

HOLY SPIRIT



SHEPHERDCHURCH

LESSON 1: WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

LIFE GROUP LEADERS: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING...

We hope you had a wonderful summer!

Welcome to Holy Spirit, our new 8-week Life Groups study series! From August 22 through October 15, your Life Group will take a fresh look at one of the most important and often misunderstood persons in the Christian life: the Holy Spirit. Many Christians know about the Holy Spirit but aren't always sure who He is or how He works in everyday life. Throughout this series, you'll explore what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit's identity, His presence, His power, His guidance, His gifts, His fruit, His assurance, and His work in bringing revival. Our prayer is that this won't simply be a study about the Holy Spirit but an opportunity for every person in your group to know Him more deeply and walk more closely with Jesus.

A few reminders:

- Please do not skip the WELCOME section of each lesson. Though this section is easy to skip (especially if your Life Group has been together for a while), it's still a needed section. Some of your Life Group members may have had a rough day or are distracted for whatever reason. This section helps them to relax and connect with everyone. Also, some people need to connect relationally before sharing about their lives.
- The Leader Notes are written to support you. Please know that you don't need to read or use any of the Leader Notes. Please use them as much or as little as is helpful for your Life Group.
- In the WORD section of the Leader Notes, each discussion prompt includes a paragraph called Guide the Conversation that, obviously, helps you guide the conversation. Most prompts also include a Deeper Dive for leaders seeking additional biblical background, theological insight, and practical application. However, you don't need to read the Deeper Dive if you don't want to—the Guide the Conversation initial paragraph should have all the guidance you need to navigate the prompt with your Life Group.
- The PERSONAL REFLECTION & DEEPER STUDY FOR THIS WEEK in each Life Group lesson includes deeper questions and prompts for Life Group members to study on their own time. Please encourage them to study these prompts/questions and undertake any challenges that are included. It will only help them grow during

• As this series comes to a close, we'll move directly into our Fall Revival on October 17–21. We encourage you to invite your Life Group members to attend the Revival together and even sit together on one or more nights.

• On October 24, we'll begin a 6-week Life Groups series called People of the 2nd Chance.

Thank you for leading. Pastor Dudley and our entire staff are deeply grateful for you, and for the way you help people take their next step with Jesus. You are making an eternal difference in people's lives.

We're grateful to support you!

—The Life Groups Team

WELCOME

Answer one of the following:

- What's something you've learned recently that surprised you?
- What's the funniest misunderstanding you've ever had with someone?

Guide the Conversation

Please do not skip the WELCOME section of the lesson. Since this is the first week of the new series, use this time to help everyone relax, and get to know one another or catch up. Encourage everyone to answer one of the two questions, but as with all other questions/prompts, allow people to refrain from answering if they're not comfortable sharing. Keep the conversation light and allow room for laughter and follow-up questions that help people connect.

WORSHIP

Read **John 14:26–27**, then spend a few minutes thanking God in prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit and asking Him to help your Life Group know Him more personally.

Guide the Conversation

After reading the verses, ask your Life Group to spend a few quiet moments thanking God for the incredible gift of His Holy Spirit, who teaches, comforts, guides, and gives us Jesus' peace. Remind everyone this series isn't simply about gaining more knowledge, but growing in a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit and becoming more responsive to His work in their lives. You could pray sentence prayers around the group, allowing each person to thank God or ask Him to reveal Himself more clearly in the weeks ahead. As the Life Group leader, close this time by asking God to unite your group, deepen your love for Jesus, and help each person know the Holy Spirit more personally as you journey through this series together.

WORD

1. According to **John 14:15–18, 26; 15:26–27; 16:6–8**, why is the Holy Spirit called Advocate, what is His role, and what does He do?

Guide the Conversation

This question helps your Life Group understand the Holy Spirit isn't an impersonal force but a divine Person who actively works in the lives of Christians every day. Encourage the group to first observe what Jesus says in John 14:15-18, 26; 15:26-27; and 16:6-8 before moving to application. As they read, identify the different roles of the Holy Spirit: Advocate, Spirit of Truth, Teacher, Helper, and the One who points people to Jesus, empowers Christians to share their faith, and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Encourage everyone in your Life Group to depend on the Holy Spirit this week through an act like a simple prayer such as, "Holy Spirit, guide me, teach me, and help me follow Jesus today."

