

“THE HOLY SPIRIT’S WORK *in* OUR LIVES”

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Perhaps the best place to begin such a study is to start with idea that the Holy Spirit is identified by the Lord Jesus as being “The Spirit of Truth” (cf. Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). By definition, there is truth and there is untruth; that is, there are things that are true and things that are not true, and Satan is the author of that which is not true — “*falsehood*” — “there is no truth in him... he is a liar, and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44); but, said the Lord Jesus, “*I speak the truth*” (Jn 8:45). Keeping that in mind, essentially all constructs of thought are either true or they are not true; there is no middle ground, contrary to what many people would like to believe. When one applies this construct to the existence of a physical object, either that thing exists or it does not; in science this concept is referred to as “*the Law of Non-contradiction*,” without a play on words, either there is a 1960 Corvette in my garage or there is not a 1960 Corvette in my garage (both of these constructs cannot be true). Now, with regard to the Holy Spirit, *He is the “Author” of God’s Word*, and God’s Word is “*true*,” every word of it is true. Peter writes, “Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation (or origin), for no prophecy was ever made by an act of *human will* (those emboldened words are emphatic!), but men moved by the *Holy Spirit* (the Holy Spirit is also emphatic!) spoke from *God*” (likewise, God is emphatic! — cf. 2 Pet 1:20-21). The reality is, when the prophets sat down to write, they did not give their own private interpretation or explanation of things, or offer their own opinions or conclusions. In these verses Peter is simply stressing *the way* in which God’s written Word came into existence. In short, Scripture is “GOD’S WORD!” — it is *God’s* interpretation of things, not man’s, and was revealed to us in its entirety by the “HOLY SPIRIT.” With that in mind, it is critically important that the believer not see Scripture in any way as a *concoction of man’s thinking*, or the result of human imagination or speculation. The reality is, in some way (which man cannot fully understand), the Holy Spirit directed these men as to the very words they were to write, all the while not destroying their individuality or their style of writing. If God is truly GOD (the only transcendent infinite reality), that construct of understanding should not be troubling to you.

Regarding the importance of “truth” in Scripture, consider the following passages — David writes, “The judgments of the Lord are *true*” (Ps 19:9)... Thus said the Lord to Jeremiah, “The Lord is the *true God*” (Jer 10:10)... The king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, after the Lord dealt with him responded, “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are *true* and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride” (Dan 4:37); wow! what an incredible admission... writes John, “There was the *true light* which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (Jn 1:9)... furthermore, he says, “Those who receive the witness of Christ, they certify that *God is true*” (Jn 3:33)... said Jesus, “The testimony of God the Father concerning His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is *true*” (Jn 5:32)... “Jesus is the *true bread* which the Father has given us out of heaven” (Jn 6:32)... Jesus said, “My flesh is *true food*, and My blood is *true drink*” (Jn 6:55)... Jesus said, “My witness is *true*” and “My judgment is *true*” (Jn 8:14, 16)... “All John the Baptist said about Jesus was *true*” (Jn 10:41)... said Jesus, “I am the *true vine*” (Jn 15:1)... Jesus also said, “This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent” (Jn 17:3)... the apostle John concluded his gospel with these words, “We bear witness of these things, and we know that Jesus’ witness is *true*” (Jn 21:24). Conversely, the apostle Paul wrote, “Whatever is *true*... let your mind dwell on these

things” (Phil 4:8)... “Our new self is being renewed to a *true knowledge* according to the image of the One who created him” (Col 3:10)... Says Paul, “You turned to God from idols to serve a living and *true God*” (1 Th 1:9)... Writes Peter, “This is the *true grace of God*. Stand firm in it!” (1 Pet 5:12)... Writes John, “You have no need for any one to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is *true* and is not a lie” (1 Jn 2:27)... Writes John, “The Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is *true*... this is the *true God* and eternal life” (1 Jn 5:20)... Exclaim the angels of heaven, “Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; *righteous and true are Thy ways*” (Rev 15:3)... “*righteous and true are Thy judgments*” (Rev 16:7)... the apostle John saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called “*Faithful and True*” (Rev 19:11)... He who sits on the throne said, “Behold I am making all things new... write, for these words are *faithful and true*” (Rev 21:5). I am providing a number of quotes on the subject of “*truth*” so that the magnitude of it does not escape your attention.

