

mean nothing. The Holy Spirit is the one who fills believers with God's love and the one who enables us to love one another. Paul describes this beautifully in his prayer to the Ephesians: *"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."* (Ephesians 3:16-19)

We are made to love others and actively give ourselves for them and God's glory. The Spirit of God moves and acts in and through us, so we can live like this. This is our purpose for living. This is our hope. In Paul Rom. 5:5 Paul says, *"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."* God gives us the Spirit and empowers us by the Spirit to glory God, to love others and to be His witnesses.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do you want the Holy Spirit? If so, why do you want the Holy Spirit?
2. Have you ever tried to ask or told the Spirit what to do and when to do it?
3. Do you want to lead or be led by the Spirit?
4. How can you serve and love God and others in your life and ministry?

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Forgotten God (3)

Why Do You Want the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 3:16-19

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Have you ever thought that you need to be filled with supernatural power from the Holy Spirit? If so, why do you want the Holy Spirit? What do you want to do with the Holy Spirit's activity in your life? Is it for power – spiritual power or physical power? Is it for your own betterment and purposes? Or is it because you want to experience all that God has for you? Is it because you love the church and desire to be a better servant to your sisters and brothers? We may have our own purposes for desiring the Spirit's presence and power in our lives.

In fact, God has the purpose to give us the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. 12 Paul tells us that each follower of Christ is given a *"manifestation of the Spirit for the common good"* (v. 7). The Spirit gives these spiritual gifts to each person, according to His will and purposes. The most obvious purpose is for the good and improvement of the church. The Spirit desires to use us when our hearts are aligned with God's vision, when we are filled with genuine love for the church, and when we desire to see the church grow in love for God and others.

The Holy Spirit has given us a supernatural ability to serve the people God has placed around us. If God cares enough about His church to give us this Spirit-empowered ability, shouldn't we care enough about the church to use that gift for the same purpose? The Holy Spirit works to glorify Christ (John 16:14). A sure sign of the Holy Spirit's working is that Christ is magnified. Jesus says in Matthew 5:16, *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good work and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* It is possible for us to be doing incredible things

for the kingdom yet have people give glory to God rather than to us.

When the Holy Spirit truly moves, God is the one praised. Jesus is the one lifted up. When the Spirit moved at Pentecost, people knew there was a power present that came from God. God would empower us so radically that we glory God. 1 Cor. 14:12 says, *“So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”*

God wants us to seek and listen to His Spirit and to obey. God wants us to trust Him to provide miracles when He sees fit. Miracles are never an end in themselves. They are always a means to point to and accomplish something greater. God does miracles when He sees fit and for His own purposes. We need to be cautious from the temptation to raise miracles that God never promised to give. Instead, we are called to focus on the priorities He has outlined for us in Scripture and ask the Holy Spirit to empower us as He sees fit. Let us trust Him to show miracles for His glory, in His time, and in His way.

There have been many times when I’ve tried to lead the Holy Spirit. I’ve wanted to ask Him and tell Him what to do and when to do it. The irony is that the Holy Spirit was given to direct us. Desiring the Holy Spirit means we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. The Spirit is not a passive power that we can wield as we choose. The Spirit is God, a Being who requires that we submit ourselves to be led by Him. Everyone is called to be led by Him.

God is calling. The Spirit is beckoning. He calls us to do something, a particular thing, and we have the choice to obey or not. As we totally submit and trust the Holy Spirit, we can submit to or trust God. We all need to answer this question: ‘Do I want to lead or be led by the Spirit?’

The Holy Spirit also empowers us to be His witnesses. If you are a teacher, have you thought about how you impact the students in your classes? If you are a coach, what sort of influence do you have on your team? If you are a businessperson, how do you conduct yourself toward your customers and coworkers? If you are a stay-at-home mom, how are you forming your children into lovers of Jesus? How are you reaching out and ministering to your family and neighbors God has placed around you?

God may have called each of us to be exactly where we are. He didn’t call us there so we could settle in and live out our lives in comfort and superficial peace. If we are still alive on this planet, it’s because He has something for us to do. He placed us on this earth for purposes that He orchestrated long before we were born (Eph. 2:8-10). You exist not for your own pleasure but to help people know the love of Jesus and to come fully alive in Him.

Being led by the Spirit will result in becoming like Christ in His love. After Paul addresses the manifestations or gifts that the Spirit gives, in 1 Cor. 12:31 he writes, *“I will show you a still more excellent way.”* It’s as if he is saying, “Sure, these gifts from the Spirit are important. Let me tell you about what will change the world.” And in chapter 13 of that letter, he writes his famous “love chapter.” In it he reminds us that without love, nothing else matters. *“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.”* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

This passage is so powerful because Paul redirects the focus from supernatural gifts to love. He specifically says that without love, speaking “in the tongues of men and of angels” and “prophetic powers” and understanding “all mysteries and all knowledge”