

WHAT IF GOD SUDDENLY WITHDREW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD?

by: Joe R. Garman

The Holy Spirit is our senior partner in the Christian life. Coming to us as the Great Gift of the Risen Christ, He abides in our hearts to purify us and to empower us for life and service. Without His aid the Christian life is impossible, and only as we consciously lean on Him will our lives be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might". Let us divest our minds of the idea that the doctrine of the Spirit is something hazy and impractical. The subject is extremely practical and is indeed most important. Let us strive to understand Him and appreciate His life in us.

HE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT

Most of us can quote Acts 2:38 as easily as we can quote John 3:16, yet we have failed to realize and emphasize that at the time of Christian baptism, we not only receive the forgiveness of sins and are washed pure through the blood of the Lamb, we also receive the free gift of God, His Holy Spirit. All of us who have repented of our sins and been baptized into Christ, have received this gift of God's Holy Spirit. He cannot be purchased, merited or otherwise obtained. He is a free gift from God. He is in essence, Jesus Christ living within us. He is the very presence of God!

Every one of us has, living within this body of clay, a human spirit. So it is with God's holy Spirit. He is in you right now. You cannot see Him, smell Him, touch Him, taste Him or hear Him; but God declares, and Scripture confirms that when we repent of our sins and are baptized into Christ, we receive from God the free gift of His Holy Spirit.

To emphasize the presence and importance of the Holy Spirit, let us contemplate what would happen if suddenly God should withdraw His Holy Spirit from this world.

IF GOD SHOULD SUDDENLY WITHDRAW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD, WE COULD HAVE NO LOVE, OR JOY, PEACE, LONG-SUFFERING, GENTLENESS, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, FAITHFULNESS, MEEKNESS, OR TEMPERANCE, FOR THESE ARE ALL GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, goodness, faith, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."

A fictitious story (but nevertheless one containing a great lesson) relates that one day Abraham, standing by his tent door, saw coming along the way a very old man, weary with his journey, with bleeding feet. With true hospitality he invited the old man to share his meal and lodge with him for the night. But he noticed the stranger asked no blessing on the meal, and inquired why he did not pray to the God in Heaven. The old man said, "I am a fire-worshipper and acknowledge no other god." At this, Abraham grew angry that a man should be such an infidel and thrust him out of his tent into the night. Then God called to Abraham and said, "Where is the old man that came to thee?" Abraham answered, "I thrust him out because he did not worship Thee." Then said God, "I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonored Me - and couldst thou not endure him one night?" God expects us to share the fruit of the Spirit.

IF GOD SHOULD SUDDENLY WITHDRAW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD, ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, BOTH CIVILIZED AND UNCIVILIZED, BOTH EVANGELIZED AND UNEVANGELIZED, BOTH SAVED AND LOST, WOULD FIND THEMSELVES IN TOTAL DESPAIR, WITHOUT LOVE OF ANY KIND, WITHOUT JOY OF ANY KIND, WITHOUT PEACE OF ANY KIND.

Why? Because we could not conquer sin or death, neither could we inherit justification as children of God. Romans 8:9-17 records, *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."*

The cross shows God clothing Himself with humility. He enters to the sharpest sorrow and shares the darkest shame. Our proud spirits would only rebel against a King all-majestic, all-happiness, all-untouched by poverty, disgrace and grief. We failed. His Spirit truly testifies to our spirit.

IF GOD SHOULD SUDDENLY WITHDRAW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD, WE WOULD HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE CHRISTLIKE, BUT RATHER WOULD BECOME VAIN IN OUR IMAGINATIONS AND OUR FOOLISH HEARTS WOULD BECOME DARKENED.

II Corinthians 3:17-18 states, *"Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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."*

John 7:37-38 says: *"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive)."*

Thirsting! Thirsting! Thirsting! Have you ever really been thirsty? You say, "I got thirsty today." No, you wanted water today. You see, the moment you want water, it is there. It is in the faucet. You don't have to wait five minutes to get it. But you go without water for a day, two days, three days; go without water until your lips swell three times their normal size and your tongue swells and begins to crack and parch go without water until you would give your automobile and your house and everything you have in the bank for one drop of water - then you are thirsty!

People have been classified as rich and poor, high and low, wise and ignorant, Jew and Gentile, etc. But the Bible has another classification - those who possess the Holy Spirit and those who do not!

The Holy Spirit reveals our need and worthlessness, this need causes us to thirst to the place where we plead, "I have to have Christ or die!"

