

**who is the
Holy Spirit?**



foundations

knowing God through his word

*for no one can lay a foundation
other than that which is laid,
which is Jesus Christ.*

1 corinthians 3:11



loving him
& loving his.

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can we know God?

God has given his unfailing word to make himself known to his children. yet, far too often, we depend on other voices to tell us about God instead of knowing him for ourselves through his word.

God is continually pursuing our hearts; our affections for and knowledge of God grow as we spend time with him. **this needs to be our daily pursuit.**

every child of God is able to intimately know God through the scriptures—**we are all called to know him and make him known.** as we grow in our knowledge of him, we also get to invite others to grow in their knowledge of him through discipleship.

foundations was created to encourage an active learning process for discipling relationships. it in no way replaces scripture as the authority on any topic or truth; rather, it is intended to point you to scripture in your growing understanding of God and his word. the purpose of this tool is to assist in laying a solid biblical foundation, equip believers to study the bible, and disciple others to do the same.

a few notes as you begin:

- **engage**

each chapter of foundations includes an introduction and four sections. this format provides a structure for meeting together regularly to study and discuss the word. **consider focusing on just one section of a chapter each week.** this pace will allow you to enjoy several days engaging with the word and reflecting on what the Holy Spirit reveals to you before you meet to talk about it.

however, you are welcome to move through it at whatever pace works for your discipling relationship. everything is provided for your benefit—feel free to use it in the way that works best for you as the Spirit leads.

**teach me your way,
o Lord, that i may walk
in your truth; unite my
heart to fear your name.**

psalm 86:11

- **pray**

it is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth (john 16:13); anytime we seek to read or study scripture, **we need to first pray** that the Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds to understand the truths we read and soften our hearts to let scripture transform us.

- **worship**

resist the temptation to treat any of this as an item on a checklist or see this as homework. the end goal of this resource is not that you would finish any of it in a specific timeframe, but that you would grow to know and enjoy God more. **as we gain a greater vision of God through his word, our worship of him will deepen.**

why discipleship?

the story of God is the story of a king saving his people and building his eternal kingdom—a kingdom that is made up of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. his is an ever-expanding kingdom, and it includes us as **disciples of Jesus**.

before Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to go and make disciples who would then make disciples (matthew 28:19-20). you are reading these words as a result of their obedience and the obedience of generations of men and women after them.

Jesus' command to make disciples applies just as much to us today as it did to his original followers. **he desires disciples, not merely converts**. he wants us to be active followers and worshippers of him, not simply spectators and fans.

as you use this resource, do not let this be merely a cognitive exercise. discipleship is not simply knowing more about God, but rather it is **knowing God intimately and daily surrendering your life to his lordship**.

this is the essence of discipleship: **follow me as together we follow Christ**.

read slowly, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you more of who God is and his steadfast love for you specifically. pray that your heart and mind would be moved to worship as you meet with God in his word.

in order to love God we must know him. as our knowledge of him grows, we get to make him known. as members of the body of Christ, we get to spur one another on towards Christ-likeness through discipleship.

this is the essence of discipleship: follow me as together we follow Christ. the commandment hasn't changed—we are to be discipled to make disciples who make disciples. his kingdom is made up of people who know him, love him, and follow him. **if you belong to him, you are a part of that kingdom**.

» *Jesus is building his kingdom through our active participation in discipleship. as you start this journey, begin praying now about who God might be leading you to disciple as you grow in him.*

*so then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members
of the household of God, **built on the foundation
of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself
being the cornerstone.***

ephesians 2:19-20

who is the Holy Spirit?

for most people, the Holy Spirit is the least understood member of the trinity. we can somewhat wrap our brains around the fact that God the son became God in the flesh as the son of man, Jesus. additionally, God the father, although he is spirit, is frequently described in scripture with human physical and emotional characteristics which can help us relate to him.

perhaps one reason the Holy Spirit is more challenging to understand is simply because people often avoid discussing what the scriptures have to say about him; **lack of knowledge has led to a fear of the unknown**. we don't want to risk getting him wrong, so we just ignore him all together.