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai a second time to get two new tablets written on by the Lord [Moses had broken the first tablets the Lord had given to him – cf. Ex 24:12; 32:16-20; 34:1ff], the Lord spoke to him saying, “The Lord God, compassionate and gracious, is slow to anger, and abounds in *lovingkindness and truth*” (Ex 34:6)... conversely, when Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem after conquering the land of Canaan, Joshua said to the people: “Now fear the Lord and *serve Him in sincerity and truth*... and if it disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh 24:14-15)... Samuel’s charge to the people of God was: “Fear the Lord and *serve Him in truth with all your heart*; consider what great things He has done for you” (1 Sam 12:24)... King David magnified the Lord with these words, “O Lord God, Thou art God, and *Thy words are truth*” (2 Sam 7:28)... Writes David, “O Lord, who may dwell on Thy holy hill? He who walks with integrity, works righteousness, and *speaks truth in his heart*” (Ps 15:1-2)... he also writes, “*Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth will continually preserve me*” (Ps 40:11)... likewise, the psalmist prays, “Send out Thy light and *Thy truth*, let them lead me” (Ps 43:3)... writes David, “*Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being*” (Ps 51:6)... David prays, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord; *I will walk in Thy truth*” (Ps 86:11)... the psalmist praises the Lord saying, “The works of your hands are *truth* and justice” (Ps 111:7)... in another psalm the psalmist says, “The *truth* of the Lord is everlasting” (Ps 117:2)... likewise he writes, “Thy righteousness is everlasting, and *Thy law is truth... the sum of Thy word is truth*” (Ps 119:142, 160)... Solomon writes to his sons, “Do not let kindness and *truth* leave you; bind them around your neck” (Prv 3:3)... he also writes, “*Buy truth and do not sell it*” (Prv 23:23)... The word of the Lord to Zechariah was this: “*Love truth and peace*” (Zech 8:19)... the apostle John writes, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory... *full of grace and truth*” (Jn 1:14)... we are to “*worship the Lord in spirit and truth*” (Jn 4:24)... Jesus said, “*If you abide in My word... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (Jn 8:31-32)... Likewise Jesus said, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life” (Jn 14:6)... Jesus said of the Father, “*Thy word is truth*” (Jn 17:17)... when Pilate questioned Jesus, he asked Him, “*What is truth?*” (Jn 18:38)... Unbelievers “*suppress the truth in unrighteousness... and they exchange the truth of God for a lie*” (Rom 1:18, 25)... Paul exhorts the believer to “*speak the truth in love*” (Eph 4:15)... “*gird your loins with the truth*” (Eph 6:14)... “*the church is the pillar and support of the truth*” (1 Tim 3:15)... “*we are to handle accurately the word of truth*” (2 Tim 2:15)... writes James, “*we were brought forth by the word of truth*” (Jam 1:18). Lastly, Jesus often used the following grammatical construction when

teaching: **“Truly, truly, I say to you”** (cf. Jn 1:51, 3:3, 5:19; 6:26; 6:53; 8:34; 10:1; 12:24; etc.) — the redundancy of that word **“truly”** makes those statements **the most emphatic statements Jesus made to people throughout His ministry... the wise do well to pay heed!** Writes David, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Ps 14:1)... conversely, Solomon says, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him” (Prv 22:15). **To neglect the truth is to play the fool** (cf. Prv 1:7; 14:9; 18:2; 19:3; 24:7; 28:26; Ecc 2:14; Lk 12:20); you can make any excuse you want for ignoring the truth... none of them are acceptable.

