

UNIT TWO: THE HOLY SPIRIT

KEY SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR UNIT TWO

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. - Acts 2:17-18

CLASS 1: HOLY SPIRIT POURED OUT

1 Reading, 1 Exercise

Fifty days after the resurrection, Jesus poured out the Spirit of the Lord from heaven. Now, the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of all who believe in Jesus.

CLASS 2: NEW HEART & NEW SPIRIT

1 Reading, 1 Worksheet, 1 Visual Aid

The Holy Spirit dwells inside of each believer to communicate according to God's will and execute its multifaceted job description.

CLASS 3: REPENTANCE & FRUIT

1 Reading, 1 Exercise

As we lay aside the desires of our flesh, the Holy Spirit works in our lives to produce certain characteristics which prove our participation in divine nature.

CLASS 4: HOW TO HEAR GOD

1 Reading, 1 Exercise

God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within each believer so that we can live our lives in constant communication with Him, guided by his direction.

KEY QUESTIONS

GROUP EXERCISES

THE HOLY SPIRIT POURED OUT*

After Jesus was raised from the dead, He showed Himself to His disciples as eternally alive in a glorified resurrection body. Then, before ascending to heaven, Jesus told His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit before they did anything in His name. Even though He had already commanded them to GO into all nations to make disciples, He first told them to WAIT until the Holy Spirit had been poured out. The Holy Spirit is of supreme significance to God's plan for our redemption through His Son.

PROPHETIC FORESHADOWS

Jesus was crucified on the day of Passover, the exact anniversary of the day that God had delivered Israel from four hundred years of slavery. In the first Passover, the Israelites slaughtered an unblemished male lamb and painted its blood on their doorposts so that the destroyer could not touch them. (See Exodus 12.) These events were a picture of Jesus, the eternal Lamb of God, whose blood was shed so that by His blood, we who believe Him are set free from slavery to sin and death. When Jesus was crucified, He was slaughtered as the eternal Passover Lamb to take away the sins of the world. (See John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:8-19; 1 Corinthians 5:7.)

On the third day after the original Passover, early in the morning, the waters of the Red Sea were rolled away and the Israelites walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. Their enemies, Pharaoh and the world's most powerful army, were overcome and the Israelites rejoiced and worshipped God. (See Exodus 14-15.) Every year after this on the third day after Passover, early in the morning, the appointed priest would wave the first sheaf of the spring harvest in an observance of the Feast of First Fruits. (See Leviticus 23:9-14.) This was typically a bundle of grain from the first and best portion as a representation of dedicating the whole harvest to the Lord, even though the full harvest was still yet to come.

These events were a picture of Christ's resurrection. It was early in the morning on the third day after His crucifixion that the stone of His tomb was rolled away and Jesus walked out in a resurrection body of eternal life! He had defeated the evil one, overcome death, and triumphed over the enemies of mankind. He became the wave offering of the First Fruits of resurrection harvest – the first and best portion – wholly dedicated to God in anticipation of the harvest yet to come. We who believe are that harvest and we will be resurrected when He returns.

*1 Corinthians 15:23 NLT: But there is an order to this resurrection: **Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.***

All of this is to say that the events of the Old Testament, particularly the Feasts of the Lord, serve as prophetic foreshadows of the work of Christ. (See Leviticus 23; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5, 10:1.) Three of these Feasts were fulfilled through Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which we are discussing in this unit. Here is a chart of them:

Nation of Israel	Feast of God	Fulfilled in Christ
Passover	Passover	Crucifixion
Red Sea Crossing	Feast of First Fruits	Resurrection
Law Given at Sinai	Feast of Weeks	Pentecost

THE FIFTIETH DAY

In the original Passover, on the fiftieth day after the Israelites had walked through the Red Sea, God met with His people in power and with fire at Mount Sinai and gave them the Ten Commandments. (See Exodus 19:1-16.) On the fiftieth day after leaving Egypt, God descended on the mountain in a great pillar of fire with billowing smoke, thunder which shook the earth, and a great trumpet blast. All of the Israelites standing at the base of the mountain trembled at the power of their God.

*Exodus 19:16-19: **There was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast.** Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp **to meet with God**, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. **Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.** As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.*

At Sinai, God spoke to His people and the fiery finger of God wrote His Laws on tablets of stone. (See Exodus 31:18.) To commemorate this event every year on the anniversary of God's powerful Sinai visitation, all Israelite men were required to gather in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks. This is a holy day for worshipping the Lord and rejoicing in the abundance of the Promised Land and another offering of the First Fruits is brought before the Lord. Everyone is included in this feast, even foreigners, and the poor are remembered with mercy and grace. (See Deuteronomy 16:1-17; Leviticus 23:15-22.)

These events were a picture of the work of Jesus. On the fiftieth day after His resurrection, Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit to His disciples. The day is now known as Pentecost, which literally means fiftieth day.

PENTECOST OUTPOURING

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples for forty days and then, He ascended to heaven. Before He left, He told them to wait in Jerusalem for power from heaven which He would send soon.

*Acts 1:3-5: After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**"*

*Acts 1:8: **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

120 disciples of the risen Lord Jesus waited for Him to send the Holy Spirit so that they could be empowered for their global assignment of proclaiming His Kingdom. They devoted themselves to prayer while they waited for the Lord to pour out the Holy Spirit. They gathered together every day at the Temple to praise God and they stayed at night in an upper room nearby in Jerusalem.

*Luke 24:49-53: **I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.**" When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.***

*Acts 1:12-15: Then the apostles **returned to Jerusalem** from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, **they went upstairs to the room where they were staying.** Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot,*

and Judas son of James. They **all joined together constantly in prayer**, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers... among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty.)

These 120 disciples waited in prayer and rejoicing in Jerusalem for ten days after Jesus ascension. Then, the fiftieth day arrived – the day of Pentecost.

Because it was required for all Jewish men to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Weeks, the city was packed. Jewish men from all the nations of the world were gathered in Jerusalem and were heading to the Temple to celebrate the feast to the Lord.

*Acts 2:5: Now there were staying in Jerusalem **God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.***

The disciples of Jesus were gathered together at the Temple, as per was their usual routine. They were most likely at the main entrance of the Temple near the Southern Steps. Then suddenly, a mighty wind blew through the place and the followers of Jesus were filled with the Holy Spirit.

*Acts 2:1-4: **When the day of Pentecost came**, they [120 disciples of Christ] were all together in one place. Suddenly **a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house** where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be **tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

On the exact anniversary of the day God had descended to His people in a consuming fire at Mount Sinai, the fire power of God descended into the hearts of Christ's disciples in Jerusalem. The gigantic fire which was on top of Mount Sinai was now divided into smaller segments and rested upon each of them. At Sinai, the fiery finger of God which had written the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone but now at Pentecost, God wrote His laws on hearts of stone and transformed them into hearts of flesh. (See Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26-27; Jeremiah 24:7.)

NOT DRUNK - WITNESSES

At Sinai, as the trumpet sound grew and Moses spoke to God, the Hebrew word used to describe that God "answered" is a word that means "to testify, speak, or respond as a witness." You could say that God testified with His own voice to His people about Himself and His requirements for them to remain in relationship with Him. This testimony was given to all the Israelites and the mixed multitude that had come out of Egypt with them. (See Exodus 12:38.)

