

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

JUNIOR 1 YEAR 2 BOOK 3



Teacher's Guide and Student Handouts

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Passages: Eph 4:4–6; Acts 1:8; 2:1–13; Jn 4:24; Gal 4:6; Col 2:9; Jn 12:16; 16:8–11, 13; Rom 8:13; 1 Jn 3:24

Memory Verse

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
God abides with us through the Holy Spirit.	God is Spirit.	Open ourselves to the teachings of the Spirit. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Spirit gives us wisdom and revelation from God.• The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Who Is the Holy Spirit?
- B. Characteristics of the Holy Spirit
- C. The Holy Spirit Convicts the World

Life Application

How Does the Holy Spirit Help Me?

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19), but let the Spirit of God help us grow in our walk of faith.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Have you ever wondered what the Day of Pentecost is? The day was named *Pentecost* because it occurred fifty days after the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was also referred to as “the Feast of Weeks,” and was the second time within a fifty-day period that the Israelites would give a grain offering to the Lord (Lev 23:15). Thus, “the Day of Firstfruits” was also named “the fiftieth day,” or *pentecost* in Greek. It was on this day, when the Israelites were giving a new offering of the firstfruits of their harvest, that the Holy Spirit descended.

We have probably heard how precious the Holy Spirit is, and how we must continue to fill ourselves with the Spirit through the power of prayer. But what exactly is the Holy Spirit, other than our ticket into heaven? To many of us, the Holy Spirit is an abstract concept because it is not visible or tangible. In this lesson, we will be taking a closer look at who the Holy Spirit is.

A. Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The Bible often calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of God, indicating that they are one and the same. Since the Lord Jesus is also God Himself, the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ as well.

1. The Holy Spirit is the one true God

The following Bible verses teach us that the Holy Spirit is God Himself:

- “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.” (Ezek 36:27)
- “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Jn 4:24)
- “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit [...]? You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:3–4)
- “And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.” (1 Jn 3:24)

The Holy Spirit is God’s personal presence in our lives, who constantly dwells within us. We may not be able to see or touch the Lord with our physical senses, but the works of His Spirit who abides in us can be seen. Let us look at some of the more tangible works of the Spirit in the Bible.

- Created heaven and earth (Gen 1:1–2)
- Anointed His servants (Isa 61:1)
- Empowered His servants (Ex 31:1–3)
- Spoke through His prophets (2 Chr 24:20)
- Anointed Jesus and showed that He is Christ (Mt 3:16–17)

2. The Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ

Galatians 4:6 says, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba! Father!’ ” The Holy Spirit within our hearts is the Spirit of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. The following verses further teach us that the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus are the same.

- “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2 Cor 3:17)
- “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Rom 8:9)

- “Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:29, 39)
- “When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.” (Acts 16:7 NIV)

From these passages, we understand that the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ refer to the same Spirit. Paul describes the Lord Jesus as the “image of the invisible God [...]. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth [...]. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Col 1:15–16). Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God who created all things (Job 33:4), is God Himself (Col 2:9), and thus is also the Spirit of God who dwells among us.

The Holy Spirit = God = Jesus Christ.

Do you understand the mystery behind this truth? It may seem simple to us, but theologians spent hundreds of years studying this mystery. For many, this is a very complicated and abstract concept. Some even try to rationalize it with human logic. For example, they may believe that the three beings are three separate entities. But for us, it is clear. The Holy Spirit is God Himself, as well as Jesus Christ.

B. Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

Just as names and titles often reflect something about a person, object, or position, the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit using many different names to illustrate the Spirit’s characteristics.

1. The Spirit of truth

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (Jn 16:13)

The world around us is constantly changing—people lie, twist facts, or even choose to remember a different reality in order to suit their desires. Standards of morality change with each generation, and every country has its own laws that dictate what is just. But God is truth, and His truth is absolute and unchangeable. His Spirit will never change. Why is this important to us? Jesus Christ once said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn 14:6). We need the unchangeable truth to be able to see God. But we were born into sin, making this impossible to obtain. This is where the Holy Spirit comes in.

Paul wrote, “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:11). The Spirit of truth is the only one who is able to understand God, because the Spirit is God Himself. So, for us to see God, we need the Holy Spirit within us to “guide [us] into all truth” (Jn 16:13), so that we can become sons of God (Rom 8:14). “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (Jn 14:26).

2. The Helper

“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (Jn 16:7)

During the last supper, the disciples were saddened, knowing that Jesus would soon depart from them. But Jesus reassured them, telling them that He would send them help (Jn 14:16). Sure enough, after He ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit descended, and the disciples received the power to boldly testify for the Lord (Acts 2:4, 14–36).

The title that Jesus used, “Helper,” or *paraklētos* in Greek, is also sometimes translated as comforter, advocate, or counselor. As a Helper, the Spirit comforts us when we are upset, intercedes for us as our advocate before God, and counsels us when we need guidance. This is why it is so important for us to have the Holy Spirit. Our spirits may be willing, but our flesh is weak (Mt 26:41).

3. The Spirit of wisdom and revelation

“[That] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” (Eph 1:17)

The Holy Spirit also gives us different gifts (1 Cor 12:4–11) and can direct the activities of God’s servants. For example, the apostles, once fearful followers of Jesus Christ, were filled with power on the Day of Pentecost and boldly preached the gospel. Let us look at some of the works of the Spirit in the Bible. Look up the following passages, and for each, explain what kind of wisdom or revelation the Spirit gave.

- a. Genesis 41:38–41 – *Gave Joseph the wisdom to rule.*
- b. Exodus 31:2–6 – *Gave craftsmen wisdom in all manner of workmanship.*
- c. Daniel 4:18 – *Gave Daniel the wisdom and revelation to interpret dreams.*
- d. Acts 16:6–10 – *Gave Paul revelation regarding where to preach the gospel.*
- e. Acts 15:24–28 – *Gave the members revelation regarding the conflict of circumcision.*
- f. 1 Cor 2:4–5 – *Gives us spiritual power and wisdom.*

From these examples, we can see that the Spirit offers so much more than just a way into heaven. God has promised that His Helper will guide us to follow His will, help us to see the truth, and give us spiritual power.

C. The Holy Spirit Convicts the World

There is another, crucial role of the Holy Spirit. Let us read John 16:8–11. Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit will convict the world. To “convict” means to admonish, to reprove, or to convince. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of its sin, of its need for righteousness, and of the judgment to come. Let us look at each of these in a bit more detail.

1. “...of sin, because they do not believe in Me”

The Spirit shows us what we have done wrong. This is important because there are many times in our lives when we do not even realize that we have sinned, especially when we do not believe in God. Let us read John 3:18. What does it say? “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Therefore, the Holy Spirit helps us by pointing out our unbelief. Even someone who has already been baptized into Christ may need help with their unbelief (Mk 9:24).

Have you ever doubted the Lord’s presence, forgotten His love, or lost sight of His power? In times like these, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the Lord’s omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. By being convicted of our sin and reminded of the powerful redemption that Jesus offers, we will be

able to turn away from the world and accept the Lord into our hearts.

2. *"...of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more"*

Because He was the perfect Lamb of God, death could not keep the Lord Jesus. His ascension into heaven proves His righteousness, and as a result of His perfect sacrifice, we are able to receive water baptism to wash our sins away. However, this is only the beginning of our journey of faith. We need to abide by the same standards of righteousness as the Lord. But we are weak, so it is impossible to live a fruitful life purely by human will alone. If this is the case, how can we ever measure up to Jesus Christ, who is God's standard of righteousness?

The Holy Spirit is not here to make us feel despair over our failures. The Holy Spirit reproves us when we fail to meet God's righteous requirements, shows us where we fall short, and helps us overcome our weaknesses. Paul wrote, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom 8:13). The Holy Spirit helps us work harder to be even better Christians and to set an example as children of God. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to constantly transform us and help us overcome our sinful nature.

Have you ever compared yourselves to others? Or perhaps decided that you were smarter or better because you have better grades, are better dressed, or have the latest electronics? All of these standards – wealth, looks, or social status – are expectations formed by the society in which we live. By convicting us of God's righteousness, the Holy Spirit reminds us to be better children of God and to constantly reach for God's standards, not mankind's.

3. *"...of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged"*

The judgment that the Spirit convicts the world of refers to the judgment of Satan. With His resurrection, the Lord Jesus emerged victorious over death (Jn 19:30; Rom 6:9). As a result, Satan, who is the "ruler of this world," has already been condemned for his sins, and he will be judged when Jesus Christ returns.

According to the Book of Revelation, Satan will be convicted and cast into the lake of fire for eternity. Likewise, those who refuse to acknowledge God and allow Satan to be their ruler will suffer the same fate as the evil one. However, if we accept Jesus Christ as our King and Savior, we will be exempt from God's wrath (Rom 5:9). By convicting the world of the judgment that is to come, the Holy Spirit reminds us that we should not seek after the things of this world, which Satan rules over, but after God's heavenly kingdom and His righteousness.

Check for Understanding

1. Who is the Holy Spirit? List one verse for each answer.

- a. He is the one true God: Ezek 36:27; Jn 4:24; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Jn 3:24
- b. He is Jesus Christ: Gal 4:6; 2 Cor 3:17; Rom 8:9; Acts 8:29, 39; Acts 16:7 (NIV)

2. Name two of the works of the Holy Spirit. Created heaven and earth; anointed His servants; empowered His servants; spoke through His prophets; anointed Jesus and showed that He is Christ.

3. List four different characteristics of the Holy Spirit. Teaches, guides, strengthens, comforts, convicts, grieves, calls, intercedes, testifies, witnesses, helps, reveals.

4. Why do we need the Holy Spirit in our life? The Holy Spirit helps us see our sin, helps us understand that we fall short of God's standards, and helps people come to Jesus Christ.

Life Application

How Does the Holy Spirit Help Me?

1. The Holy Spirit teaches us the truth

Let us read the following verses.

- Jesus told His disciples, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (Jn 16:12–13).
- “The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” (Jn 14:17)
- Jesus said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (Jn 14:26).

Jesus’ disciples could not understand the gospel until they received the Holy Spirit. In the same way, before we receive the Holy Spirit, we also may not understand the truth. But when we do receive the Holy Spirit, we have a “Helper” (Jn 14:16), whose role it is to teach us the truth. This is wonderful news to us! When we read the Bible, we cannot understand God’s words on our own, but the Holy Spirit will illuminate the truth so that we might understand it and put it into practice.

1 Corinthians 2:10 says, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” The Holy Spirit wants to reveal and teach us the ways of God. The question is: are you willing to open your heart and mind, and wholeheartedly follow the teachings that you receive? The word of God can impact our lives and serve as a manual for living a godly and abundant life, free of the bonds and burdens of this world, but only if we allow it to, and only if we open our hearts to the Spirit’s teachings.

2. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and revelation

“[That] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” (Eph 1:17)

After we have received the Holy Spirit, we need to ask God for wisdom and revelation. Why? Because the wisdom from God is very different from the wisdom of the world. The Bible tells us that the wisdom of this world is “foolishness with God” (1 Cor 3:19). If we only want to live in the flesh, we cannot understand the wisdom of God, so we continue to live in darkness. But God wants to equip us so that we can discern right from wrong. He wants to give us His spirit of wisdom and revelation. All we have to do is be willing to seek after it. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (Jas 1:5).

When God reveals His wisdom to us, we are able to see the truth in many things—not only in church, but also in our family or at school. We begin making decisions with “the wisdom that is from above [that] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (Jas 3:17). When others see God’s wisdom in the decisions that we make, we become the light of this world!

3. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins

The word “convict” means to convince someone of their errors or sins. That is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit, like an internal alarm that reveals our wrongdoings or evil thoughts. When we do not have

the fullness of the Holy Spirit, it is easier for us to sin against God. Isaiah stood in the presence of God and said, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa 6:5). If the Spirit convicts us of our sins, there is a sense of utter dread. We realize how much we have dishonored God.

But the Holy Spirit can also convict us even before we know God. Remember the jailer whom Paul stopped from killing himself? He fell at the disciples' feet and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The jailer was filled with dread upon realizing his sins, and was immediately convinced that he needed a Savior. The Holy Spirit has the power to bring us back to God, and to be reconciled with God, by opening our hearts and eyes to see the wrongs that we have done (Acts 17:30).

There is a beauty when the Holy Spirit convicts us; we are transformed, and our spiritual lives are regenerated and renewed. When we are slaves to sinful pleasures, led astray by our desires, and are disobedient, the Holy Spirit convicts of our sins. This is not to punish us, but is because of His great love and mercy. The Spirit gives us spiritual eyes to see, spiritual ears to hear, and a spiritual sense in our heart to know that God loves us, just like the prodigal son who "came to himself" (Lk 15:17). Therefore, when the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins, it is to change, mold, and return us to God.

Discussion

- Share a time when you were convicted by the Holy Spirit. What lesson(s) did you learn?
- Share a time when you truly felt the Holy Spirit was your Helper in teaching you the truth.
- Share a time when you needed wisdom from God. How did God respond?

Memory Verse

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Meanings

As Jesus Christ promised us, He will send the Holy Spirit to us and abide with us forever. When we rely on His Spirit, we will witness His power working in us, with us, and through us. No matter where we go, we will be able to bear witness for God and glorify His name. People of the world will be able to witness God in our actions and speech.

Conclusion

There are many characteristics of the Holy Spirit, but the most important work of the Holy Spirit is to help us draw even closer to God in our daily lives. Therefore, let us strive to live a life where God's Spirit can work in us. Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19), but let the Spirit of God help us grow in our walk of faith.

Lesson 1 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What happens when the Holy Spirit abides in us and we rely on His Spirit?
We will witness His power working in us, with us, and through us.
2. "I will put My _____ within you and _____ you to _____ in My _____, and you will _____ My _____ and do them." (Ezekiel 36:27)
Spirit, cause, walk, statutes, keep, judgments
3. How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of sin?
The Spirit shows us what we have done wrong. By being convinced of our sin and reminded of Jesus' redemption, we will be able to turn away from the world and accept the Lord into our hearts.
4. Why is it important that the Holy Spirit convicts us of God's righteousness?
By convicting us of His righteousness, the Spirit reminds us to be better children of God and to constantly reach for God's standards, not mankind's.
5. Why do we need wisdom and revelation from the Spirit?
Because the wisdom from God is very different from the wisdom of the world. We need God's wisdom to fight our spiritual battles every day and to be a shining light for Him.
6. Have you ever needed wisdom from God? How did He respond to your need?
Personal answers.

The Roles of the Holy Spirit

Passages: Acts 2; 5; 10; 13; 15; 16

Memory Verse

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:26)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
The Holy Spirit plays important roles in the church, in our lives, and in our salvation.	God is Spirit.	Experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Roles of the Holy Spirit in the Church
- B. The Roles of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives
- C. The Roles of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation

Life Application

Experiencing the Power of the Holy Spirit

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Through the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, in our lives, and in our salvation, we can see that He is powerful and able to transform lives. Let us continue to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and live a life that glorifies God’s name.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

A. The Roles of the Holy Spirit in the Church

During the apostolic period, the Holy Spirit played a great role in the guidance and work of the church. Today, the Holy Spirit guides us in these ways as well.

1. Empowers the apostles to preach

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.’” (Acts 2:14)

Before receiving the Holy Spirit, Peter relied on his own power to follow Jesus Christ, which resulted in his denial of Jesus Christ. After receiving the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Peter underwent a visible transformation. He was able to stand before a multitude to preach boldly and eloquently. His words were able to pierce through the hearts of the people who heard him and, when he had finished speaking, around 3,000 people came to believe and be baptized.

2. Guides where the gospel is preached

a. *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.” (Acts 10:44–45)*

A “holy angel” instructed Cornelius, a centurion and a Gentile, to summon Peter to speak at his house (Acts 10:22). As a result, when Peter preached to Cornelius’ household, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles who listened. This was an important event because before this occasion, the gospel had only been preached to the Jewish. When the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his household, this was proof to the apostles that salvation was also for the Gentiles. In this way, the Holy Spirit guided the church to this understanding, allowing the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, even to this day.

b. *“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.” (Acts 16:6)*

As Paul was preaching, there were times when the Holy Spirit would stop him from preaching in a certain area or direct him to a different area to preach. In Acts 16, Paul and his companions were stopped from traveling to Asia and Bithynia by the Holy Spirit, and were instead directed to Macedonia (Acts 16:9). While worshipping on the Sabbath in Philippi in Macedonia, they then met Lydia and, through her household, established the first European church.

3. Sends out workers

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” (Acts 13:2–3)

As the apostolic church was growing, the Holy Spirit guided the work of the church by selecting workers to be sent out. Right after the breakthrough, when the gospel had been preached to

Cornelius and his family, the Holy Spirit spoke and called Paul and Barnabas to be separated for the work to which He called them. This was the beginning of Paul's ministry to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

4. Punishes those who deceive the church

"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?' " (Acts 5:3)

During the early days of the apostolic church, many believers sold their belongings and offered the entire proceeds to the church. Ananias and his wife Sapphira wished to appear to do the same, but secretly kept a portion of the proceeds for themselves. Peter rebuked Ananias, saying, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? [...] You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3–4). After hearing this, Ananias fell down and died.

Shortly after, Sapphira also came in, not knowing that her husband had just died. When Peter asked her if she had sold the land for the amount offered, she also lied. Peter rebuked her for testing "the Spirit of the Lord," and she immediately fell down and died as well (Acts 5:9–10). These events brought great fear upon the church and demonstrated to the believers that it is wrong to lie to or deceive the Holy Spirit.

5. Deepens our understanding of the truth

"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." (Acts 15:28–29)

After the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, an issue divided the believers: circumcision. One group believed circumcision was necessary, and the other believed it was not. As a result, this issue was brought before the elders and apostles during the Jerusalem council. Through the discussion of the council, the Holy Spirit moved all of them to reach the consensus that circumcision was not required for salvation. They sent out a letter to all the churches which stated: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

B. The Roles of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives

1. Helps us

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (Jn 14:26)

Jesus Christ promised the disciples that after He left them, He would send a Helper to teach them all things. The Holy Spirit is able to give us understanding about and help us remember the things that Jesus Christ has taught in the Bible. There are many testimonies about how people had a hard time understanding the teachings in the Bible, but once they received the Holy Spirit, the teachings made sense. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is able to help us understand the word of God.

2. Gives us power

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

The Holy Spirit empowers us to do the work of God. This includes preaching the gospel or helping us to overcome the temptations in our lives. Either way, the Holy Spirit gives us the inner strength to do what we think we are unable to do.

3. Teaches us what to say

“For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” (Lk 12:12)

The Holy Spirit helps us to preach by teaching us what we should say. Sometimes, we may find that we are afraid or do not know how to preach to our friends. Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit is able to teach us what to say and to help us speak, even to those who may be against us.

4. Gives spiritual gifts

“God also [bears] witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will[.]” (Heb 2:4)

The Holy Spirit gives us a variety of spiritual gifts that we can use to serve one another. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, it lists a variety of spiritual gifts, such as the gift of healings, of working of miracles, and of interpreting tongues. All these gifts have a central purpose: to serve the body of Christ.

C. The Roles of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation

1. Allows us to be born of water and the Spirit

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” (Jn 3:5)

When we receive water baptism, the presence of the Holy Spirit is highly important. His presence distinguishes us from other churches and makes our baptism effective in washing away our sins.

2. Seals our inheritance in heaven

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:13–14)

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. He is the “guarantee,” or proof, of our inheritance in heaven. It is through the Holy Spirit that we know that we have salvation in heaven.

3. Baptizes us with the Spirit

“[For] John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:5)

When Jesus Christ spoke to His disciples before He ascended to heaven, He told them to remain in Jerusalem because they were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. We know that to be baptized with the Holy Spirit means to receive the Holy Spirit, for it was on the Day of Pentecost that the promised Holy Spirit came down on all the people praying in the upper room.

4. Washes and renews us

"[Not] by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit[.]" (Tit 3:5)

As mentioned previously, it is the abidance of the Holy Spirit during water baptism that allows our sins to be washed away and allows us to be reborn in the spirit. After we have received the Holy Spirit, He continues to renew us as we strive to live our lives to glorify our God.

Check for Understanding

- 1. Share one instance of how the Holy Spirit worked in the apostolic church.** See *Spiritual Teachings, Section A.*
- 2. Share one role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives.** See *Spiritual Teachings, Section B.*
- 3. Share one role the Holy Spirit plays in our salvation.** See *Spiritual Teachings, Section C.*
- 4. In Acts 1:5, what does Jesus Christ mean when He says: "[You] shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit"?** To be baptized with the Holy Spirit is to receive the promised Holy Spirit.

Life Application

Experiencing the Power of the Holy Spirit

Today, we are blessed to have the abidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. However, more often than not, we do not experience the power of the Holy Spirit. So, let us take some time to reflect on whether we experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we find that we do not, let us identify the obstacles that may be in our way.

1. Do I experience the power of the Holy Spirit in my life? If so, what does it look like?

To experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to feel God's presence in our lives. If our conscience rebukes us for doing something that we should not do, or if we feel peace in the midst of a stressful situation, these are all ways that we experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Do I have doubts?

The Bible teaches that those who come to God "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb 11:6). This means that for us to truly experience God's abidance, we first need to believe in Him. We can also pray to God and ask Him to help us overcome our unbelief (Mk 9:24).

3. Do I have sin in my life?

This is the most common and most difficult obstacle that each of us must overcome if we want to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Though the Holy Spirit is able to help us, oftentimes we are unwilling to let go of our old ways. Over time, sin can cause us to become numb and desensitized to what is right in the eyes of God. However, the Bible encourages us that if we walk in the Spirit, then we will be able to overcome the lust of the flesh (Gal 5:16). This is the promise that God has given us to help us overcome our sinful nature.

Discussion

- What are other obstacles that may stop us from experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit?
- What can you do to experience the power of the Holy Spirit?

Testimony

Hallelujah! In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify.

Around the age of seven, I had many doubts about God, the church, and the Holy Spirit. I wondered if True Jesus Church was the only true church and whether the Holy Spirit was real or not. I would often wonder why I had to come to church every Saturday because I thought that church was a waste of time. I would often hear my classmates talk about what they did over the weekend and where they went, which all seemed so much more fun to me. Their weekends seemed to be full of fun and their lives weren't constrained by the many teachings of the Bible. Since I had to go to church, I felt like I was forced to miss out on these activities.

During a spiritual convocation, I decided to go to the baptism site because I wanted to skip RE class. At the baptismal site, I noticed that there was a different church holding a baptism. Their baptism was different because the person being baptized was pushed backwards and was not fully immersed. Our church, however, baptized forwards, bowing down, and fully immersed. It was in the middle of the baptism that I saw the water around the pastor turning red, like blood. I looked at where the other church was, and their water did not change. As the last member and pastor from our church started getting out of the water, the blood slowly disappeared from the water.

From the baptism, I learned that God knew about my doubts. Even though I had not received the Holy Spirit yet, He wanted me to have full faith in Him. God is with us wherever we are, and He will always be there to guide us as long as we have faith in Him.

It was during the following spiritual convocation that I received the Holy Spirit. Looking back, it was really God's plan and grace for me. He knew when the best time was to give me the Holy Spirit and why I needed the Holy Spirit. I am very thankful to God for granting me this experience when I was younger because it really strengthened my faith. May all the glory, honor, and praise be unto His holy name. Amen.

– Anonymous

Memory Verse

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26)

Meaning

1. The Holy Spirit is our Helper and Teacher. He can help us to understand the truth and remind us of the things that we have learned about God.
2. As we go through our lives, there may be times when we do not know what to do, but we can rely on the Holy Spirit to help us. This does not mean that we should treat Him like a genie who fulfills our whims at our beck and call. Rather, when we are able to build a relationship with God, we come to know more about Him.

Conclusion

Junior 1 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 2

Through the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, in our lives, and in our salvation, we can see that He is powerful and able to transform lives. The Holy Spirit is also a precious Helper sent by our Father, as proof of His abidance with us. Knowing this, let us continue to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and live a life that glorifies God's name.

Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is the Spirit's purpose in our lives?
The Spirit is our Helper and our Teacher. He can help us to understand the truth and remind us of the things that we have learned about God.
2. "For the _____ will _____ you in that very hour what you _____ to _____." (Luke 12:12)
Holy, Spirit, teach, ought, say
3. Pick one of the Holy Spirit's roles in the church and describe an example from the Bible.
See Spiritual Teachings, Section A.
4. What is the purpose of the spiritual gifts that the Spirit gives to us?
The Spirit gives us a variety of spiritual gifts so that we can serve one another. All of the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, are for a central purpose: to serve the body of Christ.
5. What is a major obstacle that blocks our experience of the Spirit's power? Why is this the case?
The most common and difficult obstacle to overcome is sin. Over time, it can make us numb or desensitize us to what is right in God's eyes.
6. Do you have any personal obstacles that block you from experiencing the Spirit's power?
Personal answers.

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Passages: Eph 1:13; Acts 2; Isa 4:4; Ps 72:6; Jn 7:37–39; Heb 1:9; Mt 3:16; Eph 2:14–17

Memory Verse

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, and He can assist us in many ways. 2. The Holy Spirit is represented by many symbols.	God is Spirit.	Rely on the Holy Spirit to renew, refine, and sanctify us.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

1. Seal
2. Wind
3. Fire
4. Rain
5. Water
6. Oil
7. Dove

Life Application

My Relationship with God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: By studying the symbols of the Holy Spirit, we can understand how the Holy Spirit refines us, renews us, sanctifies us, and gives us the strength to work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

The most vivid description of the Holy Spirit can be found when He first descended on the Day of Pentecost:

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where [the disciples] were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

(Acts 2:2–4)

These verses describe images of wind and fire but use the words “as of” to show that the Spirit is not wind or fire itself. Rather, “wind” and “fire” are the closest descriptors humans can use to illustrate what the Spirit of God is like.

