

14 / Filled with the Holy Spirit

LOOKING AHEAD

MEMORY VERSES: Ephesians 5:18-20

BIBLE STUDY: John 14:15-18; 16:5-15

READING: The Intimate Presence



Core Truth

How are we empowered by God to want to follow Jesus?

Jesus promised that he would not leave us alone but would send the Counselor, who would come alongside to help. This Counselor, known as the Holy Spirit, is free to work in us as we empty ourselves of known sin and seek to be continuously filled with his indwelling power.

1. Identify key words or phrases in the question and answer above, and state their meaning in your own words.
2. Restate the core truth in your own words.
3. What questions or issues does the core truth raise for you?



Memory Verse Study Guide

Paul urges the Ephesians to imitate God by being filled with the Holy Spirit, always giving thanks and praising the One who sent his Spirit to be with us.

1. *Putting it in context:* Read Ephesians 5:1-20. Make a list of Paul's exhortations in Ephesians 5:1-17. What general impression do you get from these exhortations?
2. The memory verses are *Ephesians 5:18-20*. Copy the verses verbatim.
3. What is Paul's point in contrasting being filled with the Spirit with getting drunk with wine (see Acts 2:13-17)?
4. What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit"?
5. In verses 19 and 20 Paul lists three characteristics of those who are filled with the Spirit. What are they?

Why are they evidence of the Spirit's filling?

6. How have these verses spoken to you this week?
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Inductive Bible Study Guide

Though Jesus had spoken of the Holy Spirit at other times in his ministry, the Holy Spirit takes center stage on the eve of Jesus' departure. On the night before his crucifixion Jesus gathers with his disciples in the upper room (John 13—17). He says to them, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer" (John 13:33). He then assures them that it was to their advantage that he go away, for he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them and live in them.

1. *Read John 14:15-18; 16:5-15.* Jesus calls the Holy Spirit "another Counselor" (John 14:16). What does this tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit? (Read this verse in different translations. What different words for "Counselor" do you find?)

2. What does Jesus teach us about the Holy Spirit in John 14:15-18?

3. How could it possibly be to the disciples' advantage that Jesus go away (16:7)?

4. What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit (16:8-13)?

5. What is the Spirit's relationship to Jesus (16:14-15)?

6. What questions do these passages raise for you?

7. What verse or verses have particularly impacted you? Rewrite key verses in your own words.



Reading: The Intimate Presence

Darrell Johnson

John 14—16 is a record of the last words our Lord spoke to his disciples the night before he was crucified. Picture yourself in that context, in the place called *the Upper Room*. You are reclining on the floor around a large table. The food and drink of the Passover meal are spread over the table. Although there is much joy, there is also a feeling of heaviness in the room.

As the evening progresses, Jesus does a number of surprising things. He begins by changing the prescribed order of the Passover meal at two places. He takes a loaf of bread, and after saying the traditional blessing he breaks it and hands it to you, saying, “This is my body.” He then takes a cup of wine, and after saying another traditional blessing he offers it to you, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.”

Then he gets up from the table, takes off his outer garments, wraps a towel around his waist, gets down on his knees and begins washing your feet. After doing this for everyone in the room he returns to his place around the table. And then comes the biggest surprise of all: devastating news. “Children,” he says, “I will be with you only a little longer” (John 13:33). And for the rest of the evening Jesus prepares you and the others to go on living in the absence of his physical presence. “I am going to him who sent me” (John 16:5).

A TROUBLING REVELATION

No wonder Jesus begins by saying, “Do not let your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1). The word for *troubled* used here is a strong, emotional feeling-word. It means to shudder, to be thrown into confusion. Jesus’ announcement

made the disciples shudder and threw them into profound confusion. For three wonderful years they had enjoyed his company. They had come to depend on his intimate companionship. When they were with Jesus they felt secure, they had hope, they were not as afraid, and they knew themselves to be loved unconditionally. “I am going away”: they shuddered at those words, and their hearts were filled with fear, the fear of being left alone, of having to face the rest of life without this trusted companion.

What startles the disciples then, and us now, is what Jesus says in John 16:7: “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away.”

How could that be? How could it possibly be to the disciples’ advantage to live in the absence of Jesus’ physical presence?

Jesus continues: “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (16:7).

The word translated “Counselor” is notoriously difficult to render with one English word, which is why different translations of the Bible use different terms. The King James Version translates it “Comforter.” The NIV and RSV have “Counselor.” The New English Bible, New Jerusalem Bible and NRSV have “Advocate.” The NASB has “Helper.” J. B. Phillips uses the phrase “Someone to stand by you.” Although that is a mouthful, the latter is probably the best. The verb form of the word for the Spirit has a wide variety of meanings: to call in, send for, exhort, encourage, comfort, strengthen, console, connect, convince. In classical Greek the word is a legal term. It re-

fers to someone called in as a representative and advocate to plead another's case.

John uses the term in the "advocate" sense in 1 John 2:1 where he writes: "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." Jesus, sent from the Father to the world, returns to the Father to be our advocate, representing us and pleading our case.

In the upper room Jesus claims that it is for the good of all of his disciples that he go away physically. Unless he goes, the Spirit will not come. But if he goes he will send "One called in alongside." The disciples and we will not be alone in Jesus' physical absence.

Why is this better than Jesus' physical presence? Jesus says:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT

What is the Spirit like? Following are four key characteristics.

■ A Person

The word for "spirit" is a neuter noun, neither male nor female. John breaks all the rules of Greek grammar when he refers to the Spirit with masculine personal pronouns! The point is that the Holy Spirit is not an "it." The Spirit is not an impersonal force or influence. This is important because as long as the Spirit is thought of as "it," we can distance ourselves

from it. But when the Spirit is thought of as "he," we have to decide how we are going to respond to him.

