
Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Historically, no member of the Godhead has received less attention than the Holy Spirit. When Christians have picked up a work of theology they have been met with an abundance of information, Scripture, and critical thinking about God the Father and his Son Jesus. There is no end to theologizing about God. In spite of this voluminous material pondering the God of the Bible, the church has been woefully lacking when it comes to good theological material on the Holy Spirit. J.I. Packer points out that, “Prior to the twentieth century, only one full —scale study of the gifts of the Spirit had been written in English, penned by the Puritan John Owen in 1679, 1680.” (Packer, p. 28)

In our own time we have seen this trend reversed. Walk in to any Christian bookstore and ask for titles on the Spirit and you will be faced with a dizzying array of books focusing on various aspects of the Spirit. Many will be trite, and in need of careful biblical interpretation. As believers have longed for a greater sense of God's presence in their lives, a spiritual Pandora's box may have been opened. This wonderful hunger for a deeper life in the Spirit has, unfortunately, led to a great deal of erroneous thinking and bizarre action.

Today, Christians tend to fall into one of two camps. The first is what might be termed “Spirit movements.” In this century this has taken place in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. These movements have attempted to “correct” the larger body of Christ and bring back a supernatural vibrancy and dependency to a believer's life centered in the person and work of the Spirit. Often times they have succeeded. However, as Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee points out, this corrective is at times misguided.

These Spirit movements have also tended to emphasize individualistic spirituality, so that the reality of the Spirit is sometimes merely experienced in the experience. Such piety has frequently lacked sound exegetical basis or betrayed inadequate theological reflection. (Fee. p. xiv)

While some Spirit movements have been misguided, the bulk of evangelical Christians have fallen into an even worse error. They have so marginalized the Spirit that for all practical considerations He barely exists! Of course in their doctrinal affirmations and worship, they acknowledge the reality of the Spirit. But in the actual life of the church and daily walk of the individual believer, they more often than not merely pay lip service to his empowering and transforming presence. What they have ended up with is a truncated understanding of the Spirit, what Gordon Fee calls, “Spirit dormancy.” We are reminded of the disciples at Ephesus who were asked by Paul, “Did you receive the Holy

Spirit when you believed?” and replied, “No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” (Acts 19:2)

In this study we will carefully consider the biblical teaching on the Spirit. Our focus will primarily be the New Testament. While certainly the Spirit is present in the Old Testament, his role in the life of the believer and the church after the death and resurrection of Jesus is unique. Jesus makes this clear in his last instructions to his disciples. “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor (Spirit, John 14:25) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7). Jesus predicates the ability of the gospel to go into the world on the empowering presence of the Spirit. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

In reading the New Testament it becomes immediately clear that the Spirit is at the center of a Christian’s identity and practice. In Paul’s letters alone we find over 140 references to the “Spirit.” As we shall see in our study, the Spirit is referred to in a number of ways.

- “Holy Spirit” — 17 times (in Paul)
- “The Spirit of God” / “his Spirit” —16 times (in Paul)
- “Spirit of Christ” — 3 times (in Paul)
- “Counselor” — (in John)
- “Spirit of truth” — (in John)

Most Christians are probably accustomed to referring to the Spirit as “Holy Spirit.” Gordon Fee points out why.

This full designation occurs only twice in the Old Testament (Ps. 51: 11; Isaiah 63:10); nonetheless, it was picked up by Christians as the full proper name for the Spirit of God. For all practical purposes, it came to be understood as the Spirit’s “Christian” name. Paul uses the full name at about the same ratio as his uses of his full name for Christ, “the Lord Jesus Christ,” where name and title also blend into one reality. (Fee, p. 29)

For the purposes of this study, we will most often simply use the word “Spirit.”

Christian thinkers and commentators have long struggled with trying to discern the primary work of the Spirit. No doubt we will do the same in this study! Here are a few examples of how Christians have understood the Spirit’s role.¹

- **Power**— Some have understood the work of the Spirit as essentially about giving power to enable the believer to live the Christian life. Paul reflects on what Christ has done in his life, “...by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit. . .” (Romans 15:18, 19).

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- **Performance** – Those who see the primary work of the Spirit as performance emphasize his work in the use of spiritual gifts (preaching, teaching, prophecy, healing, etc.). These gifts are the “manifestation of the Spirit” (I Cor. 12:7).
 - **Purity** – Others have felt that the doctrine of the Spirit centers on his purifying work. The Spirit is responsible for our progress in holiness and purity of lifestyle. “. . . Walk by [in] the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).
 - **Presentation** – This group views the essential work of the Spirit as making the believer aware of spiritual truths. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)

As we shall see, there is truth in each of these positions. Each reflect a biblical idea. It is best, however, to understand the primary role of the Spirit as the presence of God in our lives and churches. In the preparation of this study guide both J.I. Packer and Gordon Fee have been relied upon heavily. They make this understanding of the Spirit very clear.

The essence of the Holy Spirit’s ministry, at this or any other time in the Christian era, is to mediate the **presence** of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Packer, p. 55, emphasis added)

The coming of the Holy Spirit in and among us means that the living God, in the person of the Spirit, is indeed with us. Here, then, is one of the shifts that must take place in our thinking and experience if we are to be biblical, and thus more effective, in our postmodern world. We must not merely cite the creed, but believe and experience the **presence** of God in the person of the Spirit. (Fee, p. 34, emphasis added)

This study will enrich our church body and individual lives as we learn and experience more of God’s presence in our lives through the Spirit.

Study One

The Holy Who?

