



The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

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Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, part 1

By Ted Johnston - May 28, 2020 (from <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2020/05/holy-spirit-part-1.html>)

This post begins a series presenting "**The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit**," an essay by **Dr. Gary Deddo, President of Grace Communion Seminary**.

Seeking to understand and know the Holy Spirit is a wonderful, rewarding endeavor. It ties in with every aspect of the Christian faith and life. But if ever there was a topic we are likely never to get to the bottom of, this one would qualify. The very name of this Divine Person, the Holy Spirit, already tells us that we're in pretty deep. But we do have a good amount of insight given to us by biblical revelation that can inform our understanding and help us stay away from pure speculation. God has seen fit to reveal himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and has provided and preserved teaching about the Holy Spirit. Because he wants us to know, trust and worship him, we by faith can dare to pursue understanding on that basis. But we proceed only by God's grace.

In this essay we will touch on only a few key points that address questions that are, first, foundational to our faith in the Holy Spirit and are, second, of more immediate importance given current discussions and debates. Hopefully, this essay will also help keep further explorations and other discussions in perspective. We will not be able in a short space to offer anything near a comprehensive view, so regard this as more of a beginning than an ending.

I'd like to start by recalling the passage in the Gospel of John where Jesus, trying to explain to Nicodemus something foundational regarding the nature and work of the Spirit, says this: **"Truly, I say to you, unless you are born of water and the Spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God."** Jesus continues, **"That which is born of flesh is flesh, that which is born of Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born anew [from above]. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit"** (John 3:5-8).

Nicodemus wants to understand how God works. Jesus tells him that how God works with us is by the Holy Spirit. But Nicodemus is not exactly satisfied with that answer. He wants to know, if he can, how then the Spirit works. Jesus' answer to that how question amounts to him saying: How the Spirit works is like trying to talk about how the wind works. We see the effects, but we know very little about it, not even where it was a few moments ago, or where it will end up going a few moments later. The Spirit is not predictable or controllable by us. We don't and can't have an answer as to how the Spirit works, the mechanics of it. Apparently the how question is the wrong one to ask. And, given Jesus' reply to Nicodemus, we can assume that it's not necessary for us to know either, even to receive the benefits of the working of the Spirit.

Jesus' "no-explanation" answer does makes sense. How can we possibly put in words, concepts and ideas something about the Spirit given that it is like the wind? You can't actually predict its movement or say much about it except that "it blows where it wills." The Spirit has a mind of his own! I think that's part of our experience. The wind of the Spirit blows where it wills. We did not necessarily see it coming and don't necessarily see exactly where it's going to go. So it is with the Spirit.

So why not just stop right there? Well, in some cases I think that might be the right thing to do. There is a lot of speculation taking place, especially about how the Spirit works. However, we are given other words and descriptions in biblical revelation that refer to the Holy Spirit. But not surprisingly, they don't tell us how the Spirit works nor especially how to bring the Spirit under our control or how we can influence or predict the working of the Spirit. Rather, most of what we are given relates to the nature and purpose and character of the Spirit, not the mechanics of his working. All sorts of problems can be avoided if we simply pay attention to what biblical revelation actually tells us and resist using what we discover in ways that actually disregard Jesus' own teaching on the limits of our knowledge of the Holy Spirit's wind-like working.

Sometimes, people think the Holy Spirit gets less attention than deserved -- the short end of the stick, as we say, or short-shrift. The complaint that the Spirit is under-represented can be heard both at the levels of theological discussion as well as at the daily and practical level of church life. That's a perfectly good concern to raise. We should be aware and take to heart all we are told regarding the Spirit. Neglecting any part of biblical witness is not a good idea. Faith seeks whatever understanding of the Spirit we are given, as in any other part of the Christian faith. But we can ask the counter question as well: Is it true that in practice and preaching we don't properly emphasize the Holy Spirit? If so, in what ways do we fail to give the Spirit sufficient attention? And, what measure or criteria can we use to evaluate whether or not we have under (or over) emphasized the Holy Spirit?

Whether or not we give full attention is best gauged by the norm of biblical teaching. We can look to Scripture to weigh its own emphasis on the Spirit relative to other matters. We can also consider the full range of insights it actually presents us. Then we can compare our own current emphasis and range of teaching to the pattern and proportion found there. While we will not be able to conclude with something like a numerical measurement, I think there will be many indicators in biblical teaching that can greatly assist us in our process of discernment. And of course, we can also borrow understanding on this matter from teachers of the church down through the ages, including our present time as their teaching seems in alignment with biblical revelation considered as a whole.

Now, if there is some kind of deficit, then we'll also need to explore how best to correct for that lack. We'll need to discern this issue as well, because there are various ways to correct for it. But some correctives aren't as useful or faithful as others. And some promoted in recent times have seemed not only speculative but harmful to the health of the Body of Christ. But again, biblical teaching can help us in discerning how best to make any kind of corrective called for.

What are the basics of revelation about the Holy Spirit?

Recall that any theology built on biblical revelation must seek first and foremost to answer the question of who the God of the Bible is, for that is its central concern and controlling topic. Biblical revelation is not geared nearly as much to answer the questions of how or why, where or when. So our understanding must also begin by seeking to know first who the Holy Spirit is.

Let's begin with a review of the most basic truths we have been given about the Holy Spirit. Most fundamentally we are told about the Spirit's relationship with the Father and the Son. And those relationships identify who the Spirit of God is. Who is the Spirit? The Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The Spirit is one with the Father and one with the Son. Jesus is conceived by the Spirit, he has the Spirit for us, and he ministers in and by the Spirit even in his atoning work on the Cross. Jesus and the Father send the Spirit to us. The Spirit takes us to the Father through the Son. By the Spirit we are united to Christ so that we share in his life, life in fellowship and communion with the Father. And we share, by the Spirit, in Jesus' ongoing ministry in the church and in the world.

Notice that what Jesus teaches Nicodemus (and us) fits the overall pattern of revelation about the Spirit throughout Scripture. Nicodemus wanted to know how one can be "born again" or "born from above." But Jesus' response indicates that such how questions can't really be answered in connection with the Spirit! Nicodemus is not told how the Spirit blows to bring us new life. Rather, Jesus' answer to his how question identifies who is behind the how. But Jesus does describe in a comprehensive way the effect of the working of the Spirit, namely, bringing us a new kind of life.

