

Bible Study on the Holy Spirit *4 lessons with questions*

This Bible study on the Holy Spirit looks at who He is and what He does in the life of every believer: the Advocate Jesus promised in John 14, the life and adoption He brings in Romans 8, the fruit He grows in Galatians 5, and the boldness He gave the first church in Acts 4. Four lessons for a small group, a class or personal study.

The study stays with what these passages say, so it is suited to a group from different church backgrounds. Each lesson prints the passage in full from the Berean Standard Bible, then gives the big idea, notes for the leader, questions to observe, understand and apply, a memory verse and a prayer.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.

— John 14:26 (BSB)

LESSON 1 OF 4

The Advocate Jesus promised

Read John 14:15-27

The big idea: On the night before the cross, Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to be with His disciples forever, to teach and remind them.

Read

¹⁵ If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you do

know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.” ²² Judas (not Iscariot) asked Him, “Lord, why are You going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words. The word that you hear is not My own, but it is from the Father who sent Me. ²⁵ All this I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid.

– John 14:15-27 (BSB)

Notes

Jesus was about to leave His disciples, and they were troubled. He promised that the Father would give “another Advocate to be with you forever,” the Spirit of truth. The word another matters: the Spirit would be to them what Jesus had been, a helper who stays alongside. Jesus speaks of Him as a Person: He abides, He teaches, He reminds.

Notice how closely the Spirit is tied to Jesus’ words. He will “teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.” And the result is peace: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.” The Spirit does not lead us away from Jesus; He leads us deeper into what Jesus said.

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What names does Jesus give the Spirit in verses 16, 17 and 26?
2. How long will the Advocate be with the disciples (v. 16)?
3. What two things will the Holy Spirit do, according to verse 26?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. Why does Jesus say ‘another’ Advocate? Who was the first?
2. What does it mean that the world ‘cannot receive Him’ (v. 17)?
3. How are loving Jesus, keeping His word and the Spirit’s presence connected (vv. 15–23)?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Which words of Jesus do you need the Spirit to remind you of this week?
2. Where do you need His peace instead of the world’s?
3. How could you ask the Spirit to teach you before you read the Bible?

Memory verse

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.

– John 14:26 (BSB)

Pray

Father, thank You for sending the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be with us forever. Holy Spirit, teach me and remind me of everything Jesus said. Give me His peace, and help me love Him by keeping His word. Amen.

LESSON 2 OF 4

Life in the Spirit

Read Romans 8:1-17

The big idea: The Spirit sets believers free from sin and death, lives in them, leads them, and assures them that they are God's children.

Read

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set you free from the law of sin and death.

³ For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man, as an offering for sin. He thus condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the righteous standard of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh; but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ The mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind of the flesh is hostile to God: It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

⁸ Those controlled by the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are controlled not by the flesh, but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you. ¹² Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the

Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption to sonship, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ And if we are children, then we are heirs: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified with Him.

— Romans 8:1-17 (BSB)

Notes

Romans 8 begins with good news: “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” What the law could not do, God did by sending His Son. Now the Spirit lives in everyone who belongs to Christ (v. 9). Paul contrasts two ways of living: with the mind set on the flesh, which is death, or on the Spirit, which is “life and peace.”

The Spirit also changes how we relate to God. We did not receive “a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear” but the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children, and if children, then heirs with Christ.

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What does Paul say there is ‘now’ none of for those in Christ (v. 1)?
2. According to verse 9, who has the Spirit of Christ?
3. What do believers cry out by the Spirit (v. 15)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. What does it mean to set the mind on the things of the Spirit (vv. 5–6)?
2. How does the Spirit help us put to death the deeds of the body (v. 13)?
3. Why does Paul contrast slavery and fear with adoption (v. 15)?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Where are you living with fear instead of as a child of God?
2. What is one ‘deed of the body’ you need the Spirit’s help to put to death?
3. Pray to God as ‘Father’ this week, and thank Him that you are His child.

Memory verse

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

— Romans 8:14 (BSB)

Pray

Abba, Father, thank You that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Thank You for the Spirit who lives in me and tells me I am Your child. Lead me by Your Spirit, and help me put to death what does not belong to You. Amen.

