

Holy Spirit More

Session One: Introduction - Is there more?

Welcome, opening prayer and worship

(5–15 minutes)

[Pray as you begin, asking God to be at work in your group, and enjoy a short time of worship together (e.g. singing, soaking, waiting on God in silence, praying through a Psalm, journaling, etc.).]

Introduction

(5 minutes)

‘Holy Spirit More’ is a course that is designed to help you deepen your relationship with the Holy Spirit. Reflecting on His power to work in and through you, we will look at various bible passages and discuss issues that may arise, seeking to understand how He works in our present age. We need to open ourselves to allow more of Him and His power to work in our lives. Before you start, ask yourself if you really want to be changed. Studying the most powerful being imaginable is bound to make you uneasy about certain aspects of your life.

It is impossible to encounter the Holy Spirit of God and not be changed.

Bible study

(15 minutes)

[Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 aloud and work through the following questions.]

1. What does Paul (the author of this letter) mean when he talks about having your face covered by a veil and then having that veil removed? What does this symbolise?
2. Read vs. 17. ‘...and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom’. What does this freedom look like?

Discussion time and video

(40 minutes)

[Read the following passages aloud, work through the questions in the group, and where indicated, watch the video.]

Have you ever felt like you’re missing something? Like you’re getting by, but your life lacks something crucial, something extraordinary? Could it be that we are not fully embracing the power of the Holy Spirit? Jesus said: “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all” (John 6:63). And from a biblical standpoint, you simply cannot live the Christian life without the Spirit of God. Paul says, “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Rom. 8:9). We have no idea the power available to us through the Spirit. Romans 8:11 tells us, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” Think of the power that it took to raise Jesus from the dead. Paul says that the same Holy Spirit who brings life out of death lives inside of us!

Think about it for a minute. Why do you believe what you believe about the Holy Spirit? What process do you follow in forming your beliefs? Most of us would probably say that our beliefs are based on the Word of God, but really, our beliefs are often born more out of convenience and consistency than a careful study of the Scriptures. Chances are, you owe most of what you believe about the Holy Spirit to what you’ve seen and heard from the people around you. It’s important to learn from other people, but at times we need to challenge our way of thinking. We are all in constant need of bringing our lives in line with the Scriptures.

1. Take a minute and list some of your beliefs about the Holy Spirit. (Even if you don’t consider yourself a theologian, most of us have at least a few ideas about who the Holy Spirit is and what He does.)
2. Being as open as possible, do you think your beliefs are shaped more by the Scriptures or by what you’ve come to experience as the ‘normal’ Christian life? What makes you say that?

[Watch 'Session One' on the Holy Spirit More DVD (10 minutes)]

3. We assume that we know what the Christian life ought to look like. But have we ever sat down and considered the way Scripture describes the Spirit-filled life? Look up one or two of the following passages and write down some observations.

Acts 1:4-8 - Acts 2:1-13 - Romans 8:1-17 - Romans 8:26-27 - 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - Galatians 4:4-7

4. If you disregarded your own experiences and just read these passages, what would you expect to observe as the Holy Spirit entered a person's life?

5. For so many people in the church today, everyday life does not match these biblical descriptions. Why do you think that is?

The statement is so familiar to us that we sometimes overlook its significance: "The Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom 8:9). One obvious truth that we frequently overlook is that there should be a huge difference between someone who has the Spirit of God living inside of them and someone who does not. Have you ever observed Christians and non-Christians interacting? In many cases, it is all but impossible to discern who has the Spirit and who doesn't. Sure, the Christians may be a little nicer or more morally conscientious, but is that really all the Holy Spirit came to do in our lives? Shouldn't the difference be supernatural?

6. Read Galatians 5:16-25. What does it look like to walk by the Spirit?

7. Based on what Paul says here, what should distinguish a Spirit-filled person from a non-Christian?

8. In vs. 16 it says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Perhaps we've gotten so caught up in trying to live the Christian life that we've overlooked the Source of Life, and have tried to live the "Spirit-filled" life without the Spirit. Based on your experience, what good things can we accomplish merely through human strength?

9. If the Spirit works through us, how should the supernatural results differ from what we can accomplish on our own?

Prayer ministry and closing prayer

(15 minutes)

[Close by reading the following prayer aloud.]

From "Forgotten God" by Francis Chan

For all its caterpillar life, it crawls around a small patch of dirt and up and down a few plants. Then one day it takes a nap. A long nap. And then, what in the world must go through its head when it wakes up to discover it can fly? What happened to its dirty, plump little worm body? What does it think when it sees its tiny new body and gorgeous wings? As believers, we ought to experience this same kind of astonishment when the Holy Spirit enters our bodies. We should be stunned in disbelief over becoming a "new creation" with the Spirit living in us. As the caterpillar finds its new ability to fly, we should be thrilled over our Spirit-empowered ability to live differently and faithfully.

As you pray, ask yourself these questions: Are you open to being transformed, no matter what that may mean for your life?

Spend some time praying that God will give you the humility to be open to what He wants to teach you- even if it means you've spent years overlooking the obvious. Then ask Him to begin using these truths to change the way you live.