

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-14 The Holy Spirit Enables Us to Represent Christ

Someone has rightly pointed out that in Acts 1:8 Jesus did not say “You will receive power...and you will *do witnessing for me*.” He rather said, “You will receive power... and you will *be my witnesses*.” Thus, Jesus’ emphasis was on ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’. Our witness must be more than mere talk, it is to be a way of life. Certainly we witness with our words; however, it is also important that we witness with our lives.

Paul wrote the believers in Rome and explained to them how he had led the Gentiles to obey God by what he had “said and done.” Or, as one author paraphrases it, “I have won them by my message and by the good way I have lived before them” (Rom 15:19, TLB). Paul went on to say that he had done this “all by the Holy Spirit’s power.” In our last lesson you learned how the Holy Spirit empowers us to witness with powerful words and mighty works. In this lesson, you will hear how the Spirit enables us to witness with our lives. We will look at three ways the Spirit works in our lives, enabling us to truly represent Christ to a lost world.

First, the Spirit enables us to truly represent Christ to the world *by sanctifying us and making us holy*. Paul wrote that we are “sanctified...by the Spirit of our God” (1Cor 6:11). The word ‘sanctify’ literally means ‘to consecrate or set apart.’ Thus, when we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit sets us apart from the world and consecrates us to God and His mission. We are then to live Christ-honoring lives. John wrote, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1John 2:6).

We must live in holiness because we represent a holy God to a corrupt world. Paul urged the Philippian Christians to live “blameless and pure” lives in the midst of a “warped and crooked generation” (Phil 2:15-16). If they would do this, he said, they would “shine among them like stars” in the night sky.

We can live this way only through the Spirit’s power. Paul admonished the Galatians, “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal 5:16). The Holy Spirit alone can free us from our self-centeredness to truly serve God’s mission. The Spirit further sanctifies us by giving us the moral courage we need to obey Christ’s command to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19).

A second important way the Spirit enables us to truly represent Christ to the world is *by creating in us the character of Jesus*. People were drawn to Jesus for at least three reasons: His grace-filled words, His powerful works, and His beautiful life. Concerning His words, the Bible says, “All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips” (Luke 4:22). Concerning His powerful works, John says that “a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick” (John 6:2). Concerning His beautiful life, Peter wrote, “He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone” (1Peter 2:22, NLT).

As we abide in Christ and walk in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit works in us, forming us into

the image of our Savior. Paul said that we are “being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from...the Spirit” (2Cor 3:18). This Christ-like image shows forth the “fruit of the Spirit,” explained by the apostle Paul as being: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23). This fruit gives us a glimpse into the character of Jesus. The fruit grows in our lives as we abide in Christ and live “in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25).

A third important way the Spirit enables us to truly represent Christ to the world is *by filling our hearts with God’s love*. Paul wrote, “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Rom 5:5). As we allow the Spirit to work in our lives, He enables us to love as Jesus loved.

This Spirit-inspired love will enable us to reach out to those in need. The Bible says, when Jesus saw people, “He had compassion on them and healed their sick” (Matt 14:14). One reason Jesus felt love for people is that the Holy Spirit was working in His life. Peter put it like this, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Only the Spirit can cause us to love and care for people as Jesus did. We must therefore allow Him to work deeply in our lives, rooting out all selfishness and prejudice. Then, when people see the compassion of Christ working in and through us, they will be drawn to Jesus.

This lesson is **important** because in it we have learned how the Holy Spirit wants to work in our lives, enabling us to faithfully portray Christ to a lost world. We show forth Jesus by living lives of holiness, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, and treating all people with love and kindness.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that as we are filled with—and remain full of—the Holy Spirit, people will see that our lives resemble the life Christ lived on earth. The testimony of our lives speaks louder than our words. Then we will be effective in reaching the lost for Christ.

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

1. What two ways did the Holy Spirit empower Paul to win the Gentiles to Christ?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “The Holy Spirit empowered Paul to win the Gentiles to Christ by his message and by the good way he lived before them,” you answered correctly.
2. List three ways the Holy Spirit enables us to truly represent Christ to the world.
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit enables us to truly represent Christ to the world as: (1) He sanctifies us and makes us holy, (2) He creates in us the character of Jesus, and (3) He fills us with God’s love, you are right.
3. Why is it important that Christians be filled with the Spirit and live lives of holiness?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Christians must live lives of holiness because we represent a holy God to the lost world,” you are correct.

4. What three things in Jesus' life drew people to Him?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that people were drawn to Jesus by His grace-filled words, His powerful works, and His beautiful life, you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it until you thoroughly understand the principles it teaches. Then, apply these principles to your own life and ministry. Finally, teach these principles to others. Memorize what John said, "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1John 2:6).