One God, One Lord, One Spirit; Different Gifts, Different Service, Different Ways

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NLT

As I studied and prayed about what to share this week God really prompted me to talk about God the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 really popped out at me this week and it seemed to me that before we talked about the individual gifts that God has given to us, we should first consider the giver. For some of you this may seem old news or a review, but for others maybe it will be an introduction to the Holy Spirit. As I have already said, our focus will be on 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

“4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

There are two things that are very clear in these verses.

1. The Spirit is the one source of all the gifts.
2. A Spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

What are some things that the Bible tells us about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:11) and He displays God’s eternal attributes.

• He is living (Romans 8:2, 6, 10)

• He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)

• He is all-knowing (Isaiah 11:2; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Romans 11:33)

• He is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10)

• He is all-powerful (Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 11:2; Romans 15:19; 1 Peter 3:18)

• He is holy (Matthew 1:20; Romans 1:4; 1 John 2:20)

• He is truthful (John 14:17)

• He is full of grace (Hebrews 10:29)

• He is perfect (Revelation 1:4; 3:1)

• He has love (Galatians 5:22; Romans 15:30; Colossians 1:8; 1 John 1:8)

• He is faithful (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 1:13-14)

The Holy Spirit has actions which display His personality.

• He teaches (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27)

• He testifies (John 15:26; Acts 20:23; Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:15; 1 John 5:6)

• He guides (Exodus 31:1-11; Zechariah 4:6; John 16:13; Acts 8:29; Romans 8:14)

• He regenerates (Ezekiel 36:25-27; Titus 3:5; John 3:5-8)

• He intercedes (Romans 8:26, 28)

• He convicts (John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38)

• He commands (Acts 13:2-4; Acts 16:6)

• He produces fruit (Galatians 5:22-23)

• He creates (Genesis 1:2; Galatians 6:13-16)

• He sustains creation (Psalm 104:29-30)

• He gifts or anoints believers for service (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 11:25; Deuteronomy 34:9; 1 Samuel 16:13; Acts 10:38; Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:11)

• He sanctifies (Nehemiah 9:20; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10; Romans 8:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Ephesians 5:26)

• He indwells the believer (Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:1-3; Numbers 14:24; Numbers 27:18; Daniel 4:8-9, 18; 15:11, 14; 6:3; Luke 1:15; Luke 1:41; Luke 1:67; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14)

• He baptizes (John 1:33; Acts 1:5)

• He intercedes in prayer (Romans 8:26; Ephesians 6:18)

• He seals the believer insuring his inheritance (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Romans 8:15-16)

The Holy Spirit has attributes which display His personality.

• The fact that the Holy Spirit “searches” the things of God shows that He has an intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10)

• If the Holy Spirit teaches then He has knowledge (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11)

• The Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:6, 27)

• The Holy Spirit has emotions, He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)

• The Holy Spirit has a will (Romans 12:11; John 3:8)

The Holy Spirit’s position toward others displays His personality.

• The Holy Spirit can be lied to (Acts 5:3)

• The Holy Spirit can be resisted (Acts 7:51)

• The Holy Spirit can be obeyed. When the Spirit commands (Acts 13:2-4; Acts 16:6; Acts 8:29; Acts 10; 13) a person can obey.

• The Holy Spirit can be quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

• The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31-32)

Now I know that was a very quick rundown. Today we are just going to look at a few things that pertain to the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of believers and our possible responses to Him.

He regenerates (Ezekiel 36:25-27; Titus 3:5; John 3:5-8)

This is the spiritual birthday of the believer. It is when you become a new creation. It isn’t the point that you know some things about God and it isn’t even necessarily the day you get baptized or take communion for the first time. It is the moment that your heart and your mind get changed by God’s Spirit and you willfully believe that Jesus is your Savior. Some people describe it as being born again.

The prophet Ezekiel described God as saying:

“26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.”