IF GOD SHOULD SUDDENLY WITHDRAW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD, WE WOULD HAVE NO COMPASSION FOR THE UNSAVED, THUS THERE WOULD BE NO

BURDEN FOR MISSIONS, NO EVANGELISTIC PROGRAMS, NO HARVESTING OF SOULS.

Romans 5:1-5 teaches us, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience steadfastness, steadfastness experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

Billy Bray, the shouting Cornish miner, shouted for God everywhere he went.

Billy said, "I can't help praising God. As I go along the street I lift up one foot, and it seems to say 'Glory!' and I lift up the other, and it seems to say, 'Amen'; and so they keep on like that all the time I am walking."

When Billy lay dying, and the doctor told him he was going to die, he said: "Glory! glory be to God! I shall soon be in Heaven." He then added, in his own peculiar way, "When I get up there, shall I give them your compliments, Doctor, and tell them you will be coming too?" This made a deep impression on the doctor. Billy's dying word was "Glory!". Some time before dying, he said: "What! Me fear death? Me lost? Why, my Savior conquered death. If I were to go down to Hell, I would shout, 'Glory! Glory!' to my blessed Jesus until I made the bottomless pit ring again, and the miserable old Satan would say, 'Billy, Billy, this is no place for thee: get thee back!' Then up to Heaven I should go, shouting, 'Glory! Glory! Praise the Lord!' Billy Bray could not be silent because he was Spirit filled.

There would be no shedding abroad of the light of Christ from us to a lost and dying world, should God suddenly withdraw His Holy Spirit from us.

IF GOD SHOULD SUDDENLY WITHDRAW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD, WE WOULD HAVE NO INNER STRENGTH, NO LIFE, NEITHER SPIRITUAL LENGTH, BREADTH OR HEIGHT

Ephesians 3:16-19 emphasizes, *"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."*

When the Hellgate Bridge was being built over the East River in New York, the engineers came upon an old derelict ship, lying embedded in the river mud, just where one of the central piers of the bridge was to go down through to its bedrock foundation. No tugboat could be found that was able to move the derelict from its ancient bed in the ooze, finally, with a sudden inspiration, one of the workers hit upon this scheme. He took a large, flat boat, which had been used to bring stone down the river, and chained it to the old sunken ship when the tide was low. Then he waited for the great tidal energies to do their work. Slowly the rising tide, with all the forces of the ocean behind it, came up under the flat boat, raising it inch by inch. As it came up, lifted by irresistible power, the derelict came up with it until it was entirely out of the mud that had held it. Through His Spirit, God GIFTS us...then LIFTS us!

We could not even know the love for Christ or the proper love for ourselves should God suddenly withdraw His Holy Spirit from us.

IF GOD SHOULD SUDDENLY WITHDRAW HIS HOLY SPIRIT FROM THIS WORLD, OUR PRAYERS WOULD BE UNABLE TO REACH GOD'S THRONE OF MERCY

Romans 8:26-28 reads, *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."*

I have some dear missionary friends in India who lost their only son in a tragic accident. How tenderly his mother handles every relic he left behind. How the gleam in her eyes grows dim as she rereads his letters his name is never left out of her prayers; and many times when she is busy about her daily work the thought of her boy will flash into her heart like a beam of golden sunlight. The stars speak about him, the winds whisper his name, the waves tell of him. Nobody has any difficulty in understanding what is meant when it is said that her boy dwells in her heart. In the same way God's Spirit dwells in us, constantly working with us and teaching us how to live, think and pray.

Because our prayers could not be translated we could not confess our sins, ask for salvation, or plead for mercy. Therefore we would be totally unable to obtain the seal of salvation or possess final entry into Heaven. Today, as never before, let us give thanks to God for the free gift of God's Holy Spirit.

God's Holy Spirit works with mankind in three distinct ways:

First, He works ON us to bring us to salvation.

Secondly, He works IN us to prepare us as fit vessels for His use.

Thirdly, then and only then can He work THROUGH us in reaching out to those round about us.

Long before I, or any chaplain, reach that prison or reformatory cell, we find the Holy Spirit has preceded us, preparing hearts for the message of Christ. Long before the first missionary arrives on the foreign field, God's Holy Spirit has been there, preparing the nucleus of the church which soon will be. Let us give praise and tribute to God for this Person living within us - God's Holy Spirit.

And now, may a dying Savior's love, a risen Savior's prayers, an ascended Savior's power, and an eternal Savior's glory, be the comfort, joy and strength of your heart.

If I can assist you in making a personal decision for Christ or in obeying Him in Christian baptism, please write to ARM.



If you need help in making a decision for Christ, or if you want someone to assist you in Christian baptism, please contact:
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