There are more than ten different symbols that represent God’s Spirit. Symbols allow us to understand abstract concepts in more tangible terms. They can also help us understand more about God’s teachings. Jesus Christ used parables to teach about the kingdom of heaven. Similarly, we can learn more about God’s Spirit through visual symbols. Today, we will study seven symbols that the Bible uses to teach us about the Holy Spirit.

1. Seal

- “[Having] believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:13–14)
- “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Rom 8:16–17)
- “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God; by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Eph 4:30)

Purpose

A seal is like a signature. It serves to show legal recognition of ownership and authority. When an individual places a seal on an official document, the document then wields authority and power provided by the seal. Ephesians 1:13 tells us that the Holy Spirit is the seal that guarantees our inheritance in Christ Jesus. God has “sealed” us with His Holy Spirit; He lives inside us and has “sealed” us for the day of redemption. Since God is the sealer, we can rest assured that we will be with Him one day.

2. Wind

- *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

(Acts 2:2–4)

- *Also He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they*

may live.” ‘ ‘ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

(Ezek 37:9–10)

Purposes

- a. “Wind,” “breath,” and “Spirit” are the same word in Hebrew and Greek. We know that breath sustains life. Likewise, our soul cannot live without the Spirit of God because the wind, or Holy Spirit, is our breath (Ezek 37:9–10, 14).
- b. Wind is invisible and is full of force and strength, like the Spirit of God. We cannot see the wind, but we know it is around us (Jn 3:8). Similarly, when we pray in tongues, sometimes our bodies will move, indicating that we have the Holy Spirit. During the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came with the sound of a rushing mighty wind. In Acts 2:14–39, we can see how the pouring out of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the power to preach the good news of Jesus Christ’s resurrection. Today, when the Spirit fills us, He also empowers us to do the work God has entrusted us with.
- c. In the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 37, the prophet Ezekiel has a vision about the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s power of regeneration revived all the dead bones in that valley! What does that teach us about the Holy Spirit? In this vision, the wind is used to symbolize the Holy Spirit (Ezek 37:9–10). The same power of regeneration can revive your “dry bones” today! The Holy Spirit produces spiritual life in anyone who seems to be spiritually “dry,” or cold and unresponsive to spiritual matters.

3. Fire

- “When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning.” (Isa 4:4)
- “Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.” (Acts 2:3)

Purposes

- a. Fire can burn things away. God told His people that they need a spirit of burning to remove their impurities. Today, the Holy Spirit burns away our filth (Isa 4:4). Just as fire refines metals by removing impurities, the Spirit of God strips away all impurities and evil within us so that we are less tempted to sin. Simultaneously, He burns within us, compelling us to shun temptation in favor of doing good. The Holy Spirit can spiritually burn away any undesirable elements in our lives in order to refine, renew, and sanctify us (Tit 3:5).
- b. Fire is a source of light. The light of the Holy Spirit shines in us (2 Cor 4:6). Jesus Christ commanded us to let the light shine forth and not to hide it under a basket (Mt 5:14–16). When the Spirit of God fills us, others should be able to see Him in our actions. The fruit that we bear should show the light of God.
- c. Fire can melt materials and fuse objects together. Similarly, the Holy Spirit joins the many different believers into one body so that we are together in the church of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:3).

4. Rain

- “He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth.” (Ps 72:6)
- “Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone.” (Zech 10:1)

Purpose

Rain brings restoration. Rain is vital to life, growth, and good health. Without rain, vegetation would be unable to grow, and we would not have water to drink for nourishment. When the land becomes dry, it needs rain in order to experience a complete restoration (Isa 55:10). Like dry land, our hearts can become hardened, making it difficult for the word of God to take root and grow. So, we need the work of the Holy Spirit to restore us. The Spirit of God comes to us like rain, which waters the soil (Hos 6:3). He can restore the human heart from a barren wilderness to a nourishing field that bears fruit (Isa 32:15–16; Gal 5:22–23).

5. Water

- “[But] whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (Jn 4:14)
- “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ” (Jn 7:37–38)
- “For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring.” (Isa 44:3)

Purposes

- a. Water relieves those who are thirsty (Ps 104:10–11; Jn 4:13). The Holy Spirit fulfills humanity’s spiritual thirst (Jn 4:14; Rev 22:17). We will never be spiritually thirsty again if we continually drink this spiritual water, which flows through us like “rivers of living water” (Jn 7:37–38), bringing us satisfaction. In addition, when we yield our mind and heart to God, the abundance of “living water,” which is the life of Jesus Christ, will flow out from us toward those around us. Living water is never stagnant; it produces an abundant and dynamic spirit-filled life.
- b. The Bible often refers to the washing away of our sins (Num 31:24; Heb 10:22). In the same way that water washes away filth, the Holy Spirit is a cleansing agent that sanctifies us (Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13).

Additional Meanings

- Water flows downward, which also teaches us that the Holy Spirit will be given to those who are humble (Acts 5:32; 1 Pet 5:5).
- Our lives would be severely affected if we do not have a steady supply of water. Similarly, we need the Holy Spirit flowing inside us every day.

6. Oil

- “Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually.” (Lev 24:2)
- “[How] God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)
- “You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (Heb 1:9)

Purposes

- a. God sanctified oil for use in anointing objects and people, such as priests, prophets, and kings (Ex 30:25–29; 40:12–15; 1 Kgs 19:16; 1 Sam 16:12). In Acts 10:38, God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit when He began His ministry. Similarly, believers whom God uses in His ministry today must also be anointed by the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:18; Acts 1:4–5, 8). The Bible has named us holy priests (1 Pet 2:5; Rev 1:6), and as His priests, we must be anointed by the Holy Spirit before we can devote ourselves to the work of the God.
- b. Oil is used as fuel for lamps (Lev 24:2). Without oil, a lamp would be unable to give light. Today, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to radiate the light of life to all who are around us (Mt 5:16). We also need to make sure our lamps are filled with oil so that we can enter the marriage feast to see our Lord Jesus (Mt 25:1–13).
- c. Oil is used to treat wounds. In the Gospel of Luke, a good Samaritan “went to [an injured man] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Lk 10:34). True healing can only be found in God.
- d. Oil is used to sustain lives. Elisha performed a miracle for the poor widow so that she could live (2 Kgs 4:1–7). Likewise, the Holy Spirit sustains us like oil, providing us love and abundant grace.
- e. Oil is likened to gladness (Heb 1:9). When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will have joy, which is a characteristic of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

7. Dove

- “And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’” (Lk 3:22)
- “O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.” (Song 2:14)
- “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” (Mt 10:16)

Purposes

- a. Doves were clean animals used for burnt offerings in the Old Testament (Lev 1:14; 12:8). The Bible used doves as a contrast to ravens, which were unclean. Being baptized in the Spirit makes us clean in God’s eyes.
- b. Doves are faithful to their mates, so a dove symbolizes an ideal bride, as described in the Song of Solomon (Song 5:2; 6:9). We can only be faithful to God if we have the Spirit to help us.
- c. After the great flood recorded in the Book of Genesis, Noah sent out a dove from the ark, and it came back with an olive leaf in its beak (Gen 8:11). God wanted mankind to have peace after the flood, which had destroyed all wickedness. Thus, the dove symbolizes peace and reconciliation with God (Eph 2:14–17). Our Lord Jesus who died for us is the only one who can bring peace. When we allow the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and live in peace with Him, we can enjoy peace with God and with men.
- d. Doves are also seen as gentle because they are so harmless (Mt 10:16; Gal 5:23). When we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to be as harmless and gentle as doves.

Check for Understanding

Name each symbol of the Holy Spirit and one of its purposes or meanings.

1. Seal (guarantees our inheritance in Christ Jesus)
2. Wind (sustains life, empowers us, and produces spiritual life in the spiritually “dry”)
3. Fire (burns away impurities, provides light, and joins believers into one body)
4. Rain (restores)

5. Water (quenches our thirst, fills us, and sanctifies us)
6. Oil (anoints us, fuels our light, gives us healing, sustains us, and gives us joy)
7. Dove (purifies us, helps us to remain faithful to God, gives us peace and reconciliation with God, and teaches us to be harmless and gentle)

Life Application

My Relationship with God

Most mothers will tell you that the most difficult part of being pregnant is the actual birth. While the birth may indeed be the climax of a pregnancy, it is only the start of a whole new journey, for both the parents and the child. Once the baby is born, the new mother and father now face the lifelong task of nurturing the child and helping him or her grow. In fact, birth is the beginning of a new life and new relationships. In the same way, many people find it difficult to pray for the Holy Spirit. But once we have received the Holy Spirit, it is the beginning of a whole new relationship with God.

From studying the many symbols of the Holy Spirit, we now understand that when we develop a relationship with God, He can accomplish many things in our lives. For this reason, it is important for us to regularly examine ourselves and our spiritual relationship with God. If we have the Holy Spirit, do we have the fullness of Him? If we do not, is there something that is preventing us from receiving Him?

Review each symbol below and answer the questions honestly. Is there something you need to determine to strive for? Make it your goal this quarter so that you may experience the fullness of God’s Spirit working inside you.

Seal	<i>Do I have the full assurance that God has sealed me? Do I believe and trust that one day I will enter the kingdom of God because I have been sealed with the Holy Spirit?</i>
Wind	The Holy Spirit is so powerful that He can revive us, just as the wind breathed life into the valley of dry bones (Ezek 37)! The same power of regeneration can fill your “dry bones” today! <i>Think about some dry or cold areas in your spiritual life that need the power of the Holy Spirit. Set a goal to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit.</i>
Fire	Like fire, the Holy Spirit can spiritually <u>burn</u> away any undesirable elements in our lives in order to refine, renew, and sanctify us (Tit 3:5). We need to confess, repent, and convict ourselves of the sin that we have committed. Let the Holy Spirit burn within us. No one enjoys the refining process, but in order to return to God and to ensure that our prayers are not hindered, we must allow the Holy Spirit of fire to “burn” our hearts thoroughly. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Have you ever allowed the Holy Spirit to burn within you so that you no longer feel attracted to the sinful pleasures of the world?</i> 2. <i>Are you willing to ask the Holy Spirit to burn mightily in order to remove all personal will and ambition, and to break your “own self,” so that you count everything as loss like the apostle Paul?</i> 3. <i>Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to compel you to focus on matters that are spiritual?</i>
Rain	Rain <u>refreshes</u> the thirsty and brings <u>restoration</u> . We need sufficient rain in order to be fruitful. The Holy Spirit is the answer for our deepest inner thirst. When the Holy Spirit fills us, it is like rain pouring down onto dry ground. If we earnestly seek for Him, we’ll see God’s blessings pour down onto our lives so that we can blossom again.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Is your heart dry and barren, like a hard field?</i> 2. <i>What will you do in order to be filled by the Holy Spirit so that the word of God can take root and sprout?</i>
Water	<p>Water relieves those who are <u>thirsty</u>. The Holy Spirit satisfies our spiritual thirst (Jn 4:14; Rev 22:17).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Holy Spirit will fill us, but we have to make room in our hearts. Have you ever thirsted for God's words? For more of His presence in your heart?</i> 2. <i>Water is a cleansing element; it cleanses us from sin and purifies us. What do you need to cleanse this week in order to be freed from sin?</i>
Oil	<p><i>Pick one function of oil that you need the most this week from the list below.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Just as priests and kings were anointed with oil as a means of <u>separating themselves to be holy</u> for God's work, I need the anointing of oil in my life <u>to devote myself</u> to the work of God. b. Oil was used as <u>fuel</u> for lamps; I need oil to radiate the light of life to those around me. c. I need oil to make sure I'm <u>ready to see</u> my Lord Jesus when He comes back. d. I need oil to <u>treat my wound(s)</u> or someone else's wound(s). e. I need oil to <u>sustain</u> my spiritual life. f. I need oil to live <u>peacefully</u> with church members. g. I need <u>gladness and joy</u> in my spiritual life.
Dove	<p>Doves have many wonderful attributes that reflect God's Holy Spirit. To name a few: He brings faith to our hearts; He produces gentleness within through bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit; He leads us to the path of purity; He guides us to a meek and peace-filled life.</p> <p><i>Which attribute do you desire the most, and why?</i> <u>cleanliness</u> <u>faithfulness</u> <u>peace</u> <u>harmlessness</u> <u>gentleness</u></p>

Memory Verse

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25)

Meaning

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are submissive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We surrender our fleshly desires and give God our determination to walk according to His will.

Conclusion

By studying the symbols of the Holy Spirit, we can have a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit and how He is related to us. The more we understand the Holy Spirit, the more we recognize the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not only a guarantee of our heavenly inheritance, but also a Helper who teaches us and helps us overcome many difficulties in life (Jn 14:26). He can refine us, renew us, sanctify us, and give us the strength to work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 3 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How do we know if we are living and walking in the Spirit?
When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are submissive to the guidance of the Spirit. We surrender our fleshly desires and give God our determination to walk according to His will.
2. In what ways is the Holy Spirit like wind?
Just as breath sustains life, our soul cannot live without the Spirit of God. Like wind, the Spirit is invisible but still has force and strength, and we know that He is with us.
3. Name two purposes of oil and explain what this teaches us about the Holy Spirit.
 - a. *Anointing/sanctification – as God’s priests, we must be anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit in order to serve Him.*
 - b. *Fuel for lamps – without the fuel of the Holy Spirit, we cannot radiate the light of God, nor can we ensure our lamps are filled so that we can enter the marriage feast to see our Lord.*
 - c. *Treating wounds – true healing can only be found in God.*
 - d. *Sustains lives – like the widow and Elisha living on flour and oil, the Holy Spirit sustains us, providing love and abundant grace.*
 - e. *Gladness – when we are filled with the Spirit, we will have joy.*
4. What do doves represent? Pick one characteristic and explain how it applies to the Holy Spirit.
 - a. *Cleanliness/purification – the Spirit purifies us and makes us clean in God’s eyes.*
 - b. *Faithfulness – the Spirit helps us to remain faithful to God.*
 - c. *Peace and reconciliation – only through the Holy Spirit can we be truly at peace with God and with men.*
 - d. *Harmlessness/gentleness – the Spirit is never harmful but teaches us to be gentle.*
5. What areas in your spiritual life are “dry” or “cold,” and in need of the rain of the Holy Spirit?
Personal answers.
6. What will you do this week in order to be filled by the Holy Spirit, so that God’s word can take root?
Personal answers.

To Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Passages: Acts 2:2–4; 7:57–58; 8:3; 8:14–24; 9:1–2, 17–20; 10:44–46; 19:1–7

Memory Verse

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37–38)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Holy Spirit came down on the Day of Pentecost.2. The Holy Spirit transformed many lives, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.3. Speaking in tongues is evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is Spirit.2. The Holy Spirit is like living water.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Determine to pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.2. Devote yourself to a Spirit-filled life by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform you.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Filled with the Holy Spirit
 1. During Pentecost (Acts 2:2–4)
 2. In Samaria (Acts 8:14–24)
 3. Paul (Acts 7:57–58; 8:3; 9:1–2, 17–20)
 4. In Ephesus (Acts 19:1–7)
 5. Cornelius (Acts 10:44–46)
- B. Receiving the Holy Spirit
- C. Filling Ourselves with the Holy Spirit

Life Application

1. A Spirit-Filled Christian
2. Am I Transformed?

Memory Verse

Conclusion: After we have received God’s Spirit, we need to strive to be like Him by having the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction: Bleach Experiment

*(Teachers: This introduction calls for the use of bleach. Work in a well-ventilated area and avoid inhalation of fumes. Exercise **extreme caution** when handling bleach. Do not get it on your hands, in your eyes, or on your clothing. Immediately after the experiment, pour the bleach into a sink carefully to avoid splashing and flush thoroughly with cold water.)*

Before Class

Materials

- Small basin
- Bleach
- A piece of brightly-colored cloth, or bleachable cloth
- Rags
- Forceps
- Gloves

Preparation

Prepare a table in a safe location where all the students can see. Line the table with rags in case a spill occurs. Place the basin on the table. Set the cloth and the forceps next to the basin. Put on protective gloves. Slowly pour enough bleach into the basin to allow the cloth to be immersed. Wait until class begins to demonstrate the experiment. Do not immerse the cloth until the students have arrived and class is ready to begin.

During Class

When everyone is ready, use the forceps to pick up the cloth and immerse it into the bleach. Wait a few minutes for the bleach to take effect. Ask the students to share what they are observing.

Why do you think this change occurred? *(Due to a chemical reaction.)*

This is a very dramatic change. People often want to change themselves, but it's not easy to change yourself. When we want to change our habits, personality, or character, it has to be done gradually, bit by bit. But sometimes a person's life is thrown into a dramatic turn of events similar to this bleach, forcing the person to change themselves entirely. They may become very sick, a loved one may pass away, their financial situation may change abruptly, or some other life-changing event may occur.

Has anything dramatic happened in your life before, where things suddenly changed and became very different? *(Allow time for students to respond.)* In today's lesson, we're going to study how some people's lives were changed quite dramatically, all because they received and were filled with the Holy Spirit. Let's learn what it feels like to be a Spirit-filled Christian.

(Teacher's Note: Pour out the bleach immediately after the demonstration is finished to prevent any accidents from occurring during class.)

A. Filled with the Holy Spirit

Many denominations believe that people receive the Holy Spirit upon conversion. In other words, they believe that the moment they confess that God is their Savior, repent of their sins, and receive baptism, God's Spirit will be with them. But if that were truly the case, why did Jesus command His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit? And besides, what really happens when someone is filled with the

Holy Spirit? These are a few of the questions we will address in this lesson. Let us begin by examining the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles.

1. During Pentecost (Acts 2:2–4)

- a. Where were the disciples, and what were they doing? *(They were praying together in a house in Jerusalem.)*
- b. Describe what the Holy Spirit was like. *(A sound “as of a rushing mighty wind” came from heaven and divided tongues, “as of fire,” rested upon each of them. Then they began to speak “with other tongues.”)*

2. In Samaria (Acts 8:14–24)

- a. The believers in Samaria had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, but they had yet to receive the Holy Spirit (v. 16). What did Peter and John do for them? *(They laid hands on them and prayed, and then the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit.)*
- b. Simon the magician offered money for the power to lay hands and allow others to receive the Holy Spirit. After rebuking Simon, how did Peter refer to the Spirit? *(Peter said that the Holy Spirit was “the gift of God,” not something that could be purchased with money. God gives us the Holy Spirit by grace, not based on our wealth or how hard we work for Him. The only thing God asks of us is to repent and believe.)*

3. Paul (Acts 7:57–58; 8:3; 9:1–2, 17–20)

- a. Describe what Saul was like before he received the Holy Spirit. *(He persecuted Christians, personally seeking out believers and imprisoning them. He threatened to murder them.)*
- b. Read Acts 9:17–18 again. Paul received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him. It is clear from this passage that Paul received the Holy Spirit around the same time he was baptized. How can we be sure he was filled with the Spirit? *(We can tell based on his changed behavior. Before, he threatened to kill Christians. Now, he preached the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, while speaking in tongues is evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence, our changed lifestyle is a reflection of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.)*

4. In Ephesus (Acts 19:1–7)

- a. What is the difference between the baptism of John and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ? *(John’s was a baptism of repentance; it did not remove sin. However, when we are baptized in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, we believe He died for us on the cross and resurrected for the sins of mankind. When we emerge, we become a completely new person, clothed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.)*
- b. This passage shows that a person must be baptized in a manner according to the Bible in order to receive the Holy Spirit. What were outward signs that the believers in Ephesus had received the Spirit of God? *(Once they received the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues and prophesied, which is a special gift from God.)*

5. Cornelius (Acts 10:44–46)

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10, relates the experience of a centurion named Cornelius and his family and friends when they experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. “[The] Holy Spirit fell

upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision [...] were astonished” (vv. 44–45). Why were “those of the circumcision,” or the Jews, astonished? (*Because Cornelius was a Gentile. They did not expect him to receive the Holy Spirit. But through this significant incident, everyone, including the Jews, understood that God’s plan of salvation was for all people.*)

As we can see from these five examples, people experienced the Holy Spirit in many ways. Some received the Spirit while praying in a small space. One even experienced God’s Spirit before he was baptized. All spoke in tongues and a few prophesied. Others praised God with joy (Acts 10:46). But the greatest joy of the Holy Spirit is that He brings all believers together in one accord. When we all understand the love and sacrifice of the Lord, we become united in Spirit and in truth (Rom 5:5; Eph 3:14–20).

B. Receiving the Holy Spirit

We can see that each person had a slightly different experience when they received the Holy Spirit. However, the road to that joyous moment was exactly the same. That path has not changed today. In order to receive the Holy Spirit, there are four steps we must take. They are: believe in God and His word; repent of our sins; be baptized for the remission of sins; pray earnestly and persistently to God to fill us with His Spirit.¹ So, how do we pray for the Holy Spirit?

(Teachers: If you have students who are truthseekers, or who are newly baptized, you may want to spend a minute or two reviewing this portion. However, if all of your students are familiar with prayer, feel free to skip it.)

How Do I Pray?²

1. Kneel with humility.
2. Close your eyes to concentrate.
3. Begin by saying, “In the name of Lord Jesus, I pray.”
4. Praise the Lord by saying, “Hallelujah!”
5. Speak to God from your heart and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit.
6. Conclude your prayer with “Amen.”

No matter how long we have been praying for the Holy Spirit, we need to keep praying earnestly, diligently, and with a repentant heart (Lk 11:5–13). God will never grow tired of hearing our prayers, and He is always listening to us. But we must also recognize that we are sinners in His eyes. Every day, we fall short of His glory, so it is important to examine ourselves and see if there is anything blocking His Spirit from entering our hearts. To receive the Holy Spirit, we must remember that our body is a temple, so we must be pure and holy before God will rest within us.

C. Filling Ourselves with the Holy Spirit

Receiving the Holy Spirit does not guarantee that we will be filled by the Spirit. We see this from the situation in the Corinthian church. Paul referred to the believers in Corinth as “the temple of God” and “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19) because the members had already received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and had become one in Christ’s body (1 Cor 12:13). But they did not allow the

¹ TJC Department of Literary Ministry, “The Promised Holy Spirit”, *Our Basic Beliefs: An Introductory Brochure* (Malaysia: True Jesus Church, 2013), 12.

Spirit to lead them. Instead, they exhibited behaviors of the flesh, including jealousy and contention. Paul, therefore, reprimanded them (*Our Basic Beliefs*, 12)²:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

(1 Cor 3:1–3)

As we can see from this example, baptism in the Holy Spirit is only the first step. We need to pursue the constant filling of the Holy Spirit. In this way, we allow the Spirit to work in us to renew us (Tit 3:5), to sanctify us (2 Thess 2:13), and to help us to live a godly life that manifests the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–25). Being filled with the Holy Spirit means manifesting God’s character in a life that is obedient to His word. But this is not an easy task.

Pursuing the fullness of the Holy Spirit means fully submitting to His guidance, allowing God to rule in us, and living a life that is pleasing to Him. This means actively thirsting for the Spirit and making the choice to offer ourselves to God, just as Jesus offered Himself to be crucified on the cross. Let’s read Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

It takes time and persistence to offer our submission to God, and the Bible teaches us that the inward filling of the Holy Spirit is a life-long process. It occurs when our lives are completely directed by the Holy Spirit, so that we continually “walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:16) and are led by the Spirit (Rom 8:1–14). He becomes our source of spiritual power. With the strength that He offers, we can put off the deeds of the flesh (*Doctrine*, 352–353)²:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Gal 5:19–21)

Jesus Christ gave us a wonderful description of what will happen when the Holy Spirit fills us. He said, “[Whoever] drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn 4:14). He also said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (Jn 7:37–38). Here, Jesus speaks of an inward filling, which is clearly more than a one-off experience. It is a constant transformation of our lives, just like a never-ending river of living water.

Check for Understanding

1. **Describe what the Holy Spirit was like on the Day of Pentecost.** A sound “as of a rushing mighty wind” came from heaven and divided tongues, “as of fire,” rested upon each of the disciples. Then they began to speak “with other tongues.”

² Shun Dao Hsieh, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Taiwan: True Jesus Church, 2014), 352–353.

2. **What happened to the believers in Samaria (Acts 8)?** *They had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, but they had yet to receive the Holy Spirit.*
3. **How did Saul receive the Holy Spirit?** *Saul received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him when he was still blind.*
4. **What is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ?** *John's is a baptism of repentance; it does not rid us of our sins. However, when we are baptized in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, we believe He died for us on the cross and resurrected for the sins of mankind. When we come out of the water, we become a completely new person, clothed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.*
5. **Cornelius and his family and friends all received the Holy Spirit. Why were "those of the circumcision" astonished?** *Because Cornelius was a Gentile. They did not expect him to receive the Holy Spirit. But through this significant incident, everyone, including the Jews, understood that God's plan of salvation was for all people.*
6. **What are the steps to receive the Holy Spirit?** *Believe in God and His word; repent of all your sins; be baptized for the remission of sins; pray earnestly and persistently for God to fill you with His Spirit.*
7. **How did the Corinthian church believers show that receiving the Holy Spirit does not guarantee that we will be filled by the Spirit?** *The believers had already received the Holy Spirit, but they did not allow the Spirit to lead them.*

Life Application

1. A Spirit-Filled Christian

(Teachers: Take the time to look up the verses with your students. It is important that you discuss the significance of each verse and spiritual teaching with them. Note that these are also a part of their homework.)

