We should thank Jesus for the Counselor whom He has given in His place. Submit to God. Rely upon God. And whatever we do, whatever we say, do it all to the glory of Jesus Christ. Anything else will not be in line with the work of the God Himself who dwells in us.