

HOLY SPIRIT

ONE OF THE most remarkable proofs of God's Scriptural truth is the work and power of His indwelling Holy Spirit in born-again believers. A born-again believer can readily compare the Scriptural promises and revealed work of the indwelling Holy Spirit in Scripture - with the changes in their own life. Non-believers are not born-again in God's indwelling Holy Spirit and can only observe the changed lives of others. That observation leads countless non-believers to trust in Jesus Christ and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit for themselves.

When a new believer trusts their life to Jesus Christ, God bridges the gap between flesh and Spiritual life by indwelling them with His Holy Spirit. The initial evidence of this is a new and profound passion for the things of God accompanied by Spiritual fruit. This is only the beginning of a new life in Jesus Christ.

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:5-6 NKJV)

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

God's indwelling Holy Spirit conveys Spiritual rebirth, Spiritual life, transformation into the image of Christ, Spiritual fruit and Spiritual gifts to born again believers in Christ. The Holy Spirit also imparts power, guidance, revelation and understanding. Gradually the new believer learns of a never before seen Spiritual war raging around and within him. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to confront their enemy.

The blessings of God's Holy Spirit come to believers "like wellsprings of living water": "The peace of God that passes all understanding," "a deeper understanding of the things of God," power for living, God's truth, comfort in times of trouble and on and on.

God revealed Himself, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and His eternal ways and truths to mankind in Scripture/the Bible. There are over 300 references to the Holy Spirit in Scripture. God's indwelling Holy Spirit affirms the truth and reliability of Scripture by conveying the power of God and accomplishing the promises of Christ in and through believers.

Names of the Holy Spirit in Scripture:

The names and titles given to God's Holy Spirit in Scripture affirm the unity of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's work with believers:

Word of the Lord/God (236), The Spirit (163), Holy Spirit (96), Spirit of the Lord (24), Spirit of God (26), His Spirit (19), My Spirit (14); **Other:** Your Spirit, advocate, comforter, counselor, earnest deposit, seal, Eternal Spirit, Guide, Good Spirit, Indweller, Intercessor, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Grace, Spirit of Life, Spirit of Sonship, Spirit of wisdom/understanding, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of your Father, Promised Spirit, Teacher, Witness.

The indwelling Holy Spirit equips "born-again" believers to participate in the work of the Lord in Christ's church on earth.

- *"The Holy Spirit doesn't need to equip you for what you're not going to do, so if you're in rebellion against Jesus and refusing His right to be Lord, He doesn't need to send the Holy Spirit to equip you for service. And, tragically, you miss out on the joy that He brings. So let the Holy Spirit deal with anything that's keeping you from obeying Christ."*

Henry T. Blackaby

Spiritual fruit and Spiritual gifts evidence the Holy Spirit's work in believers in fulfilling Christ's promises of Spiritual life, power and understanding. Non-believers do not have God's indwelling Holy Spirit, Spiritual life or power and are limited to their own weak, fleshly power and effort.

- "God can accomplish more through one message in the fullness of the Spirit than through hundreds given in the energy of the flesh." – **Oswald J. Smith** – (*The Enduement Of Power: Being Filled With The Holy Spirit*)

THE INCOMPARABLE WORK OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT IN BELIEVERS

Convicts people of sin and draws them to Christ

- Convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8).
- Searches our hearts (Rom 8:27)
- Draws people to Christ (John 6:44)

Glorifies Christ

- Glorifies and testifies of Christ (John 15:26; 16:14).
- Reveals Christ to and in us (John 16:14-15).
- Enables us to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 John 4:2)

Conveys Spiritual re-birth in Christ (“born again”)

- New birth as new Spiritual beings (John 3:3)
- Makes us a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Quickens our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11).
- Cries out “Abba, Father” from within us (Galatians 4:6).
- Baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Marks (seals) Believers to eternal life.

- Guarantees our Salvation and Resurrection (2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5).
- “Seals” us unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).
- Conveys eternal life (Galatians 6:8).
- Bears witness to the truth that believers are children of God (Romans 8:16, 9:1).
- Bears witness to the truth in our conscience (Romans 9:1).

