

STUDY GUIDE

*The Holy Spirit*

EVEN BETTER THAN JESUS

# The Holy Spirit: Even Better Than Jesus

Jesus told His disciples, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you." For the early Church, life with God was unthinkable without the Holy Spirit at the center. His power, His pouring, His peace, and His perseverance shaped a people who changed the world.

Today, many Christians see the Holy Spirit as only a symbol of God's power rather than the living God Himself. But when we understand that the Holy Spirit is God, and that He is in us and for us, everything changes. This spring at First Presbyterian Church of Edmond, Pastor Eric Laverentz will share this transformative message.

## SERIES SCHEDULE:

His Person	John 14:15-17, 25-26	April 19
His Power	Romans 8:9-17	April 26
His Pouring	Acts 19:1-7	May 3
His Peace	Ephesians 4:1-6	May 10
His Perseverance	Psalm 139:7-14	May 17

**Share Your Story**

**Invest in Others**

**Read the Word**

**Pray Faithfully**

**Worship Passionately**

**Serve Community**

**Give Generously**



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
— CHURCH OF EDMOND —

# Lesson Number 1:

## His Person, John 14:15-17 & 25-26

*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you... These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you...*

*John 14:15-17, 25-26*

1. Jesus says in verse 15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." How does this statement challenge our common ideas that love for Jesus is mainly emotional or about "accepting Him"? What does a truly grace-filled understanding of the relationship between love, faith, and obedience look like in light of this proclamation? Do we love God by our own strength or by the Holy Spirit's? What does Philippians 4:13 or Jeremiah 31:33 seem to suggest here?

2. In verses 16-17, Jesus promises "another Helper" (the Holy Spirit) who will be with the disciples "forever." Why does Jesus call the Holy Spirit "another Helper"? What does this teach us about the continuity between the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit? How should this promise encourage believers who feel weak or alone in their Christian walk? What did Jesus promise about God's presence in Matthew 28:20?

3. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "He" (not "it") and says the world cannot receive Him because it does not see or know Him, but "you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (v. 17). What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit's personhood and deity? How does this refute views that either reduce the Spirit to a force or energy, and charismatic excesses that treat the Spirit as independent from Christ and Scripture? What did John have to say about the agreement between the three persons of the Trinity? (1 John 5:6-8). Does the Word of God, the Spirit or Jesus ever contradict one another? Why not?

4. In verses 25-26, Jesus says the Holy Spirit "will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." How does this promise apply first to the apostles (in the writing of the New Testament) and then to believers today? What are the implications for how Christians should approach Bible study, preaching, and the authority of Scripture? What does Scripture teach about its authority in our life and how is the Holy Spirit involved? (2 Timothy 3:16) What



## Lesson Number Two: His Power, Romans 8:9-17

*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

*Romans 8:9-17*

1. Paul says in verse 9, "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." What does this verse teach us about the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's indwelling for genuine salvation? How does this challenge a merely external or cultural form of Christianity?

2. In verses 9–11, Paul contrasts living "according to the flesh" (leading to death) with the Spirit giving life to our mortal bodies. What does it mean practically to "put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit" (v. 13)? How does this relate to the doctrine of sanctification? How does the Holy Spirit grow our faith and obedience? (Galatians 5:25)

3. Verses 14–15 promise, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" What is the doctrine of adoption, and how does it change our daily life to know we are adopted? How does this perspective differ greatly from simply being "saved"?



# Lesson Number Three: His Pouring, Acts 19:1-7

*And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all.*

*Acts 19:1-7*

1. In verses 1-2, Paul meets some disciples in Ephesus and immediately asks, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" What does this question reveal about the importance of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life? Why do you think Paul asked this so directly? What encounter did the Holy Spirit have with Paul? (Acts 9:17-19)
2. The men in Ephesus replied that they had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit (v. 2). What does their answer tell us about the incompleteness of their previous understanding? How can someone be a sincere believer and still have a deficient view of the gospel? How do you think this was related to their former pastor Apollos being given further training by Priscilla and Aquilla? (Acts 18:26)
3. The Ephesian men had only received "John's baptism" (v. 3) What was the main difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism? Why was it necessary for them to be baptized again "in the name of the Lord Jesus"? What result made their baptism different this time? (v. 6)
4. What does this event teach us about the relationship between faith in Christ, water baptism, and receiving the Holy Spirit? Some Christians today use this passage to argue that there is a "second blessing" or a separate experience of the Holy Spirit after conversion. Do you agree with this? Why or why not? How else can we explain a Christian suddenly being filled with the Holy Spirit? Is filling with the Holy Spirit always related to baptism? (1 Samuel 10:9-13)



