## Contents

1. The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit—March 25-31——-5
2. The Holy Spirit Symbolized in Scripture—April 1-7——-17
3. Jesus and the Holy Spirit—April 8-14——-29
4. The Promise of the Holy Spirit—April 15-21——-41
5. The Promise Fulfilled—April 22-28——-53
6. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit—April 29–May 5——-65
7. Gifts of the Holy Spirit—May 6-12——-77
8. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit—May 13-19——-89
10. Life Through the Holy Spirit—May 27–June 2——-113
11. The Restorer—June 3-9——-125
12. The Sin Against the Holy Spirit—June 10-16——-137
13. The Holy Spirit in the Last Days—June 17-23——-149

---

**Editorial Office** 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

**Principal Contributor**
Based on previously published material by Arnold V. Wallenkampf

**Editor**
Clifford R. Goldstein

**Associate Editor**
Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

**Editorial Assistant**
Larie S. Gray

**Publication Manager**
Soraya Homayouni Parish

**Art Director and Illustrator**
Lars Justinen

**Concept Design**
Dever Design

**Pacific Press® Coordinator**
Paul A. Hey

**Key Text, Lesson Aim, and Outline:** Juli Blood, freelance writer, Hanover, Pa., U.S.A.

**The Commentary:** Brian Jones, freelance writer, Chloe, W.Va., U.S.A.

**The Inductive Bible-Study Method:** Alan Hecht, librarian, Rebok Memorial Library, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Md., U.S.A.

**The Focus-on-Witnessing Approach:** Anne Hope, freelance writer, Silver Spring, Md., U.S.A.

**The Life Application Approach:** Lynn Ripley, minister, Maple Grove, Minn., U.S.A.

The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of the Sabbath School Publications Board, a subcommittee of the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM), publisher of the Bible Study Guides. The published guide reflects the input of worldwide evaluation committees and the approval of the Sabbath School Publications Board and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the author(s).
The Spirit alone can breathe upon us the life-changing breath of our Savior

“God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth.” —Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988), p. 58.

Even the quickest reading of Fundamental Beliefs, number 5, should awaken us to the importance of the Holy Spirit to our faith. Indeed, we couldn’t be Christians without Him and His work in our lives. Christ’s accomplishments for us become efficacious only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and claim His righteousness instead of our own filthy rags or when we determine through the grace of God to put away sin and live in obedience to God’s law—we are responding to the Holy Spirit and nothing else.

The Bible mentions the Holy Spirit more than three hundred times: more than one hundred times in the Old Testament and more than two hundred in the New Testament. Thus, how worthy of study the Holy Spirit is, especially now when every wind of doctrine is blowing, even in regard to the Holy Spirit Himself. Some question His personhood and/or His divinity. Others emphasize the work of the Spirit and His gifts (or what they claim are His gifts), while they pay scant attention to the obedience and sanctifi-
cation that are the undeniable fruit of the Spirit’s work in our lives. All this needs to be looked at in light of the Word of God.

Seventh-day Adventists should be most interested in becoming personally acquainted with the Spirit. We believe not only in Christ’s death for our sins but also in His intercession for us in the heavenly sanctuary. Only the Spirit can apply the results of that intercession to our lives in anticipation of Christ’s return.

Because it was the Spirit who inspired the writers of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:21), when the Spirit speaks today, He will speak in accordance with His own inspired messages. Anything not in conformity with the Bible, must therefore emanate from some source other than the Holy Spirit. We are told to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1, NIV), and in the end the only sure standard for that test is the Bible itself.

Though these lessons will present a doctrinal picture of the Spirit, they also will emphasize the daily and practical aspect of His work in our lives, for the Spirit is the Divine Agent for reaching sinful humanity. His workings are as unchartable as mountain breezes; yet, the powerful reality of His work is manifested not only in our personal experiences but in the life and power of the church. Thus, we deal extensively with the vivifying power of the Spirit as we seek to present the Spirit as God’s regenerating Agent. He alone can breathe upon us the life-changing breath of our Lord—a truth so fundamental to being a Christian.

