A TRINFINITY MINI BOOK

Knowing the Holy Spirit

The Helper Jesus promised

Andrew Dominguez

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About this book

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Introduction

Of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit is the One many Christians know least. Some think of Him as a force or a feeling. Some are nervous about Him because of what they have seen. Jesus spoke of Him as a Person, a Helper, and He said it was to our advantage that He would come.

This book looks at who the Holy Spirit is, what He does in someone who is searching, what He does in a believer, and how we can walk with Him day by day.

1 Who the Holy Spirit is

On the night before the cross, Jesus told His disciples He was leaving. They were troubled. Then He made them a promise.

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17 (NASB)

Notice the words Jesus uses. He, not it. The Spirit teaches, guides, speaks, and can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30, NASB). A force cannot be grieved. A Person can.

The Spirit is also God. When Ananias lied about his gift, Peter said he had lied to the Holy Spirit, and then said, You have not lied to men but to God (Acts 5:3-4, NASB). Christians are baptized in the one name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, NASB).

2 What He does in someone who is searching

If you are reading this and something in you is stirring, that may be the Holy Spirit at work. Jesus said that when the Helper comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8, NASB).

Conviction is not the same as condemnation. It is the Spirit showing you the truth about yourself so that you can come to the One who forgives. Paul wrote that a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 2:14,

NASB). We need the Spirit even to understand the gospel.

Salvation itself is His work. God saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5, NASB). Jesus called it being born again.

3 What He does in a believer

The moment a person trusts Christ, the Spirit comes to live in him.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NASB)

A seal marks ownership and protects what is inside. A pledge is a down payment that guarantees the rest is coming. The Spirit is God's promise that He will finish what He started.

The Spirit also gives us assurance. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16, NASB). When we do not know how to pray, the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words (Romans 8:26, NASB). He guides us into all the truth (John 16:13, NASB).

4 Power and gifts

Jesus told His followers to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit before they went out.

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NASB)

The power of the Spirit is power to be a witness. In the book of Acts, ordinary fishermen spoke with a boldness that amazed the religious leaders. The Spirit also gives gifts to every believer. To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7, NASB).

Christians disagree about some of the gifts, especially tongues and prophecy, and about whether the baptism of the Spirit comes at salvation or later. I cover that more in Understanding Baptism. What we can all agree on is that the gifts are for serving others, not for showing off.

5 Walking with the Spirit

The best evidence of the Spirit is not a spectacular moment. It is a changed life.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

Fruit grows slowly. You do not manufacture it. You stay connected and it comes. Walking with the Spirit means listening when He nudges you, confessing quickly when you grieve Him, and obeying even when you feel inadequate.

One story in my files tells of a woman who felt burdened for years to share the gospel with her elderly neighbors and kept putting it off because of fear. When she finally went, she felt she had made a mess of it. Both neighbors trusted Christ. Weeks later their son, a preacher who had prayed for his father for years, knocked on her door to thank her. God takes the weak things and does mighty things when we obey the Spirit's urging.

6 What your salvation depends on

The Holy Spirit's whole work is to point you to Jesus. Jesus said the Spirit would glorify Him and take what is His and disclose it to us (John 16:14, NASB). So the Spirit's message to you is the same as the gospel.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

Your salvation depends on Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and rose again. It does not depend on having a certain experience or a certain gift. If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9, NASB).

If the Spirit is stirring your heart right now, do not put it off. Tell God you know you have sinned. Ask Jesus to forgive you and be your Lord. The Spirit who is drawing you will come to live in you and stay with you forever.

Knowing the Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit, and what does He do? This book looks at the Helper Jesus promised, how He draws someone who is searching, what He does in a believer, His power and gifts, and how to walk with Him. Then it points you to Jesus, as the Spirit always does.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses.

Acts 1:8 (NASB)

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