

# Matthew 15

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## Matthew 15

Pure mind

Bible Question: What's the difference with God's Spirit and Holy Spirit?

In Christianity, there's no fundamental difference between "God's Spirit" and the "Holy Spirit." Both terms refer to the same entity, part of the Holy Trinity, actively working in the world and within believers.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would come upon individuals for specific purposes or tasks but wouldn't permanently indwell in them. In the New Testament, after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit comes to permanently dwell in believers, guiding and empowering them.

The Holy Spirit and God's Spirit are considered the same in Christian belief.

The terms "God's Spirit" and "Holy Spirit" are often used interchangeably in Christian theology, but they can carry slightly different nuances depending on context and tradition. Here's a breakdown:

### 1. God's Spirit

General Usage: "God's Spirit" typically refers to the Spirit of God in a broader sense, emphasizing God's presence, power, and activity in creation and history.

Old Testament : the term "Spirit of God" often describes God's dynamic presence, such as in creation (Genesis 1:2) or empowering individuals for specific tasks (e.g., Judges 6:34, 1 Samuel 16:13). This term highlights the Spirit's role as an extension or manifestation of God's will and power.

### 2. Holy Spirit

Specific Usage: The term "Holy Spirit" is more commonly used in the New Testament and Christian theology to refer to the third Person of the Trinity—fully divine and distinct within the Godhead. New Testament Context: The Holy Spirit is described as a personal being who teaches, guides, comforts, and

empowers believers (John 14:26, Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is also central to the work of sanctification and the indwelling presence of God in the lives of Christians (Romans 8:9-11). In Christian theology, the Holy Spirit is one of the three Persons of the Trinity,

While "God's Spirit" can refer to the Spirit of God in a general sense, the "Holy Spirit" in Christian theology specifically refers to the personal and divine Spirit who is active in the life of believers and central to the doctrine of the Trinity.

## Matthew 15

A clean mind is more important than a ritual cleansing

In Matthew 15, "Honor your father and mother" is the first of the Ten Commandments on relationships; Parents are the source of their children, and God is the source of our people. God's intention is for us to honor God by honoring our parents. Give to God what God deserves; What a man deserves, it should be given to man. To cover up unfilial behavior with dedication is to do evil through religion or to cover up one's own evil. Jesus confronted the Pharisees and scribes, who criticized Jesus' disciples for not following the traditional ritual of washing their hands. Jesus responded by emphasizing the importance of moral purity over human tradition. Jesus taught that what comes out of the mouth and out of the heart is defiled, not eaten with unwashed hands. He emphasized focusing on inner virtues rather than external rituals.

In Matthew 15, there is a moment when a Canaanite woman asks Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus replied at first that he was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel. But when she insisted, "Even dogs eat the crumbs that fell from their master's table," Jesus praised her faith and granted her plea, healing her daughter. The story is more about faith and persistence than literal leftovers, but it uses the metaphor of table scraps to make a point about inclusion and faith. The faith and persistence of the Canaanite woman was evident. Even when Jesus initially refused, she persevered, expressing her deep belief in Jesus' power. Jesus is not here to show contempt for the Canaanite woman, but to show the priority and order of His ministry—that He came so that salvation would come first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

This story theologically emphasizes the importance of faith, humility, and continuous prayer. The beliefs of the Canaanite woman transcend cultural and ethnic boundaries, showing that God's grace is open to all, not just specific groups.

Jesus performed a miracle when He took seven loaves of bread and a few small fish to feed a large crowd of people who had been following Him. After thanksgiving, he broke the food and distributed it to the people. Miraculously, everyone ate and was satisfied, after which seven baskets of leftovers were collected. It shows the mercy of Jesus and the abundance found in faith.

Matthew 15 includes:

**Tradition and Commandments:** Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for putting human traditions above God's commandments, emphasizing that their practices sometimes undermined the true intent of the Law.

**Inner Purity:** Jesus taught that it is not what enters the mouth but what comes out that defiles a person, emphasizing that evil thoughts and actions come from the heart.

**Canaanite Woman:** A Gentile woman showed great faith in Jesus and led Him to heal her daughter. This interaction highlights the universality of His message and compassion.

After these events, Jesus moved on and performed miracles such as healing the lame, blind, and mute, which led the crowd to glorify the God of Israel.

True faith lies not in superficial rituals and traditions, but in inner godliness and love for God and man. We need to learn to care for the needs of others, regardless of their background. Like the Canaanite woman, we are to be steadfast in our faith in God's power and mercy. Most importantly, we need to know that God is our provider.