May the Lord bless us as we seek not only to understand the work of the Holy Spirit but to know more about how to receive His promises in order that, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, we “might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:19).

The late Arnold V. Wallenkampf, Ph.D., a Swede, worked in the church for decades as a pastor and a professor, and before retirement was an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
How to Use
This Teachers Edition

The teachers comments demonstrate different methods of teaching the adult standard edition Bible study guide. Five parts make up the teachers comments:

► **Key Text, Lesson Aim, and Outline:** The key text is taken from the standard edition guide. The lesson aim is designed to (a) help class participants understand and know about the lesson material, (b) evoke an appropriate feeling about the lesson material that complements the lesson content and helps to internalize it, and (c) help class participants apply the lesson material to their daily lives. The lesson outline may not always follow exactly the material that appears in the standard guide. It may reflect additional perspectives as it attempts to stimulate class discussion.

► **The Commentary** follows the traditional teaching methods of Sabbath School. It explains Bible passages and provides appropriate information leading to spiritual applications.

► **The Inductive Bible-Study Method** emphasizes careful, methodical discovery of the meaning in a text. The teacher encourages and supports the learner’s investigation and discovery, using distinctive approaches: (a) Study a text thoroughly and systematically before drawing a conclusion. (b) Look for textual meaning carefully and thoroughly, understand the passage in context, avoid misquoting the author. We must not develop opinions without biblical proof. (c) Share insights through group discussion as students examine a Bible passage together. (d) Apply the text to life today. (e) Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to class members during Bible study.

► **The Focus-on-Witnessing Approach** should be used in conjunction with other methods of Bible study to demonstrate how particular passages of Scripture can be used to encourage people to commit their lives to Christ and to nurture spiritual life once it has been awakened.

► **The Life-Application Approach** demonstrates how issues that grow out of Bible study can be shared in a small-group setting. This section uses an approach suitable for discussion in a small group in which interpersonal sharing and dialogue are key elements.

*Use a combination of teaching methods. Within one class period it often is possible to draw from all five methods demonstrated in the teachers comments. Some teachers will prefer to focus on one method of teaching, drawing heavily on the material in the teachers comments.*
One doesn’t have to read far in the Bible before one is confronted with the Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:2 reads, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” (NASB); meanwhile, at the other end of the Bible, Revelation 22:17 reads, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Of course, between these two texts, throughout the pages of Scripture, the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit are revealed to us. This especially is true in the New Testament, where we are given many insights into the reality, purpose, and function of the Holy Spirit, particularly in regard to the plan of salvation.

This week we’ll concentrate on one often misunderstood aspect of the Holy Spirit: His divinity. In other words, the Holy Spirit isn’t just some impersonal force that emanates from God. Instead, He is God, one of the three Persons who make up the Godhead of the Christian faith. Let’s take a look at this fundamental teaching of the Bible.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 1.*
The Triune God

The second of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reads, in part: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.”—Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . ., p. 16. In other words, Adventists—along with millions of other Christians—believe in the triune nature of God; that is, there is one God (Deut. 6:4) who exists as three Persons. While that concept itself might not be simple, the biblical evidence for this truth is powerful and compelling. That we can’t fully understand something, particularly something about the very nature of God Himself, is hardly reason to reject it (Job 11:7, 1 Cor. 13:12).

**How** do each of the following texts point to the plurality of the Godhead?

**Gen. 1:26**  
____________________________________________________________________

**Gen. 3:22**  
____________________________________________________________________

**Gen. 11:7**  
____________________________________________________________________

**Isa. 6:8**  
____________________________________________________________________

**John 1:1-3**  
____________________________________________________________________

**John 8:58**  
____________________________________________________________________

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be ‘the express image of His person.’ . . . The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.”—Ellen G. White, Evangelism, pp. 614, 615.

**What analogies—such as a triangle or a three-pronged fork—can help someone understand the idea of how one God can be composed of three equal Persons? What other examples might help us better understand this deep truth?**
Key Text: 1 Corinthians 2:10-16

Teachers Aims:
1. To reaffirm that the Holy Spirit is a distinct and equal Member of the Trinity.
2. To show the uniqueness of the Holy Spirit and His work in our behalf.

