

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

LIVING IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



A SMALL GROUP STUDY

~FOR~

FALL 2018

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“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

When Jesus calls us to follow Him, He calls us into the abundant new life of the Kingdom of God. It is a life of freedom, power, joy, holiness, and love. It is a life wherein we are transformed to become like Jesus, not only doing what is right and good outwardly, but doing so out of a renewed inner-life, out of a new heart. As we read the gospels and the letters of the New Testament, from the vision of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) to Paul’s soaring vision of God’s new humanity made real in Christ (Ephesians 1-3), the picture is painted of a radically new way of life in Christ. Or perhaps put another way, the picture is painted of life right-side-up, what God always intended our lives to be.

Following Jesus is meant to transform our lives from the inside out. For many disciples today, though, that transformation, while highly desired, is nonetheless elusive. The deep peace, joy, and power of God seem to be missing. One of the reasons why, I believe, is that we do not understand the source of our life as disciples of Jesus. We continue to live in our own strength and try to produce the life of the Kingdom by ourselves rather than allowing God to produce that life in us.

I had a bad habit in my college laboratories. I studied electrical engineering, and many of my labs involved setting up electrical circuits and taking measurements to see if the measured values came close to the ones anticipated in pre-lab calculations. I would connect my circuit, connect the measuring equipment, and then proceed to get numbers that were nowhere close to what they should be. My bad habit? I forgot to turn on the power to the

circuit! There was enough electricity coming from the measuring equipment to make the circuit do something, so there were some results, but turning on the power obviously made all the difference!

That has always been, for me, a fair analogy of how we try to live our lives as disciples. We hook up the circuit, we put the right tools in place, and we get some results. But they aren't the ones we are really after. Why? Because we need to turn the power on!

The Holy Spirit is the source of our transforming life in Christ. As we learn to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, we will find that we are made new from the inside out so that the life we live does not merely look good on the outside, but flows out of who we are. Oswald Chambers captured the issue well when he observed that the Kingdom life of following Jesus “is not a set of principles to be obeyed apart from identification with Jesus Christ [but] the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting his way with us.”

This study is an invitation to live more deeply in the love and power of Jesus as we learn how to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is my prayer that you not only learn *about* the Holy Spirit, but that you experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit renewing you and producing in you the beautiful and abundant life of the Kingdom of God.

Introducing the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has long been misunderstood or ignored in the life of the Church. While we can conceive of God as Father and Son, the Holy Spirit doesn't cleanly fit in any of our categories. Yet, when it comes to living the Abundant Life of following Jesus, we need to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. In order to do that, though, you need to know the Holy Spirit. So who is He?

The first thing we want to say about the Holy Spirit is that He is the Third Person of the Trinity. He is a person, a "He" and not an "It." In fact, the authors of the New Testament went out of their way to communicate that. The Greek word for "Spirit" is *pneuma*, which is properly considered an "it" (neuter). Instead of following the proper rules of Greek grammar, they intentionally modified *pneuma* with "He." Why? Because the Holy Spirit has the attributes of a person, not a force or an "it." The Holy Spirit teaches (John 14:26), guides (John 16:13), testifies (John 15:26), and can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).

What kind of work, then, does the Third Person of the Trinity do?

In both Hebrew (*ruah*) and Greek (*pneuma*), the word for *spirit* can also be translated as *breath* or *wind*. As we take a quick tour of Scripture, we find the Spirit at work.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of all things out of nothing (Genesis 1:1-2) and bring life to humanity (Genesis 2:7) as God *breathed* His *Spirit* into man. The Holy Spirit also came upon particular men and women of God to empower them for particular tasks in times of need. For example, the Holy Spirit empowered:

- Artistic gifts (Ex 31:1-5)
- Leadership (Jud 6:14-16, 34)
- Strength (Jud 15:14-15)
- Prophecy (Is 61:1-3)

Speaking through the prophets, God also revealed the promise of a new thing. A day would come when the Holy Spirit would no longer come upon particular men and women of God for a time of need, but upon all the people of God forever. In that day, all God's people will know Him (Jeremiah 31:31-34) because He will put His Spirit in them (Ezekiel 36:27) and cause the waters of new life to flow from their hearts (Ezekiel 47, John 7:37-39).

All of this was fulfilled fifty days after Jesus' resurrection on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). On that day, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' followers gathered in Jerusalem, enabling them to take up the mission of the Church to make disciples of all nations. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, all who put their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 1:13). The rest of the New Testament is built upon the reality of the Holy Spirit in the lives of disciples.