In a day when many people and churches are denying the authority of the Scriptures, it is important that we stand firmly for the **verbal** (every word), **plenary inspiration** (all of Scripture is God-given from Genesis through Revelation) of the **inerrant Word** (the resultant Word of God is totally without the slightest error in the original manuscripts). The foregoing may be difficult for some of you to believe... but should you deny the reality of it, **you need to know, you are making “yourself” the final authority as to what is true and what is not true** (carefully reflect upon that statement); if you don’t believe Scripture is the inerrant Word of God, then you must give proof to the contrary, and not just say, **“I just can’t believe that”** — the question is **“why?”** The lazy man and the man of sin (*i.e.*, the man who lives a self-centered life) come up with such conclusions without the slightest justification for their diabolical thinking. Keep in mind, no man has ever been able to substantiate a single error in the Bible; though a very small number of **“jots and tittles”** have been found in some manuscripts, it is important to remember that a manuscript is either a **“copy”** of the original manuscript, or a copy of another copy that the individual had in his possession; which may in fact have been a copy of another copy. To satisfy your mind with regard to the integrity of Scripture, you need to know the vast majority of the copying errors are almost all spelling errors, number errors, word order (instead the name Jesus Christ, some may have written the name Christ Jesus — incidentally, the name Jesus Christ gives emphasis to His **“humanity”**... and the name Christ Jesus gives emphasis to His **“divinity”**), punctuation, and very minor word alterations. It should also be understood that people didn’t **“copy manuscripts”** with the intent of trying to change God’s eternal Word; the truth is some may not have even been conscious of the fact that what they were copying was indeed God’s eternal Word (they may have just been making a copy of one of Paul’s letters to have for their own church or their own personal use, and added a word or thought here and there to further explain what Paul had written. Furthermore, the reality is, the amount of **“textual variation”** found in the extant manuscripts is **extremely small**... and textual critics believe the degree of textual accuracy for the Bible is far greater than that of any other book from antiquity. The facts are, the New Testament has **far more reliable textual support** than do the works of Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Tacitus, and any other ancient writer. I have written on this subject far more extensively in my textbook, **“Christianity: The Pursuit of Divine Truth”** (pp. 211-232).

To expand upon the documentation of Scripture and the integrity of the process, let me share the following — when the Old Testament writers finished their scrolls, there were no printing presses to duplicate their writing for the public. Instead they depended on **scribes** to patiently copy the Scriptures by hand, word by word. By the time Jesus was born, the most recent Old Testament book (Malachi) had been copied and recopied numerous times over a span of more than 400 years; conversely, the books that Moses wrote had been copied in this same manner for more than 1,400 years. The copies that were made are called **“manuscripts.”** These manuscripts are important because historians can collect **thousands of them** to compare how accurate they are. For example, if a particular manuscript that was copied in Egypt was missing a verse or

a phrase, it could be compared with manuscripts copied in Israel in order to find the missing words. Obviously, the more manuscripts available to make such comparisons, the better. Biblical scholars have concluded that, on the average, scribes probably incorrectly copied “one letter” (*i.e.*, one jot or tittle) out of every 1,580 letters, and these mistakes were almost always corrected when they made new copies.

The New Testament alone has more than 5,366 Greek Manuscripts (remember, Greek was the original language in which the New Testament was written), and many of these manuscripts date from the second and third centuries. In addition to these manuscripts in Greek, there are more than 15,000 manuscripts in other languages — that means there are more than twenty-thousand manuscripts available for scholars to examine to determine the slightest variation that may exist in any one or any small group of manuscripts. Historians tell us that no other piece of ancient literature has anywhere close to the number of ancient manuscripts that are available for the Bible. To help put this manuscript evidence in perspective, no one doubts the reliability of the text of Julius Caesar’s *Gallic Wars*, but we only have 10 copies of it and the earliest of those was made 1,000 years after it was written. By comparison, here are a number of significant ancient documents, the author’s identity & title of his work, the time-gap between the original document and the earliest extant copies, and the total number of copies (manuscripts) —

