

## The Key to Experiencing Closeness with God Selected Scripture

### I. We have the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

- A. Jesus promised that He and the Father would send the Holy Spirit to live in us after He returned to heaven.

*<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)*

- B. The book of Acts describes how Jesus and the Father originally fulfilled that promise in a powerful way.

1. Acts 2:1-13 describes how the Holy Spirit came upon the Lord’s first disciples on the Day of Pentecost. All those believers were Jews.
2. Acts 8:14-17 describes how the Holy Spirit came upon Samaritans who believed in Jesus.
3. Acts 10 describes how the Holy Spirit came upon Gentiles who believed in Jesus.

- C. The normal way God intends for His people to receive the Holy Spirit is at conversion.

*<sup>7</sup> Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” (Acts 2:37-39)*

The phrase, “Repent and be baptized” does not mean that baptism is necessary for salvation as the ESV Study Bible explains:

“This does not imply that people can be saved without having faith in Christ as Savior, because the need to believe is implied both in the command to *repent* and also in the command to *be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins*.

“The willingness to submit to baptism is an outward expression of inward faith in Christ.”

Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? (1 Cor.6:19)*

If the Holy Spirit does not live within us, we aren't Christians.  
*Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* (Rom.8:9b)

## **II. We have the power of the Holy Spirit within us.**

A. After Jesus' resurrection, He told His disciples that they must not begin their ministry until they received the power of the Holy Spirit:

- *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.* (Luke 24:49)
- *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* (Acts 1:8)

B. The Holy Spirit lives in us today to empower us to live the Christian life, as John Stott explains:

“His ministry is both to reveal Christ to us and to form Christ in us, so that we grow steadily in our knowledge of Christ and in our likeness to Christ.

“It is by the power of the indwelling Spirit that the evil desires of our fallen nature are restrained, and the good fruit of Christian character is produced.

“He also unites us to the body of Christ, the church. . . . [He] reaches out through us to others, prompting us to witness to Christ and equipping us with gifts for the serve to which He summons us.”

- John Stott

*these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.* (1 Cor.2:10)

“Paul is telling us here that the Holy Spirit . . . acts as a searchlight and shines on the text of Scripture when we read it, giving us the capacity to understand the meaning of it. When this happens, we see the truth of God intensely and sharply. Every one of us who is a Christian has had this experience sometime in his or her life. We are reading from the Scriptures, and suddenly a particular truth seems to jump off the page and pierce our souls. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. . . .”

- R.C. Sproul

Luke 6:

- *And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.* (v.31)
- *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.* (v.36)
- *For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.* (v.38c)

Can you see signs of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in your life?

One of the most obvious signs that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives is that He is giving us the desire and ability to please God:

*. . . for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil.2:13)*

“One of the chief ways in which God preserves His people is through the priestly intercession of Jesus.

“We see an example of this from the night when Jesus was betrayed. Jesus knew that Peter was going to deny Him later that night, so he told Peter: “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*” (Luke 22:31-32).

“[Peter’s] denial was a ghastly and heinous crime, but Jesus had prayed for him, and He commanded Peter to strengthen his brothers when he returned. Not if he returned, but when. So, the prayer of Jesus for Peter was effective.

“Today, Jesus is in heaven, interceding for you and me, if indeed we belong to Him, and His prayers for us are equally effective.”

- R.C. Sproul