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201 Kingdom of God, A New Creation

What is the kingdom of God? Do any of the statements below describe how you would define it? **What do you think most people understand the Kingdom of God to be?**

- The KOG is Heaven
- The KOG is God's future kingdom that he will establish
- The KOG is God's present reign on this earth and in heaven
- The KOG is/was Jesus Christ's ministry, death and resurrection
- The KOG is a spiritual kingdom where God reigns
- The KOG is God in action

The Kingdom of God, active and present

Matt 3:1-2 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

In Jesus the Kingdom of God collided with earth and the world was never the same. Below are three examples to support this.

- Jesus brought dignity and value to human life

In the world Jesus Christ lived in, only certain 'elite' people had dignity and value. Literally the culture of this world dictated that most people had little or no value, this included peasants, slaves, children and often women. The life of these people were no more valuable than a bag of trash. Jesus taught that all people were created in the image of God whether slave, children or women. This belief that all people have value has transformed the world as we know it. It has inspired people like Martin Luther King, who have championed the marginalized and those who have no voice.

- Jesus revolutionized humanity

In the days of Jesus, the sick, prisoners, unwanted children, the elderly and others were literally discarded and abused. They had no place in society and thus were often abandoned to die a lonely and horrible death. But Jesus served the oppressed and taught the world not to neglect them. *Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.* Today this teaching of the kingdom has inspired people such as Charles Colson (prison ministry) and Mother Theresa (advocate of the poor and sick). Jesus example and teaching of the kingdom introduced a new culture of humanity that has had great influence in this world.

- Jesus redefined greatness

Greatness before Jesus came meant ruling with power and lording it over people. Greatness was defined by how well your followers feared you and by how magnificent your empire was. Cruelty was not despised but rather embraced. Jesus taught that greatness is defined not by power, fear or fame but by humility. In today's world, humility is a key characteristic that defines greatness and it all started with Jesus Christ who humbled himself, even unto death on a cross (Phil 2:8). Think of the heroes the world has today, would they be a hero if they didn't have an air of humility? The kingdom of God teaches that greatness is not defined by the outward things of man but rather by who a person is inside.

Matt 18:4 So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

See *“Who is This Man”* by John Ortberg for a much more in depth look at how Jesus brought forth the Kingdom of God and how it changed this world completely.

Conclusion: The kingdom of God is present and active in this world, It is a Kingdom proclaimed and experienced by all who trust in Christ and are being formed into His image.

The Gospel, An Invitation to be Part of the KOG

Jesus died for us so that we could be part of His magnificent and everlasting kingdom. In Christ we have access and present availability to a life in God. While this good news (gospel) has been prophesied about and looked into since the beginning of time, it was made accessible in Christ.

Today a reduced gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is often taught. It focuses solely on forgiveness of sins and the assurance of heaven which actually creates spiritual apathy when not taught in context of the Kingdom of God. Listed below are two problems of a gospel that is conversion centered (a gospel centered only on personal salvation).

1. A conversion centered gospel is interpreted as a finish line.

The good news of Jesus Christ is not a finish line but a starting line. The invitation to be part of God’s Kingdom is a new beginning. The acceptance of Jesus invitation to be part of His kingdom means that we become a whole new creation.

2 Cor 5:17-19 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

The attitude many have after responding to a conversion centered gospel is, “why do I need to invest in discipleship, I am already forgiven and am going to heaven.” The reality is that God does not call us to be Christians, but to be disciples (sadly in today’s culture there is often a difference). Disciples are citizens of the Kingdom of God who are being made into the image of Jesus Christ. Salvation is a starting line for a new work of God in our lives, it is not a finish line. (see also 2 Cor. 3:18)

2. A conversion centered gospel has no missional appeal– It is passive.

Does your faith propel you beyond yourself? It should because Jesus invitation is to enter a new kind of life where we begin operating by God’s agenda for the world. A conversion centered gospel is often proclaimed as salvation but for no purpose other than to see our own hides saved. How is the KOG described in the scripture below? Who will proclaim the KOG according to this scripture?