- Herodotus, *History* — ca. 1350 years — 8 copies
- Thucydides, *History* — ca. 1300 years — 8 copies
- Plato — ca. 1300 years — 7 copies
- Aristotle — ca. 1400 years — 49 copies
- Demosthenes — ca. 1400 years — 200 copies
- Caesar, *Gallic Wars* — ca. 1000 years — 10 copies
- Livy, *History of Rome* — ca. 1000 years — 19 copies (one partial copy ca. 400 yrs)
- Tacitus, *Annals* — ca. 750 years — 20 copies
- Pliny Secundus, *Natural History* — ca. 750 years — 7 copies

As mentioned earlier, there are 5,366 Greek Manuscripts of New Testament; the earliest fragment in our possession was copied just 50 years after the “original document” was written... there are other manuscripts of certain books that were copied just 100 years after the original document was written... there are a few manuscripts of nearly the entire New Testament that were copied within 150 years of the original documents... and complete manuscripts of the entire New Testament that were copied within 225 years of the original document. Incidentally, though the “original documents” of the Bible (commonly referred to as “autographs”) are no longer available, the evidence is extremely strong that these documents were very carefully preserved, because of the high level of respect for the integrity of the documents being copied. With the foregoing in mind, when we put God’s Word in its proper light, we should not find it difficult to place our confidence and trust in the written Word that God has miraculously preserved for us. With reverence then for God’s Word, here are a number of passages in the New Testament that describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer —

- **John 16:8** — “The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment;” *i.e.*, He creates an inward awareness of these things in the life of the individual sinner — He convicts the world of the sin of failing to believe on Christ, who was totally worthy of belief; there was nothing about Christ that made it impossible for men to believe in Him;

they simply refused. The Lord Jesus claimed to be righteous, but many men said He had a demon; the Holy Spirit witnesses to the fact that Christ was right and the world was wrong. The presence of the Holy Spirit also convicts the world of coming judgment. It is the Holy Spirit who testifies to the “truth” in the hearts of men; He does a work in the hearts of all people everywhere; thus everyone has a “God consciousness” — whether or not they admit it — responding to that conviction brings men to salvation; to deny these truths is to “blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and never experience forgiveness,” the essence of denying the truth is “being guilty of eternal sin” (Mk 3:29). When the Holy Spirit convicts the mind of truth, we are without excuse should we decline His revelation (cf. Rom 1:18-32). One of the primary functions of the Holy Spirit is to “testify of Jesus Christ” (cf. Jn 15:26).

- **Acts 16:14** — “The Holy Spirit is the One who opens the heart of individuals to believe the Gospel;” believing is a product of divine revelation to the mind and the heart. Luis Palau, commonly referred to as the Billy Graham of South America, used to say, “When you share the good news of the gospel with people, of this you can be certain, ‘their conscience is on your side,’ they have to deny the message of the Spirit to their heart.”
- **John 3:6** — “The Holy Spirit is the One who effectuates the new birth in Christ,” *i.e.*, being “born again” (Jn 6:63; Gal 4:29); as believers we are “brand new creations in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17).
- **1Thess 1:5** — “The Holy Spirit illuminates the mind to understand the truth;” *i.e.*, He enlightens the heart with full conviction (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Cor 2:14; Heb 11:1).
- **Rom 6:3** — “The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into Christ Jesus” (cf. 1 Cor 12:13); *i.e.*, He places him “in Christ.” The concept of being “in Christ” was one of the apostle Paul’s favorite teachings (cf. Rom 6:3, 11; 8:1; 16:3; 1 Cor 1:30; 3:1; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 3:27; Eph 2:10; 1 Pet 5:14).
- **Rom 5:5** — “The love of God has been poured out in the believer’s heart by the Holy Spirit;” as such, believers can have a deep abiding conviction that God really loves them.
- **Rom 8:6** — “The Holy Spirit ministers life and peace to God’s children;” the Spirit is the guarantee of life that is life indeed (cf. Jn 10:10), as well as a life of tranquility, because as believers we now have peace with God (cf. Rom 5:1). The word “peace” literally means “joining together that which has been separated,” whereas we were at war, we are now at peace.
- **Rom 8:9** — “The Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in the life of the believer;” *i.e.*, He indwells every believer (cf. Jn 3:34; Col 1:27; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 1 Th 4:8; 2 Tim 1:14; 1 Jn 4:13). The believing community (the body of Christ) is being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (cf. Eph 2:22).
- **Eph 1:13** — “Every believer is sealed in Christ with the promised Holy Spirit,” the sealing implies security and permanence. Paul goes on to describe the Holy Spirit as the pledge (down payment) or the guarantee of our future eternal inheritance (cf. Eph 1:14); thus suggesting that there is much more to come.
- **John 14:26** — “The Holy Spirit helps and encourages us in the Christian life” — the word “help” (*parakletos*) is also translated “encourage, comfort, strengthen” (Rom 15:4-5; Phil 2:1); the Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “our Helper” (cf. Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