At Pentecost, as soon as the Holy Spirit was poured out, the 120 disciples of Jesus were supernaturally empowered by God and began to testify as witnesses about the wonders of God and faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, the disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to supernaturally declare the works of God in every language under heaven, which they did not otherwise know how to speak. You could say that God testified by His Spirit through the voices of those who believed Jesus. Because of this, all the Jewish people who had gathered together in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks could hear the testimony about Jesus in their own language, in addition to whoever else was in Jerusalem at that time.

Needless to say, onlookers were perplexed by this and wondered, "What can this mean?" Some even concluded that Christ's disciples must be drunk. (See Acts 2:6-13.) But Peter stood up to explain what was happening and, filled with the Holy Spirit, gave an inspired and empowered proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He explained that what the people in Jerusalem were witnessing with their own eyes and ears was the fulfillment of the promises that God made to the Jewish people centuries before.

*Acts 2:14-21: Then **Peter stood up with the Eleven**, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "**Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem**, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. **These people are not drunk**, as you suppose. It's only nine in the*

morning! No, this is **what was spoken by the prophet Joel**: 'In the last days, God says, **I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**' (Quoting Joel 2:28-32.)

Peter went on to tell the crowd about how Jesus had come and had been confirmed by God with miracles and wonders only to be crucified in fulfillment of the Scriptures of the Suffering Servant but how God had raised Jesus from the dead to everlasting life in fulfillment of the Scriptures of His chosen one not being trapped in the decay of death! Peter assured them that what they heard was God's confirmation of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and Savior of mankind through the fulfillment of even more Scriptures pertaining to God's plan of redemption.

*Acts 2:32-33: **God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.***

At Peter's anointed proclamation, those who heard were cut to the heart and asked what they needed to do to be saved. Peter instructed them to repent and be baptized to have their sins forgiven so that they could also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Right then and there, three thousand people gave their lives to Jesus Christ and were baptized in the pools at the Southern Steps where the ritual baths for cleansing before entering the Temple area were located (the ruins of which are still there today.)

*Acts 2:37-41: When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "**Brothers, what shall we do?**" Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.**" With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." **Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.***

At Sinai, God had given His Law and three thousand people died. (See Exodus 32:28.) At Pentecost, God poured out His Spirit, and three thousand people were brought into everlasting life! The old has passed and the new has come. The old gave commands leading to condemnation and death, the new gives empowerment from the Spirit for a righteous and holy life!

*2Corinthians 3:6-9: He has made us competent as **ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ...If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!***

INCLUSION IN THE OUTPOURING

Once the Holy Spirit was poured out to the initial believers in Jerusalem, they continued to testify of God's grace and goodness through Jesus. As they proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, events similar to the original outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred in various places to demonstrate without a doubt that God included Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John the Baptist who believed Jesus. (See Acts 2-Jews; Acts 8-Samaritans; Acts 10-11-Gentiles; Acts 19-disciples of John the Baptist.) Just like the Feast of Weeks included foreigners and remembrance of the poor, all types of people are able to participate in God's gift of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus.

Of course, this also served to fulfill the promises and prophecies (of which there are many) of the Messiah of Israel who would save not only Israel but the Gentiles as well. For example:

*Isaiah 42:6: "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will **make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,***

*Isaiah 49:6: he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. **I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."***

However, sharing the Gospel of the Jewish Messiah with Gentiles was extremely controversial at that time. In fact, it was bizarre and offensive for God to break through the cultural barriers in order to include Gentiles in salvation through Christ. This is part of why God's initial outpourings of the Holy Spirit were so powerful. It was undeniable that salvation through Jesus Christ was available to anyone from any nation, tribe, or tongue who placed their faith in Jesus for salvation. (See Revelation 5:9.)

Even today, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit marks us with the seal of God for our inclusion in the promise of Abraham, and gives us a deposit guaranteeing our inclusion in the heavenly inheritance, no matter what nation or ethnicity we may originate from.

*Ephesians 1:13: And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, **you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,***

*2Corinthians 1:21-22: Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. **He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.***

*2Corinthians 5:5: Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has **given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.***

*Galatians 3:14: He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come **to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.***

Sometimes, we have powerful experiences when the Holy Spirit first comes into our lives, almost as if God is granting us our own little Pentecost outpouring. However, we do not always feel the Holy Spirit so powerfully and we can't base our faith in Jesus on what we feel or don't feel. Let's keep it simple. If you believe Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, then you received the Holy Spirit when you believed. (See Ephesians 1:13.) If you do not believe Jesus, then you do not have the Holy Spirit in you, and you do not belong to Christ. (See Romans 8:9.) (Note: We will discuss the various functions of the Holy Spirit in later chapters.)

Therefore, if you want more of the Holy Spirit, ask for more, and commit to living your life by following His direction, allowing the power of God to help you carry out His work as His witness who brings Him glory.

*Luke 11:9-13: **So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.** For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!***

URIM & THUMMIM

Exodus 28:30 NIV – Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.

DESCRIPTION

Under the regulations of the Old Covenant, the High Priest wore a breastpiece which contained special stones called the Urim & Thummim. Urim means "lights" and Thummim means "perfections." These stones were used as a way of obtaining revelation from the Lord regarding the perfect will of God.

For example, the Urim & Thummim were used to inquire of the Lord for military movements – to move or to stay. (Numbers 27:21) They were used to single out a person within a group – this one or that one. (1 Samuel 14:41) They were also used to determine who was admitted or not – yes or no. (Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65)

Scripture is not exactly clear how these stones worked. Some say it was like casting lots like a spiritual coin toss. Others say that when a specific question was asked of the Lord, either the Urim or the Thummim would supernaturally illuminate.

Today, in the New Covenant, we have the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us access to guidance from God through direct revelation from our High Priest, Jesus.

Therefore, practicing the Urim & Thummim today is a spiritual exercise about presenting the Lord with a simple question. Yes or no? This one or that one? Which one of these? This way or that way? To go or to stay? Right or left?

He will answer us by the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts. It is as if He presses the answer onto our hearts or illuminates our heart and mind with revelation of God's perfect will for our situation. Then, we can proceed by faith with whatever guidance He supplies, trusting that we are walking in His will for us.

PRACTICE

1. Think about a situation in your life that you would like God to speak to you about.
2. Narrow the issue down to a simple question.
 - Questions such as: Yes or no? This one or that one? Which one of these?, etc.
3. Ask the Lord your question.
 - Say something like, "Jesus, I ask for your response to: _____."
4. Listen with your heart for what Jesus replies. Be still and wait patiently until you sense that you have received an answer, as if you were standing in front of the High Priest watching for the response of the Urim & Thummim.
 - You might sense a pull or a leaning in your heart towards "yes" or "no" or "none of these."
 - You might have a Scripture verse flash into your mind.
 - You might sense a direction or something the Lord wants you to do other than what you inquired about.
5. Implement whatever Jesus speaks to you.
6. Throughout your day, continue to check in with the Lord to be certain that you are staying in step with Him. The Urim & Thummim exercise can be done anytime and anywhere.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to be my High Priest who sits at your right hand and knows your perfect will. Thank you that you have put your Spirit within me to receive guidance from you. Help me to seek your guidance continually every moment of the day and to develop the habit of asking for your direction and wisdom with each step I take. Speak to me even now. In Jesus' name. Amen.

