

## The Holy Spirit

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 6/2/2018

Few people in this confused world understand what **Spirit–Life** is all about. When Adam was created – he was a living breathing human being like you and me. But, Adam was unable to understand spiritual things. God has to give spiritual knowledge to mankind – because it is spiritually discerned.

God was not creating mankind only for the physical realm – but for the eternal spiritual realm. Mankind was created to eventually be made into the image of God – Spirit. Because God is Spirit, He is bringing us to completion; we do not yet possess His eternal spiritual Life.

Mankind was created to be in the Family of God – not with human life – but with God Life – with the same Spirit of God. We brethren, in God’s Church, are the only ones who are able to come to the truth vis-à-vis God’s Spirit. Vis-à-vis is a French phrase that means “as regards,” but interestingly, it also means “face to face,” as in, the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend. (Exodus 33:11) God’s Spirit makes a real relationship with Him possible.

We are physical right now – we cannot see God or Jesus Christ. John reveals that we will see God as He is.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God [Now we are the Children of God – but there is more to come], and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is.

We are not like God yet – are we? Paul tells us that we only have partial knowledge at this time.

1Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part,...

That alone should keep us searching and growing in knowledge and Truth.

1Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

A genuine and close relationship with God changes us to be **like God**.

Philippians 3:21 [ the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:] shall change our vile body, [We have temporal bodies] that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

Jesus’ glorified body is now an immortal resurrected Spiritual member of the God Family – as we will be. We will not retain our flesh and blood bodies – we will be changed to Spirit. Only the part of us that has put on Godliness will be resurrected – not the body which rots in the grave, but by His Spirit that dwells in you. Paul described how our fleshly body is not that which is gloriously resurrected.

1Corinthians 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown [buried] in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

1Corinthians 15:43 It is sown [buried] in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown [buried] in weakness; it is raised in power:

1Corinthians 15:44 It is sown [buried] a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

God's eternal Spiritual Family is open to all those who live by His Spirit. God's Family is not a closed family as Satan would have us believe. Knowing as we do that the Holy Spirit is **not a third person** of a mysterious closed Trinity is a good start at coming to the True knowledge of the nature of God. The Trinity is the most devious of all heresies in that when you are taught that the Holy Spirit is a person – you will make no attempt to become that person.

We are to strive to become like God is – Spirit. That is our destiny – our incredible human potential – to be like God. The Truth is – we will be changed and become Spirit as God is Spirit - and know God face to face as family members do. The evidence of God's Spirit within the Church of God is **rare** these days. That is a sad thing to say – but it is true.

We all know the Scripture that says "You shall know them by their fruit. (Matthew 7:20)

Luke 18:8 ... when the Son of man returns, shall He find faith on the earth? [Will there be any true believers when Jesus comes?]

Would Jesus find Faith among the church brethren that you know? Are their lives shining examples of lives filled with the fruit of God's Holy Spirit? Are they a joyful people who uplift and encourage you? Do they trust in God's principles – or, Are they more like the people in the world? As we look around our scattered congregations – how many brethren are holding grudges? Who honors his parents according to God's Commandment? How many refuse to reconcile or to be reconciled? Who is truthful in their words and deeds? Is the fruit of God's Spirit evident in their lives? Brethren, Most importantly, we must understand what God's Holy Spirit is – and how it is that we grow in Spirit as Jesus did.

Luke 2:40 ...Jesus grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Growing in Spirit does not come naturally. "Waxed" means He increased more and more in the vigor of God's Spirit. That means that the dynamism of God's Spirit was evident in His growing character.

Brethren, we are to do the same thing!!! We must be making every effort to bear the same fruit – as much as is possible. The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden represented God's Spirit – God's Life – God's Family tree – even His eternal Life.

Herbert W. Armstrong used to speak on the Two Trees – and people would say, "Oh NO!" – "Not again!" That is because they never got it – and the proof of that statement is in the apostasy that carried the great majority away in their dissimilitude from the Truth. As it says in Hebrews 13:9 "They were carried away with divers and strange doctrines."

