

Session 1: Life-giving Spirit

It is impossible to be a true believer without submitting to God, the Holy Spirit.

Even in the Old Testament, the heroes of faith demonstrated the evidence of having the Spirit of God working in them and through them.

Examples:

Joseph - Genesis 41:37-40

Bezalel - Exodus 31:2-5

David, Daniel, The Prophets etc.



Jesus declared that those who believe in Him will have rivers of living water flowing from within them, meaning the Holy Spirit.

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 7:37-39_{NIVUK}

Sadly many try to live as Christians without complete submission to the Holy Spirit.

For the individual the result may be:

- Absence of a life-giving personal fellowship with God
- Going through the motions
- Defeat by sinful habits

Churches that try to function without being committed to following the leading of the Spirit soon become mere social clubs or religious institutions that depend on form and format.

The remedy:

- Be in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1-2_{NIVUK}

- Keep in step with the Holy Spirit

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation - but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

Romans 8:12-14_{NIVUK}

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16_{NIVUK}

Session 2: Who is the Holy Spirit?

There is a prevalent tendency among Christians to focus on the work and power of the Holy Spirit without first coming to know Him as a Person. Some only think of Him as a force, or influence with supreme power that they can access at will. Sadly some would even refer to Him as "it". It is essential for every believer to deeply understand who the Holy Spirit is in order to pursue a necessary vital, live-giving fellowship with Him.

The Holy Spirit is God, equal with the Father and the Son.

There are very many Bible texts which show clearly that the Holy Spirit thinks, speaks and feels. There is no doubt at all that He is a Person, distinct from, but equal to the Father and the Son. He is the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

For example:

Acts 5:3-4

Matthew 3:16-17

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 13:1-3

Ephesians 4:29-30

Some people find it difficult to accept what the Bible teaches, that there are Three distinct and equal Persons in one GOD. The very beginning of the Bible, Genesis 1:1-2 introduces both the plurality in the one GOD, and in particular the Person of the Holy Spirit.

The following resource may be helpful:

Course: Laying Foundations

Session 10: One GOD, three Persons

<https://youtu.be/gGD1yTipdcQ?si=URLTiDMyKeAmitQE>

The Holy Spirit is God with us now.

'If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.'

John 14:15-21^{NIVUK}

It is essential for a believer to prioritise getting to know the Holy Spirit better and better, in line with what is revealed about Him in the Scriptures.

Session 3: The promise

The word promise has been compromised in many ways in people's minds and behaviour. It is helpful to consider its synonyms to recover its true meaning. Words that have the same meaning include - word, word of honour, assurance, pledge, vow, guarantee, oath, bond, agreement, commitment, contract, covenant, and so on. If someone states, "I will ...", they are making a promise. Whether they fulfil that promise or not depends on their honesty, integrity and ability to follow through.

When God makes a promise, He will see to it that it is done. Anyone who truly puts their trust in God can be certain that all His promises will be fulfilled.

God promised that He will make His Holy Spirit available to all willing humans.
Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:14-21

He fulfilled that promise on the day of Pentecost.

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.

Acts 2:1-4^{NIVUK}



Promises are often conditional. The conditions for receiving the promised Holy Spirit were clearly stated by Peter on the day of Pentecost, as he addressed the crowd that had gathered.

Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.'

Acts 2:38-39^{NIVUK}

Repentance and baptism indicate not only being sorry for one's sins, but also a wholehearted resolution to turn away from them and living in obedience to God, which means to follow Jesus Christ as His disciple. Peter and the other apostles said as much when they were being tried by Jewish leaders.

Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead - whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.'

Acts 5:29-32^{NIVUK}

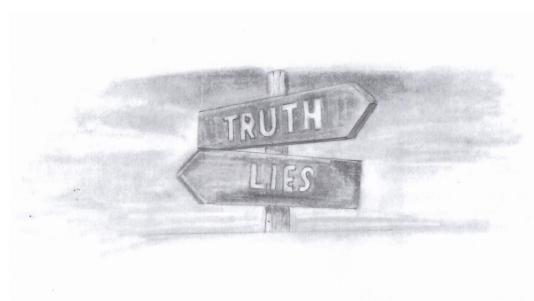
One must repent and live in obedience to God to receive the promised Holy Spirit.

Session 4: The Spirit of Truth

How the world needs the Truth! Lies and deception abound in this world. The enemy of mankind is the father of lies, the deceiver. Some lies are so cleverly presented that a trustworthy, external help is needed to know the truth.

The enemy strategy even among those who claim to be believers is to deceive and insert dangerous falsehood that have led many people astray. The need for vigilance cannot be overemphasised.

True believers need to know and live by the objective truth, as revealed by the Creator of all things.



Jesus clearly taught that He is the embodiment of Truth.

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

John 14:6NIVUK

While He was with His disciples physically they experienced Truth in action. Now He was leaving to make way for the Holy Spirit to represent the same things to them, and also to all who would become His disciples worldwide. He promised that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth will be sent to be in them and with them.

John 16:1-15

The prayer of Jesus - John 17

'I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'

John 16:12-15NIVUK

God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth will do the following for obedient disciples of Jesus. He will be an ever-present ...