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NLT

And Jesus said:

5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

John 3:5-8 NLT

PLEASE take note…Jesus makes it clear that we don’t have to know (or maybe that we can’t know) exactly how people are born again. We can only know these things in part our knowledge of God is not a comprehensive knowledge.

What we do know about new birth (or regeneration) is that God gives us a new heart and a new Spirit. He takes away our stubborn heart and gives us a tender, responsive heart.

Which brings us to the next point that I think is pertinent today…

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer (Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:1-3; Numbers 14:24; Numbers 27:18; Daniel 4:8-9, 18; 15:11, 14; 6:3; Luke 1:15; Luke 1:41; Luke 1:67; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14)

As Romans 8 says:

9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) 10 And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Romans 8:9-11 NLT

Which brings us to the main thrust of today’s consideration of the Holy Spirit.

He gifts or anoints believers for service (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 11:25; Deuteronomy 34:9; 1 Samuel 16:13; Acts 10:38; Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:11)

Remember 1 Corinthians 12:7 says:

“7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.”

And Ephesians 4:7 says:

“7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say,

“When he ascended to the heights,

he led a crowd of captives

and gave gifts to his people.”

Ephesians 4:7 NLT

When Jesus cried out on the cross and the scriptures say that He gave up His Spirit it opened the door for His Spirit to indwell us and impower us.

If you remember Jesus once told His disciples that He had to go away so that the Helper would come. Everyone who has been born again has been given a gift that is meant to help the rest of God’s church. What you and I do and how we serve matters to the Body.

There are a couple more things that are really important to consider about the person of the Holy Spirit and how our interaction with Him. New birth and the indwelling of God’s Spirit doesn’t guarantee that we will obey God and use our gifts. We see in the scriptures that…

The Holy Spirit can be obeyed. When the Spirit commands (Acts 13:2-4; Acts 16:6; Acts 8:29; Acts 10; 13) a person can choose to obey.

29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”

30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

Philip obeyed the Holy Spirit’s command and he was a vessel used to bring salvation to the Ethiopian Eunuch.

But the Holy Spirit can also be resisted and quenched…

In the book of Acts, Luke recorded God’s Words to Israel, he said…

51 “You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That’s what your ancestors did, and so do you!”

Acts 7:51 NLT

Philip chose to obey the Holy Spirit’s voice. He could have disobeyed and thus stifled the work of the Holy Spirit. That is what the Bible means when it talks about quenching the Spirit. When we, as born again believers, disobey God’s Spirit and when we refuse to use the gifts God has given us, it quenches or stifles the Spirit. As the book of 1 Thessalonians says:

16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

19 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 20 Do not scoff at prophecies, 21 but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. 22 Stay away from every kind of evil.

So today, I want you to test what I am saying and I want you to consider…

Has God given you a new heart?

Have you willfully accepted Jesus as Lord of your life and Savior?

If you answered “no” than I am going to encourage you to stop resisting the Holy Spirit. Put your faith in Jesus.

If you answered “yes,” then ask yourself what does the Holy Spirit want me to do now?

We don’t have to know exactly how He has gifted us and we don’t have to know exactly how His gifts work. But we are to obediently choose to be His vessels because if we don’t God’s Spirit gets quenched.

Has God been telling you to go introduce yourself to your neighbor?

Has the Spirit prompted you sing on the worship team?

Does it seem like God wants you to show more charity?

Do you toss and turn at night because you want to tell others about the way God made you new?

The Spirit who indwells us and gifts us doesn’t force us to use our gifts.

My wife and I have always made sure that our kids have had bicycles. To me it seems like every kid should have a bicycle. And as much as I love to see the kids riding bicycles…I still don’t force them to ride.

The Spirit has given every believer, at least one gift. You and I can use it and see the God’s work flourish and grow. Or we can leave the bicycle in the shed, so to speak, and watch it collect dust and rust and basically go nowhere.

God is the giver of every good gifts and what we do with them and how we use them He leaves up to us.