As Christians we learn about God by way of analogy. God is our “Father.” For most of us, whether we had a good or bad earthly father, the idea makes sense. We know something about fatherhood and this helps us to comprehend how God functions as the perfect father. In the same way, the concept of Jesus Christ as God’s son helps us to understand Jesus and his relationship to the father. And, as Gordon Fee points out,

Our understanding of God is forever marked by the fact that in Christ he has been “fleshed out” at one point in our human history. Even if God seems distant, transcendent, “from eternity to eternity,” we are not in the dark about God and his character. As Paul put it, the glory of God has been imaged for us in the one true human who bears the divine image, Christ himself; and by beholding his “face” we see the glory of the eternal God (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4, 6). (Fee, p. 25)

When we come to the Holy Spirit, our thinking is not so clear. For many Christians today the Holy Spirit is a vague, opaque concept. When you hear the word “spirit” you are likely to think of a human mood or demeanor (Fred has a cheerful spirit, or Susan has a generous spirit.). Even the Bible itself uses metaphors for the Spirit that are difficult

for modern people to grasp in a concrete fashion. Images such as wind, fire, dove, oil, and water leave many of us scratching our heads. Before going any further in this study write a description of the Spirit in your own words. If any biblical references come to mind, go ahead and include them, but assume you are describing the Spirit for someone who has not read the Bible and is unfamiliar with Christian terms.

The word used for the Spirit of God in both the Old Testament (Hebrew = *ruach*) and the New Testament (Greek = *pneuma*) can be translated “wind,” “breath” or “spirit.” The Spirit of God is his “life-giving breath without which man remains spiritually inert.” (Green, p. 18) When Jesus encounters Nicodemus he reminds him that “The wind (*pneuma*) blows where it will, and you hear its sound but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (*pneuma*)” (John 3:8). The word “spirit” in the Bible suggests power in action in a way our English word doesn’t.

Is the Spirit in the Bible then a vague amorphous force? Should we think along the lines of the “Force” in the Star Wars films?

Read the following Scriptures (we will come back to many of these in more detail later) that speak of the Spirit as the agent of God’s activity. What do they tell you about **who** the Spirit is? Is the Spirit an impersonal force or personal expression of God’s activity?

- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- Romans 8:13
- Galatians 5:16, 25

A careful reading of the New Testament demands an understanding of the Spirit as a person. Consider the large number of verbs that demand an understanding of the Spirit that is personal.¹ The Spirit:

- *searches* all things (1 Cor. 2:10)
- *knows* the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:11)
- *teaches* the content of the gospel to believers (1 Cor. 2:13)
- *dwells* among or with believers (1 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 8:11; 2 Tim. 1:14)
- *gives* life to those who believe (2 Cor. 3:6)
- *cries* out from within our hearts (Gal. 4:6)
- *leads* us in the ways of God (Gal. 5:18; Rom. 8:14)
- *bears* witness with our own spirits (Rom. 8:16)
- *helps* us in our weakness (Rom. 8:26)
- *intercedes* on our behalf (Rom. 8:26-27)
- *strengthens* believers (Eph. 3:16)
- *grieved* by our sinfulness (Eph. 4:30)

One of the more interesting portions of Scripture that informs us as to the personal nature of the Spirit is found in Romans 8:12-17, 26-27. Reflect on these verses. What do they tell you about the person of the Spirit? How does this help your thinking about the Spirit?

While the verses above are all from the letters of the Apostle Paul, we find this exact same emphasis on the personal nature of the Spirit in the teachings of Jesus recorded by John. In the Upper Room discourse, as Jesus prepares his disciples for his imminent death, he explains to them the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit (John 14:16, 25; 15:26; 16:7) is a Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Supporter, Advocate, or Ally.¹ J.I. Packer points out the person of the Spirit in these passages.

John underlines the point by repeatedly using a masculine pronoun (*ekeinos*, “he”) to render Jesus’ references to the Spirit, when Greek grammar called for a neuter one (*ekeino* “it”) to agree with the neuter noun “Spirit” (*pneuma*); John wants his readers to be in no doubt that the Spirit is he not it. (Packer, p. 61)

The point is that we should never think of the Spirit in terms other than personal. The Spirit is not an “it” but rather a “person.” Think about your own prayer life. How do you address the Spirit? What difference would this make in our spiritual lives? What changes do you need to make in how you think and talk about the Spirit?

Jehovah’s Witnesses are present day Arians who do not believe that Jesus is God.² This error has also led them to deny the personhood and deity of the Spirit. For them the Spirit is nothing more than an “influence” from God. The very word “holy” obviously suggests deity. But what about the relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit? Read the following passages. What do they teach concerning the relationship of the Father, Son and Spirit? What do they teach about the deity of the Spirit?

- 2 Corinthians 13:14

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- Matthew 28:19
 - Titus 3:4-7
 - Ephesians 4:4-6
 - Ephesians 2:18, 20-22
 - I Peter 1:2

These verses bring up the issue of the Trinity. Christians believe that God is one **God** in three **persons**. Bible believing Christians usually do fairly well relating to the Father and the Son as God.¹ At times their relationship to the Spirit is not so easy. Respond to these two quotations. Do they ring true in your own Christian life? How?

Modern Christians are largely content to be trinitarian in belief, but binitarian in practice. (Clark Pinnock, quoted in Fee, p. 47)

The Spirit must be reinstated into the Trinity, where he has never been excluded in our creeds and liturgies, but has been practically excluded from the experienced life of the church. (Fee, p. 46)

How has this study changed or challenged your thinking? Do you know who the Holy Spirit is? List the things you would like to learn about the Spirit during the course of this study.

Study Two

The Presence of God

While we all like to be alone from time to time, humans are social animals. We are created to be in relationship with others. It is the companionship or “presence” of a mate that those who are married find the most satisfying part of marriage. Whether married or single, we all crave the presence of another to share a beautiful sunset, walk on the beach, concert, or game. God made us this way.

