

Bible Study Guide: The Spirit Comes Through Faith

Scripture: *Galatians 3:2*

"Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?" (ESV)

Theme

God's Spirit is received through faith, not works.

Study Objective

By the end of this study, participants should understand that the Holy Spirit is God's gift to believers, received through faith in Jesus Christ rather than through human effort, religious performance, or keeping the law.

Background

Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians because false teachers were telling believers that faith in Christ alone was not enough—they also needed to obey the Jewish law, including circumcision, to be fully accepted by God.

Paul reminds them of their own experience:

How did you receive the Holy Spirit?

Not by keeping the law, but by believing the gospel.

Their experience proved that salvation and the gift of the Spirit come by faith.

Key Truth

The Holy Spirit is God's gift to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

We cannot earn the Spirit through:

- Good works
- Religious rituals
- Moral achievements
- Keeping religious laws

The Spirit comes through faith in Christ alone.

Cross References

Ephesians 2:8–9

"For by grace you have been saved through faith...not a result of works."

Truth: Salvation is by grace through faith.

Romans 8:9

"Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."

Truth: Every true believer has the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38

"Repent...and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Truth: The Spirit is God's gift.

John 7:38–39

Jesus promised believers would receive the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5–6

God saved us not because of righteous things we had done but because of His mercy.

Observation Questions

1. What question does Paul ask in Galatians 3:2?
2. What are the two ways Paul contrasts receiving the Spirit?
3. Why would Paul remind the Galatians of their own experience?
4. What does this verse teach about salvation?

Interpretation

Paul's question is rhetorical.

He already knows the answer.

The Galatians received the Holy Spirit when they believed the gospel—not after perfectly obeying the law.

Paul is showing that:

- Faith starts the Christian life.
 - Faith continues the Christian life.
 - Faith—not works—is the basis of our relationship with God.
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Application

Ask yourself:

- Am I trying to earn God's acceptance?
- Do I believe God's grace is enough?
- Am I trusting Christ or my own performance?
- Do I live each day by faith?

Practical applications:

- Rest in God's grace rather than striving to earn His favor.
- Thank God daily for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Walk in dependence on the Spirit instead of relying on your own strength.
- Encourage others that salvation is by grace through faith.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people often try to earn God's approval?
 2. What is the difference between faith and works?
 3. Why is it important to understand that the Spirit is a gift?
 4. How does this truth bring peace and assurance?
 5. How can we avoid slipping into legalism today?
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Key Lessons

- The Holy Spirit is received through faith.
 - God's grace cannot be earned.
 - Good works are the result of salvation, not the cause of it.
 - Faith in Jesus is sufficient for salvation.
 - The Christian life begins and continues by faith.
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Memory Verse

Galatians 3:2

"Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?"

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Thank You that I do not have to earn Your love or Your presence through my own efforts. Help me to trust completely in Jesus Christ and to live each day by faith, relying on the power of Your Spirit. Keep me from depending on my own works, and help me walk in the freedom of Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Takeaway

The Holy Spirit is not a reward for human effort but a gift of God's grace, received through faith in Jesus Christ. Good works flow from a life transformed by the Spirit—they do not earn the Spirit.