

**KNOWING GOD: LESSON 6**  
**THE GODHEAD: THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
 John 17:3

## I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** In our last lesson we explored the “Godhead” whether Christ is a man, an angel, a “god” or God (i.e., possesses the divine nature; Godhood, e.g., manhood, childhood, etc.)

A. Recall the term “Godhead” is used three times in the New Testament (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9) and is derived from *theos* (God) and means “divine,” possessing the personality and attributes of God (divinity).

**Col. 2:9:** “For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;”

**Heb. 1:3:** “who [Christ] being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His [God] person,”

B. **\*\*** We offered many proofs that Jesus is a member of the Godhead, that is He is divine.

☛ He accepted worship (worship is reserved for God; Ex. 34:14): Matt. 8:2; Jn. 5:23

☛ He is Creator: Jn. 1:1-3

☛ He is equal to God the Father: Phil. 2:5-8

☛ He Himself claimed to be God: Jn. 8:58

☛ His given name *Immanuel* shows that He is God: Matt. 1:23

☛ He forgave sins (only God can forgive sins): Mk. 2:5

☛ Echo passages: We cited several “echo” passages ascribing identical characteristics to God and the Christ.

☛ He is explicitly called God: **Heb. 1:8:** “But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.’”

**Isa. 9:6:** “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

2. **3** In this lesson we will consider the nature, deity, and work of the Holy Spirit.

A. Is the Holy Spirit a divine being, a member of the Godhead or is He merely an “active force.”

B. The Holy Spirit is the least understood member of the Godhead.

C. Most readily understand the nature and work of the Father and the Son, but not the Holy Spirit; there are so many misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit that we will certainly not be able to cover them all in one lesson.

D. There are three primary areas in which these misunderstandings occur:

(1) The nature of the Holy Spirit; is He Deity, is He a “personality of the Godhead,” or is He just some sort of mysterious force sort of like “divine electricity”?

(2) The work of the Holy Spirit; just what exact purpose does the Holy Spirit serve?

(3) How does the Holy Spirit “interact” with the Christian today?

## II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** False views of Holy Spirit: A brief summary of false (apostate) views of the Holy Spirit:

A. **\*\*** Christadelphians: “The Holy Spirit is not a personal God distinct from the Father, but the radiant, invisible, power or energy of the Father.” (Founder: John Thomas; came out of the

Restoration Movement; Thomas debated Alexander Campbell; no eternal soul; no Satan; millennialists, etc.).

B. **\*\* Jehovah's Witnesses:**

"The Holy Spirit is the active force of almighty God which moves His servants to do His will."

"It [the Holy Spirit] is the impersonal, invisible, active force that finds its resource and reservoir in Jehovah God and that he uses to accomplish His will even at great distances."

C. **\*\* Others say the Holy Spirit is not a personal being but is rather a term used of the sum total of God's power. According to this view, the Scriptures indicating the Holy Spirit is a personal being should be "interpreted" as personification. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is not a person, but simply the personification of God's power.**

D. **\*\* Note that each of these false concepts have three common themes:**

- (1) The Holy Spirit is not a "person," but a "thing."
- (2) The Holy Spirit is an "impersonal" "it," not a person.
- (3) Since the Holy Spirit is an "it," a "thing" that is "impersonal"; He is not divine, He is not a member of the *Godhead*.

E. Thus, the central question we must determine is this: "Is the Holy Spirit an "it," a "thing," an "impersonal force"? Or, is the Holy Spirit a person, a member of the *Godhead*, a divine being, a divine person, one in purpose and united with the Father and the Son?

2. **5 Personification of God's power?** Is the Holy Spirit simply the personification of God's power?

A. Definition: "A figure of speech in which a thing, quality or idea is represented as a person. When we speak using "personification" we assign qualities to "things" (non-living) as if they possessed life and personality."

B. Examples we are familiar with:

- (1) In reference to my mint condition "57 Chevy: "She sure is a beauty."
- (2) "Cupid" as a personification of love,
- (3) Or, expressions like, "The face of the moon," or "My mistress the sea."