- **Acts 9:31** — “The Holy Spirit is the one who *comforts* us when life is difficult and painful;” *i.e.*, He comes alongside (paraclete) and ministers comfort to our soul.
- **Rom 8:13** — “It is by the Holy Spirit that we are able to *put to death the deeds of the flesh*” (cf. Gal 5:16); remember, the branch cannot bear fruit apart from the Vine (cf. Jn 15:5); without the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the flesh would rule continuously.
- **2 Cor 3:6** — “The Holy Spirit *makes us alive in Christ,*” and *gives life* to every believer (cf. Rom 6:4, 8, 10, 11; also cross reference the various passages mentioned above under Romans 6:3).
- **Ezek 36:26-27** — “*The Holy Spirit actually causes us to walk in God’s ways,* rather than in the ways of the flesh;” He is the empowering impetus that causes us to obey God; without the Holy Spirit dwelling within us we would not walk in the ways of God. The following description of “*The New Covenant Foretold*” will help give contextual understanding to these words found in Ezekiel —

THE NEW COVENANT FORETOLD

During the days of the Babylonian captivity, the Lord spoke to His people through the prophet Ezekiel regarding their future. God told Ezekiel to tell the house of Israel — “*I am about to act on your behalf... not for your sake, but for My holy name,* which they have profaned among the nations... I am going to vindicate the holiness of My great name... the nations will know that I am the LORD, when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.... I will not only cleanse you of all your filthiness... *I will remove the heart of stone that is in you... and put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My ways...* you will be My people, and I will be your God” (Ezek 36:22-28). Such is the sovereign work of God in our world. In like manner, the Lord told the prophet Jeremiah, “I will bring My people back to the land of Israel... and I will give them a heart to fear Me always... and I will make an *everlasting covenant* with them that I will not turn away from them... and I will rejoice over them to do them good.... Just as I brought calamity on them, so I am going to bring good on them” (Jer 32:37-42).

Evil had characterized both Israel and Judah from their youth... the house of Israel had provoked God with their wicked conduct... spiritually they had turned their backs on God, and polluted the temple with abominable idols (cf. Jer 7:30; Ezek 8:3-16)... thus God ultimately destroyed Jerusalem because of her sin, and sent His people into captivity, but that did not signal the end of God’s covenant people. There would come a day when He would bring His people back to the land of Israel (cf. Jer 31:1-17), and establish an *everlasting covenant* with them. Thus says the Lord, “Days are coming when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel.... I will write My law on their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:24-32). Beloved, this is our God.

