

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 4: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian living. To live as the Word of God teaches us means we understand that the choices we make each day affect our faith. It also means learning to pray, practising the commands of God and learning to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practice of Christianity. Include time to discuss these principles and how to effectively apply them to your life.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 4: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the need for reliance on God's power when fighting against our sinful nature. Participants will examine the discipline required to conquer the sinful nature and develop habits that allow / enable them to be surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson deals with the Holy Spirit's work in our life. The Holy Spirit is the supernatural presence of God in our lives, and the power through which any of us can accomplish God's will. If your participants are not familiar enough with the role of the Holy Spirit or the nature of the Trinity you may wish to review this at the start. The introduction question on this topic may help you know how much of this material your participants already understand. It is amazing to realize that God places His power in us, and through Him we can accomplish everything He desires for us. This is the Gospel — God has made a way for us to join with Him in relationship, and we are not alone!

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Have you ever tried to change something about yourself? How difficult is it to change our personality or nature?
- ❖ What is something you had to work hard to achieve? What helped you to achieve it?
- ❖ Have you ever overcome a bad habit? What was necessary for helping you to overcome it?
- ❖ Are you someone who easily trusts others, or do you prefer to rely only on yourself? What are the advantages and disadvantages to both ways of living?
- ❖ What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of the believer? Can you name some of the duties of the Holy Spirit that are distinct from the other persons of the Trinity?

STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **The Holy Spirit:** Jesus promised us before He left earth that He would send a helper, the Holy Spirit, to be in us.



- **Who is the Holy Spirit?**
 - He is God (Acts 5:3,4).
 - He has a unique personality, and is not just an impersonal force (1 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30)
 - The Holy Spirit always exalts Jesus and empowers us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - He is the third person of the the Trinity (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

- **When and why did the Holy Spirit come?** Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come after He ascended to Heaven – the Holy Spirit as a gift of God to empower God's people.
 - John 16:7-15
 - Acts 1:8

- The Holy Spirit comforts, teaches, and reminds us of the teachings of Jesus. The Spirit also helps us live the victorious Christian life. We can have victory over sin, and over our selfish desires, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit guarantees our future in heaven from the moment we believed (Ephesians 1:13-14)

- ❖ **What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?** To be filled with the powerful spirit of God. The word 'filled' in this context means to be directed, led, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It means our decision making, our desires, and our thoughts are all under His influence. When the Holy Spirit leads and empowers me, Christ lives in me.
 - Though all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, not all Christians are filled with (controlled by) the Spirit if they have unconfessed sin in their lives and are walking in disobedience to God's will and His Word.

 - When we are filled with the Spirit, we are depending on God for the following:
 - 1 Peter 1:14-16: A lifestyle of holiness
 - John 15:8: bearing fruit
 - John 16:13: revelation of truth
 - Romans 8:26: the Spirit's intercession in our weakness

- ❖ **Why are some Christians not filled with the Holy Spirit?** It is possible to be a Christian, and not experience the benefits of being filled with the Spirit of God. There may be many reasons for this, including:
 - **Deliberate sin and disobedience.** Some haven't learned to "walk in the Spirit and not fulfil the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). They are living as worldly Christians, putting the things of the world before God in importance.



- **Lack of understanding.** Because of a lack of knowledge and therefore a lack of understanding of important spiritual truths, some Christians continue to live in spiritual ineffectiveness and defeat. They are ignorant of God's Word and have little understanding of God's loving plan for them.
 - **Lack of trust or unbelief.** Some Christians don't believe God can or will help them in the daily challenges of life.
 - **Fear.** Some people are afraid of the unknown regarding deeper spiritual experiences. They may have been taught to fear God, and so they do not trust Him.
 - **Doubt.** Many feel that God will require more of them than they can give. They doubt the tremendous extent of God's enablement and His unconditional love.
 - **Selfishness.** Some are not willing to give up their pleasures to follow God. . They do not realize how great His wonderful plan is for them (Matthew 6:33).
- ❖ **What does the Bible say about the filling of the Spirit?** The Bible teaches us to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)—being under the control of the Spirit, as opposed to being out of control under other influences.
- Read Ephesians 5:3-17 and discover a list of negative behaviours for Christians. These, and other sins, prevent a person from being filled with the Spirit.
 - Then study Ephesians 5:19-21 and see the results of the Spirit-filled life:
 - Fellowship with one another
 - Joyful praise and worship
 - Thankfulness to God
 - Submission to others
- ❖ **Surrender to the Holy Spirit:** Remember that the Holy Spirit lives in every believer. To be filled with the Spirit requires surrendering to His gracious control. God gives us an amazing promise in 1 John 5:14-15. 'Whatever we ask, in accordance with His will, He hears, and He will do it.' We can therefore know, by faith, that when we invite the Holy Spirit to fill us, and surrender the control of our life to Him, God hears the prayer of our heart, and He answers.
- When you surrender the control of your life to the Holy Spirit, your heart begins to align with God's purposes, you will be fulfilling God's calling on your life, and He will enable you to be Christ's witness to those who are lost and in need of His saving grace.
 - Being filled with the Holy Spirit has some other very practical results. Consider Galatians 5:22-23. The presence and fullness of the Holy Spirit produces good "fruit" in our lives (character traits that God desires) enabling us to be attractive witnesses for Christ.
- ❖ **Overcoming:** The world teaches us that we must work hard to overcome or to achieve. This implies that it is by our own strength or will power that we succeed. So often we make



commitments to ourselves and fail. Over and over we decide how we should be and yet we end up as something else.

- After we have failed a number of times at something we give up and often lose hope. Does this mean that change is impossible or that we are destined forever to fail in the same ways? Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord." By the Holy Spirit's power within us, we can:
 - Overcoming fleshly desires that have kept us bound.
 - Become the attractive, loving witnesses our world longs to see.
 - Bear eternal, lasting fruit as we abide in Christ.

❖ **The Holy Spirit as Helper:** Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is a gift to us. When He abides in us, and we trust and abide in Him, God's power is released in us.

- Read the following verses about the power available to us in the Holy Spirit:
 - John 14:15-31
 - Romans 8:1-11, 26-27

TASK:

As a group, or in smaller groups, read John 14:15-31 and make a list of the ways in which the Holy Spirit helps each believer.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ What do you need the power of the Holy Spirit for in your life today?
- ❖ Abiding in God and combating our evil tendencies requires discipline. What commitments will you make today that will fill your life with things of the Spirit rather than things of this world? (*Consider especially your thought life and temptations that surround you.*)
- ❖ Share with the group about a time when you allowed the Holy Spirit to take control instead of relying on your own capabilities. What was the outcome?
- ❖ If a friend asked you how they could be filled with the Holy Spirit, how would you counsel them?

PRAYER

Close with a time of prayer. Thank God that the Holy Spirit, God Almighty Himself, chooses to dwell inside us, giving us the power to flee temptation and our own evil desires, and to choose God's way. Thank God that when we do not know what to pray, His Spirit intercedes for us. Thank God that we are



not alone in our battle against evil, but that the battle belongs to the Lord. Pray that the participants will see each day as an opportunity to surrender to the will of God, and be filled with His Spirit.