God also made us to be in relationship with him and enjoy his presence. Think of Adam and Eve enjoying the presence of God in the garden. One of the great tragedies of sin and the fall is that our relationship with God was changed. His abiding presence was lost. With the coming of Jesus *and* the Spirit, this relationship and presence is being restored.

An understanding of the Old Testament is crucial to understanding the coming of the Spirit in the New Testament. In the Old Testament God’s presence with his people was experienced most overtly in the tabernacle and later, the temple.

Fee comments:

The Deuteronomy promise was finally fulfilled in the construction of Solomon’s temple, where the same glory as in Exodus 40 descended and “filled his temple” (1 Kings 8:11). Thus Jerusalem and the temple are regularly described as “the place Yahweh chose for his name to dwell”; and the temple became the focal point of Israel’s existence in the promised land. (Fee, p. 11)

This helps to explain why the Prophets so severely lament the fall of Jerusalem, destruction of the temple, and exile of the nation. Israel, because of her sin, is forfeiting God’s presence! The Prophets go on to look forward to a time when God’s presence will be restored (Zech. 14:16-19, Isaiah 2:2-3). This hope of the return of God’s presence is connected to the hope of a restored temple. With this background in mind, read the

verses below. Where is God's presence now? What / who is his temple? What are the implications?

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
- 2 Corinthians 6:16
- Ephesians 2:22
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Of the above verses, which are addressed to the church body as a whole and which refer to the individual believer?

Commenting on these verses, Fee explains:

It is especially with temple imagery that Paul designates the Spirit as the renewed presence of God among his people. . . There is not a more important word in all the New Testament as to the nature of the local church than this one! The local church is God's temple in the community where it is placed; it is so by the presence of the Spirit alone, by whom God has now revisited his people. (Fee, p. 17 & 19)

What do these verses and this comment by Fee tell us about the importance of the local church? Where is God's presence in the world primarily to be found today?

In addition to the Temple imagery, there is a great deal of Scripture that points to the presence of God in our lives, through the Spirit, using words like "dwelling in," "in you," and "filling." Read the verses listed below. How do they further develop this idea of the Spirit being the presence of God in our lives?

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- 1 Thessalonians 4:8
 - 1 Corinthians 14:24-25
 - Ephesians 5:18
 - 2 Corinthians 1:22, 3:3
 - Galatians 4:6
 - Romans 5:5
 - Romans 8:9-11

Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. This amazing portion of Scripture describes the presence of God in Moses' life when he encountered the glory of God. Paul uses this Old Testament event to help describe what is happening in the life of a believer today.

Why did Moses need a veil?

Do Christians need a veil? (Vs. 16)

What is the connection between the "veil" and the "Spirit"?

What does this tell us about God's presence in our lives?

Do these verses resonate with your Christian experience? How is the truth of these Scriptures evidenced in both your head and your heart?

John the Baptist had predicted that Jesus would introduce the Spirit to his followers. "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8). We have already looked briefly, in our first study, at the teaching of Jesus on the Spirit in John 14 –16. At one point Jesus says, "It is good for you if I go away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John. 16:7). Why is it a good thing that Jesus replaces his presence with the presence of the Spirit?

Read the verses below. What do they tell you about the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit? (Some of these verses we have already examined for a different reason. Take another look, this time noting the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit.)

- 1 Corinthians 6:17
- 1 Corinthians 15:45
- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
- Galatians 4:6
- Romans 8:9
- Philippians 1:19

Commenting on this close connection between Jesus and the Spirit, Fee helps clarify.

Nevertheless, although Paul does not identify the Spirit and Christ, he does assume that the same kind of close relationship between the two as exists between the Spirit and God [the Father]. Thus at times he moves easily from the mention of the one to the other. . . This fluid use of language most likely result from the fact that Paul's concern with both Christ and the Spirit is not with the nature of their being God, but with their role in salvation and Christian experience. (Fee, p. 33)

Certainly there is some divine mystery when we think about the relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. These are truths that are difficult to grasp. At the same time they can be very encouraging in your Christian life. In what way do you find this relationship between the Son and Spirit enhances or encourages you spiritually? What is confusing to you?

This study has shown how the Spirit is the very presence of God in the life of the Church and individual believer. "Presence," however, can be a funny word. It is an imprecise term. Can you think of other words that would describe this same reality?

What are the implications of this study for your life and our Church? How does the truth that God himself is present with us in the person of the Spirit strike you as life changing? How will you live your life differently in light of this truth? How should your participation at SBCC and the world be different?

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Study Three

The New Age of the Spirit

For the last 2000 years Christians have seen themselves as living in the “end times.” While we live in this world, we know that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). With the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Spirit, the future victory and destiny of the Christian is guaranteed.

In the New Testament the coming of the Spirit is understood to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise concerning the consummation of God’s Kingdom. With the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost the crowds are amazed as they listen to the believers declaring the wonders of God in different languages (Acts 2). Some, evidently, thought these Christians were drunk. The Apostle Peter stands to address the crowd and makes it very clear that this is a supernatural Spirit event and the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise. He begins by quoting Joel 2:28-32.¹

These men 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 heaven 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.

Peter is saying, **this** (praising God in other languages by the power of the Spirit) is **that** (what the O.T. prophets looked forward to).

The Apostle Paul has this same understanding of the coming of the Spirit.

This is why the Spirit is crucial to Paul's understanding of Christian existence. The gift of the outpoured Spirit meant that the messianic age had already arrived. The Spirit is thus the central element in this altered perspective, the key to which is Paul's firm conviction that the Spirit was both certain evidence that the future had dawned, and the absolute guarantee of its final consummation. (Fee, p. 54)

In the Bible we find **three key metaphors**, unique to Paul, that describe the Spirit's role in assuring future spiritual realities for the believer. Read and ponder this rich material. For each of these scriptures ask yourself;

- 1) What is promised in the future because of the Spirit?
- 2) What current benefits do I presently experience because of this reality right now in my life?

