

# 5



## Lesson 5

# Who is the Holy Spirit?

### Introduction

**Big Question:**  
What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

The Holy Spirit is often the forgotten part of the Trinity. In twenty-first century Christianity, many are unaware of His presence. They are ignorant of the power He can bring into their lives. As a result, their practice of the faith is quite dry and mechanical. They lack zeal for serving God, and they seem unable to live the life of Christ.

**Key Scripture:**  
“Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7)

According to Jesus, truth concerning the Holy Spirit is of paramount importance. In fact, He taught His disciples that it was beneficial for Him to go away so that the Spirit might come to them. In John’s Gospel, He said, “Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7). While many may reduce the Third Person to a mere superfluous side doctrine in the Christian faith, Jesus placed great weight on His importance. According to our Lord, it is more beneficial for one to have the Spirit in one’s heart than to have the personal, physical presence of Jesus by one’s side.

## Conversation Starter

Why do so many Christians neglect this topic? It seems there are numerous reasons, but two stand out in my mind. First, by virtue of the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, many assume His position is of lesser importance. Such an assumption is misguided. There is perfect unity and harmony amongst the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Second, some minimize the Spirit out of fear. Strange teachings and sensationalistic practices make them fearful. They've seen TV preachers make outlandish claims and perform feats they attribute to the Holy Spirit, or they have had interactions with people who have strange views on the subject. Their experience tells them to be silent on the subject. DO YOU THINK BELIEVERS TEND TO NOT TALK ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT AS MUCH AS THEY SHOULD? WHY OR WHY NOT?

## Transition

**Though there are many things we could say about the Spirit, let's focus on four basic ideas that will help us grow in both our understanding and experience of God's wonderful Spirit.**

### 1. The Presence of the Spirit (John 3:3, Ephesians 1:14)

#### Illustrate

Early in my Christian experience, I needed a better understanding of His indwelling. For most of my spiritual journey, I had regarded His presence in my life as a hit-or-miss type of thing. I felt that if I was good, he would fill me and bless me. If I was bad, or even tired, he might leave me. My Christian life was like a spiritual roller coaster. I was up and down emotionally. I had no assurance that God's Spirit was with me. Through an upbringing in what I now regard as a performance-based Christianity, I had been conditioned to think of my heart like a cheap hotel. The Holy Spirit checked in and out whenever he wanted. HAVE YOU EVER STRUGGLED TO UNDERSTAND THE WAY THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PRESENCE WORKS IN YOUR LIFE?

#### Apply

My perspective about the Holy Spirit began to shift one Sunday at the conclusion of a worship service. As I listened to the preacher extend an invitation for people to pray and respond to his message, he said something that stuck with me. He encouraged people to have what he called a "spiritual birthday." He explained that everyone alive had been born physically, but that it was necessary for each to be born spiritually.

I had always regarded myself as being saved, but I didn't view myself as permanently possessing God's Spirit. Again, I believed He came and went as He desired. Part of my problem was a misunderstanding of a key part of salvation. I didn't comprehend what theologians like to call "regeneration." The word simply represents the idea Jesus expressed when He said, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Some like to use the title "new birth" to depict what Jesus described in John's Gospel. According to our Lord, salvation isn't just a commitment to submit to His teaching in a mechanical or legalistic sense. No, salvation involves a radical change in one's soul. At the moment of faith, the Holy Spirit comes to live within the immaterial part of one's being.

Ephesians 1:14 confirmed what I was sensing to be true. It told

#### Key Scriptures:

**"Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)**

**The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:14)**

me, "The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory." I learned that God's Spirit doesn't simply grace me with God's presence when I am good. The Holy Spirit came to live within my heart at salvation. He has taken up residence within my soul and He will never leave me. He is like a certificate of authenticity that guarantees I am truly a child of God (Romans 8:16), and He will keep me safe and secure in my salvation until the culmination of all things (Romans 8:26-30).

## 2. **The Experience of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)**

### **Illustrate**

It wasn't long into my Christian journey that I discovered I needed help. Some habits and hangups seemed impossible to overcome. While others appeared to emulate Christ with ease, I struggled. I knew I was a believer, but it felt like old attitudes and actions had power over me. I reached a breaking point wherein I knew I needed something more.

I remember lamenting to an older believer who was a mentor figure. I said something like, "The Christian life is impossible." He responded, "Patrick, God's got you right where He wants you." His point was that no one has the ability to live the life of Jesus in his or her own strength. It is only when one is reduced to a dependency on the Holy Spirit that one is able to experience true transformation.