Deeper Dive

The Greek word translated "Advocate" is *paraklētos* (παράκλητος), which literally means "one called alongside to help." In the first-century world, the word could describe someone who came alongside another person to defend, encourage, advise, or represent them. Jesus uses this title because He is preparing His disciples for His departure. The disciples are anxious about losing His physical presence, but Jesus promises that the Father will send "another Advocate" (John 14:16), meaning another Helper like Himself (literally, "another of the same kind" in the original Greek). The Holy Spirit continues Jesus' ministry by remaining with Christians forever. In these chapters, Jesus says the Spirit:

- Is the Spirit of Truth who teaches God's truth (John 14:26).
- Reminds believers of Jesus' words (John 14:26).
- Testifies about Jesus (John 15:26).
- Empowers Christians to testify about Jesus (John 15:27).
- Convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8).

Every ministry of the Holy Spirit points people to Christ rather than drawing attention to Himself. The Spirit's mission is to make Jesus known, understood, trusted, and obeyed.

These passages show that the Holy Spirit is not merely God's power or influence but a divine Person who thinks, teaches, speaks, testifies, convicts, and guides. He continues Christ's presence with Christians after Jesus' ascension, making it possible for Christians everywhere to experience God's presence and power. Encourage your Life Group to observe everything these passages say the Holy Spirit does before discussing personal application. Then, try asking how each ministry of the Spirit meets a practical need in everyday life. For example:

- When facing confusion, believers can depend on the Spirit to guide them into truth.
- When reading Scripture, they can ask Him to teach and remind them of Jesus' words.
- When sharing their faith, they can trust Him to give courage and to convict hearts in ways they never could.

The goal is for your Life Group to leave with a greater confidence that the Holy Spirit is actively working in and through every Christian to glorify Jesus and help them faithfully follow Him.

2. How do **Matthew 28:19**; **Acts 5:3-4**; and **2 Corinthians 3:17-18** help us understand that the Holy Spirit is fully God instead of God's power or influence?

Guide the Conversation

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus places the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on equal footing in baptism. In Acts 5:3-4, Peter says that lying to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God. In 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Paul plainly says, "the Lord is the Spirit" and describes the Spirit's ongoing work of transforming Christians into Jesus' likeness. As you discuss these passages, remind your Life Group that while the Trinity is beyond our complete understanding, Scripture clearly teaches it.

Deeper Dive

These three passages provide some of the clearest biblical evidence that the Holy Spirit is fully God, not merely God's power or influence.

- In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands His disciples to baptize "in the name" (Greek: *onoma*, meaning "a single name" or "authority") "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Notice that Jesus uses the singular word "name" instead of the plural word "names." The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share one divine identity while remaining three distinct Persons.
- Then, in Acts 5:3-4, Peter confronts Ananias for lying to the Holy Spirit and immediately says, "You have not lied just to human beings but to God." Rather than comparing the Holy Spirit to God, Peter identifies the Holy Spirit as God.
- Finally, in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Paul writes, "Now the Lord is the Spirit," and explains that the Spirit transforms Christians into the image of Christ. Throughout Scripture, only God can forgive sin, give spiritual life, dwell within His people, and transform human hearts, yet Paul says the Holy Spirit does all of these things.

These verses also shape how Christians relate to the Holy Spirit. Because He's fully God, He isn't only a source of spiritual strength to tap into when we need help. The Spirit is someone we worship, trust, obey, and enjoy a relationship with.

Shepherd Church's doctrinal statement on the Trinity is as follows: "There is one God, eternally existing in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal, and each possesses all the attributes of God" (shepherdchurch.com/about). The doctrine of the Trinity has challenged Christians since the earliest days of the church, but the Bible consistently presents one God who eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While we may never fully comprehend God's triune nature, we can faithfully believe what He has revealed.

3. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. What part of your life would look different if you consistently remembered that God Himself lives in you?

Guide the Conversation

This question is almost a continuation of the previous question by focusing on application. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul reminds believers that God doesn't occasionally visit them as was the concept of the pagan gods of the first century did. Through the Holy Spirit, God lives within them every day. You can ask your Life Group to reflect on specific areas of life such as their thoughts, relationships, words, priorities, habits, work, entertainment, etc. Then, ask where remembering God's presence would make the biggest difference. Assure your Life Group members that this prompt/question isn't about guilt but about growing closer to Jesus. So, if time permits, you could ask everyone to choose one area they need to surrender to the Holy Spirit this week and begin each day with a simple prayer like, "Holy Spirit, help me remember that You are with me today, and lead me to honor Jesus in everything I do."