C. **\*\* The Bible does use personification in many instances, for example:**

**Jer. 22:29:** "O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the LORD!"

**Psa. 98:8:** "Let the rivers clap their hands; Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,"

**Lk. 19:40:** "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

But no rational person would argue that my "57 Chevy is a person," or that, "cupid," the moon, the sea, rivers, hills, or stones are living beings possessing personality.

D. **\*\* Some say the Holy Spirit is the personification of the Bible. They do this by constructing a chart like the one below that shows that the Holy Spirit and the Bible possess many of the same qualities. They then conclude that since they possess these common qualities, they are one and the same thing. **6,7****

Holy Spirit	Work/Action	Bible
2 Cor. 3:6	begets spiritual life	Jas. 1:18
Jn. 3:5-8	born again	1 Pet. 1:23
1 Cor 6:11	cleanses	Jn. 15:2-3
Jn. 16:8	convicts	Titus 1:9

Gal. 5:22	<b>faith</b>	Rom. 10:17
Neh. 9:20	<b>instructs</b>	2 Tim. 3:16-17
1 Cor. 6:11	<b>justifies</b>	Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:28
Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18	<b>leads</b>	Psa. 43:3; 119:105
Rom. 15:13	<b>power</b>	Rom. 1:16
1 Pet. 1:22	<b>purifies</b>	1 Pet. 1:22-25
1 Pet. 3:18; Jn. 6:63	<b>made alive</b>	Psa. 119:50
Rom. 8:11	<b>raised</b>	Jn. 5:28-29
Jn. 16:8	<b>reproves</b>	2 Tim. 4:2
Acts 7:51	<b>resists</b>	2 Tim. 3:8
1 Cor. 6:11	<b>sanctifies</b>	Jn. 17:17
Titus 3:5	<b>saves</b>	Jas. 1:21
Eph. 3:16	<b>strengthen</b>	Psa. 119:28
1 Cor. 2:13	<b>teaches</b>	2 Tim. 3:16-17
Jn. 15:26	<b>testifies</b>	Jn. 5:39
Gal. 5:16	<b>walks in</b>	Psa. 119:10
Rom. 8:16	<b>witnesses</b>	Jn. 5:39; 1 Jn. 5:6-8

- (1) Because two things have similar qualities does not mean they are the same.
- Identical twins have many similar qualities but are distinct persons.
  - At times, my computer has “a mind of its own”; my dog has “a mind of his own” and I may say that “my son has a mind of his own”; but that doesn’t mean my computer, my dog, and my son are one and the same!
- (2) **8** There are several qualities the Holy Spirit possesses that the God’s word does not; the **Holy Spirit**:
- ☛ Intercedes: **Rom. 8:26**: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”
  - ☛ Searches all things: **1 Cor. 2:10**: “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”
  - ☛ Distributes as He wills: **1 Cor. 12:11**: “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”
- (3) **\*\*** The Holy Spirit is NOT the Bible, rather He REVEALED the Bible: **1 Cor. 2:9-10**: “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”
- “The Spirit who dwelt with and knew the mind of God came to the apostles, dwelt in them, and revealed God’s will (mind, cvt) to them.” (p. 40, J. W. Shepherd, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: First Corinthians*)
- “He searches all things; ‘all things’ is not to be limited in any way; He possesses omniscience. To ‘search’ means ‘to conduct a thorough investigation.’ The basis on which the Holy Spirit was able to reveal the hidden wisdom of God was His thorough investigation of all things and, especially, of the deep things of God. This passage cannot be understood without distinguishing the Holy Spirit from God the Father and asserting the personality and omniscience of the Holy Spirit.” (p. 76, M. Willis, *A Commentary on Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*)

“The ‘depths’ of God refer to the innermost secrets of His will. Because the Spirit knows even the depths of God, He is perfectly qualified to serve as the revealer of His will. That wisdom, therefore, which was inaccessible to human reason is known because the Holy Spirit revealed it.” (p. 76, M. Willis, *A Commentary on Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*)

