

M 2 · W E E K T W E L V E

The Holy Spirit

Who is He, and what is His role in our lives? The Helper Jesus promised — and the power we need to take the Promised Land of our lives.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Do I have enough of the Holy Spirit to live on — or enough to change the world?

WEEK TWELVE

Recap

The past three weeks, we have been uncovering the three main areas that cause men to fall: the lusts of the flesh, financial issues, and our approach to authority.

Although each issue stems from good gifts that God gives us, each can be twisted by the enemy and used to rob us of our destiny. These sins will hold us captive and lead us to destruction if they aren't pulled out by the roots. Unfortunately, many men never gain control over their issues, and they live a life of bondage. This is not the will of God. Jesus came to set the captives free.

LUKE 4:18 · NIV

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.

This week, we will learn who the "Spirit of the Lord" is that Jesus was talking about — and what role the Spirit has in our lives.

WEEK TWELVE

Man's search

Throughout history, man has sought to better understand his world.

Copernicus studied the movement of the stars in the 15th century, and later that century Columbus sought a new path to India. In the 20th century the United States sent men to the moon; in the 21st, a joint group of nations launched the CERN Hadron Collider to better understand antimatter and atomic energies. Each year the U.S. spends over a billion dollars on oceanic research, and NASA's budget was just under \$24 billion in 2022. The search of the unknown is nothing new. Mankind has a hunger for knowledge and truth — and I believe God placed that hunger inside of us.

God wants to be discovered by us (**Jeremiah 29:13**). Just as there are discoveries about the physical world yet to be made, there are spiritual discoveries we should be diligently exploring. The Bible says this world is passing away, but that the next one is eternal (**1 John 2:17**). We should be exploring the spiritual world with the same fervor we bring to peering into deep space. What a blessing it would be if our country had a budget line of \$24 billion to seek God and all that He has for us.

WEEK TWELVE

Controversy

Most Christian denominations agree that the Holy Spirit is part of the triune God. He is named in the Apostles' Creed, written around the 5th century and nearly universally adopted as foundational doctrine to this day.

Yet there seems to be so much controversy regarding who the Holy Spirit is and what His role is in our lives. Some believe that miracles have ceased (Cessationists). Some believe that to have the Holy Spirit you must speak in tongues. Some believe you receive all that God has for you when you get saved; others believe in a second baptism. My prayer is that during this lesson you would keep an open mind. My goal is to help you understand who the Holy Spirit is and His role in your life — and my prayer is that you would desire to receive more of Him.

WEEK TWELVE

The Holy Spirit's role

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave His disciples implicit instructions about what to do after His death. He told them to go to Jerusalem and wait.

JOHN 14:16–17, 26 · NKJV

And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will:

- Be our Helper
- Be the Spirit of Truth
- Dwell *in* you
- Bring to remembrance the words of Jesus
- Abide with us forever
- Dwell *with* you
- Teach you all things

The Holy Spirit wasn't just for the early apostles; He has a role in every Christian's life. The word "Spirit" in the original Greek was *pneuma*. Though some translate it "wind," *pneuma* is more literally the "breath of life" — required for something to live. Just as God breathed life into Adam, He breathes His life into every newborn Christian by giving each of us His breath — His Holy Spirit. We cannot live our best life without Him. If you're still in bondage, you need more of the Holy Spirit, not less of Him.

WEEK TWELVE

A tale of two Peters

The apostle Peter lived with Jesus — the Word (**John 1:1**) — for three years. Peter knew Jesus, and yet he was vastly different before the day of Pentecost than he was afterward.

THE FIRST PETER

Pretend for a moment that you are the apostle Peter, who lived with Jesus for three years. Think about what you saw. You saw blind men and lepers healed. You saw the lame walk. You saw Jesus speak to the wind and the waves and watched them become calm. You took a step of faith out of the boat and walked on water, and when your eyes moved from Jesus you began to sink — but He saved you. You saw Him feed five thousand with a few loaves and fish. You saw Him raise Lazarus from the dead.

