



Holy Spirit Study Guide Supplement

Introduction

At Wesley International Congregation, we embrace the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit, whilst upholding the role and authority of Scripture and the centrality of Christ. Our understanding of the role and manifestation of the Holy Spirit includes modern day experiences of supernatural Spiritual gifts. Yet we embrace those who adopt a more conservative view regardless of their understanding or relationship with God the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit” Good Book Guide takes a more conservative position on the modern-day supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit than we would.

This supplement is to be used alongside the study guide to help you to navigate through some of the differences so that we as WIC can grow a more rounded and robust understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Why “The Holy Spirit – The Good Book Guide”

Whether we like it or not, no one reads the Bible without some bias and preconceived notions. No one can read the verse “Our Father in Heaven” without a concept (no matter how flawed) of what a ‘Father’ is like and does. Similarly, when it comes to studying the “Holy Spirit”, we naturally approach the discussion with some bias – whether because of teaching from our church tradition and denomination, or personal experience.

So, as we approach Scripture as ultimate authority, we need to be mindful of our own biases and preconceived notions.

We have adopted ‘The Holy Spirit – the Good Book Guide’ as our study guide to kick off our 2021 theme of Spirit LED. This study guide:

- is solidly based on Scripture
- approaches the topic from a more conservative view (as we will highlight in this supplement)
- emphasises the priority of the Gospel, Christ-centredness and Christ-like transformation.(which we affirm)

We have selected this guide, despite holding some different views, because we want to:

- embrace and appreciate the strong scriptural basis and approach taken by the study
- encourage engagement with a diversity of views with empathy and understanding
- envelope a more robust and rounded understanding of the person and role of the Holy Spirit.

Experiencing the Holy Spirit’s presence and power.

We want to learn about the Holy Spirit through the Bible studies, and at the same time to create space to experience these wonderful truths in community. We encourage every life group to set aside at least 15 minutes after the Bible study time, to pray that the Holy Spirit enables what we have studied becomes a living reality for us. This will give room for the Holy Spirit to reveal, convict, encourage and empower that our studies of the Scripture will come alive! Our hope is that this will be an ongoing practice.



Supplement to Individual Studies

Study 1: The Spirit and the Bible

This first study explores the relationship between the Spirit and the Bible emphasising the authority of Scripture and the Spirit's role in helping us to interpret and apply Scripture. In addition, we at WIC believe that the revelation of God is not only limited to the Scriptures, with Scripture being the ultimate authority.

Study 2: The Spirit and the OT

This study explores the differences between how the Holy Spirit operates in the Old Testament compared to the New Testament. Whilst there are some fundamental differences, we at WIC do not want to limit the way the Holy Spirit can relate to us in a way that excludes Old Testament experiences.

Studies 3: Baptised with the Spirit

This study explores what it means to be baptised by the Spirit. In some circles, baptism in the Spirit is interpreted as a "second blessing" which is separate to becoming a Christian. What creates confusion is when the term baptism is used to describe "being filled" with the Spirit. To prevent this confusion, at WIC we prefer to avoid using the phrase: "baptised in the Spirit" to describe an experience or encounter with the Holy Spirit, and instead focus on "being filled" with the Spirit. This will be addressed in study 5 and 5b.

Study 4: The Gift of the Spirit

This study explores how the Spirit of God is a Gift given to us at conversion who indwells all believers. At WIC we believe the Spirit indwells every Christian regardless of their supernatural experience

Study 5A: Led by the Spirit

This study explores being led by the Spirit as being empowered to live the Christian life particularly in the area of personal holiness. We agree with the Study Guide, that when looking at the phrase in its context with Rom 8:12-17, Gal 5:16-26; Paul is focusing on the Spirit's sanctifying work in the life of the believer, leading them towards holiness and Christ-likeness through the struggles against sin and hardships. This is why our 'Spirit LED' theme (and theme verses Rom 8:12-17, Gal 5:16-26) focusses on our relationship with the Holy Spirit; and fruits of the Spirit in the first two trimesters; and is how it ties in with our broader WIC vision of 'transformed lives transforming cities'.

However, we also believe that the Holy Spirit desires to guide us in our personal circumstances because God is intimately involved and concerned with our whole lives.

We believe that decisions regarding personal circumstances are influenced by, or related to our growth in spiritual maturity, character, holiness and Christ-likeness. Being 'led by the Spirit' is required for all areas of life, not just overtly 'spiritual', 'religious' or 'moral' aspects of life (e.g., career/job and decisions regarding finances and relationships), even as Christ needs to be Lord of all.