NOTES:



PURPOSE:

To listen to God for His guidance in all situations.

To submit our lives to God's ever-present direction.

To increase in discernment given by the Holy Spirit.

To function in God-given wisdom.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Increased focus on God's voice.

Developing skill in hearing God's voice.

Greater surrender and obedience to God.

Alignment with God's will, perspective, and purpose.

Advancement in God's path for your life.

Wisdom from above.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Hebrews 3:7, 15

John 10:3-5

John 16:13

Mark 4:24

Isaiah 30:21

Urim & Thummim

Numbers 27:21

1 Samuel 14:41

1 Samuel 28:6

Ezra 2:63

Nehemiah 7:65



A NEW HEART & A NEW SPIRIT*

From the beginning of mankind, it was God's design to have a heart to heart relationship with us so that we could be and do all the things He intended for us. Unfortunately, Adam messed this up for all of us by eating from the wrong tree because of his nature of rebellion against God. As descendants of Adam, we are just like him because we were born with the same rebellious heart. In our human minds, we can never figure out what God would do or what He wants us to do in any given situation. No matter how godly we try to be, our Adam-like hearts are selfish, deceived, wicked, and constantly in error against God.

*Jeremiah 17:9: The **heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.** Who can understand it?*

*Genesis 6:5: The LORD saw how **great the wickedness of the human race** had become on the earth, and that **every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.***

Even if we managed to figure it out God's will in any given situation, it would not be in our nature to do it the way God wanted. As such, even if we tried to do it to the best of our ability, we would eventually fail. We are totally unable to do the will of God with our own mind, will, and heart.

God knew this about humanity. He foresaw the solution and promised to bring it to fruition.

*Ezekiel 36:26: I will **give you a new heart** and put a **new spirit in you**; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.*

*Jeremiah 24:7: I will **give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD.** They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.*

*Ezekiel 11:19: I will **give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them**; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.*

God fulfilled these promises through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the new heart and the new spirit which God has given us and places within us when we believe Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Jesus, whose only desire and agenda is to see the will of God fulfilled. When we believe Jesus, we are born again as a new type of people on the earth who have the very nature of God inside of us. In generations past, God kept this hidden as a mystery but now, the promise is revealed and realized in us. Jesus is inside of us!

*2Peter 1:4: Through these [God's power, glory, and goodness] he has given us **his very great and precious promises**, so that through them **you may participate in the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

*Colossians 1:26-27: the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the **glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

The Holy Spirit gives us direct and constant connection to God at all times to know His will and also supplies the strength for us to do it. The Holy Spirit gives us the very life of God in our mortal bodies and the same

power which raised Christ from the dead. Therefore, when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit over our own inclinations and preferences, we become like Jesus. This is how God transforms our hearts, renews our minds, changes our character, and gives us moral fortitude to walk in righteousness as our own genuine response in whatever situation we face. Christ is in us!

In fact, the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christ's first followers made them so much like Christ that this is how they became known as Christians, which means little Christ's. The word Christ is the Greek equivalent used to express that Jesus is the "Messiah" or anointed King, and also means "Anointed or Anointed One." To anoint means "to smear," typically with oil, and it is symbolic of consecration or being set apart for a special assignment from God. In the same way that Jesus was God's Anointed One, now, we are His anointed ones. He has anointed us with the Holy Spirit. I like Thayer's Greek Lexicon definition of Christ: "who by His holy power and Spirit lives in the souls of His followers, and so moulds their characters that they bear His likeness giving them a mind conformed to the mind of Christ."

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

Let's take a deeper look at the Spirit of the Lord which now dwells inside of us because we believe Jesus.

*Isaiah 11:2-3a: The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- **the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD-- and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.***

This passage describes the Spirit of the Lord that rested upon Jesus and now dwells within each one of us who believe. This is the Spirit of the Lord, the self-existent one who has no beginning and no end, and the only one Creator of the Universe. The Spirit of the Great I AM dwells inside of us. The God whose unapproachable presence and power caused sinners and men to be struck down in an instant can now dwell inside of us because the sacrifice of Jesus cleanses our sin to give us access to God. Amazing!

The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding. Wisdom could be defined as is the right application of knowledge at the right time and understanding could be defined as the accurate perception of circumstances, people, and the dynamics involved in whatever situation we face.

The Holy Spirit gives us counsel and might. When Jesus was with His disciples, He counseled them in the will of God but now that He has ascended to God, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide us from within as our Counselor who reminds us of all that Jesus taught and demonstrated so that we stay in alignment with God's will. (See John 14:26.) Along with the counsel, the Holy Spirit gives us the might, meaning the strength, bravery, moral fortitude, or supernatural power, to put the counsel into practice.

The Holy Spirit gives us knowledge. This includes the knowing God directly and experientially for ourselves; plus the knowledge of God's will and ways in order to do what He desires; and the knowledge of things which are to come. (See Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9-10; John 16:13.) Without this knowledge, we perish. (See Hosea 4:6.) Moreover, with the intelligence of the Creator of all things and the author of all truth, the Holy Spirit can give us a higher level of intelligence than we could ever attain in our own natural minds.

The Holy Spirit gives us the fear of the Lord. At the end of the age, every person will stand before God and give account for what they have done – good or bad. The fear of the Lord is to live today with reverent recognition of God's supremacy and authority in our lives by following His ways and turning away from evil. (See Proverbs 8:13; Job 28:28; Psalm 11:10.)

CHOOSING THE TREE OF LIFE

Now that the Spirit of the Lord dwells inside of us, we should be the wisest, most intelligent, powerful, and honorable people on earth, right? Well...yes! The problem is that we do not always choose to listen to the Holy Spirit and even if we listen, we do not always do what He says. Hmmm... This sounds like the problem of all mankind from the beginning.

God has given us freewill to choose to obey Him or not. Back in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had constant access to the Tree of Life at any time they desired in addition to eating from any other fruit bearing tree. All things were permitted for them, except for one tree: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This tree was very appealing to look at and seemed to promise great rewards of strength, wisdom, and prosperity. But it had no ability to give life and, in fact, brought only death. Adam and Eve chose to eat from the forbidden tree and were subsequently banished from the Garden of Eden, losing their access to the Tree of Life in the process.

Interestingly, Biblical references to the Tree of Life can only be found in the Genesis, the beginning, the book of Revelation, the end, and the book of Proverbs, which is a collection of God's wisdom right in the middle. In the beginning, God gave humans full access to the Tree of Life and in the end, after God has judged the earth and restored it, we will again have full access to the Tree of Life. But in the meantime as we wait for total restoration, through faith in Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit, God has given us spiritual access to the Tree of Life again.

*Proverbs 3:18: **She [wisdom] is a tree of life** to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.*

*1 Corinthians 1:30: It is because of him that **you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God**--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

God's wisdom is a Tree of Life. Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. Therefore, with the Spirit of God's wisdom dwelling inside of us, we have Tree of Life is within us! The life of God gives us wisdom and vitality from within to know God's will and to do it. Figuratively speaking, this means that we can choose every day to eat from the Tree of Life by obeying the Holy Spirit, or we can choose to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil by following our own inclinations, desires, and fleshly passions.