Frees believers from the law of sin and death

- Frees believers from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).
- Brings liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17).
- Fills us with joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Establishes unity with God and Christ

- God dwelling in us by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- Enables us to know that Jesus abides in us (1 John 3:24; 4:13).
- Gives us equal access to God as Christ (Ephesians 2:18)
- The Holy Spirit is God in us and the world (John 4)
- Identifies those who worship God in Spirit and truth (John 4:24-30)

Unites believers in the ‘body/church of Christ

- Dwells within us (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:14; John 14:17).
- Fills us with God-awareness and power (Ephesians 5:18; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17).
- Brings unity with others in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3; 2:14-18)

Produces Spiritual Fruit

- Spiritual fruit in believers: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Spiritual fruit reveals the truth of our faith in Christ (Matthew 7:15-20)

Enables Provides and empowers Spiritual Gifts

(Spiritual Gifts: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4)

- Conveys Spiritual gifts in believers (1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-10; Romans 12, Hebrews 2:4).
- Service Gifts, Ministry Gifts, Supernatural Gifts: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4.
- Gifts are Consistent with Scripture, Edify the Church and Produce Fruit.
- Spiritual Gifts are God’s specific calling to each born-again Believer

Enables Believers to “rightly divide” and understand Scripture/the Bible

- Enables believers to study, understand and rightly divide Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Provides born-again believers with wisdom not of this world; (1 Corinthians 2:1-10)
- The “mind of Christ” to understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16)

The mind of Christ who enables believers to understand the things of God.

- Communicates God's way to and through us (1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 2:11; Hebrews 3:7; Matthew 10:20; Acts 2:4; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12, 28; 13:2; 16:6,7; 21:4,11).
- Reveals the deep things of God to us (1 Corinthians 2:10).
Reveals what has been given to us from God (1 Corinthians 2:12).
- Reveals the 'mysteries' of God to us (Ephesians 3:5).
- Moved the ancients to prophesy the Word of God (2 Peter 1:21)

Teaches and guides believers in God's truth and ways.

- Teaches us the things and truths of God (1 Corinthians 2:13; John 14:26).
- Teaches us to pray (Romans 8:26-27; Jude 1:20)
- Calls the things of God to our remembrance (John 14:26).
- Guides us into all truth (John 16:13).
- Leads us (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18; Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:1).

Transforms, renews and cleanses believers

- Transforms us into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).
- Regenerates us (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5).
- Sanctifies us (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 5:16).
- Washes and renews us (Titus 3:5).
- Establishes God's love in our heart (Romans 5:5)
- Gives us the faith to live righteous lives (Galatians 5:5)

Empowers believers to participate in God's work.

- Empowers us (Luke 4:14; 24:49; Romans 15:19; Acts 1:8).
- Anoints and empowers us for ministry (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38).

- Strengthens our spirits (Ephesians 3:16).
- Empowers believers to obey the truth (1 Peter 1:22).
- Empowers us to preach the Gospel of Salvation in Christ (1 Peter 1:12).
- Empowers some to be overseers of Christ's church (Acts 20:28; 13:2)
- Empowers believers to drive-out demons (Matthew 12:28).

Other things the Holy Spirit does:

- Seal believers to adoption as God's sons/daughters (Romans 8:15)
- Calls things to one's remembrance (John 14:26)
- Brings Peace that passes all understanding (in the midst of trials) (Philippians 4:7)

SCRIPTURE REVEALS GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AFFIRMS SCRIPTURE

For over 2,000-years, Christ has faithfully kept His Scriptural promises to provide new life and power in believers through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God in believers who also enables them to understand and rightly divide Scripture. Without the Holy Spirit and Scripture, believers would attribute the work of God's Holy Spirit to their own "Spirituality" and effort, just as lifeless non-believers do.

In Old Testament times, God's Holy Spirit often "moved or inspired" the prophets to write His inspired Word and others to do His work. However, the Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell or "seal" believers until Christ ushered in the New Testament covenant through His life, death and resurrection.

Since then (New Testament times), God's Holy Spirit draws all people to Christ and imparts new Spiritual life to believers. The Holy Spirit permanently indwells believers, sealing them to eternal life and conforming

them to the image of Christ as He leads, guides, counsels, reveals and empowers them.

God's indwelling Holy Spirit conveys the life Christ promised when He declared, "I have come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10 – NKJV).

Rebirth to a new Spiritual life ("Born Again")

New believers are "born again" to a new Spiritual life by God's indwelling Holy Spirit. Without Christ, one remains dead in their flesh and sin. God desires to give every individual a wonderful new Spiritual life in eternal relationship with Him.