“down payment”¹

- 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
- 2 Corinthians 5:5
- Ephesians 1:14

“firstfruits”²

- Romans 8:23

“seal”³

- 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
 - Ephesians 1:13
-

-
- Ephesians 4:30

Another phrase that describes this new age of the Spirit is **“baptism in the Holy Spirit.”**¹ John the Baptist looks forward to this event with the coming ministry of Jesus; “I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8, the 3 parallels to this verse are; Luke 3:16, Matthew 3:11, John 1:33). There are only three other Scriptures in which the phrase, “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” is found. In Acts 1:5 Jesus reminds his disciples of John’s words in Mark 1:8. Read the other two references. What do they tell you about this baptism? What is the difference between water baptism and Spirit baptism? Have all Christians been Spirit baptized?

- Acts 11:16
- 1 Corinthians 12:13

Respond to this statement by Michael Green.

So baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a second-stage experience for some Christians, but an initiatory experience for all Christians. Without it we are not Christians at all. (Green, p. 141)

We live in a highly individualistic age. Our self-absorbed narcissism makes the individual into a god. The result in our culture is many people are tremendously self-centered in their approach to life. Unfortunately this has had a huge effect on the local church. Gordon Fee draws a picture for us that is all too common.

A single person is sitting at home in front of the TV; a Christian broadcast is on, a sermon is preached, an invitation is given, and the person responds by “accepting Christ.” But the only “church” the person attends is by way of the TV, with no connection to a local body of believers. The question is: Is this person saved? I would answer: Only God knows; but such salvation lies totally outside the New Testament frame of reference. (Fee, p. 63)

With the coming of the new age of the Spirit, God wants to create a new people for himself. This new people would be a community of the Spirit. While we are saved individually, we are saved into a body of believers whose unity is based on faith in Christ and the common experience of being “sealed” or “baptized” by the Spirit.¹

The New Testament is full of admonitions on how we are to relate to “one another” or “each other.” These encouragements are frequent and strongly worded. They point to the reality of the corporate nature of our faith. God is creating a people for his glory.

- Members of one another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25)
- To build up one another (1 Thess. 5:11; Rom. 14:19)
- To love one another (1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3)
- To care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25)
- To pursue one another’s good (1 Thess. 5:15)
- To bear with one another in love (Eph. 4:2)
- To bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- To be kind, compassionate, forgiving to one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13)
- To submit to one another (Eph. 5:21)
- To be devoted to one another in love (Rom. 12:10)
- To live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)

How do these verses inform your understanding of the corporate nature of our salvation? What do they have to say to the evangelical church in America? To SBCC?

What do these verses add to your understanding of how the Spirit is central in creating this new community?

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- Ephesians 2:18-19
 - Ephesians 4:2-6
 - Galatians 4:4-6

Read the quote below from Gordon Fee. How does it challenge you to rethink your understanding of Christian community and the role of the Spirit?

God is not just saving individuals and preparing them for heaven; rather, he is creating a people among whom he can live and who in their life together will reproduce God's life and character. . . The community of God's people owe their life together as a body to their common, lavish experience of the Spirit. (Fee, pp. 66, 67)

Summarize what you have learned in this study. What practical changes will you make in your life from what you have learned? How should this affect your participation at SBCC?

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Study Four

Worship in the Spirit

Mention worship to any Christian and undoubtedly numerous ideas, experiences, images and opinions enter their mind. Praise bands, choirs, responsive readings, the Lord's Supper, Latin, incense, boredom, elation, sermons, prayer. We are living in an era of worship renewal that finds both mainline denominations and new church movements infusing fresh ideas and enthusiasm into corporate worship. Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal movements have had a tremendous influence in churches of all theological and denominational persuasions. But what is worship? When has a church really worshipped? And, for the purposes of this study, what is the role of the Spirit in worship?

Before going any further in this study or looking up any Scripture, make a few notes. First, write a definition of worship. Be ready to read it to your group. Secondly, think about the role of the Spirit in worship. What does the Spirit do in worship? How would worship be different if the Spirit were not present?

Robert Weber, in Worship Old and New, defines worship in a broad sense as a "meeting between God and His people." (Weber, p. 11) Read and ponder the quotes below that describe worship. What do they add to your understanding of worship? What is missing from these statements? What would you like to add?

True worship then is really all there is to becoming a Christian, and the worship service is important because of what it represents in a microcosm. (Donald Hustad, quoted in Allen / Borrer p. 40)

We cannot worship rightly until we recapture as the principle element of worship the overwhelming sense of awe and reverence in the presence of God. (Robert Baily, quoted in Allen / Borrer, p. 40)

Worship should be seen as a dramatic enactment of the relationship that exists between ourselves and God. (Weber, p. 97)

Worship is human response to divine initiative. (Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline, p. 138)

Worshipping God should be a personal realizing of fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit and thereby a realizing of spiritual community with the rest of God's assembled family. (Packer, p. 179)

In the New Testament it is obvious that there is some sort of interaction between the Spirit of God and the spirit of an individual. There is a meeting that takes place between the two. Read Philippians 3:1-7.

What role does the Spirit play in our worship according to this text?

Who are the "circumcision" of verse 3?

What is Paul doing with the contrast he sets up between confidence in the flesh and "worship by the Spirit of God?"

Several passages that we have already looked at in prior studies have a strong bearing on how we understand the role of the Spirit in worship. Look again at the texts below, but this time from the perspective of worship. They all speak of the Spirit's enabling the believer to know, comprehend, internalize the truths of God and our salvation. Summarize the role of the Spirit in these verses. How does the Spirit enable us to worship?