**1 Cor. 2:13:** “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches,”

“The salvation of man was wholly of and from God. Man’s wisdom was not permitted to furnish words through which the mind of God was spoken. The Spirit taught these things in words, and thus revealed them to the apostles who spoke them in the same words. So the Spirit guided them into the truth revealed (Jn. 16:13). (p. 40, J. W. Shepherd, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: First Corinthians*)

“The contrast is not between the manner in which the instruction was imparted to the apostles...the contrast is between the origin—man and Spirit! The method used by Paul to communicate God’s revelation (will, mind, cvt) was not taught to him by men but by the Holy Spirit; its source was divine and not human. (p. 79, M. Willis, *A Commentary on Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*)

- (4) The Bible is the REVELATION: **Eph. 3:3-4:** “how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),”
- (5) The Bible is the “sword of the Spirit,” not the Spirit Himself (i.e., an instrument or tool by which the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work in the scheme of redemption): **Eph. 6:17:** “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,”

E. Conclusion: The Holy Spirit is not a personification of God’s power in the form of the Word (Bible). Quite the contrary, the Holy Spirit is an omniscient person, a divine being who searched God’s mind and revealed it to man as Jesus Christ Himself promised (“the Comforter”; Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13, etc.).

### 3. **9** Is the Holy Spirit a person?

#### A. What is a person?

- (1) Definition of person: “One who has substance, completeness, self-existence, individuality and rationality. *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*: “the quality or state of being a person; personal existence.”
- (2) **\*\*** Five qualities or attributes of a person:
  - ① Substance: “something...which has discrete existence” (*Merriman-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*) A person with being, existence, reality. (e.g., in contrast to Santa Claus and the tooth fairy)
  - ② Completeness: “having all necessary parts, elements,” (*Merriman-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*) That which is only a part doesn’t satisfy the definition (e.g., by itself my arm is not a person).
  - ③ Self-existent: continued by one’s self, not by another (e.g., a robot possesses many attributes of a person, but does not possess “self-existence”).
  - ④ Individuality: “total character peculiar to and distinguishing an individual from others (personality)” “separate or distinct existence” (*Merriman-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*)
  - ⑤ Rationality: possesses an intellect, ability to reason; thus, excludes the non-intellectual (e.g., electricity, gravity, rocks, plants, or an “active force”).

- B. **10** Is the Holy Spirit an “it” or a “He”? Does the Holy Spirit possess the qualities or attributes of a person or of an “it”?

**Jn. 16:12-14:** “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** However, when **He**, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He** will guide you into all truth; for **He** will not speak on **His** own authority, but whatever **He** hears **He** will speak; and **He** will tell you things to come. **14** **He** will glorify Me, for **He** will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

- (1) Was Jesus mistaken?
  - (2) If the Holy Spirit was an “active force” why did Jesus in the space of three short verses use personal pronouns **NINE** times referring to the Holy Spirit?
- C. **\*\*** The Holy Spirit is a person: He possesses all 5 qualities and attributes that define a person; plus...

- (1) Holy Spirit has a **mind**: substance, completeness, self-existence, individuality, rationality.

**Rom. 8:27:** “Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

- (2) Holy Spirit has a **will**: substance, completeness, self-existence, individuality, rationality.

**1 Cor. 12:11:** “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

- (3) Holy Spirit can be **fellowshipped**: substance, completeness, self-existence, individuality, rationality.

**2 Cor. 13:14:** “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (NIV)

- (4) Holy Spirit possesses **emotions**: substance, completeness, self-existence, individuality, rationality.

**Rom. 15:30:** “Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,”

**Eph. 4:30:** “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

- (5) Holy Spirit has **feelings**: He can suffer slights and injuries; can you slight or injury an “it”?

