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# Our Advantage

The Holy Spirit

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**Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to  
your advantage that I go away...**

**John 16:7**

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Why is it advantageous for the Holy Spirit to be sent to us?

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## More than a feeling...

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- "The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being." [Agree/Disagree]
    - 32% strongly agree
    - 27% somewhat agree
    - 17% not sure
    - 8% somewhat disagree
    - 16% strongly disagree
- Ligonier/Lifeway "State of Theology" 2020 Survey



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# Roots of Pneumatic Misunderstanding

- The incomprehensibility of God
  - "timid first steps"

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“Therefore we wait for you to set in motion these **timid first steps** of our undertaking, to confirm it so that it may make progress, and to call us into fellowship with the Spirit who guided the prophets and apostles, so that we may apprehend their words in no other sense than that in which they spoke them, and explain the proper meanings of the words according to the realities they signify. For we shall be speaking of what they preached in mystery...

Grant us, therefore, precision of words, light of understanding, honorable speech, and true faith. Enable us to believe that which we also speak, so that we may confess you, one God of our Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ as taught by the prophets and apostles; and now against the contradictions of the heretics, proclaim you as God (yet not solitary), and Him as God (not falsely).”

Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*

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# Roots of Pneumatic Misunderstanding

- The incomprehensibility of God
  - The lack of “spirit” analogs in our life
  - The tendency to take the Holy Spirit’s actions in our lives for granted
  - The tendency to focus primarily on the gifts of the Spirit
  - The important and necessary focus we as Christians place on Jesus Christ
    - cf. Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 13-28, esp. 25-28
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And in the Spirit, the holy, the lordly, and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father, co-worshiped and co-glorified with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets.

*The Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed, 381*

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Why is it advantageous for the Holy Spirit to be sent to us?

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# The Paraclete

Helper, Comforter, Counselor, Advocate

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# Paraclete Sayings

## John 14-16

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1. John 14:16-17
2. John 14:25-26
3. John 15:26
4. John 16:7-11
5. John 16:12-15





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## Overview

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- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What does the Holy Spirit do?



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# **Who is the Holy Spirit?**

**Mission, Procession, and Name**

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# Mission - Who sends the Paraclete?

- John 14:16 = Son asks the Father to send the Spirit ("another Paraclete")
  - John 14:26 = Spirit sent by the Father in the name of the Son
  - John 15:26 = Sent by the Son from the Father
  - John 16:7 = Spirit sent by the Son
    - The unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit
    - The person of the Spirit
    - Neither mix nor separate the work of the Son and the Spirit
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# Procession

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who **proceeds** from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

**John 15:26**

- Procession = God in himself
  - Eternal relations (eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father)

“The Son and the Spirit come into our history as an extension of **who they have always been.**”

Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, 113

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# Creedal Development and the Filioque

| The Creed of Nicaea<br>(325) | The Niceno-Constantinopolitan<br>Creed (381)   | The Third Synod of<br>Toledo (589)   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| "And in the Holy Spirit."    | "And in the Spirit, the holy, the lordly, and life-giving one, <b>proceeding forth from the Father</b> , co-worshiped and co-glorified with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets." | "In this same way we must confess and make clear that the Holy Spirit <b>goes forth from the Father and the Son</b> , and is one substance with the Father and the Son." |

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## Name

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- Paraclete (14:16, 25; 15:26; 16:7)
- The Spirit of Truth (14:16; 15:26; 16:7)
  - The Spirit speaks the truth because he is **from** the Truth
- The Holy Spirit (14:26)
  - Holy by nature



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First, then, who is not lifted up in his soul and who does not raise his thoughts to the highest nature when he hears the names of the Spirit?

Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*

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He is rightfully and properly called “Holy Spirit,” which is above all the name for everything **incorporeal, purely immaterial, and indivisible.**

Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*

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# **What does the Holy Spirit do?**

## **Indwelling, Testifying**

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# What does the Paraclete do?

- He indwells us and will be with us forever (14:16)
  - He teaches and reminds us of all that Christ said (14:25-26)
  - He bears witness about Christ (15:26)
  - He convicts the world (16:7-11)
  - He guides us into all truth (16:13)
  - He glorifies the Son (16:14)
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**We need Jesus Christ**—enthroned in our glorified humanity—at the Father’s right hand, ruling and subduing enemies of his kingdom and interceding for us. But **we also need the Holy Spirit** to accomplish what only he can: to work within us to bring about repentance and faith, and to intercede within us so that we relate to the Father in joy as his adopted children rather than in fear (Rom 8:15).

Michael Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 123

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# Implications of the Paraclete Sayings

- The Paraclete Sayings norm our understanding of who the Spirit is and what he will do throughout the remainder of the canon.
  - The Paraclete Sayings teach us the fullness of what it means to be a spiritual person.
  - The Paraclete Sayings norm our understanding of the spiritual gifts.
  - The Paraclete Sayings teach us the theological basis for the inspiration of the apostolic witness.
  - The Paraclete Sayings unify us as those born of the Spirit.
  - The Paraclete Sayings bring comfort to anxious souls.
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He lives, but not because he has been restored to life; rather, he is the source of life. He does not grow in strength gradually, but is complete all at once. He is established in himself and present everywhere. He is the source of holiness, an intellectual light for every rational power's discovery of truth, supplying clarity, so to say, through himself. He is inaccessible in nature, but approachable in goodness. He fills all things with power, but only those who are worthy participate in him...He is simple in substance, but manifold in powers. He is present as a whole to each and wholly present everywhere...He is like a sunbeam whose grace is present to the one who enjoys him as if he were present to such a one alone, and still he illuminates land and sea and is mixed with the air. Just so, indeed, the Spirit is present to each one who is fit to receive him, as if he were present to him alone, and still he sends out grace that is complete and sufficient for all.

Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*

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