

## The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

### Text: 2 Corinthians 13:14

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (NASB).<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The Holy Spirit is the representative of the Godhead on earth. After we have received Him in His fullness, His ministry will have a marked impact upon our lives. The measure in which we yield to Him will determine the degree of His effectiveness in and through us.

The work of the Holy Spirit is broad in scope. Two Greek words, *teleios* and *koinonia*, summarize this work. *Teleios* is usually translated “perfect” or “perfecting” in the King James. According to Strong’s Concordance, it means “complete, (in various applications of labor, growth, mental, and moral character) ... completeness (of full age, man, perfect).” *Koinonia*, according to Strong, signifies “partnership, participation, (social) intercourse, benefaction, (to) communicate(ation), communion, distribution, fellowship.”

These two words, brought together, indicate that the work of the Spirit is to perfect our fellowship.

### Message

#### 1. Perfecting our fellowship with God.

The importance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is closely related to the heart of Christian faith, the possibility of fellowship between God and man. In the Holy Spirit we have that which distinguishes between natural and Christian religious experience. Men may know spiritual experience that is from above rather than spiritual experience that is solely the product of their own religious consciousness.

Since the Fall, God has offered ways and means for men to enjoy fellowship with Him. Always men failed. The final step in His plan was offering His only Son.

Man has the prerogative of choice. Human will is an obstacle of God’s own creation; He never crosses its threshold without invitation. But God sent One—the Holy Spirit—to draw us unto Himself. The Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8,11); the Spirit woos with tender love; He works to bring us into fellowship with God.

The possibility of fellowship with God rests not upon man’s natural ability to contact Deity but rather upon the work of the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit we repent and turn from sin; by the Spirit we are born again (John 3:5). The Spirit bears witness that we are God’s children (Romans 8:16). By the Spirit we receive the adoption of sons, for we are placed in the family of God by the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15).

Christ promised the Comforter following His return to heaven (John 16:7). The promise was fulfilled (Acts 2:4), and the Spirit continues to come upon believers to this day.

Since fellowship is based on our relationship with God, the Spirit works to perfect that relationship. He leads the believer into four priorities in relation to God.

##### a. To worship him in spirit and truth.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

The term worship by way of development signifies “worthship”; it means “to declare worth” (Revelation 5:12,13). The Greek word, occurring some 61 times in its different forms in the New Testament, literally means “I kiss toward.” It carries the idea “to revere,” “to do homage.” The corresponding Hebrew term is translated “to bow down” and is so used in Abraham’s planned sacrifice of Isaac, in the account of Solomon and the temple, and in such worship passages as Psalm 96:9. The Christian in worship “is one who declares, by his own humble acts of homage, the worthship of his Lord and Maker.”<sup>2</sup>

Paul beseeches us to “present [our] bodies ... unto God, which is [our] reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Other translators render “reasonable service” as “spiritual service” (ASV);<sup>3</sup> “spiritual service of worship” (NASB); “act of intelligent worship” (Phillips);<sup>4</sup> “which is the worship it is right for you to give him” (N.T. in Basic English); “your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship” (Amplified);<sup>5</sup> “a spiritual mode of worship” (Weymouth).<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Spirit perfects our fellowship with God by helping us offer acceptable worship to God.

##### b. To maintain unbroken communion.

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

**Communion** carries the meaning of “fellowship, partnership, sharing.” Fellowship with God and fruitfulness for Him are characteristic of the Christian life. To this end the Holy Spirit operates as the

Agent of the Trinity to check and convict us when we begin to stray from walking in the light. By bringing the Word of God to bear upon us, He leads us to “confess our sins,” and we are forgiven and cleansed (1 John 1:9).

c. To share in the ministry of intercession.

“For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26).

“The Spirit Himself”! (Berkeley).<sup>7</sup> The Holy Spirit desires to develop this great ministry in us. He will help our infirmities (weaknesses). He wants to bring us into a life of intercession that will be fruitful for eternity.

d. To yield for full expression of His gifts and fruit.

“The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

God is producing a masterpiece (literal translation of workmanship in Ephesians 2:10). He alone can produce that which is perfect. When His masterpiece is complete, He will be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28). All will be “to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:6,12,14).

