

04

Experience  
Walking  
with the  
Holy Spirit

Have you ever thought, “All of this faith stuff would be so much easier if I could just sit down with Jesus and talk to Him face to face. I could finally ask Him my questions and get some answers”? While that does seem like a wonderful way to spend an afternoon, Jesus actually proposed something greater. In John’s Gospel He says,

*“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”*

John 16:7, ESV

The “Helper” He is referring to here is known throughout the Bible as the Holy Spirit.

## What is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a part of the Trinity. Simply put, that means the Holy Spirit is God. He’s God just like the Father is God, and just like Jesus is God. They are not three separate Gods, but one God manifested in three persons. Yeah, it’s a bit confusing, and our attempts to illustrate this will always fall short. Here are a couple examples:

- Water can be a liquid, solid, or gas. Which one is it? Technically it’s all three.
- If a woman is a daughter, a mother, and a sister which one is she? Again, she is all three.

When you think about it, that’s part of the intrigue of God. There are just some things about Him that we can’t illustrate or explain because He’s bigger, more powerful, and immensely more beautiful than we can imagine. There are just somethings on this side of eternity that we will not be able to comprehend.

What we can comprehend is what has been revealed to us in His Word. In John 16 Jesus gives us a clear picture of what the Holy Spirit’s role is in our lives.

*Read John 16:7-14*

# What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

Based on what you just read, let's take a look at the role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives as we follow Jesus.

## 1. Convict the world

Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will come to illuminate three things. He will show us the ways of the world that are wrong (sin), the ways that are right (righteousness), and that God ultimately gets to make those determinations (judgment).

The fact that He says He will convict the world, not merely the Church, shows us something significant. He desires to show the world these truths through us. As the Holy Spirit works in our lives to convict us, others should see how we shun what is wrong (sin), pursue what is right (righteousness), and trust in the One who rules over us (judgment).

## 2. Guide us in truth

In our current culture there is a common acceptance that truth can be different for each of us. Consider the popularity of the phrase, "Speak your truth!" The flaw in this kind of thinking is that we end up with a world driven by desire and emotion. Truth is then determined by feelings, not shared standards.

When Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit guiding us in the truth He is pointing to the Truth, His Word. Since the Holy Spirit is God, (the Author of the Bible), He is the best guide to illuminate the Scriptures for us. The more time you spend in the Bible the more you will begin to see Him open your eyes to its truth.

Something important to keep in mind as you read and listen for the Holy Spirit to speak: He will never contradict the Bible. Why? Because it's His Word!

### 3. Point us to Jesus

Ultimately, the Holy Spirit will always point us to Jesus. That's what it means to glorify. The Holy Spirit will remind us of the goodness of Jesus and the sacrifice that He made on our behalf. He will remind us of all those truths about what it means to be "in Christ"; we are loved, secure, adopted, etc.

This serves as a good test for listening to the Holy Spirit. If what you're hearing is in line with the character and ways of Jesus...the Spirit is speaking to you. If you're hearing something that is uncertain or out of line with Jesus, do not act upon what you're hearing. Instead, return to God in prayer and wait for Him to bring clarity.

## Being Filled with the Spirit

So, you might be asking, "How does this work?" Here are a couple verses to explore.

*Read 1 Corinthians 3:16.*

*Read Ephesians 5:18.*

*Read Romans 8:11.*

Do you see the common thread in these passages? When we say "yes" to Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He is not merely an outside force that tries to influence our behavior. He works inside of us. As we surrender to Him, He changes us deep within our hearts. He guides us gently so that we pursue what is true and right.

In the Ephesians 5 passage you just read, one of Jesus' earliest followers explains how this happens. He encourages us to not be drunk on wine but instead be filled with the Spirit. In other words, we are not to be influenced or controlled by anything other than the Spirit since He is the source of what is true and right.

While the Holy Spirit can work at times in powerful and memorable moments, what Paul is describing here are small moments. In

the original Greek language that Paul wrote Ephesians in it says, “be being filled with the Spirit”. In other words, as we go about our days interacting with our families, coworkers, and friends, we should continuously be surrendering to the Holy Spirit so that He can work in and through us. Being filled by Him is a daily, moment-by-moment, walk with God. In fact, that’s another way that Paul describes our relationship to the Spirit.

*Read Galatians 5:16.*

Being filled by the Spirit is keeping in step with the Spirit. Listening to His gentle voice. Confirming that what we’re hearing aligns with the truth of His Word. Seeing if what we’re hearing glorifies Jesus. In other words, He is meant to saturate our lives. Consider this visual:

If you were to take a glass of milk with the intention of making some chocolate milk to drink, what would you do? First you would pour the chocolate into the glass of milk, right? Do you now have a delicious glass of chocolate milk to drink? No! You just have a glass of milk with a blob of chocolate in the bottom. You have to stir it up to saturate the drink.

That is how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. When we pray, read the Bible, and listen, we are doing the work to stir up our lives in such a way that He can saturate.

## The Gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit loves to give gifts to the followers of Jesus. He gives these gifts to that we can serve God and love others. Here are a couple passages that speak about the gifts He gives.

*Read Romans 12:3-8.*

*Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.*

These lists are by no means comprehensive. There are many ways that the Spirit gifts the Church to love and care for the world around us.

Something noteworthy about the gifts of the Spirit: they all have an important goal. Paul addresses this just after the last passage

you read. If you've ever been to a wedding, this passage may sound familiar!

*Read 1 Corinthians 13.*

The goal of these gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us is love. We are to utilize His gifts to care for others, encourage others, and support others. Paul describes a fuller expression of this in his letter to the Galatians.

## The Fruit of the Spirit

*Read Galatians 5:22-23.*

So what is the desire of the Holy Spirit in giving His followers gifts? This passage explains the goal of the fruit of the Spirit is to positively influence the world, drawing others closer to God.

## Questions to Consider

- Who is the Holy Spirit? Describe in your own words.
- What are some thoughts that come to mind when you think of the Holy Spirit?
- What are some questions you have about the Holy Spirit's interaction in your life?
- What stood out to you about how He works in our lives?
- What is the primary goal of spiritual gifts? (1 Cor. 12:8-10)
- Do you know other believers who are displaying the fruit we read about in Galatians 5:22-23? What about them stands out to you?
- What next steps do you need to take this week to “stir up” the Holy Spirit in your life?

## Next Session

Next time we will focus on knowing and experiencing God's community, the Church. To prepare spend some time reading about the early Church in **Acts 2:42-47**.