Week One: Becoming a New Creation

Scripture teaches that we cannot save ourselves, that we can never “clean” ourselves enough to be perfect in God’s sight. Why? Because our hearts are prone to wander after things other than God. No matter how hard we try, we find Paul’s words to the Romans to be our familiar reality:

“For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...for I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (Romans 7:15, 18-19)

We need a new heart - and we are powerless to do anything about it on our own.

When we put our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit enters our lives to make His home in us (John 14:23) and to give us a new heart and a new birth (John 3:1-15). This is, in theological terms, *regeneration*, or new birth. The Holy Spirit enters our hearts and begins a life-long process of making us new.

Getting Started

1. Do you have any hopes for this study? If so, what are they?

2. According to the sermon, the Holy Spirit is a “He” and not an “it.” What difference does that make in how we understand and relate to the Holy Spirit?

3. The sermon noted that the Holy Spirit gives us new birth. What does our new birth accomplish for us?

Into the Bible

By the Holy Spirit, we are born again and adopted into God's family. In the Roman world, adoption was a long and formal process, and once adopted, the new member of the family was considered as one naturally born into the family. To be adopted into God's family, then, is not merely finding a place to belong, but it is full membership as God's children with all the privileges and responsibilities that come with it.

Read Romans 8:12-17

4. Paul is contrasting two kinds of living. We can live according to our bodily desires and appetites (the flesh) or we can live according to God's ways with the help of His Spirit (12-13). According to these verses, where does each kind of living lead? Have you experienced this truth?
5. Paul taught that those who try to work hard enough to overcome their wrong desires and appetites and to earn God's favor will live as slaves to fear, always mindful that they are not truly succeeding because God's standard is perfection. Those who have received the Spirit, though, can peacefully rest in the knowledge that they have been adopted: chosen and accepted. How does knowing we belong to God lead to peace, joy, and strength?

6. According to verses 15-16, the Spirit enables us to call God our “Abba” (Daddy) and enables us to experience being a child of God. How should experiencing the Father’s love in this way impact our lives?

7. If we are adopted as children, we have all the privileges and responsibilities of being members of God’s family. As God’s children, we have the privilege of, among many blessings, His love, protection, provision, and peace. According to verse 17, what is the ultimate privilege? What responsibilities does Paul say we have?

Digging Deeper

8. Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that by the Holy Spirit, you have been adopted into God’s family?

Many factors contribute to our ability to believe that we are children of God. Our experience in our family of origin, our past wounding, our self-image, and our temperament are just a few factors that impact how we see and relate to God as our Father. For some, trusting that our Heavenly Father loves us is easy; for others, it is terribly difficult. But whether it is easy or not, we need to hold the truth of God’s Word before our hearts and let the Holy Spirit imprint it there as He testifies that we are children of God.

9. How can you use God's Word to allow the Spirit to deepen your trust in your Abba Father?

Week Two: The Inspiration and Illumination of Scripture

Getting Started

1. Is there a particular Bible verse that has been, or currently is, meaningful to you? What is it? Why is it meaningful?
2. The sermon noted three reasons why we believe that Scripture is authoritative.

How did Jesus show He considered Scripture authoritative?

How does the New Testament show Scripture is authoritative?

Why did the early Church consider the New Testament authoritative?

Into the Bible

Paul and Peter both teach that the Holy Spirit inspires Scripture. As Paul teaches in 2 Timothy 3:16, all Scripture is “God-breathed.” While Paul was referring to the Old Testament (there was no New Testament at that time), the church quickly came to recognize that the Holy Spirit had likewise inspired the writings that came to be known as the New Testament.

Our understanding of authority is that God, by the Holy Spirit, inspired authors to communicate a message to their original audience. The author, then, with the help of the Holy Spirit, communicated that message in a way that could be understood by the original audience. That inspired message is

authoritative. Our task is to seek to understand what the author intended the original audience to understand. This requires teaching and scholarship in order to understand messages written in a different time to a different culture.

Take, for example, Revelation 3:16. “So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.” Many have understood the message of this verse to be that God prefers we be cold, like unbelievers, to being a lukewarm believer. But as John communicated this message, his readers knew that while Laodicea was renowned for its healing hot springs, they had to get their drinking water via aqueduct. Whereas cold water from a well was clean and refreshing, and water from the hot springs was good for healing, water from the aqueduct was lukewarm and full of impurities; it could literally make you sick. What John’s audience heard, then, was that they need to be pure and usefully engaged in Jesus’ mission, but instead, they were useless and full of impurities. This is the authoritative message inspired by the Holy Spirit.

