



The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Nearly every book in the New Testament mentions the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Every gospel begins with the promise of His outpouring (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16 and John 1:33). He is found in the first chapter of the Bible (Genesis 1:2) and the last chapter (Revelation 22:17).



The Holy Spirit has been at work throughout all history, making God known to people. The Old Testament mentions that the Holy Spirit gave artisans special ability to build the tabernacle for God's glory (Exodus 35:30-35). Military leaders were equipped by God's Spirit to win battles they never could have won otherwise (Judges 3:9-10). Men of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit to record the words of the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21). The New Testament describes the Day of Pentecost as the point in time when the Holy Spirit was first poured out on 120 believers. In fact, the term "Pentecost" was birthed from the name of this special Jewish holiday. This baptism with the Holy Spirit endowed the apostles with such power and boldness that the entire world has been forever affected (Acts 2).

The Holy Spirit is active today: making the Bible alive for believers (John 16:13), changing lives (2 Corinthians. 3:18), empowering believers to witness effectively (Acts 1:8), unveiling Jesus' glory to believers (John 16:14-15).

Overview

The Holy Spirit is at work in humanity. He convicts man of sin, for not doing what is right, and warns of eventual judgment (John 16:7-8). Not only does the Spirit of God convict a man of murder, stealing, immorality, etc.; the Holy Spirit convicts man of the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ (John 16:9). Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, no one could be saved (John 3:5).

The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers to bring them to a place of spiritual maturity (Romans 8:9-10).

God's Spirit also does the following:

- He reveals truth to people and convinces us of our need for God,
- He always glorifies Jesus,
- He helps us pray effectively and provides dynamic spiritual power for life and ministry,
- He assures us that we are the children of God.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that there is . . . the third person of the Godhead, the Spirit of the father shed abroad, omnipotent, omnipresent, performing an inexpressibly important mission upon earth, convicting of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, drawing sinners to the Savior, rebuking, pleading, searching, comforting, guiding, quickening, teaching, glorifying, baptizing and enduing with power from on high, them who yield to His tender ministrations, preparing them for the great day of the Lord's appearing."

– Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



The ministry of the Holy Spirit is powerful, comforting, convicting, and continuous. The following is a summary of some of the phenomenal ways that the Holy Spirit serves the believer.

HE REVEALS TRUTH

John 16:13 - The Holy Spirit spoke to the authors of the Bible who recorded the very words of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21). Not only did the Holy Spirit lead the Bible writers to record the true words of God, but the same Spirit helps us understand those truths and apply them to our lives. He leads us into all truth. God's Word is consistent. It enlightens us concerning the principles of Christian living.

How can you be sure the voice you hear is the Holy Spirit?

HE GLORIFIES JESUS

John 16:14-15 - The Holy Spirit will always point people to Jesus and to the truth of God's Word. He will never direct people to a pursuit that will bring glory to themselves. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to encourage a deep personal relationship between the Christian and Jesus.

In what way has the Holy Spirit brought depth to your relationship with Jesus?

HE BRINGS ASSURANCE

Romans 8:16 – The Holy Spirit reminds us that we belong to God, that we are His children. The Spirit helps us realize how significant we are to God. We may love and want the best for our children, but that is

nothing in comparison to how God feels towards His children. No believer should suffer from low self-esteem. Instead, we can rest in God's approval of us, which is the only affirmation that really matters in light of eternity. It is the Holy Spirit that makes this truth real to us (also see Romans 5:5 and Romans 15:30).

How does the Holy Spirit bring you assurance that you belong to God?

HE HELPS US PRAY

Romans 8:26-27 - When we pray, the Holy Spirit gives us specific insight or reveals to us things that we might not know. When we are seeking the will of God, the Holy Spirit helps us pray according to His will even though we do not yet fully understand it in our natural minds. This will be true both in our public and private prayer lives if we will be open to the leading of God's Spirit.

If we do not know what we are praying for, how can we understand what the will of God is?