- **Rom 8:14** — “The Holy Spirit *leads us* in life” (cf. Ps 33:18; 34:15)... as the Lord told David, “Don’t be like the horse or the mule who have no understanding; whose trappings include a bit and bridle to hold them in check” (Ps 32:9); if necessary God will use force to lead us.
- **Rom 8:16** — “The Holy Spirit *bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*” (cf. 1 Jn 3:24); the assurance of salvation is a byproduct of the Holy Spirit, not human thinking.
- **Rom 8:26-27** — “The Holy Spirit *helps our weaknesses* by interceding on our behalf before the Father in heaven, and in accord with His will.” The reality is, we are often perplexed in our prayer life, and don’t even know how to pray (we often pray selfishly, ignorantly, and narrowly); once again, the Spirit “*comes alongside us*” (*paraclete*) to assist us in our weakness, interceding for us with groanings that are simply other-worldly to us. In this verse we are peering into the unseen, spiritual realm where a great Person and great forces are at work on our behalf.
- **Rom 14:17** — “*Peace and joy* are ministered to our hearts by the Holy Spirit;” peace and joy are both “*fruits of the Spirit*” (cf. Gal 5:22-23).
- **Rom 15:13** — “The Holy Spirit gives us *hope* [in the midst of turmoil], and *power* to walk uprightly and do His will;” without hope we would not be motivated to walk uprightly. The correlation is this: when our hope is a confident hope (cf. Heb 11:1), we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to “*walk with Him*” (Gal 5:16). By the way, even Jesus did things in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32; Mt 12:28; Lk 4:14); likewise, the ministries of the apostles were carried out “*in the fullness of the Holy Spirit*” (cf. Acts 4:31; 6:5; 7:54; etc.).
- **Rom 15:16** — “Believers are *sanctified* by the Holy Spirit” (cf. Jn 17:17; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2); the transformation that takes place in our lives is accomplished by the indwelling presence and work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Phil 1:6; 2:13).
- **Phil 2:13** — “The Holy Spirit is *at work in the life of every believer* both to will and to do God’s good pleasure;” related to this fact is the sovereignty of God and divine election — God has predestined (i.e., ordained in eternity past – Eph 1:4, 11) that we become “*conformed to the image of Christ*” (cf. Rom 8:29).
- **John 14:26** — “The Holy Spirit *teaches us God’s ways*;” He did this first of all through the spoken ministries of the apostles, and then through the written Word of God.
- **John 16:13** — “The Holy Spirit *guides us in all truth*;” in actuality, He’s the revealer of truth... the most significant of which are the deity of Christ, His incarnation, His Lordship (*i.e.*, He is God’s anointed), as well as His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The Holy Spirit is the one who enables us to rightly understand and interpret God’s Word. And as one of the great hymns of the faith says, “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love” — obviously, we are a people prone to living life according to the dictates of the flesh and human thought (that is simply the natural way to live); as such, we are all in desperate need of guidance as we traverse the sod of this dark world.
- **1 Cor 12:7** — “Every *spiritual gift* we possess is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit” (Heb 2:4); spiritual gifts are divine enablements given to us for the expressed purpose of ministering “God’s grace” to others (principally to the believing world), and that we might be His

ambassadors to the world, showing forth His grace and glorifying Him. In the body of Christ the Holy Spirit encourages each person to “*build up others within the body*” (as opposed to ignoring them or tearing them down), that they might become mature in the faith (cf. Eph 2:22; 4:11-16). The Spirit gives special abilities (gifts) to every believer that they might help accomplish this task (cf. 1 Cor 12:11; 1 Pet 4:10; Rom 12:6-8).

