

GETTING
ACQUAINTED
WITH THE

**HOLY
SPIRIT**

Study Guide

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL APPLICATION REGARDING THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A word from the author....Dr. Harold Sala

This study guide is designed to be of assistance to you as you read through your book. After you have read the book, I suggest that you invite a small group of friends to join you and then go through Getting Acquainted With the Holy Spirit a chapter at a time, discussing the questions you will find in this. Along with the book you will need a Bible. In the event that you don't have one, I recommend the English Standard Version or the New Living Translation, which is more of a paraphrase than a literal translation. However, any contemporary translation can be used with success.

CHAPTER 1

“WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?”

Page 16 in the Book

*“We know not the matter of the things for which we should pray,
neither the object to whom we pray,
nor the medium by or through whom we pray;
none of these things know we,
but by the help and assistance of the Spirit.”*

- John Bunyan (author of Pilgrim’s Progress)

Question 1: Can you pinpoint your interest in the Holy Spirit that prompted you to pick up this book? Would you say it was:

- a. A curiosity?
- b. The book’s cover?
- c. A deep-seated yearning to know God in a deeper way?

Question 2: Have you ever heard a message from the pulpit of a church on the person and work of the Holy Spirit? How long ago was that? Do you feel there needs to be more emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit?

Question 3: To be very candid, have you been confused as to whom the Holy Spirit really is? Are there three Gods (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) or just one?

Question 4: Do you believe that the King James translation using the term, “Holy Ghost” makes you want to put some distance between you and a “Holy Ghost”?

A THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY: While the subject of the work of the Holy Spirit may have been neglected, the reality is that God’s Holy Spirit from the day of creation has equipped those who know and love the Lord. He is the source of spiritual power today. He enters your life as you confess Christ as your Savior.

CHAPTER 2

SAYING 'HELLO' TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Page 27 in the Book

“When God spoke to Moses and others in the Old Testament, those events were encounters with God. An encounter with Jesus was an encounter with God for the disciples in the way an encounter with the Holy Spirit is an encounter with God for you.”

- Henry Blackaby

THINK ABOUT THIS: Getting started as you come to grips with the fact that there are 88 references in your Old Testament to the work of the Holy Spirit, do you remember the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Bible? If not, please turn to Genesis 1:1-2 and read it. Does it surprise you that the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of the heavens and the earth? Is this new to you?

Does it come as a surprise to you to learn that the Holy Spirit has emotions and feelings just as you do?

Consider these thoughts:

1. He is everywhere (omnipresent) See David's comments found in Psalm 139:7-10.
2. He is all knowing (omniscient) See Romans 8:27.
3. As God He has neither beginning nor ending (eternal).
4. He has personality (He loves, comforts, mourns, speaks, and can be offended).
5. He has knowledge (as a person has knowledge).

As Jesus' personal representative, the Holy Spirit indwells every believer (see I Corinthians 6:19-20). Please turn to Philippians 3:12 and 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 and ponder the fact that God wants you as a believer to live a life that makes Christ meaningful and desirable to others. Does this encourage you?

In this chapter you will find that the Holy Spirit is also identified by various names and symbols (see p. 45). Turn to this section and then note each one in your Bible. Do these symbols speak to your heart? Is this a new discovery?

Notice that prior to Christ's coming, the Holy Spirit came upon individuals to equip them for a specific task (see p. 51, 52).

Notice further that in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit withdrew from them when He was displeased with their behavior or life, whereas in the New Testament the Holy Spirit indwells every follower of Jesus Christ. Read Psalm 51, written by David, following his affair with Bathsheba, when he pleads with God not to remove the Holy Spirit from him. Can you think of others of whom this was true? Consider the life of Samson (Judges 13-16).

A THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY: The Holy Spirit is God; however, He is a distinct person, just as Jesus was a person who lived among us for 33 years. The work of the Spirit in the Old Testament is distinctly different from that of the New Testament. Whereas in the Old Testament the Spirit empowered individuals for specific tasks, after the Day of Pentecost, He makes our bodies His temple and He indwells us, empowering us and guiding us.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE

Page 54 in the Book

Every time we say we believe in the Holy Spirit,
we mean we believe that there is a living God able and
willing to enter human personality and change it!