Lesson Outline:
I. Plurality of God
   A. God refers to Himself as plural (Gen. 1:26).
   B. Moses refers to God as One but in the plural (Duet. 6:4).
   C. Jesus specifies the plurality of God (Matt. 28:19).

II. Divinity of the Holy Spirit
   A. The Holy Spirit is Omnipotent (1 Cor. 2:10, 11).
   B. Jesus glorified the Father, the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus, and the Father glorifies them Both (John 16:13-15).
   C. Jesus glorified God in the flesh; the Holy Spirit glorifies God in our hearts and minds (Rom. 8:14-17).

III. Unique Personhood of the Holy Spirit
   A. For a witness to be valid, they must exist and be available to testify (John 15:26).
   C. The Holy Spirit has a work that is uniquely His own (John 14:26, 1 Cor. 12:4-11).

Summary: The Holy Spirit has a mission as clear and distinct as the mission of Jesus. Jesus made it possible for us to be saved; the Holy Spirit works with us to better understand all that Jesus did and taught. We need both Jesus and the Holy Spirit to make it through this life and to the home Jesus is creating for us.

COMMENTARY

Introduction
The Holy Spirit, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, is a coequal member of the triune Godhead. He possesses
God the Holy Spirit: Part 1

Most people don’t have a problem with the idea of the Father as God. After all, God is who the Father is. Even the idea of Jesus as God, as a fully Divine Being manifest in human form, though somewhat difficult to grasp, is, nevertheless, comprehensible. After all, an all-powerful God should be able to manifest Himself in human flesh if He so chooses to, right?

For many people, however, the concept of the Holy Spirit Himself as God is a much more difficult concept. It’s much easier to think of the Holy Spirit not as God Himself but as some sort of impersonal force, some divine energy and power, such as gravity, that comes from God and pervades the world.

Yet, the Bible is clear that the Holy Spirit is Divine; that is, the Holy Spirit, just as the Father and as the Son, is one of the divine Personages of the Godhead.

**How do the following texts help us understand the divine nature of the Holy Spirit?**

- **Gen. 1:2**
- **Matt. 1:20**
- **Matt. 28:19**
- **John 14:16**
- **Acts 5:3, 4**
- **Rom. 8:11**
- **1 Cor. 2:10, 11**
- **2 Cor. 3:17**

Attributes of the Holy Spirit include truth (**John 16:13**), life (**Rom. 8:2**), and omnipotence (**1 Cor. 2:10, 11**)—attributes associated with divinity. Jesus, in Matthew 12:31, 32, says blasphemy spoken against Him can be forgiven but not blasphemy spoken against the Holy Spirit, a concept that doesn’t make much sense if the Holy Spirit is anything less than God. Matthew 1:20, where Jesus is conceived in the womb of Mary through the Holy Spirit, is also a difficult text to understand if the Holy Spirit were not truly God. (See also **Gen. 1:2**.)
personality, has an infinite capacity to communicate, and operates in total unity with the Father and the Son.

I. The Triune God

God’s truth about Himself and His essential qualities does not await our endorsement or comprehension in order to gain validity. “Indeed, let God be true, but every man a liar,” as Paul declares in Romans 3:4. Scripture consistently mentions the Three Personages of the Godhead with an unequivocal inference of peership among them. (See Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:4, 6; 1 John 5:6, 7.) Consider how jarringly incongruous if Matthew 28:19 read: “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of Moses!” The only being whose name could be properly conjoined with the Father and the Son in such a context would be that of One equal to Them in essential nature and authority. God’s triune Being reveals His inherently sociable, communicative, and interactive nature.

II. God the Holy Spirit

Christ’s frequent reference to the Holy Spirit as “he,” “who,” and “whom” in John chapters 14–16, plainly attests to the personal identity of the Holy Spirit, and precludes the notion that the Spirit is a mere effluence, or exalted outshining, from the Godhead. Jesus declared that the Spirit would dwell in the believer (John 14:16, 17), would guide seekers into all truth (16:13), would teach all things (14:26), would serve as the Comforter (14:26, KJV), would speak and remind believers of Christ’s words (14:26), would testify of Christ (15:26), would convince and convict human minds (16:7, 8), and would show things to come in conjunction with an expanding revelation of Christ (16:13-15). These are not the attributes and actions of an impersonal force, but of an intelligent, volitional Being.