Deeper Dive

In 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul reminds the Christians in Corinth, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." The Greek word for temple is *naos* (ναός), referring to the Holy of Holies (the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle and the Temple), where God's presence uniquely dwelt. That distinction is significant because in the Old Testament, God's presence was associated with the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple, where the high priest would make atonement for the people once a year. The Apostle John referred to this same concept in John 1:14 when he wrote, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

- First, the word "dwelling" is the word *eskēnōsen* (ἐσκήνωσεν), which is actually better translated as "pitched His tent" or "tabernacled." John used the noun "tabernacle" as a verb, "tabernacled." The Tabernacle was the tent version of the temple that the Israelites had when they were wandering in the desert.

- Second, the word "glory" in John 1:14 likely refers to God's Shekinah glory, which is the dwelling presence of God. A couple of examples of God's Shekinah glory are the pillar of cloud & fire that led Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21–22)

and the fire & smoke on Mount Sinai when God gave Moses the Law (Exodus 24:15–18). When both the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem were first established, God’s Shekinah glory filled both so greatly that people could not enter them (Exodus 40:34–35; 1 Kings 8:10–11). God’s Shekinah glory dwelled on top of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies within the Temple (Exodus 25:21–22; 40:34–35; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; Psalm 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16; Hebrews 9:3–8).

• So, Jesus’ Shekinah glory “tabernacles” in Christians (as we learn in John 14–16, He does so through the Holy Spirit).

Paul originally wrote 1 Corinthians 6:19 to confront sexual immorality in a city known for moral compromise (see 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 6:16–20; 7:1–9; 10:1–14; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; 12:20–21). The Greek word “Corinth” even came to be associated with the definition of “sexual immorality.” Ancient writers describe the city of Corinth as famous for its devotion to the pagan goddess Aphrodite. Actually, the Temple of Aphrodite was located on a hill above the city. Some say that at one time, there were close to 1,000 religious prostitutes who worked at the Temple of Aphrodite. The city’s sexual immorality was also probably driven in part by the fact that, as a wealthy Roman port city, all types of people would travel through the city on a regular basis.

However, Paul’s principle about Christians being temples of the Holy Spirit extends far beyond sexuality. His point is that every part of a Christian’s life belongs to God because they have been “bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20). Christians are no longer defined by their own sinful desires or cultural values but by God Himself who lives within them.

If God lives in us, we should approach every part of life with greater awareness of His presence. The question isn’t, “What can I get away with?” but, “How can I honor God who lives in me?” It might be helpful for your Life Group to consider specific areas of their lives, such as their conversations, entertainment choices, relationships, work ethic, thought life, use of technology, how they care for their bodies, etc. Challenge your Life Group to identify one area where they need to become more aware of God’s presence this week.

4. Read **John 16:12–15**. How does the Holy Spirit glorify Jesus, and how do we glorify Jesus?

Guide the Conversation

After your Life Group reads John 16:12–15, make sure the group identifies everything the Holy Spirit does. For instance, He speaks what He receives from the Father and the Son, reveals God’s truth, and glorifies Jesus by making Him known. Discuss how Christians glorify Jesus by trusting Him, obeying His Word, reflecting His character, and helping others know Him. If it helps, you can ask your Life Group, “What does it look like to make much of Jesus instead of ourselves?” It would be good for everyone in your Life Group to find a way to glorify Jesus this week,

whether by serving someone, sharing their faith, forgiving someone, obeying God's Word in a difficult situation, giving Jesus the credit for what He's doing in their life, etc.

Deeper Dive

This conversation takes place during the Last Supper, just hours before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. The disciples are overwhelmed by the news that Jesus is leaving, so He assures them they will not be left alone. In John 16:12-15, Jesus promises them that the Spirit will be with them.

It's in verse 14 that Jesus explains one of the Holy Spirit's primary ministries: glorifying Him. The Greek word for glorify is *doxazō* (δοξάζω), which means "to honor, magnify, or reveal someone's true greatness." If you read about the Holy Spirit in the Bible, you'll notice how the Spirit never seeks attention for Himself. Instead, His ministry always points people to Jesus so they can trust His Word and grow into His likeness.