We pray

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come to You here to thank You for Your grace and love. As Matthew 15 teaches, we understand that true worship comes from the honesty of the heart, not just outward rituals. Help us to seek Your will always in our lives and worship You with a sincere heart.

Lord, give us wisdom so that we can discern the truth and rely on You steadfast in the face of trials. May our words and actions reflect Your love and light, and may we be a blessing to others.

We also pray for those who are struggling in their hardships for Your comfort and healing in their lives. May we be able to pass on Your love to everyone who needs it, as described in Matthew 15.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Matthew 15

Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

**15** Then from Jerusalem came scribes and Pharisees and said,

<sup>2</sup> Why do Your disciples transgress *and* violate the rules handed down by the elders of the past? For they do not practice [ceremonially] washing their hands before they eat.

<sup>3</sup> He replied to them, And why also do you transgress *and* violate the commandment of God for the sake of the rules handed down to you by your forefathers (the elders)?

<sup>4</sup> For God commanded, Honor your father and your mother, and, He who curses *or* reviles *or* speaks evil of *or* abuses *or* treats improperly his father or mother, let him surely come to his end by death.

<sup>5</sup> But you say, If anyone tells his father or mother, What you would have gained from me [that is, the money and whatever I have that might be used for helping you] is already dedicated as a gift to God, then he is exempt *and* no longer under obligation to honor *and* help his father *or* his mother.

<sup>6</sup> So for the sake of your tradition (the rules handed down by your forefathers), you have set aside the Word of God [depriving it of force and authority and making it of no effect].

<sup>7</sup> You pretenders (hypocrites)! Admirably *and* truly did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said:

<sup>8</sup> These people *draw near Me with their mouths and* honor Me with their lips, but their hearts hold off *and* are far away from Me.

<sup>9</sup> Uselessly do they worship Me, for they teach as doctrines the commands of men.

<sup>10</sup> And Jesus called the people to Him and said to them, Listen and grasp *and* comprehend this:

<sup>11</sup> It is not what goes into the mouth of a man that makes him unclean *and* defiled, but what comes out of the mouth; this makes a man unclean *and* defiles [him].

<sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came and said to Him, Do You know that the Pharisees were displeased *and* offended *and* indignant when they heard this saying?

<sup>13</sup> He answered, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be torn up by the roots.

<sup>14</sup> Let them alone *and* disregard them; they are blind guides *and* teachers. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a ditch.

<sup>15</sup> But Peter said to Him, Explain this <sup>[a]</sup>proverb (this <sup>[b]</sup>maxim) to us.

<sup>16</sup> And He said, Are you also even yet dull *and* ignorant [without understanding and <sup>[c]</sup>unable to put things together]?

<sup>17</sup> Do you not see *and* understand that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the <sup>[d]</sup>abdomen and so passes on into the place where discharges are deposited?

<sup>18</sup> But whatever comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this is what makes a man unclean *and* defiles [him].

<sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts (reasonings and disputings and designs) such as murder, adultery, sexual vice, theft, false witnessing, slander, *and* irreverent speech.

<sup>20</sup> These are what make a man unclean *and* defile [him]; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean *or* defile [him].

<sup>21</sup> And going away from there, Jesus withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>22</sup> And behold, a woman who was a Canaanite from that district came out and, with a [loud, troublesomely urgent] cry, begged, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is miserably *and* distressingly *and* cruelly possessed by a demon!

<sup>23</sup> But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, Send her away, for she is crying out after us.

<sup>24</sup> He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

<sup>25</sup> But she came and, kneeling, worshiped Him and kept praying, Lord, help me!

<sup>26</sup> And He answered, It is not right (proper, becoming, or fair) to take the children's bread and throw it to the <sup>[e]</sup>little dogs.

<sup>27</sup> She said, Yes, Lord, yet even the little pups (<sup>[f]</sup>little whelps) eat the crumbs that fall from their [young] masters' table.

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you wish. And her daughter was cured from that <sup>[g]</sup>moment.

<sup>29</sup> And Jesus went on from there and passed along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Then He went up into the hills and kept sitting there.

<sup>30</sup> And a great multitude came to Him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and they put them down at His feet; and He cured them,

<sup>31</sup> So that the crowd was amazed when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they <sup>[b]</sup>recognized *and* praised *and* thanked *and* glorified the God of Israel.