LESSON 3 OF 4

The fruit of the Spirit

Read Galatians 5:16-26

The big idea: Walking by the Spirit produces His fruit in us, love, joy, peace and more, in place of the acts of the flesh.

Read

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh craves what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, ²¹ and envy; drunkenness,

orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us walk in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying one another.

– Galatians 5:16-26 (BSB)

Notes

Paul describes a real struggle: the flesh and the Spirit “are opposed to each other.” The answer is not trying harder by ourselves but to “walk by the Spirit.” He lists the acts of the flesh plainly, then sets against them the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Fruit grows; it is not manufactured. A branch does not strain to produce grapes; it stays joined to the vine. The fruit is also one fruit with nine flavors, so the Spirit grows all of it together. Paul ends practically: “Since we live by the Spirit, let us walk in step with the Spirit,” and do not become conceited or envious.

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What does Paul say will happen if we walk by the Spirit (v. 16)?
2. List the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22–23.
3. What have those who belong to Christ done with the flesh (v. 24)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. Why does Paul call it ‘fruit’ rather than ‘works’ of the Spirit?
2. What does walking in step with the Spirit look like day to day?
3. Why might conceit and envy (v. 26) be a danger for spiritual people?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Which part of the fruit of the Spirit do you most want to grow in? Pray for it daily.
2. Which act of the flesh in verses 19–21 is a struggle for you? Confess it to God.
3. Who in your life shows this fruit? Thank God for them, and tell them.

Memory verse

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

– Galatians 5:22–23 (BSB)

Pray

Holy Spirit, I cannot produce this fruit by myself. Grow in me love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Help me walk in step with You today, and keep me from conceit and envy. Amen.

LESSON 4 OF 4

Boldness to speak

Read Acts 4:23–31

The big idea: Threatened for speaking about Jesus, the first believers prayed for boldness, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke God’s word boldly.

Read

²³ On their release, Peter and John returned to their own people and reported everything that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴ When the believers heard this, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “You made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Your servant, our father David: ‘Why

do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.’ ²⁷ In fact, this is the very city where Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired with the Gentiles and the people of Israel against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed. ²⁸ They carried out what Your hand and will had decided beforehand would happen. ²⁹ And now, Lord, consider their threats, and enable Your servants to speak Your word with complete boldness, ³⁰ as You stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ After they had prayed, their meeting place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

– Acts 4:23-31 (BSB)

Notes

Peter and John had just been arrested and warned not to speak in the name of Jesus. When they told the other believers, the church did not plan a strategy first; they prayed. They began with who God is, “Sovereign Lord,” the Maker of everything, and they read their situation through Psalm 2.

Notice what they asked for. Not safety, not that the threats would stop, but this: “enable Your servants to speak Your word with complete boldness.” God answered. They “were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” The Spirit gives courage to speak about Jesus.

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What did the believers do when they heard about the threats (vv. 23–24)?
2. How do they address God, and what do they say about Him (v. 24)?
3. What did they ask for (v. 29), and what happened after they prayed (v. 31)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. Why do you think they began their prayer with who God is?
2. Why might they have asked for boldness instead of protection?
3. What does this passage show about the Holy Spirit's work in the church?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Where do you feel afraid to speak about Jesus?
2. Pray verse 29 for yourself and for your church this week.
3. Who is one person you could speak to about Jesus, and when?

Memory verse

After they had prayed, their meeting place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

– Acts 4:31 (BSB)

Pray

Sovereign Lord, You made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. When I am afraid to speak about Jesus, fill me with Your Holy Spirit and give me boldness. Let me speak Your word with gentleness and courage. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tips for leading this study

Stay with the text. Groups from different churches may hold different views on spiritual gifts. Keep the discussion on what these four passages say.

Speak of the Spirit as a Person. Jesus says He, not it. Notice how He teaches, reminds, leads and testifies.

Pray before you read. Ask the Spirit to open your eyes; it is the subject of the study.

Make lesson 4 practical. End by praying verse 29 for specific people your group wants to reach.

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