Jesus is our example of one who lived this way. Jesus never did anything to try to be a good person or do good things. Jesus never did anything that was evil. He never functioned from a "principle" or "theology" or "teaching" about what was right/good and what was wrong/evil. He obeyed God by obeying the Holy Spirit that was within Him. He always did what the Father desired for Him to do and only said what God said. (See John 5:19, 8:48, 12:49.) For certain, Jesus could discern good and evil very clearly, but all of His actions were based on God's will and guidance in each situation because He was always being led by God, not by His flesh.

For us, this means submitting to the promptings of the Holy Spirit inside of us rather than caving into the cravings of our flesh. This includes dying to ourselves and our own ideas. If we are truly dead in Christ's death then, what right do we have to have thoughts of our own about what we should be doing? The truth is that even when we do "good" things, they can be wrong things when they are not God-directed things. Our aim is not to be "good" but to be like Jesus. To be like Him means to do it the way He did, by the indwelling Holy Spirit rather than the knowledge of good and evil that comes from principles, theologies, and our own ideas about things.

If we persist in living by our fleshly desires, we may as well be eating from the wrong tree, like Adam. We have a bad spiritual diet and it will show in our lives. Typically, this results in us becoming frustrated and having a wrong view of God because He didn't bless the mess that we chose to get ourselves into, or because we are dealing with the consequences of our own self-directed choices. (See Galatians 6:7.) This also evidences itself when we are always searching for the next great teaching that is going to fix our lives or the most anointed preacher or teacher who can solve all our problems. When we won't look to the Holy Spirit within, we will look for the Holy Spirit in others. Our spiritual growth will be stunted or stagnated and we will be confused.

*Ephesians 4:13-14: until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and **become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then*

we will **no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.**

Hebrews 5:14 NASB: But **solid food is for the mature**, who because of practice have their senses trained to **discern good and evil.**

Part of the good news is that unlike Adam in the Garden of Eden, we do not lose our access to the Tree of Life (or Holy Spirit) if we choose to eat from the wrong tree. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for our mistakes and self-willed choices. His love covers over our errors as we grow but His grace is not an excuse for our willful disobedience.

When we cooperate with the Holy Spirit by allowing ourselves to be led by Him, we become the children of God. We no longer have to be enslaved to trying to earn good standing with God through trying to be good. Jesus purchased good standing with God for us so that we can be children of God. Now, we cry out to God as our Father who loves us and always leads us on the path of righteousness to the most blessing. Our heart to heart connection with God has been restored!

Romans 8:14-15: For **those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, **the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."**

If we truly appreciate what Jesus has done for us, we desire to grow up in Him by learning how to hear and obey God's voice. When we have a good spiritual diet through obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance, we grow spiritually to maturity and Christ's likeness – the full measure of sonship. We also become like a Tree of Life. As we do the things that Jesus does and say the things that Jesus says, we become like branches of Christ and we produce life-giving fruit which supplies wisdom and strength to others while drawing them to Jesus.

Proverbs 11:30: **The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives.**

ROLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

While we walk with God in deeper and deeper levels of dependence on Him, it can be helpful to know the job descriptions of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit does not do His job then God is a liar. Since God is not a liar, we can trust Him to do these things, especially when we cannot see with our eyes or in our circumstances that He is at work. For starters, Jesus said this about what the Holy Spirit does:

John 16:8-11 ESV - And **when he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:** concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

The Holy Spirit is the only one who can truly change a human heart. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can prove to anyone that Jesus is their Lord, Savior, and eternal Judge. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can convince anyone that they are a sinner in need of a Savior or that what they have been doing or believing is wrong. No matter how persuasive an evangelist or apologist is, they have no power to change anyone's heart. Only God can do that, and He does so by His Spirit.

Equally so, for those who do believe Jesus, the Holy Spirit is the only one who can expose the areas of unbelief in our lives in a way that brings lasting change and releases us to receive God's blessings. The Holy Spirit helps us to know that we have victory over the evil one who has been defeated through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Our salvation and growth to spiritual maturity is the Holy Spirit's job from start to finish. Our role is to believe God and let the Holy Spirit do His job by listening to Him and obeying Him when He speaks rather than resisting Him or thinking that we know better. This means that we can stop telling God how to do His job

in our lives and we can stop bossing other people around and manipulating them to get our own way because we trust that our Father is working it all out for us and for them in His way, in His timing, and for His purposes. He has been God for a very long time and He knows what He is doing!

Here is a chart of the various roles and job description of the Holy Spirit.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	
Holy Spirit Job Description	Scriptures
Births us as children of God, cries out "Abba, Father" in our hearts. Gives us life, seals us for redemption.	John 3:5-8, 6:63 ▪ Romans 8:11,16 ▪ 1 Corinthians 12:13 ▪ 2 Corinthians 1:22, 3:6, 5:5 ▪ Galatians 4:6, 6:8 ▪ Ephesians 1:13, 4:30
Regenerates, purifies, sanctifies, washes and transforms us. Gives us fruit of the spirit, the character of Christ, and joy.	John 16:8-11 ▪ Romans 15:16 ▪ 1 Corinthians 6:11 ▪ 2 Corinthians 3:18 ▪ Galatians 5:22-23 ▪ 1Thessalonians 1:6 ▪ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ▪ 1 Peter 1:2 ▪ Titus 3:5
Brings liberty from law of sin and death. Pours love into our hearts, dwells in us, fills us, and helps us know Jesus is in us.	John 14:17 ▪ Acts 2:4, 4:8,31, 9:17 ▪ Romans 5:5, 8:2,9 ▪ 1 Corinthians 3:16 ▪ 2 Corinthians 3:17 ▪ Ephesians 5:18 ▪ 2 Timothy 1:14 ▪ 1 John 3:24, 4:13
Teaches, reveals mysteries of God, and reminds us of the teachings of Jesus.	Luke 12:12 ▪ John 14:26, 16:13-15 ▪ Acts 6:10 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 ▪ Ephesians 1:17, 3:5 ▪ 1 John 2:27
Speaks to us and through us. Confesses that Jesus is Lord who came in the flesh. Says "Come, Lord Jesus."	Matthew 10:20 ▪ John 15:26-27, 16:13-14 ▪ 1 Corinthians 12:3 ▪ 1 Timothy 4:1 ▪ Hebrews 3:7 ▪ Revelation 2:11, 22:17 ▪ 1 John 4:2 ▪ Acts 2:4, 4:31, 8:29, 10:19, 11:12,28, 21:4,11
Comforts, encourages, and helps us. Intercedes for us teaches us to pray.	John 14:26 ▪ Acts 9:31 ▪ Romans 8:26-27 ▪ 1 Corinthians 14:14 ▪ Jude 1:20
Knows and guides us in the ways and will of God. Gives us access to God. Bears witness to truth.	Mark 1:12 ▪ John 16:8,13 ▪ Romans 8:14, 9:1 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:11 ▪ Galatians 5:18 ▪ Ephesians 2:18 ▪ Acts 1:2, 8:29, 10:19, 11:28, 13:4, 16:6-7, 20:22-23
Gives power for life, to obey truth, in our bodies. Battles against flesh. Empowers for ministry, and with spiritual gifts, prophecy/dreams/visions, etc.	Matthew 12:28 ▪ Luke 4:18-19, 24:49 ▪ Acts 1:8, 2:4, 17-18 ▪ Romans 1:11, 8:11, 15:19 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:4, 12:7-13, 14:2 ▪ Galatians 5:16-26 ▪ Ephesians 3:16 ▪ Hebrews 2:4 ▪ 1 Peter 1:12 ▪ 2 Peter 1:21 ▪ Revelation 19:10
Appoints and guides ministry. Unites and builds us into house of God.	Acts 13:2,4, 16:6-9, 20:28 ▪ 1 Corinthians 4:21 ▪ 2 Corinthians 1:17 ▪ Ephesian 2:14-22, 4:3

All of this means that because you believe Jesus, God has given you a new heart and a new spirit. The Holy Spirit will change your life by changing your heart. You have nothing to fear because Christ is in you!