The Gospel of John goes on to shed even more light on the relationship of the Spirit to Jesus and to the Father which includes the inter-relationship of their missions and ministries. These relationships are especially prominent in chapters 13-17. The central concern throughout this Gospel remains their conjoint relationships. They are inseparable, always being together and always working together.

One in being, united in act

Borrowing now from the more developed doctrine of the Trinity, we can say that the three Divine Persons of the Trinity are "one in being." This technical phrase helps us to remember there are not three Gods, but only one. So, the Spirit isn't a separate God that has his own independent mind, his own action, his own plan, and his own purpose. The Spirit is joined in one being and so joined in one mind, action, plan, and purpose with the Father and the Son. Even the name, Holy Spirit, indicates to us the unity of the Spirit with Father and Son, since only God has the name Holy.

The point here is not to let our minds think about the Holy Spirit as an independent operator. That's one of the biggest mistakes that we can make. Always remember, whatever the Spirit does, wherever the Spirit is at work, that Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, because they are one in being. They do not act separately, apart from one another. They act out of one shared mind, heart, purpose in unity with each other. St. Augustine famously summarized this in the fourth century: "All the works of God are inseparable."

A number of special phrases have been used down through the ages to convey the oneness or unity of the divine Persons besides saying that they are "one in being." They are said to "co-exist." They "co-inhere" in one another. They "in-exist" one another, or they "mutually in-dwell" one another. They "co-envelop" one another, or "mutually interpenetrate" each other. Their oneness of being has been expressed by saying that the whole God is present in each of the Divine Persons. The whole God is present in the Father. The whole God is present in the Son. The whole God is present in the Spirit. That's all to say: they're one in being even though they're distinguishable, we say, in person. An early creed sums it up this way: the Triune God is a Unity in Trinity and a Trinity in Unity.

Sharing all the divine attributes

This means that the Holy Spirit is fully and completely divine and has from all eternity all the attributes that the Father and the Son have. The Spirit is not subordinate or less than the others. All that you can say of the Father, such as being omniscient, holy, omnipotent, eternal, and even being a Creator, can all be said of the Spirit (and can all be said of the Son). Dividing up among the Persons the attributes of God and the actions of God towards creation is ruled out because they are one in being.

That's a hard rule for us to follow because we have developed poor habits of thinking and speaking in the church, and likely were never taught otherwise. We also like to divide things up and align certain attributes or actions with the Father and others with the Son or the Spirit. A typical way we do this is by saying the Father creates, the Son redeems and the Spirit perfects or sanctifies. We might think the Father is just and holy in comparison to the Son who is merciful and gracious. However, if we take such a division of labor in a strict way, we would be embracing a very inaccurate, even misleading way of speaking about God. The distinct Persons of the Trinity do not have separate jobs or wear different hats or play different roles they accomplish by themselves. God acts as the one being that God is. His being does not fragment in mind, will, purpose or action.

So, to repeat, everything you can say about the eternal nature and character of the Father, you can say about the Son and you can say about the Spirit. They are each all powerful, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, good, merciful, righteous, holy. They are all to be worshiped together because they're one in being. So we can say of our worship, we worship the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. Or, we pray to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. And we proclaim that the Father has redeemed us through the Son and in the Spirit. The whole God is our Savior.

The unity of the being and so of action, character and attributes of God is one of the most fundamental things to hold on to and to watch out for when we go on to say other things about the Spirit. We want to avoid talking as if the Divine Persons are separate, wear different hats have divergent purposes or as if they're operating independently of one another. Simply remembering they're one in being will prevent a lot of problems down the theological road.

Part 2 *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit,*

[Last time](#), we noted that every act of God, whether in creation, redemption or bringing about the perfection of creation itself, is done together as one God. But how then are we to understand those places in Scripture that ascribe certain acts of God to one of the divine Persons? Take, for example, the Incarnation. The Father and the Spirit are never said to be incarnate, as is the Son. Note also that the Spirit seems to descend on Pentecost and indwell the believing church in a way distinct from the Son and the Father. The explanation in these two and similar examples is that all three of the divine Persons are involved together in all the acts of God, but often in different (distinct, unique) ways.

How are the divine Persons distinct?

Scripture leads us to understand that each of the divine Persons contributes to the unified act of God from their own, particular "angle." We could say that one "takes the lead" in certain actions: the Father in Creation, the Son

in atonement, the Spirit in perfecting creation. But we can only say that if we aren't thinking of the three Persons as acting separately, or as being out of phase with the others. The three Persons always act in a conjoint way. Theologians call this the doctrine of appropriation. An act can be appropriated to the Person of the Trinity who takes the lead, as long as the other two are not regarded as having nothing to do with it, but are co-involved, each in their own way.

We should not think that the contribution to an act of God by one of the Persons is what constitutes their being as a distinct Person in the Trinity. For example, it is an error to think that being the Creator is what makes the Father different in Person from the Son, or that being Incarnate is what makes the Son different in Person from the Father. The Father is the Father, the Son is the Son, and the Spirit is the Spirit, whether or not they perform any actions external to their own triune being. The three Persons are distinguished by their internal relationships, not by their external actions. The being of God is not dependent upon God's relationship to that which is external to God.

So, as long as we don't leave the Son and the Spirit behind, we can say the Father leads in creation. We can also say the Son leads in our redemption. But if we think the Father is absent or has a different view, attitude, purpose or intention for the Cross than does the Son, then we've split the Trinity apart, placed them at odds with one another! Even in Jesus' earthly life, we need to remember that he only does what he sees the Father doing. He only says what the Father is saying. They're saying things together. They're doing things together. They're never separate because they're one in being.

The work of the Son

It is proper to say the Son takes the lead and that only the Son is incarnate. So, we can affirm that the Son physically suffers on the cross and not the Father or Spirit. Not being incarnate in our humanity, they cannot physically suffer and die. But, if we think the Father is absent or the Spirit has gone on vacation and isn't around when Jesus is on the Cross, then we've strayed way off the theological path. The Spirit and the Father are present with Jesus, each in their own non-incarnate way. So, Jesus says, **"Father into your hands, I commend my Spirit."** **In the book of Hebrews we read, "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to worship the living God (Heb. 9:14).** They're all acting together in Christ's redeeming work. Yes, we can say one leads. But don't let them fall apart just because one is leading.

