

# Introducing the Holy Spirit

## Discovering the Holy Spirit

How might each of the following sources of information help us to learn about the Holy Spirit?

Your personal experience

Hearing someone else share his/her experience

Reading what the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit

Which of these do you think you would find most helpful? Why?

## What (or Who) is the Holy Spirit?

In the Bible the words used for God's spirit (Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament) are derived from the word meaning "*breath*" or "*wind*." The description of God's spirit as "wind" is meant to suggest two things:

- (a) That God is *present*
- (b) That God is acting with *power*

Whilst the Old Testament frequently speaks about the "spirit of God" - meaning that God is present and acting with power - the nature of the Holy Spirit is only clearly revealed in the New Testament. This is not surprising since the Trinitarian nature of God (i.e. one god, three persons) is only clearly apparent in the New Testament.

The New Testament reveals two essential truths about the nature of the Holy Spirit:

### (1) The Holy Spirit is a *person* and not a force

#### John 15v26; 16v7-8 & 16v12-14

How do these verses show that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a force?

#### Ephesians 4v30

How does this verse suggest that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a force?

## **(2) The Holy Spirit is God in the same way that the Father and the Son are God**

### **John 15v16-18**

How do these verses show that the Holy Spirit is God?

### **Matthew 28v19**

What does this verse reveal about the nature of God and of the Holy Spirit?

### **Acts 5v3-4**

How do these verses show that the early church believed that the Holy Spirit is God?

There are many other verses in the New Testament which suggest or assume that the Holy Spirit is God in just the same way that the Father is God and the Son is God: 1 Corinthians 12v4-6; 2 Corinthians 13v14; Ephesians 4v4-6; 1 Peter 1v2; Jude 20-21.

## **Why does it matter that Christians have a proper understanding of the nature of the Holy Spirit?**

How might Christians mistreat the Holy Spirit if they think that He is a force and not a person?

If the Holy Spirit is God then he will have the same character and priorities as the Father and the Son. Christians might misunderstand the work of the Holy Spirit if they do not remember that he is exactly like the Father and the Son.

How might Christians misunderstand the work of the Holy Spirit if they fail to remember that he is:

*Sovereign?*

*Holy?*

*Unchanging?*

*Omniscient (all knowing)?*

*Omnipotent (all powerful)?*

*Loving?*

*Jealous?*

**For Further reading:**

Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth*, IVP, Ch 18, The Person of the Spirit

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, IVP, pp 232-233; 237-238

J I Packer, *Keep in Step With the Spirit*, IVP, pp 61-63

Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, IVP, pp 15-34