

The Indwelling Of The Spirit

The study of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not just academic, to determine whether or not He can dwell in a Christian; it is a powerfully practical study to see how He must dwell in a Christian. We must work diligently for the Holy Spirit to dwell in each one of us. Let's see how!

The New Testament Says The Holy Spirit Dwells In Christians

1. Romans 8:11: "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."
2. 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"
3. 1 Corinthians 6:19: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"
4. 2 Timothy 1:14: "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

What Does It Mean "To Dwell In"?

We can learn how the Spirit dwells in the Christian by studying how other persons or things "dwell in" another. Notice how the Father, Son, righteousness, sin, and other things can dwell in one. This will give us insight as to how the Holy Spirit dwells in one.

1. The Father dwells in Christians by one's agreement with God (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).
2. The Father dwells in the Son by the Son's agreement with the Father (John 14:10; 17:20-22).
3. Christians dwell in the Father (and the Father in them) by love, confession of Jesus as God's Son, and keeping His commandments (1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:12-15).
4. Christ dwells in Christians by the Christian's faith (Ephesians 3:17).
5. Christians dwell in the Son by eating of Him (John 6:56).
6. Sin dwells in one as one sins (Romans 7:17; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20).
7. Truth dwells in Christians by their belief and practice (2 John 2).

We can see that for one thing to "dwell in" another means that they agree in, participate in, or fellowship the same thing. If the Father dwells in the Christian, and the Christian dwells in the Father, it means they are sharing in something, such as love, truth, or righteousness. If we have love, the Father dwells in us (1 John 4:12). If we have faith, Christ dwells in us (Ephesians

3:17). As one dwells in the Father, He does not sin, because sin does not dwell in the Father (1 John 3:6-10). As one fellowships sin, sin dwells in him. For one thing to "dwell in" another means they "participate in, or fellowship the same thing."

How Does The Holy Spirit Dwell In A Christian?

The Christian is to be the dwelling place of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (cp. Leviticus 26:1-12; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). God set His tabernacle among His people, so He could dwell among His people. God does not have a physical temple on earth today, except for His people. In order for us to be the temple (dwelling place) of God, we must walk in harmony with God. The Holy Spirit "dwells in" a Christian as the Christian allows the Holy Spirit to have fellowship with Him in the righteousness of God. In this manner one's body is called the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This is opposed to one's body being the temple of fornication (sin). In fact, God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit all dwell in the Christian as the Christian uses his body for their use. We each need to focus on giving all three Divine persons our bodies as a dwelling place for them.

What "Indwelling Of The Holy Spirit" Does NOT Mean

First, indwelling does not mean a "literal" indwelling. Just because Christ is said to dwell in a person, it does not mean that Jesus, who is on the right hand throne of God (Hebrews 1:3), is personally in somebody. The same can be said about the Father and the Holy Spirit. Even though all three Divine beings are omnipresent (Psalm 139:7), their indwelling has to do with fellowshiping Christians. Since they are omnipresent they are everywhere, but not with everyone in the sense of indwelling and fellowship (2 John 9-11). All three are said to be with Christians (Romans 15:33; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 4:5). But, if a Christian ceases to be faithful, the indwelling ceases. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit do not abide in those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ.

To illustrate, a boy may grow up and be the "spittin' image" of his father, both in looks and behavior. Just because he reflects that a lot of his earthly father is in him, it does not mean his father is literally in him. Conversely, if the boy becomes delinquent, his earthly father may deny any blame for that behavior, and purport that what is in the boy came from elsewhere.

God wants our behavior to reflect the righteousness of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit's righteousness comes out of us, it is because it was in us. He dwells in us in the sense that His righteous traits are in us.

Second, indwelling of the Spirit does not mean one has miraculous capabilities. Some believe that since the Holy Spirit is to dwell in them, they have supernatural powers against sin, they can automatically know scriptures, they can instantly understand scriptures, they will automatically do right (God's will) in all matters, and they will make correct judgments in all physical matters of life, including business. It would be like the Holy Spirit personally getting inside of us and "taking charge." The Bible does not teach these supernatural things are involved in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches that one should accomplish righteous things by "walking after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1-17). By this one is striving to have the Holy Spirit's fruits dwell in him as much as possible. If one reads and studies the word revealed by the Spirit in the Bible (1 Timothy 4:13), and prayerfully and faithfully puts it to use, it will give them power in life over sin, and wisdom in decision making (James 1:5). But it does not guarantee they will not have ignorance in some things, and weaknesses of the flesh. Some of the Corinthians who had been washed, sanctified, and justified by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11), had to be told to "flee fornication" because their "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:18-19). Our job as Christians is to work at having God's Spirit dwell in us, and give no place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27). This means we must embrace the fruits of the Spirit and put them to practice, and we must displace the unrighteousness of the devil. We cannot wait for a miracle in order for us to accomplish our daily spiritual success. We must "walk after the Spirit" by studying the word, praying, and obeying! By this, the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Christians must have the Holy Spirit dwell in them. When the Holy Spirit dwells in someone, it indicates he is a faithful Christian. This means he is making his body useful to the Holy Spirit, by fellowshiping the will of God revealed for us to follow in the Bible. The Holy Spirit will not have a dwelling place (a temple or a home) through which to share the will of God, if one does not live to serve Christ. Let's make sure the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Adapted From Carl Lungstrum