For many of us, praying for the Holy Spirit can be a long journey. But that is actually not the most difficult part of the process. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we must learn to let Him work in our lives. Not every believer who has the Holy Spirit is filled with the fullness of Him. How do we know? We know that Paul was full of God's Spirit because of his life and his actions. Just like Paul's example, a Spirit-filled Christian should reflect God's character in all that they do and say. Let's examine this kind of life in closer detail.

a. A Spirit-filled Christian is devoted to...

- *study*: We must hide God's word in our hearts (Ps 119:11).
- *prayer* (1 Tim 2:8): There are personal prayers (Mt 6:6), powerful prayers (Jas 5:16), patient prayers (Lk 24:49), and persistent prayers (1 Thess 5:17).
- *surrender*: Our bodies belong to God. Therefore, we should bring honor and glory to God (Rom 12:1–2).
- *separation*: We must keep ourselves pure (1 Tim 5:22).

b. A Spirit-filled Christian is dedicated to...

- *loving God*: God's love caused Paul to dedicate himself and accept all suffering (2 Cor 11:24–27).
- *longing for God*: Paul had one desire—to know God. This longing will not only draw us nearer to God, but also make us like Him (Phil 3:10).

c. A Spirit-filled Christian is determined to...

- *testify*: Paul said that none of his suffering or tribulation could move or discourage him from testifying (Acts 20:24).
- *stand strong in trials*: Face trials with joy and patience (Jas 1:2–4).

- *resist temptation* (Jas 1:12): The person who endures temptation is blessed by God.

Review the list again. Pick the top three areas you need the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit in. Now let's fill in the following list:

In order to be a Spirit-filled Christian, I need the Holy Spirit to help me with:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Explain your answers and share your thoughts with the rest of the class.

2. Am I Transformed?

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we have evidence of the Holy Spirit within us, which is praying in tongues. However, have our lives been transformed by the Holy Spirit? Before receiving the Holy Spirit, many disciples of Jesus Christ were impulsive, hot-tempered, fearful, and timid. But after receiving Him, they transformed entirely. They preached boldly and became deeply committed to bringing people to Jesus Christ. Many eventually suffered and died as martyrs because of their refusal to compromise their belief in Jesus Christ and their obedience to God. However, it was not their deaths that made them stand out. Rather, it was how each of them changed so dramatically.

Reflection Activity: Instructions

- a. Give each student a sheet of paper. Ask them to draw a timeline of their lives and write down their significant spiritual milestones (e.g., when they received baptism, began reading the Bible on their own, received the Holy Spirit, helped with church ministry, suffered through a trial and came out a stronger Christian, etc.). If they have not received the Holy Spirit yet, they can pinpoint the time when they realized the importance of God in their lives.
- b. Ask them to compare their life before and after receiving the Holy Spirit, or before and after the significant realization. Do they see a noticeable change after?
- c. If the students do not see much of a change, ask them to reflect on their lifestyles and think about ways they can become a truly Spirit-filled Christian. Encourage them to think about their future timeline, and what the next year or so should look like with regard to their spiritual lives. Challenge them to strive to make it their goal.

Memory Verse

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37–38)

Meaning

Here, Jesus speaks of receiving the Holy Spirit. It is like the welling up of a spring within us, a never-ending flow of living water. When we ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit, we will experience the constant transformation of the Holy Spirit. Our lives will reflect God's character, and our actions will affect those around us as a testimony of the Spirit's power within us.

Conclusion

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit are two different matters (Acts 19:1–2). In the same way, receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are two different matters. After we have received God's Spirit, we need to submit to God and reflect the fullness of the Spirit in our lives by striving to be more like Him.

Lesson 4 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. In what way is the filling of the Spirit like a river of living water?
He will constantly transform us, making us more like God and affecting those around us.

2. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, _____, peace, longsuffering, _____, goodness, _____, gentleness, _____. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desire. If we live in the Spirit, let us also _____ in the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22–25)
joy, kindness, faithfulness, self-control, walk

3. Give three examples from the New Testament of how the apostles received the Holy Spirit.
On the Day of Pentecost, in Samaria, Paul, in Ephesus, Cornelius.

4. How do we pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit?
We need to thirst for it, put God first, and offer ourselves up as one being crucified on the cross.

5. A Spirit-filled Christian is:
 - a. Devoted to _____, _____, _____, and _____.
(study, prayer, surrender, separation)
 - b. Dedicated to _____ God and _____ for God.
(loving, longing)
 - c. And is determined to _____, to _____, and to _____.
(testify, stand strong in trials, resist temptation)

What Is the Spiritual Tongue?

Passages: Acts 2; 1 Cor 12; 1 Cor 14

Memory Verse

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”
(Romans 8:26)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The primary function of speaking in tongues is self-edification.2. The secondary function of speaking in tongues is the edification of others.3. All who have the Holy Spirit are able to speak in tongues.	God is Spirit.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask God to sanctify us.2. Set our minds to seek God first.3. Pray with a focus.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. What Is the Spiritual Tongue?
- B. The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues
- C. The Value and Significance of Speaking in Tongues

Life Application

Rely on the Power of Prayer in the Holy Spirit

Memory Verse

Conclusion: When we pray in tongues, God’s Spirit helps and edifies us.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Important Note: *After receiving the Holy Spirit, some students may still have doubts, questions, or a lack of understanding regarding the Holy Spirit, leading them to question if they still have the Holy Spirit, or wonder why they don't feel His joy or movement in their prayers. In these cases, it is important to be sensitive to your students' needs; take time to answer questions that they might have, and encourage them with the teachings contained in this lesson, as students at this age need a lot of encouragement. While such doubts can happen in a life of faith, it is important that they are addressed in order to truly experience God in their prayers. Over time, when they can fully submit to the Spirit by obeying God's word, their prayers will inevitably change. After you have spent time encouraging your students, you can pray together to help them put into practice what you have discussed.*

A. What Is the Spiritual Tongue?

There are two types of spiritual tongues. The first type refers to "different kinds of tongues" (1 Cor 12:10-11), and is a type of spiritual tongue that people may preach in. It is the movement of the Spirit, and shows itself in different forms for the edification of others.

The second type is the spiritual tongues that we pray in after receiving the Holy Spirit. It is both an amazing and joyful experience when we receive the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in tongues. But what does it mean to "speak in tongues"? This refers to the ability to speak in a language that has not been learned, by the movement of the Holy Spirit. When we pray in tongues, we are confirming that we have received the Holy Spirit, and are also speaking directly to God. Usually, the person speaking in tongues does not understand what is being said. It is a mysterious phenomenon that we cannot fully comprehend.

There are two basic functions of speaking in tongues. One function is for the edification of others, but the primary function is self-edification. 1 Corinthians 14:4 says, "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself." Have you ever wondered why God chose speaking in tongues to be the physical manifestation of receiving the Holy Spirit? Speaking in tongues allows us to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot force our tongue to vibrate the same way it does when we speak in tongues through the Holy Spirit. In addition, the inexplicable joy we feel when we pray in the Spirit definitely cannot be reproduced through human efforts. God knows exactly what we need, and He wants us to let the Spirit intercede for us. When we speak in tongues, we can feel assured that we have God living inside us.

In summary:

- When a person speaks in tongues, the Holy Spirit is giving them utterance (Acts 2:4).
- Generally, no man understands a person who is speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:2; Acts 2:13).
- Speaking in tongues edifies the speaker (1 Cor 14:4).

B. The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues

The secondary function of speaking in tongues is for the edification of others. When God intends to deliver a message in tongues through an inspired speaker, He will move someone who can understand the tongues to interpret the message to the listeners. This is the gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10). A person with this special gift can explain the meaning of the message given in tongues. This is a special gift from God that is for the "profit of all" (1 Cor 12:7), that is, for the edification of the church.

C. The Value and Significance of Speaking in Tongues

Sometimes we may wonder why we speak in tongues when we cannot understand it. Only on rare occasions will someone be able to interpret tongues through a revelation from God. However, when addressing the believers in Corinth, Paul wished that they “all spoke with tongues” (1 Cor 14:5). This tells us that the gift of speaking in tongues is something believers should seek. Paul even gives thanks to God that he speaks in tongues (1 Cor 14:18). Let us study the value and significance of speaking in tongues.

1. To confirm that we are God’s children

Speaking in tongues is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:15–16). Therefore, when we pray in tongues, we can be assured that we are God’s children.

2. For our spiritual edification

Just as our physical body needs to be kept strong and healthy, so does our spirituality. A Christian should have fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ on a daily basis. Paul writes, “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself” (1 Cor 14:4). When we speak in tongues in our prayers, it will make the Spirit within us strong and stimulate our faith. This is important, because without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6).

There are times when we want to serve God (e.g., when we are called upon to meet a challenge, to respond to a need, or to pray for someone in distress or sickness), but we feel inadequate or weak in faith at that moment. It is then that the Holy Spirit is ready to strengthen our faith as we call on Him. The Holy Spirit will always encourage and support our faith when we ask for it.

3. To intercede for us

The Holy Spirit will intercede for us, especially when we are not walking in the Spirit and instead gratifying our sinful nature. Paul says, “[The] Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26). Many times, even if we don’t have the words or strength to pray, the moment we kneel down to pray, the Holy Spirit will help us pray by interceding for us with “groanings which cannot be uttered.”

4. To pray in God’s will

During the quiet and peaceful times in our lives, we may not know what we should pray for. Other times, we run out of things to pray about, so we find it difficult to concentrate. But the Holy Spirit knows all things, and He is able to help us in those times. Paul wrote, “Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom 8:27). Praying in tongues gives us the assurance that the Holy Spirit is interceding for us according to God’s will. Jesus Christ taught us to pray for God’s will to “be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:10). When we pray in tongues with the Holy Spirit, we pray for God’s will, and for His kingdom.

5. To pray for one another and for the church

If we seek to build up other members and the church, we need the Holy Spirit’s guidance to know how and what to pray for. Paul prayed for the church constantly, and he often asked believers to pray for him. God wants us to pray for one another and, through intercession, to bring the blessing and protection of the Lord Jesus Christ into the lives of others. “[If] one

member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor 12:26). When we pray in tongues, we are unified in one body that is Jesus Christ.

6. A sign for unbelievers

- “Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers” (1 Cor 14:22).
- “And these signs will follow who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues” (Mk 16:17).

The Greek word for “sign,” *semeion*, is often used in the context of miracles and wonders. It is a particularly fitting word to use in connection with speaking in tongues because speaking in tongues testifies to unbelievers that a person has received the Holy Spirit, and that God abides in them (1 Jn 3:24).

We can see the testimonial power of speaking in tongues in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. The Jews there were drawn in great numbers to the disciples when they began speaking in tongues. At first, the listeners were amazed and perplexed but soon understood that the disciples had received the baptism of the Spirit. The spiritual tongues of the Spirit served as evidence that the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit had been fulfilled (*Doctrine*, 223).¹ As a result, many believed, repented, and were baptized (Acts 2:5–7, 37–41).

Check for Understanding

True or False

1. **The Holy Spirit gives a person utterance when he speaks in tongues.** (True; Acts 2:4)
2. **Only highly spiritual people can understand a person who speaks in tongues.** (False—No man understands; 1 Cor 14:2)
3. **Speaking in tongues edifies the speaker.** (True; 1 Cor 14:4)
4. **When we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for believers.** (True; Rom 8:26–27)

Short Answer

5. **What is the gift of the interpretation of the tongues?** The gift of being able to understand and interpret the message being spoken in tongues. This occurs when God intends to deliver a message in tongues through an inspired speaker.
6. **What is the significance of speaking in tongues?**
 - To confirm that we are God’s children
 - For our spiritual edification
 - To intercede for us
 - To pray in God’s will
 - To pray for one another and for the church
 - A sign for unbelievers

Life Application

¹ Shun Dao Hsieh, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Taiwan: True Jesus Church, 2014), 223.

Rely on the Power of Prayer in the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is key in putting to death our fleshly desires and sinful nature. We are weak, so our spiritual life cannot be fruitful without the Holy Spirit. It is vital that we ask God to give us understanding and to lead us in the way we should go. Praying in the Holy Spirit will help us yield to His guidance and live according to the Spirit. But first, why is it so important that we strive for holiness?

A Christian's faith must be accompanied by action. If we say we are Christians, we need to pursue holiness because holiness is directly related to our salvation (Rom 6:12–14). Without holiness, we cannot meet God the day He returns (Heb 12:14). Our goal in our walk with God is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, so that we do not act according to our flesh, but according to the Spirit (Gal 5:16). But if we want to live a sanctified life, we need to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, especially when we feel inadequate or weak in our faith. We may feel like we cannot fight our temptations or trials on our own, but our God has not left us helpless.

God has given us His will in the Bible, and the Holy Spirit to help us follow it (Rom 8:26). The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to put to death our fleshly desires and sinful nature. This means prayer is the foundation of every Christian life. Our victory over sin is guaranteed when we rely on the Holy Spirit. But learning to rely on the Spirit through prayer is not an easy thing to do. How can we begin to rely on Him?

1. Prepare our hearts

If our heart is not ready or prepared for prayer, our prayer may not be fruitful. So, how do we ensure we have a fruitful prayer? Before we pray, we can find a passage in the Bible and spend some time meditating on it. Let's read Joshua 1:8. "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

The word of God is our most powerful weapon when fighting against lust, pride, and temptation. It helps us to act in accordance with God's will, has the power to change us, and gives us strength (Heb 4:12). But to understand it, we must ask Jesus to come into our heart as we read. This is not something we can do in a hurry.

Being focused on God's presence is a practiced discipline. But when we have the desire to focus on Him, His presence will fill us! Furthermore, when we have finished meditating on God's word, we are filled with His love, and the desire to want to be more like Him. By meditating on God's word, we can focus our minds on God. In this way, we can prepare our hearts for a fruitful prayer.

2. Pray with a focus

When we pray, it is vital that we pray with a focus. When we are discouraged or lose heart in prayer, we need to pray in the Spirit all the more, because the Holy Spirit intercedes for us "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom 8:26). Let's go over two examples of different focuses, or goals, that we might have for our prayers.

First, take a moment to reflect on Matthew 12:36: "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment." Here, Jesus is teaching us that we need to make a commitment to watch what we say. As we meditate on this verse, we should search our hearts deeply and ask ourselves the following questions:

- Why is it important to turn from speaking idle or foolish words?
- Am I ready to set aside my idle words?

- Am I determined to ask the Holy Spirit to help me watch my words and speak only with truth and love?

A second focus we may have is to ask for God's cleansing, such as when David asked for God's forgiveness. Let's read Psalm 51:2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." When meditating on this verse, we must ask ourselves:

- Do I have a desire to confess, repent, and turn from sin?
- Have I made a commitment to shun evil and learn to do what is right?
- Am I able to identify the things around me that can easily corrupt my body and spirit?
- Do I have the strength of will to ask God to help me cut these from my life?
- Am I ready to submit to the Holy Spirit and put off my old self?

After spending some time meditating on a Bible verse, we now have a focus for our prayer. Our prayer can be more effective with a goal in mind, and we can submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit more easily. During such prayers, the Spirit will search our hearts and strengthen us according to the will of God.

Let's now put these steps into practice. Try picking two verses that you are going to meditate on during this week before you kneel down to pray. Share your verses with the rest of the class.

Memory Verse

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."
(Romans 8:26)

Meaning

1. The Holy Spirit is more than just evidence that we are the children of God. The Spirit also gives us spiritual strength. It is important that we pursue the strength that the Spirit offers us because only with His help are we able to overcome the temptations of this world and our own weaknesses that threaten to pull us away from God.
2. There are times when we have no idea what to pray for, or even how we should pray in certain situations. But even in times like these, we should still kneel down to pray because the Holy Spirit Himself will intercede for us on our behalf. He serves as the mediator between us and God, and speaks for us in a language that we cannot understand.

Conclusion

Praying in tongues has many wonderful purposes. Although we may not understand what we are saying, God's Spirit is helping and edifying us when we pray in tongues. Let us remember Paul's encouragement to pray "always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18). By fully relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, we can put to death our sinful nature and live according to the Spirit.

Lesson 5 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Why is it important that we pursue the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our prayers?
The Holy Spirit gives us strength to overcome temptation. He also intercedes for us as our mediator between God and man, even when we ourselves do not know what to pray for.
2. What are the two basic functions of speaking in tongues? Provide a Bible verse for each.
For self-edification (1 Cor 14:4), and for the edification of the church (1 Cor 12:7).
3. Name four ways speaking in tongues is valuable and significant.
 - a. *To confirm that we are God's children*
 - b. *For our spiritual edification*
 - c. *To intercede for us*
 - d. *To pray in God's will*
 - e. *To pray for one another and for the church*
 - f. *A sign to unbelievers*
4. Why is it so important that we pursue holiness and ask the Spirit to sanctify us?
Holiness is directly related to our salvation. Without holiness, we cannot meet God the day He returns. But if we want to live a sanctified life, we need to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, especially when we feel inadequate or weak in our faith.
5. What are two steps to having a fruitful prayer?
Prepare our hearts beforehand by meditating on God's word. Pray with a focus that is drawn from our meditation on the Bible.
6. How will you live a life of holiness? What changes do you need to make in order to live this out?
Personal answers.

The Nine Gifts

Passages: 1 Cor 12:1–11; other selected texts

Memory Verse

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. There are nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. 2. All spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit and are for the purpose of building up the church.	God is a God of order and peace.	1. Allow God to fill us first with the power of the Holy Spirit. 2. Be a clean vessel for God’s use.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Nine Gifts
- B. Gifts of Spiritual Understanding
- C. Gifts Which Manifest God’s Grace and Power
- D. Gifts Which Reveal God’s Will

Life Application

- 1. God Wants to Fill You First with His Spirit
- 2. Am I a Clean Vessel, Ready for the Master’s Use?

Memory Verse

Conclusion: The gifted have the responsibility of helping the church and its members, and in the end, must be able to provide an account of their works when Jesus Christ comes again. We need to remember that spiritual gifts only have one purpose: to build up the church.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction: The Corinthian Church

There was a major problem in the church of Corinth: spiritual gifts were dividing the members (1 Cor 12:1). Pride often causes conflict, and each seemed to be proud of his gift. Paul addressed this issue by explaining the nature of spiritual gifts, and their intended uses according to God's will.

A. The Nine Gifts (1 Cor 12:8–11)

The Holy Spirit gives different gifts to believers to advance the kingdom of God. When God entrusts any of these gifts to a person, that person should not feel superior to others (1 Cor 3:5–7) but instead use them to honor and glorify Him. They are not to be used for selfish reasons. Before examining the gifts, let's turn to 1 Corinthians 12:4–7.

What do these verses tell us? While each member may have different gifts to help advance the growth of the church in various ways, everything comes from one God and one Spirit. Therefore, there should be no strife or contradiction. Otherwise, God would be in conflict with Himself.

The Purposes of the Nine Gifts

What are the purposes of the nine gifts that Paul lists?

1. **To edify and build up the members and the church:** The gifts are to advance God's work. For example, these gifts can help the members discern right from wrong. Since Satan has the power to deceive, we need God's power to discern the true from the false.
2. **To exhort and encourage one another:** The gifts can encourage the members' faith, especially in times of sorrow, so that we are able to comfort one another.
3. **To educate:** These gifts can educate even the illiterate, as they are used for God's glory.
4. **To expose:** These gifts will help the members and the church expose false spirits and religions.

From these purposes, we can see that no matter what the gift is, its purpose is to edify and help the members and the church. It is not for self-glorification, power, or personal gain. A key verse to remember is Ephesians 4:16: "[From] whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

There are various manifestations of the Holy Spirit when we are talking about these nine gifts. They may have different functions, but all are needed and equal in value in the eyes of God. But what exactly are these gifts? They can be categorized into three groups (*Doctrine, 74–75*)¹:

1. Gifts of spiritual understanding (The gift of the word of wisdom; The gift of the word of knowledge; The gift of discerning spirits)
2. Gifts which manifest God's grace and power (The gift of faith; The gift of healing; The gift of working miracles)
3. Gifts which reveal God's will (The gift of prophecy; The gift of tongues; The gift of interpretation of tongues)

Let's examine each of these gifts in greater detail.

¹ Shun Dao Hsieh, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Taiwan: True Jesus Church, 2014), http://elibrary.tjc.org/content/cm/EN/pdf/2014/Print_tjc_holy%20spirit_%20nd%20edition%20March2014_MC%20edits_13531.pdf.

B. Gifts of Spiritual Understanding

1. The gift of the word of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8)

In this phrase, “word,” or *logos*, means the “essence of” in Greek, making this gift the *essence of* wisdom. It comes from God alone and refers to the ability to speak words of wisdom to the right people, at the right time. Let’s read 1 Corinthians 2:6–7. We cannot receive this wisdom from books, only from God through the Holy Spirit. Let’s examine one particular example of someone using this gift to edify the members and the church. Let’s read Acts 15:6–22.

After listening to Peter, the Pharisees, and Paul and Barnabas’ report, James then spoke, guiding the leaders to a decision that was in line with God’s will. He spoke words of wisdom at the right time, to the right people, and for the sole purpose of resolving an issue and building up the church. There are many other examples of people who received this same gift, such as Joshua (Deut 34:9), Peter (Acts 2:14, 40), and Stephen (Acts 6:8–10). In all of them, the gift is clearly from God, given for the purpose of leading His people and building up the church.

2. The gift of the word of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8)

The gift of “the word of knowledge through the same Spirit” is the gift of speaking God’s knowledge, because He and the Spirit are one. It is the gift of spiritual knowledge, which is different from worldly knowledge (Col 2:8). This gift comes from the Holy Spirit, not human intelligence. The knowledge of God is not gained from experience, nor is it based on one’s skills or abilities, but there are various ways God can give it to us. If it comes by means of a dream or vision, it must always agree with God’s word. The scope of this knowledge includes (*Doctrine*, 75–76):

- a. The richness of spiritual wisdom (Col 3:16)
- b. The ability to discern good from evil (Phil 1:9–10)
- c. The ability to stand firm in the faith
- d. The ability to teach others (Rom 15:14)

Let’s look at a few examples that illustrate this gift:

- a. Peter had knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira’s deception (Acts 5:3, 9).
- b. Ananias received knowledge of Saul’s conversion and future in detail (Acts 9:11–16).
- c. God revealed events of the end times to the apostle John on the island of Patmos (Rev 2; 3).

What is the difference between the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge?

Often, the gift of the word of knowledge comes before the word of wisdom, but there is no contradiction between them. Rather, they often work side by side, as a Spirit-filled person can have both. Let’s examine the following examples:

- a. Jesus had the word of knowledge regarding the Samaritan woman’s past (Jn 4:17–18). But He also demonstrated the gift of the word of wisdom in the same conversation, guiding her to the understanding that He was the Messiah (Jn 4:21–26).
- b. Joseph had the word of knowledge regarding the impending famine. But he also had the word of wisdom that gave Pharaoh the solution to save his people (Gen 41:25–36).
- c. When the Bible describes Daniel and his three friends, it says, “As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:17).

3. The gift of discerning spirits (1 Cor 12:10)

Evil spirits are, like Satan, able to deceive Christians (Mt 24:24; 1 Tim 4:1), for “Satan himself

transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). To counter such deception, the Bible teaches us not to “believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 Jn 4:1). The apostles from the early church had the gift of discerning spirits and could tell when Satan was working against God (*Doctrine*, 76). For example:

- a. Paul rebuked a sorcerer who tried to turn away someone who wanted to hear the word of God. Paul had recognized the evil spirit through a revelation from the Holy Spirit. “Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?’ ” (Acts 13:9–10).
- b. A slave girl followed Paul and Silas for many days, announcing that they were workers from God. Although what she was saying was correct, it came from an evil spirit, with which God wanted no association. As a result, Paul cast the spirit out (Acts 16:16–18).

This gift of discernment requires a solid understanding of God’s word. It is not based on human intelligence, experience, or ability, but is directly from God. With it, we can judge and understand the situation, person, or environment to see if Satan is trying to influence our faith. Without members who can distinguish between spirits, the church is open to spiritual attacks.

C. Gifts Which Manifest God’s Grace and Power

1. The gift of faith (1 Cor 12:9)

Faith is an indispensable part of a Christian’s journey. It is key to receiving the grace of salvation (Eph 2:8), conquering difficulties (Phil 4:11–14), and living a life pleasing to God (Heb 11:6). Jesus Christ once said that if we have faith, we could move mountains (Mk 11:23–24). This gift doesn’t refer to our belief in God’s existence or in Jesus Christ as the Savior. The “gift of faith” is the ability to continue to trust in God at all times, even in impossible situations. Stephen and Barnabas had this gift (Acts 6:5; 11:24)(*Doctrine*, 76–77). The following are some more examples of when God guided His believers through seemingly impossible circumstances, all because of their faith.

- a. Noah, who built the ark despite everyone’s ridicule (Gen 6:14, 22).
- b. Abraham, who followed wherever God led him (Heb 11:8–9).
- c. Rahab, who helped the Israelite spies despite being a Canaanite (Josh 2:8–13; Heb 11:31).
- d. Daniel, who refused to eat the king’s food and wine (Dan 1:12–13) and had no fear in the den of lions (Dan 6:16–17, 19–23; Heb 11:33).
- e. Peter, whose faith enabled the lame man to walk (Acts 3:7–8).