The work of the Spirit

We can say that the Spirit perfects. However, we must also say that he perfects human beings with the perfection accomplished by Christ. The Spirit shares with us the holiness and the sanctification of Jesus, himself, in our humanity. He doesn't give us a spiritualized or divine perfection, a non-bodily, inhuman existence. But rather the Spirit joins us to Christ's glorified human body, mind and soul. The Spirit makes us to share in Jesus' self-sanctification. The work of the Spirit is not separate from the work of the Son, but the Spirit does lead in dwelling in us now.

Beware the error of tritheism

Though we can talk about the Spirit leading, we must not think of the Spirit branching off, saying, "Father and Son, you've done a good job over there, but now I've got to go do something over here that you don't have anything to do with. It's my turn to do my own thing." That's a mistake. That could only happen if God wasn't one in being and was three beings—tritheism! We don't want to go there. We can distinguish between the various contributions the Father, the Son and the Spirit make by the way they take their lead, but we don't want to separate them or place them in any kind of opposition or in tension with each other. And we don't want to say that their differing contributions to what they accomplish together are what make them distinct in Person from all eternity.

As so we distinguish but we don't separate. The Divine Persons are one in being and distinct in Person, both in their internal and eternal being and in terms of what they do in creation, redemption, and consummation.

Beware projecting on God

Why do we get tripped up in this? I think there are a number of reasons, but one is that we tend to think of God in ways we think of ourselves. We start with ourselves, then try to get to our understanding of God. Think of how we usually distinguish ourselves from each other. How do I know I'm not you and you're not me? I note that you have a different body. You're over there, and I'm over here. You do this, but I do that. You live there, but I live here. You think that's funny, but I don't. I want X, but you want Y. We're different in all these ways, and that's how we know we are distinct persons.

So we can project this perspective on God, and think that's how the Father, Son and Spirit are distinguished. The Father is over here, the Spirit's over there. The Father wants A, and the Son wants B. They each have different jobs to do. We try to distinguish them from each other in the same way we distinguish ourselves. The problem is, God is not a creature like we are. So, you can't just take the idea of how we distinguish ourselves and apply that reasoning to God. Thinking that way would only work if God was a creature. But he is not.

Names and relations

The essential way we have been given to distinguish between the divine Persons is by means of their different names: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These names reveal a difference of their Persons. That is also why we believe there are three, not four or two Persons in the Godhead. The names we are given in Scripture are revelatory of real differences in God. They are not just arbitrary words, concepts, ideas, or conventional labels. So we address God in worship, in prayer, by means of these three names. And in doing so, we follow Jesus' example and instruction. He uses these names in his relationship to the Father and the Spirit, and directs us to do so as well. So he instructs us: **"Pray like this: Our Father in heaven..."**

Notice that divine names represent unique relationships. The Father has a different relationship with the Son than the Son has with the Father. And the Spirit has a different relationship to the Father than does the Son. The names identify and reveal to us unique relationships. Following biblical teaching, we can also find distinct designations for the different relationships.

Corresponding to the Father is the relationship of begetting to the Son. Begetting is the special term used to describe more particularly how the Son comes from the Father. The Father begets the Son. Begetting indicates a certain kind of relationship. For instance, in the early church they recognized that begetting is different from making. What is made is of a different kind of thing than the maker. But what is begotten is of the identical kind of being. So we say that the Son is begotten, indicating a unique kind of relationship to the Father. The Son doesn't beget the Father and the Father isn't begotten by the Son. They each have a different relationship with each other and that difference of relationship, which is internal and eternal to God, is what makes them personally distinct from one another. The Father begets (is not begotten of the Son). The Son is begotten (does not beget the Father).

The unique names and relationships identify who the divine Persons are. They are who they are in relationship with each other. Without the relationships with each other, they would not be who they are. And they are not interchangeable. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father. Being the begetter and being the begotten one are different and not reversible. There is a direction to the relationships that can't be reversed. You can't say the Son begets the Father. The Son has always been the begotten Son. The Father has always begotten the Son. The Son is eternally the Son, and the Father, eternally Father. That's why we can say they are the divine Persons of Father and Son.

But the words/names don't themselves explain everything. They represent what we have to go on and explain, namely, what they do and don't mean as far as we can tell. In the case of the Father and Son, we have to rule out, or "think away" as Athanasius said, some aspects of the meaning of the words begotten or begetting as used of human creatures. Among creatures these words include the idea of a time sequence. But when it comes to God, the aspect of time does not apply. God is eternal and so, then, are the Divine Persons. So the Father generates the Son from all eternity.

Time sequence doesn't apply to God. There never was a time when the Son was not. The Son was always the begotten Son of the Father, which is simply to say the Son is eternally the Son and the Father is eternally the Father, begetting the Son. The discipline of theology is to discern where and how words used to refer to God must be used differently from how they are used of creatures. This would be impossible if we did not have biblical revelation to lead us.

The Holy Spirit proceeds (spirates)

Now what about the Holy Spirit? There has always been the Spirit who has eternal relationships with the Father and the Son. We use a special word to talk about those relationships, a word given in the New Testament; we say the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and, or through, the Son ([John 15:26](#)). Another word has also been used down through the ages to indicate that unique relationship, "**spirates**." These words indicate unique and non-interchangeable relationship. The name and relationship indicate who the Spirit is. The Spirit would not be the Spirit without spirating from the Father and the Son. And the Father and Son wouldn't be Father and Son without the Spirit proceeding. The relationship of the Spirit is essential to who the Spirit is and so to who the Triune God is.

We likely want to ask, "So how does that work? How does a procession work in God?" We don't actually know. We can't say exactly how it is different from begetting or being begotten. Along with the name, Holy Spirit, the word procession indicates that there is a unique kind of relationship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, one that is different from the relationship of the Son to the Father. It indicates that the Spirit is from the Father and/through, the Son in such a way that the Son and Father do not proceed from the Spirit and are not the Spirit. With this unique relationship, the Spirit is not interchangeable with the other Persons. And it means that the Holy Spirit has always been the Holy Spirit. We affirm in this way that God has always been a Trinity. There never was a time when God was not Triune.

