

# Holy Spirit More

## Session Two: Repentance - Space for 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)

**[Read the paragraphs below aloud to introduce the session.]**

As we will discover in today's session, the Holy Spirit and repentance are intimately connected. In reading the Scriptures, we will examine our own relationship with the Holy Spirit. Fear of the unknown and letting go of control over our lives can be factors that limit the outworking of the Spirit in our lives. Through repentance and turning back to God, we can allow the Holy Spirit to work His power in and through us more fully.

Bible study

(15 minutes)

**[Read Acts 3:11-20 aloud and work through the following questions.]**

1. In vs. 16, Peter talks about the faith of the beggar in Jesus' name, which brings him healing. In vs. 19, Peter addresses the crowds with the word 'Repent'. What is the relationship between faith and repentance?
2. Read vs. 19. Have you experienced 'times of refreshing... from the Lord'? What is your experience of receiving the Holy Spirit in your own life? What words would you use to describe the experience?

Discussion time and video

(40 minutes)

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

Most of us have experienced a time when we asked God to do something, but He did not come through in the way we expected. Maybe you're afraid that if you ask God for the Holy Spirit, nothing will happen. I'm sure that more of us are guilty of this than are willing to admit it. You read the Bible and don't see any reason why God couldn't do today what He did then. But you don't see the miraculous in your everyday life, so you're afraid that if you ask God for His Spirit, you'll be disappointed.

1. If you are motivated by a fear that God won't act when you ask Him to, what does that say about your view of God?

If you are afraid that the Holy Spirit won't show up when you ask Him to, start by assessing your requests in light of James 4:2-3: "You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." Sometimes God doesn't show up because we don't ask Him to. Sometimes God doesn't answer our requests because our motives are all wrong. Rather than praying for the things that God has promised to give us (like the Holy Spirit - see Luke 11:13) we pray that God will give us what we want.

There is one other fear that we ought to address. Perhaps the only thing scarier than the Spirit not showing up is the thought that He will! What if the Holy Spirit started to act powerfully in your life? I'm concerned that most of us are not prepared for what that might mean.

**[Watch 'Session Two' on the Holy Spirit More DVD (9 minutes)]**

Ignorance can be bliss. If we don't know exactly what God wants us to do, we can maintain our current lifestyle and still manage a perception of godliness.

2. Imagine that the Holy Spirit took complete control of your life and showed you exactly what He wanted you to do. Why might the thought of actually following the Holy Spirit be scary?

Read Luke 18:18-30. The ruler in this story had been going about his life in peace. Apparently, he was really striving to keep God's commandments. He seems to have been sincere in asking Jesus about the path to eternal life. He was confident in his efforts. But (as we often find) Jesus' answer required more than he was prepared to give.

3. Why do you think the ruler was so surprised when Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor? What do you think he was expecting Jesus to say?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said "follow me" (vs. 22)? Do you think the ruler understood what Jesus meant by this? Why, or why not?

Just like the blackjack game mentioned in the video, Jesus acknowledges that it's more difficult to follow when a lot is at stake: "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24). It's easier to go "all in" when we don't have much. In Durban North, not many of us fall into that category.

5. Try to put yourself in the ruler's position. He was a wealthy man, yet he came to Jesus to learn what he should do. Picture yourself coming to Jesus and asking His Spirit to lead you in the right direction. Do you have any thoughts about what He might ask you to do? Would you be willing to follow, no matter what that might mean?

Most people are control freaks. It can be difficult to let someone else call the shots, especially when it comes to the way you live your life. The truth is that the Spirit of the living God is guaranteed to ask you to go somewhere or do something you wouldn't normally want or choose to do. Isaiah 55:8-9 says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

At this point, question yourself: Do you really believe that where the Holy Spirit would lead you is better than where you would lead yourself?

Prayer ministry and closing prayer

(15 minutes)

**[Close by reading the following prayer aloud.]**

There is one thing that we should be afraid of when it comes to the Holy Spirit: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:19-21). We shouldn't fear other people, the possibility that God won't show up, or the possibility that He will show up. But we should be afraid of quenching the Spirit. What hope does the church have if we actively suppress the power of God?

In a time of prayer, think of those moments when you may have grieved the Holy Spirit and hindered His work in and through you. Repent of those things and ask the Spirit to give you the strength to put those things to death.

Ask God to remove your fears about following His Spirit. Ask God to give you the Holy Spirit. Pray that the Spirit would show you what He wants you to do and pray that God would give you the strength and the heart to follow wherever He might lead.