

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-25 The Spirit Will Encourage and Guide Us

Have you ever lost a spouse or a very close friend? The sense of loss and grief can be overwhelming. Though the Twelve did not yet fully grasp the fact that Jesus would leave them, He tried to prepare them for the shock they would experience.

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathered His disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem. He told them that He would soon leave them. He then promised to send Someone to take His place. “I will ask the Father,” He said, “and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.” He added, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16, 18). About six weeks later, just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus again promised His disciples, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20). On both occasions, Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit, whom He would send on the Day of Pentecost. In this lesson, we will discover how the Holy Spirit, as Jesus’ representative, will fulfill Jesus’ promise to come alongside us to cheer, encourage, and direct us.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as *another Counselor*. Jesus was saying that He would send another One, just like Him. This Counselor would walk alongside Christ’s followers to encourage them and empower them to serve Him more perfectly. He was telling His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to them as their ever-present Helper. What a great comfort this must have been to Christ’s first followers! And how wonderful it is today to know that the Holy Spirit is walking beside us and dwelling in us! This reality brings great encouragement to our hearts, especially when we encounter opposition to the cause of Christ. Whatever the situation, we can know that the Holy Spirit will enable us. We can confidently face any difficulty and endure any trial, emerging victorious in Christ. This is yet another reason for us to be filled with, and remain full of, the Holy Spirit.

Not only will the Holy Spirit come to us to encourage us. On occasion, He will speak to us and tell us what we should do and say. Jesus told His disciples, “When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say” (Luke 12:11-12). Once, Paul was ministering in the city of Corinth. Because of the difficulty of the work, he became discouraged. Then one night the Spirit gave Paul a vision. In the vision, the Lord Jesus appeared and spoke to Paul, saying, “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10). Paul was encouraged and remained in Corinth for another year and a half preaching the gospel. As a result, a great church was established in the city.

The same is true for us today. If we will remain full of the Holy Spirit and live prayerful committed lives, the Spirit of God will speak to us too. An important question we must answer, however, is how can one know and hear the Spirit’s voice when He does speak?

To be able to hear the Spirit’s voice, we must first understand the ways He speaks to us. Primarily, the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the book He inspired, the Holy Bible. All other

revelation must be in agreement with the will of God as revealed in Scripture. As we prayerfully reflect on the words of Scripture, the Spirit of the Lord will open our hearts and use those words to show us what we should do.

The Spirit may also speak to us through dreams, visions, and prophetic words as He did to believers in the New Testament. Most often, however, God speaks to us by His Spirit to our spirits. Isaiah described it like this: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (Isa 30:21).

Paul affirmed, “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God” and “the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Rom 8:14, 16). As God’s children, we can expect the Spirit to guide us in these ways. We must never forget, however, that God’s Spirit will never tell us to do anything that contradicts what He has already said in the Bible.

To hear the Spirit’s voice, we must prepare our hearts. Scripture counsels, “Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb 3:7-8). We ought to always keep our hearts open and tender before God. Such sensitivity to the Spirit rises from a humble and obedient spirit. God sees whether or not we are willing to do whatever He asks. Such a willing spirit comes through a consistent devotional life, including time spent in prayer and meditation on the Word.

Finally, if we are to learn to recognize the voice of the Spirit, we must by faith practice obeying His voice when He speaks. As you take the first step He tells you to do or say, He will reveal the next step and the next. The Spirit often reveals His plan just one step at a time, not the whole map at once. We really have but one good reason to hear the Spirit’s voice. We hear His voice in order that we might obey it. As we obey and follow His directives, we learn to better discern His voice.

This lesson is **important** because in it we have learned how the Holy Spirit will help and encourage us in our daily lives, and how He will guide us in ministry.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that we can receive the Spirit’s guidance if we will be filled with the Spirit, remain committed to God’s mission, and live prayerful lives.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson:

1. What did Jesus mean when He promised to send *another Counselor*?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Jesus was saying that He would send the Holy Spirit in His place to walk alongside His followers and empower them to serve Him more perfectly,” you are correct.
2. What is still the primary way the Spirit speaks today?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Spirit’s primary method of speaking to God’s children is through the Bible, the inspired word of God, you are right.

3. Name other ways the Holy Spirit directs God's children today. What is the most common way?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit may direct God's children through dreams, visions, and prophetic words; however, the most common way He directs them is by speaking by His Spirit to their spirits, you are right.

4. How can we prepare our hearts to hear the Spirit of God when He speaks?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered that we can prepare our hearts to hear the Spirit's voice by remaining humble and obedient before God and by keeping our hearts open to Him, you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to apply its truths to your own life. Re-listen to it until you understand it thoroughly. Memorize the words of Isaiah the prophet: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isa 30:21). Then, begin asking the Holy Spirit to fill you and direct you to do the Father's will. When the Spirit speaks, quickly obey.