So how do we hear that message? “As by inspiration he provided Scripture truth for us, so now by illumination he interprets it to us. Illumination is thus the applying of God’s revealed truth to our hearts, so that we grasp as reality for ourselves what the sacred text sets forth” (J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide To Historic Christian Beliefs*). One way the Church has taught us to allow the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word is a practice called *Lectio Divina*. What follows is an exercise in *Lectio Divina*. You will do this exercise alone in preparation for your small group and again in your small group. Treat this as an experiment – will something different come from it each time? After completing the exercise (and not before!), move on to the questions below.

Read

Sit in silence for a few moments and breathe slowly and deeply. Ask God to open you to hear what the Spirit would speak to you today through His Word.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, 15-16 **slowly**. You may even want to read it out loud.

Read the passage again slowly, this time listening for any words, phrases, or ideas that stand out to you. Don't choose it or force it, simply accept what comes to you.

Reflect

Read the passage again slowly. As you do, reflect on the word or phrase that stood out to you. Ask yourself why it stood out. Reflect on this for a few minutes.

Now ask God how this is meant to connect to your life. What would He have you do or be in light of this passage?

Pray

Read the passage one last time. As you do, think about what you would like to say to God about what you think He is speaking to you. Pray as you are led, asking God questions, asking Him for things, and thanking Him for working in your life.

Contemplate

Spend time in God's presence and simply consider how you encountered Him today.

3. What stood out to you in the passage?

Alone:

Group:

4. Was it the same or different when in the group?

5. If different, why do you think so?

6. How do you think God is calling you to respond?

Week Three: Becoming Like Jesus

Getting Started

1. Have you known someone who really “looks” like Jesus? If so, who?

2. The sermon discussed the role of the Holy Spirit in making us like Jesus. How do you feel about what God is seeking to do in your life?

Into the Bible

The lifelong process of becoming like Jesus is known as sanctification – the process of being made holy. It is the Holy Spirit who, dwelling in us, acts to conform us to Christ’s image. It is as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit that we open ourselves to His gracious work. We are neither wholly passive, letting the Spirit do all the work, nor wholly active, trying to do it all ourselves, in becoming like Jesus. Rather, we learn to actively surrender to the power of the indwelling Spirit as He produces the life of Jesus in us.

The key to growing in the image of Jesus is to recognize that a relationship with Him is inherently transformational. That needs to be distinctly understood. When we put our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit enters our lives and forever connects us to Jesus so that we can abide in Him. As we abide in Christ by the Holy Spirit, we are transformed.

Read Galatians 5:16-25

To understand this passage, we need a bit of context. In the first portion of this letter, Paul argues that we do not earn eternal life by what we do, by keeping the works of the Law, but by putting our faith in Jesus and His saving death on the cross. He also teaches that once we put our faith in Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit, who then enables us to become like Jesus.

It appears that part of the problem for the Galatians was that while they believed they were initially saved by grace through faith, it was then up to them to make themselves like Jesus. “It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (3:1-3).

The Galatians were trying to “perfect” themselves in their own power (flesh). They were trying to make themselves like Jesus. This, Paul teaches, simply does not work. Rather than trying to “perfect” themselves in their own power, they were to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit as He produced the life of Jesus in them.

The same is true for us. We are not meant to produce the fruit of Jesus’ image in our own lives by our own strength. Rather, we are to keep ourselves vitally connected to Jesus through the Holy Spirit, knowing that as we do, He will produce the fruit of Jesus’ life in us.

3. The Spirit and the flesh (our rebellious will and disordered desires) are opposed to each other. What kind of “fruit” does the flesh produce? (17-21)

4. Notice how many of these works are relational and tend to treat people as a means to serving our own desires. What do these works reveal about what we truly love?
5. Slowly think through the fruit of the Spirit and in your own words describe the attributes.

Love

Goodness

Joy

Faithfulness

Peace

Gentleness

Patience

Self-control

Kindness

6. According to verse 24, we leave room for the Spirit to work by crucifying the flesh. What do you think Paul means by that?

Digging Deeper

7. We do not produce this fruit in our own lives, it is the Spirit's fruit. How can we "live by the Spirit" (v. 25) so that He can produce fruit in our lives?

8. Living in the Spirit always involves crucifying the flesh and clinging to/abiding in Jesus. Crucifying the flesh not only involves repenting of sinful behavior, but repenting of trying to live in our own strength without relying upon God. We repent in order to more fully abide. Where do you need to repent in order to more deeply abide?

