

Abiding In Christ

Lesson 4

Abiding in Christ through the Holy Spirit

Leader Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

David R. Steele

This lesson is a free download from Leader Guide Bible Studies and is not for resale.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®

Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™

Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Lesson 4

Abiding in Christ through the Holy Spirit

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16-17)

Prayers

Introduction

The thoughts of always abiding in Christ, having God's Spirit in us, and being his dearly beloved child are too wonderful to fully understand, but they are the gifts God has promised to us through the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, we will look at God's gift of the Holy Spirit and how his Spirit keeps us securely in Christ. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a gift and is the only occurrence of the Greek word "dorea" in the Bible (John 4:10). The word "dorea" conveys the idea of a gift that is incomprehensibly wonderful and beyond measure. The Holy Spirit is God's incomprehensibly good gift given to us. Every Spiritual gift we have received comes to us through the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ.

1. In the parable of the vine and branches, Jesus carefully illustrates the relationship between the Father, himself, and the believer but does not mention the role of the Holy Spirit. Read the illustration again and ask yourself where the Holy Spirit is in the story.

Jn 15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

Jn 15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

Jn 15:3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Jn 15:4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Jn 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

The Holy Spirit would be the life-giving sap flowing through the vine and the branches. Without nourishment through the vine, the branch cannot bear fruit. Likewise, we are spiritually fruitful when we abide in Christ and are nourished by the Holy Spirit.

2. Martin Luther's discussion of the Apostle's Creed provides a concise and insightful explanation of the Holy Spirit. Read his discussion of the Apostle's Creed below:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Luther writes in the Shorter Catechism: What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly

forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

- a. Refer to the following scriptures and discuss why Luther said we cannot come to believe in Christ by our own reason or strength.

^{1Co 1:23} but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ^{1Co 1:24} but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ^{1Co 1:25} For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

^{2Th 2:13} But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ^{2Th 2:14} He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

^{Eph 2:8} For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ^{Eph 2:9} not by works, so that no one can boast.

We cannot come to faith in Jesus Christ unless God first reveals his plan of salvation to us through his Holy Spirit, the gospel, or the testimony of others. Faith in Christ as our Savior is God's gift to us. This truth is apparent when we share our faith with others, who reject it as foolishness. God's plan of salvation for us since before creation, the virgin birth, God's incarnation as Jesus, and Jesus' sacrificial death for our sin and all sin for all time, eternal life, and Christ's second coming sound like foolishness to them. Others demand a sign from God despite Jesus' many miracles and fulfillment of the scriptures.

- b. How are we assured of our faith by our inability to come to Christ by our own reason?

We can be assured that we are united with Christ because God gives us our faith in Jesus Christ. Even though God's plan of salvation through faith in His Son Jesus Christ is simple, it sounds foolish to others to whom God has not revealed it. The sacrificial life of Christ is so precious that God leaves nothing to chance in our salvation. He chose us, revealed his plan of salvation, gave us our faith, and gave us his Spirit to keep us in him.

Baptism

3. The Holy Spirit works in the heart and minds of believers to bring them to faith in Christ and is God's gift to us at baptism. Luther reminded his parishioners they should remember the gifts of their baptism daily. Read the following scriptures and discuss the promises and benefits we receive through the Holy Spirit at baptism.
 - a. Faith in Christ and baptism give eternal life / salvation.

^{Mk 16:16} **Whoever believes [in Christ] and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

- b. The holy Spirit gives birth to spirit (his spirit) so that we can enter the kingdom of God.

Jn 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

Jn 3:6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

- c. Christ saved us; the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual rebirth and renewal so that we might have eternal life

Tit 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,

Tit 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Tit 3:6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Tit 3:7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

- d. We are baptized into Christ so we are called sons/children of God, one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,

Gal 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- e. Through baptism, we receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Ac 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- f. Through baptism, we are figuratively buried with Christ so that we are spiritually raised from the dead to live a new life.