- 1 Corinthians 2:1-16
 - John 16:12-15
 - Romans 8:26-27
-

Try and imagine what corporate worship would look and feel like without the enabling work of the Spirit. How do you suppose it would be different? What would change in our singing, teaching and prayer?

Along with prayer (Romans 8:26-27), singing is a special focus of the Spirit's enabling work in worship. Read these Scriptures. What do they teach concerning the Spirit and singing in worship?

- Ephesians 5:18-19
- Colossians 3:16
- I Corinthians 14:26

Reflect for a moment about the role of the Spirit and singing in our worship. Gordon Fee puts it rather bluntly; "Where the Spirit of God is there is also singing." (Fee, p. 159) Martin Luther, the 16th century leader of the Reformation, makes it clear that singing is to be a part of every Christian's experience.¹

If any would not sing and talk of what Christ has wrought for us, he shows thereby that he does not really believe. (quoted in Allan / Borrer, p. 161)

Singing has always been a part of Spirit-inspired renewal movements in the history of the church. The Reformers introduced singing back into their churches, often taking contemporary tunes from the tavern and inserting Christian lyrics ("A Mighty Fortress"). During the Wesleyan revivals of the 18th century, Charles Wesley wrote literally thousands of hymns, warming the hearts of believers and teaching theology by way of poetry. ("And Can It Be?") Discuss and respond to the following quotation.

Again and again in Scripture we are commanded and admonished to sing to the Lord. Singing for those redeemed by the grace of God should not be an obligation; rather, it is a freely given expression. It seems totally inconsistent to be a joyful believer and a non-singer! When a non-singer becomes a Christian, he or she becomes a singer. Not all are blessed with a finely tuned ear and well modulated voice; so the sound may not be superb-it may even be out-of-tune and off-key. Remember: worship and service are a state of heart, musical sound is a state of art. Let's not make the mistake of confusing them. (Allen / Borrer, p. 157)

Since it is the Spirit who enables the church to worship God, it follows that we should do everything we can to be open, receptive, responsive and embracing of the Spirit's leading. "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). Think through our worship in SBCC. How can we be receptive to the work of the Spirit? How can **you** make yourself more available and receptive to the work of the Spirit? How in the words of Robert Weber can we have a "recovery of the power of the Holy Spirit?"

Clearly worship renewal does not consist of moving chairs in circle, rearranging the order of worship, or finding new gimmicks. The heart of worship renewal is a recovery of the power of the Holy Spirit who enables the congregation to offer praise and thanksgiving to God. (Weber, p. 196)

A part of Spirit-led corporate worship is spontaneity. Worship must be planned but not overly planned. Worship is a Spirit-led family affair, not a performance by professionals.

Worshipping God should be a personal realizing of fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit and thereby a realizing of spiritual community with the rest of God's assembled family. So when the congregation meets, the liturgical structure of worship must be loose enough to allow for spontaneous contributions and ad libs and sufficiently relaxed, informal, and slow moving to let all bask in the sense of togetherness with God and each other. (Packer, p. 179)

Are we allowing enough room for the Spirit to work in our worship at SBCC?

Imagine you have been gone for the weekend and missed Sunday worship. During the week you see a friend from church or show up at your mid-week home group and you

might ask them, “How was worship on Sunday?” What are you asking? How should we evaluate our worship?

6HUP RQ□ RW□□□□

Study Five

Living the Spirit Life

When a young couple comes home from the hospital with that little bundle of joy, they have no idea what is in store for them. Long leisurely walks on the beach, a calm romantic dinner followed by a late movie, sleeping in on Saturday morning, well, these pleasures of life will be more difficult to experience. Life has changed. Another individual has invaded their existence. Children completely change a person's life. There is now the presence of a small person who will demand that he or she be taken into consideration at all times. The presence of a baby changes everything!

The Christian enjoys the presence of God himself in the person of the Spirit. This reality changes everything. The Spirit changes our lives infinitely more than the presence of a new baby, spouse, roommate, or job. Because of the presence of the Spirit, we can actually live the Christian life.¹ When we are "saved" by Christ, we are called to live the life of a "saved" person. The New Testament shows very little patience for believers who are now "justified" by the sacrifice of Christ and who continue living a life that, for all practical purposes, ignores the reality that they are Spirit people. The presence of the Spirit changes everything!

In Galatians 5:13-26, we find a crucial portion of Scripture that makes clear the central role the Spirit plays in living out our new life in Christ. Earlier in this letter Paul has shown displeasure with these believers for attempting to live the Christian life without the Spirit.

"Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Galatians 3:3)

Read carefully Galatians 5:13-26. How does this passage make clear that the Spirit is the key to living an ethical Christian life?

What type of changed behavior does this passage describe?

The key to living the Christian life is the Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says:

“So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (NIV)

Compare the NASB:

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.” (NASB)

In 5:25 we are instructed :

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (NIV)

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (NASB)

Paul is again using one of his favorite verbs to describe the Christian life (“to walk” is used 17 times by Paul). “To walk” was a common term used in Judaism which described a person’s entire manner of life. Paul now applies it to the ethical life of a believer. What does it mean to “walk” or “keep in step” with the Spirit? What does it mean for you at this period in your life?

In our Galatians text we find a clear description of “Spirit people” and their lifestyle. The broad range of behaviors and attitudes listed are referred to as the “fruit of the Spirit” (Vs. 22).¹ Notice that, before we are introduced to the fruit the Spirit produces, we have a list of behaviors that spring from our sinful nature (5:19-21). Compare the two lists. What stands out? Look beyond the obvious. How are these two lists different? Characterize and contrast these two approaches to life.