**Matt 12:31:** “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.”

**Heb 10:29:** “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”

**Acts 5:3:** “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?’”

**Acts 7:51:** “You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.”

- (6) **11** The Holy Spirit is also a person who does things: (See Holy Spirit/Bible chart above):

☛ **He testifies:** **Jn. 15:26:** “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

☛ **HE convicts:** **Jn. 16:8:** “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

- ☛ **HE guides, hears, speaks, tells:** **Jn. 16:13:** “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”
- ☛ **HE glorifies, acts, declares:** **Jn. 16:14:** “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”
- ☛ **HE sends:** **Acts 13:3-4:** “Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”
- ☛ **HE exercises judgment** (i.e., expresses will): **Acts 15:28:** “For it seemed good (judgment, cvt) to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:”
- ☛ **HE forbids:** **Acts 16:6:** “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.”
- ☛ **12 HE leads:** **Rom. 8:14:** “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
- ☛ **HE bears witness:** **Rom. 8:16:** “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,”
- ☛ **HE helps, intercedes, groans:** **Rom. 8:26:** “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings (utterances, cvt) which cannot be uttered.”
- ☛ **HE searches:** **1 Cor. 2:10:** “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”
- ☛ **HE teaches:** **1 Cor. 2:13:** “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
- ☛ **HE works, distributes, wills:** **1 Cor. 12:11:** “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”
- ☛ **HE speaks expressly:** **1 Tim. 4:1:** “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,”
- ☛ **HE says:** **Rev. 22:17:** “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”

D. **Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is not an **it**, but a **person**. He possesses every characteristic or attribute of a person: substance, completeness, self-existence, individuality, rationality. An “it” or an “active force” does not and cannot possess all of these qualities and characteristics.

4. **13** Is the Holy Spirit a divine being? A divine person!

- A. **\*\* He is divine in name:** **Acts 5:3-4:** “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’”

**Matt 12:28:** “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”



**Jn 14:16:** “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever;”

- (1) Vine: “another” here is from *allos* not *heteros*.
- (2) Vine: “*Allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes another of the same sort; *heteros* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes another of a different sort. Christ promised to send “another Comforter” (*allos*, another like Himself, not *heteros*).”
- (3) The Holy Spirit was like Christ (i.e., divinity, a member of the Godhead).

B. **\*\* He is divine in power:**

- (1) To create: **Gen. 1:2:** “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

**Gen. 1:26:** “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;’” (Elohim, plural)

**Psa. 104:30:** “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.” **\*\***

### Godhead in Creation

#### One God, Three Persons

Gen. 1:1-26; Jn. 1:1-4; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:1-3



- (2) To work miracles: **Heb. 2:3-4:** “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”
- (3) To inspire prophets: **2 Pet. 1:21:** “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

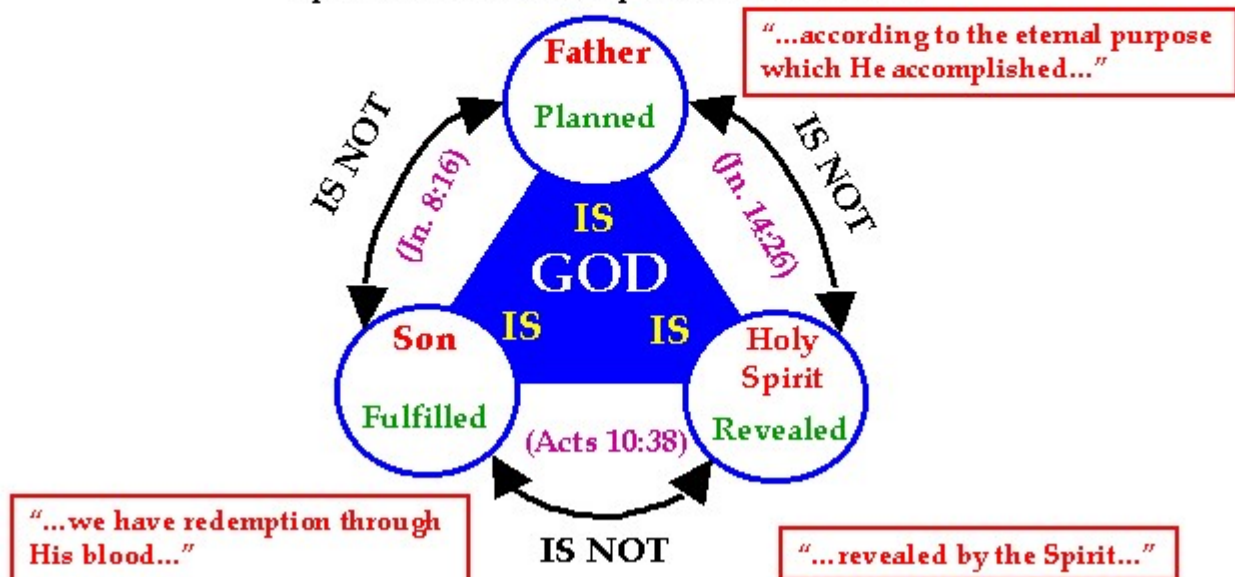
**1 Cor. 2:10, 12-13:** “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

