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The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Galatians 3:1-3

There certainly is a lot of misinformation being propagated concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit today.

We need to make sure to teach very clearly about all of the valuable ministries of the Holy Spirit. Charismatics sometimes claim that we do not believe in the Holy Spirit – they are so very wrong. We need Him and His ministry and His power.

We also need to make sure that we do not make a mockery of the Holy Spirit or claim that the work of devils is the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Charismatics do.

Paul asked some questions of these believers.

"Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?"

The word 'bewitched' doesn't necessarily mean that they were involved in the occult.

It means that they were fascinated or charmed away from the truth by someone or some teaching.

The Galatian believers had been drawn into thinking that they could live the Christian life in the flesh. Paul reminds us of the foolishness of such a notion.

And yet that is exactly what many Christians are doing.

The last resort is to turn to God.

The Holy Spirit and His power in our lives is ignored by many while they turn to the teachings of men and their own power to solve problems.

Much confusion also exists because of the crowd that will over-emphasize and misrepresent the true ministry of the Spirit.

The Spirit of God has a very important ministry in the lives of believers and should not be over-looked.

I. The Holy Spirit Saves and Sanctifies

A. The Holy Spirit is the Agent of salvation.

1. He produces conviction.

a. Conviction is an awareness of guilt regarding one's own sins.

b. Only God can produce that awareness.

c. Note: John 16:8-11

John 16:8-11

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

2. He empowers preaching.

a. The Holy Spirit empowers God's truth so that it penetrates the unbeliever's mind and begins to do its saving work.

b. He empowers both the preacher and the hearer, and both are necessary works of the Spirit of God.

c. Note: 1 Thess. 2:13

1 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it not as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

3. He regenerates hearts.
 - a. Example of Nicodemus in John 3:3-8
 - b. Note: Titus 3:5-6

Titus 3:5-6

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

God the Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration. We are born-again as children of God and entered into God's family at the moment of salvation.

John 3:5

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

You cannot enter the kingdom of God unless you are born of water - the physical birth - and of the Spirit - the spiritual birth.

B. The Holy Spirit is the Agent of Sanctification.

1. He indwells believers at the moment of salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Romans 8:9

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Since He indwells us, He works to guide us to a path of righteousness.

2. He baptizes believers into the Body of Christ.
 - a. The "body of Christ" refers to all who are saved in this age.
 - b. The Spirit of God places us into this body at the moment of Salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

At the moment of salvation we are baptized, immersed, into Christ.

3. He gives spiritual gifts to believers.
 - a. Spiritual gifts allow us to do spiritual service such as preaching, teaching, helps, etc.
 - b. Each believer has a unique combination of gifts especially suited to them by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The spiritual gifts are to be exercised in the believer's local church.

4. He secures every believer's eternal inheritance.

Ephesians 1:13-14

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

We are sealed and we have the earnest of the Spirit to assure us of God's love and guarantee to keep His promises to us.

5. He sanctifies believers.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

2 Corinthians 3:18

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Christian life begins in the power of the Spirit that's why we should never try to reach spiritual maturity apart from His power.

As we walk with Him, seek His power and focus our attention on the Word of God (with Him as our teacher) we are changed into the image of Christ.

II. The Holy Spirit Provides Access to God

A. The importance of access.

Galatians 4:5-9

⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

⁷ Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

⁸ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Access to God implies intimacy with God – we are now children and can call Him Abba.

God is the provider of any spiritual resources, so we must be close to Him.

Our needs can't be satisfied by natural means.

Only God can supply those needs, and He's available to us through the Holy Spirit.

B. The means of access.

1. Through prayer we have direct access to God.

2. Through God's written Word we have access to God also.

Psalm 16:11

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 27:4

4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

C. The benefits of access to God.

We have fellowship with God, and as we pursue that fellowship we experience all the provisions we need for a healthy Christian life.

We have resources for every need.

Matthew 6:11-13

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Philippians 4:19

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

James 1:5

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Proverbs 3:5-6

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

III. The Holy Spirit Illuminates Scripture

A. Illumination is necessary.

1. Having intimacy with God is wonderful, but it must be a two-way conversation.

2. We speak to Him in prayer, but He speaks to us through His Word.

3. It is the Spirit of God who opens our minds to God's Word and makes it come alive to us as God speaks through its pages.

Read:

1 John 2:20-27

1 Corinthians 2:9-14

Scripture is sufficient to supply all God wants us to know about Himself and His will for our lives.

But Scripture must be illuminated by the Holy Spirit if we are to understand it.

The Spirit works through the Word of God to accomplish His purposes in our lives.

When we became Christians, God's Spirit

- convicted us of our sins,
- and regenerated us.
- He then indwelt,
- baptized,
- sealed,
- gifted,
- and separated us from sin.
- He gives us access to God, who supplies all we need for physical and spiritual life.
- He illuminates our understanding of God's Word so that we are transformed by its principles as He applies them to our lives.

He is our source of spiritual power.

Unfortunately, many Christians do not depend on the Spirit's ministry to answer to their problems.

But there are no shortcuts to godliness.

We must allow the Spirit of God to transform us through God's Word and His ministry. That is how we grow as Christians.