2. The gift of healing (1 Cor 12:9)

This gift refers to the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities. It is a gift that is beyond natural means, and its effects can be immediate or gradual. The Bible has many examples:

- a. It was believed that even Peter’s shadow could help the sick (Acts 5:15).
- b. Paul’s clothing was used to heal diseases (Acts 19:12).
- c. Jesus went through all Syria, “and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them” (Mt 4:24).
- d. “And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him” (Acts 28:8–9).

Miraculous healings can help convince unbelievers of the message of the gospel (Acts 8:6; 14:3) and also encourage obedience and respect for the Lord. The Bible teaches us that faith is a

necessary condition for receiving God's gift of healing (Mt 9:27–30; Mk 9:21–24; Acts 14:8–10), as are the confession of sins and intercessory prayers on the part of the church (*Doctrine*, 78).

3. The gift of working miracles (1 Cor 12:10)

Like the gift of healing, this gift refers to a supernatural intervention. It is the gift to work something extraordinary, an occurrence against the laws of nature, such as the ten plagues (Ex 7–10), and the feeding of the 5,000 (Mt 14:15–21). Jesus performed many miracles during His ministry, and His apostles had this gift. For example, Peter restored Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:40), while Paul struck Elymas blind (Acts 13:11). Today, the signs and miracles that occur within the true church confirm the truth of the gospel she preaches and testify of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit (*Doctrine*, 78–79).

D. Gifts Which Reveal God's Will

1. The gift of prophecy (1 Cor 12:10)

The Greek word for *prophecy* means “to speak for another.” Prophecy is given by the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20–21). Prophecies can be used to edify, exhort, and comfort members (1 Cor 14:3), and also to convict unbelievers (1 Cor 14:24–25). In 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul wrote, “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy,” implying that he held this gift in particular prominence (*Doctrine*, 79). God gave many prophets the special authority to speak His words. Today, God can similarly raise prophets to reveal the truth and to encourage the believers in the faith (1 Cor 14:30–31; *Doctrine*, 79).

2. The gift of tongues (1 Cor 12:10)

The gift of “different kinds of tongues” does not refer to our speaking in tongues when we receive the Holy Spirit. This gift is one of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, but not everyone has it (*BSG: 1 Corinthians*, 7.4: 12).² We need to understand the differences between these two types of tongues so that we do not confuse the two (*Doctrine*, 80).

- a. The first type is the spiritual tongue used by an individual in their prayer (1 Cor 14:2, 14–15). This tongue is primarily for self-edification (1 Cor 14:2, 4). More importantly, it is the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
- b. The second is the gift of “different kinds of tongues.” This kind of tongue is used for preaching, to deliver God's message for the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:5–6, 26). It is used in worship only when someone present is able to interpret their words (1 Cor 14:27–28).

3. The gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10)

The gift of interpretation of tongues is used to explain the meaning of the message given in tongues so that all may be edified (1 Cor 14:5, 27). The one speaking should pray that there be an interpretation (1 Cor 14:13). While the interpreter may not understand the tongue spoken, the Holy Spirit does; he merely speaks the interpretation by the work of the Spirit.

Paul instructs the Corinthians that if there is no one to interpret, they should keep quiet (1 Cor 14:27–28). He further speaks firmly against disorder, writing that messages in tongues in a public meeting should be limited, for “God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (1 Cor

² TJC Department of Literary Ministry, “Order in Church Gatherings”, *Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians* (U.S.A.: True Jesus Church, 2018), https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/1-corinthians-12/?guide_id=920, 7.4:12.

14:33). Additionally, he advises that “all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40).

We need to remember that spiritual gifts only have one purpose: to build up the church. The gifted have the responsibility of helping the church and its members, and in the end, must be able to provide an account of their works when Jesus Christ comes again. If we have been blessed with a gift, do not boast. Instead, remember that it is a privilege to have, and that with it comes the duty to use it in service to other members to the best of our abilities.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are the purposes of the spiritual gifts?** To edify and build up the members and the church; to exhort and encourage one another; to educate; to expose false spirits and religions.
- 2. Name two characters in the Bible who had the gift of the word of wisdom.** James (Acts 15:6–22), Joshua (Deut 34:9), Peter (Acts 2:14, 40), and Stephen (Acts 6:8–10).
- 3. Name two characters in the Bible who had the gift of the word of knowledge.** Jesus (Jn 4:17–18, 21–26), Joseph (Gen 41:25–36), and Daniel and his three friends (Dan 1:17).
- 4. Why it is important to have the gift of discernment?** Without members who can distinguish between spirits, the church is open to spiritual attacks.
- 5. What is the difference between speaking in tongues in Acts 2 and “different kinds of tongues” in 1 Corinthians 12:10?**
 - a. The first type is the spiritual tongue used by an individual in their prayer (1 Cor 14:2, 14–15). This tongue is primarily for self-edification (1 Cor 14:2, 4). More importantly, it is the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
 - b. The second is the gift of “different kinds of tongues.” This kind of tongue is used for preaching, to deliver God’s message for the edification of the church (1 Cor 14:5–6, 26). It is used in worship only when someone present is able to interpret their words (1 Cor 14:27–28).

Life Application

1. God Wants to Fill You First with His Spirit

Let’s read Exodus 31:1–6. God had a group of gifted people to work with Moses in order to construct the tabernacle. God knew they needed special spiritual gifts, so He filled them with the Spirit of God in wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skills in all manner of workmanship (Ex 31:1–11; 35:30–35). The same principle applies here. God will help His workers to do His work in order to build up the body of Christ.

You may be skillful in planning or managing your work. Perhaps your skills lie in music, sports, or writing. But church work is not the same as work at home or school. That’s why God wants us to be filled with the power from on high. His work needs members who are empowered with wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit. When we let Him fill us with His Spirit and gifts, we will be able to do the work just like the craftsmen in the Old Testament (Ex 36:2), and God’s name will be glorified.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). We are made for a purpose and God’s workmanship, created for good works. This gives our life great significance! What skills do you have? How can you use them for God’s good works, either now or in the future?

2. Am I a Clean Vessel, Ready for the Master’s Use?

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”

(2 Tim 2:20–21)

We may feel that some things in life are unattainable or impossible. Many of us could never imagine ourselves becoming a pastor or healing others. But God doesn't need any natural talents from you in order to build up the church. The most important question we should ask is: are we cleaned and sanctified from within so that God can use us? We can be a vessel of wood, clay, gold, or silver in God's eyes. Whatever we may be, we know that God wants to apply our skills and abilities for His good purposes. Our value doesn't lie in our material, but in our submission to God's use.

Rather than assuming we are incapable, we should always pray to understand the will of God and sanctify ourselves so that when He wants to use us, we will be ready! The best vessel for God to use is a clean vessel. God can't use someone who hasn't repented of his wicked ways and is dirty within. We need to deal with our sins and be right with God.

Memory Verse

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5)

Meaning:

Even though there are nine gifts listed here, all of them are from the same Spirit and the same Lord. They do not come into conflict with each other but are to be used to promote peace and understanding, for the purpose of building up the members and the church towards God's heavenly kingdom.

Conclusion

Paul highlighted the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit to remind the believers at Corinth of their misuse of the gifts. Every member can be given special abilities by the Spirit, but that doesn't make one person better than another. Rather, the gifted have the responsibility of helping the church and its members, and in the end, must be able to provide an account of their works when Jesus Christ comes again. We need to remember that spiritual gifts only have one purpose: to build up the church.

Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about the different spiritual gifts?
They all come from the same Spirit, the same Lord, and thus do not conflict with each other.
2. "But the _____ of the _____ is _____ to each _____ for the _____ of _____." (1 Corinthians 12:7)
manifestation, Spirit, given, one, profit, all
3. What are the purposes of the nine gifts that Paul lists?
To edify and build up the members and the church; to exhort and encourage one another; to educate; and to expose.
4. Outline a Biblical example that shows both the gifts of the words of wisdom and of knowledge.
 - a. *Jesus had the word of knowledge regarding the Samaritan woman's past (Jn 4:17–18). But He also demonstrated the gift of the word of wisdom in the same conversation, guiding her to the understanding that He was the Messiah (Jn 4:21–26).*
 - b. *Joseph had the word of knowledge regarding the impending famine. But he also had the word of wisdom that gave Pharaoh the solution to save his people (Gen 41:25–36).*
 - c. *When the Bible describes Daniel and his three friends, it says, "As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Dan 1:17).*
5. Why do we need to be filled with God's Spirit in order to serve Him?
Church work is not the same as work at home or school. God's work needs members who are empowered with wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit.
6. What in your life do you need to change in order to become a clean vessel, prepared for His work?
Personal answers.

Understanding Heaven

Passages: Mt 5:17–20; 7:13–14; Jn 14:2–4; Heb 11; Rev 7:13–17; 21:4–8; 22:3–7, 5–9

Memory Verse

“In My Father’s house are many mansions [...]. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:2–3)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. God has prepared for the righteous a glorious heavenly home. 2. God gives us the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of our inheritance.	1. God is holy. 2. God reigns eternally.	1. Pursue holiness. 2. Hold on to our faith.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Heavenly Kingdom in the Bible
- B. Characteristics of the Heavenly Kingdom
- C. Inheriting the Heavenly Kingdom

Life Application

- 1. Pursuing Holiness
- 2. Holding on to Our Faith

Memory Verse

Conclusion: When we pursue holiness in our hearts and hold on to our faith no matter what obstacles we face, we will find peace and rest. When we enter into God’s unshakable kingdom, we will reign as kings alongside our Lord forever.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Can you imagine the kingdom of heaven? What kinds of images or feelings do you think of when you try to imagine it? (*Allow students to answer.*) The Greek word for “kingdom” in the phrase “kingdom of heaven” is “*basileia*.” In the New Testament, this word is used to refer to the reign of the Messiah and is related to His royal power, kingship, and dominion. He is the only ruler over heaven, and we know that our hope is to dwell in this kingdom alongside Him. Today, we’re going to examine how the Bible explains the kingdom of heaven in a bit more detail.

A. The Heavenly Kingdom in the Bible

First, let’s begin with what we know. What do you know about heaven? Do you remember how the Bible describes it or refers to it? (*Give the students some time to brainstorm and write down their answers on the board. Examples may be Zion, a place of rest, God’s kingdom, etc.*)

The Bible refers to the heavenly kingdom with different titles or names, and many of them can be found in the books of Hebrews and Revelation. First, let’s turn to several verses. For each, how does the Bible refer to the heavenly kingdom?

- Heb 4:9–11; Rev 14:13 – A resting place
- Heb 9:12; 10:19; Rev 21:2 – The holy place, or the holy city, New Jerusalem
- Heb 11:16 – A heavenly country
- Heb 12:22; Rev 14:1 – Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem
- Heb 13:14 – The continuing city

Jesus once told His disciples, “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (Jn 14:2–3). Right now, we are simply wanderers on this earth. Just as the Israelites traveled in the wilderness, hoping to enter Canaan, we also “seek a homeland” that God has prepared for us (Heb 11:14–16). And from its many names, we can see that it is unlike any kingdom on earth. Let’s now take a closer look at some of its characteristics.

B. Characteristics of the Heavenly Kingdom

The heavenly kingdom is spiritual, and its glory cannot be accurately described. Paul simply says that being with Christ is “far better” (Phil 1:23). There’s nothing in this world that can compare. Let’s look at some of the characteristics that are mentioned in the Bible.

1. Our inheritance

Jesus once declared that in “[His] Father’s house are many mansions” and that He was preparing a place for us (Jn 14:2). We may live in this world now, but in truth we are simply wanderers and vagabonds, waiting for the arrival of our true home in heaven. Jesus Christ said that the kingdom of heaven will be given to those who are “poor in spirit,” and who are “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (Mt 5:3, 10). Those who overcome the world and hold on to their faith will inherit His kingdom (Rev 21:7).

2. An unshakeable and everlasting kingdom

When Jesus returns, the world will be shaken (Mt 24:29), but Hebrews says that the heavenly kingdom is unshakable (Heb 12:28). The Bible also says it is “incorruptible” and “enduring” (1 Pet 1:4; Heb 10:34), meaning it shall never perish, spoil, or fade. The world around us will pass

away (Rev 21:1, 4), but God’s heavenly kingdom is everlasting (2 Pet 1:11; Heb 13:14).

3. A holy and sinless place, without need of lamp nor sunlight

The mistake in the garden of Eden will never occur again. There will be no chance for sin to enter heaven and separate us from God (Rev 21:27). Instead, we will live side by side with the Lord for eternity. John also wrote, “There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever” (Rev 22:5). Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and we will dwell in His magnificent light. “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mt 13:43).

4. Those who enter will be transformed

As God dwells in an “unapproachable light” (1 Tim 6:16), it would normally be impossible for us to dwell side by side with the Lord. But Paul wrote that the Lord Jesus will “transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Phil 3:21). We cannot see God as we are now, but when He returns, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn 3:2), and when we are transformed to be like Him, we will reign with Him as kings (2 Tim 2:12).

5. A place of rest, with no death, sorrow, or tears

What does it mean that heaven is a “place of rest” (Heb 4:9–11; Rev 14:13)? John wrote that in the new kingdom, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for all the former things have passed away” (Rev 21:4). The world around us is in constant upheaval, and there are always conflicts in our lives that make us angry, upset, or depressed. But in the heavenly kingdom, no sin, and therefore no pain or sorrow, exists. Adam and Eve had to toil and labor when they were cast out of Eden, but when we enter the heavenly kingdom, we will finally be able to rest.

C. Inheriting the Heavenly Kingdom

We learned that the heavenly kingdom is the inheritance that God has promised, but how do we receive it? Many Christians today believe that it is enough to simply believe in Jesus. However, the Bible says, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21). We must obey God’s commands and live a life according to His will.

1. Be born of water and the Spirit

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are “born of water and the Spirit” (Jn 3:5). Many other passages state the importance of water baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:3–6; Tit 3:5; Acts 2:37–38; Mt 25:1–13). Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, the apostles repeatedly demonstrated the importance of being baptized according to Jesus’ teachings, and of receiving the Holy Spirit. No matter how great our belief in Christ, if we do not do these things in accordance with the Bible, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

2. Receive the kingdom as a little child

Let’s read Mark 10:14–15. What is it about little children that makes them so different? We often associate children with innocence, trust, honesty, and dependence. And when a child likes something, they will eagerly pursue it. Adults are more cautious, fearful, unwilling to give things up, and easily caught up in other priorities. In this passage, however, the Lord says that “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.” No matter how old we are physically, our hearts should be as humble and trusting as a child’s,

completely dependent on our Father and eager to learn the truth.

3. Seek God's kingdom and His righteousness

The Lord doesn't want us to sit around doing nothing, waiting for His kingdom to fall into our laps. He wants us to seek after it and to pursue His righteousness. Jesus said, "Let [our] light so shine before men" (Mt 5:16) and warned us that "unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20). The actions of the scribes and Pharisees may have seemed good on the outside, but they did not seek God in their hearts. If we truly seek God's kingdom, then we must prioritize His will in our lives and actively try to draw closer to Him (Mt 6:33).

4. Overcome the world

Because Jesus Christ overcame the world, we can now do the same (Jn 16:33). But what does it mean to "overcome the world"? Let's read 1 John 5:4. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." If the world belongs to unbelievers and evildoers (1 Jn 4:3–5; Gal 5:19–21), then overcoming it means holding on to our faith and fighting to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). Those who "practice [the works of the flesh] will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:21), but "He who overcomes shall inherit all things" (Rev 21:7).

When we struggle with sin and temptation every day, entering the heavenly kingdom seems like such a monumental task! But we must remember that God truly wants us to be saved; He loves us dearly, which is why, even now, He is preparing a special place for us by His side. If we are ever overwhelmed by the long struggle before us, remember that He wants us to rely on His strength. When we rely on Him as little children, He will take care of all of our needs on this earth, so that we will be able to pursue His kingdom above all other things. With His help, we will be able to "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12). When we fear God and rely on His help, we will overcome the world.

Check for Understanding

1. **What are some names the Bible uses to refer to the heavenly kingdom?** A resting place; the holy place; the holy city; New Jerusalem; a heavenly country; Mount Zion; the city of the living God; the heavenly Jerusalem; the continuing city.
2. **What are the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom?** It is our inheritance; an unshakable and everlasting kingdom; a holy and sinless place, without need of lamp nor sunlight; a place where those who enter will be transformed; a place of rest, with no death, sorrow, or tears.
3. **What does it mean that it is a "place of rest," with no death, sorrow, or tears?** Adam and Eve had to toil and labor when they were cast out of the garden of Eden. But we will no longer have to labor in the heavenly kingdom, and we will no longer experience death, sorrow, or tears because no sin exists there. We will never be separated from God ever again.
4. **How can we inherit the heavenly kingdom?** Be born of water and the Spirit; receive the kingdom as a little child; seek God's kingdom and His righteousness; overcome the world.
5. **What does it mean to overcome the world?** It means holding on to our faith and fighting to walk in the Spirit.

Life Application

(Teachers: The full version of the testimony referenced in this section is too long to include. However, a separate pdf with the full testimony has been included alongside this lesson. You may want to read the

full testimony with your students if you have time, or alternately, give them a copy to read at home. Note that the same testimony is referred to in Lesson 8. Please collaborate with the corresponding teacher.)

1. Pursuing Holiness

Why is holiness so important as a qualification for our entry into the heavenly kingdom? We need to remember that God is a holy and righteous God, so the unholy cannot enter the heavenly kingdom where He dwells. But what does holiness look like in our lives? It is not simply “looking good” in front of others, avoiding worldly activities, being different, or isolating ourselves. The Bible does not want us to live as hermits! Nor should we think that once we have the Holy Spirit, we can sit back and relax.

Easton’s Bible Dictionary¹ defines holiness as the following:

In the highest sense belongs to God (Isa 6:3; Rev 15:4), and to Christians as consecrated to God's service, and in so far as they are conformed in all things to the will of God (Rom 6:19; 6:22; Eph 1:4; Tit 1:8; 1 Pet 1:15). Personal holiness is a work of gradual development. It is carried on under many hindrances, hence the frequent admonitions to watchfulness, prayer, and perseverance (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:23; 4:24).

Holiness belongs to God. His way is perfect, and none are as perfect as He is. But a Christian can be considered holy when they conform themselves to His will. Therefore, we can be called holy when we cultivate our spiritual lives. We need to learn to apply biblical principles to our everyday decisions. But we are human and often weak in the face of our desires. How can we ever achieve holiness when we are faced with so many temptations?

A young girl saw a vision of two paths in her prayer during an evangelical service. One path led to hell and the other to heaven. When she stood before the gates of heaven, she saw that many people did not meet the requirements to enter the kingdom of God. Here is an excerpt from her testimony:

[Two] angels remained before the gate, and the third brought out a book with a list of names within it. The angel began to call out names, and the moment their names were called, they were permitted to enter the heavenly kingdom.

Suddenly, Sister Jia Yin saw the pages of the book that the angel held. In it were many names, and beside each was a list of the fruit of the Spirit. By each characteristic was one of four symbols:

○ × △ ☆

Each circle, cross, triangle, or star indicated how well the person had lived out each fruit. She saw that each person who was permitted to enter was not perfect. But they were admitted because they had constantly reflected and repented, were willing to admit their faults, and were humble when the Holy Spirit rebuked or convicted them of their sins. They had prayed in the Spirit, asking God to remove their impurities, and had been able to live as good examples. They had been able to glorify God and edify men through their actions.

Some remained whose names had not been called, despite having received both water baptism and the Holy Spirit. These people had not cared about the value of prayer in the Spirit. They had lived a life of ignorance in regard to the truth, wasted their time, and become lukewarm believers. They had not prayed for their transgressions, regardless of how the Holy Spirit worried about them. Neither did they rebuke themselves for the sake of sin, righteousness, and judgment through any humble, sincere repentance before the Lord. Because of this, they were not qualified to enter into the heavenly kingdom.

¹ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/holiness.html>, accessed April 2019.

Some now saw that they had done wrong and determined to repent and acknowledge their transgressions. However, it was too late. They had lost the opportunity to repent. When all the names had been called and those who were permitted entered, the gate immediately swung shut. The gust of wind generated by the gate's closing blew the rejected into hell.

– Sister Jia Yin Chen (Transcribed by her father)

Excerpt, translated and adapted from *Holy Spirit Monthly* (November 2004)

It isn't easy to pursue holiness. It is easier to spend time playing video games or scrolling through social media than studying the Bible. We may even prefer to do our homework rather than spend time praying! And even when we do make the choice to follow God's commandments, we may be persecuted. As Jesus said, people will hate us because of Him (Jn 15:18–25).

But let's look again at those whose names were called. The sister saw that these people were not perfect. Initially, they did not have all of the fruit of the Spirit. What allowed them to enter heaven was their willingness to repent while living. They had humbly admitted their faults and corrected their mistakes. They listened to the Holy Spirit's rebuke, bore the fruit of the Spirit, glorified God, and as a result, were saved. We will never be perfect, but the Lord only asks that we try our best to pursue His holy will. When we do, we will be rewarded.

2. Holding on to Our Faith

A very important thing to remember is that we may have faith, but faith alone will not carry us into the kingdom. Faith requires action (Jas 2:14–20). Let's read another excerpt from the same testimony.

Sister Jia Yin began by describing a vision of people who had been buried in a cemetery. From these bodies emerged their souls, and they began to walk together along a single road. Not long after, they arrived at a fork in the path and had to make a choice. One way was very wide, eventually leading downwards. It also gradually grew narrower and became darker. The other way was a path that went upwards. It was a very tiny road, covered with stones. But the longer you walked on it, the brighter it became (Eccl 3:11; Jn 5:28–29).

The "stones" or "rocks" hinder us from walking the path to heaven. What in your life distracts you from God or encourages you to make worldly decisions? Your "rocks" may be as simple as a long drive to church, or something more serious like peer pressure or spiritual conflicts within our own families. Let's brainstorm a few together. (*Have the students brainstorm, writing each on the board.*) Examples:

- *Social media*
- *Ungodly music*
- *Movies*
- *Peer pressure*
- *Academic pressures*
- *Family members outside of the church*
- *Choosing not to attend services*
- *Someone who dislikes us*

From the list, pick three that are the most problematic for you. In small groups or with a partner, try to come up with some practical solutions for each. For example, if you have a problem with music that is severely affecting your spirituality (e.g.: giving you impure thoughts), one solution may be to remove this music from your device, unfollow those artists, or delete your playlists. Perhaps in extreme cases, you may even need to uninstall the app you use to listen to this music. These steps may not remove the obstacle entirely, but the goal is to find a way to remind yourself not to let anything get in the way of your walk to heaven. When you have come up with some solutions, share them with the class.

(Teachers: Remind your students that simply saying “pray and read the Bible” is not enough of an answer. Instead, they should try to brainstorm real and practical solutions that are specific to their individual problems.)

Memory Verse

“In My Father’s house are many mansions [...]. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:2–3)

Meaning

The Lord Jesus ascended for the purpose of preparing a place for us. He wants us to join Him in the heavenly kingdom and has promised that we will have a place in it. But in order for Him to receive us, we must prepare ourselves by following the requirements written in the Bible.

Conclusion

It is often difficult to follow God’s instructions, and it may even seem unfair when we consider the path that He wants us to walk. However, we must remember that the road leading to heaven gradually becomes brighter and wider as we travel. And whoever chooses to walk this path will eventually reach the towering, golden gates to the heavenly kingdom. When we pursue holiness in our hearts and hold on to our faith no matter what obstacles we face, we will find peace and rest. And as we learned today, when we enter into God’s unshakable kingdom, we will reign as kings alongside our Lord forever.

Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What must we do in order to be received by the Lord?
We must prepare ourselves by following the requirements written in the Bible.
2. What are three characteristics of the heavenly kingdom? Include supporting Bible verses.
 - *Our inheritance (Jn 14:2)*
 - *Unshakable, everlasting (Heb 10:34; 13:14)*
 - *Holy and sinless, without need of lamp nor sunlight (Rev 21:27; Mt 13:43)*
 - *Transforms those who enter (1 Jn 3:2)*
 - *A place of rest, with no death, sorrow, or tears (Heb 4:9–11; Rev 21:4)*
3. What does it mean to do the “will of My Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21)?
Be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit; receive the kingdom of God as a little child; Seek God’s kingdom and His righteousness; and overcome the world.
4. Explain in your own words what it means to “receive the kingdom as a little child”.
No matter how old we are physically, our hearts should be a humble and trusting as a child’s completely dependent on our Father and eager to learn the truth.
5. Why is it important to seek out God’s kingdom in your life?
He wants us to join Him in the heavenly kingdom, and has promised that we will have a place in it. But in order for Him to receive us, we must seek His kingdom.
6. What are some things in your life that you can change in order to pursue holiness?
Personal answers.

[Editor's note: The first section of this article has not been translated into English; it is simply an introduction to the sister who testified, briefly summarizing her life from her birth in 1996 to the time of her vision. Sister Jia Yin explained her vision orally, and her father, a minister, transcribed her testimony. The Lord gave her this vision when she was seven or eight years old.]

Testimony: A Vision of Heaven and Hell

By Sister Jia Yin Chen (Transcribed by her father)

Published November 2004

Translated and adapted April 2019, from <http://www.joy.org.tw/holyspirit.asp?num=1626>.

*And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.*

(Joel 2:28–29)

Friday, April 23, 2004, ESSC

After the evening service, a sister named Jia Yin went to the front to pray for the Holy Spirit. During this prayer, her vision went black, and she felt like her spirit was being lifted into midair. God then allowed her to see this vision. A few days later, while praying at home, she received the Holy Spirit.

