

Freedom Way M.B.C.

Bible study Lesson #652

Date _____

Seeking the Counselor: The Holy Spirit

Biblical Passages: John 14:15–18, 14:25–27, 15:26–27, 16:7–14

Supporting Passages: John 14:1–31, 15:18–27, 16:1–15

Memory Verse: John 14:26

Biblical Truth: The Holy Spirit, who lives in believers, is a Counselor, Comforter, and Teacher who also brings conviction to followers of Christ.

Context: In John 13, Jesus showed His disciples the essence of God's Kingdom through His humility by washing their feet. Looking toward the end of His earthly life, Jesus comforted His disciples by explaining that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to **guide** them in leading others to glorify God.

INVESTIGATION

Lessons about the Holy Spirit are embedded in several places in God's Word. The Gospel of John contains Jesus' conversation about the Holy Spirit with the disciples on the night before His crucifixion. Jesus had just taught about the relationship between Himself and the Father. Though Jesus never explicitly said, "I am God," He clearly said that He and the Father are one. Likewise, He told the disciples that if they had seen Him, then they had seen the Father since the Father was in Him. With such statements, Jesus showed the disciples that through their relationship with Him, they have a relationship with God. Even though Jesus would soon leave, He wanted His followers to know that they would not be alone. The Holy Spirit would lead them into greater things than they had experienced with Jesus.

IMPORTANCE

This passage teaches that **The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer**. It is important because it reminds learners of the presence of the Holy

Spirit in their lives as a constant companion in living the consecrated life and continuing the work of Christ.

INTERPRETATION

John 14:15 In verses 13 and 14, Jesus provided instructions to the disciples about how to pray after His departure. They were told to ask "in My name" so that "the Son may bring glory to the Father." Further, they were guaranteed that He would answer their prayers. His guarantee was not a statement that using His name would serve as a magic phrase to obtain what they desired, but that by understanding who He is and asking in that context, they could know that He would respond. Verse 15 concludes Jesus' instructions for prayer with a reminder to remain obedient to His commands.

John 14:16 Jesus described how He would provide comfort and support to the disciples in His absence. Though Jesus would no longer be with the disciples physically, He promised to send them someone else. This person would fill the role He had served for His followers over the previous three years. The word Jesus used for "another" indicates that this **Counselor** would be like Jesus: one who would be their helper and friend.

Jesus the Son told the disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit. This indicates how God has interacted with humanity through the Trinity.

John 14:17 Jesus said that the one to come was the "Spirit of truth." Earlier, in John 14:6, Jesus had identified Himself as "the way, and the truth, and the life," thereby introducing the idea that in order to know the Father, one would have to know Him. He now introduced the Spirit to His disciples as part of the Godhead, indicating that the "Spirit of truth" would, in fact, be His Spirit.

In sharing more about this Counselor, Jesus said that not everyone in the world would receive Him. Unbelievers would not experience the Holy Spirit's ministry of counsel and comfort. But Jesus' followers would "**know**" the Spirit in the same way that He was known. This word refers to knowledge that comes from personal experience of living with Jesus.

Jesus reminded His disciples that they already knew this Counselor because He was already living within them. Scholars suggest that this shows a differentiation between the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the disciples and the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost.

John 14:18 Jesus also gave His followers a wonderful promise: The Spirit would do an abiding work in believers' lives. Jesus would not leave the disciples "as orphans," helpless and hopeless and with no one to care for them. He promised that He would always be with them through the indwelling presence of the Spirit (1 John 4:13).

John 14:25–27 After responding to a question from one of the disciples, Jesus reminded them of all that He had taught them while He was with them. Now He wanted them to understand that there was still more to learn.

Jesus identified the Spirit as holy. This word emphasized the Spirit's deity: He is God. Just as Jesus is God, so is the Spirit whom He would send to continue His work (v. 26).

The Holy Spirit has another specific ministry to believers: He teaches them many things. No amount of books could fully chronicle all that Jesus taught His disciples (John 21:25). But the disciples had the ministry of the Spirit to remind them of Jesus' teachings. Likewise, believers today continue to be taught by the Holy Spirit about what the Lord desires and how to put His teachings into practice.