The people at Worldwide's headquarters did not get it – they could not understand about the Tree of LIFE !!! Satan deceived them into taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Mr. Armstrong spoke of the Two Trees representing the way of Give and Get.

Without God's Spirit we are "Takers." With God's Spirit we are "Givers." That was so clear – – – or was it? Without God's Spirit – even that simple concept cannot be established in one's life.

God's Way of Life is one of sharing who and what we've become – caring, sacrificing, healing, loving according to all God's Commandments. Jesus says, "Will I find faith on the earth?" because so – so many continue to be Takers – without Putting Back - without being willing to truly give of themselves.

They withhold their friendship, their concern, their love, their emotions because they maintain a Gentile mindset of "The more I Get – the more I'll have. Are we so blind to the workings of God's Holy Spirit? Do we understand yet – that the more we exercise of God's Spirit – the more we'll have His Spirit. The more we give of ourselves – the more like God we become. I'm not speaking of money. I'm talking about giving of ourselves, our emotions, our love, our caring, our being, our attitudes, our concerns – our outgoing concern for others.

The more we give of ourselves, the more we are like God.

Proverbs 13:6 Righteousness keeps [protects] him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

That is pretty straight forward – when we live according to God's Law – we are protected in all that we do. And when we continue to sin – it will catch up to us with dire consequences. Let's continue here in Proverbs 13 – I wish to expound on the spiritual principle in verse 7. Let's take a good look at this scripture because within it is the Spiritual Principle that many neglect to understand.

Proverbs 13:7 There is [one] who makes himself rich, yet has nothing: there is [one] who makes himself poor, yet has great riches.

To the Gentile mind – this is a great contradiction – because every Gentile (and too many Israelites too) knows that the more you hoard – the more you have... And the more you let get away from you – the less you have. The Gentile mind thinks that is clear and simple logic.

The principle says that the generous prosper – while the selfish decline. That principle works with property, wealth, riches, etc. But let's look further – into the Spiritual Principle contained in this verse. "There is that makes himself rich" – this is referring to one who thinks he gets ahead of the game by withholding from others. He does not speak to those whom he holds in contempt. Postage is saved by not sending notes of encouragement to those who are sick.

He lets himself off easily by saying, "They know I care – I don't need to show it." He is unwilling to share his concerns... Never does he get around to visiting the elderly or disabled. He has learned not to get involved – because it might impact him negatively. He thinks that he gets ahead by hobnobbing and trying to impress the Pastor. He withholds his spiritual gifts from others he does not like. He is trying to be something when he is unwilling to sacrifice, be a living sacrifice for his brother's spiritual welfare, and he is unwilling share of himself. He will not jeopardize his social standing in the church for any reason.

“There is that makes himself rich” – and the Scripture says “yet has nothing.” He becomes Spiritually void, empty and has nothing – He is lacking God’s Spirit. Now let’s look at the second-half of this Scripture.

Proverbs 13:7 ... there is that makes himself poor,

This is the man who willingly gives of himself – without cost to others. He will willingly go out in the pouring rain to change a flat tire for you – and insist that you owe him nothing.

Better than that (here is the spiritual application) – when you have a sin in your life that threatens your salvation – he will come to you in great peril of your friendship – and none the less – he will try to help you with fasting and prayer and spiritual reasoning – to get you back on the straight and narrow. He sets a Godly example in His life of giving and living all the spiritual virtues of Christ.

Proverbs 13:7 ... there is [one] who makes himself poor, yet has great riches. He becomes Spiritually Prosperous.

Peter has some things to say on this topic. Let’s take a look at how we can become Spiritual – like God.

2Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Partakers of the divine nature – that is what we must do to be in the Kingdom of God – in the Spiritual Family of God. Then Peter shows the proper progression of Spiritual growth. Of those who fell away in the apostasy – none understood how to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ – not a one of them.

