



Behind Enemy Lines Training Saints

Written by an Inmate

Who is the Holy Spirit?

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The Lord has convicted me for a while now to do a message on the Holy Spirit. Now that topic is so broad that I may as well say that I'd like to come up here and talk about God today. Well, that is actually what I'm saying, since the Holy Spirit is God. And this should really be a series, but here we go with a crash course on God the Holy Spirit.

The God we worship is beyond our comprehension, but He has revealed Himself to us through the Scriptures, through Jesus, and through His Spirit. The church has believed since its inception in the 1st century at Pentecost that God is triune. He is three-in-one. At some point in your Christian walk you will hear attacks on the "Trinity" doctrine. Especially here in prison, we get a lot of free literature from churches and groups that attack the concept. They say that the traditional belief is wrong, and they know better than what the church, apostles, and early church fathers* taught from the very beginning.

One line I've often heard repeated is that the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible and that the whole concept came from the church hundreds of years later. Well, yes, the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible (gasp!), but do you believe that God is omnipresent – a word that means He exists everywhere? Or that He is omniscient – a word that means He knows all things? Well, these words are not in the Bible either, but every Christian believes in these concepts that are described there (see **Psalm 139**), just like the Trinity. Trinity is just a word to describe a complex theological concept that is in the Bible.

The formula for the Trinity given by Tertullian over 1,800 years ago is that God is one in essence and three in person (not person like you and I are each a separate person, but this is based off the Latin "persona", so it's more like three roles or personalities). The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all God in essence, in substance, in unity with one another, but at the same time they are distinct (not separate) in their role in creation and God's plan of salvation. One imperfect illustration for this that came to mind is Neapolitan ice cream – it is one thing with three distinct flavors, each one no less "ice cream" in substance than any other. Another is a glass of ice water. You have one substance, H₂O, existing in three forms with the liquid water, ice cubes, and water vapor condensing on the outside of the glass. Though the properties change with the form, the substance is always the same. Each person of what we call the Godhead is fully God, fully divine and worthy of all glory, honor, praise, and worship.

Of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we seem to talk about the Holy Spirit the least, probably since He is the most mysterious and least "visible" in His role in salvation. But it's very important that we understand and give Him His due honor since Jesus Himself warned us not to blaspheme (or slander) the Spirit of God. In **Matthew 12:31**, He tells us it's the one sin that's unforgiveable! Those who deny the Trinity either attack Jesus and say He isn't divine and just a prophet or a created being like an angel or archangel that's lesser than God, or else they attack the Holy Spirit and say He isn't anything more than an impersonal force or the power of God working in the world.

So, who or what is the Holy Spirit then? The Bible talks about the Spirit of God from cover-to-cover starting from the very beginning in **Genesis 1:2** where He takes an active role in the process of creation. We are told God Himself is spirit in **John 4:24**. The Bible also talks about the spirit of man and

says in **1 Corinthians 5:5** that our spirit is what is saved on the day of the Lord, the day of judgement. **1 Corinthians 2:10-11** says, “These things God has revealed to us through the [Holy] Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” Here we learn a few things. First, that man is both body and a spirit, so when the body passes away what’s left is their spirit, which is not any less that same person. Their spirit is said to know all the thoughts of a person. It is fully them, just without the flesh. We also learn that the Spirit of God comprehends/understands the thoughts of God (beyond just knowing them), and that He reveals the things of God to us. So, if man’s spirit is no less that man after he dies, how can anyone say that God’s spirit is any less God? Is the spirit of man greater in that sense than the Spirit of God ?!

The Scriptures also describe the Holy Spirit with attributes that only a person, a full being and not simply a force, can have. We’ve already learned that He searches the depths of God and understands His thoughts, but we’re explicitly told that He has a mind (**Romans 8:27**); has emotions like love (**Romans 15:30**), grief (**Ephesians 4:30**), and outrage (**Hebrews 10:29**); and has a will (**1 Corinthians 12:11**) and desires (**Galatians 5:17**). He speaks to us (**John 16:13**); **Acts 8:29, 13:2**), guides us (**John 16:13, Romans 8:14**), teaches us (**John 14:26, Luke 12:12, 1 Corinthians 2-13**), and intercedes for us (**Romans 8: 26-27**). We see in **Acts 5:3-4** that you can lie to the Holy Spirit and that lying to Him is lying to God.

Jesus and the apostles always used personal pronouns like “He,” “Him,” and “who” rather than impersonal pronouns like “it,” “that,” and “which” when referring to the Holy Spirit. He is called by many names in the Bible, and the way they are used interchangeably (see **Romans 8:9**) demonstrates how the New Testament writers saw equality between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Some of these are: Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of Jesus, Spirit of Yahweh, Spirit of life, Spirit of truth, Spirit of holiness, Spirit of power, and Spirit of glory.

Jesus, just before His arrest and crucifixion, tells us in **John 16:7-8**, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper (Advocate) will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement.” Jesus – the Immanuel, God with us – says it’s to our advantage that He goes away since He’ll send us His Spirit; our Helper, Counselor, Comforter, and Advocate. It’s an advantage because then God was with us in human form, but now He is God **IN** us. He now dwells inside every believer! He’s even closer to us now than He was then! By being in us rather than with us, He works directly on our hearts as He sanctifies and conforms us to His image. He gives each of us gifts and produces in us the fruit of the Spirit that we read about in **Galatians 5:22-23**. By being in us rather than with us, He has made us into His temple!

We don’t need to go anywhere to worship God because He’s here inside us always! And since we’re now His temple, let’s always remember that and not defile it with sin. By doing something like looking at pornography, we’re emblazoning those images in our minds, which is now Jesus’ home. So, it’s like putting dirty pictures up on the walls of His temple! We’d never think of doing such a thing when we walk into a church or cathedral, so let’s try to keep, let’s try to keep the real temple of God clean from sins of any kind as we remember how He has saved us and now dwells in us.

Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us Your Spirit, Yourself, so that we can know You better and grow each day to be more like You. We don’t deserve the honor and can never hope to fully understand You, but we are eternally grateful for all You do for us through Your Spirit. Lord, fill us each day and transform us – all of us here and all of our loved ones outside these walls. In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.

*For example, in around AD96, Clement of Rome, a disciple of Peter, wrote this in a letter to the church in Corinth, "For as truly as God lives, as truly as the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit live

Further reading: **John 14:15-26**, **John 16:7-15**; **Matthew 12:22-32**; **Romans 8**; **1 Corinthians 2:6-16**; **1 Corinthians 3:16-17**, **1 Corinthians 12:3-13**; **Ephesians 4:4-6**; and many more ...