

## A Spirit of Confusion?

*In a religious world that is filled with confusion about every spiritual subject imaginable, one of the greatest sources of confusion is the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Over the past hundred years, the charismatic movement has swept through the United States, and its members claim that we live in the middle of a modern-day outpouring of spiritual gifts. When we are saved, we should expect to speak in tongues as the mark of our salvation, and if we are sick, we should seek out a faith healer who will bless us with a miraculous cure. All of these things they attribute to the operation of the Holy Spirit.*

*Adherents of more sedate faiths also claim the direct work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Some claim that they are saved because their hearts were anointed by the Spirit. Others suppose that the Spirit leads them through life by whispering messages in their hearts and prompting them to action through various feelings. Finally, there are those who believe that the Spirit personally dwells within them, even though they neither see nor expect to see any evidence of His presence.*

*When we are confronted with this whirl of opinion, our response is often to back away from the entire topic. The proponents of these various doctrines are often very committed to their beliefs, and they often defend them with great fervor, pointing to various passages that appear to confirm their words.*

*However, we must resist the temptation to reduce such a complicated topic to a few proof texts. There are hundreds of passages in Scripture that describe or refer to the Spirit in some way, and if we form beliefs on the subject without surveying that body of evidence, we're likely to be led astray. This workbook is intended as a guide for that survey. It doesn't examine every passage in the New Testament that uses the word "Spirit", but the passages that are studied are representative of those that are not. If we study these texts carefully and honestly, we will be well on our way to understanding the Holy Spirit.*

## About The Author

M. W. Bassford lives in Joliet, IL, with his wife, Lauren, and daughter, Zoë, where he preaches for the Joliet church of Christ.

# Understanding The Holy Spirit



M. W. Bassford