[Jesus to Nicodemus] "... *no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. No one can see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again.*" (John 3:5-6 NIV).

A "born again" believer can no longer use the sin excuse, "I'm only human," because they are no longer "only human!" New born again believers are new Spiritual creatures with eternal Spiritual life (2 Corinthians 5:17). They have "the mind of Christ" which enables them to understand God's ways and truths, which they previously considered foolish.

Regardless of age, religious education or prior church experience, all new believers are born-again as "Spiritual babies in Christ." A novice swimmer does not immediately swim long distances in rough waters. Similarly, new, Spiritual babies must be trained (discipled) in God's Scriptural truth and ways, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Even new believers who spent years reading or studying Bible will suddenly see and understand Scripture, God and Christ in entirely new ways.

EVIDENCE ONE IS BORN AGAIN IN GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

- The "fruit of the Spirit" affirms one is a 'born again' believer (Galatians 5:22)
- God's Spirit bears witness to our spirit we are God's children (Romans 8:16)
- Things of God once considered foolish become understandable (1 Corinthians 2:12-15)
- Desires for worldly things, becomes a desire for the things of God (Psalm 37:4-5)
- The things of God become precious (Truth, holiness, salvation) (1 Peter 2:7)

Spiritual Life

Spiritual Life is the difference between born again believers and non-believers. All are born into this world as spiritually lifeless, non-believers. Those who respond to God's call, "Come to Jesus Christ for forgiveness, Salvation and eternal Spiritual life" are born again and never the same again.

Because believers and non-believers appear the same on the outside, the world often perceives Christianity as only another religion or philosophy. There is actually an eternal life and death difference. Believers are born again to a new Spiritual life empowered and guided by God's indwelling Holy Spirit. Non-believers have only natural, fleshly life and the leading of their own fleshly desires and instincts. The difference between life in the flesh and life in God's Spirit is like an empty glove and a glove with God's hand inside.

Human philosophies and opinions tickle one's ears and appeal to one's flesh, but have no power to produce Spiritual life in this world or the next.

Non-believers often conceal the painful awareness of their inner emptiness and confusion. But, without Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit, they can only continue to fill their lives with the same old worldly stuff, relationships and experiences that failed them in the past. That never works because God created mankind to only find true peace, joy and life in Him.

Spiritual Fruit:

God's indwelling Holy Spirit produces Spiritual fruit in believers (Galatians 5:22). Spiritual fruit affirms to the believer they are truly "born again" and that God is working in them.

- "Fruit is always the miraculous, the created; it is never the result of willing, but always a growth. The fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God, and only He can produce it. They who bear it know as little about it as the tree knows of its fruit. They know only the power of Him on whom their life depends."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

New, born-again believers almost immediately experience a change in their desires, thinking and interests. These changes occur as rapidly or slowly as the new believer will submit previous desires and habits to God's life-changing power. The "fruit of God's indwelling Holy Spirit" is seen in inward and outward life changes:

The fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22)

Love	Unlimited, lasting, agape love; Loves whether others "deserve" it or not
Joy	Lasting; Independent of circumstances; often Illogical in man's eyes.
Peace	"Peace of God that passes all understanding; non-circumstantial
Patience	"Waits upon the Lord" – Trusts and serves God; Depends on God

Kindness	Generous, not self-serving; Seeks other's good; applied patience
Goodness	Seeking and living in God's righteousness and truth
Faith	Persevering; Trust, confidence, submission; depends on God's word
Humility	Living response to God's majestic sovereignty
Self-Control	Disciplined, submitted and committed to God first; even in trials

Truths about Spiritual Fruit

- Spiritual fruit is always produced when the Holy Spirit is working.
- Spiritual fruit evidences to believers and others that one is "born again" to Spiritual LIFE that God is working within.
- Spiritual fruit is an outward sign of an inner change/transformation
- Spiritual fruit identifies Spiritually alive believers .
- Spiritual fruit increases as a believer transformed into Christ's image.
- Spiritual fruit is a "spiritual thermometer" that gauges Spiritual growth
- No Spiritual fruit or change may evidence one is not born again

God's Holy Spirit does not prevent people from sinning, but changes their inner desires. The indwelling Holy Spirit convicts believers of sin, making them uncomfortable with worldly habits and lifestyles. A desire for the things of God soon replaces the previous desire for worldly things of which one is now ashamed. (Romans 6:21).