<sup>32</sup> Then Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, I have pity *and* sympathy *and* am deeply moved for the crowd, because they have been with Me now three days and they have nothing [at all left] to eat; and I am not willing to send them away hungry, lest they faint *or* become exhausted on the way.

<sup>33</sup> And the disciples said to Him, Where are we to get bread sufficient to feed so great a crowd in this isolated *and* desert place?

<sup>34</sup> And Jesus asked them, How many loaves of bread do you have? They replied, Seven, and a few small fish.

<sup>35</sup> And ordering the crowd to recline on the ground,

<sup>36</sup> He took the seven loaves and the fish, and when He had given thanks, He broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

<sup>37</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied. And they gathered up seven [<sup>[i]</sup>large provision] baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over.

<sup>38</sup> Those who ate were 4,000 men, not including the women and the children.

<sup>39</sup> Then He dismissed the crowds, got into the boat, and went to the district of Magadan

Matthew 15 is a rich chapter in the Gospel of Matthew, featuring Jesus' interactions with religious leaders, His teachings about purity, and His miraculous acts of healing and provision. Below is a detailed exploration of this chapter.

## Full Description

### Pharisees and Tradition (15:1–9)

Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem question Jesus about why His disciples do not follow the tradition of ceremonial handwashing.

Jesus responds by accusing them of breaking God's commandments for the sake of their traditions, specifically citing their neglect of the command to honor their parents.

He quotes Isaiah, calling them hypocrites whose worship is vain because their hearts are far from God.

### Teaching on Purity (15:10–20)

Jesus calls the crowd and teaches them that it is not what enters the mouth that defiles a person but what comes out of the mouth, as this reflects the heart.

The disciples ask for clarification, and Jesus explains that evil thoughts, murder, adultery, and other sins originate from the heart, not from external actions like eating without washing hands.

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman (15:21–28)

Jesus travels to the region of Tyre and Sidon, where a Canaanite woman pleads for her demon-possessed daughter to be healed.

Initially, Jesus seems to dismiss her, stating His mission is to the lost sheep of Israel.

The woman persists, humbly acknowledging her position but demonstrating great faith. Jesus commends her faith and heals her daughter.

Feeding the Four Thousand (15:29–39)

Jesus moves to the Sea of Galilee, where He heals many who are sick, lame, and blind.

Seeing the crowd's need, He miraculously feeds four thousand men (plus women and children) with seven loaves and a few small fish.

After everyone is satisfied, the disciples collect seven baskets of leftovers.

Key Verses

Matthew 15:8–9

““These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.””

This highlights the contrast between outward religious acts and genuine devotion to God.

Matthew 15:11

“What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

This shifts the focus from external rituals to the condition of the heart.

Matthew 15:28

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that moment.”

This verse emphasizes the power of persistent faith and Jesus' openness to Gentiles.

Matthew 15:37

"They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over."

A testament to Jesus' miraculous provision and abundance.

Theological Thought

True Purity Comes from the Heart

Jesus challenges the Pharisaic focus on external rituals and underscores that true purity is about the condition of one's heart.

This teaching aligns with the broader biblical theme of internal transformation over external compliance (e.g., Ezekiel 36:26).

Faith Beyond Boundaries

The encounter with the Canaanite woman reveals that God's kingdom extends beyond Israel to include all who demonstrate faith.

This anticipates the universal mission of the Gospel (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus as the Provider

The feeding of the four thousand reflects Jesus' compassion and His ability to meet both physical and spiritual needs.

It also symbolizes the abundance of God's grace and provision for all who come to Him.

Spiritual Influence

A Call to Examine Our Hearts

This chapter invites believers to focus on the purity of their hearts and motives rather than relying on religious traditions or outward appearances.

It challenges us to align our words and actions with God's will.

The Power of Persistent Faith

The Canaanite woman's story inspires believers to approach God with humility, perseverance, and trust, even when answers seem delayed.

#### Trust in God's Provision

The feeding miracle encourages believers to trust in God's ability to provide for their needs, both materially and spiritually.

It reminds us that God's resources are always sufficient.

#### Inclusivity of the Gospel

Jesus' interaction with the Gentile woman highlights the inclusivity of God's love and salvation, urging believers to embrace and share the Gospel with all people.

#### Conclusion

Matthew 15 offers profound lessons on the nature of faith, the importance of inner purity, and God's abundant provision. It challenges religious hypocrisy while demonstrating the inclusivity of God's kingdom. For believers, this chapter is a call to genuine worship, persistent faith, and trust in God's sufficiency.