*2 Timothy 1:7: For the **Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.***



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HOLY SPIRIT ROLES WORKSHEET

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. - John 16:7-1

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	
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Regenerates, purifies, sanctifies, washes and transforms us. Gives us fruit of the spirit, the character of Christ, and joy.	John 16:8-11 ▪ Romans 15:16 ▪ 1 Corinthians 6:11 ▪ 2 Corinthians 3:18 ▪ Galatians 5:22-23 ▪ 1Thessalonians 1:6 ▪ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ▪ 1 Peter 1:2 ▪ Titus 3:5
Brings liberty from law of sin and death. Pours love into our hearts, dwells in us, fills us, and helps us know Jesus is in us.	John 14:17 ▪ Acts 2:4, 4:8,31, 9:17 ▪ Romans 5:5, 8:2,9 ▪ 1 Corinthians 3:16 ▪ 2 Corinthians 3:17 ▪ Ephesians 5:18 ▪ 2 Timothy 1:14 ▪ 1 John 3:24, 4:13
Teaches, reveals mysteries of God, and reminds us of the teachings of Jesus.	Luke 12:12 ▪ John 14:26, 16:13-15 ▪ Acts 6:10 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 ▪ Ephesians 1:17, 3:5 ▪ 1 John 2:27
Speaks to us and through us. Confesses that Jesus is Lord who came in the flesh. Says "Come, Lord Jesus."	Matthew 10:20 ▪ John 15:26-27, 16:13-14 ▪ 1 Corinthians 12:3 ▪ 1 Timothy 4:1 ▪ Hebrews 3:7 ▪ Revelation 2:11, 22:17 ▪ 1 John 4:2 ▪ Acts 2:4, 4:31, 8:29, 10:19, 11:12,28, 21:4,11
Comforts, encourages, and helps us. Intercedes for us teaches us to pray.	John 14:26 ▪ Acts 9:31 ▪ Romans 8:26-27 ▪ 1 Corinthians 14:14 ▪ Jude 1:20
Knows and guides us in the ways and will of God. Gives us access to God. Bears witness to truth.	Mark 1:12 ▪ John 16:8,13 ▪ Romans 8:14, 9:1 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:11 ▪ Galatians 5:18 ▪ Ephesians 2:18 ▪ Acts 1:2, 8:29, 10:19, 11:28, 13:4, 16:6-7, 20:22-23
Gives power for life, to obey truth, in our bodies. Battles against flesh. Empowers for ministry, and with spiritual gifts, prophecy/dreams/visions, etc.	Matthew 12:28 ▪ Luke 4:18-19, 24:49 ▪ Acts 1:8, 2:4, 17-18 ▪ Romans 1:11, 8:11, 15:19 ▪ 1 Corinthians 2:4, 12:7-13, 14:2 ▪ Galatians 5:16-26 ▪ Ephesians 3:16 ▪ Hebrews 2:4 ▪ 1 Peter 1:12 ▪ 2 Peter 1:21 ▪ Revelation 19:10
Appoints and guides ministry. Unites and builds us into house of God.	Acts 13:2,4, 16:6-9, 20:28 ▪ 1 Corinthians 4:21 ▪ 2 Corinthians 1:17 ▪ Ephesian 2:14-22, 4:3

1. Why do you think Jesus said, "It is for your good that I am going away?"

2. **Read Column One** of the chart. Which of these categories do you desire to experience more in your life with the Holy Spirit?

New Birth	Regeneration	Liberty	Teach	Truth
Comfort	Guidance	Power for life	Ministry	Unity

3. **Use Column Two** of the chart. Look up the Scriptures listed beside the category you selected and write them down.

4. What do you sense the Lord highlighting for you out of these Scriptures? Is there any action you sense the Lord prompting you to take?

5. Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one Scripture for you from your list. Slowly read and speak this Scripture out loud three times. What do you sense the Lord speaking to you through this Scripture?

6. In what ways is God asking you to walk and live with the Holy Spirit more?

7. How will you continue to walk in faith rather than slipping back into old patterns?

8. Praise God for what He has done for you. Jesus is King!

LOVE

Post Card Handout

LAW & FLESH

GOD'S LOVE

SEPARATION

Love the Lord your God with all your heart.
Deuteronomy 6:5

GOD'S LOVE

SEPARATION

Love your neighbor as yourself.
Leviticus 19:18

LAW: Striving to please God and earn His love and blessings through our own efforts. Functioning without faith in Christ from our old nature. Leads to frustration, exhaustion, and religion.

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GRACE & HOLY SPIRIT

GOD'S LOVE
for me in Christ.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.
John 15:9

GOD'S LOVE
through me to others.

My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.
John 15:12

GRACE: Receiving God's love freely through faith in Christ. Loving others freely from our new nature, the Holy Spirit. Leads to freedom from all fear, genuine love for others, and Christlikeness.

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REPENTANCE & FRUIT

Scripture Reading & Worksheet

Read each of the following passages and then use the chart below for study and reflection.

- The Book of Matthew, Chapters 5-7
- The Book of Romans, Chapter 8
- The Book of Galatians, Chapter 5

Main Themes & Common Message:	God's Commands:
Key Verses/Highlights:	Questions I Have about this:
What is God's definition of spiritual fruitfulness? Is this different than you expected? How so?	
List some characteristics or evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in someone's life.	
Fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life:	Areas in my life in need of repentance/more fruit:
Notes & Lessons Learned:	

CONVICTION OF SIN

Psalm 32:5 NIV - Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

DESCRIPTION

God already knows how we have sinned against Him through our actions (transgressions) and even in our thoughts (iniquities.) Sin is anything we do or think that is not like God. We were created to be like Him but we have all fallen terribly short.

Conviction is not a ritual self-assessment of how we find ourselves to be faulty. We are not God. Instead, one of the roles of the Holy Spirit (who is God) is to bring conviction of sin by making us aware that we are in violation of God's will and ways. He does this even as we are in the act of doing or thinking it!

Before the Holy Spirit enters our lives, we may not think that the things we do, think, or feel are wrong. But once we place our faith in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit in our inner man, He begins to reveal our ungodliness so that we can confess our sins and be free. This is God's way of purifying our hearts, choices, and behaviors from the inside out.

In the Old Testament, when an Israelite became aware that they had sinned, they brought a sacrifice to the Priest, confessed their sins over the sacrifice, and trusted that the blood cleansed away their sin.