Spiritual Gifts: (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4)

Every born-again believer in Jesus Christ receives one or more Spiritual gifts that enable them to live beyond their own skills, talents and abilities. The first disciples were changed from fearful followers in hiding into dynamic Spiritual leaders willing to die for their faith in Christ. Spiritual gifts are God saying, "This is my plan and purpose for you and the work I have enabled you to do."

Many fail to recognize their God-given Spiritual “gifts,” because they are only willing to look in areas where they have natural talents and abilities. While God also wants believers to commit their natural talents and abilities to Him, those are not the “Spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit.” This is evident because non-believers without the Holy Spirit, also have the same natural talents and abilities.

God empowers, but does not possess. The operation of Spiritual gifts depends on one’s willingness to submit to God’s will. Spiritual gifts are most visible where believers lack natural talents and abilities, but will trust God. Many fear public speaking, but, like Peter on the Day of Pentecost, become powerful witnesses for Christ, beyond their own oratorical abilities (Acts 2:14-40). As teachers, preachers and evangelists, they suddenly see the Spiritual fruit of changed lives touched by their words.

God’s uses complementary Spiritual “gifts” among believers to strengthen (“edify”) the Church of Christ on Earth. Evangelists reach new believers for teachers to teach. Otherwise, the world would be filled with baby Christians unable to Spiritually feed themselves, much less others. Those who prophesy in tongues need those who interpret tongues. Christ’s church on earth depends on those with gifts of Service, Giving and Administration to minister in an efficient, organized manner. Spiritual gifts enable believers to participate in the Lord’s work and fruit.

Spiritual gifts are discovered through obedient use, not reading books or taking “Spiritual gift tests.” Some fail to discover their Spiritual gifts because of their reluctance to step-out and trust God to do what they cannot. Those unwilling to follow God’s leading in new areas and examine the results for Spiritual fruit are unlikely to discover their Spiritual gifts or distinguish them from religious activity.

Believers will one day receive eternal Spiritual rewards in areas where God has worked in/through their lives. Fleshly and religious activity will be burned-up and count for nothing (2 Corinthians 3:12-15)

Spiritual Gifts are always (1) Consistent with scripture; (2) Edify / strengthen the church; and (3) Produce fruit.

Service Or Motivational Gifts - Meeting the practical needs of Christ’s church, freeing or enabling others to focus their time and efforts on meeting the Spiritual needs of the body through ministry gifts.

Service/Helps - *Diakonia* - Serving.- Demonstrating Christ’s love and enabling others to perform ministry by serving practical needs [root of deacon]
(cf. Acts 6:1-4; Matthew 20:26-28; Mark 10:43-45)

Exhortation/Encourager - Calling forth the best in others and resolving problems. From the Greek “parakalon” – Encourager: one affirms the faith/gifts of others
(cf. Romans 12:6-8; Acts 4:36; 1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:11)

Giving - A special readiness and ability to give of material **goods** and financial resources for Christ without motives for self-benefit.
(cf. Romans 12:6-8; Act 4:36-37; Luke 21:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:7)

Administration- Leadership and guidance; Gifted ability to manage and coordinate the affairs of the body so things run smoothly.
(Ephesians 4:11)

Compassion/Mercy - Empathy; Meeting needs with supportive ministry and caring, so others might be established in the faith.
(Romans 12:6-8)

Ministry / Office Gifts - God’s work through believers in planting the seed of His Word in the hearts of the lost; and in training / discipling believers to grow spiritually and minister to others

Apostleship (Missionaries) - Start/Plant new Churches; Communicate the Gospel where no prior Gospel preached or Church planted. - Evangelist-Teachers (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28; 3:6-7; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6-7)

Evangelism -(Soul Winning) - Leading the lost to a saving faith in Jesus Christ – Power-filled influence in the conversion of non-Christians. All Spiritual gifts lead to evangelism. (cf. Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:5-6; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 2:7)

Prophecy (Preaching) – Preaching/Declaring God’s uncompromised Word with power and relevant clarity (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 12:28; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11, 3:1-6; Acts 11:28, 15:32; 1 Corinthians 14:29)

Teaching (Discipling) - Instruct, disciple and nurture Christians in God’s Word with a clarity that can be understood and applied to life (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6-8; also Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 4:31-32; Mark 5:1-5)

