



God - All Three (Trinity)



What we're going to look at in this Sub-Series is:

- The 'Operation' of the Holy Spirit.



Operation: What does he do?

How does he operate / function?

What are his jobs?

How does he relate with us?

ONLY 25 PERCENT OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN PART BECAUSE THEY'VE RELEGATED THEMSELVES TO THE SIDELINES AS MERE "EXTRAS" IN GOD'S KINGDOM WORK. BUT HERE'S HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE.

BY JEFF KENNEDY

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

in the *existence* of the Holy Spirit? Barna also found that younger generations were less likely to believe in and engage with the Spirit. This statistic is alarming when we consider the mass exodus from church life among 18- to 34-year-olds in America.

This means that for most professing Christians the Holy Spirit is nothing more than a symbol of the faith—a dove on a stained-glass window. This "Spirit-less" version of Christianity is dangerous for several reasons.

First, it compromises biblical truth. Jesus told Nicodemus that unless he was born again by the Spirit, he would never enter God's kingdom (John 3:3, 5-8). The church was born on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of God baptized and filled every believer (Acts 2:2). The Christian faith is a lot of things, but it is *nothing* without the Spirit. We may engrave His name in the bedrock of our historic creeds, but without His presence we are not of Christ at all.

Second, Spirit-less Christianity jettisons our mandate. Christianity is not a nice family religion. It is a living, active and missional enterprise. God did not send Jesus so that you and I could inherit a harmless delusion that makes us feel better when we're sad. If we make the mistake of treating the Spirit as nothing more than a theological abstraction, an amorphous concept or a vague idea, we will utterly fail to disciple the nations and the next generation. This is why Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Father's promise—God's empowering presence (Acts 1:4-8). Take the Holy Spirit away from the church, and all we're left with is a grace-deficient, family-based cult.

How did we get here? I suggest that the widespread incredulity of the next generation is the fruit of the previous generation's marginalization of the Spirit.

We've ignored Him as a present reality in our midst even while insisting that parishioners learn rightly *about* Him. In effect, we've barred would-be worshippers and ministers of the gospel from the fullness of the Spirit's experience while teaching them the Apostles' Creed.

Though the reasons for this are multifaceted, a prominent culprit is a particularly faulty paradigm that dominates American churches today. Somehow we've bought into the idea that there are superstar ministers who are gifted by the Holy Spirit to do God's "real" work—and then there's the rest of us.

Let me explain.

Red-Shirt Christians

As a kid, I was mesmerized by the cult classic TV show *Star Trek*. I wanted to be Captain Kirk and command the starship *Enterprise*. I wanted to spend my life as an intrepid explorer, voyaging through space, going on away missions, meeting new aliens, killing Klingons—all with inspiring theme music playing in the background.

After watching the first 20 episodes of *Star Trek*, I began to notice certain patterns in the show. Almost every episode had a crisis of cosmic scope where the spaceship *Enterprise* was threatened with destruction and Kirk and Spock had to figure out an ingenious solution. And no episode would be complete without an away team beaming down to the planet surface. The away teams usually consisted of Kirk in a khaki shirt, Spock and McCoy in blue shirts, and a couple of security guards in red shirts. I noticed the red-shirt security officers almost never came back from away missions but would get killed by the bad guys. The main characters always seemed to be smart enough or fortunate enough to cheat death. But those poor red-shirt guys just couldn't keep up. At some point the show's creators decided that the red-shirts were expendable. These disposable extras existed to prop up the stars. In fact, the red-shirt guys

You can't believe in all that Spirit mumbo-jumbo!" my friend Kevin said. We were having an intense conversation over whether the Holy Spirit was real or not.

"Just seems like a bunch of nonsense," he grouched, rolling his eyes and folding his arms.

Now, Kevin wasn't a hardened atheist or a confused agnostic. He was a self-identified believer in Jesus who went to church with his family on occasion. He had no problem relating to God as a heavenly Father or believing that Jesus died for his sins. But the notion that God is presently at work in us by the person of the Holy Spirit sounded like religious jargon to him.

We may be tempted to chalk this up as an extreme case. Regrettably this example is the rule, not the exception. The Barna Group found that only 25 percent of American Christians believe

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Even though they are one: Each of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit operate and relate differently with the human race.

- 1. Each one has their jobs / office.**
- 2. In most areas, they don't cross the lines of doing each others work.**
- 3. Because they're one: most things (attitudes, desires, attributes, abilities, etc.) about God are the same with all of them, but each one relates with man the same, and differently.**
 - a. We'll talk a little more about that next Sunday.**

#1 – Understanding God.

**(Attributes and Characteristics that
apply to all Three)**

#2 - Understanding the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit

(Primary Focus: The Father)

#3 - Understanding the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit

(Primary Focus: The Son)

#4 - Understanding the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit

(Primary Focus: The Holy Spirit)