Our God, Our Guard, Our Guide: Functions of the Holy Spirit Pt 1

Many Christians rarely think about the Holy Spirit; or at least think less. God the Father we know about. God the Son we think about all the time. But God the Holy Spirit? Imagine how may fewer songs sung to Him, fewer meditations about Him, and fewer offerings of praise to Him.

This may be because so much focus is placed on knowing the Father and the Son, that knowing the Holy Spirit is sometimes given meager attention. As a result, there are many misconceptions about the identity of the Holy Spirit: that He is merely a mystical force, an impersonal power, or a promoter of show-stopping signs.

Those who challenge the idea that the Holy Spirit is God suggest that the Holy Spirit may simply be an impersonal force of some kind, a source of power controlled by God but not fully a person Himself. Others suggest that perhaps the Holy Spirit is just another name for Jesus, in spirit form, apart from His body.

Many mischaracterize the Holy Spirit in this way based upon subtle misinterpretations of scripture **(Micah 3:8; Lk 1:35).** While strangely, to deny one person of the Holy Trinity is to deny the others. Likewise, to deny the personhood of the Holy Spirit is the equivalent to denying the divinity of Jesus.

The Spirit of God was present at and involved in creation **(Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6).** The Holy Spirit moved the prophets of God with the words of God **(2 Ptr 1:21).** Those in Christ are described as temples of God because the Holy Spirit is in us (1 Corinthians 6:19). Jesus was clear that to be "born again," to become a Christian, one must be born "of the Spirit" **(John 3:5).**

While the scriptures don't use the specific term "trinity", there are numerous biblical references to the triune or tripartite essence and nature of God, in three persons **(Gen 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Is 48:16; Mt 3:16-17; Mt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).** The entirety of our Christian faith is based upon God as Father, God as Son and God as Holy Spirit.

These three function in perichoresis *[per-uh-ker-ee-sis],* the mutual indwelling, interpenetration, and perfect unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while maintaining their distinct identities. This is the "divine dance" where they harmoniously dwell within one another in an intimate inseparable union without losing their individual identities.

This points to the reality that the Holy Spirit is not a "thing", used by God, that serves His purpose in a lesser capacity or a lesser function. He is a person. He is God. This challenges our understanding, not of His role, but of His identity and our relationship to Him as equally God **(Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 3:17-18).**

The Holy Spirit desires as much relationship with and reciprocal interaction, as does the Father and the Son. He deserves as much praise and glory, as does the Father and Son. He feels the same about us, and the lack of these, as does the Father and the Son **(Mt 23:37).**

The scriptures argue definitively for His personhood. He has a will (**1 Cor 12:4-7**), a rational mind (**Rom 8:26-27**), makes choices (**1 Cor 12:11**), uses His mind to search the deep things of God (**1 Cor 2:10-13**), counsels (**Jn 14:16**), teaches (**Jn 14:26**), guides (**Jn 16:13**), reveals Jesus (**Jn 16:14**), convicts (**Jn 16:8**).

And He has fellowship with believers (**2 Cor 13:14**). His presence and influence can be resisted (**Acts 7:51**), He can be blasphemed (**Mt 12:31**), lied to (**Acts 5:3-4**), quenched (**1 Thess 5:19**), grieved (**Eph 4:30**). Clearly, the Spirit is a person, just as the Father and Son.

When we begin to embrace this relational embrace of the Holy Spirit, it will make a great deal of difference in our lives if we know that we are being indwelt and led and purified not by impersonal forces from a distant God, but by a person who in His essence is the love of God (**Romans 5:5; 1 John 4:12–13).**

While He may not have a physical body like Jesus had during His season of incarnation, He is a person who has eternally lived in an intimate relationship with God the Father and God the Son. And perpetually, He invites each of us to participate in that dynamic relationship of love.

Take time to listen for the Spirit. Don't wait for an audible voice but listen as he speaks through the Word. Learn to understand what many call "the prompts" and "the checks" of the Spirit. You can experience these because the Spirit, as a divine person, has taken a personal interest in you. Why because He is God and shares the same love for His creation.

Why is it so important to believe in the deity and personhood of the Holy Spirit? It is crucial because you cannot give Him the honor and respect that He deserves if you don't consider Him a divine person. The one born of the Spirit is said to be born of God. The words of God are the words the Holy Spirit inspired. We are the temple of God because the Spirit indwells us.