Conclusion: triune relations

The three divine Persons eternally exist in absolutely unique relationships and that is what is essential to their being distinct Persons. That's it. They have unique relations. Each has a different relationship with the other two. We don't know how to explain all that, what that means, but we use unique words because there are unique relations. And that's also why we address them according to their unique names that correspond with the relations. The Father is the Father, not the Son. The Son is the Son, not the Father. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. We have unique names to indicate the unique persons and they have unique relationships and they're not interchangeable.

When God through Jesus says, to address him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we're being told something. The triune name identifies who God is, which God we're speaking of, and even what kind of god that God is. God is the Triune God. That's the only God that is or has ever been. God is Father, Son and Spirit. The Father is the Father. The Son is the Son. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit. Don't separate them -- they are one in being. But don't collapse them into one Person with no relationships -- they are distinct in Person.

Who is the Spirit? (Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, part 3)

(from <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/>)

By Ted Johnston - June 24, 2020

This post continues a series presenting "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" by Dr. Gary Deddo, President of Grace Communion Seminary. For other posts in the series, click <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2020/05/holy-spirit-part-1.html>

You have probably heard the triune God referred to as *one in three and three in one*. Though that is not an incorrect statement, it's easily misunderstood. Why? Because it can sound as if we are stating that God is both three and one of the exact same thing. But that makes no sense. God is not one being and three beings; nor is God one person and three persons. To avoid misunderstandings, it's better to say that the triune God is ***one in being and three in divine Persons***. Let's explore what this means as we continue this series on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.



Perichoresis (source unknown)

Fundamental to the discipline of theology is making sure we don't talk about God as if God was a creature. This way of disciplining our thinking takes some time and effort to catch on to, and that is why GCI takes great care in teaching people to think about God *according to God's nature*. That means, for example, not thinking about God as a big human being in the sky.

God is three divine Persons

The doctrine of the Trinity asserts that God is *three divine Persons*. What does that mean? We begin by noting that God is not a "person" the way we are. As humans, we are images of God, but God is not an image of us. Because divine Persons are not exactly the same as human persons, we have to distinguish them.

Were God three persons exactly like we are persons, then God would be three beings, since human persons are separate beings. When speaking about God, we're not using the word "person" in exactly the same way we do about ourselves.

In speaking of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as divine (not human) Persons, we affirm that these personal names and personal relationships between the three Persons reveal the reality of who God is.

God knows himself as Father, Son and Spirit. There are real and eternal relationships in God which Scripture characterizes in several ways including mutual knowing, loving, glorifying, and oneness.

What we think about human persons in living, loving and holy relationship with each other does, to a degree, reflect the truth about God in the sense that God is more like a community of three human persons than like any other created thing. We could switch this around and say that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the original and real Persons, and since we are somewhat like them, we can borrow the term "person" to speak of ourselves as individual human creatures. That said, we must be careful to note that God is not like a single, lonely, isolated individual.

God is one in being

As individual human persons, we do not, and we cannot have the same kind of unity (oneness) with other persons that the three divine Persons have. Their unity is their being -- *the three divine Persons are one in being*. The sense of unity we experience as human persons cannot match that.

The kind of unity of God revealed in Christ was so unique that the church teachers eventually came up with a unique word to represent that one-of-a-kind unity. That word is *perichoresis*. It is Greek and often is not translated because it has a unique meaning that can't exactly be translated. It means most literally to *envelope* one another or to *make space* for one another. It has also been translated as *mutually indwelling* each other, or having a *coinherence* in each other, or *in-existing* in one another. This language represents Jesus' teaching that he is "in the Father and the Father is in [him]" (**John 14:11**). It is also just what we see lived out in the Gospels as we watch and hear Jesus in his dynamic relationship with the Father and the Spirit. This unique unity has also been explained by saying that *the whole of God, all three Persons, are present in each of the Persons*. So, each in being is fully God even though distinct in Person so that there is a real relationship and exchange going on from all eternity between the three divine Persons. As the Athanasian Creed summed it up: the unity of God is a Trinity and the Trinity of God is a Unity. We can try to put this into a single word: God's unity is a *tri-unity*.

Given this tri-unity, everything we can say about the Spirit, we can say about the Father (or the Son), except that the Spirit is not the Father (or the Son). Why? Because the divine Persons mutually indwell one another, and so are equally God -- equally and together God. They have an absolutely unique kind of unity so that they are distinct in divine Person but united in being. Unlike creatures, the unity of being doesn't undo the difference of Person and the distinction of Person doesn't undo the unity of being. Remembering this will help us get our language squared away so that we don't grossly misrepresent who God is.

What kind of God is the triune God?

The doctrine of the Trinity, so far as it goes, faithfully identifies who God is. However, its purpose is to protect the mystery of God's nature, not explain it away. That said, when we add up what the doctrine asserts, we are given significant, biblically accurate understanding about the kind of God that God is. It declares that God has his being by being a fellowship, a communion of divine Persons. The biblical witness then shows us that all the relationships that flow from God's being are forms of love. Begetting, being begotten and proceeding are all relationships of loving exchange. This is why we can say with John that *God is love*. We also can see what Jesus means, and why he says he loves the Father and the Father has loved him from all eternity. It makes sense that Jesus tells us that as the Father has loved him, so he loves us; and that as he has loved us, so we ought to love one another. No wonder then that the ways of the people of God can be comprehensively summed up in the two commands to love God and love neighbor.

The relationships internal and external to God are filled with holy loving. God is a fellowship kind of God -- a communion kind of God. God is not a lonely being floating out there from all eternity "looking for someone to love." God is the fullness of holy love, the fullness of fellowship and communion. Bringing it all together, we can say that the Father and Son have their fellowship and communion in the Holy Spirit.

The triune God who in his being is love, is very different than an isolated individual God who can't love until there is something else outside of God to love. The God that is fullness of fellowship is very different from one who exists with no internal and external relationships, one in whom there is no

giving and receiving, in whom there is no exchange of knowing, loving, glorifying of one another. Such a god would be very different from the God we come to know through Jesus Christ, according to Scripture.

