

# Life Group Lesson

40 Days with the Holy Spirit • Week of June 19

## Introduction

The Holy Spirit is all about building up. In the Book of Acts, with the birth and rapid growth of the early church, the Holy Spirit keeps the church moving forward in the face of accusation and in the midst of persecution. God's Holy Spirit builds up and strengthens God's people, and is passionately opposed to anyone attempting to tear down what God is doing. Now, the understanding of pruning is something that Jesus taught in John 15:1-2 – "I am the truth grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and He prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more." But once the Holy Spirit falls – it's on! There is no stopping what God is doing.

However, the enemy will try; and has tried to trip us up from the beginning. It begins as doubt in our minds. The Serpent asked, "Did God really say you must not eat of the fruit? The enemy whispers: You can't trust God. God doesn't want you to eat the fruit because He knows you will become like Him—and God doesn't want the competition. The fruit is delicious and the moment you eat it, you will be like God. In fact, you will finally be independent of God" (see Genesis 3:1-7). Fast-forward, as the early church grew, the enemy comes right alongside the religious leaders—those who are supposed to be leading God's people—and whispers: "Do you really think these ordinary fishermen deserve the people's attention? Get rid of them" (see Acts 5:17-18).

The most dangerous tactic of the enemy is when we succumb to complaining and grumbling. Where does what the Bible calls 'murmuring' come from? Pride. It comes from a place where we – even the 'most righteous'—want to be in control. We want to be 'like God' – in control. It is a deadly path when we bow to jealousy over celebrating the success of others; a deadly path when we allow bitterness or resentment to take root in our hearts. When we secretly want to bring down those God has placed in leadership over us, we run the risk of keeping company with the Devil. No one has a corner on hearing from God. The Bible clearly tells us that God

does not show partiality or have favorites (Deuteronomy 10:17). Yet, God's Word does say: "God opposes the proud, but favors the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). This is not a false humility, but an attitude of understanding God's call over your life, realizing every gift you possess is from Him, and a deep resolve to please the Lord above man.

## Background

Peter and John and the early apostles did not fear the religious leaders. When the religious leaders threatened and demanded they stop preaching about Jesus, Peter boldly declared: "We must obey God rather than any human authority... We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:29,32). Peter had a humble confidence in Christ. He understood Christ's call over his life and knew his courage came from the Holy Spirit. As a result, Peter was not afraid to stand strong in the face of threats of many in the Jewish high council.

One of the members of the council, Gamaliel, offered this wise advice once the disciples were sent out of the council meeting: "Men of Israel, take care what you are planning to do to these men!... If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!" (Acts 5:35, 38). Even after being flogged, the disciples rejoiced that "God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus."

## *Reading the Text*

### **Read Acts 6:1-15**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

## In Closing

Satan tries to trip us up in many ways; but beware of fighting against God. When we become critical of everything those in spiritual authority are trying to do for the Kingdom of God, we are on a dead-end street. Our role is not to complain or gossip, but to undergird them in prayer. If we have a disagreement, go to your leader directly. St. Augustine once said, "He who speaks evil of an absent man or woman is not welcome at this table." Be careful about strategizing and secretly scheming on how to eliminate an overseer. Gossiping, complaining and murmuring can kill and any of us who persists in such evil actions will stand in judgment if we refuse to repent.

Ask yourself: How can I pray for those leading? Is my heart in the right place? Do I secretly want to be in control, get the credit, or desire to be in control? Am I seeking title or position? Lord, show us how can we all together work to accomplish what is in the best interest of all. Give me eyes to see what you are doing in this situation. Help me to be like Stephen – full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Like Stephen, help me know your Word; ready to speak the truth and defend the faith. Like Peter, help me to understand your call over my life and boldly stand strong in the face of threats and accusation. Lord, I trust you. I love you. Thank you, Lord.

## *Close in a Time of Prayer asking:*

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

## One Year Bible Readings

June 19: 1 Kings 20:1-21:29, Acts 12:24-13:15, Psalm 137:1-9, Proverbs 17:16

June 20: 1 Kings 22:1-53, Acts 13:16-41, Psalm 138:1-8, Proverbs 17:17-18

June 21: 2 Kings 1:1-2:25, Acts 13:42-14:7, Psalm 139:1-24, Proverbs 17:19-21

June 22: 2 Kings 3:1-4:17, Acts 14:8-28, Psalm 140:1-13, Proverbs 17:22

June 23: 2 Kings 4:18-5:27, Acts 15:1-35, Psalm 141:1-10, Proverbs 17:23

June 24: 2 Kings 6:1-7:20, Acts 15:36-16:15, Psalm 142:1-7, Proverbs 17:24-25

June 25: 2 Kings 8:1-9:13, Acts 16:16-40, Psalm 143:1-12, Proverbs 17:26

# 40 DAYS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Text: Acts 6:1-8

## Plain Truth:

The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ tearing down.

1. Full of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Living the faith by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Word
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Don't be afraid to be \_\_\_\_\_.