

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-15 The Holy Spirit Works in the Lives of Unbelievers

In previous lessons you have learned how the Holy Spirit enables Christians to work together with God in His mission to redeem the nations. The Spirit, however, not only works in the life of the proclaimer of the gospel, He also works in the lives of those who receive it. In this lesson, you will learn three ways the Holy Spirit works in the lives of sinners, preparing them to receive the message of Christ.

The first way that the Holy Spirit works in the lives of unbelievers is by preparing their hearts to receive the message of truth. Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). The Father does His work of drawing people to Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit secretly works in the hearts of sinners, making them aware of their need for God. At other times, He may give someone a dream or a vision, opening their hearts to the message of Christ. This is what happened to Cornelius in Acts 10. The Spirit gave him a vision of an angel who told him to send for Peter—who would tell him what to do. Even today, the Spirit of God gives certain unsaved individuals dreams or visions of Christ. This work of the Spirit seems to be especially common among Muslim men and women who are sincerely seeking after God.

The Spirit most often opens the minds of unbelievers as they hear the gospel being proclaimed. He enables them to comprehend the truth of what is being said. This very thing happened to a woman named Lydia in the Book of Acts. As Paul talked to her about Christ, “the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message” (Acts 16:14). The Holy Spirit works in the same way today. When we share Christ with the lost, the Spirit moves on their hearts, enabling them to receive the message. Because of this, we can be confident that, when we go and preach the gospel, the Lord will work with us and open their hearts to Christ.

A second way the Holy Spirit works in the lives of unbelievers is by convicting them of their sin. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, “he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin” (John 16:8). This is what occurred on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the waiting disciples. Then Peter, full of the Spirit, stood and proclaimed the gospel to the gathered crowd. As the people listened, “they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37). In other words, as Peter preached, the Spirit of the Lord moved in the people’s hearts, making them aware that they were sinners and in need of a Savior. They then cried out, “What shall we do?” Peter answered that they must repent and follow Jesus.

Paul describes how the Spirit works in the lives of unbelievers who come into a place where the Spirit of God is moving. He said, “If an unbeliever...comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (1Cor 14:24-25).

This is why it is so important that every believer be filled with—and remain full of—the Holy Spirit. If we will do this, the Holy Spirit will give our words power so that they will penetrate people’s hearts. It is also vital that the Spirit of the Lord be present and moving in our church services. Then people will truly be drawn to Christ.

A third way the Holy Spirit works in the lives of unbelievers is by regenerating repentant sinners. By this, we mean that, when sinners come to Christ and repent of their sins, the Holy Spirit makes them into new persons. Paul put it like this: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2Cor 5:17).

Jesus explained to Nicodemus how the Holy Spirit works in making us new creations in Christ. He said, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” When Nicodemus asked how this could happen, Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:3-6). Paul said that we are saved “through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

This means that, when a repentant sinner comes to Christ, puts his faith in Him for salvation, and repents of his sins, a miracle takes place. The Spirit enters his life and makes him into a new person. The Spirit of God changes him from the inside out and he becomes a new person in Christ. Has this happened in your life? If not, humble yourself before God, and sincerely pray this prayer:

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are the Son of God, the Savior of the world. I admit that I am a sinner, and I repent of my sins. I open my heart to you, come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. By your Holy Spirit, make me a new creation in Christ. In Your name, I pray. Amen.

This lesson is **important** because in it we have learned how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of unbelievers. He draws them to Christ and makes those who repent and believe into His image.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that, as we go about sharing Christ with the lost, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit is working through us. The Spirit also works in them and draws them to the Savior.

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

1. How does the Holy Spirit prepare the hearts of sinners to receive the message of Christ and be saved?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit works in the lives of sinners, opening their hearts to God and making them aware of their need for Christ, you answered correctly.
2. When does the Holy Spirit most often work in the lives of sinners?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit most often works in the lives of sinners as they hear the gospel being proclaimed, you are right.

3. What do we mean when we say that the Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sin?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sin by moving on their hearts and making them aware that they are sinners and in need of a Savior, you are correct.

4. What do we mean when we say that the Holy Spirit regenerates repentant sinners?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, by regeneration, we mean that, when a sinner believes in Christ and repents of their sins, the Holy Spirit makes them into a new person in Christ, you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to re-listen to it until you understand each of its teachings. You are then to share what you have learned with others.