Week Four: Gratitude

Getting Started

1. The sermon suggested that some people view stewardship as saying that nothing belongs to them, while others see it as the privilege of being entrusted with precious things. What are your thoughts about this aspect of stewardship?

Into the Bible

Gratitude is a powerful force in our lives. Gratitude leads to lively faith and deep peace, as well as to confession and repentance. As we spend time giving thanks for all the good things in our lives, we become more aware of God's faithful and generous provision for us. With this awareness, we grow to trust God's constant presence and work in our lives, leading to deepening peace. Giving thanks also frequently leads to an awareness that we do not deserve all that God has done for us. Despite our ingratitude and sin, God still works to bless us beyond anything we could ever deserve. In the face of this gracious love, we find ourselves moved to confession and repentance as we desire to be worthy of God's gracious love and care.

Ultimately, we want gratitude to become a part of our character. We want to be the kind of people who are always aware of God's goodness and are ever-grateful for His constant presence and work in our lives. In a culture that teaches us to yearn for what we don't have, this kind of gratitude does not always come naturally to us. It can, though, be cultivated rather easily as we simply make an intentional and regular habit of giving thanks. The more we give thanks, the more we will be moved to give thanks, and the more it will become part of who we are.

2. Spend a good chunk of time (5 minutes or more) giving thanks for the good things in your life. Give thanks for big things (like family, friends, and home), for little things (like the smell of flowers or fresh coffee in the morning), and even for how God is working in challenges you are experiencing. Note how you feel when you start giving thanks. If you feel like making notes, use the space below.

3. What did you note about your time giving thanks? Was it easier or harder than expected? Did your time change how you feel?

We are meant to live our lives in response to God's gracious love for us. When we live in the awareness that He loves us and is always working to make us like Jesus, we should want to respond with grateful hearts. The General Thanksgiving puts it this way:

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you*

*in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*

This dynamic of grateful response to God's grace is at the heart of our lives as disciples of Jesus. This dynamic is behind the majority of Paul's letters. The first half of his letters tend to focus on who God is and what God has done for us in Christ. The second half of the letter then calls upon us to respond to God's merciful grace.

Read Romans 12:1-2

4. Paul has been writing about God's grace and mercy in chapters 1-11, that while we were yet rebellious sinners, God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross in order to rescue us and reconcile us to Himself. When you think about all that God has given you in Christ, how do you feel? What does the knowledge of God's mercy make you want to do in response?

5. Paul calls us to respond to God's merciful grace by presenting our body as a living sacrifice (v.1). Thinking about our bodies, what does it mean to offer God our:

Feet

Hands

Eyes

Ears

Mouths

Minds

Time

Talents/Skills

Treasure

6. Sacrifices died on the altar, so this language of sacrifice calls us to give ourselves up completely to God. How does Paul describe this sacrifice in v. 2? What is the benefit of living as a sacrifice?

Going Deeper

7. As Rick Warren once noted, as sacrifices, we tend to continually crawl off the altar. What kinds of practices can you adopt that will help you live a life of sacrifice?

8. Think back to your time of giving thanks. How might gratitude help you give your whole life to God?

Week Five: Trust and Freedom

Getting Started

1. The sermon focused on how we grow in trust as we step out in trusting faith. As we grow in our ability to trust God's gracious provision in our lives, we find growing freedom from fear and anxiety. What struck you from that message?

2. How can intentional gratitude help us grow in trust and freedom?

Into the Bible

The 23rd Psalm is, along with John 3:16 and the Lord's Prayer, one of the most recognizable passages in the whole of the Bible. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..." As David penned this psalm, he was likely under pressure and stress, perhaps even under the threat of losing his life in the "shadow of death." Yet, he is able to say, "I shall not want." Such was his trust in the Lord and his freedom from fear, even in severely challenging times.

Read Psalm 23.

3. David says that he lacks nothing because the Lord provides green pastures and still waters – food and drink – that restore and refresh his very being. How does the Lord provide for us?

4. At the heart of the psalm, David gives the reason why he fears no evil. How does knowing that the Lord is with us change the way we see everything?

David's life was full of blessing and turmoil (some of his own making, and much of it due to King Saul), but through all of it he put himself in a position of having to trust the Lord. David didn't just trust God with his lips, but he acted upon his trust in the Lord. For example, he faced Goliath in a life or death encounter and he let King Saul continually try to kill him because he trusted the Lord to deliver him and make him king in His own time. We learn to trust through experiencing God's trustworthiness. Likewise, if we do not step out in trust and obedience (which always go hand in hand), we will not grow in the kind of faith we see in David.