To summarize: the Christian God is a fellowship, a communion. This triune God has his being by being in relationships of holy loving. Those relationships are, in particular, eternally begetting, being begotten, and proceeding -- each a unique form of holy, loving exchange. Those are the key words we have in allowing us to point to the amazing reality of who God is. And these are the essentials to remember if we are going to go on and talk about the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

If the Holy Spirit first exists in relationship with the Father and the Son, then that is the first thing we need to know, not the Spirit's relationship to us or our relationship to the Spirit. Those come afterwards. There was a time when nothing other than God existed and the Holy Spirit was perfectly happy being the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The Spirit doesn't need us to be the Spirit. There was a time when there was no creation. At that time God was the fullness of fellowship in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In answer to the question, *who is the Holy Spirit?* the simplest answer is that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. That means that whenever we speak of the Father and Son, or hear about them in Scripture, since God is one in being, the Spirit is also involved in some way, whether or not it is explicitly stated. The Spirit *always* has something to do with the Father and Son. It's true that we don't always remember this connection. And we probably should make it more explicit more often. So, when speaking of the Father or the Son we do not exclude the Spirit, because the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Reference to the Son involves the Spirit and the other way around. We can't talk about the Holy Spirit apart from the Son, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son. If we assume we can think of one without the other, we're misrepresenting who the Spirit is because the Spirit has his being, is the Person he is, by being in an essential relationship. We don't always spell this all out, and it would be better if we did see and make all the connections. A full understanding will always seek to grasp all the Persons in their relationships.

The *who*, not *how*, of the Spirit

When seeking further understanding about God, we tend to look for answers to *how?* questions, such as, *how does God operate his providence over all of history and nature and everything else?* It's understandable that we would ask such questions. We want to know the mechanisms, the machinery. We want to know the chain of cause and effect as it pertains to God's acts. The problem is that the *how?* questions tend to take us in a wrong direction. Instead we need to ask the *who?* questions. We need first to identify the agent responsible for what takes place. And when it comes to *who?* questions concerning God, the answer often is the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of God's actions. In short, our *how?* questions are frequently answered this way: *By the Holy Spirit!* And the reality is this: we can know the *who*, without knowing the *how!*

Consider this: does Jesus tell Nicodemus the mechanism of *how* one becomes born from above? Does Jesus offer Nicodemus a technique? Does he list a bunch of rules that if you do this and that and the other, then bingo, the new birth happens? No. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that, because the Spirit works more like the wind, no such *how?* explanation can be given. The working of the Spirit can't be controlled or predicted by us. That's the nature of *who* the Spirit is, and so *how* the Spirit works!

It's understandable that we have many questions -- especially about the Christian life. But such questions are actually answered simply by identifying the agency of the Holy Spirit. And that's it. But we often want more -- we want an explanation about some mechanism, technique or about steps to take. We feel that there needs to be a combination of conditions that we fill in order to get the Spirit to work. There is quite a bit of teaching in Christian circles that speculates about and even invents techniques and methods that can be used to fill in the gaps between what Scripture tells us, and what we, like Nicodemus, often want to know -- answers to our *how?* questions that would tell us exactly what conditions we need to fill in order to get the Spirit to work, or to work more effectively. However, shouldn't we stop where Scripture stops, rather than succumb to speculation or invention?

Many of the current controversies and differences of emphasis between various teachings and ministries actually have to do with their lining up behind a favorite technique or mechanism, or a particular list of conditions needed to get what we're looking for from the Holy Spirit. The arguments and

controversies are most often over which teaching offers the best *how to*. But when we go down that road, we've already forgotten most of who the Spirit is. On that road we easily are tempted to mistakenly assume that God can be divided up, asking such questions as "can you have the Spirit without having the Son?" or "can you have the Son without having the Spirit? Another mistake is to assume that the presence and blessing of the Spirit comes not by grace but by technique or by us fulfilling certain preconditions, leading us to ask "what steps do we need to take before we can effectively have and use the gifts of the Spirit?"

By the Spirit of the Father and Son answers the how? question

When we take into account the full testimony of Scripture, the questions and controversies that arise concerning the Spirit can be addressed. This involves accounting for the very nature and character of the Spirit. That means, for example, understanding that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in being, and thus you cannot have one without the other. The unity of the Persons in being and in action is indicated in biblical revelation. For example, we are told that no one truly proclaims Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit (**1 Cor. 12:3**). God doesn't split up, having the Son heading off saying, "Goodbye, Spirit. I hope you catch up later." God is one in being but also one in action. The three divine Persons act and work together.

Many if not most current controversies have forgotten some of the most fundamental things about who God the Spirit is. But, of course, if forgotten, this is what can happen. Our thoughts can head in all directions and we can end up speculating in order to answer misguided questions. We can just grab random Bible verses and try to throw them together to come up with an answer. When that happens, we end up with different groups gravitating around what they regard as key verses to prove their point, but they have left behind the more fundamental teaching and reality of who the Spirit is. The fundamental thing, the answer to the Who? question regarding the Spirit is often forgotten and so the answers promoted are inconsistent with the deeper more central truth of the Spirit who is one in being and one in working with the Father and the Son.

Biblical revelation about the ministry of the Spirit is often presented in connection with mention of at least one other divine Person. So for example, only the Holy Spirit can break into a person's pride and enable them to recognize that Jesus really is their Lord and Savior, come in the flesh, as one of us (**1 John 4:2**). We only have the Spirit because he is sent by the Son from the Father (**John 15:26**). If anyone is convicted by the message of the gospel it is because the Spirit is at work (**1 Thess. 1:3-5**). Jesus sends the Spirit to bring persons to an acknowledgment of sin and the need for judgment and righteousness (**John 16:8**).

As Paul tells us, when the "Spirit of sonship" comes upon us, we cry out "Abba Father" (**Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:60**). Why do we cry out "Abba Father"? If you know who the Spirit is, the answer is obvious. Because God is one in being and one in action. Isn't that amazing? The whole Trinity is involved in that one simple and profound cry of our hearts. When the Spirit acts, he acts in unity with the Father and the Son, bringing our worship all together in the fellowship of the Trinity.