Pastoring - Pastoral leadership/shepherding; Nurturing and guiding a body of Believers - (Ephesians 4:11-14; Matthew 18:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:2-4)

Supernatural Gifts - Supernatural manifestation of God’s anointing power to meet needs, minister to Christ’s church and strengthen the body of Christ on earth

Word of Knowledge - God given information or instruction; Revealed by the Holy Spirit - Always consistent with scripture and reveals God’s truths (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 11:33; Colossians 1:2:3)

Word of Wisdom - Divinely inspired insight and wisdom that directly reveals an understanding of God’s purpose. (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Matthew 16:17; Acts 10:24)

Faith - Supernatural faith that sees beyond worldly circumstances. Willingness to firmly believe and trust God in every situation. (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22, Hebrews 11:1) -

Discerning of Spirits - Revelation: Ability to distinguish between divine and false spirits in teaching, action, prophecy etc. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Healing - Supernatural physical, emotional or Spiritual healing and restoration. (*A “gift of healing” does not preclude God’s “divine healing.”*) (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Working of Miracles - Supernatural works of Power that exceed natural laws and human ability (*often incorrectly applied to things people do not understand*). (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Tongues – Praise and worship in unlearned, unearthly language; Utterance empowered by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11); (Praying in tongues (1 Corinthians 14) differs from prophesying in tongues.

Interpret Tongues - Interprets God’s message revealed in tongues. Makes the gift of tongues serviceable to the believing community (edification). (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28).

“THE WORK OF THE LORD”

Many claim to “do the work of the Lord,” yet only the Lord can truly do the “Lord’s work.” God empowers born again believers to participate in His

work, but He alone does “the work of the Lord.” It is like allowing one’s young son to help mow the lawn with his plastic lawnmower while we actually do the work with our real lawnmower. The difference is that our son will eventually take over the real lawnmower and do the work. As Christians mature Spiritually, they grow even more aware of their own inability to “mow God’s Spiritual lawn.”

Jesus taught, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light,” because God does the work. “Ministry burn-out” occurs when believers attempt to “do the work of the Lord in the arm of the flesh” (their own religious activity and effort). One day, the works of all believers will be tested by fire. If the Lord has done the work, the believer will receive an eternal reward. This is why the twenty-four elders in Revelation 4:10 “cast their crowns before the throne of God.” All work comprising religious activity and human effort, “will be burned-up.” These believers will still be saved, but will suffer loss as one passing through the flames” (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

As a small child, I was certain others were convinced I was swimming when I bounced on the pool bottom and made swimming motions with my arms. I didn’t realize that my failure to go anywhere was a dead give-away. Many believers similarly bounce and splash in the “church pool,” without realizing that the lack of Spiritual growth, fruit and understanding are a dead-give-away.

God produces Spiritual fruit in the lives of believers who abide in Him. Not even Christ could produce miracles in people without faith. Many who are not born-again believers spend years “playing church,” without fully trusting their lives to Jesus Christ. They know their lives feel empty and they are only going through the motions, but are unwilling to admit it to themselves or others. They are certain no one else knows and do not realize the lack of Spiritual fruit and true understanding is a dead give-away.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

Spiritual growth occurs when a believer is conformed and transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:10). Spiritual growth is entirely the work of God’s Holy Spirit, but will only happen with the believer’s willing cooperation. While all true believers are born again as Spiritual babies, not all grow Spiritually at the same rate, while some never grow to Spiritual maturity.

The ‘transforming’ work of the Holy Spirit conforms believers to the image of Christ. It changes a believer’s previous natural desires into a Spirit-led hunger to read, learn and study Scripture/ the Bible and live Christ-centered lives. The Holy Spirit also enables believers to see God, Christ, and themselves in Scripture, in a new light. As believers begin to fully recognize the depth of their own inner sin and rebellion, Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross to satisfy the “death wages” of their sin becomes personal and real. As the believer digs deeper into God’s Word and allows the Holy Spirit to work in and through them, miraculous changes occur.

The people new believers previously associated with often see the change and draw away, saying things like, “Since you found religion, you’re no fun anymore!” This is a decision point for believers who then decide “to live in the world, but, not to be of the world” (John 17:16, Romans 12:2-3).

Spiritual fruit or the lack thereof, is a “Christian barometer” which reveals when one is living in the power of God’s Holy Spirit or in the power of their own weak flesh.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that

does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them"

Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)

Scripture commands believers, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). As one grows in the knowledge of Christ, one also grows in relationship with God.

