

3. The Spirit is mentioned 8 times in these verses. What does Paul reveal about the Spirit on each occasion (sometimes he is repeating himself for the sake of emphasis)?
4. In Acts 14:1 Paul commands us to “eagerly desire spiritual gifts”. Are you putting this into practice? What gifts are you asking God to allow you to use to build up other Christians and extend the Kingdom of God?

Weekend: Responding to the Spirit

Look up each of the following verses and see the context in which they were written. Try to read them in different modern translations of the Bible and note the words used.

Ephesians 4:30; Acts 7:51; 1 Thess. 5:19,20
 Ephesians 5:18

These four verses emphasise four possible ways of responding to the Holy Spirit. Only one is an appropriate response. Are you seeking a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit each day? Perhaps get a copy of a useful book on the Holy Spirit to keep the fire burning in your soul!

Recommended Books (available online from Amazon or Eden Christian Books)

“Surprised by the Power of the Spirit” by Dr Jack Deere

“Word + Spirit = Power” by Charles Carrin; Jack Taylor; R. T. Kendall

Notes



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Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes

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Week 41: The Holy Spirit (A practical study)

It has often been commented that if the Holy Spirit’s presence was withdrawn from the New Testament Church 99% of what they did would come to an end. However, if that happened in most Churches today, 99% of our activities would carry on as normal without any obvious change! The fact is we can do all the things Christians do and look the part for quite a while, without really knowing and experiencing the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The aim of this week’s studies is to give you an overview of the way the Holy Spirit works in our lives, and help us respond to Him in our daily life.

Day 1. The ministry of the Spirit – Part 1

John 16:5-15

The night before his death, Jesus emphasised and taught the disciples what he thought was most important and helpful to them before he went to the cross. As part of this last teaching contained in John chapters 13-18, he begins to teach them clearly the role of the Holy Spirit when he is not personally going to be with them. Read the passage again and consider the following:

List everything that is said about the Holy Spirit in these verses. (I found 10 specific truths mentioned. See if you can dig as many as this or more from this passage.)

Note: the way he is described in verse 7. This links with what Jesus taught them earlier in John 14:16, when he describes the Spirit as being a Counsellor in the way that he has already been to the disciples.

Which of the things you have listed seem the most relevant to you at the present time?

What did Jesus mean when he said that it was “for their good that he was going away”? How does this apply to you today?

Day 2. The ministry of the Spirit – Part 2

John 20:19-23; Acts 1:1-8

After his resurrection, but before he ascended to the Father, Jesus appears to the disciples a number of times and in a number of different situations. Twice he speaks to them about the Holy Spirit.

1. What do these two passages teach about the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

It seems as though the incident in John 20 is a prophetic act focussing on their future ministry after the Holy Spirit is given.

2. In what way was the power to forgive sins given over to the disciples? Do you understand it as applying to you or only to the first disciples, as you compare it to Acts 1:8?
3. In Acts 1:4,5, Jesus tells them to wait in Jerusalem to be baptised with the Holy Spirit. Later, Peter makes it clear that this Baptism of power to enable us to be witnesses applies to all disciples (Acts 2:38,39). Ask God to increase your experience of the power of the Holy Spirit in your life today.

Day 3. The arrival of the Spirit

Acts 2:1-15, 37-41

The fact that the onlookers thought these people were drunk, implies that their behaviour was unusual and that the flames of fire and the sound of the wind was something only the disciples experienced (verses 2,3).

While this occasion was the first in which the Spirit demonstrates His presence, other examples are evident in the Book of Acts. (See Acts 4:31, 8:17-19, 9:17-19, 10:44-46, 19:1-7.) On some of these occasions it was through the laying on of hands and prayer, but not every time. Once it was entirely unexpected and interrupted the preaching. Sometimes it took place after water baptism, and other times before people were baptised in water. The one thing that is clear is that whenever it happened there were some obvious outward signs that something supernatural and unusual had taken place.

1. What do these verses reveal of the impact the Holy Spirit's presence had on:
 - a. The disciples?
 - b. The God-fearing Jews?

2. Read again Acts 2:38,39. How does your experience of the Holy Spirit compare with the examples in the Bible? If you are not aware of having received the Spirit in an obvious and evident way, ask God to fulfil His promise in your life.

Day 4. The influence of the Spirit

Galatians 5:16-26

Christians are called to “live by the Spirit” (v16, 25), “be led by the Spirit” (v18), and “keep in step with the Spirit” (v25). What is the relationship between these phrases in this passage? What are the implications for your life as you seek to practically apply these in your life today?

Interestingly, we are not called to produce the fruit of the Spirit. He will produce this spiritual fruit in our lives as we fulfil the principles mentioned in question 1, above. Instead the focus is on the battle which is taking place for control of our lives, between our sinful nature and the Spirit. The way to see whether you are living by the Spirit or the sinful nature is simple: Which list (verses 19-21 or verses 22-23) is more representative of your life? If you have been a Christian for more than a very short time, your life will show more of the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit than the sinful nature, even though sometimes these will be evident.

Someone once said that “the most significant decision that anyone can make is to submit to the direction of the Holy Spirit.” Do you agree or disagree? To what extent have you done this in your life so far?

Day 5. The gifts of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

There is no basis in the Bible for the view that spiritual gifts are no longer needed in the Church, or are no longer necessary. Instead we are given a list of spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to be used in the Church and for its ministry.

1. Read verses 6 and 7. How widespread is the distribution of spiritual gifts among Christians, according to these verses? If this is true, why do so many not seem to know or exercise their spiritual gifts?
2. Which of the gifts mentioned in these verses have you seen in action, or used yourself?