We find the personhood of the Spirit celebrated in the book of Acts. Luke tells us that the Spirit

- speaks (1:16; 8:29; 10:19)
- is lied to (5:3)
- is tempted (5:9)
- bears witness (5:32)
- is resisted (7:51)
- snatches (8:39)
- gives orders (13:2)
- sends (13:4)
- thinks (15:28)
- forbids (16:6)
- prevents (16:7)
- appoints (20:28)

The personhood of the Spirit is also affirmed in the New Testament letters. The Spirit *helps* us pray (Romans 8:16), *searches* our hearts (1 Corinthians 2:10), *teaches* (1 Corinthians 2:13), *leads* (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18), *speaks* (1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:7; 10:15), *predicts* (1 Peter 1:11), is *grieved* (Ephesians 4:30).

■ Another Like Jesus

The passage says that the Holy Spirit is "a second of the same kind and not of a different kind." Who is the first Counselor of whom the Spirit is the same kind? Jesus of Nazareth. He is the first one called in alongside as comforter, counselor, helper, advocate. He promises that when he goes away physically, he will send in another of the same kind. In Jesus' physical absence "another", just like Jesus, comes in alongside, which is why Jesus says to the disciples, "You know him." The "another" has been

abiding in Jesus all along. The “another” is stamped with the very personality of Jesus. When the Spirit comes, we disciples do not meet a stranger.

Thus the rest of the New Testament speaks of the presence of the Spirit and the presence of Christ in the same breath. They cannot be separated. To be “in Christ” is to be “in the Spirit”; to be “indwelt by Christ” is to be “indwelt by the Spirit”; to have Christ “make intercession for us” is to have the Spirit “make intercession for us” (see Romans 8:9-10; 8:26, 34).

■ With Us Always

At Jesus’ first coming his presence was restricted by geography and time. If Jesus was in Capernaum and the disciples were in Jerusalem, he could not be with them. In the coming of “another Counselor” the presence of Jesus is no longer restricted. Michael Green writes, “In the days of His flesh Jesus was limited by space and time. His physical departure made possible the coming of the Spirit, . . . and there would be no barriers of space and time to prevent disciples being in intimate contact with Him.”¹

In the coming of the Holy Spirit Jesus fulfills his promise: “And surely I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). In the presence of the Spirit the reality of Jesus as Immanuel, God with us, is realized. That is why it is to our advantage that Jesus went away physically!

■ Dwells in Us

“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor. . . . He lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). The disciples would now “find the relationship even closer than companionship with Jesus in the days of His flesh. . . . He has dwelt with them, but the one whom He promises as another Paraclete

[Counselor] will dwell in them.”² Because of the coming of the Spirit, our bodies, mortal and sinful though they are, have become the Holy of Holies, the sacred dwelling place of the living One!

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Jesus refers to the “Holy Spirit” and the “Spirit of truth.” We say the word *holy* so often we forget that it means “wholly other,” “distinct,” “pure.” The Spirit dwelling alongside and within us is pure and is working to purify us, to cleanse us, to free us from all that displeases God.

The indwelling Spirit is fulfilling God’s Word: “Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15-16). That is why, even though the presence of the Spirit comforts, it also disturbs. The Spirit creates a holy discontent with the way things are in ourselves and in the world. The Spirit will not rest, nor let us rest, until we become like the One who sent him.

“Spirit of truth” will teach and guide into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). The indwelling presence teaches us the truth about ourselves, about the world and about God. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the rest of the New Testament puts such an emphasis on knowing, doing and speaking the truth. Indeed, not speaking the truth grieves the Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:25-30). When we find ourselves having to hide, deny or stretch the truth, we can be sure that we are not being guided by the Spirit. The uneasiness we feel when we exaggerate or lie or otherwise play with the truth is not simply the result of compromising our own conscience; the uneasiness is due to the Spirit’s disappointment.

The good news is that the Spirit is at work wooing, pulling, pushing, leading us into

truth. He is constantly leading us to Jesus Christ, who is the truth incarnate (John 14:6). As the apostle Paul says, in Christ “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are hidden (Colossians 2:3). The great passion of the Spirit is that human beings know Christ in all his fullness and then evaluate everything in light of him. The Spirit is radically Christ-centered.

“HE WILL GLORIFY ME”

“He will bring glory to me,” says Jesus of the Spirit of truth (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit is the “shy member of the Trinity,” as Dale

Bruner says. He constantly turns the spotlight off himself and shines it on the God-man. Any moving of the Spirit, therefore, that does not lead people to Christ is not the moving of the Spirit of God. The passion of the Spirit of God is to make the living Christ the center of our lives.

It is to our advantage that Jesus goes away physically. When Jesus goes he sends another, a Person of the same kind as himself who continues Jesus’ presence with us, who comes to live in us, slowly, but surely, making us more like the Holy One and helping us see all of life in light of the One who is the Truth.

¹Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 42-43.

²Ibid., p. 43.

Reading Study Guide

1. Describe in your own words the setting in which Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit.
2. Why is it to our advantage that Jesus sent his Holy Spirit?
3. What new insights about the person and work of the Holy Spirit did you receive as a result of this study?

4. What misconceptions about the Holy Spirit were clarified as a result of this study?

5. How do you view the purpose of the Holy Spirit in your life?

6. What questions do you have about the reading?

7. Does the reading convict, challenge or comfort you? Why?

Going Deeper

Watson, David. "Life in the Spirit." Chap. 5 in *Called and Committed: World-Changing Discipleship*. Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw, 2000.