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). --- And also, "Leave them (the world); separate yourselves from them; don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you and be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters." (2 Corinthians 6:17-18 TLB)

Spiritual Fruit Evidences Spiritual Growth

The life-transforming guidance, work, power, Spiritual fruit and gifts of God's indwelling Holy Spirit is indisputable to billions of born-again believers. They consider worldly things that contradict Scripture foolish and will return to the same Scripture passage time and again, discovering new, deeper, more exciting truths each time.

Billions of observers and non-believers see the change in believers and even attempt to emulate the change in themselves. But, Non-believers understand little of Scripture; and consider what they think they understand, foolish! They lack God's indwelling Holy Spirit (the mind of Christ) who enables people to understand the things of God.

All living things grow. Spiritual change and growth evidence Spiritual life. A lack of Spiritual change and growth raises the question of whether Spiritual life actually exists! Professing believers must honestly confront the Spiritual fruit in their lives to validate their own Spiritual life and growth. Wearing one's father's clothes does not make a child an adult any more than church activity makes one a mature, active Christian. The parables of the wheat and tares and

the sheep and goats (Matthew 13:24-23, 25:31-46) are a warning against only going through the motions of faith and relationship with God.

Going through the motions of faith is evident when the institutional church and professing believers focus on religious programs, activities and experiences, rather than Spiritual growth in God's Holy Spirit. Many are confused and deceived into believing that "church and religious activity" are the same as Spiritual life and growth. They are not! God seeks those who 'worship Him in Spirit and truth, not religious ritual, good behavior and church attendance. Born-again believers must also choose daily to submit to God's truth and ways and seek Spiritual fruit to grow Spiritually.

Spiritual growth is a paradox. It only occurs when the indwelling Holy Spirit is at work, yet believers, not the Holy Spirit, grow. Believers must submit to the Holy Spirit to grow Spiritually, yet as John the Baptist affirmed, this is largely a function of "decreasing, so He may increase" (John 3:30). When *believers decrease* or "deny themselves daily" (Luke 9:23), they make more room for God to work in their lives!

Spiritual Understanding

All Scripture is inspired by God, but only those born-again in God's Holy Spirit (the mind of Christ) understand Scripture. This understanding comes to "born again believers" who begin to understand things they once considered foolish.

¹⁴ *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.* ¹⁵ *The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,* ¹⁶ *for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.* (1 Corinthians 2:14-16 NIV).

A common lament of believers who come to Christ late in life is: “My biggest regret is the amount of time I wasted avoiding God and playing church.” But that is infinitely better than waiting to “bow one’s knee and confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of the Father” ...on the other side of death’s veil. (Philippians 2:10-11)

It is impossible to understand God’s ways and truths apart from Christ, Scripture and the Holy Spirit. Scripture is the source of God’s truth, while the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual understanding. Those without the Holy Spirit often diligently attempt to read and understand the Bible, yet, neither understand Scripture or find life in Christ.

“... The Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸ nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. ³⁹ You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:37-40 - NIV)

Scripture affirms the person and work of the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit also affirms the truths of Christ and God in Scripture.

- “It is not enough just to read the Bible; it is even just as important to understand it. As to living it- that is accomplished in and through us by the Holy Spirit.”

R. Alan Woods - *‘The Journey Is the Destination’*

Christian Discipleship

For two-thousand years, every true believer in Jesus Christ has been born again and empowered by God’s “indwelling Holy Spirit.” To their own surprise and the amazement of family, friends and others, they are changed by a power they never had before. Spiritual fruit evidences that one is born-again and following Christ and not simply trusting in their own power, effort and talent.

Scripture/the Bible is God’s standard of truth, righteousness and wisdom and is essential to faithful disciples. Ironically, not even believers can follow God’s ways and truths in their own power without the Holy Spirit. The world without Christ can only pursue the world’s ways, because it does not know Christ or have the indwelling Holy Spirit. The world’s ways and truths often seem logical, but are not the same as God’s and invariably contradict and undermine God’s ways and truths.

The Holy Spirit works in concert with scripture by “calling all things to the remembrance” of believers. The Holy Spirit of God never contradicts God’s inspired Scripture, nor does God’s inspired Scripture contradict itself! The Holy Spirit calls to remembrance” Scriptural teachings and revelation of God and Jesus Christ. While all of mankind has the same Scripture/the Bible, only born-again Christians can understand and remember the spiritual truths they have studied and believed.