» *before you begin this section, reflect on what you know about the Holy Spirit and what questions you have concerning him.*

in the same way that God the father and God the son are eternal, so too is God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is referred to throughout scripture with the personal *he*, not the abstract *it*. he is not inanimate or unrelatable.

he is so many things to and for us:

- **breath of God**—job 32:8, 33:4
- **helper**—john 14:16
- **reminder**—john 14:26
- **advocate**—john 16:7-8
- **teacher**—john 16:13-14
- **divine power**—acts 1:8
- **witness**—romans 8:16
- **intercessor**—romans 8:26-27
- **sanctifier**—romans 15:14-17
- **revealer**—1 corinthians 2:10-11
- **gift giver**—1 corinthians 12:7-11
- **security**—ephesians 1:13-14
- **wisdom**—ephesians 1:16-19
- **truth**—1 john 4:6

while the Holy Spirit has always existed, in the old testament, our human access to him was limited. he only came upon specific individuals for specific purposes. however, there was the promise of a new covenant: **one day the Holy Spirit would indwell all who called upon the name of the Lord.**

the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus ushered in this new covenant, and with it came the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit for every son and daughter of God. covered by the blood of Christ and made one with him, the chasm separating us from God has been bridged, and his Spirit is now forever ours as well. if you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit is as near to you as your own heartbeat.

*and it shall come to pass afterward, that
i will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...
and it shall come to pass that everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

joel 2:28,32

indwelling

although the people of God had limited access to the Holy Spirit in the old testament, God assured them that **he would dwell with them**. for that reason, God repeatedly commanded his people to build a tabernacle or temple where he would dwell in their midst.

with the coming of Jesus in the new testament, **people now had access to God in the flesh**. even still, their access was limited to proximity because Jesus the man was not omnipresent as he walked upon the earth. not until after Jesus returned to heaven was the promised Holy Spirit permanently given to the believers in the book of acts.

filled with the Spirit of God, **we are now his temple** and the dwelling place of God is *with* and *in* his daughters and sons.

- exodus 25:8-9
- exodus 29:43-46
- acts 2:1-4

- 1 corinthians 3:16-17
- 1 corinthians 6:18-20
- ephesians 2:18-22

- » *imagine being an old testament believer with limited access to God. spend time thanking God for the gift he has given us in his indwelling Holy Spirit.*
- » *what does it mean that you are God's temple? does realizing the nearness of God change how you live and worship?*

the law of God consists of more than just the ten commandments written on stone. in the first five books of the old testament, moses records over 600 civil, ceremonial, and moral laws that the israelites, as God's chosen people, were required to follow.

in part, these laws served as reminders to them that they were to look like the God to whom they belonged. **God is holy and they were his set-apart people**. the law instructed them how to follow God; their faith was largely external—living in obedience out of fear and reverence.

- exodus 20:1-21
- deuteronomy 30:15-20
- romans 7:7-12

now, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, we as children of God are invited and empowered to **live in obedience from a place of freedom and relationship**. the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us, draws us to Jesus—showing us our desperate need for him, bringing us from death to life in Christ, and convicting us of our sins that we may repent and live free.

instead of having the law written on tablets of stone, by the work and power of the Holy Spirit, **we have the law written on our hearts**.

- jeremiah 31:31-34
- ezekiel 36:26-27
- romans 8:1-4

since we are covered in the blood of Jesus, God the father sees his son when he looks at us. in his loving-kindness, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin in order to progressively make us more like Christ through a process referred to in the bible as *sanctification*. **the Spirit works in us to make us look more like Jesus**.

helper

the life of a christian centers on increasingly becoming more like Christ, which is not something we can do on our own—nor does God expect us to. **he has given us his indwelling Spirit to help us** live “*in a manner worthy of [our] calling*” (ephesians 4:1).

in the original language of the new testament, the greek word that is often used synonymously with the Holy Spirit is *paraclete*. because of the limitations of language, there is no exact translation for *paraclete* in english.

in the english standard version of the bible, *paraclete* is most often translated as *helper*. however, other translations also use: *advocate*, *counselor*, or *comforter*, and all are correct because *paraclete*, in a single word, means all of those things.

the Holy Spirit is indeed our helper, advocate, counselor, and comforter.

God’s promise to restore his presence with his people culminated in the incarnation of Jesus. after years of friendship and physical proximity to his followers, with his crucifixion imminent, Jesus comforted his disciples by promising that **God the father would send another helper in his place** who would be with them forever. though their hearts and minds could not fathom it, Jesus insisted it would actually be better for him to leave so the helper could come.

- **matthew 10:16-20**
- **john 14:15-21**
- **john 15:26**
- **john 16:7-11**
- **romans 5:3-5**
- **galatians 5:22-25**

» *what do these verses reveal about the Holy Spirit being our helper, advocate, counselor, and comforter? how do these truths broaden your understanding of him?*

» *in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit be your paraclete?*

reading with God

while God has given us his word that we might know him, **we need his help to even understand what we are reading**. the word is “*living and active*” (hebrews 4:12) because the Spirit inside us is living and active and present as we read and meditate on the scriptures.

the Holy Spirit illumines our minds as we read scripture, teaching us the truths of God and convicting us of sin. without depending on the Holy Spirit—asking for his wisdom and praying for understanding—reading the bible simply becomes an empty religious duty. without the Holy Spirit, we cannot know God. **with the Spirit, you and i have the mind of Christ** (1 corinthians 2:16).

