

"I AM where two or three are gathered in My Name."

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

In this Abide we'll further explore issues that are related to divine belonging, especially your abiding need to be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In Abide #3, **Divine Belonging Precedes Communal Belonging**, we emphasized divine interaction. And, when it comes to belonging, a "Pentecost Purpose" with one another exemplifies the basis for home fellowship families in the Newer Testament. As those who loved and trusted Christ were gathered together on that Day of Pentecost, they were mutually filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4). For the *genuinely* born again today, the ramifications of Pentecost are immense! The Spirit's presence is the spiritual power that our Lord Jesus affirmed for His own (Acts 1:8), and His presence and power separates the *genuine* from nominal Christians and unbelievers alike. It's momentous that you take to heart Peter's words spoken on that Pentecost:

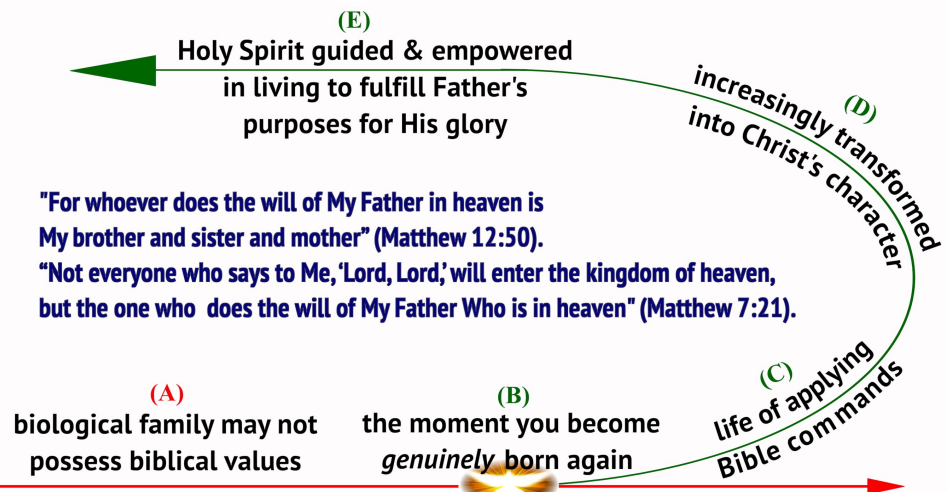
"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself" (Acts 2:38,39). The Holy Spirit's presence within the genuine completely transforms your life goals, your motives and your family identity.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit Establishes The Preeminent Identity Of "Family"

"God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 4:6).

Something for the genuine to take to heart: (A) Your biological family has a genetic connection with each other, and yet may also have unbiblical "family values". (B) But when you become *genuinely* born again and are indwelled by the Holy Spirit, you are part of a spiritual family based on biblical values. (C) The life of the *genuine* is demonstrated in loving our Lord by applying His commands to your life (John 14:15). And in doing this mutually as a marriage, family or fellowship family, you develop **"spiritual family values"** (Matthew 12:50). (D) Over time you increasingly acquire the character qualities of our Lord Jesus as the Holy Spirit transforms you. (E) Your life is guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit as you make our Father's purposes and glory your daily priority.

As you apply more of our Lord's commands to your life, you may experience increasing difficulty accepting the unbiblical values of your biological family. Many *genuine* realize they can no longer identify with their biological family values as they live to fulfill our Father's purposes to His glory.





An insight into our life in Christ: We've understood that when we were *genuinely* born again, it was *the beginning* of lifelong loving service in union with Christ fulfilling Father's purposes, ultimately leading to a heavenly welcome by our Lord Jesus. We weren't earning heaven! Rather, out of loving and obedient trust in our Lord, by His grace we established His commands as our way of life. Transformation from the inside out by the Spirit in developing and growing in our Lord's character increased with each new command we've enacted in our lives.

During this time we also recognized that the nominal Christian thinks he or she is "born again" even while they go on living according to their own desires and the goals and purposes and ways of this world. But this man-pleasing, man-invented deception is totally contrary to the Bible! And we knew we had nothing in common with such perversion of Truth.

