

THE HOLY GHOST

Anyone who has committed to a discipline, whether it is in music, athletics, or just dieting, knows how difficult it is to keep it. People always fail at some point, even though they may reach the goal that they set.

The same is true for people who become Jesus' disciple. They promise to do His will. They even symbolically crucify their natural self, but the old instincts and appetites remain. Sometimes these desires gain the upper hand and cause a relapse.

Jesus rose from the grave because He did not have to die. He explained, "*My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*" (John 10:17-18). Likewise, we have power to lay down our carnal lives and symbolically do that in baptism, but we also retain power to take up that life again.

Because committed believers encounter temptations and sometimes submit to them, Jesus provides a Helper. Some translations call Him a Comforter. He told His disciples, "*I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever*" (John 14:16). Jesus called this Helper the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). Both *Ghost* and *Spirit* come from the same Greek word, which means *breath*. That is why Jesus "*breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'*" (John 20:22). Just as Adam received his physical life when God breathed in him (Gen 2:7), Jesus' disciples receive their spiritual lives when they receive the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost lives within each committed believer. John wrote, "*By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit*" (1J 4:13). Paul agreed, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*" (Gal 2:20). Elsewhere, Paul called the Holy Ghost "*the mind of Christ*" (1 Cor 2:16). Because the mind of Christ lives in us, the Holy Ghost helps our thought processes choose the things of God and provides the determination to do His will. Paul also wrote, "*For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*" (Phil 2:13).

When believers commit to follow Jesus, they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter said, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). That Helper is a gift from God, which the apostles normally bestowed by the laying on of their hands. For instance, Peter and John went to Antioch and "*prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 8:15-18).

The Holy Spirit transforms the believers in whom He lives and changes them into new persons. The Bible promises, "*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*" (2 Cor 5:17). The Holy Spirit does that by changing the thought processes of our mind. Paul admonished, "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*" (Rom 12:2).

Those who receive the Holy Ghost are remade into children of God. Paul wrote, "*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*" (Gal 3:26). They are born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence within them is a testimony that they are children of God and will share in Jesus' glory. Paul said, "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are*

children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom 8:16-17).

The new life that we find in Christ is not limited to this world, but extends into the world to come. The Holy Ghost is the Father’s downpayment on eternal life and His presence in us guarantees it. Paul wrote, *“He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Cor 1:21-22).* Elsewhere, he said, *“You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:13-14).*

The process of believing in Jesus, repenting of our sins, being baptized for a remission of our sins , and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost changes people from their natural condition into spiritual people who are born of God and, through the presence of the Holy Spirit within, are being prepared to forever live with God.