5. David was able to live in true freedom because he had experienced God's faithful covenant loving-kindness and knew that God's love would "follow him all the days" of his life. Paul said something very similar when he told the Romans that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). How can we know and experience the love of God?

One powerful way to grow in trust and freedom is to give thanks for all God's blessings in our lives. As we do, we should come to see that God, in His love for us, is active and working in our lives. That, in turn, helps us trust God more deeply and helps us step out in faith in bigger ways. But we must step out in bigger ways if we are going to grow in our trust of the Lord. Trust both shows itself in action and grows through action. When we step out in faith and find the Lord's provision, it deepens our trust.

Much of our fear is rooted in the fear of losing something or in the fear of the unknown. When we trust that the Lord who loves us so much that He laid down His life for us is always with us, we realize that the One we truly need, Jesus, will never be taken from us and that no matter what unknown we enter, He will be with us. As our trust grows, we will find that we live in greater freedom.

Digging Deeper

6. Trust both shows itself in action and grows in action. On a personal level (not just theory), how does your use of your Time, Talent and Treasure show where your trust is? How might God be calling you to step out in faith?

Time

Talent

Treasure

Week Six: Empowerment

Getting Started

1. Every believer has been given spiritual gifts. The sermon talked about how using our gifts in the church both blesses the body and helps us grow spiritually. Have you found that to be true? If so, how?

Spiritual Gifts Inventory

Some people hesitate to serve in ministry and mission because they are unsure what kind of gifting they have. One reason many people are unsure of their gifting is that it comes to them so easily that they assume anyone can do those things. There are two tools that can be very helpful in discerning our gifts. First, the use of a spiritual gifts inventory can often help us see talents in ourselves that we overlook. Second, listening to brothers and sisters in Christ who know us and can see what the Lord is doing in us can help us understand how the Holy Spirit is at work through us.

Prayerfully take the following spiritual gifts inventory.

At your small group meeting, allow each person to share the results of their inventory. Then allow the group to respond to each person's result.

Respond to each statement according to the following 0-5 point scale:

0 = Never; Not true

1 = Rarely; Seldom true

2 = Some of the time; Occasionally true

3 = Half of the time; Usually true

4 = Most of the time; Consistently true

5 = All of the time; Always true

1. _____ I am skilled at organizing people to accomplish many different tasks and objectives.
2. _____ I want to establish and equip new churches and/or ministries.
3. _____ I can easily determine whether a statement is true to Scripture or not.
4. _____ I can clearly and effectively communicate the Gospel to others.
5. _____ I seek to inspire others who are facing difficulties in their faith.
6. _____ I live confidently knowing that God is intimately concerned and involved with my life.
7. _____ I live a simple lifestyle so that I can give a larger portion of my income to The Lord's work.
8. _____ People often ask me my perspective or interpretation of specific passages of Scripture.
9. _____ Others tend to follow my lead.
10. _____ I have great empathy for those who are facing difficult life challenges.
11. _____ I am very protective of the spiritual well-being of others.
12. _____ At times God has given me a message for an individual or group and compelled me to speak it to them.
13. _____ I enjoy doing everyday tasks that support the various ministries of the church.
14. _____ I spend large amounts of time studying the Word of God knowing that my effort will make a difference in someone's life.

15. _____ I often have helpful insights into situations that have not been made clear to others.
16. _____ I can clearly see what needs to be done and implement a plan to make it happen.
17. _____ Cultural boundaries do not hinder my work to expand the kingdom of God.
18. _____ I pay attention to what people say and how they say it, particularly those who teach.
19. _____ I feel a burden of compassion for those who are lost without Jesus.
20. _____ When people are discouraged, I remind them of the power and promises of God found in Scripture.
21. _____ I trust God completely to answer my prayers according to His perfect will.
22. _____ I consistently and joyfully give of my income - often more than a tithe.
23. _____ The Spirit has brought to my mind information that I have been able to use to minister to others effectively.
24. _____ I have a vision for my church or ministry and I know what needs to be done to accomplish it.
25. _____ I see the sick or needy as those who most need the love and comfort that Jesus offers.
26. _____ I love spending time nurturing and guiding others in their faith.
27. _____ There have been occasions that I have received a revelation from the Lord and spoken it to the church.
28. _____ I readily volunteer to help in church when I know it will fill a practical need.

