

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 1 - The Holy Spirit and Christians Today

BIBLE READING:

**John 3: 1-8; John 14: 16-17;
Ephesians 1: 12-14**

KEY VERSE:

“Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.”

Romans 8: 9

In this Study, we concentrate upon the work of the Holy Spirit in each believer in the Lord Jesus.

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR RE-BIRTH.

At the outset, we must be clear that a Christian is a person who is born again by God's Holy Spirit. This is the only way that we can have new life; without the Holy Spirit's work in giving us life, we can't be saved. (**John 3: 1-8**)

1 Peter 1: 23 helps us to understand - **“you have been born again... through the living and abiding Word of God”**. (See also **James 1: 18**) When we believe the gospel and are saved, what happens (from God's viewpoint) is that the Word of God has been used by the Spirit of God to give us eternal life. It is helpful to remember that the Holy Spirit is the 'Agent', and the Word of God is the 'Instrument', in bringing about our 'new birth'. Both are necessary.



2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RESIDENCE.

As we study the Bible, we learn that the Holy Spirit comes to reside in each Christian. This happens at the very moment of our becoming believers! Here are some references to this wonderful truth:

- **“God... has put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2 Corinthians 1: 21-22)**
- **“you also, when you... believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance.” (Ephesians 1: 13)**
- **“your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God.” (1 Corinthians 6: 19)**

In these verses, note carefully the two 'pictures' which are used to describe the Holy Spirit residing in every Christian:

a) The Holy Spirit is like a SEAL on a document. A seal denotes ownership and security. By giving us His Holy Spirit, God is saying, **“You are Mine!” (Isaiah 43: 1)** The Holy Spirit within is a sure sign that He has accepted us, and that we shall never perish. Note carefully the Key Verse.

b) The Holy Spirit is like a GUARANTEE. (Some translations use the word 'deposit' or 'earnest'.) The idea being expressed is that the Holy Spirit, in residence within us, is the assurance that God will complete what He has begun. Every one of His children will, eventually, be with Him in Heaven!

You may wonder if the Holy Spirit is always in residence. If we do not live as Christians ought to live, does He leave us? In answer to this, we wish to stress that He remains in us even when we fail! The Lord Jesus spoke of Him as **“another Helper to be with you FOREVER”**. (**John 14: 16**) We can rely upon Him for help and support, for He is always there!

This 'permanent indwelling' of the Holy Spirit is one noticeable difference between believers of today, and those of Old Testament times. In those days, the Spirit came upon certain people for a limited period of time to enable them to carry out the tasks God had given them. When their work was done, the Spirit was no longer upon them. (See **Judges 14: 19 and 16: 20**) Today, however, He indwells each Christian on a permanent basis.

In olden times, ships depended upon the wind to fill their sails and drive them forwards. Modern ships have the power-source deep within them in the form of powerful engines. Similarly, in this 'church age', all believers have the Spirit within, ready to strengthen them as they go through life. Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus **“that He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being”**. (**Ephesians 3: 16**) The same prayer is applicable to us!

Because we have the Holy Spirit in residence, we do not need to pray for Him to come to us. We should, however, always avail ourselves of the power which is already there!

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 2 - The Filling of the Holy Spirit

BIBLE READING:

**Acts 2: 1-4; Galatians 5: 16-18;
Ephesians 5: 15-21**

KEY VERSE:

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”

Ephesians 5: 18

In the last Study, we learned that God has given the Holy Spirit to everyone who has genuinely believed on the Lord Jesus.

We now move on to consider our personal response to what God has done for us. The Key Verse expresses very clearly what is required of us - **“Be filled with the Spirit”**.

There are several points here which are important to consider:

1. TO “BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” IS GOD’S COMMAND TO US.

It is, therefore, a responsibility which each of us has. God is calling upon us to allow the Holy Spirit to ‘fill’ our minds, wills and hearts. This implies that we must not try to exclude God from any part of our lives, in the way that a stranger visiting in your home would be excluded from prying into every nook and cranny, unless invited to do so! It is only as we open each area of our lives to the Lord Jesus that we can experience the filling of the Spirit.

2. TO “BE FILLED” IS AN ON-GOING, REPEATABLE EXPERIENCE.

The Key Verse, literally translated, is telling us to **“keep on being filled...”**. This is consistent with the Acts of the Apostles, which shows that the same group of people experienced more than one filling. **(See Acts 2: 4; 4: 8 and 31)** For us, each day brings fresh opportunities to serve the Lord. Likewise, there are new temptations to be overcome. We cannot live on yesterday’s spiritual power! The daily filling of the Holy Spirit gives us the strength to live as Christians.

3. TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT REQUIRES CO-OPERATION WITH GOD.

We must allow what God has already done for us to have an effect, every day, upon our living. We do not need to pray for the Spirit to be given to us, nor do we need to ask for more of the Spirit; there is no record in the New Testament of anyone praying in that way.

Instead, our responsibility is to permit the indwelling Holy Spirit to enter every part of our lives, to be, not merely a ‘resident’ but the ‘President’. As we give the Holy Spirit control of each area of our life, we will begin to experience what the Bible means when it says, **“Be filled with the Spirit”**.

We should not fail to see the contrast in the Key Verse between a drunk man and a Spirit-filled Christian! The person who becomes intoxicated with alcohol is setting out on the road to ruin! He is giving his life over to that which will debase him. When drunk, he will think, say and do things which only demean him as a person. As the Key Verse says, it will bring him into a state of **“debauchery”** (indulgence). In contrast to this, if we are filled with the Spirit, we live lives which are worthy of the Lord Jesus because we are under God’s control.

The challenge which we face is this: What power is going to control us - the power of sin and Satan, OR the power of God’s Spirit? Paul offers us sound advice: **“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh”**. **(Galatians 5: 16)**

Answer Sheet

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 1 - The Holy Spirit and Christians Today

Name: _____ Return address on back of answer sheet

Address: _____

1. Answer the following:

- a) What two words are used to describe the Holy Spirit in **John 14: 16, 17**? _____
- b) What does **John 14: 17** tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian? _____

/2

2. Read again **John 3: 1-8**, then answer these questions:

- a) What did Jesus say is necessary if one is to "**see the kingdom of God**"? _____
- b) In what way did Nicodemus misunderstand what Jesus was saying? _____
- c) How can a person be "**born again**"? _____

/6

3. "**You also, when you ... believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...**". (**Ephesians 1: 13**) Explain, as clearly as you can, the meaning of this statement.

/3

4. In **2 Corinthians 1: 22** the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a 'guarantee', (or 'deposit', 'earnest' or 'pledge'.) What does this tell us about God and His future plans for us?

/3

5. Read **1 Corinthians 6: 18-20** and answer the following questions:

- a) To what is the Christian's body compared, in **verse 19**? _____
- b) What everyday effect should the teachings of these verses have on our behaviour? _____

/3

6. Think about these two words: i) TEMPORARY ii) PERMANENT

- a) Which word describes the Holy Spirit's residence in believers today? _____
- b) "**The Spirit of the Lord came upon**" the men in the following Bible passages. Find the name mentioned in each Bible reference.
- i) **Judges 3: 9-10** _____
- ii) **Judges 11: 29** _____
- iii) **Judges 14: 5-6** _____
- iv) **2 Chronicles 24: 20** _____
- c) Which of the two words describe their association with the Spirit of God?

/6

7. Express clearly what you understand to be the main point of this Study.

/2

THINK: Take time to think about the role of the Holy Spirit when you were saved, with regard to your future, and in your life here and now. Give thanks to God for this.

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 2 - The Filling of the Holy Spirit

1. Answer TRUE or FALSE to the following:

a) The Holy Spirit indwells every believer in the Lord Jesus. _____

b) Being filled with the Holy Spirit happens only at the moment of our conversion. _____

c) We should yield ourselves every day to the Holy Spirit's control. _____

d) The filling of the Holy Spirit never happens nowadays. _____

/4

2. 'God gave His Spirit to me the moment I trusted the Lord Jesus, but the filling of the Spirit is something for which I have daily responsibility.'

a) Do you agree with this statement? Circle YES or NO.

b) In your own words, enlarge upon the answer you have given above. Support your answer, if possible, by quoting appropriate Bible verses. _____

/5

3. Read *Ephesians 5: 19-21* again and describe three characteristics of those who are "filled with the Spirit".

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

/6

4. In each of these references, there is a person who was "full of the Holy Spirit". Look up each Bible reference to find the person's name.

a) **Acts 4: 7-10** _____

b) **Acts 7: 54-60** _____

c) **Acts 11: 19-25** _____

d) **Acts 13: 9-11** _____

/4

5. Answer the following:

a) Explain how a Christian today may "**be filled with the Holy Spirit**". _____

b) 'Let the Holy Spirit be not merely a 'resident', but the 'President' in our lives.' Explain in your own words what this statement means. _____

/6

THINK: Am I allowing the Holy Spirit to control my life each day?

