

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit – Part 2

The Holy Spirit Dwells in the Christian through the Word of God alone

The beginning of this column begins exactly as the one last week did. Why? Because it holds some fundamental truths that I want to ensure are not lost on those who read this article.

That the Holy Spirit dwells within the Christian is admitted by all who understand and love the Scriptures. How the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian is a matter of controversy within the Lord's church. The Holy Spirit either (1) really and truly dwells in us as faithful Christians in a literal or personal manner, or (2) He dwells in us through the Word of God alone, or (3) else He does not dwell in us at all. Since the third view denies many plain and easily-understood passages, we dismiss that view totally.

Brethren holding to the two differing interpretations, as to exactly what constitutes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian, need to understand that neither view is without problems. So long as no one is contending for modern-day miracles (**1 Cor. 13**) nor for a direct operation of God's Spirit upon the human heart (**Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12**), there is surely room for honest disagreement among us. **So long as we agree that the Holy Spirit directly convicts, leads, directs, and edifies the human mind only through the Word, whatever other differences we might exhibit should not be used as a basis for withdrawal of fellowship.**

We all must reject the view set forth by those who give "lip service" to the Word of God, and argue (from such passages as **Acts 5:32, Rom. 8:15-16, and 1 John 4:13**) that we can only understand the scriptures by a necessary direct, internal work of the Spirit upon our minds.

Let me say to all that may read this article that there are no scriptures that lead us to believe the Holy Spirit convicts, leads, directs, and edifies by any other way than through the Word of God!

This week we will review the stance of those who believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians through the Word of God alone.

Those who hold to the view that the Holy Spirit Himself actually dwells in us through the Word of God alone do so based on their belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2:38** is **NOT** the Holy Spirit Himself as a gift to all who receive remission of sins upon their obedience to the Gospel plan of salvation. The proponents of the personal indwelling view base it on the Greek construction of the sentence. They point out that the phrase "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in the Greek is "the genitive of identification," meaning "the gift which is the Holy Spirit."

Those who hold to the view that the Holy Spirit Himself actually dwells in us through the Word of God alone dismiss that supposition.

Consider the following with me.

The New Testament teaches that Christians have the Holy Spirit. Peter said in **Acts 5:32**, “**And we are witnesses of these things; and [so is] the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.**” Christ also said in John 7:39, “**But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet [given]; because Jesus was not yet glorified.**” The scriptures teach that the world cannot and will not receive the Holy Spirit (**John 14:17**). He is exclusively given to those who obey the gospel.

We are told that the Spirit dwells in each faithful member of the church:

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

The Holy Spirit bears witness with Christians that they are the children of God (**Rom. 8:16**). If we do NOT have the Holy Spirit, then we are not Christians (**Rom.8:9**). It is thus clear that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians. But He is never separated from the Word of God in His work of conversions and sanctification.

The scriptures also teach that God and Christ dwell in us:

1 John 4:15 - Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God.

Colossians 1:27 - to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Romans 8:9 - But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The verses we have reviewed have all stated fact, not a manner or mode by which the indwelling occurs. Is God the Father actually, literally, personally and directly in us? Those who hold to the view that the Holy Spirit Himself actually dwells in us through the Word of God only will ask, “Then why do we pray, ‘Our God who art in heaven..’” (**Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2**). The question is asked has

Jehovah abdicated His throne in heaven to be literally, actually, personally and directly in all His children?

Is Christ the Son actually, literally, personally and directly in us? If so, then in what sense must heaven retain Him until His second coming (**Acts 3:20-21**)? Has Christ left the right hand of God to be literally, actually, personally and directly in all His disciples?

They will further contend that if you answer “No” to the first two questions then how can you answer in the affirmative in regards to the Holy Spirit who is part of the Godhead?

Their answer for how the Holy Spirit dwells in a Christian is found in various scriptures that I wish to share with you.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 3:17**, “**that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love...**” We know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (**Rom. 10:17**). This is the HOW of the Son’s indwelling in Christians.

In **Ephesians 5:18** we are told to be, “**filled with the Spirit...**” This compliance is not by passive means but an active one. In what is considered a parallel passage in **Colossians 3:16**, the apostle Paul tells us to let the “**Word of Christ dwell in us richly...**” It is argued that Paul’s charge to be “**filled with the Spirit**” was to allow “**the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly.**”

The Son indwells Christians by faith or through the wonderful Word of God (His Will.) As that Word (Will) motivates, moves and molds us to be obedient, we are indwelled by the Son.

The Spirit indwells the Christian by the rich possession of Christ’s word in our hearts. As that Word (Will) motivates, moves and molds us to be obedient, we are indwelled by the Holy Spirit.

My friends, I have not intended for this to be an exhaustive study of this topic. I have hoped to offer you a glimpse into the various stances taken so that you might further your studies on the subject of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

As long as we agree that the Holy Spirit directly convicts, leads, directs, and edifies the human mind only through the Word, whatever other differences we might exhibit should not be used as a basis for withdrawal of fellowship.

Our final lesson will deal with the work of the Holy Spirit today.