- *“When the man of God looks into the Word of God, he is changed by the power of God, into the image of God, for the glory of God” –*

Warren Wiersbe –Theologian, Author, Evangelist

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Some churches wouldn't know if the Holy Spirit was there or not

- “I remind you that there are churches so completely out of the hands of God that if the Holy Spirit withdrew from them, they wouldn't find it out for many months.”

A.W. Tozier -Theologian, Author, Bible Scholar, Teacher

The Holy Spirit makes God come alive in us

- “Gospel change is the Spirit of God using the story of God to make the beauty of God come alive in our hearts.”

J.D. Greer. PhD--Author, Evangelist, Church Planter

The Holy Spirit empowers people to live-out the Bible

- “It is not enough just to read the Bible; it is even just as important to understand it. As to living it- that is accomplished in and through us by the Holy Spirit.”

R. Alan Woods -Author

Bible understanding requires supernatural assistance

- “The Bible is a supernatural book and can be understood only by supernatural aid.”

A.W. Tozier -Theologian, Author, Bible Scholar, Teacher

The Holy Spirit comforts us, but, is not here to make us comfortable

- “Why would we need to experience the Comforter if our lives are already comfortable?”

Francis Chan--Author, Theologian

The Holy Spirit is the source of a believer's self-control

- “Self-control is not control by oneself through one's own willpower but rather control of oneself through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Jerry Bridges - Author, Evangelist, Staff of the Navigators.

Those filled with the Holy Spirit are Christ-centered

- “To be Spirit-filled is to be Christ-centered.”

John F. MacArthur, Jr--Author, Theologian

The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus Christ

- “The touchstone of the Holy Spirit's work in us is the answer to our Lord's question: “Who do men say that the Son of Man is?” Our Lord makes human destiny depend on that one thing, Who men say He is, because the revelation of Who Jesus is only given by the Holy Spirit.”

Oswald Chambers, Author, *My Utmost for His Highest*

The Holy Spirit conveys God's power and life

- “When you strip it of everything else, Pentecost stands for power and life. That's what came into the church when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost.”

David Wilkerson - Author, Bible Scholar, Teacher

Holy Spirit empowers us beyond our own fleshly talents and abilities

- “God can accomplish more through one message in the fullness of the Spirit than through hundreds given in the energy of the flesh.”

Oswald Chambers, Author, *My Utmost for His Highest*

The Holy Spirit seals believers for heaven

- “The wizard [of Oz] says look inside yourself and find self. God says look inside yourself and find [the Holy Spirit]. The first will get you to Kansas. The latter will get you to heaven. Take your pick.”
Max Lucado -Author,

The Holy Spirit Transforms us through the fruit of the Spirit

- “The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) is not a to-do list for us to work through, but a description of the transformation that occurs when God’s Spirit begins to work in us.”
Keri Wyatt Kent --Christian Author

The Holy Spirit equips you to obey God

- “Will God ever ask you to do something you are not able to do? The answer is yes--all the time! It must be that way, for God’s glory and kingdom. If we function according to our ability alone, we get the glory; if we function according to the power of the Spirit within us, God gets the glory. He wants to reveal Himself to a watching world.”
Henry T. Blackaby, Author of ‘Experiencing God’

The Holy Spirit convicts – God judges

- “It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict, God’s job to judge and my job to love.”
Billy Graham --Evangelist, Theologian, Author, Teacher

The Holy Spirit breaks the bondage of sin

- “NO one can say ‘NO’ to sin and ‘Yes’ to righteousness without the help of Holy Spirit.”
I.A. Chosen, -Author, Theologian

God inspired and reveals His Word by the Holy Spirit

- “Don’t try to know everything. You can’t. Find Him in the Word, for the Holy Ghost wrote this Book. He inspired it, and He will be revealed in its pages.”
A.W. Tozer--Theologian, Author, Bible Scholar, Teacher

The Holy Spirit is always consistent with Scripture

- “If someone does something or is teaching something other than the Word of God and says it’s from the Holy Spirit, they’re being deceived. Jesus went to be with the Lord so he could send back the Comforter. ----“The The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity and part of God. He has nothing contrary to say about the Word or God.”
D.L. Moody, --Author, Theologian -- 1837-1899;
American Evangelist