Ro 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Ro 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Sealed in Baptism

4. Although the Holy Spirit brings us faith in Christ, God gives us the gift of his Spirit at baptism. We receive the gift of the Spirit and are sealed with him. Read Ephesians 1:13-14 and put into your own words what it means to you to be sealed with the Holy Spirit and the assurance this gives you.

Eph 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Eph 1:14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Being sealed with the Holy Spirit means that God will never abandon or leave me. He will always be present to guide, comfort, and pray for me. I should not fear anything but be assured of God's love and provision.

5. How does the presence of the Holy Spirit give us complete assurance?

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual rebirth in Christ so that we will always be his until we join Christ in heaven. Baptism and the Holy Spirit are real gifts from God to assure our salvation, but we cannot take our baptism for granted and need to look to the Holy Spirit to renew our hearts and minds so that we do good things to glorify Christ in our lives.

6. Read Ephesians 4:30-5:5 and Galatians 5:19-21. How is the Holy Spirit grieved?

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Eph 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Eph 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children

Eph 5:2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Eph 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Eph 5:4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Eph 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Gal 5:19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit living in us and is grieved by sin and malice toward others. Ephesians 5:5 lists sins that are especially grievous to the Holy Spirit, including; sexual immorality, greed and idolatry. God will forgive our sins when we confess and repent from them but some sins, like sexual immorality, are so grievous that a person cannot continue to practice them and consider themselves a Christian

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter.

In John 14:16, Jesus says, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever (KJV)." Other Bible versions of this same verse read, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another - Comforter (King James), Companion (CEB), Helper (ESV), Counselor (NIV, RSV), Advocate (NLT, NRSV), comforting Counselor (CJB), that He may remain with you

forever.” This Comforter that Jesus speaks of is the Holy Spirit. The differences in translation stem from the understanding of the Greek word “paraclete.”

7. John is the only gospel writer to refer to the Holy Spirit as the paraclete (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7). All the references occur after the Last Supper before Jesus’ arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Paraclete has two meanings in Greek and Latin; an Advocate or One who gives aid and comfort. An advocate is a legal counselor representing an accused person in a court of law. When paraclete is used as one who provides comfort, it conveys the sense of someone who comes alongside the other person to provide consolation and assurance. Based on the context in John 14, how did John mean to describe the Holy Spirit?

Jn 14:15 “If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Jn 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

Jn 14:17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Jn 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Jn 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

In the context of his impending death, Jesus is probably referring to the holy Spirit as the one who will come alongside to comfort the disciples. The Holy Spirit would remind them of Jesus’ teaching, give them the bond of unity with Christ and the Father, and comfort them during their grief with the peace that transcends all understanding.

8. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the breath of God (Job 27:3) and living water (John 4:10). What do breath and water have in common? What does this tell you about the importance of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Breath and water are essential for life. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no spiritual life with God; He is essential to our life.

The Holy Spirit is our Guide

Read the following passages and summarize the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

9. The work of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of Christ’s teachings.

Jn 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

1Co 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1Co 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