When Jesus says, "Go out and baptize them in the name" (singular) and then gives them the one name: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit," we should not be surprised. The name we're given matches the reality: Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the one name of God. A simple way to say this is that God is the Father-Son-Holy-Spirit-God, as if it is one name instead of three names. It really isn't three separate names, but a threefold name. It is three divine Persons, but we're baptized into one name. Jesus' instruction makes sense if that is who God is, and so how God acts and has his being.

Conclusion

All our thinking about the Holy Spirit needs to be contained within these Trinitarian boundaries. That will help us interpret Scripture properly, and see more deeply into Scripture so that we come to know the reality ever more profoundly. Rather than taking us away from Scripture, good theology helps us see more clearly how Scripture comes together. Though theology doesn't answer every question we might have, it does answer the questions God most wants us to grasp and proclaim. Thus, our goal is to help one another read and interpret Scripture in a way that brings all the pieces of Scripture together. Good theology helps us attain this important goal.

The Spirit's Importance (Doctrine of the Spirit, part 4)

By [Ted Johnston](#) - July 08, 2020

This post continues a series presenting "*The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*" by Dr. Gary Deddo, President of [Grace Communion Seminary](#). For other posts in the series, click a number: (<http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2020/05/holy-spirit-part-1.html>)

Why is it important to say anything about the Holy Spirit beyond simply acknowledging the Spirit? First, because a disconnection between the divine Persons can develop in our understandings of the triune God. In some churches this happens with an almost exclusive emphasis on the Father. Others restrict their focus to the Son, and still others put the spotlight on the Holy Spirit. Though these approaches to God are fragmented, God is not.

What a theological understanding of the Spirit offers

Theological work aims to fix things on our side, not fix things on God's side. So, we can grow in understanding even if the reality is not changed by our better grasp. And if we have misunderstandings, it will be good to clear them up. As the Spirit is working it is far better to be aware of that work compared to being unaware.

But our better understanding does not make something real or change the nature of the Spirit's working. God does not all of a sudden become the Holy Spirit when we recognize the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not tied up, unable to do anything until we figure the Holy Spirit out. That would be like saying the wind is tied up until we can figure out the wind.

No, the Spirit still works, but we may not recognize it. And by recognizing it we may more fully participate, we become more involved, become more in tune with the truth and reality of who God is. So, we're trying to make sure our understanding matches the truth about who God is such as the Spirit has been revealed to us.

So we need to remember that our understanding may be fragmented but God is not fragmented. Our understanding of the working in the ministry of the Spirit may be fragmented but that doesn't mean the actual working of the Spirit is fragmented. We're not controlling God by our understanding. If that were the case then God would be dependent upon us. But we want to sort this all out and let our understanding be as full and faithful as can be.

How do we fix a lack of awareness and understanding of the Spirit?

How do we then bring our understanding of the ministry of the Spirit up to speed in a way that recognizes the Spirit is one of the three Divine Persons of the Trinity? Some are concerned about the need to speak proportionately about the Holy Spirit. We might say, giving the Holy Spirit equal time or equal emphasis. What's behind that concern?

There are situations where our faith and understanding of the Spirit is indeed lacking and so lags behind the Father and Son. It might be that this is often the case, the rule, rather than the exception. Wherever we find this situation it ought to be rectified. We should become familiar with all that's been revealed to us about the Spirit and then pass that on to others. So in those cases additional teaching and focus on the Spirit is called for. (Although this should never be the exclusive focus.) In that way our faith and knowledge of the Spirit will become better aligned with the other divine Persons.

Objections to pursuing the Spirit

In pursuing this kind of correction we may run into some obstacles that contributed to the unbalanced situation in the first place. For, example, some persons might not be interested in the Spirit and so have neglected the topic. Hopefully those in this condition who worship the Triune God will come around and see that the Holy Spirit is no less important than the Father and Son.

Others may not want to know or have much to do with the Holy Spirit because the Spirit seems kind of, well, spooky. We usually don't want to be around ghosts, especially one you can't control or that you can't identify or you can't nail down, can't make a part of your program and who's, well, like the wind, (or maybe even a typhoon!). Who wants that? So, some people, may be avoiding the Spirit because they have certain worries. That's not the best reason not to have an interest in the Holy Spirit. Their fears may be based in part (or perhaps in whole) on ignorance or misinformation about the nature of the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Those who have misgivings may not have a good grasp on who the Holy Spirit is. The Spirit isn't like a ghost or something to be fearful of in the sense that it might do us harm. So helping people know that the Spirit is Holy, is good, is crucial.

The best way to do this is to emphasize regularly that the Spirit and has the exact same character and purpose as Jesus. There is no slippage in mind, attitude, or aim between the two. The best way to identify the working of the Spirit is to compare it directly to what we know about Jesus. It is his Spirit. If it doesn't, feel, sound, taste, and work like Jesus, then it is not his Spirit. Knowing Jesus is how we best discern the spirits, that is, which is the Holy Spirit.

Some could think the Spirit is now irrelevant to our current situation or no longer available to us, at least as in the days of the early church. That was back in those days, some may think. That would be another poor reason, however, to have little or no interest in the Spirit. While it's perfectly acceptable to raise questions about the working of the Spirit today,

there is no biblical teaching designed to inform us that the Spirit cannot or will not continue to work as in the days of the early church. Of course this does not mean that the Spirit cannot adjust the mode of his ministry as, in his wisdom, he sees fit from time to time and place to place. He can in his sovereign grace make adjustments.

However, there is no absolute reason that the Spirit could not continue to work today as in the days of the New Testament. But that is up to the Spirit. Those who have dogmatically concluded that the Spirit does not work and cannot work in the same manner have argued from their own experience and on that basis selected and interpreted Scripture to explain their lack of experiencing the working of the Spirit. But such arguments do not have binding authority in the church—and especially upon the Spirit! It might simply be that the Spirit at some times and places chooses to work behind the scenes, mostly undetected even perhaps by Christians—and that's why the church's experience of the Spirit is not evenly distributed all the time.

Especially thinking that the ministry and manifestation of the Spirit depends upon us, what we do, what condition we're in, what we want, or on our level of understanding, is to put the cart way before the horse. If the Spirit is dependent upon us in these ways, then the Spirit does not (cannot?) minister by grace. The ministry of the Spirit then is being regarded as a reward for works. Whatever the Spirit does and however he works, it is all of grace. We do not condition the Spirit to act. The Spirit is faithful whether or not we are.