“The doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit is . . . of the highest importance from the practical standpoint. If we think of the Holy Spirit only as an impersonal power or influence, then our thought will constantly be, how can I get hold of and use the Holy Spirit; but if we think of Him in the Biblical way as a divine person, infinitely wise, infinitely holy, infinitely tender, then our thought will constantly be, ‘How can the Holy Spirit get hold of and use me?’ ”—Alonzo J. Wearner, Fundamentals of Bible Doctrine (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald® Pub. Assoc., 1945), p. 39.

III. The Unity of God

The Godhead’s unity of purpose, mind, and character, but individuality among its Three Members, does not require any justification or explanation from created beings. Such fallen, mortal beings as ourselves only “know in part and prophesy in part,” and “see in a mirror, dimly” (1 Cor. 13:9, 12). However, from the fact of God’s
God the Holy Spirit: Part 2

“Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3, 4).

In these two verses the Holy Ghost and God are used interchangeably. Thus, Peter here is equating the Holy Spirit and God, a powerful text that points to the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

**How** does 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28 help us understand the divinity of the Holy Spirit?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

First Corinthians 12, as well as chapters 13 and 14, speaks of divine gifts or heavenly endowments made to members of the church. Interestingly enough, this discussion by the apostle Paul uses the same interchange that Peter made in speaking to Ananias and Sapphira. The Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, and Lord and God, in verses 5, 6, and 28, are used interchangeably.

**What** did Jesus call the Representative He was going to send to His followers after His ascension? *John 14:16.*

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Here Jesus addresses His Father as an equal and petitions a gift for His followers. For the word translated “another” here, the Greek is *allo*\*s. It means “another of the same kind,” in contradistinction to *het-\*\*\*eros, which means “another of another kind.” Jesus intended to send Someone who is like Himself, and that is—Divine—to the disciples and succeeding generations of His followers. Previously, Jesus had related Himself to His Father. Now He relates Himself to the Spirit. Consequently, they are all alike, the Divine Persons of the Godhead.

**Have you ever, as did Ananias and Sapphira, lied to the Holy Spirit? If so, what should you do now?**
From the very beginning of this world’s creation, God acted in the undisguised plurality of His Being, to unite in the work of fashioning this crown jewel of the cosmos:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (vs. 2). “And God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image . . . ’” (vs. 26).

“In harmony with scriptural usage, the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead. From this place onward, throughout the whole Scripture, the Spirit of God has the role of the Divine Agent of God in all creative acts, whether of the earth, of nature, of the church, of the new life, or of the new man . . . .

“This divine Agent has ever been present to assist in the work of creation and redemption, to reprove and strengthen wayward souls, to comfort the sorrowing, and to present the believer’s prayers in an

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:**  *Genesis 3:22, Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19, John 3:8, 16:13*

1. How do we know the Holy Spirit is a divine, personal Being, as are the Father and the Son? Why is it important to believe this?

2. Our views on the Holy Spirit stem from the concept of the Trinity as a unity of Three coeternal Beings. Most Christian denominations believe that this is true. What evidence for this belief do we have in the Bible?

3. Why do some people, both Christians and non-Christians, find the Trinity concept difficult to understand and believe in? Do you find it difficult? If so, why? How do you resolve your difficulties, and how would you explain the Trinity concept to others who may not believe or accept it?

4. Why is the idea of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force attractive to some people? What evidence does the Bible give us that this view is incorrect? How might our own way of speaking about the Holy Spirit contribute to the confusion?

5. What evidence is found in the Old Testament of the plural nature of God? How does the Old Testament stress that there is only one God? Why do these two concepts not contradict each other?
The Unity of God

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen” (2 Cor. 13:14).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19).