- **john 14:22-26**
- **john 16:12-15**
- **1 corinthians 2:9-16**
- **2 timothy 2:7**

praying to God

just as the Holy Spirit helps as we read the word, **he also helps us communicate with God**. prayer can be difficult. we don’t always know what to say or how to verbalize what is on our hearts. sometimes all we have to offer is unfiltered crying in pain or raging in anger at God; those are prayers from our lips, but this is where the Spirit intercedes on our behalf **knowing both our hearts and the mind of God**.

divine power

shortly before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples this command: “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (matthew 28:19).

go. to all nations. make disciples.

surely an impossible feat for mere humans. they would need power—divine power—to accomplish such a lofty mission. which is why Jesus coupled this command with a caveat: stay put until you receive power from on high. Jesus knew, **without the coming of the promised indwelling Holy Spirit, their words would have no power**, and they would likely cower in fear in the same way they had at his arrest and crucifixion.

- acts 1:4-8

- acts 2:1-11

- acts 4:7-13

- » read matthew 26:69-75 and acts 3:1-16. compare peter before and after receiving the Holy Spirit.
- » are there any similar comparisons you can make in your own life: your life without the Holy Spirit versus your life with the Holy Spirit?

the Holy Spirit is the divine power of God. he was at work both in creation and in the conception of Jesus, and if you are his, he is at work in you. we have access to that same power through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

we are intentionally unable to live the holy, set-apart life to which we have been called without the divine power of the Holy Spirit. we cannot come to Christ without this power drawing us to him. **by the power of the Spirit, we can surrender our lives to our Lord and king**, and together with paul say, “it is no longer i who live, but Christ who lives in me” (galatians 2:20).

- zechariah 4:6-7
- romans 8:9-11

- romans 15:13
- 1 thessalonians 1:4-7

- » in what ways do these verses speak of the Holy Spirit's power?
- » what questions do you have about the power of the Holy Spirit?

as we walk in the power of the Spirit, **we are changed into the image of Christ** for our own sanctification and for the building up of God's church. accordingly, the Holy Spirit empowers us by giving us each gifts that have been chosen for us from the foundation of the world. by the power of the Holy Spirit, our hearts are changed and our desires increasingly mirror those of our Lord Jesus.

- romans 15:14-20
- 1 corinthians 6:9-11

- 1 corinthians 12:4-11
- ephesians 3:14-21

- » how does seeing the power of the Holy Spirit in these verses encourage your intimacy with and obedience to God?
- » in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit's power at work in your life?

“when we have the Holy Spirit, we have all that is needed to be all that God desires us to be.” —a.w. tozer

security

the life of a believer is a life of faith. yet in this fallen world, our faith can often be easily shaken. **suffering, temptation, sin, and doubt can work to shatter our confidence.** there may be times when we feel like we are holding onto faith—with both fists clenched—desperately clinging to Jesus.

God knew. he knew we would doubt and struggle and waiver, and in his grace, he has provided for all of our insecurities. the Holy Spirit has been given as both our assurance and our guarantee of the eternal life we have in Christ Jesus. faith is not something we can prove, but is rather something that is proven in us as we live and walk by the Spirit.

now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

hebrews 11:1

- romans 8:14-17
- 2 corinthians 5:1-5
- galatians 4:4-7
- ephesians 1:11-14

- » *what has caused you to question your faith or doubt your salvation?*
- » *how does God's word help combat those insecurities?*

in the old testament, God promises to never leave his people. in the new testament, Jesus promises to always be with his disciples. however, Jesus does not *physically* remain with them; instead he assures them he will not leave them as orphans but will live *in* them. with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God takes up residence within his children fulfilling his promise of permanence—and **that Spirit will never be taken away.**

- matthew 28:18-20
- john 14:18-20
- 2 corinthians 1:20-22

- » *what are the implications of the permanent indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in your daily life?*
- » *how can you become more aware of the Spirit's presence in your life?*

not one single person comes to Jesus simply out of reason or intellect. we don't have faith in God because we are somehow smarter than our unbelieving neighbor. we would not know Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. it is the Spirit of God who draws us to faith, gives us the gift of faith, and sustains us in that faith. **by the power of the Spirit we are saved, and by the power of the Spirit we will persevere to the end.**

- matthew 11:25-30
- john 6:44
- 1 corinthians 12:3
- philippians 1:6
- 1 john 3:19-24
- 1 john 4:2-4

- » *in these verses, what do you see of the Spirit's pursuing and sustaining work in your salvation?*
- » *how does a greater understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit help ease your doubts and fears?*