“Study 5B – Led by the Spirit” seeks to broaden our understanding of what it means to be ‘led by the Spirit’, by looking at the case study of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

Led by the Spirit (5B – Supplementary Study)

Talk About

Choose one of the following to share about:

- a ‘good decision’ you’ve made in the past, and the process you took to make it
- a ‘bad decision’ you’ve made in the past, and the process you took to make it
- a decision you made in the past, following the ‘good decision-making process’ that turned out to be a ‘bad decision’.

Investigate

Last session, the booklet focussed on ‘led by the Spirit’ as a ‘technical phrase’, as used in Rom 8:12-17 and Galatians 5:16-26.

This session, we look at the broader *concept* on how God ‘leads’, directs or guides his people; which is less restrictive than the ‘general way of leading towards holiness and Christ-likeness’.

Led by the Spirit extends to an attitude and posture of actively seeking and cooperating with the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our personal lives and circumstances.

Read Acts 15:1-5

1. How would you describe the challenge the church was facing?
2. What steps do ‘Paul & Barnabas’ take to discern the right way forwards?

Read Acts 15:6-21

3. What steps do the ‘council’ take to discern the right way forwards?
4. How do the following individuals uniquely contribute to the discussion?
 - a. Peter (v7-11)
 - b. Paul & Barnabas (v12)
 - c. James (v13-21)

Read Acts 15:22-29

5. What is the final step in resolving the issue and who was involved (v22-23)?
6. Notice that in v28, the decision made “seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” to describe their process of discernment (v6-20). What does this reveal about the different elements the Holy Spirit used to guide the early church?

Apply

7. Which of the different elements of being guided by the Spirit do you:



- a. Naturally depend on?
 - b. Tend to neglect or overlook?
8. Identify an area of your life to actively seek more of God's guidance. How might you pursue the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a more comprehensive way?

Prayer

- Pray for one another for an increased sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and the many different channels through which He is guiding.
- Pray for a growing culture of dependence on and discerning of the leading of the Spirit in our church.

Study 6: Filled with the Spirit

This study explores what it means to be 'filled with Spirit', acknowledging that Paul (in Ephesians) and Luke (in Acts) use the phrase slightly differently. For Paul, the phrase is an action that can be commanded ['Be Filled with the Spirit' (Eph 5:15-22)]that involves surrendering to the influence and control of the Holy Spirit that leads in a dramatic change of behaviour in relation to God and others. For Luke, the phrase describes an experience of being empowered for ministry.

We believe that although the phrase is used differently by the two Biblical authors, the concepts are also related; much like 'to love' (action commanded) and 'in love' (experience felt) are distinct but related concepts.

The study asserts that Luke's use of the phrase is to (exclusively) empower the Christian to carry out the task of preaching and witnessing. Focussing only on the 'purpose' of being 'filled by the Spirit, sometimes overlooking the more obvious description and intention of the passages, possibly skewing our understanding of the phrase.

To draw out the broader implications and experiences of 'being filled' with the Spirit, we suggest an additional column for the table of bible references in (Q11) to gain a more wholistic appreciation of what it means to be 'filled with the Spirit':

	Who is filled with the Spirit?	For what purpose?	How is the experience described & what is the impact of being 'filled with the Spirit' (cf. v44)
Luke 1 v 15			(cf. v44)
Luke 1 v 41			
Luke 1 v 67			
Acts 2 v 4			
Acts 4 v 8			
Acts 4 v 31			
Acts 9 v 17			



	Who is filled with the Spirit?	For what purpose?	How is the experience described & what is the impact of being 'filled with the Spirit'?
Acts 13 v 9			
Acts 13 v 52			

Study 7: Gifts of the Spirit

This study explores the 'Gifts of the Spirit', emphasising their purpose for building up the church. The study addresses many misconceptions and wrong attitudes regarding the gifts of the Spirit and their use in the church.

The study guide emphasises the gift of teaching and prophecy, and presumes New Testament prophecy to be the same as 'preaching'. The study guide considers the gift of teaching and preaching to be the 'greater gifts' that are to be desired, referenced in 1 Cor 12:31(Q13-15). We at WIC do not limit our understanding of New Testament 'prophecy' as being the same as powerful (or Spirit empowered) 'preaching', but allow 'prophecy' to include a supernatural, 'revelatory' aspect.

Additionally, this study interprets the 'greater gifts' as the 'teaching and preaching gifts'. But at WIC we believe that the greater gifts are those practiced in love and that clearly build up and edify the church.

Please replace questions 13-15 in the study with the below:

Investigate:

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:3 & 14:1-5, 12

13. What is Paul encouraging the church to eagerly desire/pursue in:

- a. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31?
- b. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13?
- c. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5,12?

14. What is the common theme/emphasis across these passages?

15. How should this shape our attitude towards earnestly seeking gifts?

Study 8: The Spirit and You

This study focusses on affirming the work of the Holy Spirit in us and for us regardless of our situation or circumstances. WIC and the study guide are closely aligned on this study.