In the New Covenant, Jesus is our only High Priest and ultimate sacrifice for our sins. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, we can confess our sins to Jesus, trusting that His blood washes us clean.

The practice of Conviction of Sin is about inviting the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin in areas where we are falling short of the glory of God. Then, we can acknowledge how we are out of alignment with God and His ways, receive His forgiveness, and move forward into new life.



PURPOSE:

To invite the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts to bring conviction of sin.

To come into agreement with God about our sin so that we may receive His forgiveness.

To be purified from sin through the blood of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Honesty and integrity before God.

The development of Christlike character.

Deeper submission to and alignment with God.

Clear conscience from our failures in order to live new life in Christ.

TALK WITH GOD

Consider the fact that Jesus never sinned, from childhood to manhood, even in His heart. How does this increase your respect and awe for Him? Tell Him about it.

Consider the fact that the same Holy Spirit who dwell in Jesus now dwells in you to empower you to resist sin. How does this strengthen you to live a new life with God's power? Talk to God about this.

PRAYER

Father, thank you that you sent Jesus to be the sacrifice for my sins. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to convict me of sin. Examine my life and my heart so that I can be more like you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRACTICE

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal some areas where your thoughts and actions are out of alignment with God.
2. Ask God to reveal to you why these thoughts or behaviors are unlike Him or not what He desires for you. For example:
 - Are they unloving, hypocritical, arrogant, selfish, or unbecoming?
 - Are they contradictory to how God sees you – His child?
 - Are they rooted in trusting in something other than God?
 - Are they harmful, damaging, or dangerous to you or others?
 - Are they part of pattern of choices from your old life?
 - Do they stem from a wrong motive?
 - Are they unwise? Do they lead to unfortunate consequences or poor choices?
3. When you feel a genuine recognition of how you have been in error, acknowledge your faults to God. This is confession of sin.
4. Receive total forgiveness as a free gift because of the blood of Jesus. You are now clean. Praise God!

NOTES:



ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- John 1:6,8
- Acts 2:37
- Luke 18:13
- 1 John 1:9
- Proverbs 28:13
- James 5:16
- Leviticus 5:5
- Acts 19:18
- 1 John 1:10
- Hebrews 9:14

HEAR MY VOICE: HOW TO HEAR GOD

Living by the guidance of the Holy Spirit does not have to be complicated. It starts with simply trusting that you do indeed hear His voice. Sometimes at first, it doesn't seem like a voice speaking. Actually, it seems more like an inner knowing about something, usually about something that you have no rational way of knowing but somehow, you just know. You might call it an impression or a sense of what is really happening underneath the surface of a situation or of what you are supposed to do about something.

We begin living by the Holy Spirit by trusting that this inner knowing is, in fact, the voice of God. Begin by trusting that Jesus does speak to you because you are His sheep.

*John 10:14, 27: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and **my sheep know me**-- ... **My sheep listen to my voice**; I know them, and **they follow me**.*

NO MORE CASTING LOTS

When Jesus ascended into heaven and told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit, they obeyed His order and went into the city. However, while they were waiting, they took some Kingdom business into their own hands. Without the Holy Spirit, they still regarded the Kingdom of God in an earthly manner and were anticipating that Jesus was going to return imminently as a warrior King to restore great power and dominion to Israel. (See Acts 1:7.) They read the Scriptures (without the Holy Spirit) and concluded that it must be God's will for them to appoint someone to replace Judas who had betrayed Jesus and hanged himself. They created criteria for this person's qualifications (without the Holy Spirit) and chose between two prospective candidates in the most godly manner they could think of – they cast lots. (See Acts 1:12-26.)

In essence, this is a spiritual coin toss. To us this seems foolish but to them, it was a scripturally approved and proven methodology for settling differences. (See Joshua 7:14; 1 Chronicles 24; Nehemiah 10:34.) God even controlled the lot casting of Gentiles. (See Jonah 1:7; Ezekiel 21:21.)

*Proverbs 16:33: The lot is cast into the lap, **but its every decision is from the LORD**.*

*Proverbs 18:18: **Casting the lot settles disputes** and keeps strong opponents apart.*

However, let us learn from the example of the pre-Holy Spirit disciples and not do what they did. It can be tempting for us, even with the Holy Spirit, when we perceive and believe that we understand the will of God, to rush ahead and try to bring it to pass using our own way of doing things. This is especially true when we have good ways of doing things and even "Biblical" ways of approaching situations based on our theology or understanding of God's principles.

The problem is that our logical, practical, common sense methods may not be at all the way that God has designed to bring His will to pass. Like the first believers, there are times when God tells us to wait for Him and instead, we busy ourselves doing things that He did not ask us to do – and we base it on Scripture! There are times when we put all of our own criteria on something or someone even though that may or may not be the criteria that God has for that thing or person. There are times when, even though we are very prayerful, we are simply wrong because we are not waiting for God and listening for the Holy Spirit the way that we should. The disciples were told to wait for the Holy Spirit before they went anywhere or

did anything for Jesus. In our walk with the Lord, we also must learn to wait for the Holy Spirit, both for His prompting and His power, before we go anywhere or do anything in Jesus name. Like them, we need a new guidance system to lead us into all truth and show us what to do and how to do it. Otherwise, we ourselves are no better than lot casters.

*John 6:63: **The Spirit [God's way] gives life; the flesh [our idea] counts for nothing.** The words I have spoken to you--they are full of the Spirit and life.*

*Zechariah 4:6b: '**Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,**' says the LORD Almighty.*

After the Holy Spirit was poured out, there is no record of disciples ever casting lots again. The Holy Spirit spoke to believers and directed their movements according to the will of God. Even for us today, if we want or need wisdom from God, all we have to do is ask.

*James 1:5-8: If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, **you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.** That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*

Once we have asked and received wisdom from the Holy Spirit, all that is required of us is to believe that we have heard God. Then, we stand firm in what we have heard and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit until what God told us becomes a reality.

WAYS TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE

When we think of talking to a person, we know that they can speak to us in a variety of ways. For example, they can speak to us face to face, call us on the phone, write us a letter, or send us a gift. When they are speaking, they might answer us with a yes or no, speak in plain terms, tell us what to do or where to go, tell us a story, or show us a picture in order to express their point.

Hearing from God is as simple as hearing from another person – as long as we do not overcomplicate it. Remember, God's design for mankind in the Garden of Eden was to be in constant open two-way communication with us. Jesus has restored us to spiritual access to God's guidance so that we can hear His voice and do what He says. You could say that having the Holy Spirit within us transfers us from an “external guidance system” to an “internal guidance system.” No longer do we have to guess or try to interpret what God is saying through random events or seeming coincidences. God speaks to us.

Here is a brief snapshot of various ways that God speaks to us by the Holy Spirit.

Inner Impression: The primary way that God begins to speak to us as His children is through inner “impressions” in our hearts. As described above, it seems as if we know that we should or should not do something or go somewhere even if it might contradict what we think in our natural mind. As we begin to follow these impressions, God will guide us into deeper communication with Him.

Inner Urim & Thummim: In the Old Testament, the High Priest wore a breast piece which contained stones called the Urim & Thummim. These stones were used as a way of obtaining answers to important questions with a “yes” or “no,” “this one” or “that one,” “go to war” or “don't go to war.” (See Numbers 27:21; 1 Samuel 14:41, 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.) Now that we have our High Priest, Jesus, dwelling inside of us through the Holy Spirit, it is like we have an inner Urim & Thummim. This means that we can consult God anytime about anything with a “yes or no” type of question and receive an answer in from Him.