1John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

God’s Holy Spirit is more than just picking an apple off the Tree of Life – and saying I got it. It is a lifetime’s process in spiritual growth. God is not mocked.

2Peter 1:5 Besides this [we come out of the world], giving all diligence, add to your faith - virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

2Peter 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience Godliness;

2Peter 1:7 And to Godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [Godly Love].

How would you like to be a part of a congregation where all the brethren practiced all of these Spiritual Characteristics in a way that profited everyone? Is God asking too much of us – or has He set the bar very high for us to be among the firstfruits of His creation.

2Peter 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is God’s Holy Spirit like? God’s Spirit is the one Spirit that the Father and Jesus Christ share with each other and with us. First of all, God’s Spirit is **His Life**. That is why the tree in the Garden of Eden is called the Tree of Life.

We were fond in the Worldwide Church of God to say that God's Spirit is His power. Well, that was a good starting point – power – but God's Spirit is so much more than His power – it is His very Life. God did not name the tree in the Garden of Eden the Tree of Power, but the **Tree of Life**. Yes, His Spirit is power, but not just raw power to move mountains – but His very Spirit Life's essence that He is sharing with us – to make us His eternal children.

The languages of men fall short when it comes to describing God's Spirit. "*Ruach*" in the Hebrew language means breath in man – but when it refers to God, it means the Life of God – His Spirit. It is the breath of a man that proves that he is living. "*Pneuma*" in the Greek language means breath in man – but when it refers to God, it means the Life of God – His Spirit.

John 4:24 God is Spirit.

His Spirit is His attitude, His life's force, His mind, His love – it is who He is! How much does God Love? Does God give? Does God Share? Does God sacrifice? God the Father and Jesus Christ do not have a spirit that says. "We'll keep all the Glory and Honor and Power to ourselves..."

That is the spirit of the Gentile mind... God is outgoing Love – and sharing of Life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave [up] His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We cannot grasp the significance of these Words. God the Father gave-up His Son, Jesus Christ – so that we might obtain God Life – and live eternally with Him. Had Jesus failed – had He sinned even once, Jesus would have died eternally for His own sin.

There are ministers in God's Church who wish to believe that God did not love us that much – but He did!!!

We know that Jesus literally sacrificed Himself to pay the death penalty for our sins - so that we might obtain God Life – and live everlastingly with Him. But, brethren, ponder the sacrifice that God the Father made – that is the greatest act of Godly Love ever made.

God the Father would have been **all alone** eternally without His Son – no people – no universe – nothing, had Jesus failed.

And we think that it is too much to make the sacrifices that come our way??? Let's try to think about who and what God's Spirit is.

**The Holy Spirit** is God's all-presence, His all-knowing, His unlimited power, His personality, His manifold traits, His character. God's Holy Spirit is every characteristic of God - His righteousness, gentleness, peace, compassion, excellence, generosity, mercy... the list is endless.

We are totally unable to comprehend every characteristic of God's Spirit with our human intellect for God is too great. And yet – it is absolutely necessary that we "grow in Spirit" in order to put on the Godly character that is necessary to be in the Spiritual Family of God. The complete attributes of God's Spirit are beyond the grasp of our finite minds.

In God's Church, brethren, we have been given the same opportunity to take of "The Holy Spirit," the Tree of Life that was presented to Adam and Eve by Jesus Christ. Remember – the Tree of Life represents God's Holy Spirit – that was freely available to our parents, Adam and Eve. They had freedom of choice – the same as we do. Like Adam and Eve, we too, are capable of being tempted.

The Tree of Life was freely available to Adam and Eve. Had Adam and Eve taken of the Tree of Life they would have become converted children of God with eternal life awaiting them. Satan did not want for Adam and Eve to be able to take the Tree of Life and live forever (Genesis 3:22). Adam and Eve did not avail themselves of the Tree of Life, but instead chose Satan as their spiritual father (John 8:44).

