



HOLY SPIRIT

GROUP BIBLE STUDY



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WRITTEN BY Dorothy Walker



RELEVANCE
SERIES



Holy Spirit: Group Bible Study

Written by Dorothy Walker

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The Warner Press *Relevance Group Bible Studies* provide intriguing examinations of topics using the whole of the Scriptures. The guides incorporate various stories and activities to introduce and apply the subject matter, with a Bible study component at the heart of each session. Our goal is to show life-long believers and those new to the faith how to know the Lord intimately while encouraging them to step out and join him in his work with miraculous results.

These flexible studies are ideal for any setting. We know that time is a valuable commodity in today's society, and that's why each book consists of five or six short lessons intended to meet the group's scheduling needs.



Who Is the Holy Spirit?

1 Corinthians 2:9–16

Main Point

The mind of God is too lofty for humans to comprehend, but through the teachings of the Holy Spirit we can begin to understand what God has given to us—the mind of Christ.

Background

Many people, even those who have been in the church for years, think of the Holy Spirit as a mysterious, shadowy being. This may come partly from childhood memories of hearing references (as from the King James Bible) to the “Holy Ghost.” That could bring a few shivers to young listeners! But the Holy Spirit should be as real and as comforting to us as God the Creator and Jesus our Savior. For in truth, they are all one—“God in three persons,” or what we call the Trinity. God has blessed us by sending the Holy Spirit to be our helper and guide.

Yes, Kristen, There Is One God

Kristen was new to church and had a lot of questions. "In worship last week," she said, "the pastor prayed, 'In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' That sounds like three Gods. I thought there was only one!"

"He was referring to the Trinity," the Bible study leader responded. "There is one God, who exists in three persons. When we see the world around us, we know there was someone who created it and is over all things. We often call this Creator God the *Father*. When God came to earth in the form of a person named Jesus, people could understand God in a new way, receive forgiveness for their sins, and trust Jesus as Savior and Lord. In that form we know God as the *Son*. And because Jesus is not here on earth in human form anymore, he sent a Helper to be our comforter and daily guide. That is the work God does as the *Holy Spirit*."

If you were Kristen, would you have found the leader's answer helpful? Why or why not?

What are some other helpful descriptions for explaining the Trinity?

I. Read 1 Corinthians 2:9–11.

Why do people often think of the Holy Spirit as someone (or something) mysterious, indescribable, or unknowable?

The “deep things of God” (v 10) have existed from eternity. Think of creation, redemption, and eternal glory. These help to represent the past, present, and future of life’s existence. In what way is the Holy Spirit needed in today’s world to help us comprehend this great span of life through which we all journey? What other good things has God provided for us and revealed to us by the Holy Spirit?

If you have come to place faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, what does this indicate about the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

All persons have thoughts and dreams they choose to share only with those closest to them, those they know they can trust. In what way might that also be true of God (v 11)?

How can the Holy Spirit help us build an intimate relationship with the Father so that we can begin to understand the things God would want to share with his children?

II. Read 1 Corinthians 2:12–13.

What kind of knowledge has God freely given us through the work of the Holy Spirit? What do we know about the birth, life, and death of Jesus because of the teaching of the Holy Spirit? List some of these basic beliefs about Jesus. How are these different from the beliefs of much of the world—for instance, the belief that Jesus was just a great teacher?

What are some spiritual truths that you have learned to express in spiritual words (e.g., salvation, redemption, grace)? Are there other ways to state these same truths that might make them more understandable to persons who are new to the Christian gospel? Explain.

III. Read 1 Corinthians 2:14–16.

Why do many people have trouble accepting things that come from the Holy Spirit? Can you name some things that get in the way, for some people, of understanding God’s truths?

If we have God’s Spirit, what sorts of “judgments” are we equipped to make (v 15)?

What does it mean to “have the mind of Christ” (v 16)? How should we think in light of this fact?

How can praying for our minds to be filled with Christ's Spirit protect us from the things that could crowd him out?

A Guidebook or a Guide?