All these things you saw — yet when they came to arrest Him, you ran. You were afraid for your own life. You had just spent three years with a man you were certain was more than a man, and you couldn't stand with Him at His darkest hour. You denied Him when a little girl asked if you were with Him.

You didn't see His mother's tears. You didn't see the soldiers gamble over His clothes — you had to hear about His last words, because you ran and hid. You saw the sun darken and felt the earth tremble. Bewildered, lost, and broken, you went back to what you knew best: fishing. Half in a daze over all that had happened, you couldn't help but feel abandoned and empty. Hope was gone. Death had conquered, and perhaps He was really just a man. In your heart, you had to wonder — where was this eternal Kingdom?

Then there He was, on the beach. He was alive! He was who He said He was. Peter's restoration happened in an instant. Jesus broke the curses Peter had spoken over himself when he denied Christ three times, by asking him three times if he loved Him. But Peter still needed a Helper. He had seen Jesus perform so many miracles and yet still ran. Full of doubt and fear, Peter was ineffective at leading even the other disciples — until the Helper came.

THE SECOND PETER

We call the day the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples the day of Pentecost. *Pentecost* simply means fifty; it was fifty days after the Passover. Peter and the rest of the disciples waited for the promised gift, and on the fiftieth day, this happened:

ACTS 2:1-4 · NIV

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Peter made a speech to the crowd, convincing them that Jesus was the Messiah whom they had crucified. Over three thousand were convinced, received the Gospel, and were baptized. The same Peter who ran now stood boldly and preached the Gospel to the very men who had sanctioned the crucifixion of Jesus. The only difference between the first Peter and the second Peter is the Holy Spirit. That same promise — the gift of the Holy Spirit — God freely gives to you and me. The Holy Spirit will give you understanding and boldness.

WEEK TWELVE

The Holy Spirit is your guide

Jesus told His disciples that He couldn't teach them everything at that time because they couldn't handle it — but that the Holy Spirit would teach them what they needed to know.

JOHN 16:12-14 · NKJV

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. How will you know what is true? You must discern His voice and verify everything you hear and learn with the Word. When you hear from the Holy Spirit, make sure what He tells you lines up with God's Word. If it doesn't, then what you heard isn't from God — but more probably from the pizza you ate last night. The Holy *Pneuma* of God wants to fill your sails and take you on a journey of discovery.

WEEK TWELVE

The Holy Spirit convicts

Jesus names three areas in which the Holy Spirit will "convict" the world: sin, righteousness, and judgment. To our modern ears, "convict" makes us think of a trial. But Jesus means it more in the sense of *convince*.

JOHN 16:8-11 · NIV

When He comes, He will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

The judgment the Holy Spirit levies is on the prince of this world — Satan — not on us. **John 3:17** says God did not send His Son to condemn the world, but to save it. Since "sin" means to "miss the mark,"

we could say it this way: the role of the Holy Spirit is to convince us that we're not heading in the right direction. If our goal was to drive from Atlanta to Seattle and we start seeing road signs for Orlando, we need to make a turn, or we won't get to the land of smoked salmon. The same is true spiritually. You can't get free of bondage on your own — you must have the Holy Spirit to help you. Sincerely ask Him, and He will.

WEEK TWELVE

The Holy Spirit is a Person

How do we know the Holy Spirit is a person and not merely a force? A tree is alive, but it is hardly a person. A person is a being with a soul — a mind, a will, and emotions. The Word shows the Holy Spirit has all three.

SOUL

Hebrews 10:38 says, "Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, *My soul* has no pleasure in him." The Word says the Holy Spirit has a soul.

MIND

Romans 8:27 says, "Now He who searches the hearts knows what *the mind of the Spirit* is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." There it is — the Holy Spirit has a mind. And He prays for you.

WILL

Remember John 16? "He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak." If He didn't have a will, He wouldn't have His own authority. The Holy Spirit has His own will.

EMOTIONS

Most of the fruits of the Spirit are emotions. Can a tree love, or be patient, or show kindness? **Ephesians 4:30** says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." The Holy Spirit can be grieved; therefore He has emotions.