God's Word sets forth the specific goals and motives as a way of life which validate that you are truly following Jesus as your Lord and are indwelt by His Spirit. We'll be discussing these in our writings between now and Pentecost, June 8. You may discover how far you fall short of the Spirit-guided and Spirit-empowered life which our Lord provides to the *genuinely* born again. We were recently reflecting on the hurdle which the **theologically brainwashed** must overcome in order to trust what our heavenly Father is restoring to the *genuine*. This brought to mind an incident of wary doubt which our Nigerian friend, John, overcame:

❖ During Christmas break while we were at seminary we invited John to stay with us over the holidays. Friends who lived across the lake from our home invited us and John for Christmas dinner. Sue drove the car around the lake with the dishes she had prepared, while Mike planned to walk across the frozen lake with John and our son Mikey.

When they approached the shoreline, Mike and Mikey walked right out onto the crystal clear 4 inches of ice. Then Mike turned around and saw John standing rigid in fright at the ice's edge. Having come from the tropics, John had never seen a frozen lake before! As Mike repeatedly assured him that it was safe, John gingerly stepped out onto the glassy surface. When he finally reached Mike and Mikey, he told them that the Holy Spirit had reminded him that Peter walked on water (Matthew 14:29), and that Mike wouldn't have brought his son onto the ice if it was dangerous. That fifteen-minute walk across the lake was a spiritual life changing experience for John! You might say that he had been a "believing" Christian, but after this experience, he became a man with Abraham's deep trust leading to action.

We repeatedly encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to verify what we share.

Taking action to ask the Holy Spirit for confirmation is itself novel for many, even among the *genuine* who have placed blind trust in their clergy's instruction and theological creeds and traditions. For several decades we have attested to the **historical fact** that ecclesiastical dominance (Nicolaitanism) not only eradicated the rule of our Lord Jesus in the personal lives of His followers. It also abolished the far-reaching need for the Spirit of our Lord in *guiding and empowering His own*.

Anti-Semitic theology established ecclesiastical rule to replace our Lord's personal rule of His own. The Roman Catholic hierarchy syncretized the autocratic rule of the Roman Empire into Christianity. (The Roman Emperor's title was Pontifex Maximus, a title adopted by the Roman Pontiff, the Pope. And for 1100 years the religious establishment hid the Bible in Latin, known only by the educated. Please see our book [Restoring the Early Church](#) for more on Greco/Roman subjugation of Christianity.)

"Hold firmly to the Head, from Whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God" (Colossians 2:19).



The *genuine* who resist or discount the Holy Spirit's guidance and empowerment are no different than the nominal Christian or even unbelievers. If you're *genuine*, don't let yourself be hoodwinked by Roman Catholic and Protestant anti-Semitic theology which has treated the Holy Spirit with **learned benign scoffing**. Those who trust in their theological training may not outrightly deny the existence of the Holy Spirit (although many do). Rather, from the vantage point of their denomination's stance, they just ignore mentioning Him! Church history demonstrates that too many Protestant theologians embraced the Roman Catholic establishment of spiritually powerless religious systems, "*having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people*" (2Timothy 3:5). You may find it hard to believe that Christianity can be so far away from what our Lord Jesus intended for His own. But for the *genuine*, Father is revealing the truth.

***"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You"***

(Psalms 51:10-13).

Can you imagine the emotional anguish of David's prayer? He had certainly experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit providing *rhema* to him so that God would be glorified through his victories (2Samuel 5:19-25). So be assured that the Holy Spirit's presence is no less vital for the *genuine* in glorifying our Father through guidance and empowerment. You've probably recognized that many Christians have been duped into perceiving the beginning of the Holy Spirit's ministry as starting at Pentecost in Acts 2. And over the centuries, anti-Semitic theology has confined Him to just that event with His work only applicable to the apostles and first Christians.