Inner Direction: God also speaks to us with plain directive speech that we hear from the Holy Spirit within us. Jesus is our King and sometimes, He gives us instructions or guidance which He desires for us to follow. He also loves us and sometimes, He tells us to do or not do something for our own good. This happened frequently with the early believers in the Book of Acts.

Acts 8:29: **The Spirit told Philip**, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Acts 11:12a: **The Spirit told me** to have no hesitation about going with them.

(See also Acts 10:19, 11:28, 13:4, 16:6-7, 20:22-23, 21:4,11.)

In the days of the first followers of Jesus, the majority of the civilized world were illiterate. They had no access to the Holy Scriptures and even if they obtained access, they would not be able to read them. The letters of the New Testament were read out loud to the communities of believers that gathered together in homes to worship Jesus. They lived by the guidance of the Holy Spirit for everything they did and everywhere they went. This is the way Jesus lived and God desires for us to live this way too.

Dreams and Visions: When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted from the Book of Joel that God's sons and daughters would "see visions and dream dreams." (See Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28.) Dreams and visions are largely similar in that they are a visual image or a picture in motion that comes into our minds or plays across the stage of our consciousness. This does not mean that every picture we imagine or dream we have is from God. However, some dreams and visions are from God and should be taken seriously as God speaking to us.

When dreams and visions are from God, they can be subject to interpretation. We must seek the Lord and ask Him to help us interpret correctly. For example, when Peter had a vision of a sheet coming down from heaven, a voice also spoke to him with the interpretation. The interpretation was so far from what Peter anticipated that the Lord repeated it three times until Peter finally understood. (See Acts 10:9-17.) Therefore, we cannot be presumptuous that we automatically know what God is saying to us but must ask Him to help us. He will.

Through Scripture: God also speaks to us through His written Word. Even though the first disciples did not have access to the Scripture, in most cases, we do. The Word of God is the written record of God's communication with mankind from the beginning and shares with us what is still yet to come in the times ahead. When we read the Scripture with the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us, it may seem as if certain words, phrases, stories, or passages are whispering to us, or standing out, or even shouting to us. This is the Lord communicating to us through His Word. This said, we cannot randomly select what parts of the Word of God we like to listen to and do not want to hear. We must approach the Scriptures with reverence for their holiness and authority in our lives. We stand upon the promises of God to us while also submitting ourselves under the authority of the One who authored it.

If we have access to the Word of God and are able to read, we must devote ourselves to studying it, meditating on it, and growing in our knowledge of God through understanding it correctly. This is the predominant way that we will grow in understanding God, His character, His ways and dealings with people, and what Jesus died to give us. This said, it is one thing to read a story about your best friend's interactions with other people but, it is another thing to spend time talking to and interacting with your best friend for yourself.

Scripture becomes our check and balance as we receive guidance and hear the Lord speaking to us to test whether or not they align with the Spirit of the Lord who wrote the Scriptures. This said, there are times when the Scriptures seem to contradict themselves (even though God is never actually contradictory.) For example:

Proverbs 26:4: **Do not answer a fool according to his folly**, or you yourself will be just like him.

Proverbs 26:5: **Answer a fool according to his folly**, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

Another example is how at the Red Sea, God told Moses to be still and lift his staff over the waters until they parted but at the Jordan River, God told Joshua to have the Israelites enter into the river so He could stop the flow. If Joshua had presumed based on the writings of Moses what Israel was to do when they encountered a body of water, they would still be waiting on the other side of the river!

All of this is to say that as supreme and overriding as the Word of God can be in our lives, it is only through relationship with God and hearing from the Holy Spirit that we will know which Scripture to apply at the right time.

Prophecy: God speaks to us today through the prophetic word. He can do this directly to us or He can send someone else to speak to us on His behalf about things that are happening in our lives, things God wants us to do, or things that are to come. There are many instances in the Old Testament of people who were used by God to deliver His Word to His people and there are several New Testament examples of this as well. Now that the Holy Spirit dwells in each one of us, according to the Scripture **all believers** can prophesy. This said, prophesying is a gift of God that we learn to function in. Like developing a skill, we grow in our accuracy, delivery, and interpretation of what God is saying. This said, like dreams and visions, not every prophecy is from the Lord. Therefore, we must seek the Lord for interpretation in order to respond correctly according to His will. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1.)

Audible Voice: God can and does sometimes speak in an audible voice. (See Matthew 3:17; John 12:28; Acts 9:3-7, 10:13.) This is like hearing the voice of a person in the room with you. This is rare but it does still happen today.

Circumstances: God does not actually speak through circumstances, but His hand upon our life can be evidenced through our circumstances. This can be challenging to interpret because sometimes we have walked ourselves into something that God never intended for us and yet, we are upset with God for it. (See Proverbs 19:3.) Other times, we think positive events prove that we are on the right path when in fact, it is the enemy leading us into a snare. Long story short, it is not the most accurate way of hearing from God or interpreting His will. Jesus died so that we can hear His voice.

Listening to the Lord: If we desire to hear the Lord more, we have to position ourselves to listen more to Him. This can be done through prayer, journaling, fasting, practicing His presence, and spending prayerful time with other believers. Regardless of how we choose to approach the Lord, the point is that we need to allow Him time to speak rather than filling the whole time with our own chatter.

Face to Face: Jesus calls us His friends. (See John 15:14.) What He desires is for us to have face to face communication with us, like a man speaks to His friend. This does not mean that Jesus will always appear to us but that we know His voice the way we know our best friend's voice. It is no longer riddles and mysteries but plain speech from one friend to another. This is the relationship Jesus had with the Father while He walked in a flesh like ours on the earth. This is the relationship He wants to have with us while we are still on this side of heaven so that we can know Him and move in step with Him. This is the language of love and spiritual maturity. (See 1 Corinthians 13:9-11.)

*Numbers 12:6-8a: He [the Lord] said, "Listen to my words: "When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. **With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD.**"*

NOT DOUBTING – ABIDING

One we have heard God, there are three primary ways we will be tempted to doubt His guidance. Jesus told the Parable of the Four Soils about a farmer who sowed seeds on 4 different kinds of soils. (See Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-24; Luke 8:4-18.) In this parable, the seed represents God's word, and the soil represents the condition of our hearts to receive and believe what God has said. We do not have time to dig fully into the Parable of the Four Soils but, instead, we're going to use it as a template for understanding how to stand firm in the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The first way we are tempted to doubt what God has said to us is through the enemy. The same serpent who tempted Adam and his wife to eat from the wrong tree in the Garden of Eden by saying to them,

Did God really say...?, will say the same thing to us. Of course, I am not referring to a literal serpent but a spiritual one who is constantly contradicting or twisting what God did indeed say. In fact, it seems that whenever God truly has said something, that contrary voice is right there saying, *Did God really say...?*, to get us to doubt and abandon God's guidance. Be alert for this, and don't allow the enemy to snatch away your confidence.