The text makes it very clear that Spirit people are to have a lifestyle that is consistent with the presence of the Spirit in their life. Think through the list below. Describe in your own words each of these “fruits.” Pick the one “fruit” that is most a part of your life

and another “fruit” that you find most difficult to incorporate into your daily experience. What are some of the hindrances that keep you from incorporating this into your life? What can you do about this?

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

Most Christians probably will think of this list as it concerns their individual lives. Notice, however, that the items here do not have so much to do with the individual believer but with the life of the corporate body, the church. We are called to bear fruit as individuals, but for the purpose of building up the body. How does this change or alter your thinking about the “fruit?”

Some doing this study may feel a sense of despair; “Gosh, my life doesn’t look like that list!” Consider the following.

When we receive the Spirit at conversion divine perfection does not set in, but divine “infection” does! We have been invaded by the living God himself, in the person of his Spirit, whose goal is to infect us thoroughly with God’s own likeness. Paul’s phrase for this infection is the fruit of the Spirit. The coming of the Spirit, with the renewing of our minds, gives us a heavenly appetite for this fruit. The growing of this fruit is the long way on the journey of Christian conversion, the “long obedience in the same direction,” and it is altogether the work of the Spirit in our lives. Life at a lower level is no advertisement for the future! (Fee, p. 112)

Do you have a sense of “divine infection” in your life? What does this “infection” feel like? What is the evidence of this infection?

In living the Spirit life we are called to be holy. The apostle Peter quotes the Old Testament book of Leviticus in making this point. “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1;15,16) The word “holy” in the Bible carries with it the idea of being set apart or separate.¹ Christians are to be set apart in their lives because of their new relationship with God. Read the scriptures listed below. What do they teach about holy living? How is holy living characterized? What is the relationship between holy living and the Spirit?²

- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
- Romans 8:11-12
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19
- Hebrews 12:14
- Titus 2:11-12

Read Ephesians 4:20 – 5:20 (notice especially, 4:30, 5:18). In the quest to live a holy life in the Spirit we run into a problem that has confounded Christians for centuries. Does holy living require my effort or does it just “happen” because the Spirit is in my life? In other words, what is the relation between my will, effort, discipline and the Spirit’s presence? We will tackle this problem again in study 7, but let us start the conversation now. Reflecting on both the verses above and this statement by J. I. Packer, begin to think through this issue.

Holy habits, though formed in the natural manner I have described, by self-discipline and effort, are not natural products. The discipline and effort must be

blessed by the Holy Spirit, or they will achieve nothing. So all our attempts to get our lives in shape need to be soaked in constant prayer that acknowledges our inability to change ourselves and in thanksgiving recognize that as Harriet Auber put it: *every virtue we possess, And every victory won, And every thought of holiness Are his [the Spirit's] alone.* Holiness by habit forming is not self-sanctification by self-effort, but is simply a matter of understanding the Spirit's method and then keeping in step with him. (Packer, p. 109, 110)

After working through this study what changes do you need to make in your thinking?
Are you self-consciously living the Spirit life?

Take time to pray for one another in this regard.

6HUP RQ□ RW□□□□

Everyone loves getting a gift. Whether it is Christmas or a birthday we can't wait to rip off the wrapping and see what is inside. Almost immediately we decide if we like this gift or it will be returned to the store for a different size, color or style. Gifts like these are tangible. We can hold them and try them on (if clothes) or try them out (if golf clubs). Spiritual gifts are not like this. They are less concrete, and they can't be exchanged! But are of infinitely more value than the gizmo that we get from the mall.

What are spiritual gifts? There are two important words that describe spiritual gifts. The first word is *charismata*. It is derived from the word *charis* which simply means "grace." *Charismata* is literally, "gracious giftings" (1 Cor. 12:4). The second word is, *pneumatika*. It is derived from *pneuma* which is the word for spirit or Spirit, depending on the context. *Pneumatika* means, "things of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:1, 14:1). The New Testament teaches that God's people are given gifts from the Spirit to strengthen his church and bring glory to his name.¹

We are living in an era in which Christians have had a keen interest in spiritual gifts.

One of the fads among evangelicals in the final decades of the twentieth century has been that of finding your spiritual gift. There has hardly been a church or youth group that did not have such a conference or seminar. While I appreciate the motivation behind this movement, that each of us recognize and appreciate our role in the church, nonetheless the New Testament scholar in me winced on more than one occasion. I could not imagine Paul understanding what was going on at all! (Fee, p. 163)

Understanding spiritual gifts is not quite as neat and tidy as we might like. To know how you are gifted spiritually is more complex than the taking a gift inventory test. Spiritual gifts are an area where there is great diversity of opinion by both scholars and churches. Volumes have been written on the subject. Most pastors, even with modest libraries, have many books that deal with the subject. When we study biblical ideas that are difficult, it is always best to start with the big picture and emphasize what is clear.

These are the key portions of Scripture that deal with spiritual gifts.¹ Read these slowly and make some preliminary observations. What is clear about the gifts? What is confusing?

- Romans 12:4-8

- 1 Peter 4:10-11

- 1 Corinthians 12-14 (The best way to understand Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth is to read about the gifts in a broader context of all three of these chapters.)

One of the first and more important questions we can ask is; Why does the Spirit gift his people? What is the purpose of these gifts? Look at these verses in light of the context of the passage.

