

Small Groups - Learning about the Holy Spirit

by Pastor Richard Braun

Date: _____

Icebreaker

Do you think the Holy Spirit (God) has a sense of humor? Why or why don't you think so?

Opening Prayer

God help me to be aware of your presence. Please touch me, show me your love through others, and allow me to show love to others. Thank you for sending the Comforter to make me mindful of you and what you want for your people here on earth. Bless this time together in your name.

Open It

1. From where does your knowledge about the Holy Spirit come? Who told you about it?
2. What's your sense of what the Holy Spirit does in our lives? Is it always present?
3. Is the Holy Spirit a he or a she? Is it a person, a being - what would you call it?

Please read what Jesus had to say about the Spirit? in [John 14:15-17 NRSV](#)

[15] "If you love me, you will obey what I command. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- [17] 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."

Also, read [Luke 11:11-13](#)

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? [12] Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? [13] If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**"

4. Are you comfortable talking about the Holy Spirit? Does it seem natural? Why or Why not?
5. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Does this affect how I live?
6. What does it mean to be led by the Spirit? How does the Spirit personally lead you?

Please read about the Holy Spirit at work in us.

[Ephesians. 5:15-18](#)

So be careful how you act; these are difficult days. Don't be fools; be wise: [16] make the most of every opportunity you have to do good. [17] Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to find out and do whatever the Lord wants you to. [18] Don't drink too much wine, for many evils lie along that path; **be filled instead with the Holy Spirit and controlled by him.**

[Romans 8:12-14](#)

So, dear brothers, you have no obligations whatever to your old sinful nature to do what it begs you to do. [13] For if you keep following it, you are lost and will perish, **but if through the power of the Holy Spirit you crush it and its evil deeds, you shall live.** [14] **For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

[Galatians 5:16-21](#)

I advise you to obey only the Holy Spirit's instructions. He will tell you where to go and what to do, and then you won't always be doing the wrong things your evil nature wants you to. [17] For we

naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has his way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures. [18] When you are guided by the Holy Spirit, you need no longer force yourself to obey Jewish laws.

[19] But when you follow your own wrong inclinations, your lives will produce these evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, [20] idolatry, spiritism (that is, encouraging the activity of demons), hatred and fighting, jealousy and anger, constant effort to get the best for yourself, complaints and criticisms, the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group--and there will be wrong doctrine, [21] envy, murder, drunkenness, wild parties, and all that sort of thing. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Explore It

1. How do we get the Holy Spirit to live within us? What does this mean?
2. The Bible clarifies what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit. Does your past view conflict with the current Biblical view above?
3. Does the popular Christian view agree with what the Bible says here in the last three scripture passages? (What is the pop Christian view?)
4. Once we have received the Holy Spirit, can we lose it? If so, how?

Acts 1:4-8

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. [5] For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

[6] So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

[7] He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. [8] But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Get It

1. The first part of the Galatians passage talks about listening to the instructions of the Holy Spirit. What does this mean to you? Is this our conscience, a still small voice, or fear of punishment? How do we know what it is and when to listen?
2. If we have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, should we feel differently about life? How?
3. If you have, and you are comfortable talking about it, try to describe a time when you have felt the power of the Holy Spirit working in you.

Acts 9:31

Then **the church** throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It **was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit**; it grew in numbers, living in fear of the Lord.

If we love God and obey his (God's) commands, he says he will send the Spirit of Truth to us as a counselor to encourage and strengthen us.

Also, the Galatians passage says that when we want the Holy Spirit to instruct us, we have to listen to obey, which will help us overcome evil and do good.

Read more about what Luke has to say about the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 8:15-17](#)

When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit [16] because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. [17] Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 2:36-39](#)

"Therefore, I clearly state to everyone in Israel that God has made this Jesus you crucified to be the Lord, the Messiah!"

[37] These words of Peter's moved them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

[38] And Peter replied, "**Each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you also shall receive this gift, the Holy Spirit.** [39] For Christ promised him to each one of you who has been called by the Lord our God, and to your children and even to those in distant lands!"

Apply It

1. The Holy Spirit helps us deny evil and do good. What's one thing you will do this next week that demonstrates your love for God and willingness to obey the Holy Spirit?
2. What can you do or what will you do to make your spiritual ears more sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you about life and how to live? Be specific; what's the plan?
3. Reread the scriptures; what insight can you draw from these passages about applying what you have learned through this lesson? Or maybe you haven't learned anything, so go back to the opening prayer and start again.

Closing Prayer

Thank you for giving us a Spirit of truth, dear God. Sometimes we still feel alone. Sometimes we hurt because we don't feel love, and sometimes we hurt others because we are not sensitive to the needs of others. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to fill us, teach us your ways, and guide us in this world. You have told us in your Word that the Holy Spirit would encourage and strengthen us. We want to claim that promise right now. Empower us as we long to serve you. Amen