

# The Holy Spirit Making Intercession for Us

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The title to this article comes from Paul's powerful Roman letter, where he writes:

*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

Romans 8:26-27

Many of us have heard the common interpretation of these verses. We have repeatedly been told in sermons, classes, and books by brethren on the work of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit helps reveal to God the things that we cannot express in words. This revealing of our deep inner groanings is said to be how the Spirit makes intercession for us.

However, from what the Scriptures teach, this would be a reversal of the work of the Holy Spirit. Numerous passages of Scripture show the Holy Spirit revealing the will of God to men. (cf. 1 Sam. 10:10; John 14:16-17; 26; 15:26; 16:8; 13-14; Acts 2:17-18; 20:23; 21:11; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 1Tim. 4:1; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

Has anyone ever wondered why God the Father would need the Holy Spirit to reveal or understand our thoughts? David wrote:

***O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all.***

Psalm 139:1-4 (Emphasis Mine)

In the book of Acts we have Stephen recounting the words of God concerning the children of Israel in Egypt:

***"I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt and **have heard their groans,** and I have come down to rescue them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt."***

Acts 7:34 (Emphasis Mine)

Was the Holy Spirit dwelling in these people so that God could hear their groanings? The Scriptures mention NO such indwelling of the Holy Spirit among the children of Israel at this time.

These truths from Scripture considered, it seems unlikely that Paul is describing a reversal of the consistent and constant work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, revealing the mind of man to God is an unnecessary work of the Holy Spirit, since God already knows our minds!

What then, is Paul describing when he writes of the Holy Spirit making intercession for us? In properly answering this question, we must keep in mind the historical context of the

Roman letter. Paul is writing at a time when the New Testament church had the miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There were some Christians in Rome who possessed miraculous gifts of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 12:6ff).

One of the spiritual gifts that existed at that time, was the ability to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:10). With this particular gift in mind, notice what Paul writes to the Corinthians:

*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.*  
1 Corinthians 14:14

If speaking in a tongue was a miraculous gift of the Spirit to reveal the will of God, a prayer in a tongue would be also be a miraculous work of the Spirit to also reveal God's will. Jude appears to make mention of these Spirit-inspired prayers:

*These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,*  
Jude 1:19-20

Jude is warning the Christians about false teachers who are devoid of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, he reminds them that they had the Spirit to instruct them, even in their prayers.

This helps us in understanding what Paul meant when he wrote to the Romans, "For we do not know to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us..." In other words, just as many of the other gifts were to help the early church, the Spirit also helped inspire prayers, revealing (as part of His consistent work) the will of God to men.

Knowing that we no longer have these miraculous gifts of the Spirit, one might ask, "Does the Spirit intercede in our prayers today?" As you know, the common interpretation of this passage would say, "yes." Again however, this would be a reversal of His work. I am not saying this is impossible, but it would certainly seem strange in light of God already knowing our thoughts from afar.

If the Holy Spirit still interceded in our prayers the same way as in the first century, would that not make the miraculous gifts still in use? This we know cannot be the case.

The Spirit helps in our prayers today, as we have the Spirit-inspired instruction on prayer found in the word of God. This written instruction is something the early church did not possess for some time. How blessed we are to have the inspired word of God. May His word indwell us so as to constantly instruct us on the will of God.