The second way we are tempted to doubt what God has said to us is through others misunderstanding us and the trials which arise in our lives between the time that God gives a promise and the time when the promise or purpose is fulfilled. We set out to obey God, and then our friends abandon us or pick on us or tell us that we've lost our mind to be doing such a thing. Then, everything seems to go wrong which would seem to prove our friends to be right...except they're not. It's just another way of testing our faith and causing us to question, *Did God really say...?* Be ready for this and be prepared to stand on God's promises through misunderstandings, persecution, trials, and attacks until His word is fulfilled.

The third way we are tempted to doubt what God has said to us is through our desire for other things, usually temporal things like comfort, money, status, or security. We set out to obey God and then, some other opportunity comes up that would pay us more money and/or we convince ourselves that God wants to bless us in ways that are, in truth, a distraction. Or, the responsibilities in our lives seem to take up all of our time so that we find ourselves unable to do what God has said. This includes even "good" or "godly" things like serving in the Church, taking care of our families, or working to make a living. Or, somehow, God's way just seems too hard, or it seems that we could have our desires fulfilled faster if we did it our own way or the world's ways. When these temptations come, we find ourselves asking, *Did God really say...?* This is why it is important to keep our hearts set on Christ and His Kingdom and things of eternal value so that these temporal things hold less value in our lives. God knows what we are eternally responsible for and He knows how to guide us in all of it.

But finally, there is a fourth soil in this parable and that is the soil that stands firm and endures through the questions, trials, confusion, and temptations all the way to receiving the promised outcome. This is the person who has remained or abided, in God's word and the things that He has promised.

*John 15:4-8: **Remain in me**, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. **Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.** "I am the vine; you are the branches. **If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;** apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

The word for remain in this passage means "to abide, continue, endure, keep, wait for, and not become different." While abiding can be challenging, it is not strained. All a branch has to do to remain in the vine is to allow the vine to fill it with sap and receive all that the vine has to give it.

Similarly, when we believe that we have heard God speak to us, we have to remain, continue, endure, and wait, receiving all that Jesus wants to share with us without hardening our hearts until what He says come to pass. Then, we will produce much fruit.

*Hebrews 3:15: As has just been said: **"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."***

*Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and **lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him**, and he will make your paths straight.*

AT HIS FEET

Luke 10:38-42 NIV – As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

DESCRIPTION

Jesus said that only one thing was needed in our life with Him. This thing is time At His Feet.

Two sisters, Mary and Martha, provide a vivid example of how we sometimes approach our life with Jesus. Both sisters loved Jesus. Martha busied herself with much serving and Jesus loved her. But Mary sat at His feet, positioned to hear, receive, and partake of everything that He may convey to her. He said that she chose the better portion; and the one that would remain with her forever.

As we walk with and worship Jesus, placing ourselves At His Feet is essentially doing the same things that Mary did. We let go of control, set aside our concerns, anxieties, and even other forms of service to God in order to allow Jesus to speak to us and minister to us however He sees fit. When we do this, we will be refreshed in His presence and receive from Him things that will remain with us forever.

PRAYER

Father, thank you allow me and encourage me to take time to rest in your presence and sit at the feet of Jesus. Help me to still my heart and mind as I prioritize your desires over my own forms of serving you. Speak to me Lord, I am listening. In Jesus' name, Amen.



PURPOSE:

To sit in the presence of Jesus and receive from Him.

To take a time out from other forms of serving to be with God.

To grow in our relationship with Jesus by offering our time to Him over other things.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Closer relationship with Jesus through drawing near to Him.

Deeper rest in Christ.

Fuller experience of God's peace and love.

Re-alignment to Christ-centered priorities.

CONSIDERATIONS

How and when can you make time to sit at Jesus feet? What is required for you to choose this over other demands of life?

How long can you sit At His Feet? (Recommendation: Start with at least 20 minutes.) If needed, set a timer so you can relax and not be anxious about exceeding the time allotted.

Where will you sit At His Feet so distractions are minimized? Will you turn off or silence electronics or leave them behind?

Will you play gentle worship music or not? There is value in music or silence. Ask God what He desires for your time.

Prayerfully consider your bodily position for being at the feet of Jesus. (For this exercise, I recommend being comfortable.)

Bring your Bible and a notebook to write down what Jesus reveals to you.

PRACTICE

- Once you are in the place and position for your time:
 - Invite the Holy Spirit to minister to however He desires.
 - Be still and quiet in His presence.
 - Open your heart to receive from the Lord. Listen to Him and receive all that He reveals, heals, speaks, imparts to you, or instructs you to do. Watch with the eyes of your heart for any visions He may want to show you.
 - Don't worry if you fall asleep. He gives you rest as a gift.
- After your time At His Feet, take a moment to write down any impressions you had about what Jesus was saying or doing during your time together.
 - What is one thing you sense Jesus spoke to you?
 - How do you feel different after time with Him compared to before time At His Feet?
 - Thank God for what He has done during your time.
- Resume your regular duties rested and refreshed by Jesus.

NOTES:



ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 11:28-30

Psalms 16:11

John 15:1-11

James 4:8

Psalms 27:4

Genesis 2:2

Hebrews 4:1-11

Romans 4:1-8

UNIT TWO – KEY QUESTIONS

The Holy Spirit

Use this worksheet to test your grasp of the material and exercises of Unit Two.

How do we live our lives with the Holy Spirit?	
Why did God send the Holy Spirit?	Where is the Holy Spirit?
What are some things the Holy Spirit does for us?	How does the Holy Spirit change us?
What is New Covenant obedience?	How do we hear God's voice?
What is one thing you learned that you did not know before?	What questions do you still have about this subject?

ABIDE IN ME – JOHN 15

DESCRIPTION

When we honor and approach the Scriptures as the Living Word of God, the Holy Spirit is free to speak directly into our lives today so that we are strengthened to know God's will for our lives and do it. The origins of *divine reading* (Lectio Divina) date back to Christian monks who meditated on the Word of God in devotion in order to receive divine inspiration rather than theological knowledge. This practice engages with the Word of God in a way that is personal, relevant, and applicable.

To practice this, the same passage of Scripture is read three separate times out loud while listeners listen for the following:

- **First Reading:** One word or short phrase that stands out to you.
- **Second Reading:** What you sense God is speaking to you through this passage.
- **Third Reading:** What you sense God is telling you to do.

SCRIPTURE PORTION: JOHN 15:1-11

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers: such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

GROUP PRACTICE

1. Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to your hearts. Allow a moment of stillness before the first reading.
 - Keep in mind that since this is devotional, not intellectual, there are no right or wrong responses.
2. Have one person read the Scripture Portion out loud and slowly while others listen for one word or short phrase that stands out.

3. Have one person read the Scripture Portion out loud and slowly while others listen for what they sense God is speaking to them through this passage.

4. Have one person read the Scripture Portion out loud and slowly while others listen for what they sense God is telling them to do.

5. Share with one another the insights you received from the Lord.
 - Keep in mind that since this is devotional, not intellectual, there are no right or wrong responses.



PURPOSE:
Listen to God speak to you through the Scriptures.
Hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit for your life today.

GROUP SIZE:
Any size group.

DO THIS WITH OTHER SCRIPTURE PORTIONS:

- Psalms 1
- Psalms 23
- Exodus 15
- Isaiah 54
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Romans 8
- Matthew 5