A woman was traveling in France for the first time, visiting her sister who had already lived there for several years. The woman enjoyed spending time with her sister and seeing all the iconic spots, but a few times, when her sister was busy, the woman took off on her own. She still remembered a little bit of high school French and there were many signs posted in English, but she felt uncomfortable—even a bit fearful—walking the streets of Paris and hearing the jumble of voices around her. How could she communicate with anyone if she needed help? What a difference when her sister joined her again to be her guide around the city. There was understanding, and there was safety.

What a comfort to have the promise of the Holy Spirit as our companion wherever we go!

When you have faced a new and untested life experience, what would have helped you more—a list of books to read on the subject, or a living person who had already walked that road ahead of you? Why? When has the Holy Spirit been the guide and interpreter you needed?

Three in One

The Greek word often translated as Comforter or Counselor is *paraclete*, literally meaning “one who stands alongside.” It can mean someone such as an advocate (think of the defense attorney in a trial) or a strong defender. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son, is more than a replacement for Jesus’ presence on earth. He is a teacher and guide, one who would recall to the disciples’ minds everything Jesus had taught them. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all entwined together in complete harmony, three beings different in form but moving and working as one. Picture paired figure skaters or circus trapeze artists, whose movements are perfectly synchronized. They are able to do this because of training and constant practice and because they have complete trust in each other.

Considering the illustration of a pair of performers, what would happen if one of the partners decided to change the routine without communicating with the other? What could the consequences be? What are the consequences for us in the Christian life if we fail to trust the Holy Spirit, or if we decide to go off on a tangent of our own?

Physical Life vs. Spiritual Life

Some people live as if there were nothing beyond the physical life and no needs other than material needs, while others are guided by the Spirit and are sensitive to the things of the Spirit. The first kind of people cannot understand spiritual things. Those whose minds are focused on the things of this world cannot comprehend the things of God.

Of course, there are personality differences within the Christian realm. Some look at life from a more practical viewpoint and prefer making lists and checking off achievements in their personal growth. Others are naturally more contemplative and find that they draw closer to God through meditation and prayer. Both may be equally committed to growth in life with Christ. The key is the importance they assign to spiritual things. Only when the mind of Christ dwells within us are we free from obsession with material things. Only then can we understand that God's economy deals with eternity.

How could your prayer times be altered to focus on the things of God as your top priority? The JOY method—focusing on Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself third—is one way. How are our priorities important in our prayer lives?

Closing Prayer

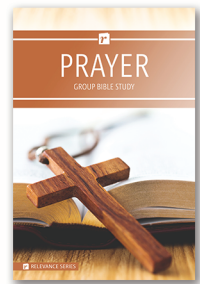
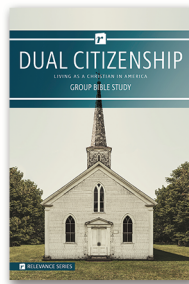
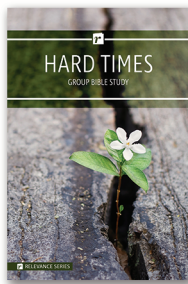
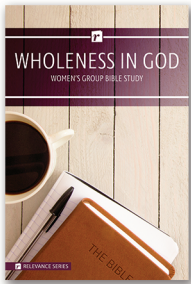
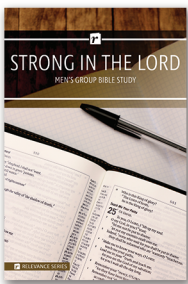
Thank you, God, that you have provided us with more than one way to understand you. Our minds cannot fathom the mysterious ways of the One who created all that exists. But you chose to come to earth in the form of your Son Jesus in order to experience all that we experience. And you sent your Spirit to dwell within us, with the capacity to meet every need. For all of this, we praise you. Amen. ■



Who is the Holy Spirit? Who needs the Spirit, and what does he do? These six lessons from 1 and 2 Corinthians, the Gospel of John, the Book of Acts, Romans, and Galatians will trace the work of the Holy Spirit among the people of God and will help participants understand how the Spirit wants to work in their own lives.

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