Now some are concerned about abuses and misrepresentations of the Spirit. Indeed, there are legitimate reasons for folks to be cautious or concerned. There have been, since the days of the New Testament, abuses, misuses and misleading teaching about the Spirit. There are many cases where an emphasis on the Holy Spirit has contributed to conflict and even church splits. There have been deceitful things said and done in the name of the Holy Spirit. And some things have occurred in connection with an emphasis on the Spirit that are bizarre and in some cases even abusive. But are these good reasons to entirely neglect the Spirit? No. Any good thing can be misused. As an ancient maxim states: abuse does not rule out proper use. So if these things can be guarded against, all the while coming to understand and welcome the ministry of the Spirit, I think the way can be clear to address any imbalance. But checks and balances, spiritual discipline and discernment need to be in place provided by wise pastors and elders ministering under the authority of the whole teaching of Scripture. That is a legitimate requirement to guard against spiritual pride and abuse, disunity and division. There are real dangers.

Equal proportions?

Given all that, however, setting up a goal of equality of emphasis or parity of focus on the three divine Persons is really not the best way to go about making a healthy correction if there is an imbalance or ignorance about the Spirit. There are valid reasons why there necessarily always will be a certain kind of faithful disproportion or inequality of emphasis or focus on the Spirit compared to the other two Persons of the Trinity. The reason has to do with the nature and character of the Spirit itself!

There is a good reason why the church down through the ages has had less to say and did not give equal concentration or time to the Spirit. Here are some good reasons why the Spirit will not get equal time or focus, in terms of our level of explanation or concentration of attention.

First of all, there is simply less biblical information about the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels there are plenty of references to the Spirit, but there is a lot more told about Jesus and his relationship with the Father in them than on the Spirit. Jesus definitely speaks of the Spirit and not just as side comments. The Spirit is an essential element to his message and life and is not less important. But he talks and tells much more in detail about the Father and his relationship with him.

Now, the same goes for Paul and the epistles. There is plenty of important teaching about the Spirit with more detail than we even have in the Gospels about our living in relationship with the Spirit. But we find there as well significantly more discussion and detail given on the Person and Work of the Son and his connection to the Father. The disproportionate detailed treatment does not signal an inequality of importance since it is clear that faith in the Holy Spirit and his ministry is not only important, but vitally connected to the ministry of Jesus.

Turning to the Old Testament, we find significant teaching and reference to the Spirit. Just consider the landmark prophecies about the Spirit in **Joel (2:28)** and **Ezekiel (11:19; 26:36)**. But throughout the OT there is far more consideration given simply to God the creator, covenant maker and deliverer of Israel. But again this disproportion does not indicate that the Spirit is less important. Not at all. Rather we simply are given less detailed information about this very important subject.

So for example there is no description of the nature of the Spirit's relationship to the Father. The biblical authors don't directly tell us it. We find them named together. We are given a few words that indicate the basics of the relationship: the Spirit is said to "proceed" from the Father and is "sent" from the Father in the Son's name. We find their actions

described in a way that indicates they are coordinated with each other. When Jesus acts he does so in or by the Spirit. Even his sacrifice on the Cross involves offering himself up in the Spirit ([Heb. 9:14](#)).. But we have nothing comparable to a detailed description of the Spirit's interaction with the Father like we find, for instance, in Jesus' prayer, in **John 17**. Here we have an amazing window in the nature and character of Jesus' relationship with the Father. But we don't have any equal to that regarding the Spirit.

Given the whole of biblical revelation, we do not have near as much written about the Spirit as we do about God the Father and the Son. The information given us is unequal, disproportional. Now that is no excuse not to pay very careful attention to what insight we are given about the Spirit. And that, indeed, may be a problem that needs rectifying. In fact, perhaps we should give even more care to what has been made available to us. But if our speech and understanding is going to remain dependent upon biblical revelation, then we shouldn't be surprised that our considerations will follow the same unequal pattern. So having less to say does not necessarily demonstrate neglect or fear or disinterest in the Spirit.

Misguided attempts at correction

The Scripture revelation is disproportional in that way. Now, of course, we could artificially try to give the Spirit "equal time" by extending what we say through the fabrication of long logical chains of argumentation leading to various inferred conclusions. But such speculations about the Spirit, even if they start with a bit of Scripture, can offer nothing secure since simple logical inferences even from some true starting point are never necessarily true.

In fact, that's where a lot of heresy and bad teaching about the Spirit comes from. Some preachers and teachers have taken a few biblical verses and then attempted to make strings of logical arguments from them, oftentimes not paying attention to other biblical teaching regarding the Spirit. But the conclusions reached are speculative. And in reaching them a lot had to be added in, such as making someone's experience (and their understanding of it!) normative for all Christians, in order to establish a purportedly doctrinal statement. But all that additional information and the logical chains developed from them do not amount to reliable Christian doctrine.

So giving the Spirit more attention by generating more information than we actually have been given is not a recommended or reliable procedure. But sometimes a desire to re-balance things and give greater emphasis to the Spirit has resulted in such practices. We should not follow suit.

Why is less revealed about the Spirit?

Is there some reason why there is unequal information about the Holy Spirit in Scripture? It seems to me the disproportion ought to be expected because of what we do find out about the Spirit. Given the very nature of the Spirit and the nature of his work, it makes sense that there is less to say concretely and authoritatively about the Spirit than the Father or the Son.

First, the Spirit is not incarnate. We don't have an embodied revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit remains undetectable itself, but is identified indirectly by the effects of his working (like the wind). The Holy Spirit doesn't show up on the incarnate stage of history like Jesus does. The Son is the only triune Person who becomes incarnate. So there's no incarnate description of the Spirit available to us.

And that's the main reason why we have a lot more to say about the Son. The purpose of his coming in human form was to be the self-revelation of God. He is the Word of God to us. The Spirit doesn't have his own incarnation. The Spirit, as a matter of fact, doesn't have his own independent word. Jesus is the Logos, the intelligibility, the communication, the living interpretation of God to us. In fact, without the incarnate life and teaching of Jesus we would know far less about the Spirit, for the Son reveals not only himself, but the Father and the Spirit to us. The Incarnate Son takes us to the Father and sends us the Spirit. So we approach the Spirit through the mediation of the Son.

