

# Core Beliefs

## His Spirit Within



Deciding to follow Jesus is an exciting step in life; one filled with hope and possibilities. But it is also a daunting decision that may give some pause. They may feel they don't know enough or aren't good enough — like they are a fish out of water when compared with other Christians. Those feelings are natural and are the reason for one of the greatest promises God has ever made to his followers—he promises to give us his Spirit to help us become more than they ever imagined.

### You Are Not Alone

Near the end of his life, Jesus told his disciples that he was leaving them to go be with the Father and prepare an eternal place for them. After spending three years with Jesus, the disciples were naturally upset about that news and worried about being left alone. To quell those worries Jesus said he would not abandon them. *“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth”* ([John 14:16-17](#)). He would go on to tell his shaken disciples that his Spirit would live in them—teaching and reminding them of all the things Jesus said while he was with them ([John 14:17-27](#)).

Depending on your translation, God's Spirit is referred to as an advocate, a comforter or a counselor. All three English words partially convey the meaning of the original Greek word “paraclete”. Other English words used to describe God's indwelling Spirit include intercessor, encourager, and helper. The promised Spirit comes to provide all those things for the believer.

### The Promised Spirit Arrives

On the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus came back to life, Peter and the other disciples were in Jerusalem when God's Spirit arrived in dramatic fashion. People heard the sound of a powerful windstorm. Then flames appeared over the heads of the apostles and they began to speak fluently in languages they had never learned. When the crowds saw this they thought these guys were drunk, but Peter spoke up and said that this was the fulfillment the prophet Joel's promise, *“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams”* ([Joel 2:28-32](#)).

Peter went on to announce to the crowd that Jesus was God's divine Son, whom they had crucified, but God had raised to life again. He said they could be forgiven of their sins if they repented and were baptized. But he then said that they would also receive the *“gift of the Holy Spirit”* and that this promise was not just for them, but *“for all whom the Lord would call”* ([Acts 2:38-39](#)). The good news not only included the for-

giveness of sins and the hope of eternal life, but the promise of an advocate to live within us to guide and encourage us as we grow in Christ. Jesus kept his promise not abandoned us.

## The Dramatic and Not So Dramatic Gifts of the Spirit

In the early years of the church, this indwelling Spirit revealed himself in a variety of ways, including enabling people to perform miracles, speak in unlearned languages, and prophesy with God's authority. These special abilities were gifts of God's Spirit to give authority and clarity to the message of the gospel. But God's Spirit also helped believers in less dramatic ways. Paul told the Christians in Rome that some had the gift of serving; others the gift of generosity or leading or encouragement ([Romans 12:6-8](#)). These varied gifts were provided by God's Spirit, spread out among the believers so that together, they may serve the community of faith and build up the church ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#)).

## The Best Path Forward

These dramatic gifts from Scripture leads many to ask, "Does God Spirit work like that in our lives today? Can we perform miracles, or speak in unlearned languages? We always refrain from placing limits on what God can do, but the Bible does tell us that the Spirit has a much better gift for us moving forward. The church at Corinth had received and abused the Spirit's gifts, so when Paul wrote to them, he wanted to point them in a better direction. He says that these dramatic gifts of speaking in unlearned languages or healings serve their purpose, but they are not going to last forever. He says, "*If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal*" (1 Corinthians 13:1). Paul said the power of love, real sacrificial love, is the truly eternal gift God's Spirit pours out on his people.

## The Spirit Among Us

Even though God's Spirit might not work among us in the same way he did in the early church, Scripture continues to affirm that Jesus has not abandoned us to struggle through life on our own. God's Spirit is among us—within each of us. He is our paraclete—comforting, counseling, encouraging and interceding for us. He speaks to us through Scripture ([1 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). He helps us communicate with God when we don't know what to pray for ([Romans 8:26](#)). He is a seal, guaranteeing our position in God's family ([Ephesians 1:13](#)). He troubles our hearts when we sin ([John 16:7-11](#)) and he comforts us when we struggle ([Romans 8:16](#)). And through it all, he leads us.

Trying to fully explain the eternal Spirit with human language is an impossible task. But in spite of our incomplete grasp of how God's Spirit lives and works in the lives of believers, we continue to trust Jesus' promise that God's Spirit lives within us. And because of that promise, we move forward with eyes and hearts open to what that indwelling Spirit is doing for and through us.

**VIDEO:** [Who is the Holy Spirit?](#)