

Small Group Study

Our Vision

To know God and enjoy Him forever.

Our Mission

To build a Christian community by making fully devoted disciples of non-religious and nominally religious people



Discussion

Power with Purpose: Receiving the Holy Spirit

Scripture

Have volunteers read the following scripture and quotes:

I. Acts 18:24-19:7 (NLT)

24 Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt.

25 He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John's baptism. 26 When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.

27 Apollos had been thinking about going to Achaia, and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers in Achaia, asking them to welcome him. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by God's grace, had believed.

28 He refuted the Jews with powerful arguments in public debate. Using the Scriptures, he explained to them that Jesus was the Messiah.

1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. 2 "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" he asked them.

"No," they replied, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

3 "Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked. And they replied, "The baptism of John."

4 Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus."

5 As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all.

2. "Our understanding of God is forever marked by the fact that in Christ he has been 'fleshed out' at one point in our human history. Even if God seems distant... we are not in the dark about God and his character... The glory of God has been imaged for us in the one true human who bears the divine image, Christ himself..."

Ice Breaker

Use ONE of the questions to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. What is one of the best gifts anyone ever gave you?

2. Do you speak any other languages? If you know a phrase or word in another language say it to the group.

3. What was the highlight of this past week for you?

We must recognize the same to be true about the Spirit, not simply theoretically but really and experientially. The Spirit is not lightly called the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Christ has put a human face on the Spirit as well...In dealing with the Spirit, we are dealing with none other than the personal presence of God."

Gordon D. Fee

3. *"...the point is...the Spirit is a person! This can be confirmed in many ways. The activity of the Spirit is the activity of a person, not a thing. The Spirit speaks, is spoken to, teaches, convicts, intercedes, and calls. The Spirit can be grieved and lied to. Even though the Spirit doesn't have a physical body, the Spirit is a Someone, not a Something.... In other words, when we receive the Spirit, we are engaged in a personal encounter."*

Rich Nathan and Ken Wilson

Questions

I. What comes to your mind when you hear the words, "the Holy Spirit"?

2. If you grew up in church, then you probably have heard the phrase, "...in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Most people can understand the Father and the Son. These are ideas and images we are familiar with. But the Holy Spirit is another matter. He is clearly the most confusing and mysterious person of the Trinity. There is nothing or no one anywhere in human experience quite like Him.

The closest thing we have to the Holy Spirit today is "the Force" from Star Wars (e.g. "May the Force be with you").

The problem many people have with the Holy Spirit is that He is intangible. We cannot touch Him with our hands, see Him with our eyes, hear Him with our ears, or even picture what He looks like. Yet throughout the pages of the Bible, He is said to "fill" people (Ex. 31:3; Acts 2:4); "come on" people (Judges 3:10; Ezek. 11:5); "speak" through people (2 Sam. 23:2); and "move" people (Is. 34:16; Ezek. 3:14). He is referred to as the breath of God, wind, fire, living water, and a dove. Along with all the unusual and bizarre things that have been attributed to Him over the centuries, it's no wonder some people prefer that He be kept shut up in the pages of the Bible and given only lip service at the appropriate times.

The Holy Spirit, however, is essential to our lives as Christians. We know this because Jesus had a lot to say about Him. During His three years of ministry, Jesus spoke often of the Father. He said that if anyone had seen Him, they had also seen the Father (John 14:9). But as His earthly ministry drew to a close, Jesus began to speak more and more about the Spirit. In the same way that Jesus revealed God the Father, He also revealed God the Holy Spirit. As one theologian said, "Christ has put a human face on the Spirit as well."

On the last night He was with His disciples, Jesus began to prepare them for what lay ahead. He would be leaving and the Spirit would be coming. Naturally the disciples were upset by this news, but Jesus had words of comfort for them. He began by telling them about the Spirit, someone they would soon be meeting in person!

Let's read John 14:15-21.

15 "If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. 19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. 20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

Throughout this passage, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as "He" or "Him" and not as an "it." What does this tell us about the Holy Spirit?

3. According to Jesus, what should we do if we love Him (v. 15 and v. 21)? What will God do if we love Him (v. 16 and v. 21)?
4. In verse 16, Jesus told the disciples He would send them “another Advocate” or “Counselor”. This word in the Greek is *paraclete* and means “someone who comes along side to help.” The word another implies “another of the same kind.” Explain in your own words the significance of this title.
5. In verse 16, Jesus informed them that the Holy Spirit “will never leave you.” This is quite different from anyone’s previous experience of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the Spirit would “come on” someone to do a particular task, such as prophesying or performing a miracle (1 Sam. 10:10; 11:6; 19:23; 2 Chron. 15:1). But the Spirit would never remain permanently, so Jesus is saying something completely new. Why is this significant now?
6. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit does in verse 17? What do you think this means? (See v. 26 for ideas.)
7. How has the Holy Spirit brought God’s truth into *your* life?
8. Let’s read one other passage on the work of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:5—15 (NLT)

5 “But now I am going away to the One who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. 6 Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. 7 But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. 9 The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. 11 Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

12 “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’

As the disciples were trying to deal with their grief over Jesus’ departure, He told them that it was good for them that He would be leaving (vv. 5—7). Why would He say that?

9. What did Jesus say the Spirit would be doing once He came into the world (vv. 8—11)? In your own words, explain what each of these activities means.
 10. According to Jesus, where does the Spirit get His messages (vv. 12—15)? How would you describe His role in the Trinity—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
 11. What is one thing you learned about the Holy Spirit today?
 12. From what we learned today, let’s list all the benefits of having the Holy Spirit live in and with us.
 13. What have we learned about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy from these passages? How can this help deepen our relationship with God?
-