



### Only By The Spirit Becky Combee

The greatest blessing for every Christian, those who have confessed Christ as Savior and Lord, is the gift of the Holy Spirit. As I walk with God, the verse that guides me day after day is Romans 8:14. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”* When I know that I don’t have to wander through life with my fingers crossed, trusting that I can approximate God’s will, I am ecstatic. Nobody, especially me, likes to be almost right or close enough. I want to steer clear of poor performance and the sentiment “good luck next time.”

In Colossians 1:9, the apostle Paul prayed that we might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will. This is my heart’s desire, and it is through the leadership of the Holy Spirit that this is possible. I am so glad that the Holy Spirit, who is God, represents our glorious Father on earth. He opens our heart so that we perceive God’s will.

In his writings to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul said, *“We have the mind of Christ.”*<sup>1</sup> In this same letter, he declares that we have the Spirit of God so that we might know the things that are given to us by God.<sup>2</sup> What an impact that has in my spirit! That we might KNOW!

I don’t like hope so, maybe so, or could be. I want to KNOW. I want to be led of the Spirit. I want to be certain that God and I are walking together. I want to live in communication with heaven and know that divine principles are guiding my life. How is that possible? ONLY BY THE SPIRIT!

The apostle Paul is a great example of the

### The Same Presence Suzanne D. Williams

I paced the floor of my living room, trying to pray, and the silence echoed of an empty house echoed around me. Empty couch, a table with four empty seats, and opposite, a cabinet full of fine dishware that is never used, but always on display.

It hit me in that moment, an odd bit of truth. For 400 years, the temple sat empty. Here’s an edifice erected to hold the Presence of God, still filled with furniture proscribed by God, and priests and scribes entering and exiting its towering walls, yet there behind the curtain where God should abide was nothing. A magnificent building built for God, which had become as empty as the chairs in my living room.

My thoughts circled back to the present day. We are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and He lives in us.<sup>4</sup> Here, within me, because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, is the Presence that should have filled the temple in Jerusalem. The same Presence, the Spirit of God, who hovered over the waters at the dawn of Creation, who breathed life into Adam and Eve, who parted the Red Sea so that millions of people could cross over on dry land, who caused Moses’ face to glow so bright that no one could look at him. The glory which sat upon the ark of the covenant, behind the temple veil, the Holy Presence which required the priests to wear cymbals on their hem just in case they didn’t make it out.

At the temple dedication, the priests couldn’t minister because of the glory of Him. The prophet Isaiah saw Him in a vision and cried out as a man

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spirit-led life. He was led of the Spirit where to travel to. On one missionary journey, he planned to preach in Asia, but the Spirit forbid it. He then decided to go to Bithynia, but again, the Holy Spirit "suffered him not." Yet in a nighttime vision, a man of Macedonia asked him to come, and realizing God was calling him in that direction, he traveled toward the chief city of Philippi.

Through his obedience to the Lord, God opened the heart of Lydia, and she and her household were baptized. He also rescued a demonized woman. Afterwards, he was beaten and imprisoned. But when he prayed and sang praises, the prison was shaken, and he and Silas were set free. This supernatural manifestation brought the gospel message to the jailer and his household.

Can you see the results of following the Spirit? Paul reached the family of Lydia and the household of the jailer. He experienced the supernatural deliverance of God and ended the torment of a demon-oppressed woman.

Where God led, He worked mightily. When God was obeyed, families were rescued. Deliverance! Freedom! Salvation! It all began when the Spirit spoke. Will that work today? Yes, absolutely! We can depend on God's Spirit! When we commit our lives to God, He will lead us!

The songwriter penned it well.<sup>3</sup> "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain or plain or sea; I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord; I'll be what you want me to be." Amen!

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<sup>1</sup>1Cor 2:16 <sup>2</sup>1Cor 2:12 <sup>3</sup>"I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go," by Mary Brown, 1891 <sup>4</sup>1Co 6:19

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with unclean lips. Here, within me, is the Holy Spirit which conceived the Messiah within Mary, who came down upon Jesus at His baptism in the Jordan River. Here is the authority of Jesus' words which amazed all that heard Him, the power which healed the lame, the blind, and made the dumb to speak. He cleansed lepers, sent demons flying, and raised from the tomb a man who'd been dead four days.

Here is God, who tore the temple veil at Christ's crucifixion, and after three days, raised Him victorious over hell and the grave. Here is the defeat of the enemy, the Comforter sent to live in you and me. Here is Pentecost, which blazed over those gathered in the upper room. In Him is the boldness which the church of Acts prayed for, the anointing of the Christ which fell on the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. The inspiration which wrote the Bible which I hold in my hands .

The Holy Spirit is not a vapor or a dove or third-hand version of God. He was not a prop for Jesus while He walked on earth. He is not a generic pronoun, an "it" that we're blessed with. He is God Himself, eternal, everlasting, exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think. He is the Voice of God, no longer contained in a room, behind a veil, but just as powerful, just as Resurrecting, only now within me.

He is love, which could not stand men's sinful state and sent a Savior to redeem him. He is joy that is our strength. He is peace that passes understanding. He is patience, endurance, and longsuffering. He is gentleness, goodness, meekness, and, incredibly, as great as He is, He is self-control. He is not the spirit of fear, but a sound mind, that is sober and vigilant. And with all that He is, He speaks to me. He brings all things to my remembrance and shows me things to come.

We live defeated, accepting our circumstances, physical pains, and mental anguish, when the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, lives in our heart. If we lack wisdom, He's ready to answer. If we need direction, He'll steer us toward the right path and plan. If we can't find the words to pray, He'll pray for us, the will of God, and it will always turn out good.

No longer is the temple empty, like a cabinet full of unused plates, because the temple is within me, the altar washed in the blood of Christ, the incense, my prayers of thanksgiving. God lives here, the same God which did all those things I've read about, those I've heard spoken of in the pulpit. The very Breath of the Father, who will one day soon cause we which are alive and remain to be caught up together in the air, death defeated, ended, and for eternity, we shall together praise the King of Kings.