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 3 - The Holy Spirit's Power

1. Read *Ephesians 4: 30-32*:

a) Explain in your own words how we can grieve the Holy Spirit. _____

b) Give two examples of how we should behave as Christians. _____

□ /4

2. "He will teach you ..." (*John 14: 26*); "He will bear witness about Me..." (*John 15: 26*); "He will guide you..." (*John 16: 13*)

a) Who said these words? _____

b) About whom was He speaking? _____

c) How are these promises fulfilled in the experience of Christians today?

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

□ /5

3. Read *1 Thessalonians 5: 14-22*.

a) "**Do not quench the Spirit.**" (*verse 19*) In this verse what does "quench" mean? _____

b) How could a member of a local church 'quench the Spirit'? _____

c) Explain from this passage how Christians should behave towards one another. _____

□ /6

4. 'Walking' in the Bible often refers to everyday behaviour, or conduct.

a) What is meant by "**walk by the Spirit**" (*Galatians 5: 16*)? _____

b) If we do so, what will be our attitude to our sinful nature, according to *Galatians 5: 24*? _____

c) Do you think Christians can "**walk by the Spirit**" and allow sinful things to have a hold upon their lives, at the same time? Give reasons for your answer. _____

□ /6

5. Sum up briefly in your own words how you can have the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

□ /4

THINK: Am I yielding every area of my life to the Holy Spirit and being obedient to whatever God says to me through His Word?

TOTAL = □ /25

Answer Sheet

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 4 - The Holy Spirit and the Church

1. **The church is “a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”. (Ephesians 2: 20-22)**
 a) Where, according to these verses, is God’s dwelling place NOW? _____
 b) What TWO metaphors, or ‘pictures’, are used in these verses for the church? _____
 _____ /3
2. **Using your own words, define ‘a local church’.**

 _____ /3
3. **According to 1 Corinthians 12, there are many “spiritual gifts” given to a church to enable it to function as God wishes it to do.**
 a) What other words could you use in place of ‘gifts’? _____

 b) Do you think EVERY member has SOME gift? Support your answer by a Bible reference, if possible.

 c) According to **1 Corinthians 12**, who is the Giver of the ‘gifts’? _____
 d) Read **verses 8, 9**, and name three “gifts” mentioned in these verses. _____
 _____ /6
4. **According to 1 Corinthians 12: 7, the Holy Spirit gives gifts “for the common good”.**
 a) What does this mean? _____

 b) What would you say to a church member who fails to get involved in the work and the witness of the church?
 _____ /4
5. **John 16: 13, 14 record what the Lord Jesus said about the Helper (i.e. the Holy Spirit) whom He would send.**
 a) According to **verse 14**, what does the Holy Spirit do for the Lord Jesus? _____

 b) What do you think it means to ‘glorify’ someone? _____

 c) How can we in our church life and in our personal life, glorify the Lord Jesus? _____
 _____ /6
6. **‘The Word of God and the Spirit of God are always in harmony.’ Explain how this is demonstrated in our Christian lives.**

 _____ /3

THINK: Read over what you have written in your answer to Question 6. Reflect on any occasions in the last week when you have been aware of the Word of God and the Spirit of God prompting you. Give thanks to God for the Holy Spirit’s work in your life.

Return your completed answer sheet to:

TOTAL = /25 UNIT TOTAL = /100

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Study 3 - The Holy Spirit's Power

BIBLE READING:

**Galatians 5: 24, 25; Ephesians 4: 25-32;
1 Thessalonians 5: 14-22**

KEY VERSE:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Romans 15: 13

How can the power of the Holy Spirit be seen in my life? How can I live victoriously over temptation and sin? In looking for answers to these questions, let us understand that it is possible for us to hinder the Spirit's working in us. We have proved from Scripture that He is omnipotent (i.e. all-powerful), but He does not compel us, against our own will, to yield to Him.

1. WE CAN GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In ***Ephesians 4: 30*** we read, **“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...”**. It is not possible for us to grieve an enemy; only someone who truly loves us can be pained by what we say or do. Because He is the HOLY Spirit, this wonderful ‘Helper’ and ‘Comforter’ is grieved when we do the kinds of things which are mentioned in ***Ephesians 4***. For example, lying (***verse 25***), outbursts of anger (***verse 26***), theft (***verse 28***), ‘dirty’ talk (***verse 29***), bitterness (***verse 31***) all these **“grieve the Holy Spirit”**. How very important, then, that we guard our thoughts, speech, and actions!

