

# LESSON ESSENTIALS

## CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

### LESSON 4: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is very easy to slip back into our old habits after we begin living our lives for Jesus Christ, especially if we are trying to overcome our sinful nature on our own. We need to remember and realize that we need to rely on God to renew our lives and change our heart and mind.

In this lesson we will learn and understand that it is only with the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we can truly live as God intends. Read on to learn more about the Holy Spirit and how we can increase the Spirit's influence in our lives.

We as humans cannot become more Godly on our own— we must seek the power of God the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is not an abstract thing but God himself who lives in us as a counsellor and a guide. The Holy Spirit does not live in us because of our good works but because we belong to Jesus.

We need to increase the Spirit's influence on our lives. This involves setting time aside each day to read Scriptures and pray.

Sometimes as Christians we can feel weak and alone. Maybe we have no family members or friends who follow Christ, maybe we are under persecution, or maybe we feel like we have weak faith. Perhaps we have been sinning a lot and we can't seem to overcome those sins. Maybe we have areas in our lives that we want to change, but we go back to old habits and sins. Maybe we are starting to lose hope in ourselves, that we aren't strong enough to follow God in a world that is hostile to Him, or that God just feels very far away and not part of our daily life.

God knew this would happen; He knew that we weren't perfect, and he knew we couldn't walk the Christian life alone, so he sent a 'Helper' to support us: 'But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.' (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit is infinitely greater and more powerful than us. In Zechariah 4:6 it says 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.' This means it's not up to us – we can surrender our inadequacies and sin to the power of Holy Spirit, who will be strong on our behalf. Isn't this amazing news? The same God that created and sustains the universe is working on our behalf, making us more like Christ every day!

You might wonder – how exactly can I let God into my life to make these changes in me? In order to submit our bodies to the Holy Spirit, it is good to gain a better understanding of the Holy Spirit, as well as be willing to increase His influence on our lives.

Let's take some time to think about who the Holy Spirit is. The Holy Spirit is a unique person and the Holy Spirit is God, a part of the Trinity. It is not an impersonal force, but has characteristics, desires, and power just as God does. The Bible also speaks of the various ways the Holy Spirit helps us. The Holy Spirit teaches us, leads us and pleads with God for us. As stated in Romans 8:26, the Holy Spirit uplifts us in our weakness and communicates to God the Father when we are lacking. As well, the Holy Spirit is mysterious, moving as it chooses and not in a way that we can predict (John 3:8). By studying and understanding the nature of the Holy Spirit, we better understand God and the ways he empowers us. Read through the Scriptures today to learn more about the Holy Spirit. Some passages to start are: Romans 8, Acts 2, and 1 Corinthians 2.

Once we have a better understanding of the Holy Spirit, we need to increase the Spirit's influence on our lives. This involves setting time aside each day to read Scriptures and pray. As we read the

Bible, we need to trust the Holy Spirit to reveal new things to us and guide us. John 14:26 says 'But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.' When we are reading the Bible, we need to stop and ask the Holy Spirit to teach us and to help us be willing to listen.

Likewise, as we spend time in prayer, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us. We need to make sure that our prayers are not only one-way; of us simply telling God what we hope will change. We need to also spend our prayer time praising God, thanking Him for what He's done, submitting our will to His, and asking His Spirit to guide us. It is also a good idea to have some silence in your quiet time, to meditate on the Scripture you just read or on something God is teaching you. God may even use that time to teach you something new, to convict you of sin or to prompt you to do something you wouldn't have otherwise thought of. One thing that is very important, when we feel the Holy Spirit teaching us we need to make sure it lines up with the Bible so that we do not confuse our feelings or impulses with the work of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer doesn't need to be restricted to a certain time every day. We can pray at any place or any time. By concentrating on God and praying when we think about it throughout the day, we may find the Holy Spirit teaching us, helping us, convicting us or leading us to an intercessory prayer for someone or to take certain actions. As well, when we are in a time of trouble, we can stop and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us or comfort us. As we become more and more open to God's leading through the Holy Spirit, not only will it be clearer to us what the Spirit is teaching us, we will also have greater power to obey God and turn away from sin in our lives.

By understanding, aligning ourselves with as well as obeying the Holy Spirit which dwells within us, we will be able to be a better witness in the world that we live in. As the Holy Spirit takes control of our lives, we will receive power to live as God desires. Acts 1:8 says, 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...to the end of the earth.' With the Holy Spirit's help, we will find that our will is gradually aligning to the eternal purposes that God intends for each one of us. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, will

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The Bible promises that submission to the Holy Spirit has great eternal rewards. Galatians 5:22-23 reads, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.' As we stay close to God, the Holy Spirit will produce this fruit in our lives.

continue to work in us through counsel and comfort to keep us on the journey of faith and righteousness.

## IN REVIEW

- It is impossible for a Christian to live on our own strength. There is always a battle between our sinful nature and the Holy Spirit. This will continue until we are in heaven. However, by submitting to the Holy Spirit, this battle can become more victorious by God's strength.
- Jesus promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit will ascend on the followers of Christ so that we may be great witness to the ends of the earth. This promise continues to tell of God's love and mercy which will never leave us.
- We can increase the Spirit's influence in our lives by better understanding the Holy Spirit as well as through careful Scripture reading and prayer.
- We need to pray often and be open to the Spirit, who will teach us, help us, and convict us.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

- What are the habits that you are tempted to do but struggle to resist? Are you willing to submit them to the Holy Spirit?
- Can you think of moments or areas of your life in which you have allowed the Holy Spirit to take control? What has changed in the situation? What has changed in you?
- Are you making sure you build your relationship with God through regular quiet-time and prayer? If so how has it affected your life?
- What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit, God Almighty dwells in you? Does it bring in a whole new perspective to the way you approach things in life? If so, what has changed?

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