- 1 Corinthians 12:7
- 1 Peter 4:10
- Romans 12:4

One question that comes to mind in any discussion of spiritual gifts is: How many gifts are there? When you read the various lists in the Scriptures above, it quickly becomes obvious that no two lists are exactly alike. At points they overlap or omit. Classic

Pentecostal thinkers have always referred to the “nine spiritual gifts.” In responding to the question ‘How many different gifts are there?’ John Stott replies,

At least twenty are specified in the New Testament, and the living God who loves variety and is a generous giver may well bestow many, many more than that. (quoted in Griffiths, p. 18)

It is important to remember that none of the lists are intended to be an exhaustive or systematic presentation of everything that might be called a “spiritual gift.” In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul’s primary concern was to correct the misuse of the gift of tongues, and not to lay out a carefully constructed doctrine of gifts. It is quite possible that Paul would be completely surprised by contemporary efforts to make lists and categorize them into convenient groupings. Let’s have some fun anyway! Write a list of the gifts you see in these texts.¹ For the sake of this study leave out Ephesians 4:11-13. Which gifts do you understand? Which gifts confuse? Alongside your list give an example of how this gift could be used at SBCC.

As we have already noted, we are living in a day where there is a revival in the interest and use of spiritual gifts. There have been long periods in the history of the church when an awareness and practicing of the gifts declined and they fell into disuse. George Malone in, Those Controversial Gifts, suggests three reasons why gifts went through periods of decline and disuse. (Malone, p. 24-25)

1. The rise of **clericalism** within the church and the institutionalization of the spiritual life had a huge impact on the gifts. Malone quotes James Thomson; “That led inevitably to institutional ecclesiasticism, and the inevitable corresponding loss of the church’s awareness of the Spirit’s presence and experience of the Spirit’s power.”

2. The rise of **scientism**, which was a world view that no longer needed God. God's presence and ability to intervene in human affairs was denied.

3. John Calvin, the 16th century Swiss reformer, says that these gifts were lost out to **ingratitude**. The church became more and more pagan and lost touch with gracious Spirit that had gifted the church.

Do you see any of these influences operating in your life?

Who gets these spiritual gifts? Go back over the above Scriptures that we have read. Notice that it is God, in his sovereignty, who gives these gifts to "each one." (1 Cor. 12:7) Is there any such thing as a Christian who is not gifted by the Spirit?

How would you respond to someone in your group who says that they don't feel like they have received any gifts from the Spirit?

Is it important is it that we all know exactly what our gifts are? Is it possible to live the Christian life, use the Spirit's gifting in your life, and not even be aware of the exact nature of your giftedness?

The implications of the Spirit's gifting for the life of the local church are astounding. What happens to a local body if members are not using their Spirit-endowed giftedness for the good of the body?¹ In answering this question, reflect on this statement by New Testament scholar Leon Morris.

...the local ministry could be exercised only because its members also possessed a *charisma*. The New Testament does not envisage any ministry carried out apart from God's good gift. It is also to be borne in mind that all church members had a "ministry" of some sort. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man" (1 Corinthians 12:7) says Paul as he proceeds to the subject of ministering, and other references make it quite plain that this is no idle expression. Thus when he is giving directions for public worship, the same writer can say, "when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine..." (quoted in Griffiths, p. 69)

The gifts are all forms of service for the local church. They point to Paul's constant concern with relationships within the church and the spiritual maturity of the body. Most of these gifts (serving, giving, teaching, encouraging) are fairly easy to understand and picture how they would be used in the life of a church. It is the more extraordinary gifts, the seemingly miraculous manifestations, tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy and healing that can cause confusion and disagreements among believers. Here are a few comments and questions concerning what George Malone has termed, "Those Controversial Gifts."

Tongues / Interpretation – The use of this gift caused considerable problems in the church at Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul attempts to correct the misuse of this gift. Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee makes the following observations.

1. Whatever else, it is Spirit inspired utterance; that is made plain by 1 Corinthians 12:7 and 11 and 14:2. As with all Spirit-empowered activity, Paul held it in high regard *in its proper place*.
2. The regulations for its community use in 14:27-28 make it clear that the speaker is not ecstatic or out of control. Quite the opposite: the speakers must speak in turn, and they must remain silent if there is no one to interpret.
3. It is speech essentially unintelligible both to the speaker (14:14) and to other hearers (14:16), which is why it must be interpreted in the assembly.
4. It is speech directed basically toward God (14:2, 14-15, 28)
5. As a gift of private prayer, Paul held it in the highest regard (14:4, 5, 17-18).

Paul shows considerable ambivalence toward this gift. On the one hand, with regard to its use in the public assembly, although he does not condemn it, he is obviously not keen on it. In any case, tongues should not occur at all if there is

not an interpretation. On the other hand, as a gift of private prayer and utterance, Paul speaks of tongues quite favorably, obviously a topic that for Paul is very personal and private. The breakdown for him has occurred when what is personal and private comes into the public assembly, since it has no facility for strengthening the others. Here again the central focus on corporate life comes to the fore. (Fee, p. 170)

Share with the group how tongues / interpretation of tongues has been clarified for you. What remains unclear?

Prophecy – Of all the gifts, prophecy is the one mentioned most often (7 times). Michael Green points out that prophecy was very widespread in the New Testament.

...not only in Jerusalem and Caesaria, but in Antioch Acts 11:27, 13:1), Corinth, Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5:19,20) and the churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 1:3). Both Luke and Matthew indicate that Jesus anticipated a continuation of prophecy among His followers (Matt. 10:41f.; Luke 11:49). (Green, p. 169)

To many, the idea of “prophecy” conjures up images of bearded Old Testament figures foretelling the future. In our day one may picture an individual standing in a worship meeting and shouting, “Thus says the Lord...” Both of these caricatures miss the point. Fee gives a clear and simple definition of prophecy.

The prophet [in the Old Testament] spoke to God’s people under the inspiration of the Spirit. In Paul such speech consists of spontaneous, understandable messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people. (Fee, p. 171)

When is the last time you heard a “prophecy” that fits this description? How did it affect your life?