✚ The Holy Spirit certainly appears before that Day of Pentecost. He was active throughout the Older Testament, being mentioned 86 times, in 27 of the 39 books. The basis to Pentecost, *Shavuot* in Hebrew, was that God commanded the Israelites to observe this feast 50 days after Passover as recorded in Leviticus 23:15-21. Also known as the Feast of First Fruits, Israel dedicated the initial part of the barley harvest to God. First Fruits symbolized the consecration of the whole harvest to God and was a pledge of the entire harvest to come. By the time of the Book of Acts, *Shavuot* celebrated God giving the Ten Commandments on Mt Sinai, transforming the Israelites into a nation bound by divine commands.

At *Shavuot* the 10 Commandments were written on stone tablets by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). At Pentecost God's instruction was written by the Spirit on the tablets of the heart (2Corinthians 3:6-18) in fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah 31:31,32. Both happened to a newly redeemed people:

- *Shavuot* marked the birth of the nation of Israel when God's Spirit descended in fire on Mt Sinai and was visible by all.
- Pentecost marks the gift of the Holy Spirit in descending in fire and dividing onto each of those gathered together in that room.

Those first followers of our Lord Jesus had been convinced by the overwhelming evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in the Older Testament, as well as by our Lord's own words of promise. The subsequent writings of Peter, Paul and John further reinforced the reality and need for the Holy Spirit. They clearly understood that every *genuinely* born again person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit for a purpose:

•“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (John 6:63).

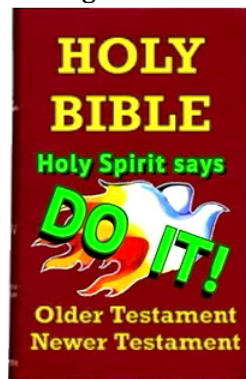
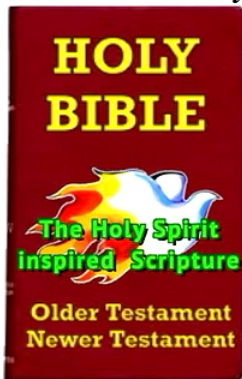
•“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God ... The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:5,8).

•“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever trusts in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:12,16,17).

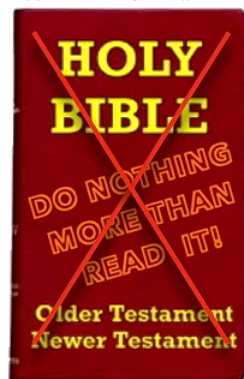
The Holy Spirit Imparts Strong Conviction To The *Genuine* Concerning The Scriptures

The Holy Spirit and God’s Word are paramount!

Genuinely Born Again



Nominal Christian



We earlier noted our friend John’s life-changing experience on the frozen lake for a specific reason: because what our Father has given us to share with you for over 32 years is a life of **trust-based action** no less than Abraham’s. This means that what is commanded in the Bible, **YOU DO IT!** This obedient trust is the initial way you reveal your love for our Lord (John 14:15). In this light the life of the *genuine* is a living testimony of the indwelling Holy Spirit as your Source for guidance and empowerment. The

Holy Spirit was an integral part of God’s purposes in the Older Testament, and the inspiration for writing both Testaments. His presence and power are absolutely indispensable for the *genuine* to live pleasing to our Lord.

The Spirit of the Lord comes upon selected individuals throughout the Older Testament to fulfill God’s will. (For example, see Exodus 31:3, 35:31; Numbers 24:2, 27:18; Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 14:6,19; 1Samuel 10:10, 16:13.) And through the *genuinely* born again the Holy Spirit uses His power for them to fulfill Father’s purposes. If His purposes aren’t being fulfilled by you, what does that say about you? Either you aren’t *genuinely* born again, or you are quenching, grieving or even blaspheming the Holy Spirit. There are dire consequences for living in such spiritual darkness.

Anchor this truth about the Holy Spirit from God’s Word: **The *genuine* cannot have true fellowship with one another if there’s no evidence of the Spirit guiding and empowering them. What evidence is there of Him in *your* life?**

➤In our next Abide we’ll delve deeper into the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the extended spiritual family of home fellowships.