Genesis 2:8-9 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

As children of Adam and Eve we have inherited the proclivity to do our own thing – which is, decide for ourselves. And just like Adam and Eve, we are capable of being tempted. But Adam and Eve failed, and were ejected from the Garden and denied access to the Tree of Life.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:

Genesis 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Genesis 3:24 So He drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims [angels], and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life.

We know one of the principles in the Bible that we live by is this; when one tries to mix good and evil – the result is always evil – not ever good.

The world believes that it is silly to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days. The world believes that it is ridiculous to tithe and avoid unclean foods... The world believes that you only go around once – get it while you can... While us Christians live (correctly) lives of self-sacrificing and striving for the unity of the Spirit.

Why are we on such a different wave-length from multiple billions of people all around the earth? Here is the answer. No one is able to know the things of God except by the Spirit of God. The natural man of the world is unable to receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are absurd to him – he is utterly unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

God revealed a great deal of “The wisdom of God” to the prophets of old for our understanding, edification, and our knowledge.

Psalms 139:6 Such [Godly] knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high [inaccessible], I cannot attain unto it. [It cannot be grasped.]

David wondered: What is mankind that you would even give him a passing glance (Psalms 8:4).

It is wise to believe in God – but it is foolish to think that we can know everything about God that there is to comprehend (Psalms 14:1).

It is exactly like Paul said; man is ill-equipped to be able to understand the all encompassing scope of the reach of God’s Spirit.

Psalm 139:7 Whither shall I go from your Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? [There is no place where God's influence does not pervade.]

Psalm 139:8 If I ascend up into heaven, you are there: if I make my bed in hell [*shehol* – grave or pit], behold, you are there.

Psalm 139:9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea...

Psalm 139:10 Even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. [God's presence and control through His Spirit is everywhere.]

Brethren, read and dwell on all of chapter 139 in your own Bible Studies to see just how much David delighted in reflecting on God's Spirit. David even understood that God was aware of his every thought and motivation – and, in faith, David welcomed God's involvement and intervention into his innermost thoughts and consciousness.

Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, [test me,] and know my thoughts:

Psalm 139:24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Brethren, there's a lesson here for us. How much of our old ways do we wish to retain and desire to hold onto? Like David, we must be more than willing to be putty in God's hands – to shape us, mold us and fashion us. Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay... (Romans 9:20-21)

God knows how to instruct His people. Man begins to make the transition from his physical existence to growing in Spirit toward the flawless Life of Christ when he receives the first token of God's Spirit at his baptism and the laying on of hands.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 You were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession [our resurrection], unto the praise of His glory.

In the resurrection we will be Spirit – like God is. In order for a Christian to be able to achieve that great leap from man-kind to Spirit God-kind, God gives baptized Christians a security pledge of His Spirit – His Life, making us His Godly children.

God's Spirit in a Christian begins the conversion process, which culminates in our being born eventually into the eternal Family of God. God's Spirit is the gift of God unto eternal life (Romans 6:23). It is God's Will that we enter His Kingdom as His Spirit-born eternal Children. We are to do our utmost to obtain the same stance and perspective on everything as God has and be exactly like Him in every way that we are able. And in the same way that God loves us we are to follow suit and love one another. As we saw – God and Jesus Christ have already demonstrated their Love for us. God gives us the opportunity to demonstrate our love to them by loving each other.

Ephesians 4:3 "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...

We are not supposed to be scattered – independent Christians. Do we understand what God means by the unity of the Spirit?

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Brethren, which of us has reached the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ? Not a one of us has!!! Our work is cut out for us – isn't it?

Our becoming Spiritual – like God is Spirit – is a promise that God Himself has made to us.

Acts 2:39 God's desire is to share His Spirit with us "for the promise [of His Spirit] is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

We can see how important it is to find and recognize all the facts that God has made known about His Spirit.