The Soul Must Choose Between Two Paths

- *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (Jn 6:63)*
- *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Mt 7:13–14)*

Sister Jia Yin began by describing a vision of people who had been buried in a cemetery. From these bodies emerged their souls, and they began to walk together along a single road. Not long after, they arrived at a fork in the path and had to make a choice. One way was very wide, eventually leading downwards. It also gradually grew narrower and became darker. The other way was a path that went upwards. It was a very tiny road, covered with stones. But the longer you walked on it, the brighter it became (Eccl 3:11; Jn 5:28–29).

The Road that Leads to Death

- *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Prov 14:12)*
- *“Hell and Destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.” (Prov 27:20)*
- *“Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.” (Mk 9:48)*

Those who chose the wide path became more tightly packed as the road grew narrower. At the end of the path, they saw a beautiful and magnificent bridge, and those who chose this path thought that this path led to life. Everyone who walked on the bridge thought that they would enter paradise at its end, and there were many who crowded onto the bridge in an attempt to cross. However, because there

were so many, they were blind to what lay ahead: In the middle of the bridge was an endless abyss, and those who walked the path obliviously fell right into it.

Their lack of vigilance made them unaware of the danger, and their fall was so sudden that they had no chance to call out any warning to those behind them, or to shout, “The bridge is broken; stop walking!” Those who walked behind simply thought that the people ahead had successfully crossed the bridge. Sister Jia Yin described this abyss or vacuum as a deep, deep hole with no end, filled with skeletons. In it, she saw a vast number of worms and fires that could not be quenched. It was truly a fearful hell (Jer 6:16–21; Mt 16:26–27; Lk 16:19–31).

“Have You Been Baptized?”

- *“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ ” (Jn 3:5–6)*
- *“[The church] is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Eph 1:23)*
- *“This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.” (1 Jn 5:6–8)*

Although the second path was narrow and full of rocks, the further you traveled, the brighter it became. Eventually, the road actually grew wider, and those who chose this path arrived in front of a massive, towering gate. This bright gate was made entirely of gold, and on it were beautiful, engraved flowers, themselves made of gold. At this moment, Sister Jia Yin arrived in front of the gate, and there was a multitude with her. Suddenly, she saw a dove that held a freshly plucked olive branch. This dove began to descend, and as it did so, it grew larger and larger. As the dove flew down, the gate grew brighter and brighter with an indescribable magnificent glory and light.

Three angels flew to the front of the gate. It was still closed, but two moved to the left and the right of it and asked the multitude standing in front of the gate, “Have you been baptized?” Upon hearing this question, some were shocked, not knowing why one had to be baptized to pass through the gate. They had thought that all they needed to do was believe in Jesus. Realizing that they had not been baptized, they left and instead followed the wide road that led to destruction.

Others among the multitude agreed that they needed baptism and had been baptized. However, they did not know that the baptism they received was not in accordance with the Bible. Only the correct baptism has the power to wash away our sins, so these people could not enter the heavenly kingdom. They had to travel down the wide road, to the bridge that led to the abyss (Lk 1:77–79; Mt 3:16–17; Acts 22:16).

“Have You Received the Holy Spirit?”

- *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:13–14)*

Of those who remained before the gate, the angels asked a second question: “When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?” The moment they asked this question, those who had not received the Holy Spirit were swept away by a large gust of wind and pushed onto the wide road that led to destruction. Of the multitude, some refused to leave, believing that they had received the Holy Spirit. However, in truth they had not. They too were forcefully pushed to the other path by a great gust of wind. The apostle Judas had betrayed the Lord Jesus out of greed, and as a result, was no longer qualified to receive the Holy Spirit. He too was forced down the path to death by the wind that was God’s judgment (Acts 2:37–39; 19:1–7; 1 Cor 1:22; Jn 3:31–36).

The Book of Life

- *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”* (Gal 5:22–23)
- *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”* (1 Tim 4:12)
- *“When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning.”* (Isa 4:4)
- *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”* (Heb 12:14)

Once these two questions were asked, a group still remained before the gate, which slowly began to open by itself. The two angels remained before the gate, and the third brought out a book with a list of names within it. The angel began to call out names, and the moment their names were called, they were permitted to enter the heavenly kingdom.

Suddenly, Sister Jia Yin saw the pages of the book that the angel held. In it were many names, and beside each was a list of the fruit of the Spirit. By each characteristic was one of four symbols:

○ × △ ☆

Each circle, cross, triangle, or star indicated how well the person had lived out each fruit. She saw that each person who was permitted to enter was not perfect. But they were admitted because they had constantly reflected and repented, were willing to admit their faults, and were humble when the Holy Spirit rebuked or convicted them of their sins. They had prayed in the Spirit, asking God to remove their impurities, and had been able to live as good examples. They had been able to glorify God and edify men through their actions.

Some remained whose names had not been called, despite having received both water baptism and the Holy Spirit. These people had not cared about the value of prayer in the Spirit. They had lived a life of ignorance in regard to the truth, wasted their time, and become lukewarm believers. They had not prayed for their transgressions, regardless of how the Holy Spirit worried about them. Neither did they rebuke themselves for the sake of sin, righteousness, and judgment through any humble, sincere repentance before the Lord. Because of this, they were not qualified to enter into the heavenly kingdom.

Some now saw that they had done wrong and determined to repent and acknowledge their transgressions. However, it was too late. They had lost the opportunity to repent. When all the names had been called and those who were permitted entered, the gate immediately swung shut. The gust of wind generated by the gate’s closing blew the rejected into hell (1 Pet 2:1–2; Prov 3:1–7; 1 Jn 1:5–10; 2:1–6; Jn 16:8–11; Phil 2:14–16; 1 Thess 5:23–24; Mt 22:11–14; Rev 20:11–15; 21:27; 2 Thess 2:8).

Those Who Enter Will Transform and Sing New Songs

- *“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” ’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’ ” (Rev 19:7–9)*
- *“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.” (Rev 14:1–3)*

The qualified saints began to walk in a single file past the gates. The moment they stepped through the gate, their clothing changed into a white robe, and all of their faces were transformed. Though they were men and woman of all ages, they became as young and beautiful as the angels. The path beyond the gate was paved with pure, bright gold, and the flowers were singing!

Those who were called first were then arranged in the front row, while those called later were arranged in the second row. Through the Spirit, Sister Jia Yin knew that the twelve disciples stood in front, including Matthias. She was able to recognize the faces of Peter, John, and James, and all of the apostles stood hand in hand, singing hymns joyfully as they walked towards the front. On both sides of the road stood angels, also singing hymns. The language they used was not any worldly language but the language of the heavenly kingdom. Everyone was able to sing in this language, and their songs were beautiful to the ear (Mt 17:2; 22:23–32).

Blessed to Hear the Sermons of the Lord

- *“[And] that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” (1 Cor 15:5–8)*
- *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Tim 4:7–8)*
- *“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” ’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’ ” (Rev 14:13)*

While everyone was singing and walking hand in hand, the saints all came to a very large and glorious chapel. The two rows became a single file as they entered the chapel. Angels stood on either side of the procession, playing hymns with instruments such as the flute, violin, and harps similar to the one played by David. These angels welcomed everyone into the chapel, letting them prepare themselves to listen to the sermon spoken by the Lord Jesus.

The first saint who entered the chapel was revealed by the Spirit to be the mother of Jesus while He was in the flesh: Mary. After her, everyone entered one by one into the chapel and sat in their designated

seats on the pews. The chapel was not only very tall, large, and splendid but was also full of a glorious light, with walls made of precious rocks and gemstones. The chapel was bright with glory.

At the front of the chapel, one angel played the piano. And nearby, a person stood. He was non-Asian, with hair that was black, mixed with a dark brown color. Through the Spirit, Sister Jia Yin knew that this was the Lord Jesus Christ, ready to speak. He spoke first of “The Calling of the Four Disciples,” in which He told the story of how Peter, Andrew, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were called to be fishers of men. He then moved on, speaking of “The Miracle of Five Loaves and Two Fish,” in which He described how a child offered his bread and two fish. After Jesus’ blessing, this small amount of food was distributed to 5,000 people, with enough to satisfy everyone and still have twelve baskets of leftovers remaining.

As she described this moment, I asked the sister, “Why did Jesus still need to deliver this type of sermon?” To which she replied, “The Lord Jesus said, ‘Today you are able to enter the heavenly kingdom and sit here, listening to these sermons. The reason is that although you have held on to your faith, you still must maintain a sense of responsibility to preach the gospel. Do your best to offer what you can, so that with the Lord’s blessing and guidance, you will be able to complete the work of saving the people.’” (cf. Rev 21; Mk 1:16–20; Jn 6:9–13).

Concluding Thoughts from the Preacher: Receiving the Holy Spirit

- *“Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.” (Mt 7:9–13)*

From this moment, due to the vision she witnessed and Jesus’ sermon that she heard, Sister Jia Yin’s attitude towards her prayers changed completely. She began to pray earnestly, shedding tears with great joy. When the deacon saw her crying and praying so earnestly, he patted her shoulder and said, “Sister Jia Yin, keep praying! You will soon receive the Holy Spirit.” The moment she heard his encouragement, she opened her eyes, and with that, the vision ended.

She did not receive the Holy Spirit during the evangelical service. However, a few days later, we offered a prayer of thanksgiving at home together. She began the prayer with “Hallelujah, praise the Lord!”, but within a few moments, her tongue began to roll, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Her prayer was very loud and earnest, and full of the Spirit.

After a while, we concluded the prayer with “Amen,” and I then said to her, “You have received the Holy Spirit!” I know that the Lord granted the Holy Spirit to her, and He had allowed her to see the vision in her prayer. This was to remind her that heaven and hell are real, and that she needs to make the proper decisions; to stand firm in her faith, be alert, work hard, and prepare herself to enter the heavenly kingdom. This is what we call “a valuable and successful life.” Thank the Lord, and may all the glory and praise be unto Him. Amen.

Understanding Hell

Passages: Mt 5:25; Rev 20–21

Memory Verse

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God rewards those who do good and punishes those who do evil.2. God wants to save us from eternal punishment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is just.2. God is love.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Follow God’s will to the end.2. Break away from sin.3. Learn to fear God.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Existence of Hell
- B. The Characteristics of Hell
- C. How to Avoid the Punishment of Hell

Life Application

1. Follow God’s Will to the End
2. Break Away from Sin
3. Learn to Fear God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: To avoid condemnation, we must put our best effort into striving for the blessings of the heavenly kingdom by putting our faith first in everything we do.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

When the Lord Jesus was preaching in this world, He often mentioned the existence of hell and what it looked like as a warning to the people. If we are condemned at the end time, there is no turning back. There will no longer be any chance for us to turn back to the Lord, and we will be unable to change any of our decisions. Therefore, it is important for us to understand how terrible the punishment of hell is, and how we can avoid being cast into it after we die.

A. The Existence of Hell

Like the heavenly kingdom, hell is a place that is difficult for us to comprehend, and for many to even accept. However, the Bible often refers to it and constantly warns us of the punishment that awaits those who do not follow the will of God. It is truly a place to be feared. But how exactly does the Bible describe this place?

1. A place to punish the devil

The Lord Jesus said, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41).

2. A prison for sinful angels

Sinful angels are incarcerated in the dark pit of hell, waiting for judgment (Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4).

3. A place of eternal punishment for the condemned

Those who cannot be saved, and those whose names are not recorded in the book of life will be thrown in the lake of fire in hell to be punished for eternity (Mt 25:10; Rev 20:10).

God's righteousness is manifested in His rewards and His punishments. He cannot go against His own nature, and as a just God, He will judge all of us, angels and people alike. Hell is a place reserved as punishment for any who have disobeyed the word of God.

B. The Characteristics of Hell

From our understanding of it, hell is a miserable place. It is full of suffering and torment. However, even this cannot be called a truly accurate description because our understanding of the place is based on human terms. We know that in the end time, this world and everything in it will burn away (2 Pet 3:10, 12), leaving only heaven and hell. Like heaven, hell is beyond the realm of the physical. And like heaven, it cannot be truly described in human terms. Its torments are beyond our imagination. However, the Bible does offer some insight into what it is like.

1. A lake of fire

John wrote: "These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev 19:20). Additionally, the Lord Jesus quoted Isaiah, describing hell as a place where the worms that eat them do not die, and "the fire is not quenched" (Mk 9:48).

2. Darkness

Jude wrote that those who have "gone in the way of Cain" are "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 11, 13). And in this outer darkness, "[there] will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 8:12).

3. A bottomless pit, separated from heaven

Revelation describes hell as a "bottomless pit" (Rev 20:1), and a legion of demons once begged

that Jesus “would not command them to go out into the abyss” (Lk 8:31). It is a place that even demons fear to go, and there is no escape from it, because between heaven and hell, “there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us” (Lk 16:26).

4. Eternal torment

Those condemned to hell “have no rest,” and they “will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev 14:11; 20:10).

Punishment in hell is a horror beyond imagination. Jesus was silent when He suffered the pain of punishment in His flesh. However, when He experienced the punishment of death for our sins, He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mt 27:46). The punishment of eternal death is unbearable for any human. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31).

C. How to Avoid the Punishment of Hell

No one wants to suffer this punishment. Even if we are already believers, we must still be extremely careful. The Book of Hebrews reminds us that “we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away” (Heb 2:1). We must be watchful so that we are not thrown into suffering. So how do we stay watchful? What do we need to do to avoid this second death?

1. Believe in Jesus

The Lord commanded His disciples, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk 16:15–16). Therefore, to avoid condemnation, we need to believe in Jesus and accept His salvation.

2. Keep His word to the end

Only those who do the will of God can enter the heavenly kingdom (Mt 7:21; Jas 1:21–22). So, to avoid being condemned, we need to practice the word of the Lord. This is too difficult to do on our own, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can keep ourselves from straying from the Lord. Let’s read Jude 20–21. “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” We need to keep ourselves in the love of God by following His word.

Paul wrote that “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thess 2:13). God chose us to be His followers even before we were born. And as His believers, all we have to do is to rely on the Spirit to sanctify us. When we do so, we will be able to keep God’s word until the very end.

3. Break away from sin

The Bible makes it very clear that sin gives birth to death (Jas 1:15). It repeatedly warns us that we must break away from sin, because if we willingly allow ourselves to sin, knowing that we should not, we can only have a “fearful expectation of judgment” (Heb 10:26–27). We need to remain in control of our bodies and eliminate sin entirely so that we do not lose the hope of our gospel (1 Cor 9:27).

4. Fear God and love men

The Bible tells us that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10; Ps 111:10). This fear is not simply being afraid of God's power but can also be translated as a deep reverence or a deep respect for Him. When we respect God's almighty power and revere His sovereign nature, we will be more inclined to follow His will and avoid His punishment.

Let's read Matthew 22:36–40. God is love (1 Jn 4:8), and having love in our hearts is important to Him. Peter even wrote that "love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Pet 4:8; cf. Prov 10:12), and John taught that "we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 Jn 3:14–15). So, in order to avoid the punishment of eternal death, we must learn to fear God and love men (Gal 5:14).

Testimony

*(Teachers: The full version of the testimony is the same used in the previous lesson, which is too long to include. **Please collaborate with the teacher of the previous lesson.** If students already read the testimony in its entirety, you may simply want to review the relevant section before going over the concluding teaching. If they did not have the opportunity to read it the previous week, you can do so now, or give them a copy to read at home - a separate pdf with the full testimony has been included alongside this lesson.)*

The following is an excerpt from a testimony. The young sister had seen a vision of two paths, a narrow one leading to heaven and a wide one leading to hell. In her vision, she saw a vivid depiction of hell and described it as follows.

Those who chose the wide path became more tightly packed as the road grew narrower. At the end of the path, they saw a beautiful and magnificent bridge, and those who chose this path thought that this path led to life. Everyone who walked on the bridge thought that they would enter paradise at its end, and there were many who crowded onto the bridge in an attempt to cross. However, because there were so many, they were blind to what lay ahead: In the middle of the bridge was an endless abyss, and those who walked the path obliviously fell right into it.

Their lack of vigilance made them unaware of the danger, and their fall was so sudden that they had no chance to call out any warning to those behind them, or to shout, "The bridge is broken, stop walking!" Those who walked behind simply thought that the people ahead had successfully crossed the bridge. Sister Jia Yin described this abyss or vacuum as a deep, deep hole with no end, filled with skeletons. In it, she saw vast numbers of worms and fires that could not be quenched. It was truly a fearful hell (Jer 6:16–21; Mt 16:26–27; Lk 16:19–31).

The Lord Jesus told us that there are two paths for us to take. He said, "[Wide] is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Mt 7:13–14). Since we have now learned of the beauty of heaven and the terror of hell, "we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away" (Heb 2:1). We must put our best effort into striving for the blessings of the heavenly kingdom by putting our faith first in everything we do.

Check for Understanding

1. **How does the Bible refer to hell?** As a place to punish the devil; a prison for sinful angels; and a place of eternal punishment for the condemned.
2. **How does the Bible describe hell?** As a lake of fire with worms that do not die; the blackness of darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth; a bottomless pit that is an abyss separated from heaven; and a place of eternal torment.
3. **How do we avoid the punishment of hell?** Believe in Jesus; keep His word to the end; break away from sin; fear God and love men.
4. **Why is it so important that we keep God's word to the end?** Only those who do the will of God can enter the heavenly kingdom.
5. **What does it mean to fear God?** It is not simply being afraid of God's power but can be seen as a deep reverence or a deep respect for God.

Life Application

1. Follow God's Will to the End

We learned earlier that to avoid condemnation we need to keep God's word to the very end. To follow God's will is an active determination that we need to make. We need to make the choice to walk in the path of the Lord (Deut 5:33). Even having the Holy Spirit within us is meaningless if we are unwilling to put forth our own effort (1 Thess 5:19). The Spirit is simply our Counselor, not our dictator. According to some experienced ministers, when they pray for others, those people still need to be willing to rely on God. Otherwise, their prayers are ineffective. He may be all-powerful, but God will never impose His will on us, because He has given us the liberty to choose whether or not to follow Him (Josh 24:15).

Discussion: Reflect for a moment on your daily life. Have you ever chosen to follow God's will? Have you ever chosen not to? Share with the class an instance when you did or did not.

It is difficult to follow God's will. Our flesh is often weak and cannot do the good that we want to do (Rom 7:18–19). As a result, we have to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13–14). Paul wrote that "the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses" (Rom 8:26–27), and there are many encouraging examples in the Bible of those who were strengthened by God when they were weak, either physically or spiritually. Even Elijah, a great prophet for the Lord, experienced a dip in his faith right after he emerged victorious over the false prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 19:1–7). But God encouraged him and gave him strength. Therefore, whenever we are lacking in our faith, we need to remember to ask God for help (Prov 3:5–6).

2. Break Away from Sin

In order to follow God's will to the end, we must learn to break away from sin. Jesus said, "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell" (Mt 5:30). He is not telling us to physically harm ourselves, but to remove the root of sin from our lives. For example, if you have bad Internet habits, only use it in the presence of family. If a friend urges you to skip church or disobey your parents, then tell them frankly that it is unacceptable, or stop spending time with them. These types of solutions will probably be difficult for us to do on our own, so we need to ask for help not just from the Spirit, but also from those around us, such as our spiritual friends, parents, or R.E. teachers.

Discussion: What kind of sins do you need to break away from? Are there any particular temptations in your life that you face right now, or any personal characteristics that prevent you from following God's will? How can you change your environment or personal habits to benefit your spiritual life instead?

3. Learn to Fear God

How do we learn to fear God? It is unlikely that we would ever revere a random passerby on the street. But if we learn that they are someone with power—a king, a celebrity, or a leader—we are more likely to treat them with respect because of the power that they hold. Therefore, to attain reverence or respect for someone, we must first get to know them.

Before they entered the promised land, Moses instructed the Israelites to read the law every seven years. Let's read Deuteronomy 31:11–12. “[When] all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law.” The more we study God's word, the deeper our fear of God will become.

Discussion: How closely do you study the Bible? Do you carefully read all of the passages during sermons, or try to understand verses that you do not? How can we learn not just to read, but also to study the Bible on our own?

Fearing God is not being constantly afraid of God's punishment, but being in awe of His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. God's punishment on evildoers is fearsome, but simply being afraid of His punishment is a passive form of faith because we simply live our lives in fear of making mistakes. If we are simply afraid of Him, we will never boldly follow His word. But when we truly try to understand God, we will see that He is a loving Father who hopes for us to come back to Him every day (Lk 15:11–32). We will learn to respect His will, and as a result, prioritize His word in our lives. When we do so, God has promised that we will not be condemned to death, but instead will receive eternal life.

Memory Verse

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Meaning

1. We should not fear the death of our bodies. Rather, we need to fear the death of our souls—eternal punishment in hell.
2. People can only kill our bodies, but God can destroy both our bodies and souls.
3. The death of our bodies is not an end of our lives. There is an afterlife for our souls.

Conclusion

The Bible's descriptions of hell depict a truly terrible place that we would never want to experience. Knowing this, we must strive harder to avoid condemnation by keeping God's word, breaking away from sin, and learning to both fear God and love men. Since we have now learned of the beauty of heaven and the terror of hell, “we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away” (Heb 2:1). We must put our best effort into striving for the blessings of the heavenly kingdom by putting our faith first in everything we do.

Lesson 8 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. According to the memory verse, what is the reason we should fear God?
He can destroy not only our bodies, but also our souls. We should fear the death of our souls, which is eternal punishment in hell.

2. What are four characteristics of hell as described in the Bible?
 - a. *A lake of fire (Rev 19:20; Mk 9:48)*
 - b. *Darkness (Jude 11, 13; Mt 8:12)*
 - c. *A bottomless pit, separated from heaven (Rev 20:1; Lk 8:31; 16:26)*
 - d. *Eternal torment (Rev 14:11; 20:10)*

3. "But you, beloved, _____ yourselves up on your most holy _____, _____ in the _____, keep yourselves in the _____ of God, looking for the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ unto _____." (Jude 20–21)
building, faith, praying, Holy, Spirit, love, mercy, eternal, life.

4. Why is it so important that we break away from sin?
Sin gives birth to death. We need to eliminate sin entirely so that we do not lose the hope of our gospel.

5. Do you revere God or fear His punishment? How can you remind yourself to fear God daily?
Personal answers.

The Meanings and Purposes of Miracles

Passages: Job 38–39; Ex 14; Dan 3; Mk 16:14–20; Heb 2:3–4

Memory Verse

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30–31)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God used miracles, signs, and wonders throughout the Bible, and this is still the same today.2. Through miracles, God enables mankind to know Him, His word, and the way to salvation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is almighty, full of love and compassion for mankind.2. God stretches out His powerful hand to deliver and protect us when in pain, sorrow, and need.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be truly thankful for God’s mercy and saving grace, and give Him all the glory.2. Ponder on God’s nature in His miracles and reflect this in our lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Types of Miracles
- B. The Purposes of Miracles
- C. The Prerequisites for Miracles

Life Application

What Does God Want Me to Learn from Miracles?

Memory Verse

Conclusion: By studying miracles and witnessing them, we can grow in our knowledge of the truth, change our hearts, and shift our lives so that we can have a closer walk with God.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Throughout human history, God has demonstrated His power and might through amazing acts. These divine acts are known as signs, wonders, and miracles. These acts of God transcend natural and scientific laws. They go beyond human understanding and reasoning, and they cannot be achieved by man. Through miracles, we see the sovereignty and glory of God.

In today's lesson, we will look at miracles in nature, miracles experienced by man, God's intentions for miracles, and the prerequisites for miracles.

A. Types of Miracles

1. Miracles in Nature

Just as a building needs a designer to build it, our universe and all of creation was created by an awesome Creator. Creation gives us a glimpse of God's power, wisdom, majesty, and love. He causes the new plants to grow in the springtime, guides the stars in their cycles above, maintains the seasons, and sustains every living being.

No human can achieve or replicate all of these things that we experience; they all come from God, making them miracles in and of themselves. For example, from what we know so far, the universe has about 100 billion galaxies. Each of these galaxies contains hundreds of billions of stars. Man cannot possibly determine the exact number of stars because there are just too many. And yet, our God knows the exact number, and He calls each one by name (Ps 147:4).

When beholding God's creation, King David exclaimed, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Ps 8:3–4). Job also marveled saying, "Indeed these are the mere edges of His ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?" (Job 26:14).

Besides these daily miracles in the natural world, there are also a number of extraordinary occurrences in the Bible that go beyond the laws of nature.

- When the five kings of the Amorites came to fight against the city of Gibeon and the Israelites, Joshua prayed that the sun and the moon would remain in place. As a result, God caused the sun and the moon to remain still for an entire day to provide daylight for Joshua to destroy the enemies (Josh 10:1–14).
- When Hezekiah was sick and near death, he beseeched the Lord to heal him. The Lord heard his prayer and gave him fifteen more years to live. God caused the sundial to go back ten degrees as a sign (2 Kgs 20:1–11).
- Jesus instructed Peter to cast a hook in the sea. Peter did so and the first fish that he caught had a coin in its mouth that was used to pay the temple tax (Mt 17:24–27).

2. Miracles Experienced by Man

Mankind has been created and loved by God. God uses signs, wonders, and miracles to relieve man of their pain, sorrow, and daily concerns and to allow man to ultimately know Him and receive salvation. The following are miracles experienced by man.

a. Protection from danger

Psalm 121:1–8 reminds us that in times of dangers and difficulties, our help and deliverance

come from the Lord who made the heavens and earth. He will keep us from all evil, and He will preserve our soul.

