

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 4: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian living. When we live according to the Word of God, we realize that the choices we make each day affect our faith. We will also have an increased desire to pray, practise the commands of God, and learn to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practicality of Christianity and how to live out our faith within our community.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 4: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the need for reliance on God's power when fighting against our sinful nature. The Holy Spirit is the third part of the Trinity – or the third person of God. This lesson explores what the Holy Spirit can do in a person's life, and how to be filled with the Spirit.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

The Holy Spirit is the supernatural presence of God in our lives, and the power through which we can accomplish God's will. Jesus promised when He left earth to send a Helper to us, so that His followers would not be alone and without power. This helper, the Holy Spirit, came at Pentecost. The early church experienced incredible growth and miracles through the work of the Spirit. This same Spirit is available to all believers today – a constant presence of God in our lives! It is important to know that while God desires holiness from us, He does not leave us to simply try our best and see how holy we can become on our own. God gives us His very presence and power to help us!

GETTING STARTED

1. Have you ever tried to change something about yourself? How difficult is it to change our personality or nature?

2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of the believer? Can you name some of the duties of the Holy Spirit that are distinct from the other persons of the Trinity?



STUDY

❖ **WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?:** When Jesus returned to Heaven, His followers were lost, afraid and weak. They didn't know which way to go, or how to live with one another as a community. Before He left earth He assured them that He would send a Helper to them. This Helper was the Holy Spirit!

- You might wonder who the Holy Spirit is. The following points will help us know about Him!
 - The Holy Spirit is God.
 - The Holy Spirit has a unique personality and is not just an impersonal force.
 - The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.
- The Holy Spirit has always been part of the Trinity, and appeared occasionally in the Old Testament to certain people. In the time before Jesus Christ, the Spirit only filled specific people, and for a time and purpose.
 - When the Holy Spirit came to all believers at a time called 'Pentecost' He came for specific reasons. Look at the verses below and write down what you find about why the Holy Spirit came:

John 14:26	
John 16:7-15	
Galatians 5:16-17	
Acts 1:8	
Ephesians 1:13-14	

The Holy Spirit comforts, teaches, and reminds us of the teachings of Jesus. The Spirit also helps us live the victorious Christian life. We can have victory over sin, and over our selfish desires, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guarantees our future in heaven from the moment we believe, and gives us power over sin.



❖ **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?:** The word 'filled' in this context means to be directed, controlled, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It means our decision making, our desires, our thoughts are under its influence. When I am led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in me and through me.

Being filled with the Spirit involves several things:

- It involves confession of sin through prayer. We must continually confess sin in our lives through prayer, and thereby receive forgiveness and cleansing by God’s Spirit within us (1 John 1:9).
- Though all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, not all Christians are filled with (controlled by) the Spirit if they have unconfessed sin in their lives and are walking in disobedience to God’s will and His Word.
- Being filled by the Spirit requires a dependence on God. According to the following verses, what does the Bible say we must depend on God for?

1 Peter 1:14-16	
John 15:8	
John 16:13	
Romans 8:26	

- Read Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 2:15 and Genesis 2:19-23. What was the relationship between God and the man and woman He created?

❖ **WHY ARE SOME CHRISTIANS NOT FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?** It is possible to be a Christian, yet not experience the benefits of being filled with the Spirit of God. There may be many reasons for this, including:



- **Deliberate sin and disobedience.** Some have yet to learn to “walk in the Spirit and not fulfil the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). They are living as worldly Christians, putting the things of the world before God in importance.
 - **Lack of knowledge.** Because of a lack of knowledge, some Christians continue to live in spiritual defeat. They are not regularly reading and obeying God’s Word or combatting sin in their life.
 - **Unbelief.** Some Christians don’t believe God can or will help them in the daily challenges of life.
 - **Fear.** Some people are afraid of the unknown regarding deeper spiritual experiences.
 - **Doubt.** Many feel that God will require the impossible of them. They doubt the extent of God's enablement and unconditional love.
 - **Selfishness.** Some feel God will take away their pleasures. They do not realize how great His wonderful plan is for them (Matthew 6:33).
- Read Ephesians 5:3-17. What sins are listed? Write down this list of things which will hinder the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

- Read on in Ephesians 5:19-21 and write down the results of a Spirit-filled life. What does a Spirit-filled life look like?

The Spirit-filled life is one where we experience fellowship with one another, joyful praise and worship, a life of thankfulness and gratitude. When we are Spirit-filled we can submit to one another instead of living in pride and conflict.

❖ **SURRENDER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT:** One must remember that the Holy Spirit lives in the believer. To surrender to the Holy Spirit requires discipline. This involves scheduled quiet time and prayer, fellowship with Christian friends, actively listening to the voice of God and seeking His guidance when facing choices. When you surrender to the Holy Spirit, your purposes will align with God’s purposes, you will fulfil God’s calling on your life, and your ability to witness to others will be drastically improved.

- What is the result of surrendering to the Holy Spirit? How does it affect our life? Read Galatians 5:22-23 and write down what the Spirit produces in a believer’s life.



❖ **OVERCOMING** : The world teaches us that we must work hard to overcome or to achieve. This implies that it is by our own strength or will power that we succeed. So often we make commitments to ourselves and fail. Over and over we decide how we should be and yet we end up as something else.

- After we have failed a number of times at something, we give up and often lose hope. Does this mean that change is impossible or that we are destined forever to fail in the same ways? Zechariah 4:6 says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”
 - Overcoming fleshly desires is only possible by the power of God in the believer.
 - When we rely on our own effort to be holy, we deny the gift of God and we do not bring glory to God. Ultimately we are bound to fail.
 - We can have the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome evil by abiding with God.
- Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is a gift to us. It is important to consider who the Holy Spirit is in our lives. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity (and is therefore God). The Holy Spirit has a role in the life of each Christian.
- Read John 14:15-21 and Romans 8:1-11, 26-27 and make a list of the ways in which the Holy Spirit helps each believer:



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit when He left earth.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity – He is alive, is a divine personality with unique characteristics, and indwells all believers.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit came to remind us of what Christ taught, to empower us to change and live lives of holiness, to comfort, direct and shepherd us.
- ❖ Being filled with the Spirit means to be directed, controlled and empowered by the Spirit. It means to live God’s way instead of our own.
- ❖ We prevent the Holy Spirit from working in us by allowing sin in our life, and through our own disobedience, unbelief, fear, doubt and selfishness.
- ❖ When we surrender to the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is able to grow in us.
- ❖ When we surrender to the Spirit we can overcome sin and not be controlled by our old self. Instead, we can live by the Spirit of God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you need the power of the Holy Spirit for in your life today?

2. Abiding in God and combating our evil tendencies requires discipline. What commitments will you make today that will fill your life with things of the Spirit rather than things of this world? *(Consider especially your thought life and temptations that surround you.)*