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul is very favorably disposed to the gift of prophecy. Why? What does the gift of prophecy do for the church?

Is it possible that at SBCC when an individual “shares” in either a home group or on a Sunday afternoon, that the person may at times be exercising the gift of prophecy, by delivering a Spirit-inspired word of encouragement?

In 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, Paul tells us: “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” How should a church go about testing the gift of prophecy?

Healing – Again, as with any of the more extraordinary gifts, it is easy to have one’s understanding swayed by bizarre examples. When you think of the gift of healing and all you can picture is the almost comical gyrations of Benny Hinn your understanding of this gift is doomed to be skewed.¹ Healing is a gift that God has given to members of the body to enable them to act as agents of his compassion and love. The gift is probably most often exercised through simple prayer.

What have you learned about Spirit gifts from this study? Have any of your preconceived ideas changed?

How will this study change how you function at SBCC?

6HUP RQ□ RW□□□□

Christians are people who look forward to the future. The future is a time when God will rule and reign in such a way that, “There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away.” (Rev. 21:4) In the present we live in the real world where there is a struggle, a virtual warfare in our life to actually experience this new life with Christ. While Christians are invaded by the presence of God in the person of the Spirit, they continue to have a conflict with their sin nature (Romans 6:1-14). The tension for believers is between the Spirit and the flesh, between living *kata sarka* (“according to the flesh”) and *kata pneuma* (“according to the Spirit”). This tension, for many, is the cause of tremendous pain and frustration, even a sense of helplessness. At the same time we may run into believers who claim that all sin has been eradicated from their heart and that they no longer struggle!¹ Before going any further in this study or looking at any Scripture, ask yourself a question. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about your ability to be successful in living the Christian life in the power of the Spirit? Be ready to share your answer with the group.

The New Testament often uses the word “flesh” (*sarx*) to describe our fallen or sinful humanity. We often find the “flesh” contrasted with the “Spirit” or new life in Christ. “Flesh” is not always the easiest word for Bible translators to work with. The NIV often uses “sinful nature.”² Read carefully the verses listed below that talk about this flesh-Spirit contrast. How do they describe this conflict? What do these verses tell us about living the Christian life?

- 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
- Galatians 5:16-17
- Romans 7:4-6

-
- 1 Corinthians 3:1¹
 - Philippians 3:3
 - Romans 8:5-9

Does your study of these verses make you more optimistic about living the Spirit life? Why? Why not?

Gordon Fee points out that, “Life in the Spirit is not just a stroll in the park.” (Fee, p. 132) What does he mean by this? Respond to his statement below.

Life in the Spirit is not passive; nor is obedience automatic. We continue to live in the real world; we are, after all, both already and not yet. Therefore the imperative for the already is walk in/by the Spirit. That assumes that we live in a world very much controlled by the flesh; but it also assumes that we now live in that world as different people, led by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit to produce fruit of righteousness, rather than to continue in the works of the flesh. (Fee, p. 133)

Very few efforts are more frustrating than the attempt to do something without the corresponding ability or power to accomplish the task. No one can drive a car without gas, the human body doesn't run without food, and lights don't turn on without electricity. In a similar fashion, we can not live the Christian life without the empowering presence of the Spirit. In the New Testament there is a close link between the Spirit's presence and power. Jesus says to his disciples, “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” (Acts 1:8). We know after the coming of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, this rather impotent band of disciples were transformed into an aggressive and empowered band of missionaries who turned their world upside down. Often the Bible will contrast human weakness with Spirit power.

Read these verses. What do they tell you about power from the Spirit? What do they have to say to the believer who is feeling “weak” in her ability to live the Christian life?

- 1 Corinthians 2:3-5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6
- Romans 15:13; 17-19

In Ephesians 5:18-19 we find Paul’s command to “be filled with the Spirit.”¹ The present tense makes it clear that this filling is not a one-time event, but rather to be a continuous supernatural replenishment. Literally the verse could be translated, “go on being filled” or “keep on being filled.” Comprehending this verse is crucial for our understanding of power and Christian living.

Describe how the filling of the Spirit has manifest itself in your life.

Do you think that Paul was encouraging his readers in this letter to enter into a new experience; “Up to now you have not been filled with the Spirit, but you must start to be so.” Or is he saying, “Of course you have been filled with the Spirit and I want you to keep on being filled.” ?

How often can a Christian be filled with the Spirit?

How do you know if you are being filled with the Spirit?

Paul uses a shocking illustration to make his point. Drunkenness was a rampant problem in the first century. This sin even crept into the church (1 Corinthians 11:21). What does Paul intend with this very graphic illustration. What are the parallels between being filled with alcohol and being filled with Spirit?

Michael Green gives us a clear definition of being filled with the Spirit. How does this help in your understanding of being filled? Is there anything you would like to add?

To be filled with the Spirit means to allow Jesus to have the fullest control in our lives that we are conscious of. In so far as we do that, we will always be finding new areas of self centredness to surrender as the Lord who is Spirit possesses us more and more fully. To such submission all Christians are called. And it is no once and for all transaction: “go on being filled with the Spirit” is the meaning of the original.

Thus, while baptism in the Spirit is the initial experience of Christ brought about by the Spirit in response to repentance, faith and baptism, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is intended to be the continual state of the Christian. (Green, p. 153)

What would need to happen in your life to enable you to experience the filling of the Spirit on a consistent basis?

Read Ephesians 4:29-30. What does it mean to “grieve the Holy Spirit”? How do you tend to do this?

Think through this seven week study. Take a few minutes and scan these pages. What has surprised you? What new insights have you gained about the presence of the Spirit in your life? What changes have you experienced in your life as a result of this study? What changes would you like to see in the coming weeks and months?