Ps 145:8-13 The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations

“To enter into the fullness of human life as God intended it—and thus become the kind of persons we would expect from looking at Jesus and His teachings, requires us to live our lives in the kingdom of God.” - Dallas Willard (from the book, *The Kingdom Life*)

Col 1:13-14, For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Conclusion: The Kingdom of God is more than just a doctrine of “believing so I can go to heaven.” Being a part of God’s Kingdom means experiencing God’s grace that enables and empowers us to be involved in His continual work of redemption and reconciliation.

The Kingdom and Spiritual Formation

Listen to the scripture below as it admonishes us in being formed spiritually. [What do the verses tell us about God’s intention for us? How do these verses help us understand what the Kingdom of God is?](#)

Rom 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Eph 4:22-24 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy

Col 3:9-11 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

God’s Kingdom is perfectly Holy, without blemish or sin. This is why Jesus has predestined those who he foreknew (all who are and will be saved) to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ who was without sin and perfect. Thus, as we live here on earth there is constant tension between our flesh and that work of being conformed into the likeness of Christ. God is at work in us, but we too are to be active in our faith “putting on our new nature.” The scripture below makes it clear that we too have a role in our own formation as a citizen of God’s Kingdom.

1 Tim 4:8-10 Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers.

Training for godliness is all about development of our life in the kingdom of God that comes to us through the risen Christ. We will eventually talk more about this training but for now, how do you explain godliness and how might one train for it?

Conclusion: The Kingdom of God is foundational to formation into the image of Jesus. In fact, this formation (also called discipleship) is a natural response to the gift of life in the Kingdom of God.

Hopefully by now you are beginning to understand, even if just a little bit, the Kingdom of God. Those who through faith trust in Jesus to be part of the Kingdom of God know they have found something so valuable it is worth giving up everything for. It's just as Christ said in **Matt 13:44**

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!"

A Quick look at the statements we started with

- The KOG is Heaven
(the Kingdom of God includes heaven but is more than just a place of eternal life)
- The KOG is God's future kingdom that he will establish
(the Kingdom of God will be completely fulfilled. It does have aspects to it that are future looking)
- The KOG is God's present reign on this earth and in heaven
(The kingdom of God is God's present reign but also his past and future reign as well)
- The KOG is/was Jesus Christ's ministry, death and resurrection
(The Kingdom of God was established on earth through the ministry of Christ but is not limited only to what Christ has done but includes what He is doing)
- The KOG is a spiritual kingdom where God reigns
(The Kingdom of God is spiritual but it has a real impact on the physical reality we understand with our senses. God certainly is King of His kingdom!)
- The KOG is God in action
(perhaps this is the best way to sum up the Kingdom of God. God's work and influence is definitely a positive way of understanding the Kingdom of God).

201 CFF Our Identity in the Kingdom

Saints that Sin

Do you know who God says you are? Perhaps a better question is, Do you trust who God says you are? Many Christians live out of a mistaken identity and not out of who God has said they are. Thus they try to live out of who they think they should become.

Do you...

- Attempt to identify yourself according to successes achieved with spiritual disciplines?
- Trust your assessment that you have failed God and that he is disappointed with you?
- Do believe your own efforts have brought you into a state of great spirituality?
- Do live with a hope that you will one day earn God's acceptance?
- Do you believe you are currently a sinner saved by Grace?

If you belong to the Kingdom of God but checked any of the previous boxes then you are probably living out of a mistaken identity. The truth of the matter is that our sainthood has already been accomplished by Jesus (if indeed you have repented and trust in Him). We have already been clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 1:30 God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.

2 Cor 2:14 But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God.

Eph 2:6-7 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

Rom 6:10-11 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

If indeed you are in Christ then the scriptures above affirm your identity. When God says you have been united with Christ it is done. When it says you have been raised from the dead along with Christ do not suppose that it might happen; What God says is as good as done. You are raised up with Christ, you are a saint. And yes, as a saint you likely sometime sin.

The culture will try to tell you who you are. Satan will try to tell you who you are. Your flesh will try to tell you who you are but who will you listen to, God or someone else? Sometimes even your faith community might convey to you that you are someone other than who God says you are. If you believe you are a sinner saved by grace then you will act like a sinner who strives hard to become a saint. Yet this effort will lead to failure because only Jesus Christ can make us a saint. As a saint who sins you have a correct foundation to grow up into what is already true of you.