- When Daniel and his three friends were thrown into a furnace for their refusal to worship the golden image, they were unharmed by the fiery fire.
- Peter was freed from his prison cell by an angel.
- Paul was bitten by a venomous snake but was unharmed.

b. Healing of sicknesses

During His earthly ministry, Jesus healed countless people with all kinds of sicknesses. In the New Testament, there are seventeen accounts of physical healing, including a man with a withered hand (Mt 12:9–14), the deaf and mute (Mk 7:31–37), a paralytic (Mt 9:2–8), lepers (Lk 17:11–19), a woman with a long-term sickness (Lk 13:10–17), and many more. These miracles show that Jesus is the great physician. When we are sick, we need to turn to the merciful Savior who has the power to heal us.

c. Casting out demons

Jesus cast out demons from those who were tortured and possessed by demons. Later, through faith and reliance on God’s power, the disciples were able to do the same. Similarly, by believing in God, we can be freed from the bondage of Satan and sin.

d. Raising of the dead

No one has the power to raise people from the dead except God. In the New Testament, there are three people whom Jesus raised from the dead. These miracles show that Jesus, as our Creator, has power over life and death.

- Jairus’ daughter (Mt 9:18–26)
- The widow’s son at Nain (Lk 7:11–15)
- Lazarus at Bethany (Jn 11:1–44)

Workers such as Elijah, Elisha, Paul, and Peter also raised people from the dead through God’s power (1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:17–37; Acts 20:9–10; 9:39–41)

e. The transformation of the Holy Spirit

People rarely change, or they find it extremely difficult to change themselves. But through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, our evil desires and bad habits can be removed. With the help of the Spirit, we can bear good fruit and be sanctified. This is the most important miracle in our lives, as it enables us to be complete for salvation.

B. The Purposes of Miracles

1. The Purpose of Miracles for Man

a. Convince man to believe in God

People today revere science, money, power, or pleasure above God. However, through signs and miracles, a person can experience God’s might and power. This experience can lead them to depart from false beliefs and superstitions, and instead believe in God and submit to the truth (Rom 15:18; 2 Cor 10:4–6).

- The disciples wondered who Jesus was when they saw how even the winds and the waves obeyed Him (Mk 4:41).

- Simon the sorcerer believed in God upon seeing Philip perform God's great miracles (Acts 8:9–13).
- Jesus told the Jews that even if they don't believe in Him, at least believe in miracles, for through them they will know that the Lord Jesus is indeed God (Jn 10:3, 8; 14:11).

b. Confirm the true message

A miracle is not for entertainment. It is not to satisfy our curiosity, nor is the miracle itself the primary purpose. Signs and miracles confirm the gospel. Their main purpose is to lead man to know God, to show them the truth, and to teach them how to obtain salvation (Heb 2:3–4).

- The Lord worked with the apostles and confirmed the message they preached by the signs that followed (Mk 16:20).
- Herod desired for a long time to see Jesus because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him, but because of Herod's misplaced motives, Jesus did not perform any miracle (Lk 23:8–9).

c. Confirm the divine commission

Signs and wonders confirm that the worker has been sent by God.

- Miracles proved that Moses was chosen and sent by God (Num 16:28–30; 17:1–11).
- Jesus Christ worked miracles to testify that He is the Christ (Mt 11:2–6; Jn 5:36; 10:37–38).
- With the abidance of the Holy Spirit, the true church abounds with all kinds of miracles (Mk 16:17–18; Lk 10:19; 1 Cor 12:9, 28).

d. Strengthen the believers' faith

When believers turn to God and witness God's almightiness in times of sickness, trouble, or adversity, their faith and knowledge of God can grow.

- The power of Christ's miracles resolved the doubts of John the Baptist (Mt 11:2–6).
- Miracles caused early believers and others to fear God and to hold the apostles in high honor (Acts 5:11–13).

2. The Purpose of Miracles for God

a. To execute His deliverance

- The ten plagues were miracles for the purpose of delivering the chosen people out of Egypt (Ex 3:20; 7:20–12:36).
- The Lord delivered Peter when he sank into the sea (Mt 14:28–31).
- Jesus' resurrection was for the sake of our salvation (Jn 3:15; 17:2).

b. To execute His judgment

God uses miracles to bring judgment upon the wicked and the unrighteous.

- God rained down fire and brimstone to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24–25).
- When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, they immediately died (Acts 5:1–11).
- God caused the earth to open up and swallow the rebellious Korah, his men, and his household (Num 16:27–33).

c. To glorify our Father in heaven

We should not exalt the person who performed the miracle, but rather give praise and glory to God, the true source of miracles.

- The crowds marveled and glorified God when they saw the paralytic rise and take up his bed (Mk 2:12).
- Lazarus' sickness was for the glory of God (Jn 11:4).

C. The Prerequisites for Miracles

Mark 16:17 tells us that signs will follow those who believe in Jesus' name. This does not mean that miracles will definitely occur or that we should push God for a miracle. God said, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways [...]. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:8–9). God manifests miracles according to His will and purpose (1 Jn 5:14). However, there are still certain prerequisites for miracles to happen.

1. Performed in the Name of Jesus Christ

Our God is the maker and sustainer of all creation. He is the God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in us all. He came to the world as our Savior and manifested His name to mankind. Therefore, if we believe in His name and have faith in God's power and might, signs and miracles will follow (Mk 16:17; cf. Acts 3:16). Whatever we ask in Jesus' name, God will give to us (Jn 16:23–25).

Conversely, if we call on Jesus' name with unbelief and a lack of reverence, our actions will be ineffective. The seven sons of Sceva misused Jesus' name by attempting to cast out demons "by the Jesus whom Paul [preached]." Not only did they fail, but they were also overpowered by the demons (Acts 19:13–16). Using Jesus' name in vain will incur the wrath of God.

2. Performed Through God's Spirit

Signs, miracles, and mighty works manifest through God's Spirit (1 Cor 12:9–10; Acts 10:38).

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth through His Spirit and word (Gen 1:1–2).
- Jesus cast out demons and healed sicknesses through the power of the Spirit (Mt 12:28).
- When Elymas the sorcerer opposed the truth, Paul caused him to become blind (Acts 13:8–12).

3. Great Faith

a. From the intercessor

Jesus said that if we have faith as small as a mustard seed, nothing is impossible for us.

- The Lord showed mercy upon the Canaanite woman's demon-possessed daughter because of her great faith (Mt 15:22–29).
- Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith and healed his servant that same hour (Mt 8:5, 13).
- Elijah believed that God would send an abundance of rain when initially there was no sign of rain (1 Kgs 18:41–45).

b. From the one receiving intercession

Those who require healing must believe that Jesus is the almighty Savior and that He will heal us according to our faith (Mt 9:27–30, 20–22). With the use of God's words and personal testimonies, we can strengthen and encourage those who lack faith.

- The Lord encouraged Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe" (Mk 5:36).
- The Lord said to Martha, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (Jn 11:39–40).

4. Fervent and Persistent Prayer

Oftentimes, prayer precedes a miracle. That’s not to say that wonders will instantly unfold when we pray. However, fervent and unceasing prayers are key in witnessing God’s deeds.

- Elijah prayed three times for the widow’s son to resurrect and prayed seven times before the rain came after three and a half years of drought (1 Kgs 17:21–22; 18:42–45).
- The Canaanite woman pleaded persistently for Jesus to heal her daughter (Mt 15:22–27).
- The blind man in Jericho incessantly called out to Jesus and was healed (Lk 18:38–43).

5. Confession and Repentance

God does not hear the prayers of the sinners (Jn 9:31) but the prayers of the righteous (Jas 5:16). Sickness, calamities, and troubles can sometimes originate from our sins (Mk 2:5–12). Therefore, repentance and confession of our trespasses are sometimes necessary before we ask for healing (Jas 5:15–16).

- Jesus first forgave the sins of the paralyzed man before He healed him.
- God sent down rain after the Israelites stopped worshipping idols (1 Kgs 18:37, 45).

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are two types of miracles?** Miracles in nature and miracles experienced by man.
- 2. What are the purposes of miracles for man?** Convince man to believe in God; confirm the true message; confirm the divine commission; and strengthen the believers’ faith.
- 3. What are the purposes of miracles for God?** To execute His deliverance and judgment, and to allow us to glorify our Father in heaven.
- 4. What requirements are needed for miracles to manifest?** Performed in the name of Jesus Christ; performed through God’s Spirit; great faith; fervent and persistent prayer; and confession and repentance.

Life Application

What Does God Want Me to Learn from Miracles?

Have the class divide into small groups. Read the following Bible verses to discover the different reactions to the miracles and what we can learn from each story.

Bible Passage/Who is Involved	What was the reaction to the miracle?	What does this teach us?
Acts 19:13–16 Sons of Sceva	The Jewish exorcists used the name of Jesus whom Paul preached to cast out evil spirits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without belief and faith in the Lord Jesus, casting out demons in His name is ineffective. • Only with true faith and a life that pleases God can a person be worthy to call upon the name of Jesus. • Misuse of God’s name will incur His wrath.
Acts 8:9–24 Simon the Sorcerer	When Simon saw the signs and miracles and how the people received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, he wanted to purchase the power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon’s desire to purchase the power of God showed that he was more interested in power and glory. • This reminds us that even though we may have experienced some miracles in our life and seen God’s power, we may still have weaknesses,

		<p>erroneous thoughts, or incorrect motives that need to be changed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our goal in life should be transforming ourselves into the image of Christ.
Acts 14:8–18 The people in Lystra	The people wanted to worship the apostles, believing that they were gods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we experience miracles, we need to avoid the temptation of exalting ourselves or the person who performed the miracle. • All praise and glory should be given to the almighty God.
Jn 6:10–14, 22–26 The multitude	The day after Jesus fed the 5,000, the people came looking for Him again. But Jesus knew that it was not because they believed in Him, but because they wanted food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of following the Lord and seeing miracles is not for material blessings and benefits. • We ought to set our sights on higher and nobler goals, such as to grow in Christ through His word and Spirit.
Lk 23:8–9 King Herod	King Herod had heard much about Jesus and wanted Jesus to perform a miracle for him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miracles do not exist for the purpose of satisfying our curiosity, nor are they a form of entertainment. Their purpose is to allow us to know and believe in the true God.
Lk 17:11–19 The leper	After the leper was cured, he returned to Jesus to glorify God and give thanks to Him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We cannot take God’s grace for granted. We need to glorify Him and give thanks for God’s blessings.

Discussion:

- Share a miracle that you experienced or have heard about that inspired you to grow spiritually.
- What did you learn about Jesus’ character from the miracle? Did it change you?

Memory Verse

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30–31)

Meaning

Miracles are not for the purpose of entertainment or excitement. Instead, miracles are for the purpose of leading ourselves and others to the truth that is the gospel of salvation. They are a testimony of God’s almighty power.

Conclusion

The purpose of miracles is not to perform startling wonders that will cause a sensation. Nor are they for the purpose of fulfilling any material desires or for satisfying our curiosity. Instead, by studying miracles and witnessing them, we can grow in our knowledge of the truth, change our hearts, and shift our lives so that we can have a closer walk with God.

Lesson 9 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is the purpose of miracles?
They lead us and others to the truth that is the gospel of salvation. They are a testimony of God's almighty power.
2. Summarize a miracle in the Bible that went beyond the laws of nature.
 - a. *God caused the sun and moon to remain still for an entire day to provide daylight for Joshua and the Israelites to destroy their enemies (Josh 10:1–14).*
 - b. *God healed Hezekiah and caused the sundial to go back ten degrees as a sign (2 Kgs 20:1–11).*
 - c. *Jesus instructed Peter to cast a hook in the sea. He did so, and the first fish he caught had a coin in its mouth that was used to pay the temple tax (Mt 17:24–27).*
3. What are the purposes of miracles for man?
 - a. *Convince man to believe in God*
 - b. *Confirm the true message*
 - c. *Confirm the divine commission*
 - d. *Strengthen the believers' faith*
4. "For My _____ are not your _____, nor are your _____ My _____ [...]. For as the _____ are higher than the _____, so are My _____ higher than your _____ and My _____ than your _____." (Isaiah 55:8–9)
thoughts, thoughts, ways, ways, heavens, earth, ways, ways, thoughts, thoughts.
5. Have you ever witnessed or heard of a miracle that changed your faith in any way? Briefly explain.
Personal answers.

Discerning True Miracles from False

Passages: Deut 13:1–5; Acts 16:16–18; Mt 24:4–14; Gal 1:6–9; Ex 7–8

Memory Verse

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
As Christ’s second coming approaches, many false christs and prophets will arise to deceive people with great signs and miracles.	The Lord Jesus came full of grace and truth, and He seeks to save mankind.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be watchful and prepared by loving the truth.2. Do not love unrighteousness or the things of the world, but discern false prophets with God’s power.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. False Miracles in the Old Testament
- B. False Miracles in Apostolic Times
- C. False Miracles and Christs in the End Time
- D. Discerning Miracles with Truth
- E. Discerning False Prophets

Life Application

Stand Firm in the Faith

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God can rescue us from Satan’s deceptions if we stay true to His word and reject those who twist the truth and perform false miracles.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

What are true miracles or false miracles? (*Let students respond.*) A true miracle is a demonstration of God's power and might through divine acts. These acts of God transcend natural and scientific laws. They go beyond human understanding, and they cannot be achieved by man. A false miracle, on the other hand, is an act done by Satan, or an act that feigns to be an act of God. True miracles are performed by God's will and power, as only God alone "does great wonders" (Ps 136:4; Ps 72:18).

God uses miracles as proof of His power, love, and authority. But Satan can also perform many false miracles. The world is filled with unexplained signs and phenomena. Claims of healings, visions of religious figures, and relics performing bizarre acts can be found across the world, and they still fascinate people to this day. Such occurrences are designed by Satan to lead people away from the true God. In this lesson, we will examine what false miracles are, study examples of false miracles from different time periods, and learn how we should equip ourselves to overcome the wiles of the devil.

A. False Miracles in the Old Testament

(*Teachers: Have the students read the passages together, and then answer the following questions.*)

1. The Egyptian wise men and sorcerers (Ex 7:11–8:19)

God instructed Moses and Aaron to perform signs and wonders to prove that God had sent them and to show that He was the God of Israel.

- When Aaron's rod turned into a serpent, the Egyptian magicians were able to perform the same miracle. However, Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (Ex 7:11–12).
- When Moses turned the water of the Nile to blood, the Egyptian sorcerers did likewise, but they could not turn the blood back to water (Ex 7:20–22, 24).
- Like Aaron, the magicians were able to bring forth frogs which covered the land of Egypt, but they could not remove the frogs. Pharaoh pleaded with Aaron and Moses to entreat the Lord to remove the frogs (Ex 8:5–15).
- When Aaron caused the dust of Egypt to become a massive swarm of lice, the magicians were unable to replicate this miracle, and they admitted to Pharaoh that "this is the finger of God" (Ex 8:16–19).

Discussion

- How did Pharaoh and his magicians respond to the first six plagues?
- Where does the power of the sorcerers come from?
- What does this tell us about the power of God and power of Satan?

Teachings

- Pharaoh believed that he and his wise men were as great and powerful as the God of Israel, so despite witnessing God's miraculous power, he refused to believe in the true God.
- The magicians did not use God's power but Satan's. But Satan is not God's equal, and his power is limited. The magicians could not remove the problem of the plagues or change dust to lice. They also could not stand before Moses when they were inflicted with boils. This reminds us that the God we worship is the one true God, living and all-powerful.

2. The medium at En Dor (1 Sam 28:3–20)

In fear and desperation, Saul once went to a medium and asked her to bring up Samuel from the dead. When the summoned spirit rose up out of the earth, the medium told Saul that it was an

old man covered with a mantle. Saul immediately believed that it was Samuel risen from the dead and bowed down before him. The spirit predicted that Saul and his sons would die, and that Israel would be given into the hands of the Philistines.

Discussion

- Do you think that this was the spirit of the prophet Samuel? What evidence tells you that it was or was not Samuel?
- Read Deuteronomy 18:9–12. What does the Bible say about occult practices?
- What kinds of occult practices do we see today?

Teachings: When we read this passage, it appears that this was a genuine sign from God, and that the prophet Samuel truly rose from the dead to pronounce judgment on Saul. However, digging deeper, we can see that this was a false sign to deceive Saul.

- Satan can transform himself to be an angel of light, and he can use his ministers to be ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:14). Satan transformed himself to look and speak like the prophet Samuel to deceive Saul.
- The spirit Samuel said to Saul, “And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me” (1 Sam 28:19). How can Saul, who was rejected and forsaken by God, dwell eternally with the man of God (cf. Mt 25:34, 41, 46)?
- The spirit’s prediction that Saul’s sons would die with him proved untrue, because Ishbosheth survived and later became king over Israel for two years (2 Sam 2:8–10).
- Sorcery, fortune-telling, or other methods of advice or predictions said to come from spirits or visions are an abomination to God. He is a holy and jealous God, and we cannot engage in such practices, because to do so is to associate ourselves with Satan (Deut 18:9–12).

B. False Miracles in Apostolic Times

1. Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9–13)

While Philip preached in Samaria, he met a sorcerer called Simon, whom people revered as “the great power of God” because of his sorcery. When Philip preached the gospel and performed many signs and miracles, the people turned from these false beliefs and deceptions to the truth.

2. Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:4–12)

At Paphos, Paul and Barnabas met a sorcerer called Elymas, who tried to obstruct the proconsul from accepting the truth. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul rebuked Elymas and caused him to be blind. When the proconsul witnessed this, he believed and accepted the gospel.

3. The demon-possessed slave girl (Acts 16:16–18)

For many days, a girl possessed by a spirit of divination followed Paul and Silas in Philippi, loudly proclaiming that they were servants of the Most High God. Although what she said was true, her knowledge came from an evil spirit, whose motive was to disrupt and hinder the work of God. So, Paul cast out the spirit in the name of Jesus.

Discussion

- What do these three incidents reveal to us about the purpose of false miracles?
False miracles exist to confuse people from knowing the true God, to exalt oneself, to obstruct and oppose the truth, and to lead men to destruction.
- What might be the motives of people who perform “miracles” today?

Some do it for prestige, for profit and self-benefit, or to hinder and obstruct holy work.

C. False Miracles and Christs in the End Time

1. False denominations and religions

The Lord Jesus prophesied that “false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Mt 24:24; cf. 1 Tim 4:1). As we draw closer to Christ’s second coming, the number of religions in existence is astounding. According to some estimates, there are approximately 4,200 different religions and beliefs in the world today. Of these, Hinduism, New Age Spirituality, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are among the prevalent religions, with Christianity being the largest of all. And within Christianity alone, there are an estimated 33,000 denominations.

Each religion has their own gods. Each also believes that they have the “truth,” and that their members experience signs and miracles. These miracles may appear like a confirmation of God’s presence or healing, but Satan uses false miracles to destroy God’s work, and to confuse, deceive, and lead His followers astray. If we examine the beliefs and behaviors of other religions, there are many areas that are incomplete or at odds with the Bible.

2. The lawless one

The Bible prophesies that before the second coming of the Lord, the “lawless one” will come. He will be Satan’s tool, and will use Satan’s power to perform signs and wonders (2 Thess 2:3–4, 9–12; Rev 16:13–14; 19:20). While Jesus performed miracles to help, to heal, and to point mankind towards God, the lawless one will use his power to destroy, to lead people away from God, and to exalt himself as a god. We must be aware of this danger and learn to discern true miracles from false miracles.

D. Discerning Miracles with Truth

While miracles strengthen our belief in God, it is dangerous to base our faith solely upon them, as Satan can also perform miracles (2 Thess 2:9–10). So, when we hear of miracles and healing being performed by other denominations or religions, we should not be quick to conclude that these are acts of God or doubt our faith in the true church. God works in the lives of people to let them see His presence. Satan works to make them believe in false religions and gods. So, how do we discern true miracles from false miracles? We should evaluate them according to the truths of the Bible and examine whether that religion or church has the complete gospel of salvation.

Remember, God’s word is the only true and solid foundation of our faith. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps 119:105). The truth will give us spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and discernment to know right from wrong. It makes us wise for salvation (2 Tim 3:15; Jas 1:21; Eph 4:13–14), helps us recognize Satan’s tactics, and repels the evil one as the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17). Therefore, the ultimate solution is to seek out and love the truth. But the Bible is often difficult for us to read, and we often find ourselves too distracted to study or remember its words or teachings. So how can we develop a love of the truth? *(Let students brainstorm ideas before continuing.)*

1. Turn our feet from the things of the world

When we devote our time to movies, games, and other media that take up our time and energy, it’s difficult to focus on God and find time to read the Bible. We need to free ourselves of these things so that we can spend more time on God’s words (1 Jn 2:15).

2. Desire the truth as a deer pants for water

At first, reading the Bible may seem like a chore instead of something enjoyable. It can be like learning and practicing an instrument or eating something nutritious but unpalatable. But the longer we persist in reading the Bible, the more the Holy Spirit will transform our hearts, teaching us to appreciate and love God's words.

3. Pursue the word with friends

Oftentimes, it's hard to go at something alone, be it exercising, studying, or praying. This can also be the case with reading the Bible. One way to love the truth is to find a friend who can read it with us, so that we can hold each other accountable (2 Tim 2:22). Here are some steps to help us get started:

- a. **Find a buddy.** Our Bible-reading buddies could be our parents, family members, church friends, or even an online church group.
- b. **Set up a time to read together.** This could be once a week, or as frequent as you would like, in person or online. Online is not the same as meeting face-to-face, but the Internet is a blessing in that it allows us to connect and be encouraged by believers living in different parts of the world!
- c. **Start with something short and simple.** The key is not quantity but quality, meaningful study. Share observations about the text with one another and lovingly challenge each other to think more deeply.
- d. **Reflect.** Based on the passage, spend time reflecting on it together, and ask each other if there are any life changes you need to make.
- e. **Follow up.** It is important to follow up with one another the next time you read together and see how everyone is doing in the areas they committed to change. Continue encouraging one another to grow deeper in their knowledge and love of God.

Over time, you will discover that studying the Bible with others is a joy because you get to hear what God is doing in each other's lives. Your friends may also glean different teachings or ideas while reading together, making your study time more beneficial and fruitful.

4. Memorize and practice God's words

The Bible reminds us that we need to hide God's word in our hearts and to let it dwell in us richly (Ps 119:11; Col 3:16). This is different from just reading God's words, as memorization helps us to internalize God's words. Then it can shape our hearts and minds to conform to God's will. But the Bible is so big! How do we get started?

- a. Start off by finding a verse that speaks to your current situation. Think and reflect on how the verse applies to your situation and how God is speaking to you through His words. Commit the verse to memory and meditate upon it.
- b. Think of ways to commit God's words to memory. Be creative! For example:
 - Write a verse on an index card and place it in areas you know you will see it, like your bathroom mirror, or place one on your computer's desktop background. Each time you see it, try reciting the verse without looking. It's easier to commit to memory when you practice often and in short amounts of time.
 - Write or draw verses to help you memorize, meditate, or learn. It's also a very creative way to study the Bible. This practice helps you slow down while reading the Bible.
 - Technology is a great tool in this area. There are many Bible apps that can help you memorize verses, test your knowledge, and challenge yourself.

- Try writing a spiritual journal. Chronicle the Bible verses that you have memorized and record the situation where it proved precious. For example: “The verse that comforted me when I felt discouraged after praying for the Holy Spirit and still did not receive it - Ps 42:5–6a.”

5. Do not love unrighteousness or the things of the world

Luke 11:24–26 warns us that when human hearts are empty, people will be inclined to pursue the pleasures of unrighteousness (2 Thess 2:10–12; Isa 5:13–14; Rom 1:18). But what does it mean to have an empty heart? An empty heart is one that doesn’t have the Holy Spirit or the truth. When our hearts are inclined to sinful pleasures or harbor incorrect motives and attitudes, we refuse Christ and His word and allow ourselves to be deceived by Satan. It is important therefore to fill our hearts with God’s words, so that we do not give Satan a foothold.

E. Discerning False Prophets

Let’s read Matthew 7:15–18. We are reminded here to know the characteristics of false prophets. A false prophet may not only be a worker of God, but can be any person, church, or religion who acts against God’s will and truth. What kind of “bad fruits” should we look out for?

1. **Beware of their words** - The words of false prophets may sound religious, but they speak lies, and are arrogant and prideful (e.g.: Hananiah the false prophet (Jer 28))
2. **Beware of their motives** – False prophets are often motivated by personal benefits, money, or prestige rather than by their desire to glorify the Lord. They love receiving respect and honor, and draw many followers (e.g.: Korah accused Moses of exalting himself, but in truth, he desired the priesthood for himself (Num 16:1–10)).
3. **Beware of their actions** - To obtain these benefits, false prophets may employ subtle methods that are cruel, deceptive, and unbiblical (e.g.: Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9–11; 2 Pet 2)).

Just as a tree is consistent in the kind of fruit it produces, a true messenger or worker of God will consistently live out the truth of God’s words. His character, motives, and behavior will reflect that of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, regardless of how great the miracle, or how gifted the worker may be, if their conduct or speech is not in accordance with the Bible and the will of God, we should not be misled to follow that person (Deut 13:1–5; Gal 1:6–9; 1 Jn 4:1–6).

