

Blessed be the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

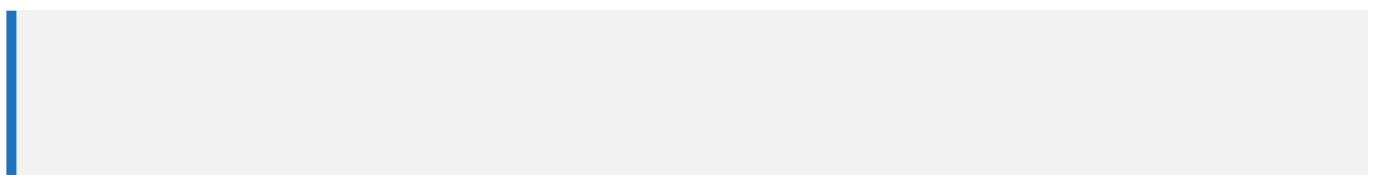
Today, we will explore how to draw the presence of the Holy Spirit near us. The Holy Spirit is God's active presence in our lives, guiding, empowering, and sanctifying us. Theologians describe the Spirit as the third person of the Trinity — fully God, co-equal with the Father and the Son — who works intimately in believers to make Christ real and active in our hearts.

There are three foundational ways to draw the presence of the Holy Spirit close to us:

## 1. PRAYER

Prayer is the primary way to maintain communion with God through the Spirit. Prayer is not just speaking to God but is deeply relational—inviting the Holy Spirit to intercede and align our hearts with God's will.

Romans 8:26-27 (ESV) states:



Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

This shows the Spirit's active role in prayer — praying through us and with us. When we engage in prayer, the Spirit draws closer.

Consider Jesus' baptism: Luke 3:21-22 (ESV) says:

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Note that the Spirit descended while Jesus was praying, emphasizing prayer as a means of inviting God's presence.

At Pentecost, the disciples were united in prayer (Acts 1:14), and the Spirit came upon them powerfully (Acts 2:1-4), enabling bold proclamation and transformation.

Prayer is not just about asking; it is an encounter. It is the Holy Spirit dwelling and working within us, molding us into Christlikeness.

## 2. READING THE WORD OF GOD

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (John 16:13, ESV):

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...

God's Word is truth (John 17:17, ESV):

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

The Spirit uses Scripture to illuminate our hearts and minds, enabling us to understand and apply God's truth.

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) beautifully demonstrates this. The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, but without the Spirit's revelation through Philip, he could not understand the gospel truth about Jesus the Messiah.

The Spirit actively leads us to Scripture, opening our eyes and hearts (Psalm 119:18), confirming the Word within us.

Therefore, regular Bible reading is vital. It is how the Spirit teaches, convicts, and guides believers (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### 3. WITNESSING AND PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Jesus commanded His followers to be His witnesses everywhere (Acts 1:8, ESV):

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Preaching and witnessing are Spirit-empowered acts. The Holy Spirit works through us, giving courage and wisdom to speak boldly (Acts 4:31).

Jesus promised in Matthew 10:18-20 (ESV):

And do not be anxious how you should speak or what you should say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Our mouths become channels for God's Spirit as we testify to Christ.

Theological Reflection: The Indwelling and Filling of the Holy Spirit

When we accept Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit indwells us (1 Corinthians 6:19) — God's presence lives inside the believer, sealing and guaranteeing our salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14).

However, the Spirit's fullness can increase through prayer, worship, obedience, and faith-filled living (Ephesians 5:18).

The Spirit empowers believers for service, holiness, and growth in Christlikeness (Galatians 5:22-23). Drawing near through the practices of prayer, Scripture reading, and witnessing invites greater Spirit presence and power in our daily lives.

### A Personal Challenge

Have you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior? (Romans 10:9-10) If so, consider your spiritual disciplines:

Are you a person of prayer?

Do you regularly read and meditate on God's Word?

Are you actively witnessing and sharing the gospel?

Neglecting these vital practices can hinder experiencing the Spirit's presence. Many Christians find themselves distant from prayer, unfamiliar with Scripture, and inactive in sharing their

faith. Yet, the Lord desires to be closer to us than we desire Him.

Maranatha! The Lord is coming!

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