

The Holy Spirit Is Personal – The Biblical Evidence

The Holy Spirit exhibits the following qualities of *personhood*:

Self-awareness

Acts 13:2 [NIV] “While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said**, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Intelligence

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 [NIV] “but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way **no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God**. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

Will

1 Corinthians 12:11 [NIV] “All these are the **work of one and the same Spirit**, and he gives them to each one, just as **he determines**.”

Emotions

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] “And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

The Holy Spirit does work that only *persons* can do:

Teaching

John 14:26 [NIV] “But the Counsellor, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, **will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you**.”

Reproving

John 16:8 [NIV] “When he comes, **he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment**.”

Interceding

Romans 8:26 [NIV] “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but **the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express**.”

Leading

Romans 8:14 [NIV] “because those who are **led by the Spirit of God** are sons of God.”

Calling

Revelation 22:17 [NIV] *“The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.”*

Witnessing

Romans 8:16 [NIV] *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”*

Grieving over sin

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] *“And do **not grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Giving satisfaction

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time **the Spirit** had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

Helping

John 14:16 [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counsellor** to be with you for ever”*

Imparting power

Acts 1:8 [NIV] *“But you will **receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Certain things may be done to the Holy Spirit that point to his being a person.

Obeyed

Acts 10:19-21 [NIV] *“While Peter was still thinking about the vision, **the Spirit said to him**, “Simon, three men are looking for you. So **get up and go downstairs**. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”*

Lied to

Acts 5:3 [NIV] *“Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have **lied to the Holy Spirit** and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”*

Blasphemed

Matthew 12:31 [NIV] *“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the **blasphemy against the Spirit** will not be forgiven.”*

Insulted

Hebrews 10:29 [NIV] *“How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”*

The Holy Spirit can also be affected as is a person, thus displaying personality passively.

Lie to Holy Spirit

Acts 5:3-4 [NIV] *“Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”*

Grieve Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Quench Holy Spirit

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;”*

Resist Holy Spirit

Acts 7:51 [NIV] *“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!”*

While it is possible to resist a mere force, one cannot lie to or grieve something that is impersonal.

Matthew 12:31 [NIV] *“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”*

Mark 3:29 [NIV] *“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”*

This sin again the Holy Spirit, which Jesus suggests is more serious than blasphemy against the Son, surely cannot be committed against something impersonal.

In addition, the Holy Spirit in moral actions and ministries that can be performed only by a person.

Among these activities are teaching, regenerating, searching, speaking, interceding, commanding, testifying, guiding, illuminating, revealing.

All of the foregoing considerations lead to one conclusion.

The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force, and that person is God, just as fully and in the same way as are the Father and the Son.

Implications of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

1 The Holy Spirit is a person, not a vague force.

Thus, he is someone with whom we can have a personal relationship.

2 The Holy Spirit is fully divine.

He is to be accorded the same honour and respect that we give to the Father and the Son.

It is appropriate to worship him as we do them.

He should **not** be thought of in any sense inferior in essence to them, although his role may sometimes be subordinated to them (i.e. within the economy of salvation).

3 The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.

His work is the expression and execution of what the three of them have planned together.

There is no tension among their persons or activities.

4 God is not far off. In the Holy Spirit, the Triune God comes close, so close as to actually enter the believer.

God is even more intimate with us now than in the incarnation.

Through the operation of the Spirit God has truly become Immanuel, '*God with us*'.