A particular verse made a strong impression on me at one point. It was Galatians 5:16, a verse that says, "I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh." From a surface level reading, I understood that the verse contained a key to overcoming my struggle. I sensed that a relationship with the Holy Spirit was what I was looking for.

### **Key Scripture:**

**"I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh."  
(Galatians 5:16)**

The word translated "walk" in Galatians 5:16 is one that is used on numerous occasions in the New Testament to speak of the Christian life (Romans 13:13, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 2:6, and 1 John 1:7). It provides a fitting metaphor for the Christian life. Walking is typically something one does on a regular basis. It permeates one's life, marking nearly every activity in which one engages. The Christian faith is meant to work similarly. Intermittently and regularly, one is to live with a reliance on the Spirit.

### **Apply**

To experience the power of God's working in one's life, it is necessary to live with a habitual awareness of the Spirit's desires. As life is shaped by such realities, one is positioned to then surrender to such realities. Walking in the Spirit, then simply involves obeying the will of the Spirit. When a man or woman bends his or her soul to obey, the transformational power of the Spirit is unleashed.

## 3. **The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)**

Walking in the Spirit results in a work of the Spirit in one's life. As a person yields, He supernaturally produces Christ's character in that person. Paul spoke of such realities in Galatians 5:22-23 when he said, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." The apostle's intent was to show that real Christian virtue only comes as a result of the work of the Spirit in one's soul.

### **Key Scripture:**

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23)**

## Illustrate

When I was fourteen years old, I got my first job at a grocery store. I can still remember the first time I stepped foot into the section of the store that contained all the fruits and vegetables. A large sign with the word “produce” hung from the ceiling. As a high school student, I don’t think I had ever heard the word. I didn’t know what it meant. My manager explained that “produce” referred to things that had been grown. As Christians, we can expect a certain form of growth in our own lives. The Spirit’s presence in our souls has the power to produce the character God desires.

Paul remarked on this reality by speaking of the “fruit” of the Spirit. It is interesting to note that He spoke of such “fruit” in the singular tense. Though he would go on to list nine different virtues, he saw them as all having a singular source. The entirety of Christian character finds its wellspring in the Spirit of God. Humanity can’t produce the life of God. Self-will, performance-driven religion, and man-based effort will never suffice. To live the Christ life, Christians need empowerment from the Holy Spirit.

## Apply

The lesson for us is clear. We can’t manufacture the life of God. Things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control aren’t fully created through human efforts. Real Christian character comes from the Spirit of Christ. Consequently, if Christians want to live like Jesus, they must learn to live in a faith relationship with Jesus’ Spirit. As they walk step by step with Him, He will supernaturally produce His character in their lives.

## 4. The Power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8-9)

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, His last words spoke of the coming of His Spirit. In the book of Acts, Luke recorded, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:8-9). Notice that Jesus’ words centered on the “power” the Spirit provides.

### Key Scripture:

**“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:8-9)**

The Greek word underlying English translations is one from which we get our word “dynamite.” Sure, first-century people didn’t know about the explosive, but the word picture provides an illustration for us. The power the Spirit provides is mighty in its effect! For us to really experience the Spirit’s work in our lives, we must be aware of such realities.

According to Jesus’ last words, the Spirit’s power for us is directly related to our witness for Jesus. The word translated “witness” in Acts 1:8 is one that spoke of a person who gave firsthand testimony regarding a person or event. The term provides a good description of what the Lord wants us to do

for Him. He has called us to make Him known. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Fortunately for us, we are not alone in our witnessing endeavors. The Lord has promised to give us Divine enablement via the Holy Spirit.

## Apply

If we seek the Spirit’s power through prayer, He will strengthen us to influence others for Him. Our words and witness will be blessed with His divine enablement. I have seen this happen in my own life.

## Illustrate

There are times in which I have shared the gospel with others and I have thought that my attempts at witnessing would accomplish nothing. To my amazement, God's power has drawn people to salvation and changed their lives. I realize such responses have had nothing to do with me. They are the result of Holy Spirit power! HAVE YOU EVER HAD SUCH AN EXPERIENCE?

## Follow Me Challenges

PERSONAL: list 5 scriptures that have had an impact on your life.

PUBLIC: Participate in, invite folks to, or host a Backyard BBQ. More information can be found at [tabernaclebaptist.org/events](http://tabernaclebaptist.org/events).

PRAYER: Pray for...

- opportunities to share Scripture with the people on your "My 5 List" (people in your circle of influence who need the love of Jesus).
- TBC Backyard BBQs.
- students/leaders who will attend Merge Weekend (Fri 4.23-Sat 24).