

# The Nature of the Holy Spirit

Jesus spent three years building close relationships with His followers. The twelve disciples were especially close to Christ. They witnessed His compassion for people. They observed His humanity in moments of physical exhaustion. They saw Him perform numerous and varied miracles. And while observing each miracle, the disciples learned a valuable lesson -- they saw the motivation of the Heavenly Father's heart in everything Jesus did (John 10:37-38).



Jesus went on to suffer a painful crucifixion which caused His disciples to be very fearful for their own lives. Jesus didn't abandon them, though. Three days later He arose from the dead. They were thrilled to see Him again. Christ remained on earth for a short time revealing Himself to His followers. Then He went back to heaven to rule at God the Father's right hand (1 Peter 3:22).

However, before Jesus returned to heaven, He opened up a new realm to His followers. He promised to send His Spirit to be their helper and comforter. Jesus pledged in John 14:16, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you ANOTHER (*Allos*) Helper, that He may abide with you forever--" (NKJV). When Jesus spoke these words, He was saying that another of the same kind would come. *Allos* is equivalent to one besides Christ, and in addition to Him, but one just like Him. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His followers to wait in Jerusalem until He sent the Holy Spirit to be with them (Acts 1:8). The person of the Holy Spirit would help them just as Jesus, Himself, had done while He was physically with them.

## Overview

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person, and He is fully God. Therefore, whenever we talk about the Holy Spirit we must refer to "Him" not "it." We find personal pronouns describing the Holy Spirit in Bible references: "He will testify about me..." (John 15:26); "I will

send him to you..." (John 16:7); "He will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13).

Because He is God and personally cares for mankind, He speaks to the hearts of unbelievers convicting them of their spiritual need (John 16:8). He also teaches the believer

the truth concerning Christ (John 16:13-14).

As God, He is equal to other members of the Godhead. Biblically this is verified in the conferral of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6), in Christ's baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19) and in the apostle Paul's benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14).

# DECLARATION OF FAITH

*“We believe that there is but one true and living God; maker of heaven and earth and all that in them is; the Alpha and Omega, who ever was, and is and shall be time without end, Amen; that He is infinitely holy, mighty, tender, loving and glorious; worthy of all possible love and honor, confidence and obedience, majesty, dominion and might, both now and forever; and that in the unity of the Godhead there are three, equal in every divine perfection executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption: The Father...The Son...The Holy Spirit.”*

– Aimee Semple McPherson,  
Founder ICFG



## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The distinctive marks of personality are knowledge, feeling, and will. The Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:27). He loves (Romans 15:30). He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). Furthermore, the Bible attributes to the Holy Spirit only things that a person could do. For example, the Holy Spirit encourages (Acts 9:31), teaches (Luke 12:11-12), and guides (Mark 1:12). Likewise, the Holy Spirit can be treated like a person. He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), insulted (Hebrews 10:29), lied to (Acts 5:3), and sinned against (Matthew 12:31-32).

## THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Acts 5:3,4 the term “God” and “Holy Spirit” are used interchangeably. Likewise, quotes from the Old Testament with the terms “Lord” or “God” are translated as “the Holy Spirit” in the New Testament (compare Acts 28:25-27 with Isaiah 6:8-10, and Hebrews 3:7-11 with Psalms 95:7-11).

Certain characteristics that can be ascribed only to God are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

- (1) The Holy Spirit is eternal (Hebrews 9:14).
- (2) The Holy Spirit is omnipresent – everywhere present (Psalm 139:7-12).
- (3) The Holy Spirit is omnipotent – all powerful (Luke 1:35; Romans 15:19).
- (4) The Holy Spirit is omniscient – all knowing (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

## THE EQUALITY OF THE GODHEAD

The Holy Spirit is God. We have only one God, but He makes Himself known in the three persons of the Trinity. Each member of the Godhead complements the others:

- The Father is the Creator, although the Bible clearly states that the Son (Colossians 1:15-16 and Hebrews 1:2), and the Spirit (Genesis 1:2) were both present and active in the creation of the world.
- The three Persons of the Trinity were involved in the baptism of Christ. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove. The Heavenly Father spoke from heaven declaring His approval of the Son (Matthew 3:16-17).
- In the coming of the Holy Spirit, we see each person of the Trinity working together. *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever . . . the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things . . .”* (John 14:16,26).



# Personal Response

Imagine that the Holy Spirit is a guest at a social function where you are the host. Describe how you might introduce the Holy Spirit to your other guests.

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Suppose you had to prove to someone that the Holy Spirit is God. How would you go about it?

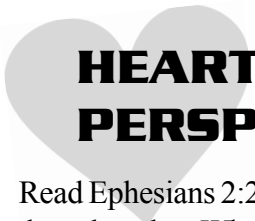
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## HEART PERSPECTIVE

Read Ephesians 2:22 and reflect on these thoughts. When we are brought to the Father by the Holy Spirit and are made new by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we become a habitation of God. This word “habitation” means a dwelling place; therefore, “habitation of God” would mean

nothing less than the dwelling place of God. The means by which God dwells in us is through the person of the Holy Spirit. Salvation does not only mean that something divine has happened to us; it also means that Someone divine has actually taken up residence within us. God has not sent

an “influence” to help us in our need, but has come Himself to dwell in us. His plan is to give us His life and transform our basic nature from that of sinful people to holy, loving, godly human beings. The ultimate design is to empower Christians to influence the world for God’s Kingdom.

Begin to pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare your heart to share the truth of God’s love and salvation with another person. Invite the Holy Spirit to give you an opportunity to relate this good news to someone who needs it. Then be faithful to speak out for God when the chance comes. 1 Cor 2:12-13 *“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. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”*





## Lesson 5 Teaching Outline

# The Nature of the Holy Spirit

### **REFERENCE POINT**

**(10 minutes)**

Ask a volunteer to read the *Reference Point* aloud for the class. Then, point out the personal nature of Jesus' relationship with His disciples. Make the observation that Jesus wanted the personal relationship to continue. Therefore, He provided Another Helper to be with his followers. Focus in on the word *allos*, translated as "another."

Let the class suggest ways in which the Holy Spirit and Christ are alike. If you have time, discuss ways in which they are different. For example, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are a part of the Godhead. However, they are different in that Jesus could be seen visibly on earth while the Holy Spirit cannot be seen.

### **OVERVIEW**

**(10 minutes)**

Read the *Overview* out loud to the class. Then open up a class discussion on the equality of the Holy Spirit with Jesus and the Heavenly Father. Have the students look up and read the scriptures that point this out from the overview section.

Some students in your class may have limited experience with the Holy Spirit. They may remember vague references to the Holy Spirit from religious ceremonies when they were children. Share these recollections and any impressions the students have about the role of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **INSIGHT**

**(25 minutes)**

Consider the following discussion questions to expand the information for the students. Be familiar with the scripture references in the *Insight* section so that you can guide the discussion in the right direction.

- Why do you think it is crucial to recognize that the Holy Spirit is a person?
- How do we know that the Holy Spirit is God?

## TAKING IT HOME

### **PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)**

Allow students to interact as they answer these questions, but encourage everyone to write a response. The second question allows the students to write in their own words what was discussed in the Insight section of the lesson.

### **HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)**

This section is intended to encourage and guide students during the week as a reminder of how much God cares for them. It might be used in personal devotions, as a point of conversation with family members, or simply to build the faith of the students.

### **FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)**

Encourage students to genuinely expect the Holy Spirit to give them opportunities to speak to other people who need to hear the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Have the class pray towards that goal.