- John Owens

As a follower of Jesus Christ, do you remember when you first heard that God loved you, and that Jesus became sin on your behalf and that you needed a relationship with Jesus Christ? While you may have been unaware of this at the time, it was the Holy Spirit who was speaking to the need of your life.

When you invited Jesus Christ into your life, the Holy Spirit came to indwell your body (See 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Do you recognize this as a motive, a reason, for living a life that makes your faith real and personal? Can you accept the fact that the Holy Spirit either rejoices or is grieved by your lifestyle?

Notice that the feast of Pentecost was the birthing of the church when Jews from many nations had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost!

Notice further that Pentecost (discussed on page 63) was a great outpouring of grace and power upon unworthy men and women, but prior to the outpouring of the Spirit, the disciples had been with Jesus in the Upper Room when Jesus breathed upon them and said, "Receive you the Holy Spirit." Being completely candid, do you see yourself as one who knows that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, however, the element of spiritual power is missing from your life? If so, this chapter can lead to a life-changing encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Item 5 in this chapter is "The Holy Spirit Bestows Gifts Upon You for the Work of the Ministry." On page 74 you will find references to four passages that discuss spiritual gifts--1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:7-14, and 1 Peter 4:8-11. Is this topic new to you? Take time to again ponder the discussion on page 74 and ask yourself, "How have I been gifted to contribute to the work of the Lord?" Also ask, "Am I hesitant to use my gift to make a difference in our world?"

Pages 75-90 deal with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. On page 94, I mention that it is the Holy Spirit who gives us the certainty that we are born again and the Spirit of God is working in our lives. If you are uncertain of this, pause and pray, "Jesus, I am trusting you, and I take by faith the fact that I am born again. May the Holy Spirit give me this conviction right now!"

Page 81 says the Holy Spirit leads us. Can you relate a time when you felt that The Holy Spirit was leading you? Did you have any doubt that it was the Holy Spirit, indeed, that was directing you either to do something or not do something? Please related that experience.

A THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY: The Holy Spirit is Jesus' personal representative in the world, convicting us of our need of a Savior, making our bodies His temple, empowering us, and bestowing spiritual gifts upon each believer for the work of the ministry.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT IS THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Page 92 in the Book

“But have we Holy Spirit power - power that restricts the devil’s power, pulls down strongholds and obtains promises? What has hell to fear other than a God anointed, prayer-powered Church?”

- John Owens

Do you see a marked difference between the church today and the one you read about in the book of Acts? Would you agree that many churches are driven by promotion and program rather than the power of the Holy Spirit?

If you have a spiritual thirst--a personal desire to have more of God’s power and strength, realize that it is the Holy Spirit who helps you understand that you need more of God, and it is the infilling of the Holy Spirit that will bring that encouragement and help to you! Would you agree that the Holy Spirit creates the thirst in your heart so that He can satisfy it?

Remember the Spirit-filled life is not a super-deluxe edition of the Christian life, reserved for a few choice men and women. It is God’s provision for every one of His children--for you! Describe someone you know who is a Spirit-filled believer.

Take your Bible and ponder the words of Ephesians 5:15-21. Notice, if you would, that Paul’s admonition to be filled with the Spirit is a command--not a suggestion. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is the key to living a life that has purpose and meaning.

Finish this sentence, “This chapter speaks to my heart about _____!”

Now move to the next chapter that tells you how to be filled with the Spirit.

A THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY: The Spirit-filled life is not a super-deluxe edition of the Christian life, reserved for a few very Godly individuals. It is God’s provision for the normal Christian life, enabling us to demonstrate the love of Christ in our daily lives. The Spirit’s indwelling presence brings the fruit of the Spirit (notice fruit is singular) enhancing all of our relationships in life. He becomes the Air Traffic Controller of your life, opening doors, guiding you, bringing joy and peace to your life. Realize there are fresh fillings of the Spirit to meet the demands and challenges of life.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO HAVE A LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTER WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Page 116 in the Book

*"If you look up into His face and say,
'yes, Lord, whatever it costs' at that moment
He'll flood your life with His presence and power."*

- Alan Redpath

In this chapter, you will find five steps in the progression to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Ponder them for a few minutes:

1. Recognize your need to be filled with the Spirit! (page 117)
2. Confess any known sin in your life (page 119). This may be something that is known only to you and the Lord. If you are involved in a relationship with someone that you know is improper and contrary to what God wants, break it off. Ask God's forgiveness and put it in the "forgiven" category.
3. As you know how, give yourself completely to the Lord. Pray, "Father, as I know how, I surrender my life and my will completely to you." Now turn to Romans 12:1-2 in your Bible and notice that this one passage is the closest thing to a statement of "how to do it" you will find in the Bible. God wants all there is of you and wants to be in control of your life.
4. Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit! God know the emptiness of your life and He is far more willing to fill you with Himself than you are to have Him do it. Hold on to the promise of Luke 11:13 that says, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" This is a transaction between you and your Heavenly Father who loves you and is making provision for you to live with spiritual power.
5. Find a quiet place where you can get on your knees and pour out your heart to the Lord, asking Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Don't get up until the Holy Spirit Himself gives you a witness in your heart that He has heard you and that you have received the fullness of the Spirit. A. W. Tozer put it as follows: "Let it be remembered that no one ever received the Holy Spirit's power without knowing it. He always announces Himself to the inner consciousness. (Review p. 132-135).

A THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY: Just as Satan attempted to deter Jesus from fulfilling God's plan and purpose in coming to redeem humankind, so Satan will strive to keep you from having all that God intends for you to have by creating fear or misunderstanding. Jesus said he is a liar (John 8:44). This is where the truth of God's Word has to triumph over your fears of extremism or losing control of your life. To the contrary, the filling of God's Holy Spirit is the key to spiritual power and victory in your life.

CHAPTER 6

LIVING AND WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Page 136 in the Book

*“If Christians are forbidden to enjoy the wine of the Spirit,
they will turn to the wine of the flesh...
Christ died for our hearts and the
Holy Spirit wants to come and satisfy them.”*

- A.W. Tozer

A word from the author. This may be the most important chapter in the book because the suggestions I make in this chapter will take you through the rough spots in your journey of faith, the times when you stumble or Satan tries to convince you that “nothing has happened to you” and laughs at your struggle to live and walk in the Spirit. This chapter will give you strength and insight for the journey.

Living and walking in the Spirit means that you will need to re-organize your life, making time for nurturing your soul day by day. I highly recommend that you set your alarm early enough to allow you to be in the Word each morning as you make time for prayer, and--yes, if you are like me, enjoy a cup of coffee or tea as you talk to the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to prompt you if you need to apologize for harsh words with someone or in a moment of weakness have stumbled (see 1 John 1:9). Your first task of the day should be to ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh infilling of His power and strength to help you--whatever is in store for you.

A word of warning. You can destroy by doubt what God has done in your life through faith. Remember, Satan is a liar and there is nothing he would like more than to convince you that nothing has happened to you, that you have had only an emotional experience, and you cannot change! Don't believe it for a moment. Even Peter, following the tremendous encounter with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, was less than perfect (see Galatians 2:11).

A word of encouragement. If you are not presently involved with a small group, consider forming one consisting of three or four like-minded friends and then meet together on a regular basis to encourage each other, affirm each other, and to pray one for another. And, I, too, would be glad to hear from you. E-mail should go to Harold@guidelines.org. Knowing what God has done in your life would be a blessing to me as well.

A THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY: God's love for you is absolute and unchanging! The greater your knowledge of the cost of redemption, the greater will be your love for Jesus! Let the prayer of your heart be the words of a 19th century hymn, “More love to thee, O Christ, More love to thee! Hear thou the prayer I make On bended knee; This is my earnest plea; More love, O Christ to thee, More love to thee!”