We also grieve the Holy Spirit, if we do not allow Him to do for us His special task. What, you may ask, is that? Think again about the promises Jesus gave concerning the Holy Spirit:

- a) **“He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14: 26)**
- b) **“He will bear witness about Me.” (John 15: 26)**
- c) **“He will guide you into all the truth ... He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16: 13-14)**

These verses show that the special task of the Holy Spirit is to show us the greatness of the Lord Jesus. He does this mainly through the Word of God, the Bible. So, if we neglect our Bibles, we are robbing the Holy Spirit of the opportunity of doing this for us! The Holy Spirit is grieved, and we are spiritually poorer and weaker.



2. WE CAN QUENCH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“Do not quench the Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 5: 19) ‘Fire’ is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit, so this verse means that we are not to extinguish, or smother, the ‘fire’ of the Holy Spirit.

Each of us is to be ready, and willing, to play the part for which the Holy Spirit has fitted us. If we fail to do this, we may be quenching the Spirit!

3. WE CAN WALK BY THE SPIRIT.

“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” (Galatians 5: 16) To walk by the Spirit is to allow Him to have His way in your life, each day. It is, a day-by-day fellowship with the Lord Jesus, making every decision in the light of His holiness, and always keeping our minds fixed on pleasing Him. When we live our lives in this way, ‘the flesh’ is treated as ‘dead’. **(See Galatians 5: 24)**

If, then, we desire the Holy Spirit's power, we must ensure that we neither GRIEVE Him, nor QUENCH Him. Positively, we must WALK BY THE SPIRIT, yielding every area of life to His control, and being obedient to whatever God says to us, through His Word.

B11 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 4 - The Holy Spirit and the Church

BIBLE READING:

1 Corinthians 12: 1-13

KEY VERSE:

“In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Ephesians 2: 22

The Holy Spirit is very important to the church. This is true whether we think of the church in its complete sense, or in a local sense. (See A12 The Church)

THE COMPLETE CHURCH

By this we mean the complete body of believers extending from the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) until the Lord Jesus comes again.

1. The Holy Spirit is the Agent who unites in one body all the members of this vast church. **“In one Spirit we were all baptised into one body”**, of which Christ is the Head. (**1 Corinthians 12: 13**) As individuals, we are incorporated into that body at our conversion; by baptism in the Spirit we are vitally united to the church’s Head, in Heaven.

2. The Holy Spirit has a key role, not only in the formation of the church, but also in its development. In some New Testament references, the church is likened to a **“body”**, in others to a **“building”**. These two ‘pictures’ are joined together in **Ephesians 2: 21, 22** where Paul writes, **“the whole structure (building), being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”**. So, while the ‘Head’ (Christ) is in Heaven, the Holy Spirit, as His Representative, has made the church His headquarters on earth. The church, through all these centuries, has been a dwelling place for God, the Holy Spirit.

LOCAL CHURCHES

By a ‘local church’ we mean a group of believers, in any area, who come together to worship God, to glorify the Lord Jesus and to strengthen each other in their faith. They also have a concern to spread the gospel to others.

How important is the Holy Spirit to such a group of Christians? Note these points:

1. The Holy Spirit fits each member for the part he or she has in the church. We learn this from **1 Corinthians 12**, where Paul speaks about **“spiritual gifts”** in the church. It means that not everyone in the church is fitted to do the

same task - **“For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge...”**. (See verse 8) But whatever the gift may be, Paul says, **“All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as He wills”**. (verse 11) We learn, therefore, that it is the Holy Spirit who distributes ‘gifts’ or ‘spiritual abilities’ in local churches. He does it, as He chooses!

2. All gifts are to be used to glorify the Lord Jesus. **“No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.”** (**1 Corinthians 12: 3**) This means that if someone speaks in the church in such a way as does not honour the Lord Jesus, that person is out of step with the Holy Spirit! The Spirit always glorifies the Lord Jesus! (**Read John 16: 13, 14**) It is important, then, that in our ‘church life’, we allow the Holy Spirit to control us.

3. The gifts of the Holy Spirit to individual members of the church are to be used for the good of everyone. All need to be built up in their knowledge of God, and to make this growth possible, spiritual gifts have been given. When they are properly used everyone makes good spiritual progress! **“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”** (**1 Corinthians 12: 7**)

We should all strive to be helpful and useful in our churches. When we do so, we are following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God and the Spirit of God should constantly regulate our actions and behaviour.



This is the second of three units on **God the Holy Spirit**.