# Lesson Number Four: His Peace, Ephesians 4:1-6

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*Ephesians 4:1-6*

1. Paul opens with “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord.” How does this self-description (and the “therefore”) connect the doctrinal truths of chapters 1–3 to the practical commands that follow? What does it reveal about the nature of Christian suffering and authority? List the five virtues or attitudes Paul commands in verses 2–3. What specific actions or mindsets does each one require in the context of the local church?
2. What is “the calling to which you have been called” (v. 1)? Drawing from Ephesians 1–2, how does this refer to God’s sovereign, effectual call rather than a general invitation? Why is a “worthy walk” the only fitting response to such grace?
3. This passage calls believers to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit” (v. 3). How does this unity differ from mere human agreement or institutional uniformity? How and why is the Holy Spirit the source and sustainer of this unity rather than our own efforts? Where do you see the greatest threats to this unity today? In a culture that often prizes self-promotion and division, how does the gospel-shaped humility and gentleness of verses 2–3 serve as a witness to the watching world? Give one specific way you can cultivate these virtues this week through the ordinary means of grace (Word, prayer, sacraments, fellowship).
4. In verses 4–6, Paul lists seven “ones.” Identify them and explain how they form a logical progression from the church’s internal life (v. 4) to its doctrinal center (vv. 5–6).
5. Verses 4–6 affirm “one body and one Spirit,” “one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” and “one God and Father of all.” How does this seven-fold confession simultaneously uphold the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the church as the elect people of God? What does it teach about the relationship between diversity of gifts (see Eph 4:7–16) and essential unity?



# Lesson Number Five: His Perseverance, Psalm 139:7-14

*Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*

*Psalm 139:7-14*

1. What is the first instance of humanity attempting to hide from God? Did God find them? (Genesis 3:7-13) Can you name other occasions in Scripture when people tried to run and hide from God?
2. In verses 7–12, David asks rhetorical questions about escaping God's presence. List the specific locations or scenarios he imagines (heaven, Sheol, farthest sea, darkness). What common truth do all these examples illustrate about God? Identify the emotional progression in this section: from the impossibility of fleeing (vv. 7–12) to wonder and praise (v. 14). What key word in verse 14 captures David's response?
3. Verses 7–10 emphasize God's omnipresence and verses 11–12 His ability to see in darkness. How do these truths together affirm the idea that God can be present in every place without being limited by space or time? Why is this a comfort rather than a threat to us?
4. How does the language shift in verses 13–14 from God's presence everywhere to His personal involvement in creation? What two actions does David attribute to God regarding his own formation ("formed" and "knitted")?
5. How does the imagery of God's "hand" leading and holding David (v. 10) illustrate His loving control over all things? Connect this to the broader teaching in Psalm 139, Ephesians 1:11 and Matthew 11:27?



# A Guide to Growing the Holy Spirit in Our Life

The Holy Spirit is the key to our relationship with God. In fact, Scripture teaches us that it is not only the job of the Holy Spirit to communicate salvation to us but to make that salvation effective in our life as well. In other words, faith is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus meant when He called the Holy Spirit **“another, a helper to be with you forever.” (John 14:16)**

*By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.*

**(1 John 4:13-17)**

Many Christians tend to devalue reliance upon the Holy Spirit. However, this is not our theological heritage. John Calvin said it is by “the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits.” (Institutes of the Christian Religion, 3.1)

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God—the third person of the Trinity, no less God than the Father or the Son, fully Divine, who lives and moves and has His being in the children of God. The Fourth Century theologian Gregory of Nazianzus wrote this about the Holy Spirit: “We have given ourselves, and head anointed with the oil of perfection, in the Almighty Father, the Only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit who is God. For how long shall we hide the lamp under the bushel, and withhold from others the full knowledge of the Godhead, when it ought to be now put upon the lampstand and give light to Theologian Tom Oden who taught at Drew Theological Seminary wrote down a brief summary of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer:

- The restraint of sin, by which the Spirit provides time for repentance
- The conviction of sin, by which the Spirit awakens the sinner to the awareness of sin
- Repentance, by which the Spirit leads the penitent to godly sorrow for sin, reform of behavior, reparation for harm done to others, revulsion against sin, and confession of sin
- Faith, by which the Spirit enables one to place personal trust in the Savior
- Regeneration, by which the Spirit quickens life spiritually so as to begin a new life born of God, born by adoption in the family of God
- The indwelling of the Spirit, by which the Spirit comes to reside in the heart of the believer

- Baptism of the Spirit, by which the new person becomes dead to the old way and alive to the new
- The sealing of the Holy Spirit, by which the Spirit confirms the living Word in the heart
- Assurance, by which the Holy Spirit witnessed inwardly to the spirit of the believer that he or she is a son or daughter of God, pardoned and adopted, enabling a firm conviction that the believer is reconciled to God
- The filling of the believer by the Holy Spirit, by which the Spirit comes more and more fully to express the way of holiness in the life of the believer
- Sanctification, by which the Spirit works to bring the regenerate spirit into full participation in the life of God through union with Christ.

The Holy Spirit is God and we clearly cannot control God. But I believe there are things we can do to cultivate, invite, and encourage the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life. **Deuteronomy 4:29 promises, "Seek the Lord God and you will find Him if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul."**

**First Thessalonians 5:9 - 24 talks about growing into the image of God and how we do it.**

**For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**

1. Spend time in daily prayer and Bible study

**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

**Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. (Matthew 14:13)**

2. Worship extravagantly and expectantly

**As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.**

**And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)**

**But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)**

3. Clear out the sin

**Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)**

**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. (James 4:7-8)**

4. Form friendships with Spirit-filled people

**Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. (First Thessalonians 5:11-15)**

**For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, 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. (Ephesians 2:18-22)**

#### 5. Work to expand the Kingdom

Nearly 40 times God promises to be with His people when He gives them a mission to work to expand His Kingdom. When we extend ourselves in Divine mission, going beyond our comfort zone, we open ourselves up to the work of the Holy Spirit and God makes good on His promise, in a very literal way, to be "with us."

**Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. (Joshua 1:5)**

**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)**







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