And just as the Holy Spirit's mission is to make much of Jesus, our lives should do the same. As verse 14 continues, Jesus tells the disciples how they will glorify Him through the Spirit: "He (the Spirit) will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you." The Holy Spirit will continue Jesus' ministry by teaching His followers, revealing His truth, and helping them understand everything Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection. Through this understanding, we are able to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

Along those same lines, John 16:12-15 reveals the perfect unity within the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, yet they work together with one purpose: to reveal God's glory and accomplish His plan of salvation. In the same way, although each Christian is a different person, we still work together to glorify Jesus. And the Spirit uses different aspects of our individual selves to glorify Jesus. For instance, we glorify Jesus when our words, attitudes, decisions, and actions reflect His character and point others toward Him rather than ourselves (see John 3:30). That said, a good question to ask your Life Group might be: "What gets the most attention in my life: Jesus or me?"

You can challenge everyone in your Life Group to choose one way to glorify Jesus this week (e.g., serving someone without seeking recognition, obeying God's Word in a difficult situation, speaking about Jesus in a conversation, giving Him the credit for what He is doing in their life, etc.).

As we Christians surrender to the Holy Spirit, He continues to make Jesus more visible through our lives.

5. Our culture often encourages people to trust their feelings above everything else. How do **John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13** challenge that way of thinking?

Guide the Conversation

This question gives your Life Group an opportunity to compare what our culture says with what Jesus says. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13 helps your Life Group notice that Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of Truth,” not the Spirit of feelings or opinions. While God created our emotions and they are important, they are not always reliable guides. The Holy Spirit leads believers into God’s truth, which is found in His Word and always points us to Jesus. If needed, ask your group members to recall messages they hear every day, like “follow your heart” or “live your truth,” and discuss why those ideas can sometimes lead us in the wrong direction. Consider asking them for examples of times when they had to choose between following their feelings and following what they knew God wanted them to do. They could also identify one area this week where they can work on trusting God’s truth over their emotions.

Deep Dive

Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of Truth” in John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13, and that title alone challenges the idea that our feelings should be our ultimate guide. The Greek word for “truth” is *alētheia* (ἀλήθεια), which refers to “what is real, reliable, and in accordance with God’s character.” As with many of the verses you’ve read in this lesson, Jesus spoke these words to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion. He knew the disciples would face confusion, fear, and uncertainty. Notice that Jesus didn’t promise the Holy Spirit would simply make them feel better or affirm their opinions. He promised that the Holy Spirit would teach, testify, and guide them into God’s truth. In John 16:13, the verb “guide” comes from the Greek word *hodēgeō* (ὁδηγέω), which means “to lead along a path.” This definition paints a picture of a guide leading someone safely to the correct destination.

Now, all of this doesn’t mean our feelings are bad. God created our emotions, and they can alert us to what’s happening in our hearts. Yet sin can cause our emotions to be incomplete, inconsistent, or even misleading. This is why many people have often said, “Emotions make great companions, but horrible leaders.”

Scripture repeatedly reminds us that God’s truth is a better foundation than our changing emotions. Actually, God’s truth is THE foundation. The Holy Spirit never leads believers away from what God has already revealed in His Word, and He always points people to Jesus rather than to themselves (John 15:26).

John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13 remind us that the Spirit’s primary ministry is not to validate our personal preferences but to help us know Christ, understand God’s truth, and live in obedience to Him. While Christians should certainly pay attention to their emotions, they should evaluate those emotions through the lens of Scripture, allowing the Holy Spirit to shape their thinking rather than letting their feelings determine what is true.

WITNESS

Who is one person in your life who has questions about God or the Holy Spirit, and what is one simple way you could begin a conversation with them about who Jesus is this week?

Guide the Conversation

There might be some in your Life Group who ask, “Why do they always ask this kind of a question?” or they might comment, “This is always something they ask.” If anyone asks such a question or makes such a comment, affirm their comment by saying something like, “You’re absolutely correct, and we should never stop asking this question.” We should always have a person or people in our lives that we share with and invest in.

This question/prompt helps move the discussion from learning to living, so encourage the group to think of one specific person rather than speaking in general terms. If it’s helpful, Life Group members can exchange ideas of how to share, such as asking how someone is doing, offering to pray for them, sharing something they learned from this week’s lesson, or simply asking whether they’ve ever thought about who Jesus is.

Pray for the people they mention before the discussion ends, asking the Holy Spirit to prepare their hearts, provide opportunities for meaningful conversations, and give each person the wisdom, courage, and love to point others to Christ.