29. _____ I effectively communicate the Bible in ways that influence and motivate others to learn more.
30. _____ I have learned through my experiences in life and can often guide others who are facing similar difficulties or challenges that I have had.
31. _____ I am good at delegating responsibility and trust others to "do their jobs."
32. _____ I can minister to people in different cultures effectively.
33. _____ I am a quick and accurate judge of character.
34. _____ I seek ways to build relationships with non-Christians so that The Lord will use me to share the Gospel with them.
35. _____ I am compelled to challenge and inspire growth in those whose faith is stagnant.
36. _____ I know God will come through even if I don't see any possible solution to my problem.
37. _____ When I give it brings me great joy knowing that more people will be served and touched with the Gospel.
38. _____ I study the Bible regularly in order to share truth with others in and outside the church.
39. _____ I am not afraid to take risks to advance the kingdom of God through my church or ministry.
40. _____ I care deeply about those who are hurting and want to help them navigate through their tough times.
41. _____ I desire to help the wounded and lost find healing and shelter in Jesus Christ.

42. _____ The Lord has spontaneously given me information about an individual that I felt obligated to confront them with in order to restore them to God.
43. _____ I like to serve the Lord "behind the scenes."
44. _____ I am able to explain deep theological truths in ways that even a child can understand them.
45. _____ I often help people by offering Scriptural lessons and principles as solutions to life's various challenges.
46. _____ I like to create ways to make things run efficiently in my life and work.
47. _____ God has given me influence over several different ministries and/or churches.
48. _____ I can readily sense the enemy or a demonic influence in a situation.
49. _____ I love to memorize Scripture to share with those who don't know Jesus as their Savior.
50. _____ I am not afraid to challenge someone if I know it will foster spiritual growth and boldness in their life.
51. _____ I will boldly move forward in a situation if I sense God's calling and provision to do so.
52. _____ I believe I have been blessed financially so that I may be a blessing to the church and her mission to reach the lost and help the poor.
53. _____ I retain most of what I learn and can recall it quickly when the need arises.
54. _____ I can readily identify leaders and love to help them grow in their gifts and abilities.

55. _____ I love to see people through the storms of life and show them the compassion that Jesus did.
56. _____ I care about the church and do all I can to see it grow and be built up in love.
57. _____ God has put in my mind urgent matters that were otherwise unknown that I have announced to the church.
58. _____ I set aside time in my week to help those in need in my church and community.
59. _____ I enjoy communicating the important details of Scripture to others.
60. _____ I can see where a group or individual's decisions and actions will lead them, and I offer to guide them in the right direction.
61. _____ Details matter to me and I pay special attention to make sure things are done correctly.
62. _____ I am qualified and able to establish and lead a new church or ministry.
63. _____ I can often tell if someone is being deceitful or dishonest before it becomes apparent to others.
64. _____ I love to share what Christ has done in my life and how He has changed me.
65. _____ Others have told me that my words have compelled them to step out and grow in their faith.
66. _____ Even when times are tough, I trust God completely to comfort me and provide for my needs.
67. _____ Stewardship is an important discipline in my daily walk with Christ.

68. _____ I like to share the truth and insights God has shown me with others.
69. _____ People often look to me to lead a group or project.
70. _____ I have been known to "care too much" and help others in their time of need.
71. _____ I long to see each person in the church fulfilling the Great Commission.
72. _____ I have suddenly received a message from God specific to our congregation and shared it for the edification of the entire church.
73. _____ If I recognize a need in the church I simply fill it without being asked.
74. _____ Others have shared that my teaching is helpful and easy to understand.
75. _____ It is humbling to me when someone asks for my guidance, so I take great care to help them.
76. _____ I manage my time wisely.
77. _____ I have a strong desire to raise up leaders and pastors who will equip the church.
78. _____ I have a strong "radar" for false teaching.
79. _____ I am not afraid to plead with people to believe that Christ died for their sin and to confess Him as Lord and Savior.
80. _____ When others are faced with difficult situations, I boldly tell them of the faithfulness of God towards His people.
81. _____ I don't often worry because of my confidence in God's ability and willingness to see me through every circumstance.
82. _____ I seek ways to help others financially and share the love of Christ with them.

