

# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

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## Journal Questions

LESSON  
ONE

IN THE TRINITY



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## Journal Questions

1. Systematic theologians traditionally define the Trinity by saying that, “God has three persons, but only one essence.” In your own words, how would you explain the Trinity to someone who is struggling to understand it?
2. In his book, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity*, B.B. Warfield compared the Old Testament to a room that is richly furnished but poorly lit. What did he mean?
3. Do Old Testament names like “Spirit of God” or “my Spirit” directly refer to the third person of the Trinity? Explain your answer.
4. What evidence do we have in the Old Testament that God’s Spirit is personal rather than just a force or power? Why is the Spirit’s personhood important for us in the church today?
5. In Jesus’ Farewell Discourse in John 14-16, Jesus called the Holy Spirit “the Counselor.” This has also been translated as “the Comforter,” “the Helper,” or “the Advocate.” In what way has the Spirit been a Counselor/Comforter/Helper/Advocate in your own life?
6. What does it mean that the Spirit is both divine and personal? How might this fact be used as you teach and disciple others?
7. What happened at Pentecost? Does anything similar happen today? Explain your answer.
8. Do you think doctrinal statements such as the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed are still important for the church today? Why or why not?
9. Describe some of the worship practices in your church and whether they do or do not include the Holy Spirit. Should the way we worship the Holy Spirit be different from the way we worship the Father and the Son? Explain your answer.
10. What is the Holy Spirit’s role in the Trinity? How has your understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in the Trinity changed over the course of this lesson?
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

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## Journal Questions

LESSON  
TWO

IN THE WORLD



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## Journal Questions

1. Genesis 1:2 uses the metaphor of a powerful bird caring for its young to describe the Spirit's work in creation. How does this powerful metaphor affect your view of God's love for you and the rest of his creation?
2. How would you respond to someone who believes that God created the world and then left it alone to function on its own?
3. Read Psalm 104. Write your own poem or song praising the Holy Spirit for his works of creation and providence.
4. What counsel would you give to someone who believes that the Holy Spirit sometimes violates people's wills or pushes them to do sinful things?
5. Several passages in Scripture describe God as a potter and human beings as clay, and these all conclude that the potter has the right to make whatever he wants with his clay. Does this mean that we aren't responsible for our actions? Explain your answer.
6. The lesson discusses three traditional understandings of the Holy Spirit's providential work in bringing people to faith in Christ. Which view do you think best represents the teachings of Scripture? Why?
7. Give some examples from your own life of times when the Holy Spirit revealed God to you through: 1) the natural world, 2) illumination and inward leading, 3) Scripture, or 4) some other means. How might you use these examples as you teach or disciple others?
8. How can we determine if our thoughts, emotions, visions, and interpretations of Scripture come from the Holy Spirit? Why is it important for us to distinguish between the inward leading and illumination that come from the Holy Spirit and the thoughts and feelings that just naturally come to us?
9. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit still performs miracles in the world today? Why or why not?
10. What evidence of the Holy Spirit's common grace do you see in the world today? What do you think the world would be like without the Spirit's work of promoting goodness and restraining evil?
11. How does the Spirit's ministry of common grace promote life? How might you use this understanding of the Spirit's ministry to share the gospel with an unbeliever?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

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## Journal Questions

LESSON  
THREE

IN THE CHURCH



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### Journal Questions

1. Why is it important for us to recognize that Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church constitute a single, continuous covenant people?
2. Is it fair and/or right that the Holy Spirit's covenant grace includes greater patience, forbearance and mercy for the church than for the rest of humanity? Explain your answer.
3. The Old Testament teaches that God was always faithful to his covenant, even when the nation of Israel was unfaithful. What does this mean to you personally? What should it mean for the church corporately?
4. There are both believers and unbelievers in the church, so some who have received the Spirit's covenant grace will still be condemned in the final judgment. How should this fact affect the way we minister in our churches?
5. How would you respond to someone who claims that Scripture was written by human authors alone who were simply urged by the Holy Spirit to write?
6. How would you respond to someone who claims that the Holy Spirit dictated every word of Scripture, and the human authors of Scripture just wrote down what the Spirit told them to write?
7. Think about a time when you made a formal agreement (or covenant) with another person or entity. What was the purpose of the agreement? What were the terms? In what ways was your agreement similar to God's covenant with his people? In what ways was it different?
8. Paul taught that the purpose of spiritual gifts was to build up the church. How are you currently using your gifts to benefit the people of God? How might you encourage others in your church to do the same?
9. Imagine what it was like on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the entire church. How is your experience in the church today similar to and different from the day of Pentecost?
10. Do the Spirit's more spectacular gifts — like miracles, healing, and prophecy — continue today, or have these gifts now ceased? Explain your answer.
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

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## Journal Questions

LESSON  
FOUR

IN THE BELIEVER



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## Journal Questions

1. Reflect on your conversion. What were the circumstances the Spirit used to bring you from a state of spiritual death to spiritual life?
2. What has the Spirit used to convict you of sin? Should the church play an active role in convicting people of sin? Why or why not?
3. Scripture tells us that all human beings, even redeemed human beings, don't just sin occasionally; we sin all the time. So, in regard to sin, what is the difference between someone who is redeemed and someone who isn't?
4. How can we become aware of sin's repulsiveness without becoming judgmental and harsh toward other fallen human beings?
5. Recall a time when someone or something greatly offended you. How did you feel? How did you respond? In what ways does this experience help you understand God's response to sin?
6. Does the fact that we are completely dependent on God's grace for forgiveness and salvation mean that we should do *nothing* to try and please God? Explain your answer.
7. In Ephesians 1:14, Paul tells us that we have received the Holy Spirit as "a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance." How does this affect you personally? How might you use this truth as you teach and disciple those around you?
8. Through sanctification, the Spirit purifies us and makes us holy. In what ways should our sanctification change us, including how we act, think and interact with others?
9. Why do you think that the Holy Spirit doesn't completely remove sin's corruption and influence from our lives when we are regenerated?
10. How have you matured throughout your ongoing sanctification? Where would you like to see greater growth and maturity in yourself in the future?
11. What does the Spirit's ministry of intercession mean to you? Describe a time or times when this ministry has been particularly important or precious to you.
12. How might you use Scripture references that point to the Holy Spirit's work of preservation to counsel someone who is in a state of spiritual doubt?
13. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?