Check for Understanding

1. **Name three biblical examples of signs or wonders performed by Satan.** Egyptian wise men and sorcerers; the medium at En Dor; Simon the sorcerer; and the slave girl in Philippi.
2. **What is the Bible’s view on occult practices?** They are an abomination to God. To engage in such practices means associating ourselves with Satan (Deut 18:9–12).
3. **Why is it dangerous to base our faith solely on miracles?** Satan can pretend to be a messenger of light and perform miracles. We should instead base our faith on God’s words and doing His will.
4. **What are some of the purposes of false miracles?** The lawless one uses his power to destroy, to lead people away from God, and to exalt himself as a god.
5. **How can we grow to love the truth and discern false miracles and prophets?** Turn our feet from the things of the world; desire the truth as a deer pants for water; pursue the word with friends; memorize and practice God’s words; and do not love unrighteousness or things of the world.

Life Application

Stand Firm in the Faith

Jesus warned us that in the end time, many will be led astray by false miracles and signs. What should we do to ensure that we can stand firm and be saved? Read each scenario, and then discuss the following questions.

1. Love the truth

Patrick's friend Sam was a Christian from another church. Patrick and Sam often exchanged ideas and views on their beliefs and things that went on in their own churches. One day, the topic of miracles came up in their conversation. Sam shared some miracles that occurred in his own family: God had healed his mother of terminal cancer, and his brother's decade-long drug abuse and severe depression were cured after he willingly accepted Jesus. Hearing this, Patrick thought that perhaps God is not only in True Jesus Church. Maybe He is everywhere, and He answers the prayers of the devout regardless of which church they belong to or the religion they believe in. Perhaps there is more than one way to get to heaven. Patrick began to feel that it was rather narrow-minded to think that his church is the only one that has miracles and God's abidance.

Discussion

- How would you explain to Patrick about the occurrence of miracles in other denominations or religions?
- Patrick has started to have doubts about True Jesus Church being the only church where one can experience God. What are your thoughts? What would you say to Patrick?

2. Do not love unrighteousness or the things of the world

Rachel is what you would call a "social butterfly," both at school and at church. She looked forward to church each week; she loved catching up with her friends, being involved in the choir, learning to translate, in addition to many other activities. Sometimes, she seemed to be doing so much that she had very little quiet time with God. Then suddenly, Rachel was absent from church for a few weeks. It turns out that Rachel had overheard someone criticizing her, and their words had really hurt and angered her. She decided from then on that she didn't want to be in a church with people like that and at a place where she was not appreciated. Her friends later discovered that she was now going to another church.

Discussion

- What kind of person was Rachel? What might be some of her motives for coming to church?
- What might be some of the dangers that arise when we have incorrect motives or attitudes?

3. Discern false prophets

Deacon Ezra was a very kind and gifted worker in church. Even though he had a hectic personal schedule, he gave a lot of his time to serving God and caring for the brothers and sisters. It seemed that whenever he prayed for others; whether if it was for healing, finding a job, or for the Holy Spirit, his prayers would be answered. One Sabbath service, Deacon Ezra said that the Bible was not the only standard upon which we base our faith. There are other books not included in the Bible, which are just as authoritative and relevant to our faith. While some members questioned this in their minds, others simply accepted what he said. How could a worker who was so gifted, loving, and full of God's abidance be wrong?

Discussion

- How might it be easy for a believer to simply accept this message?

- How do you know that what Deacon Ezra said in the sermon was wrong?
- How can we truly discern whether a person is a true worker of God?

Memory Verse

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24)

Meaning

Jesus warned us of what will mark the coming of the Lord. In those days, the deception will be so great that even the elect will be unable to discern between right and wrong, so they will be swept away by false truths and signs. This is a reminder that we cannot rest on our laurels, but must always be watchful, holding fast to the truth. However, we can also be confident that as long as our hearts remain focused on God and not on the pleasures of the world, He will save and preserve us (Heb 7:25).

Conclusion

Beneath the surface routine of daily life, a fierce struggle between invisible spiritual powers is being waged. Satan is working hard to capture the souls of mankind by using false miracles, false prophets, and false christs. But God can rescue us from these deceptions if we stay true to His word and reject those who twist the truth and perform false miracles. By remaining rooted in God’s truth, we can overcome Satan with God’s power.

Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse warn us of and remind us to do?
A sign of the second coming is that the elect will be unable to discern right from wrong. It is a reminder to always be watchful, holding fast to the truth.
2. “Beware of false _____, who come to you in _____ clothing, but _____ they are ravenous _____. You will know them by their _____.” (Matthew 7:15–16)
prophets, sheep’s, inwardly, wolves, fruits
3. What are some of the purposes of false miracles?
The lawless one uses his power to destroy, to lead people away from God, and to exalt himself as a god.
4. Why is it dangerous to base our faith solely on miracles?
God may perform a miracle to enable a person to know Him and to lead the person to the true church. However, Satan can pretend to be a messenger of light and use miracles to deceive. We should base our faith on God’s words and doing His will.
5. Pick one way you can love the truth and explain how you plan to enact it in your daily life.
Personal answers.
6. What temptation or weakness is a challenge to your faith? What will you do to stand firm?
Personal answers.

Discerning Spirits

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Our fight is against rulers of darkness and the spiritual hosts of wickedness.2. With God’s power, we can discern and overcome evil spirits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is the ultimate ruler of the spiritual realm.2. Only God can overpower Satan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pursue an understanding of the spiritual realm.2. Prepare to fight against false teachings and the works of Satan.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Spiritual Realm
- B. The Opposition of Evil Spirits
- C. Discerning Spirits
- D. The Importance of Discerning Spirits

Life Application

1. Growing in Spiritual Wisdom
2. Be Watchful

Memory Verse

Conclusion: When we grow in spiritual wisdom, we will be able to be good watchmen for the Lord, able to discern spirits and to guard ourselves and the true church.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction¹

One of the challenges that is easily forgotten in our walk of faith is the challenge of discerning true spirits from false spirits. The Bible teaches us often of the dangers of false prophets and false teachers, which come from the deceptions of evil spirits. But when the Bible is often difficult to understand, our task of sticking to the truth is not easy, especially when we are faced with decisions we have no idea how to make.

Because of the depth and scope of the topic, today's lesson is only going to be a brief introduction. To fully understand these spiritual mysteries, we have to pursue a closer walk with God and a higher understanding of His truth, so that He can send a spirit of wisdom to guide us and help us to understand. For today, however, we'll start by taking a broader look at topic of discerning the spirits.

A. The Spiritual Realm

The spiritual world is not an easy thing to understand. It is a realm that surpasses all things and it cannot be measured with scientific knowledge, because science can only be applied to things of the material world. The Bible teaches us that the thoughts of God are above our own (Isa 55:8) and cannot be understood by mankind. The same can be said of anything that is of the spiritual realm, because we are limited by our physical bodies.

Spirits have no form, cannot be touched or searched, and are not limited to time and space (Lk 24:39). Paul wrote that "the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4:18). The only way we can experience the existence of spirits is when they are revealed to us through the physical. But the spirit that reveals itself may be a spirit of God or of evil. The Bible warns us that the devil can impersonate an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), and that "in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1). This makes it all the more important for us to learn how to discern what kind of spirit is revealing itself.

B. The Opposition of Evil Spirits

Although thrown down and condemned by God, evil spirits still possess power, and only God can overthrow them (Job 1:12). And the power that they have can confuse, deceive, and hinder God's followers. But what kind of power do they have? And what obstacles do they place before us?

1. Characteristics of evil spirits

The Bible records: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). We fight the rulers of darkness of this age, and their command over this world allows them to deceive men, causing them to worship false gods. The Bible describes Satan himself as the "prince of the power of the air" and the king of this world (Eph 2:2; Lk 4:5-6). It even says that the devil has the power of death (Heb 2:14), which is the result of sin (Jas 1:14-15).

2. Deceptions of evil spirits

It is easier to fight an enemy that we can see. But evil spirits fight us with deceptions that are not easy for us to discern, unless we are close with God and full of the Spirit's wisdom. As with any enemy, to counter their attacks, we must first learn how they attack us.

¹ Some of the lesson content has been translated from the following book:

靈界辨證 (*Discerning False Spirits from the True One, 3rd Edition*), Theological Seminary Textbook of True Jesus Church: Taiwan, July 1993.

The Bible teaches us that evil spirits engage in several activities, all a form of deception. First, they deceive by performing great signs, blinding our minds with the use of idols and sorcery (Rev 13:13–14; 1 Cor 12:2). Second, they cause men to do evil deeds according to their desires, giving them earthly knowledge, a love of money, and a love of the world. They trap unbelievers and make them enemies of God (Jas 4:4). Third, they confuse and resist the truth with false religions and hypocrisy and hinder those who preach the gospel.

But one of the most dangerous tactics that we face is when evil spirits seek to tempt and deceive members, to overcome God’s children when they are weak (Rev 12:4). They tempt members to sin and cause conflict between members using envy, heresies, and pride.

3. Persecution from evil spirits

Evil spirits tempt and trap members in order to attack and destroy the church. When there is no unity in the church, it cannot grow. The apostolic church fell apart because of the many false teachers that rose in the church and the heresies that they taught. Such persecution from the world occurs because we are children of God (Jn 15:19). Jesus Christ once warned His disciples that “you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Mt 10:22).

Satan and his servants will always seek to overcome God’s followers. But “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor 10:13). We may be pursued and persecuted by Satan, but God has promised blessings for those who overcome, and for those who are persecuted for His righteousness’ sake, He will give the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:10).

C. Discerning Spirits

Now that we understand just what they can do, how do we discern between good and evil spirits? One of the most obvious signs of God’s Spirit is the speaking of tongues, like when the disciples first received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Aside from these external signs, the Holy Spirit will transform our conduct as well, replacing our heart of stone with a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26–27). The Spirit will release believers from the bondage of sin, fill them with spiritual joy, and enable them to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Rom 8:2; Gal 5:22–23). This is because the Holy Spirit grants us power from on high (Lk 24:49).

On the other hand, evil spirits have their own power and seek only to harm. The physical signs of one possessed by an evil spirit have been witnessed, both in the Bible and today within our church. They may produce unnatural sounds or have other abnormal manifestations, such as convulsions or throwing themselves to the ground. God’s Spirit offers peace and self-control (1 Cor 14:32–33), but one who is possessed cannot control their bodies (Lk 9:39–42; Mk 5:5–6).

It is important to note that evil spirits do not only exist in those that have been possessed. A person who intends to do harm, cause conflict, and hinder the church out of hatred or pride can also be considered an evil spirit that we have to defend ourselves against. This is especially true of false teachers, who can sow great harm and discord within the church. Let’s read 1 John 4:1–6. This passage notes the differences between spirits of truth and of error. Let’s briefly take a closer look at how John teaches us to discern the spirits.

1. “Does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” (v. 3)

The first and clearest sign is when someone claims that Jesus Christ did not descend on this earth as

human. John describes these spirits as “the spirit of the Antichrist,” a spirit that directly opposes God’s truth. Peter also warns us of such destructive doctrine. He wrote, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction” (2 Pet 2:1). He greatly condemns false teachers, calling them “accursed children,” and declares that, “while they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption” (2 Pet 2:14, 19).

2. “They are of the world.” (v. 5)

Jesus said, “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (Jn 17:14). With the help of the Holy Spirit, God’s word transforms us so that we act according to His will. But a false spirit is of the world, and therefore encourages people to act according to their worldly desires. Rather than seeking out the kingdom and righteousness of God, they instead seek to fulfill their own desires and pleasures. As a result, someone with a false spirit does not have peace in their hearts. John warned us, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 Jn 2:15–16).

3. “The world hears them”; “does not hear us.” (vv. 5–6)

The Bible teaches us that the world loves its own (Jn 15:19). The revelations of a spirit of error do not come from God, but are deceptions, aimed at like-minded people who seek out their own interests. John also notes that “he who is not of God does not hear us” (1 Jn 4:6). A person with a spirit of error refuses to submit to the truth or to change their ways. They are often proud and lack the humility to learn God’s word and, therefore, oppose the truth.

D. The Importance of Discerning Spirits

The Acts of the Apostles describes a great number of situations where Paul, Peter, and the rest of the apostles were opposed by various spirits and different types of persecution. However, one of the biggest things that broke apart the apostolic church was the rise of incorrect doctrine through false prophets and teachers. Peter and John addressed these issues in their letters, but the church ultimately fell apart because the members turned away from the truth.

It is vital that we learn to discern the spirits so that we avoid falling into the same pitfalls that many members—both from the apostolic church and in our church today—have fallen into. Whether we face temptations, conflict, or heresies, it is often difficult to see the attack for what it is unless we have the wisdom of God within us. By understanding what kind of tactics evil spirits use, we can begin to defend ourselves and learn how to avoid falling into sin and disharmony with God and our brethren.

Today’s lesson, however, is just the beginning. There is still so much to learn. To grow in our experience and faith, we need to pursue a higher level of spirituality, so that we can be better equipped to fight against false doctrines, temptations, and persecution of the end times.

Check for Understanding

- 1. Why is the spiritual world so difficult to understand?** It surpasses all things; it cannot be measured with scientific knowledge because science can only be applied to things of the material world.

2. **What kind of power do evil spirits possess?** The power to confuse, deceive, and hinder God's followers.
3. **What kind of deceptions do evil spirits use?** They perform great signs, blinding our minds with the use of idols and sorcery. Second, they cause men to do evil deeds according to their desires. They trap unbelievers and make them enemies of God. Third, they confuse and resist the truth with false religions, hypocrisy, and by hindering those who preach the gospel.
4. **What is the most dangerous tactic that we face from evil spirits?** When they tempt and deceive members, and when they overcome God's children when they are weak.
5. **According to John, how can we discern false spirits from true spirits?** Spirits of error do not confess that Christ has come in the flesh; are of the world; and are heard by the world but do not hear us.

Life Application

1. Growing in Spiritual Wisdom

The most basic, yet most important, foundation for discerning spirits is spiritual wisdom. At the beginning of the lesson, we learned that we cannot apply any human understanding or logic to the spiritual realm. The Bible teaches us that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor 3:19). So how do we grow in spiritual wisdom?

a. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

Solomon famously wrote that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov 9:10). This is because "no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11). Therefore, the first step to growing in spiritual wisdom is to first fear God. We need to revere and respect Him before He will grant us wisdom. To do so, we need to ask ourselves daily, "Do my actions show respect towards God? Do I remember His omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence? Or do I try to pretend that He cannot see what I am doing, or that He does not know the thoughts in my heart?"

b. Equip ourselves with the word of God

When we revere God, we will naturally spend more time learning His word and will understand how to apply Scripture to our daily spiritual growth (2 Tim 3:16). This includes being able to discern spirits. One reason false teachers are able to lead so many astray is because those who listen lack knowledge of the truth. Just as Jesus rejected Satan's temptations with Scripture (Mt 4:1–11), when we have a better understanding of God's word, it is less likely that we will be led astray. Instead, we will be able to grow in the wisdom given to us by the Spirit and learn how to wield God's word as our defense against false doctrine and temptation (Eph 6:17).

c. Leave no room in our hearts for spirits of error

Jesus taught us to pursue the treasures of heaven because "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt 6:21). We tend to set God aside for the sake of our daily pursuits, whether they are sports, academics, music, or games. It is always easier to prioritize what we can see over what we cannot see. This is one of the reasons it is so difficult for us to pursue spiritual wisdom. But worldly pursuits are all opportunities for Satan to drag us away from God.

When we prioritize our interests in this world, we open a door for the spirit of error to enter our hearts and cause us to stray. So, instead of filling our hearts with material desires, we need to learn to fill our hearts with God's will and leave no room for false teachings or temptations. To do so, we need to constantly pray for the fullness of the Spirit. By doing so, we can remind ourselves that the things of this world will pass away, but those who pursue God will be given

spiritual wisdom, which leads to everlasting life. Ask yourself, “What do I truly treasure in my heart? Do I prioritize God in my everyday decisions? Do I strive to fill my heart with God’s Spirit?”

The devil is a powerful, intelligent, and cunning being, but if we ask God for His wisdom, He will give us the understanding and power to combat any deceptions.

2. Be Watchful

Aside from having the spiritual wisdom to discern the spirits, we must always remain watchful. Peter told us that Satan “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet 5:8). Any one of us may be his target, especially when we are spiritually weak. While the Israelites traveled through the wilderness, the Amalekites, one of their enemies, attacked the stragglers at their rear, when they were tired and weary (Deut 25:17–18). In the same way, Satan will attack the weakest among us. We need to be watchful, both for ourselves and those around us.

When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, desperate for God’s help, His disciples fell asleep. Seeing this, Jesus warned them, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt 26:41). So how do we remain watchful?

a. Remain alert²

In ancient times, a “watchman” would be the lookout for the town or city, normally from a high point, such as a tower or atop a wall. Their job was to keep an eye on the surrounding fields and warn the city of approaching danger. However, if a watchman were to fall asleep, enemies could creep up unnoticed, bringing danger to the city and all of those within. A watchman’s job is to remain alert at all times. When you see sexual images, do you quickly switch channels or close the tab on your browser? Do you refuse to follow along with your friends if they engage in activities that you know God would dislike? If an evil thought comes to mind, do you pursue the thought or shake it away? Are you a watchman who stays alert?

b. Sharpen our spiritual sight

In the Old Testament, the Lord called Ezekiel His watchman (Ezek 3:17). But His first message to the Israelites was not to warn of dangers from the outside, but from within. At the top of a tower, a watchman not only has a good view of the surrounding land, but also of the very city that he guards. We learned today that one of the greatest dangers we face from evil spirits is the rise of incorrect doctrine and false teachers. So, like a watchman atop a tower, we must be alert to false teachings and incorrect behavior, both in ourselves and in our church. To do so, we must sharpen our spiritual sight, so that we are able to discern the true from false.

Sharp spiritual eyesight requires a strong faith, deep knowledge of the Bible, and insight into God’s will—all things which cannot be achieved without the fullness of the Spirit. Are you able to see the true will of God? Are you able to see sin when it appears, either in yourself or in those around you? Or are you spiritually blind like the Pharisees, unable to perceive God’s true will?

c. Rely on the power of God’s name

In the event that we actually face danger, we must rely on God. Remember that evil spirits have power, and we cannot face them without God’s help. We must learn to call upon God’s name

² Wayne Chen, “The Spiritual Watchman”, *Manna Magazine Issue #35*, April 2001, <http://ia.tjc.org/elibrary/ContentDetail.aspx?ItemID=608&langid=1>.

when in need. Using the name of Jesus, Peter made a lame man walk (Acts 3:6), and Paul cast out an evil spirit from a girl with the simple words, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her" (Acts 16:18). The strength of the apostles was not in their own abilities, but in their faith and reliance on God's name. Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." Without God's power, we can do nothing. But on the other hand, with Him at our side, we can do anything. Our faith can move mountains (Mt 17:20). Do we have faith in the name of Jesus Christ? Do we truly believe that there is power in His name, and that if we call upon Him with faith, He will answer?

Memory Verse

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

Context

In this passage, John was warning the members to be on guard not against demon possession, but against teachers who promote incorrect behavior within the church. At the time, the church fought misguided teachings such as Docetism, a set of beliefs that branched from Gnosticism.

Meaning

1. To "test the spirits" means to ascertain whether a spirit is truly from God. If a person's teachings are from God, then they align with God's will and will never be in conflict with the Bible. This means that to recognize a false teacher, we must first have a thorough and complete understanding of God's word.
2. False prophets are a tool of Satan, set forth to deceive God's children and drag us from the true faith. Many may have already strayed from the truth, but we must be firm in our beliefs. We must remain convinced of God's calling, of the true church, and of His will, no matter what temptations or false teachings we face.

Conclusion

By understanding what kind of tactics evil spirits use, we can begin to defend ourselves and learn how to avoid falling into sin and disharmony with God and our brethren. To do this, we must grow in our experience and faith. We need to pursue a higher level of spirituality, so that we can be better equipped to fight against false doctrines, temptations, and persecution at the end time. Then, when we grow in spiritual wisdom, we will be able to be good watchmen for the Lord, able to discern spirits and to guard ourselves and the true church.

Lesson 11 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How do we “test” a spirit, to see if a person’s teachings are from God?
If a person’s teachings are from God, then they align with God’s will and will never be in conflict with the Bible.
2. How do evil spirits tempt and deceive members?
They tempt members to sin and cause conflict between members using envy, heresies, and pride.
3. According to 1 John 4:1–6, what are three characteristics of a spirit of error?
 - a. *Does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*
 - b. *Is of the world*
 - c. *The world hears them; they do not hear us*
4. Why is it so important to equip ourselves with God’s word?
False teachers are able to lead so many astray because those who listen lack knowledge of the truth. Just as Jesus rejected Satan’s temptations with Scripture, when we have a better understanding of God’s word, it is less likely that we will be led astray.
5. Are you a good watchman who stays alert? Explain why or why not. How can you become a better watchman?
Personal answers.

Hidden Sins Within Our Hearts

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
God does not want us to hide the hidden sins of our heart, but to acknowledge and repent of them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is truth, and He wants us to be truthful.2. God is merciful, and He wants us to repent of our sins.3. God is holy, and He wants us to be holy.	Determine to leave the bondage of sin through self-examination that leads to confession, repentance, and a desire for holiness.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Consequence of Sin
- B. How to Face Our Hidden Sins
- C. Hidden Sins in the Bible
- D. Be Truthful, Repent, and Be Holy
- E. Lust, Pride, and Idolatry

Life Application

1. Self-Examination, Acknowledgement, and Confession
2. Repent of Hidden Sins
3. Have a Strong Desire for Holiness

Memory Verse

Conclusion: If we do not perceive our hidden sins and take the necessary steps to root them out, we may suffer serious consequences, the worst of which is eternal death.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

In its simplest terms, we can define sin as missing the mark or making a mistake. As humans, none of us can ever be perfect. We all make mistakes. But what we tend to forget is that our very thoughts may be considered a sin. And sometimes, we may think that our sins that have been committed in secret, out of sight, are not considered sins. But Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (Jn 8:34). This includes the hidden sins in our lives. If we have hidden sin in our life, we are a slave of death. But Jesus wants us to be set free (Jn 8:31–32).

A. The Consequence of Sin

There are two types of “hidden sin.” The first type is the secret sin, the thoughts that we have and the actions that we have done, with none but the Lord to witness. The most dangerous mistakes that we can make are hidden within our hearts and minds. Our inner emotions and secret desires can produce sinful thoughts, unseen by any except God (Jas 1:14–15). The second type is sin done in ignorance, when we have sinned but do not even realize it because of our own ignorance of God’s will. This includes dangerous mistakes where we believe that we are doing the right thing but, in reality, are not. Even we ourselves may fail to see our own hidden sins, which is what makes them so dangerous.

We all make mistakes. Some may not hurt us that much in the long run, but other mistakes have the potential to turn disastrous, maybe even life-threatening. For example, if you make a small mistake in a test, you may still pass the test. But if a driver mistakenly drives through a red traffic light, they could lose their lives. In short, there are some mistakes that we simply cannot afford to make. And like some mistakes, hidden sins can have serious consequences, many that we cannot undo.

The most serious consequence of sin is separation from God (Isa 59:2). If we are separated from God, we ultimately cannot receive His blessings, including the grace of salvation that He offers. The Bible clearly tells us that sin leads us to death (Rom 6:23). A life of hidden sin—whether committed knowingly or unknowingly—is a life that leads to death.

B. How to Face Our Hidden Sins

Facing and repenting of our hidden sins is challenging because we often cannot see our own mistakes clearly. If we don’t realize what’s wrong with our inner thoughts, we will likely continue with them, unaware that we should turn away. Or perhaps, despite knowing we’re wrong, our heart is unwilling to turn back because it’s already controlled by our sinful desires, like a slave.

1. God sees our hidden sins

The first thing the Bible teaches us is that sin cannot be hidden from God. After Adam and Eve broke God’s command, they tried to hide. But God knew what they had done (Gen 3:10–11). Ecclesiastes 12:14 teaches: “For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

People that sin against God over and over again may think that they have “gotten away with it,” while others believe themselves righteous, free of sin. But they are only deceiving themselves. The Bible says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8). We might be able to deceive others—even ourselves—but we can never deceive God, because God looks at our hearts (1 Sam 16:7).

Psalm 69:5 says, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You.” Instead of trying to hide our sins, we should face our own mistakes, acknowledge our sins, and confess them before God. And not only because we know that we cannot hide them from Him, but also because God loves a humble heart that is willing to confess (1 Jn 1:9; Lev 26:40–45).

2. Repenting of our hidden sins

We can only repent of mistakes that we have acknowledged (Ps 19:12). After David sinned, he confessed to God, saying, “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight” (Ps 51:3–4).

Beyond confession, repentance is very important. Unless we truly turn away from our sin, we will just return to our sinful ways. Proverbs 28:13 says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” Repentance isn’t simply an apology. It means striving to set aside our sin and turn away from it entirely.

C. Hidden Sins in the Bible

Let’s look at some biblical examples of those who have struggled with hidden sin and learn from the serious consequences they faced.

1. Achan’s hidden sin

Do you remember the story of Jericho and Achan’s sin? Before Jericho fell, the Lord commanded that the Israelites refrain from taking any of its treasures. But Achan disobeyed and took some for himself, hiding it in his tent after the battle. Let’s read Joshua 7:11–18. As much as Achan tried to hide it, his sin was seen by the Lord, and the consequence far greater than he likely would have imagined. He failed God’s first test of faith, and he and his household, in addition to the Israelites slain by the people of Ai, suffered the consequences.