- **1 Cor 12:8** — “It is the Holy Spirit who gives *wisdom*” (Eph 1:17); the wisdom to understand the various realities in which we find ourselves, and the power to speak to various issues with divine insight.
- **1 Cor 12:9** — “It is the Holy Spirit who gives *faith*” (Rom 10:17; Eph 2:8-9); the faith to overcome the difficulties of life by responding to them in accord with the promises of God — faith originates with God and is that virtue whereby we live a life that is pleasing to God (Heb 11:6).
- **2 Cor 3:3** — “The Holy Spirit effectuates a *change in our hearts*; God’s Word was not merely written with ink, but is written by the Spirit on human hearts.”
- **2 Cor 3:18** — “It is the Holy Spirit who is *transforming us* into the image of Christ” (cf. Rom 8:28-30); the present tense of the verb stresses the fact that we are in a state of “*continual transformation*,” the passive voice of the verb stresses the fact that it is the “*the Holy Spirit*” who is transforming us; and the indicative mood of the verb stresses the fact that this is “*an unconditional absolute reality*” — the reality is, it “*is*” occurring in the life of every believer. To use a baseball metaphor... it’s like you were drafted by God onto His team, but not because of your skillset... yet over time He is going to make you into a very productive ballplayer — He understands your shortcomings and knows exactly what needs to be done to make you a good player, including all of the discipline and training that He needs to do. Guess what? God is going to succeed in making you a good ballplayer (cf. Phil 1:6; 2:13; Eph 5:27; Col 1:22). Can you even imagine being “like Christ” someday? The difference between who we are now and who we are going to be in eternity future is seemingly infinite... but that’s the miracle of God’s grace.
- **Gal 5:16** — “When we *walk by the Spirit*, we will not carry out the desires of the flesh;” without walking in accord with the Spirit, we will carry out the desires of “*the self-life*” (the flesh). To walk in accord with the Spirit is to allow Him to have His way, and remain in communion with Christ (*i.e.*, abide in Christ); it is to let the light of His holiness rule in our soul rather than our sin nature.
- **Eph 5:18** — “*Be filled with the Spirit*,” the active voice of the verb means this is an action that we as believers must take — we can either surrender to the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit, or stubbornly resist doing so and live according to our sin nature. The believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit is occupied with Christ and not with self (Phil 1:21). A corollary of Eph 5:18 is found in Col 3:16 — “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*” (*essentially being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ dwell within you are direct equivalents*; read the following verse in each instance; you’ll notice they are identical. Remember, the Holy Spirit is the Living Word (cf. Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12).
- **Gal 5:22-23** — “It is the Holy Spirit who *makes our lives fruitful* when we walk by the Spirit (*i.e.*, when we abide in Christ)” (cf. Gal 5:16; Jn 15:5). Bearing fruit occurs when the child of

God abides in the Vine (cf. Jn 15:1-11). So when a person lives according to the Spirit's leading, his life will bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23); notice this fruit is the product of the Holy Spirit, not human effort — in and of ourselves we can do "nothing" (cf. Jn 15:5); the flesh is simply not capable of producing such fruit.

- **Eph 2:18** — “It is through the Spirit that we have access to the Father.” Through prayer any believer can enter the throne room of heaven, kneel before the Sovereign of the universe, and address Him as Father. The Holy Spirit facilitates our approaching God's throne; it is by His power that we are able to commune with the Father.
- **Eph 3:16** — “We are strengthened with power in the inner man by the Holy Spirit.” The greatest hymn of the Christian era is Martin Luther's, “*A Might Fortress is Our God*” — He is a Bulwark who never fails us... our Helper amid the flood. If we simply seek victory in our own strength, our striving will be losing (it is not in us to stand in our own strength). As Luther says, “Our ancient foe seeks to work us woe — his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate.” Outside of Christ and the ministry of His Spirit, failure is certain... a humble spirit of dependency is absolutely essential (cf. Prv 3:5-6; Phil 4:13; Jam 4:6; 2 Pet 5:5-6).
- **Eph 4:23** — “The Holy Spirit renews us in the spirit of our minds.” The reality is this — as believers we are undergoing a complete transformation in our “thinking,” and the Holy Spirit is the operative source of that transformation; He influences the thought processes to reason from God's standpoint, rather than from our fallen human viewpoint. The Holy Spirit is the Agent in regeneration, and the Word of God is His Instrument (cf. Titus 3:5).
- **1 Cor 2:10-11** — The apostle Paul writes of the Holy Spirit's omniscience in this passage: “*The Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God*. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.” In addition to His infinite wisdom, the created order came into existence by His omnipotence (cf. Gen 1:1-2; Ps 104:30). Likewise, the psalmist attests to the omnipresence of the Spirit in Psalm 139:7-8, “*Where can I go from Thy Spirit?* Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there... if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.” So, He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present, and has taken up residence in the heart of every believer — there is nothing the Holy Spirit does not know, and there is nothing that He cannot do (cf. Jer 32:17, 27). It is this third person of the Trinity who makes the cross of Christ efficacious in our lives, and is committed to transforming us into the image of Christ... any other thoughts to the contrary are the lies of hell. Throughout Scripture the believer is encouraged over and over again to “believe the truth” and “abide in the truth,” and in so doing “experience the liberating reality of the truth” (cf. Jn 8:31-32). Beloved, it is to this end that the believer must commit himself.