The Word is clear: the Holy Spirit is a Person, not an inanimate object. He's not a ghost that haunts you or a wind that merely blows. He is a Person with a mind, will, and emotions — One who loves, can be grieved, and should be sought for guidance, truth, help, conviction, and power. And because He is a Person, He can be your friend. He is Emmanuel — our God with us.

WEEK TWELVE

Fruit, power & love

When we spend time with people, it's inevitable that part of them rubs off on us. We come to resemble those we admire. When we spend time with the Holy Spirit, we become more like Him. Paul described what that looks like — the fruit of the Spirit:

- Love
- Peace
- Kindness
- Faithfulness
- Self-control
- Joy
- Patience
- Goodness
- Gentleness

I love the line in **Galatians 5:23** that says, "against such things there is no law." Mankind has never adjudicated against any of God's personality traits — every facet of Him is good. And He gives us more than fruit; He gives us power. **Galatians 5:16** says, "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." If you are white-knuckling your sin, you aren't walking by the Spirit. **Romans 8:11** says the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. You can use your own strength to walk five hundred miles, or you can get into a car and drive. As Christians, we don't have a car — we have a rocket ship.

The Holy Spirit seemed to go through me, body and soul... it seemed to come in waves of liquid love, for I could not express it in any other way.

CHARLES FINNEY

Romans 5:5 says the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Even the wicked love their families, but we are called to love our enemies — and that kind of love doesn't come naturally. We receive it from the Holy Spirit.

WEEK TWELVE

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Everyone who is saved has a deposit of the Holy Spirit. But there are degrees and amounts of the Holy Spirit — just as one man has a thousand dollars in his account and another has a hundred million. Both have money, but one has enough to live on for a few weeks, and the other has enough to change the world.

The enemy has made the Baptism of the Holy Spirit into something weird, but it wasn't weird for the apostles or the early Church. You don't have to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to be a Christian, but as Chris Hodges says, "I don't have to kiss my wife to be married either — but it sure is fun." God gave us a picture of two baptisms when Israel crossed the Red Sea (symbolic of the blood of Jesus) and later crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. We are saved from death by the blood of Christ, but we can't take the Promised Land without the power of the Holy Spirit. We need power to fight the giants in the land.

ACTS 19:1-6 · NIV

Paul...came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" "No," they answered, "we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Paul — who wrote about two-thirds of the New Testament — taught that there was a second baptism, supplemental to the deposit received at salvation. How do we receive it? It's a gift. We must want it and ask for it. But remember that the Holy Spirit is a Person who can be grieved; don't reject Him before you get to know Him in His fullness. If I were your enemy, I'd do my best to keep you from picking up your weapons — I might let you keep your pocketknife, but I'd keep you away from the fighter jets.

WEEK TWELVE

Tongues

I'm not a scholar. I never attended seminary. My foundation is the Word — I read it, study it, and verify everything I take in against it before receiving it.

There is no statement in the Bible that says everyone *will* speak in tongues. There is also no statement that says anyone *shouldn't*. Let's not get bogged down in this dilemma. The early Christians certainly spoke in tongues, and I know tongues still exist because God has blessed me with the gift of a prayer language. If you want more power to overcome, more wisdom, more boldness — then ask, seek, and knock (**Matthew 7:7**). Seek the answer for yourself, set aside any predisposition, and ask God if it is good for you. He will answer.

Tongues isn't weird; it is a way to communicate directly with God that bypasses our soul — our mind, will, and emotions. God uses it to edify our spirits. **1 Corinthians 14:4** says, "Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church."

DEFINITION · EDIFY

To instruct; to improve morally or intellectually.

Every one of us needs edification. We all need more instruction. Is it better to prophesy? I believe that's what Paul is saying — but that doesn't negate the need to be edified. The Holy Spirit edifies, convicts, cleanses, teaches, guides, corrects, and loves. He is your personal Friend, your Teacher, your Helper, your Guide, and your source of strength. He is the power that will help you take the Promised Land of your life.

WEEK TWELVE

The Apostles' Creed

The creed the early Church confessed — and the Church still confesses today.

— *I believe* in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

— *I believe* in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

— *I believe* in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Catholic here means the universal Church — not what is known as the Roman Catholic Church.