

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-23 The Spirit Will Help Us Understand the Bible

Once a young woman was given a book of romantic poems. After reading one or two of the poems, she became bored and laid the book aside. Sometime later, she met a young man and fell deeply in love with him. Then she discovered that he was the poet who had written the book she had laid aside. She again took up the book and began to read it. However, this time her heart was thrilled as each poem spoke directly to her innermost being. The book of poems became her most cherished possession. She had fallen in love with the author, and now she loved the book he had written. It is the same with the Bible. As you grow to love the Author more and more, you too will grow to love the Book He wrote. The Author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit, will make its stories more vivid and its truths more precious.

The night before He was crucified Jesus met with His disciples in an upper room and taught them many things. One thing He taught them was about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He told His disciples that, when He returned to heaven, He would speak to His Father. He promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to take His place (John 14:16). Jesus explained to them, “The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). He further explained, “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). In this lesson you will learn how the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth by helping us to understand the Bible.

Before we can intelligently discuss how the Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible, we must first know how He inspired it. Peter wrote, “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture [meaning the Bible,] came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2Peter 1:20). Peter is saying that the Holy Spirit moved on the prophets and Apostles, inspiring them to write the words of Scripture. Or, as Paul put it, “All Scripture is God-breathed” (2Tim 3:16). Thus, the Holy Spirit is the true Author of Scripture. He is the One who inspired the biblical writers to say what they said.

Since the Spirit of God is the Author of the Bible, we can confidently look to Him to help us understand what the Bible teaches. Paul explained this truth to the Christians in Corinth. “We have not received the spirit of the world,” he wrote, “but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.” Paul continued, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1Cor 2:12-14). In other words, by using our natural minds alone, we can never fully understand what the Bible teaches. The spiritual truths found in Scripture must be spiritually discerned, and this discernment comes from the Holy Spirit. John wrote, “The anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But...his anointing teaches you about all things” (1John 2:27). This means that the Holy Spirit, whom we have received, will help us understand the Bible.

We must not think, however, that John is saying that our being filled with the Spirit will automatically cause us to understand Scripture. Nor must we think he is saying that we should

disregard godly, Spirit-anointed teachers. After all, teachers are one of Christ's gifts to the Church (Eph 4:11). What John is saying is that we do not have to be completely dependent on others to understand the Bible. This is because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Thus we can depend on Him to help us understand the clear meaning of Scripture. However, we must still pray and apply ourselves to diligently study the Bible, and we must use sound methods of interpretation. Yet we are not alone in this endeavor, for the Holy Spirit is with you to help guide you into all truth.

How then does the Spirit help us understand the Bible? He helps us in several ways. Let's look briefly at three of those ways.

First, the Spirit helps us to understand the Bible by opening our hearts to God and causing us to value His revealed Word. Paul wrote that "the things that come from the Spirit of God"—which includes the truths found in Scripture—are foolishness to the person without God's Spirit (1Cor 2:14). However, when a person is born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit causes them to love and appreciate His message to us in the Bible. As the disciple becomes better acquainted with the Author of the Bible, he or she will also love the Bible more.

A second way the Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Bible is by giving us insight into its meaning. Jesus told Nicodemus, "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). We are born again when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus alone for salvation. At that moment, the Spirit of God comes into our being, renews our minds, and begins to transform us into Christ's image (Rom 12:2). Only then are we capable of "correctly handling the word of truth" (2Tim 2:15). Jesus said, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). As we prayerfully study the Bible, we can expect the Holy Spirit to come and give us insight into its meaning.

Finally, the Holy Spirit will help us to understand the Bible by transforming us and helping us to obey its teachings. One cannot truly understand the Bible until he or she has, by faith, accepted its teaching and applied them to their own lives. Paul taught that without the Spirit we are powerless to do God's will. Unless we, with the help of the Spirit, do what the Bible teaches, we can never fully understand its teaching. Paul told the Romans that in Christ, "the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:4). As you, through the Spirit's power, do what the Word of God says, you will come to better understand what it means.

Oh, how we need the Spirit of God to fill us and help us understand and apply the teachings of the Bible to our lives!

This lesson is **important** because it teaches how the Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Bible and apply its teachings to our lives.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that we must prayerfully seek the Spirit's help in understanding Scripture. God has promised to answer that prayer.

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

1. According to Scripture, who is the true Author of the Bible?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit is the true Author of the Bible, you are right.
2. Why is it important that we know that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that since the Spirit inspired the Bible, we can confidently look to Him to help us understand what the Bible teaches, you answered correctly.
3. List three ways the Spirit helps us to understand the Bible.
 - A. [PAUSE] If you said, “By opening our hearts to value the Bible, by giving us insight into the meaning of the Bible, and by transforming us and helping us to obey its teachings, you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to re-listen to it until you understand its teachings. Memorize the following verse: “We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us” (First Corinthians, chapter 2, verse twelve. As you memorize verses from the Bible, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind to better understand their meaning. Now go out and teach others what you have learned, including verses you have memorized.