- Helper - just like Jesus was to His disciples.
- Guide - leading to truth, knowledge and understanding in every situation.
- Director - commanding God's people to act wisely always, in line with His will.
- Counselor and coach - bringing much needed teaching and training.
- Encourager - especially during tough times and during persecution, when focus on eternal truth is desperately needed. **1 Peter 4:13-14**

Session 5: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit

Seeing how much a believer needs the fellowship, guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, one of the worst-case scenarios is to grieve Him. There are many scriptures that show that the Holy Spirit may choose to withdraw from an individual, or from a group of people who are supposed to be the people of God, if they persist in willful disobedience.

The Spirit of God is **HOLY**.

SIN grieves the Holy Spirit.

Persistent, willful sin will grieve the Holy Spirit.

Discipleship, being a child of God includes the decision to turn away from sin.

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.'

2 Timothy:2-19_{NIVUK}

It is sad when believers, even prominent leaders, are exposed as having been persistently living in sin without repentance, whilst claiming to be filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit may withdraw, and they are given over to deception; being deceived and deceiving others. Some mistakenly think that being baptised in the Holy Spirit is a one-off event from the distant past. A believer must go on being filled with the Spirit and that means on-going commitment to doing the will of God. It means following Jesus in daily obedience - the mark of a disciple.

Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.'

Luke 9:23-24_{NIVUK}

The practical response of a disciple is stated in **Ephesians 4:17-32**.

The text includes the following -

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:29_{NIVUK}

Please note that grieving the Holy Spirit is not the same as the "unforgivable sin". Repentance and forgiveness are available to anyone who may have grieved the Holy Spirit. Let us continue to be contrite in heart and to receive forgiveness and restoration.

Extra ref:

KC YouTube Channel - Questions and Answers - The unforgivable sin

<https://youtu.be/6HGmXPyGJY8?si=qKheGanjAS7zhSEP>



Session 6: Led by the Spirit

Paul, the apostle wrote the following in his first letter to the Corinthian Church, *“Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly – mere infants in Christ.”* Sadly, many believers are the same. Some claim to have been believers for a very long time but show by their fruit that they think and therefore act according to what their “flesh” desires and according to worldly thought patterns. They behave like “infants” instead of manifesting increasing spiritual maturity.

Galatians 5:13-26

Romans 8:1-13

Believers must be intentional about following the leading of the Holy Spirit in everything. That is the evidence that they are indeed children of God.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

Romans 8:12-14NIVUK



Reflection/discussion

1. How do you make decisions about what to do in various situations?

Those who are led by the Holy Spirit will ask Him for guidance and direction in everything. They listen to Him. They obey Him. He will lead the believer to make the right decisions, in line with the will of God as revealed in the Bible.

2. How do you react when confronted with challenges?

Those who desire to be led by the Spirit will learn to pause and listen to the Holy Spirit before speaking or reacting in the heat of the moment.

3. How do you live when you are comfortable and there are no apparent challenges?

Those who are led by the Spirit remain alert and vigilant. They continue to pay attention to what the Holy Spirit may be saying to them. They are aware that complacency is dangerous because the enemy, the devil, is on the prowl.

The result is a life of righteousness, peace and joy – the mark of the Kingdom of God.

Session 7: Leading by the Spirit

The success of God's work on earth is not dependent on any human. God sets the agenda. He determines the criteria for success. He calls different people to work as faithful servants in various capacities as determined by His Holy Spirit. He gives the grace and measure of faith needed for each person to do what they have been called to do. A wise person will pay attention to the Holy Spirit in order to fulfil God's purpose for them.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

A leader in the broadest sense is someone who is able to influence another to move in a given direction. The command our Lord Jesus has given to every disciple is to be His witness and to make disciples for Him, in the power of His Holy Spirit. In that sense, every believer should aim to lead or point others to Jesus.

There are other formal levels of leadership according to the gifts and calling of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection/discussion

All godly leadership must be under the command of the Holy Spirit.

Examples from the book of Acts

Barnabas and Saul

Acts 13:1-4

Paul

Acts 16:6-10

Acts 20:22-24

Philip and the Ethiopian

Acts 8:29

Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5:1-10

Ephesian Elders

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 20:28_{NIVUK}



Session 8: Be filled with the Spirit

Someone who is filled with the Spirit is also described as someone full of the Holy Spirit. When the apostles needed to appoint men to do the administrative work of distributing food fairly they said to the Church –

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Acts 6:3-4NIVUK

How did the people know who was full of the Holy Spirit? All of them received the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit and they all spoke in tongues. It implies that even at that early stage, some of them were distinguishing themselves by showing the evidence of being full of the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is very important.

Acts 19:1-6

However it is not a one-off event. Believers must go on being filled with the Holy Spirit, with evidence in thought, word and actions.

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

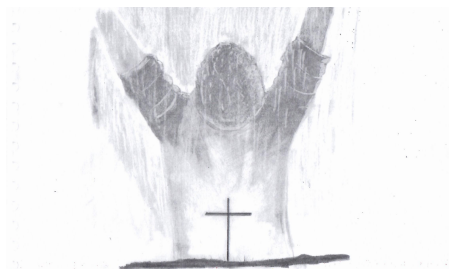
Ephesians 5:15-20NIVUK

Reflection/discussion

What does it mean to be full of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus said

“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are full of the Spirit and life.”



Believers must be careful to not treat the Holy Spirit as merely an influence or some kind of force or supreme power that would overwhelm them, resulting in “magical” manifestations. Such people are constantly asking for “more of the Spirit”. Believers who understand that the Holy Spirit is God, and that He so graciously wants to indwell and empower us to live as children of God will be constantly asking, “How can I give more of, and even better, all of myself to Him?”