Of course, who we really are is all dependant on whether or not we belong to God's Kingdom.

Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.

God's will is that all submit to Jesus Christ, placing their trust (faith) in him. This means repenting of the life we used to live and embracing a new life in Christ. When we do this we become saints who sin. Jesus invitation to God's Kingdom invites us to participate in a life with God, where His grace empowers us toward transformation.

The Illustration of the Butterfly

It can be easy to loose sight of who we really are and begin living a mistaken identity. To remind us of this we can remember the butterfly.

Take a caterpillar and ask a biologist to analyze and describe its DNA. The biologist would say to you, "I know it looks like a caterpillar, I know everyone keeps telling you it's a caterpillar but according to my analysis it is a butterfly. According to its DNA, it is fully and completely a butterfly." While the caterpillar may not yet fully display the behavior and attributes of the butterfly, it one day will. The caterpillar will mature and is maturing into what is already true about it.

If we are already saints because of Christ, does it even matter whether we sin or not? Why or why not? (Rom 6:6-7, 11-16, 12:1, 2Cor 3:18)

Grace and Repentance

Is your life focus "Working on my sin issues" or is it "trusting who God says I am." Many of us have spent all our life trying to be good. Even Christians when they come to Christ will often try to rebuild the same old house by placing all their efforts into trying to be good. But, the grace of God "*invites us into a community (a kingdom) where our worldview (how we see ourselves and others) and our sin-view (where we see sin residing and how sin is handled) changes the foundations of how we are formed into Christlikeness.*" - Bill Thrall & Bruce McNicol, The Kingdom Life.

2 Tim 1:9-11 God who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

This Grace of God is the most refreshing thing any person could ever know and is like the fuel of a car. That fuel allows us to live a holy life but this is not altogether without our effort. There is one word in the New Testament that sums up well what this effort of ours looks like— Repentance. Repentance is the word that embodies our effort and intentionality.

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Repentance is something God has given for us to do. God does not make us repent. In the scripture above Jesus is telling people that God's kingdom is in their midst and that they need to change the way they think about reality and take action according to the invitation to be part of the Kingdom.

Repentance is not an emotion, rather it is a decision. It's deciding that you were wrong in thinking you could manage your own life and be your own God. Repentance can only occur when you realize you can't get enough education, training or strength to make it on your own. It will be a decision you make only when you realize that the truest thing about life is what Jesus Christ tells you, not what the world or self has taught you. Repentance is a decision that recognizes all the above and thus leaves one reality behind to be part of a new reality and kingdom. Repentance is of the mind first and then gives way to the "will to follow" Jesus Christ.

Examine statements of false identity

Do you...

- Attempt to identify yourself according to successes achieved with spiritual disciplines?

In what ways have you based your identity on how well you have succeeded in practicing spiritual disciplines (Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, meditation)?

In the next lesson we will look at the importance of spiritual disciplines in the life of disciples of Christ but for now it is enough to know that while incredibly important, spiritual disciplines don't define your identity, Christ does.

- Trust your assessment that you have failed God and that he is disappointed with you?

When we know we have failed God what should our response be? How should we deal with our failures?

How can a person's failures define their identity, worth and value before God? What does it take for a person to stop allowing their failures to define their worth and value?

- Believe your own efforts have brought you into a state of great spirituality?

God tells us that we cannot earn salvation but that we do participate with him in spiritual growth. How do we participate with God in our own spiritual growth? Can spiritual growth happen apart from Christ?

- Live with a hope that you will one day earn God's acceptance?
2 Cor 5:21—God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

What does it mean to be the righteousness of God? How does a person become accepted by God?

- Believe you are currently a sinner saved by Grace?
What is the difference between living like a “sinner saved by grace” and living like a “saint who sins”

Without naming names, have you ever known someone who uses grace as an excuse to live any way they want? When we use grace as an excuse to live out our own agenda for life (rather than God's), whose character do we reflect?