Achan’s story teaches us about the serious consequences of hidden sin. It may not only affect us, but also those we love. Although Achan received several chances to confess his sin, he did not admit it until later. But by then, it was too late, and, his confession could not void the consequences of his actions. The same is true for us. Sometimes, we cannot avoid the consequences of our sin, even if we confess it before the Lord. For this reason, it’s best to deal with our hidden sin before we face any irreversible consequences. Achan’s story is a warning for us to take hidden sin seriously.

2. David’s hidden sin

When David killed Uriah to hide his sin of sleeping with Bathsheba, he seemingly had no qualms about his own actions, either of adultery or of using his power to murder Uriah. His lack of perception was such that when the prophet Nathan confronted David with a story, he could not even understand that it was about him. Let’s read 2 Samuel 12:1–15.

No one knew of David’s hidden sin, but God knew. As a result, David would always face bloodshed to the end of his days, and his children brought adversity to him as they fought each other. Further, true to God’s word, his first child by Bathsheba died. David’s story again reminds us about the serious consequences of our sin. Even if it is hidden, our sin has the potential to affect both ourselves and those around us, including those we love most.

We may wonder, why does God allow us to suffer the devastating consequences of sin? Why do others have to suffer if they were not the ones who sinned? If God never allowed His people to live through the

consequences of their sin, no one would realize its danger. Receiving such punishment is an important lesson from God: we must do our best to cleanse ourselves of it.

D. Be Truthful, Repent, and Be Holy

God's divine character is all-knowing, merciful, and holy. Knowing this helps us understand why God wants us to be honest, repentant, and holy in our own character.

1. God is truth, and He wants us to be truthful

Most people find it normal to hide things, even our own character. Many wear masks of deception, acting as one person at home but another in public. We, too, may act differently, presenting a more "holy" face while we're in church but acting more worldly the moment we arrive at home. We may also sin at times and attempt to hide it, either by lying or concealing our actions behind closed doors or in the dark. But the Bible teaches us that "[lying] lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight" (Prov 12:22).

When we try to hide our sins, we are lying both to ourselves and to God. But God is all-knowing and sees everything we do and think. In Jeremiah 16:17, God says, "For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes." There is no purpose in lying to God, and if we respect and revere Him, we will be an honest and true person before Him (Josh 24:14; Ps 15:1–2). Paul encourages us, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). We should strive to make decisions that we never need to be ashamed of.

2. God is merciful, and He wants us to repent

When Adam and Eve sinned, God returned to the garden and called out, "Where are you?", and "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (Gen 3:9, 11). Later, after Cain murdered Abel, God asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" (Gen 4:9). God knows all things. He didn't need to ask these questions. For each situation, He was not asking for knowledge. Rather, each question was a chance that He was freely giving to them, an opportunity to choose to come forward. However, their answers were not what He was hoping for. They blamed others, feigned ignorance, and showed no remorse.

People today often blame their mistakes on things other than themselves. People sometimes even blame their genetics or their environment. When people say things like this, it means they want to continue living a sinful, unrepentant lifestyle. They don't want to take responsibility for, or even acknowledge, their own mistakes. But if we remain stubbornly unrepentant, the Bible says we are storing up punishment for "the day of wrath" (Rom 2:4–5). On the other hand, James wrote, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jas 4:10).

David understood God's desire for repentance. He said, "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Ps 51:16–17). God may already know of our sins, but He wants us to repent. This is because when we make the choice to acknowledge our sins, we are humbling our hearts and being honest with both God and ourselves. And just as with Adam, Eve, and Cain, He will always give us a window of time to seek mercy. We must always try to repent before that time is over (Mt 22:11–14).

3. God is holy, and He wants us to be holy

God is holy, and He wants His people to be holy (Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:15–16). To be holy means to

be separated from what is unclean and become more like God. Jesus once said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Mt 5:14). When we stop letting our hidden sin control our lives, we will start to shine the light of glory that God wants us to shine in the world. In other words, to be holy means to separate ourselves from the sinful world and shine the glory of God’s character. It means developing an inner desire to be clean before God.

David knew that God’s desire for His people was for them to live holy lives, set apart for Him. When our hearts are filled with hidden sin, anything we offer to God is unclean (Mt 15:16–20). This is because holiness is both inward and outward: it is in our actions and also in our hearts. David knew this, so he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, [...] and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness” (Ps 51:10, 14). Only after we repent and are cleansed of our sins can we then begin to live a renewed life of holiness and service for God.

E. Lust, Pride, and Idolatry

The Bible says, “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 Jn 2:16). It also says, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5). From these verses, we can group the sin of the world under three general categories: lust, pride, and idolatry.

Whatever the shape or form of the hidden sins within our hearts, lust, pride, and idolatry often lie at the root of them. Jesus Himself was tempted by Satan with these sins (Mt 4:1–11). Let’s briefly go over each:

- Lust of the flesh is when we let our passions and desires control our actions in an ungodly way (e.g., watching pornography or ungodly media). Lust of the eyes is covetousness, or materialism (e.g., excessive shopping, greed, or the urgent need to have the latest electronics). These sins come from our physical desires, and when we yearn for things of this world.
- Pride is self-importance. It is when we place ourselves over others (e.g., when we despise or look down on others, either in our hearts or in our speech). Wanting to be better than someone, to be admired, or to be needed more than others are all forms of pride.
- Idolatry is when we love someone or something above God (e.g., when we pursue material wealth, pleasures, or money more than God). Lust and pride often lead to idolatry, but idolatry can also creep into our hearts when we admire someone, or when we place more faith in religious icons rather than God Himself.

Lust, pride, and idolatry can work together and hide secretly within our heart. They are easily hidden from human eyes. For example, a brother or sister may habitually watch a variety of ungodly things on the Internet, but at church they exhibit no signs of such behavior. We may seem very humble outwardly, but inwardly, we may believe that we’re so much better than others. We may sing about putting Jesus first in our lives, but when we’re back at home, we pursue money, success, or pleasure. It can be surprisingly easy for our sins to remain hidden, even from ourselves.

Overcoming Sin

Satan’s role is to tempt, attack, and deceive God’s children. But the Scriptures teach us how to overcome sin and, in doing so, overcome Satan and death. Let’s read Revelation 12:11. “And [the saints]

overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” Three things are mentioned in this verse to help us overcome sin. Let’s examine them.

1. We received salvation not because of our actions, but because the Lord loved us so much that He willingly suffered the death we deserved (Rom 3:24–25; 1 Jn 4:10). But the referral to the “blood of the Lamb” does not only refer to our baptism. The “blood of the Lamb” is also a reminder of Jesus’ love (Rev 1:5). Jesus’ love should compel us to give up our sin and selfish desires and instead, “live no longer for [ourselves], but for Him who died for [us] and rose again” (2 Cor 5:14–15).
2. The word of “their testimony” refers to the practice of God’s word in their lives. The life of Jesus testifies of His full obedience to God (Jn 6:38; Phil 2:8). Even His words were of God and the Holy Spirit (Rev 19:10). He never spoke of His own will (Jn 14:10). As Jesus taught us, we must “[let our] light shine before men, that they may see [our] good works and glorify [our] Father in heaven” (Mt 5:16). If we live according to God’s word, then our lives will testify of Him.
3. “They did not love their lives to the death” means that they were willing to suffer for Christ even in the face of death, evidence of their selfless love towards God (cf. Rev 2:10). Many early Christians suffered and died for Christ under serious persecution. Yet, despite the sufferings they faced, they refused to give up their faith. We can overcome sin by loving God more than anything, including our own lives.

Check for Understanding

1. **What are two types of hidden sins?** The first is the secret sin, the thoughts that we have and the actions that we have done with none but the Lord to witness. The second is sin done out of ignorance, when we have sinned but do not even realize it because of ignorance of God’s will.
2. **What are three things God desires from His people after they sin?** God wants us to be truthful, to repent, and to be holy.
3. **Why does God want us to confess our sins?** When we make the choice to acknowledge our sins, we are humbling our hearts and being honest with both God and ourselves.
4. **What three things often lie at the root of the hidden sins in our hearts?** Lust, pride, and idolatry.
5. **How can we overcome Satan according to Revelation 12:11?** By remembering the blood that Jesus shed, by living according to God’s word so that our lives testify of Him, and by loving God more than anything, including our own lives.

Life Application

The power of hidden sin is that it remains unacknowledged and hidden. But, with God’s help and a determination to change, we can free ourselves from the bondage of sin. Let’s now focus on three practical steps to help us overcome our hidden sins.

1. Self-Examination, Acknowledgement, and Confession

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

We can’t remove our hidden sins if they remain unacknowledged. It’s important to confess our sins to begin the process of healing. Some share or confess their sins to another person, such as a trusted friend or godly mentor. Ideally, this person should be able to give us godly counsel and not just make us feel better. Others prefer to confess their sins privately before God. If we do this, it’s important to be open

to hearing what God tells us. We can also do both. However we prefer to do it, the most important thing is that we confess to God what we have done. Acknowledging our sins requires honesty, self-examination, an understanding of God's word, and prayer (Ps 139:23–24). Many times, our biggest obstacle is ourselves and our own sense of pride. Quite often, we're too proud to admit our mistakes, much less confess our weaknesses before others.

2. Repent of Hidden Sins

"For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Mt 9:13)

Christians often talk about repentance but don't understand what it means. Repentance means we change our mind and determine to turn away from our sin. For example, if we're addicted to games or doing other meaningless activities on our phone, we could easily justify our actions and continue in them unless we truly change our minds about them. Change cannot happen when there's no desire for change. Only when we acknowledge that we've fallen prey to sin, can we then begin to change our minds about it. Meaningful change and true repentance come from changing our mindset.

3. Have a Strong Desire for Holiness

"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." (Ps 119:11)

Very often we get caught up in our hidden sins because we are bound by our sinful desires, which control our sinful actions. We can break through this invisible wall with God's word, which helps us overcome ungodly desires. Instead of allowing sin to hide within our hearts and control us, we should hide God's word in our heart. When we meditate on the truth of God's word, we expose every sinful desire in the light. The Bible says, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Ps 119:9). The Bible also says, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22).

After his sin, David wrote Psalm 51. If we read it, we will realize one important thing about David. Although David sinned greatly, his inner heart was always filled with a strong desire to be holy and blameless before God. Today, we need this same strong desire. If we do, we will naturally set aside the things of this world and seek out God's strength and deliverance from sin.

Memory Verse

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Meaning

This verse explains the importance of confessing our sins. Satan has convinced many that God would never forgive them of their sins. But this verse tells us the opposite. The "He" refers to God, who is faithful and wants to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. However, for God to bring healing, He first wants us to acknowledge and confess our sins before Him.

Conclusion

God wants us to confess and repent of our hidden sins honestly. If we constantly examine ourselves to see if any sin secretly lives within our heart, with the help of God's word, we will be able to perceive it and take the necessary steps to root it out. Otherwise, we may suffer the serious consequences of hidden sin, the worst of which is eternal death.

Lesson 12 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What must we do for forgiveness of our sins?
We must first confess and acknowledge our own sin.
2. What is the most serious consequence of sin? What does this lead to?
It separates us from God (Isa 59:2). This means we cannot receive God's blessings, including the grace of salvation. A life of sin leads to death.
3. Why does God want us to confess our sin even though He already knows of it?
God wants us to confess our sin because we know that we cannot hide it from Him. But more importantly, God loves a humble heart that is willing to confess.
4. "And they _____ him by the _____ of the _____ and by the _____ of their _____, and they did not _____ their lives to the _____." (Revelation 12:11)
overcame, blood, Lamb, word, testimony, love, death
5. Spend some time examining yourself. What hidden sin do you have in your heart? How can you turn away from this sin?
Personal answers.

Junior 1 Year 2 Book 3 Review

Memory Verses

Instructions: Fill in the blanks correctly using the provided words.

Father	intercession	name	come	gifts
body	Christ	prepare	walk	Jerusalem
Himself	deceive	faithful	witnesses	cleanse
world	God	elect	signs	forgive
Helper	confess	Spirit	ministries	test
mansions	Lord	weaknesses	same	destroy
false	chests	teach	receive	remembrance
soul	life	spirit	live	prophets
thirsts	Spirit	unrighteousness	hell	earth
living	Myself	heart	groanings	believes

Galatians 5:25	1 John 1:9	John 14:2-3	Romans 8:26
1 Corinthians 12:4-5	John 7:37-38	John 20:30-31	Acts 1:8
Matthew 10:28	Matthew 24:24	1 John 4:1	John 14:26

1. "But you shall _____ power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be _____ to Me in _____, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the _____." (_____)
2. "But the _____, the Holy Spirit, whom the _____ will send in My name, He will _____ you all things, and bring to your _____ all things that I said to you." (_____)
3. "If we _____ in the _____, let us also _____ in the _____." (_____)
4. "If anyone _____s, let him come to Me and drink. He who _____ in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his _____ will flow rivers of _____ water." (_____)

5. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our _____. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit _____ makes _____ for us with _____ which cannot be uttered." (_____)

6. "There are diversities of _____, but the _____ Spirit. There are differences of _____, but the same _____." (_____)

7. "In My Father's house are many _____ [...]. And if I go and _____ a place for you, I will _____ again and receive you to _____; that where I am, there you may be also." (_____)

8. "And do not fear those who kill the _____ but cannot kill the _____. But rather fear Him who is able to _____ both soul and body in _____." (_____)

9. "And truly Jesus did many other _____ in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the _____, the Son of God, and that believing you may have _____ in His _____." (_____)

10. "For false _____ and false _____ will rise and show great signs and wonders to _____, if possible, even the _____." (_____)

11. "Beloved, do not believe every _____, but _____ the spirits, whether they are of _____; because many _____ prophets have gone out into the _____." (_____)

12. "If we _____ our sins, He is _____ and just to _____ us our sins and to _____ us from all _____." (_____)

Multiple Choice

1. ____ : Which is true of the believers in Samaria when Peter and John first met them?
 - a. They had received the baptism of John the Baptist and received the Holy Spirit.
 - b. They had received the baptism of John the Baptist but had not received the Holy Spirit.
 - c. They had received baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and received the Holy Spirit.
 - d. They had received baptism in the name of Jesus Christ but had not received the Holy Spirit.

2. ____ : Which is not true of speaking in tongues?
 - a. The Holy Spirit gives a person utterance when he speaks in tongues.
 - b. Only highly spiritual people can understand a person who speaks in tongues.
 - c. Speaking in tongues edifies the speaker.
 - d. When we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for believers.

3. ____ : How does the Bible refer to hell?
 - a. A place to punish the devil
 - b. A prison for sinful angels
 - c. A place of no rest
 - d. All of the above

4. ____ : Which of these events is an example of a false miracle?
 - a. A girl with the spirit of divination proclaimed Paul and Silas to be servants of God.
 - b. A sundial went backwards ten degrees in response to Hezekiah's prayer.
 - c. The sun stood still during a battle between the Amorites and the Israelites.
 - d. None of the above

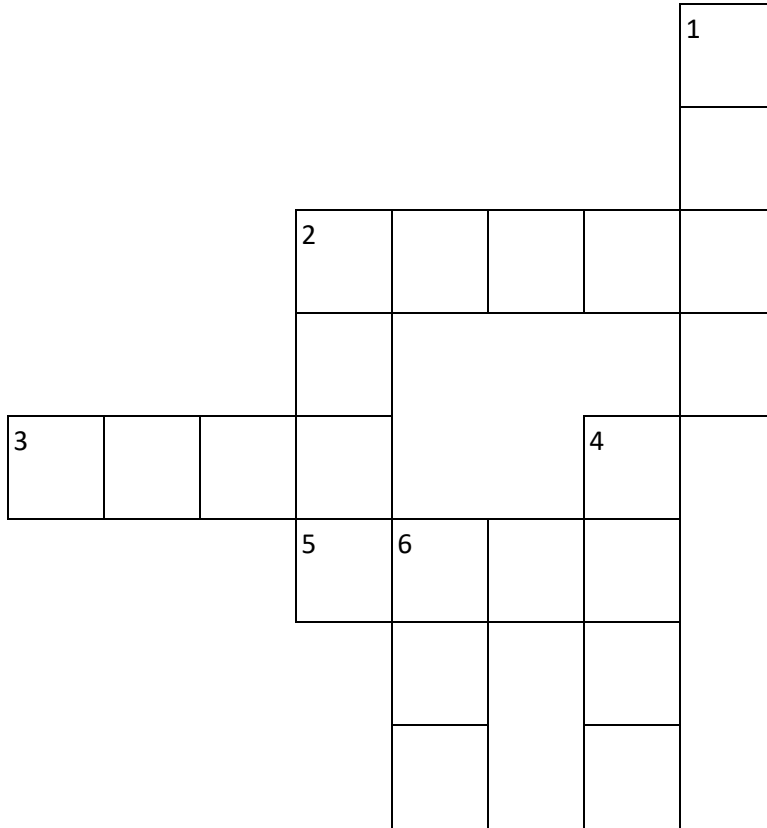
5. ____ : Which is not a way to "test" a spirit to see if it is from God?
 - a. Check if a person's teachings align with God's will
 - b. Check if a person's teachings conflict with those in the Bible
 - c. Check if a person can speak in tongues
 - d. None of the above

6. ____ : Which is true of the hidden sins committed by Achan, David, and Ananias and Sapphira?
 - a. Each sin was revealed by a prophet.
 - b. Each sin resulted in death.
 - c. Each sin was committed unknowingly.
 - d. None of the above

7. ____ : What is the purpose of the nine gifts given by the Holy Spirit, listed in 1 Corinthians 12?
 - a. To edify and build up members of the church
 - b. To exhort and encourage one another
 - c. To expose
 - d. All of the above

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Instructions: Fill in the crossword puzzle with the symbols of the Holy Spirit using the descriptions of each symbol.



Across

- 2. Quenches our thirst, fills us, sanctifies us
- 3. Restores
- 5. Purifies us, gives us peace and reconciliation

Down

- 1. Burns away impurities, provides light, joins believers into one body
- 2. Sustains life, empowers us, produces spiritual life in the spiritually "dry"
- 4. Guarantees our inheritance in Christ Jesus
- 6. Anoints us, gives us healing, sustains us

The Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Instructions: Complete the table by filling in each gift of the Holy Spirit and the category it falls under. The categories are: spiritual understanding; manifest God's grace and power; and reveal God's will.

Gift	Description	Category
	Comes from God alone; speak the right words to the right people at the right time	
	Trust in God at all times	
	Comes from the Holy Spirit, not gained from experience; ability to discern good from evil, to teach others	
	Given by divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit; can edify, exhort, comfort members	
	Used for self-edification, as well as for edification of the church	
	Supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities	
	Recognize an evil spirit through revelation from the Holy Spirit; able to test spirits	
	Explains the meaning of a message by work of the Holy Spirit	
	Work something against the laws of nature	

Short Answer

1. How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of sin? What is His purpose in our lives?

2. What are the steps we must take to receive the Holy Spirit?

3. What does the gift of discernment require? Why is it important to have the gift of discernment?

4. What must we do to enter the heavenly kingdom?

5. Why is it dangerous to base our faith solely on miracles?

6. According to 1 John 4:1–6, what are three characteristics of a spirit of error? How do evil spirits

tempt and deceive members?

7. Why does God want us to confess our sin, even though He already knows of it? What is the most serious consequence of sin, and what does it lead to?

Junior 1 Year 2 Book 3 Review Answer Key

Memory Verses

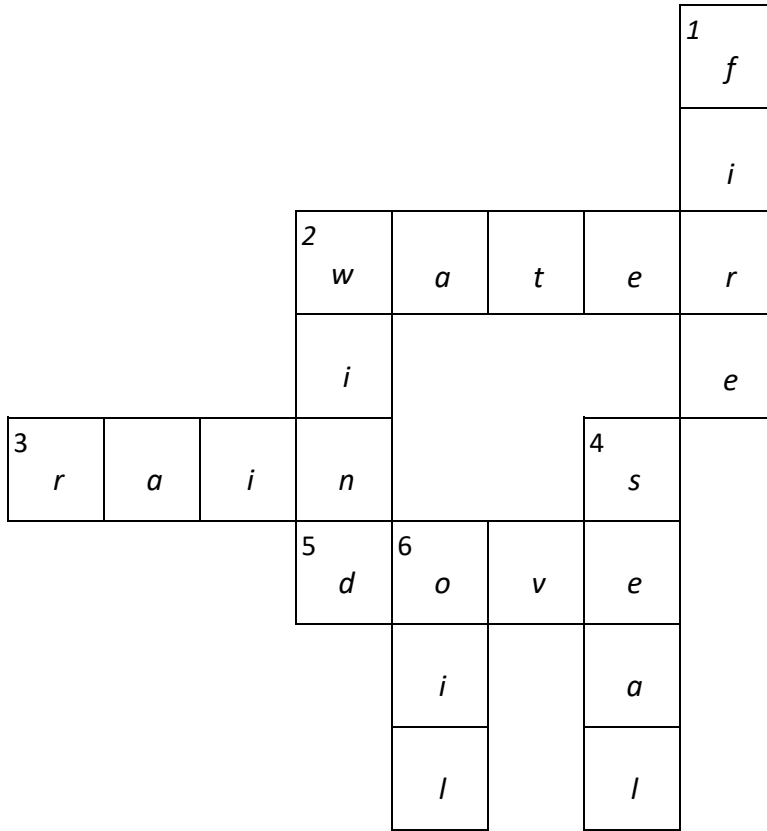
1. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
2. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26)
3. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25)
4. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38)
5. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26)
6. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord." (1 Corinthians 12:4-5)
7. "In My Father's house are many mansions [...]. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3)
8. "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)
9. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31)
10. "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." (Matthew 24:24)
11. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)
12. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Multiple Choice

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 - c. Each sin was committed unknowingly.
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7. ____ : What is the purpose of the nine gifts given by the Holy Spirit, listed in 1 Corinthians 12?
- a. To edify and build up the members and the church
 - b. To exhort and encourage one another
 - c. To expose
 - d. **All of the above**

Symbols of the Holy Spirit



Across

- 2. Quenches our thirst, fills us, sanctifies us
- 3. Restores
- 5. Purifies us, gives us peace and reconciliation

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The Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Gift	Description	Category
<i>The gift of the word of wisdom</i>	Comes from God alone; speak the right words to the right people at the right time	<i>Spiritual understanding</i>
<i>The gift of faith</i>	Trust in God at all times	<i>Manifest God's grace and power</i>
<i>The gift of the word of knowledge</i>	Comes from the Holy Spirit, not gained from experience; ability to discern good from evil, to teach others	<i>Spiritual understanding</i>
<i>The gift of prophecy</i>	Given by divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit; can edify, exhort, comfort members	<i>Reveal God's will</i>
<i>The gift of tongues</i>	Used for self-edification, as well as edification of the church	<i>Reveal God's will</i>
<i>The gift of healing</i>	Supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities	<i>Manifest God's grace and power</i>
<i>The gift of discerning spirits</i>	Recognize an evil spirit through revelation from the Holy Spirit; able to test spirits	<i>Spiritual understanding</i>
<i>The gift of interpretation of tongues</i>	Explains the meaning of a message by work of the Holy Spirit	<i>Reveal God's will</i>
<i>The gift of working miracles</i>	Work something against the laws of nature	<i>Manifest God's grace and will</i>

Short Answer

1. (Lessons 1, 2) How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of sin? What is His purpose in our lives?

The Spirit shows us what we have done wrong. By being convicted of our sin and reminded of Jesus' redemption, we will be able to turn away from the world and accept the Lord into our hearts. The Spirit is our Helper and our Teacher. He can help us to understand the truth and remind us of the things that we have learned about God.

2. (Lesson 4) What are the steps we must take to receive the Holy Spirit? Once we receive it, how do we pray for the fullness of it?

First, we must believe in God and His word. Then, we must repent of our sins. Afterwards, we must receive water baptism for the remission of our sins. Lastly, we must pray earnestly and persistently to God and ask Him to fill us with His Spirit. To pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, we need to thirst for it, put God first, and offer ourselves up as one being crucified on the cross.

3. (Lesson 6) What does the gift of discernment require? Why is it important to have the gift of discernment?

The gift of discernment requires a solid understanding of God's word, as it comes directly from God.

It is not based on human intelligence, experience, or ability. With the gift of discernment, we can judge a situation, person, or environment to see if Satan is trying to influence our faith. Without members who can distinguish between spirits, the church is open to spiritual attacks.

4. (Lesson 7) What must we do to inherit the heavenly kingdom?

To inherit the heavenly kingdom, we must “do the will of [our] Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21). Doing the will of God in heaven means: to be born of the water and Spirit; to receive the kingdom as a little child, with humility and trust; to seek His kingdom and righteousness; and to overcome the world by holding on to our faith and fighting to walk in the Spirit.

5. (Lesson 10) Why is it dangerous to base our faith solely on miracles? What should we base our faith on?

God may perform a miracle to enable a person to know Him and to lead the person to the true church. However, Satan can pretend to be a messenger of light and use miracles to deceive. We should base our faith on God’s words and doing His will.

6. (Lesson 11) According to 1 John 4:1–6, what are three characteristics of a spirit of error? How do evil spirits tempt and deceive members?

A spirit of error does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. A spirit of error is of the world. The world hears the spirit of error, but the world does not hear us. Evil spirits tempt members to sin and cause conflict between members using envy, heresies, and pride.

7. (Lesson 12) Why does God want us to confess our sin, even though He already knows of it? What is the most serious consequence of sin, and what does it lead to?

God wants us to confess our sin because not only do we know that we cannot hide it from Him, but God also loves a humble heart that is willing to confess. Sin separates us from God, so we cannot receive salvation, and our life of sin will lead to death.