C. \*\* He is divine in character:

- ☛ **ETERNAL:** **Heb 9:14:** “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
- ☛ **GOOD:** **Neh. 9:20:** “You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, And gave them water for their thirst.”  
**Matt. 19:17:** “So He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’”
- ☛ **OMNIPRESENT:** **Psa. 139:7-10:** “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.”
- ☛ **OMNISCIENT:** **1 Cor. 2:10-11:** “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. I I For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” \*\*

**Godhead in Salvation****One God, Three Persons**

Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 1, 3:1-5; 10-11; Col. 1



- (1) God the Father PLANNED salvation,
- (2) God the Son FULFILLED the plan of salvation,
- (3) God the Holy Spirit REVEALED the plan of salvation.

## D. SUMMARY: the Godhead are those “beings” possessing the “divine nature,” divinity, deity:

- ❶ God the Father
- ❷ God the Word (incarnate, Jn. 1:14, as God the Son; “Immanuel...’God with us””; Matt. 1:23)
- ❸ Holy Spirit



- E. Thus, the Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead which consists of three distinct persons that are one in nature, one in quality, and one in purpose.
- F. Each performs distinct and different offices in the work of creation and the work of salvation, yet, are ever in perfect harmony and unity.
- G. **Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is not just any person, He is a divine person. Because He possesses every characteristic of the divine nature (Godhead). He is divine in NAME; He is divine in POWER; He is divine in CHARACTER, and He is divine in WORK!

### III. CONCLUSION: 14

1. The Holy Spirit is not some vague, indefinable, ethereal, intangible, nebulous power or substance that enshrouds and permeates the universe like a mystical fog or emanates from God like some supernatural magnetic or electrical field.
  - A. Nor is He a mere influence, a formless impersonal power released in response to human needs.
  - B. Nor is He merely the personification of God's power or the Bible.
  - C. The Holy Spirit is a loving, divine being personally concerned about you and me!
 

**Rev. 22:17:** *"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."*
2. Won't you heed the Spirit's invitation today! What does the Spirit say?
  - A. He says we must hear the word: Rom. 10:17
  - B. He says we must believe (faith): Heb. 11:6
  - C. He says we must confess Jesus Christ with our mouth: Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37
  - D. He says we must repent of our sins: Acts 17:30; 2:38
  - E. He says we must be baptized: Acts 2:21; 22:16
  - F. He says we must remain faithful: **Col. 1:21-23:** *"And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight; 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."*
3. Don't you want the Spirit to bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Rom. 8:16
4. You can, **IF** you simply do what the Spirit has said in the magnificent salvation He has revealed.

Some of the material in this sermon was  
gleaned from Steve Rudd's website  
The Interactive Bible ([www.bible.ca](http://www.bible.ca)).

Figure 2 on page 4 was adapted from material  
on Steve Rudd's website: [www.bible.ca](http://www.bible.ca).