The Spirit gives peace (v. 27). Jesus brought us peace through His work on the cross. The Spirit produces internal tranquility, regardless of external circumstances, when a person has a relationship with Christ (Gal. 5:22). Knowing all that was to transpire and all that the disciples would face, Jesus encouraged them to remain strong and confident in their faith in Him. The peace of the world would not be enough for the disciples. Only the peace found in Jesus would be enough to sustain them through the events to come.

John 15:26–27 In verses 18–15, Jesus reminded His disciples that they should expect to be hated by the people who did not understand Jesus' teachings. Then Jesus provided an explanation of

how the presence of the Spirit would work with the disciples in their ministry.

The Spirit comes from the Father; He is God. As the Spirit of truth, everything that He says is true. Jesus added that a vital ministry of the Spirit would be to **testify** about Him. As Jesus' followers testified about Him, the Holy Spirit empowered their witness and gave understanding to those who heard the gospel. Jesus stressed that the Spirit's testimony was not to replace the testimony of the disciples, but rather to provide support for them.

John 16:7–11 The disciples grieved over Jesus' coming departure. Jesus encouraged them by explaining that His leaving would actually benefit them (v. 7). Jesus was God incarnate—in flesh and blood—with the limitations of a physical body. The Holy Spirit, however, does not have these physical limitations and can reside in multiple places at the same time. Wherever Jesus' followers would find themselves in the future, He would be with them all, dwelling in them through the Holy Spirit and helping them to obey His teachings and testify about Him.

The Spirit works in three areas of ministry. In the first area of ministry, the Spirit relates to the world to "convict the world of guilt" (v. 8) in three areas. The first conviction deals with sin (vv. 8–9). Because of sin, people cannot attain God's standard of righteousness. Apart from conviction of sin, no one can experience the salvation that God offers. The Holy Spirit exposes guilt and the necessity of believing in Jesus.

A second area of conviction deals with God's standard of righteousness (vv. 8, 10). Humanity must be righteous to be acceptable to God. In Jesus' day, many Jews felt that they were acceptable to God because they were descendants of Abraham. Even today, many people think that they can be rightly related to God by acting good or doing more good than bad. None of these things makes a person righteous. All people have sinned (Rom. 3:23)—but Jesus was without sin. His resurrection and ascension proved that He was righteous and acceptable by God the Father. Only through Jesus' righteousness can anyone achieve God's standards.

A third conviction relates to judgment (vv. 8, 11). "The prince of this world" (v. 11) is already condemned under God's judgment. Jesus' death defeated Satan. The Spirit, thus, convinces people of the judgment already pronounced on Satan and his followers.

John 16:12–13 In the second area of ministry, the Spirit provides direction and teaching to Jesus' followers. Jesus had things to tell His disciples that they could not bear. Jesus presented a picture, and all that they heard weighed them down. They likely did not understand much of what they heard. The Spirit, thus, would help them comprehend Jesus' teachings and continue to grow in understanding. This promise was especially important for those who would later write the Gospels. The Holy Spirit would also reveal God's plan about the expansion of His Kingdom and the end times.

John 16:14 In the third area of ministry, the Spirit works to reveal Jesus more completely to His followers. The Spirit will not teach anything new or contrary to what Jesus taught. His teachings will totally line up with Jesus' teachings. The Spirit only teaches what comes from the Father. The Spirit will not call attention to Himself. He will glorify Jesus in the same way in which Jesus glorified the Father during His earthly ministry.

IMPLICATIONS

Although most adults in the Church know something about the Holy Spirit and what He does, many do not have a solid grasp on His unique role as a member of the Trinity. As a result, He is almost always relegated to the least important within the Trinity. And since it is easier to think of God and Jesus as persons, it is much more difficult to do so with the Holy Spirit. Consequently, He ends up being thought of as a mysterious presence with ghostlike characteristics—an "It" rather than a "He."

Adults need to understand that the Holy Spirit wants to indwell the lives of believers and equip them to live consecrated lives according to His Word. This is practical living and abiding in the relationship with Christ. Adults need to begin to recognize and rely on the Holy Spirit as the very presence and power of God that will help them in day-to-day situations and decisions. He is not an otherworldly, mysterious presence floating around

in space; He is the Spirit of Christ sent to dwell in all of Christ's followers and help them as they try to live the life He has called them to live. He will comfort them when a parent dies, give them the words to say when they attempt to witness to their next-door neighbor, and will help clarify many difficult-to-understand passages of the Bible, among many other things.➤