83. _____ I am able to relate the truth and realities of the Gospel to all aspects of life.
84. _____ I am not afraid to step up and take charge in a crisis situation.
85. _____ I seek out those who are deemed "lost causes" and aid them in restoring their lives.
86. _____ The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation of my life and ministry.
87. _____ Others have recognized that often God has spoken clearly and directly to them through a message I have shared.
88. _____ I believe there is eternal significance in performing mundane tasks and service.
89. _____ I love discovering how the Gospel is woven throughout the entire Bible as I increasingly spend time in study.
90. _____ I can easily see which plan or strategy is the best one in a given circumstance.
91. _____ My desk or workspace is set up so I can access whatever I need quickly.
92. _____ Other pastors and leaders often come to me for help and guidance.
93. _____ Others have told me that my perceptions or judgments of people, situations, or statements have proved trustworthy.
94. _____ Most of my conversations with non-Christians lead to me speaking about my faith in Jesus.
95. _____ If a person or a group is stumbling or deviating from the life God has intended for them, I will speak up and press them to remember and return to joyful life in Christ.

96. _____ I consistently encourage others to trust God in everything.
97. _____ I give generously and without pretense to the ministry of God's people.
98. _____ I can usually recall a Scripture verse or passage that applies to a given situation.
99. _____ I am more "visionary" than detail oriented. I concentrate more on the big picture than the day-to-day particulars.
100. _____ Others have showed appreciation that I have comforted and ministered to them at a low point in their lives.
101. _____ I build others up to be more like Jesus.
102. _____ I can recall times the Lord gave a specific message to His church through me.
103. _____ I find joy in being a helper and assisting others in their ministries.

Scoring Instructions:

Write your score (from 0-5) for each question in the box with that question number. Add up each column and write your total scores above the corresponding Gift Code. Once you have done this you can check the key below to see what spiritual gift each Gift Code represents. **The highest score for any gift is 35.** The higher the score, the stronger you are in that spiritual gift based on your responses. A score of **29 or higher** in any gift is a strong indicator of the presence of that gift in your life. Scores between **22 and 28** could indicate a spiritual gift in the "seedling" stage, particularly if one or more of your top three scores are in this range.

Scoring Matrix

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
Total scores (enter column totals below)														
Ad	Ap	Di	Ev	Ex	Fa	Gi	Kn	Le	Me	Pa	Pr	Se	Te	Wi

Ad = Administration

Me = Mercy

Ap = Apostleship

Pa = Pastor/Shepherd

Di = Discernment

Pr = Prophecy

Ev = Evangelism

Se = Serving/Ministering

Ex = Exhortation

Te = Teaching

Fa = Faith

Wi = Wisdom

Gi = Giving

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Kn = Knowledge

www.SpiritualGiftsTest.com.

Le = Leadership

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Week Seven: How the Spirit Guides Us

Getting Started

1. The sermon suggested that God is constantly speaking into our lives by the Holy Spirit and that we simply need to cultivate our ability to listen. What makes listening so difficult?

Throughout this study, we have explored the indispensable work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as disciples of Jesus as He:

- gives us new birth and brings us into God's family as He forever indwells our hearts.
- speaks into our lives, especially through inspired Scripture, and brings the Word to life in us.
- transforms our hearts so that the character of Christ is produced in us.
- produces the fruit of gratitude, trust, and generosity in us.
- gives us gifts to be used to build up the Church and further the mission of Jesus.

All of this impacts how God guides us. By the Holy Spirit, God is always with us (Matt. 28:20) and always working to transform our lives as we play our part in Jesus' saving work in the world.

Because God has big plans for our lives – both to change us and to use us – we should not be surprised that He is always seeking to speak into our lives and guide us.

Speaking of God's guidance, Dallas Willard writes:

James Dobson has given me some of the best practical advice I have heard on how someone who really wants the will of God and who has a basically correct understanding of it should proceed. Describing how he does it himself, he

says, “I get down on my knees and say, ‘Lord, I need to know what you want me to do, and I am listening. Please speak to me through my friends, books, magazines I pick up and read, and through circumstances.’”

The simplicity of this should not mislead us. When we are in a proper, well-functioning relationship with God, this is exactly what we are to do. And then we are, as Dobson says, to listen. This means that we should pay a special kind of attention both to what is going on within us and to our surrounding circumstances. (*Hearing God*, 260)

Willard’s key insight here is found in knowing that in a “proper, well-functioning relationship” we can trust that God is guiding us and that our task is to *listen*. When we cultivate our relationship with God, we can rest in the knowledge that He will lead and guide us in His will.

Into the Bible

2. Read 2 Timothy 3:16. According to this verse, how does the Holy Spirit offer guidance?

3. Scripture reveals God’s general will for us, and as we live in obedience to Scripture, we better able to hear God speaking in our lives. How have you experienced God guiding you in Scripture?