Even when the Spirit is present and active within creation, he doesn't establish his own revelation and doesn't convey his own self-explanation. The Spirit remains the Spirit. That is, remains unincarnate while present to and within creation.

The Spirit's remaining unincarnate actually serves a positive purpose. It prevents us from reducing God simply to a creature or thinking that we can understand God entirely in terms of creaturely realities. It preserves the transcendence, the spirituality of God. God is not a creature and so we cannot explain God as if God were a creature subject to its ways and limitations. We cannot simply read back onto God the creaturely nature of Jesus.

Now, some people mistakenly think that when the Son of God took on human form, the Father (or God) turned into a man, a creature. Two mistakes here. First, it was the Son of God who became incarnate, not the Father (nor the Spirit).

Second, the Son of God did not cease being the eternal, divine, Son of God when he took on human being. He remained what he was but also added to himself a fully human nature and lived a human life. He didn't stop being something he was and turn in into something else, a man. Early church teachers put it this way: The eternal Son of God,

remaining what he was, assumed also a human nature to himself. You can recognize this kind of confusion when, considering the possibility of the incarnation, people ask, “Then, who is running the universe?”

Now how the eternal Son of God can be incarnate in human form is indeed a mystery. We can't imagine how such a change of that order could be true for human beings. But, remember God is not a creature. Admittedly, it is easier to think of Jesus' incarnation as his turning into what he was not and ceasing to be what he was. If A becomes B, then it ceases to be A. It's now B. That's easy to think because that's how most if not all creaturely things work. However, such thinking just doesn't apply to the truth about who the Son of God is. He remains what he was, the eternal Son of God, assuming a human nature as well.

The Spirit then never did take on a human nature himself. If you ask, “How was Jesus conceived in the womb of Mary?” What's the answer? By the Spirit. The agency of the Spirit is the answer to the “how” question. But this answer doesn't tell us the mechanisms involved. No mention of DNA. Or what happened with the chromosomes. We don't get that type of explanation. Rather we get an explanation of who, the agent involved who knows how! I suppose if we asked the Spirit and he thought it was important for us to know, the Spirit could explain it to us if we were educated and intelligent enough to grasp it. But apparently, it's far more important to know by whom it occurred rather than how.

But we definitely learn something about the Spirit in this event. The Spirit can interact in time and space, with flesh and blood without being incarnate himself. The Spirit is able to be present and active at the deepest levels of creaturely existence, down to the DNA and chromosomes if need be. The Spirit is not absent but able to be very present to creation. That's one way God can work directly within creation—by the Spirit. Recognizing that God is the Spirit and the Spirit is God and he remains the Holy Spirit prevents us from thinking of God as merely being a creature but that the Spirit doesn't have to be incarnate to have a direct ministry to us. As Jesus said, he is sending another Comforter who was with us, but will be in us ([John 14: 17](#)).

There is another reason we find that makes sense as to why there is a disproportion in the amount of information we have about the Spirit in the biblical portrayal. Again this distinction is not one of importance but of the extent of the revelation. And if what we say and teach about the Spirit depends upon that revelation, then this will make a difference in how much we can say and how much we can understand about the Spirit.

This second reason has to do with the very character of the Spirit and of his ministry. It seems that the whole purpose and character of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is actually to always direct attention away from, not bring it to himself. The ministry of the Spirit, Jesus tells us, is to direct us to Jesus ([John 15: 26](#)) So he doesn't come with his own independent message but bears witness to the truth he has heard spoken by the Son. The Spirit does not glorify himself but Jesus by taking his words and declaring them to us ([John 16:13, 14](#)). And that is the glory of the Spirit!

So, the Holy Spirit isn't saying, “Hey, Jesus, you've had the microphone now for plenty of time. Now, it's my turn to tell people about myself.” No. When the Holy Spirit “gets the microphone,” what does he announce? He helps us recall all that Jesus taught, the truth that He taught. He, perhaps annoyingly, passes up his opportunity to shed light on himself.

The Holy Spirit doesn't really draw attention to himself. Rather he points away from himself. Why? Because that's his ministry, so that we see who Jesus is, who reveals to us the Father. The early church put it this way. The Holy Spirit is like light and the light shines. And the Holy Spirit shines light on the face of Jesus who has an actual, flesh and blood human face. And when the Holy Spirit's light shines on the face of Jesus, what do we see mirrored in the face of Jesus? The invisible face of the Father. Isn't that a beautiful thing?

So, the Holy Spirit doesn't say, “Hey, look at me. Look at me. I'm the light. I'm shining. I'm shining, can't you see how bright I am?” Not at all. The whole reason for the Spirit's shining is so that when we look at the face of Jesus, we see the face of the Father. That's the whole point of the light. The light doesn't draw attention to itself.

That doesn't mean the Spirit's not important, but the contrary! If the light didn't shine, what would result? We wouldn't see the face of the Father in the face of the Son. In fact, there wouldn't even be a face of the Son incarnate if the Spirit hadn't been involved in the conception of the Son in the womb of Mary. The Spirit has a coordinated but different mission and ministry than the Son. But that ministry would be somewhat compromised and not demonstrate the true nature and character of the Spirit if it drew attention to itself.

One theologian has said, if you add the Biblical picture up, the Spirit is the “shy one” of the Trinity or the “retiring one.” We could also even say the Holy Spirit displays the humility of God because he serves the Father and the Son. Theologian Thomas Torrance brings out this same point regarding the character of the Spirit. Relatively speaking he stays in the background.

Now, should we come to clearly grasp that that the Holy Spirit serves the Father and Son rather than himself? Absolutely. We'd be somewhat impoverished if we didn't know that. We are learning something about the Spirit when we see that he doesn't draw attention to himself! But whenever we find revelation concerning the Spirit what we discover are

more references to the Father and the Son. The Spirit actually promotes the disproportion of detailed understanding about the Triune Persons, because that's the ministry of the Spirit. The Spirit says, "Yes, excellent. You saw the face of the Father and the face of the Son. Wonderful. That's what I do. That's why I'm here."