201 CFF Growing into God's purpose

Intentionality and Spiritual Formation

The true gospel of the Kingdom of God produces disciples not just consumers of religious activity.

What might some of the differences be between consumers of religious activity and true disciples of Christ?

“You see, this life in the Kingdom of God, under the direct rule of God through Jesus can only be realized if we become disciples, students, or apprentices whereby we learn from Jesus how to live our lives in character and action, as He would live our lives if He were us.”
- Keith Matthews

What do the two verses below indicate about the connection between God's righteousness and His Kingdom?

Matt 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness [*insert your own particular variety of goodness*] surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

In the Kingdom of God Jesus is not only a savior who saves us from our sins but He is also our daily teacher, helping us to live out this new life in His kingdom. Understanding Jesus as our teacher is vital for continued growth the rest of our lives. This growth into the likeness of Jesus is not done quickly or passively but is formed through time and experience. This is why new disciples must understand that once they have made a decision to trust Jesus it is just the beginning of their journey of transformation. Their salvation is not the end, but rather a wonderful new start.

Disciples—Growing into the purpose and identity God saved you for.

Check out the verses below: What do they tell us about God's transformation of us?

Eph 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

2 Cor 3:18 And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

Rom 8:29-30 God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

Now contrast the verses you just looked at with the three verses below. Note that the previous verses identify God's plans and purposes for us to become like his son Jesus Christ. The verses below identify our role in participating with God in that purpose (of transformation) he has for us and others

2 Cor 5:16-19 How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

Rom 12:1-2 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

1 Tim 4:7-9 Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."

We have already asked the question in a previous lesson, "how do we participate with God to train ourselves to be like Jesus (godliness)." There are two key answers.

1. We practice obedience to His ways and teachings. 1 John 2:3-5 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him.

2. We practice what is called spiritual disciplines.

We do not earn God's favor through Spiritual Disciplines, rather we practice spiritual disciplines as a way to learn to be like Jesus in character and action.

There are two basic categories of spiritual disciplines: 1. disciplines of abstinence and 2. disciplines of engagement. When we abstain from something we do so to place ourselves before God. When we engage in something we also do it to place ourselves before God. Below is a couple of disciplines practiced by Christ himself. However, this list is short as there are hundreds of other disciplines.

Spiritual Disciplines

Abstinence

Solitude— this is the practice of aloneness, when we abstain from interaction with people, work, activity, etc. Scripture tells us that Jesus often escaped to a solitary place. Solitude allows us a chance to see ourselves before God and to respond accordingly in forgiveness, repentance, renewal and hope. Within solitude there are a number of other specific disciplines that can be engaged.

Silence- eliminating distractions so we can hear the voice of Christ

Fasting— Withholding food (nourishment) in order to receive nourishment from God. Often this practice is used hand in hand with prayer.

Sabbath— To set apart one day a week for rest and worship of God. Sabbath is God’s gift of repetitive and regular rest, it is given for our delight and communion with God.

Engagement

Prayer—activity of asking and receiving from God through conversational activity

Study—Engaging our minds on the things of God. Most prominently we engage with scripture to learn more of God and His ways.

Confession— Sharing with one another (and with God) our pain, sin, temptations, or thoughts in order to live in greater harmony with God’s purposes for us.

Fellowship— To express and reflect on God’s love and unity by investing in and journeying with others. Fellowship exists when believers connect with each other in authentic and loving ways that encourage growth in Christ. Fellowship involves transparency and a certain level of intimacy in our relationships with other believers.

Devotional Reading—To prayerfully encounter and surrender to God through attending to scripture. This discipline requires an open and reflective posture. The purpose for this is more aimed at growing in a relationship with God than gathering information about God.

Resource for more information on Spiritual Disciplines:

Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

Spiritual Pathways

In training yourself for godliness it is also helpful to understand how you best connect or relate to God. Most of us have natural predispositions for how we relate to God. The list below details nine pathways or temperaments, which ones best apply to you?

Naturalist— People with this temperament affirm that nature clearly proclaims the glory of God. Such people are moved by creation and generally prefer to be outdoors with God rather than in any building. Naturalists must avoid missing out on God’s work in others areas of life.