God’s pleasure today is that the full expression of His gifts and fruit shall be imparted to us, to the end that our fellowship shall be perfected with Him and bring Him the glory that is due Him.

## **2. Perfecting our fellowship with fellow believers.**

If Christians have fellowship with God, it follows that they can have unbroken fellowship with each other. Fellowship with our brethren is a natural outcropping and an evidence of our fellowship with God. Toward God’s Son there must be faith; toward God’s sons there must be love (1 John 2:7–11; 3:14). The church at Corinth was beset with problems stemming from the carnality of its members. There was strife, immorality, intemperance, excess, and doctrinal error.

To that church, and to us, Paul points out the great truth of the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12 he declares there are many members, but only one Body (verse 12); many gifts, but only one Spirit (verse 4); many operations, but only one God operating (verse 6); many ministries, but only one purpose (verse 7).

The Holy Spirit brings us into that Body through the miracle of the new birth. Regardless of position in the Body, there is ministry for each (verses 8–31).

Ministry gifts have been given to the Church and “His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), that they should do the work of ministering toward building up Christ’s body (the church)” (Ephesians 4:12, Amplified).

The Holy Spirit desires that we:

1. Keep in focus our distinctive Pentecostal message and mission (Luke 24:49).
2. Cultivate a sense of mutual responsibility as members of the body of Christ in fulfilling our mission (1 Corinthians 12:12).
3. Use God’s Word both in the church and in personal devotions (Colossians 3:16).
4. Recognize the prophetic significance of our times (James 5:8).
5. Keep eternal values in view (2 Corinthians 5:10,11).

## **3. Presenting our fellowship to the lost.**

“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8).

Sinners do not become Christians through an evolutionary process, a succession of moral improvements, the influence of Christian environment, or a series of religious instructions. Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). That is a disturbing and radical statement to many. They dislike it and find it hard to accept.

The standard of conversion is too low in our day. The work of the Holy Spirit has been minimized and human commitment emphasized. But repentance is not cheap, and regeneration is not shallow. When God’s Spirit enters a life, something remarkable and decisive takes place.

God’s work, including witnessing, is a spiritual, supernatural work. And yet God has committed His work to men, not to angels. The Lord never commands but what He also enables. Christ linked the coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers with the primary task of the Church—the task of witnessing. We are to be witnesses, and the Holy Spirit is given to make our witnessing possible and effective. According to Luke 9:1, Jesus “called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power.” On the Day of Pentecost a new power was given.

There is no substitute for the Spirit. We are only at our best in our work for God when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul, brilliant and capable, realized his utter dependence on the Spirit. “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:4). “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

## **Conclusion**

The Holy Spirit causes us:

1. To base soul-winning efforts on the premise that man's primary need is regeneration, although social improvement will follow (John 3:3).
2. To discern the value of human souls for whom Christ died (1 Peter 1:18,19).
3. To realize the eternal tragedy of souls meeting God unprepared (Mark 9:43,44).
4. To expect His enablement for an effective witness to the lost (Acts 1:8).

—G. Raymond Carlson

## **Endnote**

1. Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)
2. George Hedley, *Christian Worship: Some Meanings and Means* (New York: MacMillan, 1953).
3. The American Standard Version (ASV) of the Holy Bible was first published in 1901 by Thomas Nelson and Sons. This translation of the Holy Bible is in the public domain, since its copyright has expired, and it is the predecessor to the New American Standard Bible.
4. Scripture quotations marked "Phillips" are taken from *The New Testament in Modern English*, copyright © 1958, 1959, 1960 J.B. Phillips and 1947, 1952, 1955, 1957 The Macmillan Company, New York. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
5. Scripture quotations marked "The Amplified Bible" or "The Amplified New Testament" are taken from *The Amplified Bible, Old Testament* copyright ? 1965, 1987 by the Zondervan Corporation and *The Amplified New Testament* copyright 1958, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
6. *Weymouth New Testament in Modern Speech*, Third Edition 1913.
7. *The Holy Bible, The Berkeley Version In Modern English* (Gerrit Verkuyl). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959.