HE BRINGS PERSONAL POWER

Acts 1:8 - When we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives are totally changed. God's Spirit gives us courage to speak out for Jesus when we might not have before and the spiritual insight that can bring solutions to difficult situations. The next two lessons on the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit will clarify how we receive this supernatural power and gifting.

How does God's passion for people become evident in the life of the Spirit-filled Christian?

God's standard is that we overcome sin in our lives. Let us not simply accept salvation and be thankful that we will escape hell; let us realize that we have a responsibility to live Godly lives. However, we do not have to accomplish this through the strength of our own will power, which would ultimately fail. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, gives us power to live overcoming lives.



Personal Response

After considering the Bible verse studied in this lesson, answer these questions. (Use the back of this sheet to complete your answer if you need to.)

What is the most valuable ministry of the Holy Spirit to you personally, and why?

With your understanding of the Holy Spirit's ministry, what expectations do you have for His work in your life?

HEART PERSPECTIVE

The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us. It is He who draws our attention to Jesus Christ and gives us the discernment to call Jesus, Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3). Throughout church history, this has been the pivotal point around which the true church has moved. Cults (false religious sects) have come into being when there was an attempt to move away from this truth.

We must carefully guard the reality of the Holy Spirit's ministry. The best way to accomplish this is by a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. Once we have experienced His closeness, there is no turning away from the truth of the doctrine. Commit your life to the empowering of the Holy Spirit. He will never abuse the relationship. You will never be sorry that you gave Him the authority to run your life.

To be effective in sharing our faith, we need the Holy Spirit. He empowers us as witnesses, and He works on the unbeliever. As we have discovered, the Holy Spirit convicts man of sin and of his need to believe in Jesus. However, just as we need God's Spirit, so the Lord has chosen to use man to be a physical witness for Him (John 15:26-27). We are not in this alone. The Holy Spirit and we are partners together to bring men, women, boys, and girls to the Savior through testimonies, relationships, love, and gentleness.



FAITH SHARING



Lesson 6 Teaching Outline

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Ask students to look up and read the Bible examples of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in this section. Emphasize the timeless ministry of God's Spirit by pointing out that He was involved with creation and that He has influenced the lives of people in the Old and New Testaments. He makes the Bible alive to believers today, and He will continue to change their lives to be more like Jesus as they yield to Him. Some students will find it helpful if you chart these examples on the chalkboard. One way to do this is to write these headings: "Old Testament," "New Testament," "The Present," "The Future." Under each heading write a key word or phase which describes the Holy Spirit's involvement during that period.

OVERVIEW

(15 minutes)

Before you read the *Overview* section of the lesson, have one or two people in the class give a SHORT testimony of how they came to faith in Christ. Then, as you read through the first paragraph of the *Overview*, clarify how the Holy Spirit was involved in those peoples' salvation.

However, the work of the Holy Spirit does not stop when a person receives Jesus as Savior. He continues to work in the Christian's life. Continue to read through the *Overview*. Have someone give a brief testimony of how the Holy Spirit helped him or her in daily life.

INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

Review the characteristics of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, making note of details that need more explanation. As you study, remember that the Holy Spirit does much more than the six functions listed in this lesson.

Break the students into groups of two or three, and assign one or two questions from this section to each group. Allow sufficient time for the groups to look up the suggested Bible verses and discuss their answer. Then, ask the groups to report their answers to the entire group.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

Direct students to apply the truth of this lesson to their own lives. Use the questions in this section to spark further questions which will lead people to the conclusion that they need the fullness of God's Spirit and the benefits of the Spirit-filled life. This is a perfect place to transition from the intellectual understanding of this lesson to a personal, life-changing revelation that will make a difference in the way people think and live.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Encourage students to yield control of their lives to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Emphasize that, by relinquishing self-control, what we will gain is far greater than anything we give up.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

It is wonderful to know that we are not alone in attempting to win people to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is also responsible and involved. This should greatly encourage us as we share our faith with others.