Sensates—Such Christians generally enjoy being lost in the awe, beauty and splendor of God. Often they seek worship that engages their senses. Some find that when engaging their senses it becomes distracting but sensates feel closest to God in such settings. Sensates should be careful to be in control of their senses and emotions and not rely on them entirely or there is danger in becoming addicted to experiences apart from truly seeking and worshipping God.

Traditionalist—For such people rituals and symbol are important in their growth as Christians. Sometimes such people can become legalistic which is a danger but others live disciplined lives which move them into greater reflection of God's truth. While Jesus probably would not have been considered a traditionalist, he did use symbols and structure at times to glorify God. Traditionalists must avoid just going through the motions. Often ritual and symbols simply become idols that they hold on too if they are not careful

Ascetics—Ascetics enjoy solitude and simplicity. They prefer to be in prayer and away from liturgy and the trappings of religion. Often ascetics can become isolated to a fault. Ascetics are very internal people but have a danger of neglecting the authenticity of relationships that God calls us to.

Activists—Activists often focus on God's justice and define worship as standing against evil and calling sinners to repentance. Activists are often viewed as people of confrontation. Activists must be very careful to reflect all of God's character not just his justice. If activists are not careful they can easily be seen by others as rigid people of hate.

Caregivers—Caregivers serve God by serving others. Caregivers see Christ in the poor and needy and are recharged by serving others. Caregivers should be careful not to neglect their own spiritual growth. Some caregivers can also focus purely on physical and emotional needs while neglecting the spiritual needs of others.

Enthusiasts—enthusiasts come to God in awe of his mystery and are compelled toward the celebration of God. Enthusiasts need their hearts to be moved to have a sense of experiencing God's power. Knowing concepts is not enough but experiencing them will move them. Enthusiasts must avoid being controlled by emotions and neglecting knowledge.

Contemplatives—contemplatives could be described as being on a honey moon with God. They love God through adoration. They generally seek to have the deepest, brightest and purest love imaginable. The danger for contemplatives is to internalize their devotion so much that they neglect reflecting Christ likeness in other ways.

Intellectuals—Intellectuals need their minds to be stirred before their hearts can come alive. Intellectuals often enjoy studying or apologetics, even if they don't like to engage in intellectual confrontation. Faith is something to be understood, not just experienced. Intellectuals should avoid boiling down the Christian faith to simply doctrines and concepts. They need to be weary that while knowledge is important, living knowledge out is equally important.

Understanding your pathways should be used to help you understand your own response to God but also the response others have to God as well. Use the understanding of your own pathways to help you train yourselves in godliness.

201 CFF The Role of the Holy Spirit

If you lacked time in your last lesson to talk about spiritual pathways, take a few minutes to do this. Share which pathways you believe you engage most in.

Introducing the Holy Spirit?

Who is the Holy Spirit? Often there is a much greater emphasis on God the (Father) and God the (Son) but little emphasis on God the (Spirit). Because there is a lack of emphasis on the Holy Spirit there may be some confusion as to who the Holy Spirit really is.

The Bible teaches that God is one. In other words there are not many God like so many down through the centuries have believed. Yet the Bible also teaches that God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christians call this the trinity or triunity of God. But how can this be? God is still very much a mystery, we don't understand everything about Him. If we did understand everything about God, would he really be God? Christians have come to understand the trinity by affirming that God is one and yet lives as three persons. Each person of the trinity is revealed to us as unique by their roles.

Before we talk about the role of the Holy Spirit let's talk about what your perceptions are of the Holy Spirit. It may be you have some correct understandings of the Holy Spirit and you may also have some incorrect understandings of who the Bible says the Holy Spirit is. [Talk about who you believe the Holy Spirit is? Do you currently or have you had any of the misperceptions below?](#)

Misperceptions:

- The Holy Spirit is an "it"
- The Holy Spirit is like a ghost
- The Holy Spirit is the power of God (kind of like the force in star wars)

The Holy Spirit is

The Holy spirit is a Person

John 14:16-18 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

[How does the Bible describe the Holy Spirit in this verse? Are these descriptions you might apply to a person? What pronouns are used of the Holy Spirit \(he, she, it\)](#)

[The Bible also gives us some attributes of the Holy Spirit that show he is a personality. How does each verse below show us that the Holy Spirit is a personality?](#)

Romans 8:27

1 Corinthians 2:10 –11

Ephesians 4:30

Acts 13:2

The Holy Spirit is God

We can affirm from scripture the Holy Spirit is a person but what scriptures show us that he is God. See the below chart. The attributes listed can only be true of God.