Much of what God would have us do is found in Scripture. In fact, everything we really need to know about the life God calls us to

live can be found there. Many people, though, want God's guidance without having to know Scripture, but then wonder why they don't hear God speak. When we take the time and energy to intentionally seek God in His Word, we show that we love Him and want to be in His will. Not only does this enable us to know God's general will in all the big and routine aspects of life, but knowing Scripture shapes us in wisdom so that we have a godly character that simply knows how to behave in a godly way. Obedience to God's Word cultivates wisdom and righteous living. This is part of the well-functioning relationship Willard believes helps us listen for God's guiding voice.

While God's general will can be known from Scripture and shapes us in wisdom, there are times that we want guidance on more specific matters in our lives. One of our great resources in those times is our brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. Read Proverbs 12:15 and 15:22. What do these verses say about seeking counsel?

5. Why do you think God frequently speaks into our lives through other people? Why do you think we often resist seeking counsel?

Digging Deeper

Is there something you are seeking guidance on in your life? One of our hopes for our small groups is that they can be a place of true fellowship and support, a place where we can share, as appropriate, our needs and seek counsel and help from one another.

6. In which ways do you find God's guidance easiest to hear?

Scripture

Prayer

Signs

Saints

7. What steps can you take to grow in an area where you struggle to listen for God's voice? Is there a way that your small group can help you?

Compline

The Officiant begins

Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

People

The maker of heaven and earth.

The Officiant continues

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

Silence may be kept. The Officiant and People then say

Almighty God and Father, we confess to you,
to one another, and to the whole company of heaven,
that we have sinned, through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.

For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
have mercy upon us, forgive us all our sins,
and by the power of your Holy Spirit
raise us up to serve you in newness of life,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Officiant alone says

May Almighty God grant us forgiveness of our sins,
and the grace and comfort of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Officiant O God, make speed to save us.

People O Lord, make haste to help us.

Officiant Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

People as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Except in Lent, add Alleluia.

One or more of the following Psalms are sung or said.

Psalm 4 *Cum invocarem*

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; *
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 “You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory? *
how long will you worship dumb idols
and run after false gods?”
- 3 Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; *
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.
- 4 Tremble, then, and do not sin; *
Speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.
- 5 Offer the appointed sacrifices *
and put your trust in the Lord.
- 6 Many are saying,
“Oh, that we might see better times!” *
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart, *
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.
- 8 I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; *
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 31:1-5 *In te, Domine, speravi*

- 1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame: *
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O Lord, O God of truth.

Psalm 91 Qui habitat

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High *
abides under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 He shall say to the Lord,
“You are my refuge and my stronghold, *
my God in whom I put my trust.”
- 3 He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter *
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with his pinions,
and you shall find refuge under his wings; *
his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.
- 5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, *
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
- 6 Of the plague that stalks in the darkness, *
nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand, *
but it shall not come near you.
- 8 Your eyes have only to behold *
to see the reward of the wicked.

- 9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge, *
and the Most High your habitation,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, *
to keep you in all your ways.
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands, *
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; *
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent
under your feet.
- 14 Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver him; *
I will protect him, because he knows my Name.
- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; *
I am with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and bring him to honor.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him, *
and show him my salvation.

Psalm 134 *Ecce nunc*

- 1 Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, *
you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.
- 2 Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord; *
the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.

At the end of the Psalms is sung or said

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Bible Study occurs at this time.

If time is short after Bible Study, consider taking prayer requests, praying for one another, and closing with one of the collects on page 6 or 7.

Officiant Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;
People For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.
Officiant Keep me as the apple of your eye;
People Hide me under the shadow of your wings.
Lord, have mercy [upon us].
Christ, have mercy [upon us].
Lord, have mercy [upon us].

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass
 against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.

Officiant O Lord, hear our prayer;
People And let our cry come to you.
Officiant Let us pray.

The Officiant then says one or more of the following Collects. Other appropriate Collects may also be used.

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, illumine this night with your celestial brightness, and from the children of light banish the deeds of darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Saturdays

We give you thanks, O God, for revealing your Son Jesus Christ to us by the light of his resurrection: Grant that as we sing your glory at the close of this day, our joy may abound in the morning as we celebrate the Paschal mystery; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

One of the following prayers may be added

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. *Amen.*

or this

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live: Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayer requests and free intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered.

If time permits, the Officiant and People say or sing the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32) with this Antiphon

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,
according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before the face of all people;
to be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake
we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

In Easter Season, add Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

The Officiant concludes with the following

The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end.
Amen.

Or this


The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless us and keep us, this night and evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER REQUESTS



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Sunday Worship

8 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

11300 Campus Park Dr.