God's Spirit is the one Spirit that the Father and Jesus Christ share with each other and with us. With so many people holding misconceptions about the Holy Spirit, how can we have a handle on the true nature of God's Holy Spirit? God's Holy Spirit is not a bird, ghost, fire, third person of a Trinity, or any of the other commonly misunderstood concepts about God. The Bible tells us that man does not naturally comprehend God or His ways. We know of the physical world through our five senses – touch, sight, hearing, etc., but how do we learn about the spiritual realm? (Ephesians 1:13, 14; 1Corinthians 2:9-10)

So we see that through the Holy Spirit, the profound and mysterious things of God are revealed to Christians who have God's Spirit. What can we know about this non-physical term that the Bible calls, "spirit?" The Scriptures speak of God and angels as being spirits, and of demons as being unclean spirits. It means that they are not of this physical, temporal realm in which man exists.

"Spirit" is not restricted nor constrained by the physical laws of nature and the universe. "Spiritual" is much more real and enduring than the temporary physical existence we are a part of. Jesus said that "spirit" is eternal and invisible – like the boundless wind (John 3:8). "Whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:26)

A physical man has life, vitality and breath. In the Greek of the New Testament we find these three terms. Physical life is "*psuche*." We find Jesus using this word the same way that we do. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:25) When Jesus died for us, it was His "*psuche*" life that He gave for us. "As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:15) Physical vitality is "*zoe, zao*." It means to be lively, animated, alive and living (Luke 1:75). "*Zoe*" is also used with eternal and everlasting life as well.

The third term, "breath," takes on a great deal of significance in the Holy Text. In the Greek it is "*pneuma*." God builds on the concept of "breath" to help us grasp the meaning of "spirit." The term, "*pneuma*," the breath in man, is interchangeable with and corresponds to Spirit in reference to God. It is only by the context of the verse that we are able to determine if a Scripture is speaking of breath or spirit. For example, when we read, "God is *pneuma*," we realize that He is more than mere breath, and interpret the verse as, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). Notice the ease in which Paul alternated between the Spirit of God and our spirit using the exact same word – "*pneuma*":



"The Spirit [*pneuma*] itself bears witness with our spirit [*pneuma*], that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16) Even the Scriptures themselves are God-breathed, "*theo-pneustos*," that is, inspired by God's Spirit (2Timothy 3:16).

God's Holy Spirit is the Life, Mind, Love, and Power of God the Father and Jesus Christ. That Spirit is what a Christian has been baptized into (Matthew 28:19). Besides our human life that we received from our father and mother, we have been conceived with the Spiritual Life of God the Father and Jesus Christ. (Being born into the Kingdom of God with eternal Spiritual God Life will come at the resurrection – if we endure until the end Matthew 24:13)

God's Spirit is every divine attribute and means of God. It is the very essence of who and what God is. God's Spirit is the motivating action of God at work. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

In the same way that breath is necessary for human life, God's Spirit in us is essential for our future eternal life. When speaking of God's Spirit, it is appropriate to add "*hagios*" [holy] – Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, "*hagios pneuma*," represents the Life and Spirit of God. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1Corinthians 2:16)

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of the "spirit of Man." In the New Testament Greek, the phrase is: "*Pneuma Anthropos*." The animals have breath too, but because of the God-created spirit of Man, only man is knowing, rational, and capable of conscious reasoning to guide his intellect.

When our breath ceases – we die! The breathing of air is necessary to sustain natural life, conscious thinking, and the "spirit in man." "For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God... But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1Corinthians 2:11, 14)

It is God's Holy Spirit that transforms a Christian into the Life and realm of God, making him a partaker of God's divine nature (2Peter 1:4). As we saw in the article on conversion, man begins to make the transition from his physical existence to growing in Spirit toward the perfection of Christ when he receives the first token of God's Spirit at his baptism and the laying on of hands.

Ephesians 1:13-14 ...You were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Being begotten (Fathered) by God makes us His children with His Spirit. This is the earnest and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

2Corinthians 1:21-22 He who establishes us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Why do we need God's Holy Spirit? Because without it, we lack the strength and ability to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

End: The Holy Spirit