

As you come to Him, be honest about how you fear disappointing people more than quenching His Spirit, or how you don't really trust Him to come through on His promises, or whatever else you may be feeling toward Him. Share this with people you trust. Allow the Spirit to continue His work of freeing you from unnecessary fear and inhibition or from unrestricted license. Surrender yourself and invite Him truly to dwell within you, whatever that may mean and wherever it may take you.

We definitely believe in the Holy Spirit and we hope to experience more of Him every minute. Let's focus on believing the promises given to us by God, on submitting to Him the fears that we have, and on surrendering ourselves fully to the work and will of God, the Holy Spirit.

### Questions for Reflection

1. What are you afraid of in your daily life?
2. What is your fear on the Holy Spirit?
3. What would be your feeling or response when you think God doesn't respond to your prayer? Or if you feel God doesn't show up in your life?
4. What would be your reaction if God shows up and asks you to go somewhere or do something that's uncomfortable?

July 15, 2018  
Forgotten God (2)  
**What Are You Afraid Of?**  
Luke 11:9-13  
Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

We are not called to fear what following the way of Jesus may require of us. A life of following Christ requires relinquishing those fears when they do come. Our fear keeps us from pursuing the truth about the Holy Spirit. Fear has a way of channeling our thought process.

What would be our fear, specifically of the Holy Spirit? It would be what if we pray for the Holy Spirit and nothing happens? It would be what if we ask for more of the Spirit's fruit in our lives and don't see any apparent "result"? It is scary that we pray boldly for change or freedom from sin and nothing happens. If so, then doesn't that mean God failed? Doesn't that mean His Spirit isn't all we've been told He is?

The fear of God failing us leads us to "cover for God." So we ask for less, expect less, and are satisfied with less because we are afraid to ask for more or expect more. We even convince ourselves that we don't want more. We think that we have all the "God" we need or could want. However, it is pain for God to see His children hold back from relationship with the Holy Spirit out of fear that He won't come through. How much it grieves Him to watch His children ignore the promise He's made throughout Scripture! God wants to empower His children with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

In today's text Jesus said to His disciples, *"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"* (Luke 11:13). God is a good Father who wants to give good gifts to His children. Sometimes we forget this truth and beg as though He needs convincing. It's as ridiculous as if our kids thought they

needed to beg us to hug them. Actually it is our joy to hug our children.

God has promised to give us His Spirit if we ask, if we repent and are baptized. Some of you have asked the Holy Spirit to do something and have not experienced the results you anticipated. Now you fear asking again because it would weaken your faith if God “fails to act” again.

Many people question God for not responding when they prayed in faith. The question is whether they prayed for things God has promised. Often, it’s the un-promised requests that God answers with a no. There is a huge difference between believing what God has promised and praying for things you’d like to be true. Don’t put your hope in what others promise or what you’ve been told you’ll “get” if you are a “good Christian.” We trust God even though He says no or “not in this way” to us. We still believe He is good and doing what is best.

Another side of fearing that God won’t show up is fearing that He will show up. What if God does show up and then asks us to go somewhere or do something that’s uncomfortable? Many people feel much fear when God asks them to go in a difficult, undesirable direction than the fear that God ignores them.

We take God at His Word and we believe the Spirit is meant to dwell in and guide our lives. When it comes down to it, many of us do not really want to be led by the Holy Spirit. More fundamentally, many of us don’t want to be led by anyone other than ourselves. The truth is that the Spirit of the living God asks us to go somewhere or do something we wouldn’t normally want or choose to do. The Spirit will lead us to the way of the cross that is definitely not a safe or pretty or comfortable place to be. The Holy Spirit of God will mold us into the person we were made to be. This painful process strips us of selfishness, pride, and fear.

In C.S. Lewis’ book *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* there is the boy, Eustance, who becomes a dragon. In order to become a little boy again, he must undergo a tremendous amount of pain as the dragon skin is peeled away and torn from him. Only after he endures this painful process he is truly transformed from a dragon back into a boy. The Holy Spirit seeks to make us Christlike, but this can be painful.

There is a legitimate kind of fear. We often worry a lot more about how people will respond to us than we do about how the Holy Spirit of God will respond. We think about making our friends mad or not being accepted or being thought of as different or strange. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says “*Do not quench the Spirit.*” When we make or create a place a healthy system of communal accountability and we commit ourselves to biblical integrity, then maybe we would be slower to quench the Spirit.

Another important check of quenching the Spirit is going too far with all this. I don’t mean “going too far” in the sense of getting too radical or passionate about the Holy Spirit. I mean “going too far” in the sense of stepping outside the bounds of biblical orthodoxy. I mean “going too far” in the sense of adding to the Scriptures or listening to distortions of the truth, supposedly from the Holy Spirit, and applying those to your life. This is why orthodox (as in “committed to exegetical living”) and radical (as in “willing to do whatever and go wherever the Spirit leads, even if it doesn’t make sense”) community is vital to living lives that comply with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Some Christians may quench the Spirit by ignoring His working, but surely putting unbiblical words into the mouth of God is a form of quenching the Spirit as well. We need the Spirit in order to live faithfully. But we also need one another as we work out our faith.

Don’t hide your fears. Admit them, first to yourself, and then to God.