10. The work of the Holy Spirit is to **convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.**

Jn 16:7 **But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.**

Jn 16:8 **When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:**

Jn 16:9 **in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;**

Jn 16:10 **in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;**

Jn 16:11 **and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.**

11. The work of the Holy Spirit is to **reveal God's plan of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ.**

1Co 2:12 **We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.**

12. The work of the Holy Spirit is to establish the Church. The Holy Spirit filled 3,000 God-fearing Jews with his Spirit to establish the church in Jerusalem. Miraculous signs of wind, fire, and speaking in other languages accompanied the Spirit's presence. Later, the Holy Spirit filled Gentiles with signs of speaking in tongues in Caesarea as Peter was preaching the gospel. Peter baptized them, establishing the church among the Gentiles.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of having dinner with a pastor of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church and asked him how his church was growing so rapidly. I expected him to give an account of the miraculous signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit. Instead, he described how the Holy Spirit was at work among the people in other ways. Late one evening, the pastor received a knock on his door from a Muslim friend dying from AIDS. His friend told him he had given his heart to Christ and would like the pastor to pray for him. He instructed the pastor to bury him in the Muslim cemetery so his family would not be persecuted. The pastor agreed but told his friend that he would have to give his testimony of conversion and repentance to the congregation. The man agreed, and when he told the congregation he had given his heart to Christ but would soon die, the congregation shouted, "No! you will not die!" They gathered a collection and went home for more money so the man could afford transportation to a larger city and receive treatment for AIDS. The treatment was successful; the man is an elder in their congregation. Sometimes we look for miracles, overlooking the greatest miracle of all by the Holy Spirit, the transformation of a heart given to Christ.

How have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life or the life of your congregation?

Spiritual gifts of joy, kindness?
The bond of unity and fellowship?
Acts of charity, mercy?
Conviction, repentance, and forgiveness?

Spiritual transformation?
Power to witness and evangelize?
Power to comfort and give peace?
Discernment, leadership?

13. Unity is one of the signs that the Holy Spirit is working in a church, and unity in Christ is a theme in nearly every New Testament letter. Jews and Gentiles despised each other and did not associate with each other, but we made brothers in Christ. All believers entered the kingdom of heaven without distinction. Paul wrote to the Galatians, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus Galatians” (3:26-28).

Just as God redeemed his people through Christ, He gave his Spirit to unify and make them one body in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the bond of fellowship between the Father and Son and all believers. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit —just as you were called to one hope when you were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:3-6).

What relationships need to be reconciled through the Holy Spirit in your life or your congregation?

The Holy Spirit, the Gift Bearer

14. The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts on all believers to build up Christ’s body, the church. Read several of Paul’s lists of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and discuss how your unique gifts lead you into service for Christ.

Romans 12:4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- a. What gifts does Paul list in Romans 12?
 - i. Verse 6 **Prophesying**
 - ii. Verse 7a **Serving**

- iii. Verse 7b **Teaching**
- iv. Verse 8a **Encouraging**
- v. Verse 8b **Giving**
- vi. Verse 8c **Leading**

1 Corinthians 12:4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

- b. What gifts does Paul list in 1 Corinthians 12
 - i. Verse 8a **wisdom**
 - ii. Verse 8b **knowledge**
 - iii. Verse 9a **faith**
 - iv. Verse 9b **healing**
 - v. Verse 10a **miraculous powers!**
 - vi. Verse 10b **prophecy (the ability to apply God's word)**
 - vii. Verse 10c, d **speaking in tongues and interpretation**
- c. The differences in the lists indicate that Paul aims to illustrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not to include them all. How do your unique gifts and talents lead you into service for Christ.

Allow time for the class to reflect on their gifts.

The Holy Spirit and Prayer

15. Another work of the Holy Spirit is to guide our prayers. Read the following verses and summarize how the Holy Spirit assures you that God hears your prayers.

Ro 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Ro 8:27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Eph 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

1 Corinthians 2:10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The Holy Spirit assures us that God hears our prayers because he is God's Spirit living in us and knows our thoughts and needs. He teaches us to pray and prays for us when we do not know what to pray for.

Closing Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven,

Thank you for giving me your Spirit so I can abide in you.

Forgive me for grieving your Spirit by conforming to the world in my thoughts and actions.

I pray for your Spirit to intercede for me so that my sins are forgiven.

I pray for your Spirit to teach me your ways so I will walk in your truth.

I pray that your Spirit renews my mind, so I am more like Christ.

I pray for your Spirit to guide me to use the gifts you have blessed me with so that I can bless others.

I pray for your Spirit to draw our loved ones to you who do not know your love for them through your Son.

Bless us Father, as we go into the world and seek to be a blessing to others.

AMEN