Attributes of Deity		
Omniscient	All knowing	Isaiah 40:13-14
Omnipresent	Present everywhere	Psalm 139:7
Eternal	Without beginning or end	Hebrews 9:14
Truth	Integrity	1 John 5:7, John 16:13

Divine actions showing deity

1. He was the cause of the virgin birth (Luke 1:35).
2. He was the agent in giving the inspired Scriptures (2 Pet 1:21).
3. He was involved in the creation of the world (Gen 1:2).
4. He is involved in Sanctification (to be set apart unto God—make holy) (2 Thess 2:13).

The Coming of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit in Old Testament Times

The Spirit's work in the Old Testament was not the same as it has been since the day of Pentecost (the day the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles). This is especially true as it involves His work in relation to people. In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit intervened sporadically and temporarily to enable individuals to perform specific tasks, such as prophecy (Num 11:24-30), craftsmanship (Ex31:2-3), and leadership (Jud 3:10, 6:34, 11:29).

An important verse about the future role of the Holy Spirit is found in Joel 2:28-29 and is a prophecy that makes clear that one day the Spirit role would be different. On the day of Pentecost this prophecy was fulfilled.

Joel 2:28-29 Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants—men and women alike.

Preparation for The Day of Pentecost

The prophet Joel had predicted the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. John the baptizer had pointed to Jesus as the one who would fulfill that prophecy. "I have baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8). John had borrowed from the imagery of Joel but changed it enough so that the great outpouring of the Spirit was now known as the great baptism of the Spirit.

As Jesus death neared He began to be increasingly more explicit about the coming of the Spirit. Finally just before His ascension, Jesus gave the disciples detailed instructions for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5).

Pentecost Day

10 days after Jesus' ascension large crowds of people from many countries came to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, also called 'Feast of Weeks.' This was a time of celebrating the giving of the law to Moses and also the beginning of the harvest season. On this day as 120 followers of Christ (Acts 1:15) were all together in one room, the Holy Spirit was poured out and they were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13). This signaled God's giving of the Holy Spirit to all believers.

1 Cor 12:13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Role of the Holy Spirit

Salvation

2 Cor 5:17-18 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Just as when a man and a woman come together in an act of love to produce a new creation (Physical Birth). Likewise people become a new creation when the Holy Spirit comes together with a person's spirit. It produces a new creation (Spiritual Birth). This is what also is referred to as being "born again."

John 3:3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Therefore, the Holy Spirit has a vital role in our spiritual birth into God's Kingdom. **What does the scripture below communicate to us about the role of the Holy Spirit in believer's lives? How does God mark us as His own?**

Eph 1:13-14 And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. 14 The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Ongoing Ministry

Every Christian having the Holy Spirit within them then begins the process of growing into who Christ says we are. We begin to bear the family resemblance of God. The Holy Spirit is deeply involved in that process of transformation. However, we can resist the Spirit's work in us or we can participate with Him in that transformation.

Eph 5:18-19 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,

1 Thess 5:19-20 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit.

Gal 5:16-17 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants.

Eph 4:30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Producing Fruit

We have already seen that the Holy Spirit is at work in a believer's life shaping them into the image of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us that we will be able to see the work of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and in other believers. Paul calls the manifestation of the Spirit's work, fruit.

Gal 5:22-23

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Conclusion:

The role of the Holy Spirit in forming us into the image of Christ is central. He is involved deeply in the process of bringing us into the Kingdom of God, making us a new creation, and helping us live out our new identity and purpose. Understanding the Spirit's role in our formation and identity has great significance for how we live.

1 Cor 6:19-20 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.