How do these two verses help us see the divine nature of the Holy Spirit?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Christians have often been, and sometimes still are, accused of being polytheists—worshipers of more than one God. This is an understandable, but false, accusation. As Christians we admit there are three Persons in the Godhead, but “they are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person.”—Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p. 422. The Christian religion is not a belief in three separate gods; rather, it is a belief in one God who is manifested in three Persons working in perfect harmony with one another.

How is God presented by Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

“Our God” in the text could justly be translated “our Gods.” Even with their intense monotheism, the Jews still used a plural name for God. In other words, this “one” God is depicted with a plural noun. There has been a great deal of scholarly debate over the centuries regarding the meaning and significance of the plural for God here and in other places in Scripture. Explanations among both Jewish and Christian scholars, besides the plurality of the Godhead itself, have been given. As believers in the triune nature of God, we could see this use as evidence of our position but certainly not as proof. There is other scriptural evidence, more concrete, that affirms our understanding of the nature of God.

What hope can you find in the idea that all three Persons of the Godhead are involved in the plan of salvation?
acceptable form to God.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 209.

In the work of Creation and redemption we see a consistent pattern of evidence that the Holy Spirit serves in voluntary subordination as the Third Member of the Godhead. In no way does this imply that the Spirit is a “junior partner” of the Trinity. Instead, He is a full possessor of all the characteristics and prerogatives of Deity. It is to exemplify an attitude of cooperation and self-transcendence that the Spirit takes this subordinate role. The Spirit’s infinite power enables Him to perform any work that advances Heaven’s cause and benefits us. Being God, nothing is impossible for the Spirit to achieve for, and through, cooperative lives (see Eph. 1:17-19). The

Witnessing

It’s pretty common nowadays to find products that provide three different functions under one label. For instance, biodegradable dishwashing liquid that (a) cleans the greasiest of dishes while (b) it manages to soften your hands and (c) protect the environment. An ATM (automated teller machine) card conveniently lets you withdraw cash, make deposits, and check on your account information all at the touch of a button. Talk about multipurpose!

The role of motherhood is a wonderful example of another type of multipurpose function that combines several distinct duties into one. Moms can be caregivers par excellence, no matter our ages or needs. They can be strong disciplinarians when they need to be and, more than anyone else, are meant to love and care for their children unconditionally.

Multipurpose gadgets and multitasking mothers, as wonderful as they make our lives, can only shadow what God does for us in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He is our spiritual Comforter, whom Jesus Christ promised to send to our sinful planet to minister to those in need of the plan of salvation. Jesus promised to never leave His followers, and He kept that promise when He returned to heaven. In place of His physical Person, He sent back to earth His sweet Presence, embodied as the Holy Spirit, to comfort, minister, and impress all who will listen to open their hearts to His continuing love and forgiveness. Faith in the Word and in the promises of the Father and of the Son open the way for the Holy Spirit to reach hearts and minds.

Now think of all the people you know who desperately need comfort, unconditional love, and the promise of a better life. Plan ways in which you can reach out and offer the care and attention that is needed so badly. Remember, when you do this, you are being guided by the Holy Spirit and by God’s rich example of love and care.
Evidences of the Spirit’s Personality

Because Jesus had come to earth as a human being, in human form, it’s not hard to think of Him as a person with distinct character traits. In contrast, we oftentimes think of the Holy Spirit as an “it,” an impersonal entity or power. Yet, the Bible presents the Holy Spirit as a distinct personality, one that has intelligence (John 14:26, 15:26, Rom. 8:16), a will (Acts 16:7, 1 Cor. 12:11), and affections (Eph. 4:30).

The Bible also attributes to the Holy Spirit actions that reveal personality. He is said to speak expressly (1 Tim. 4:1), to send people on missions (Acts 10:19, 20), to prevent people from going places (Acts 16:7), to command people (Acts 11:12), to forbid actions (Acts 16:6), to call ministers of the gospel (Acts 13:2), to appoint them their spheres of duty (Acts 20:28), and to make intercession (Rom. 8:26, 27). These qualities and actions are more commonly identified with human personality as opposed to some mere power or influence.

**How did Jesus refer to the Spirit?** John 15:26; 16:13, 14. **What do these texts tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit?**

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Although the word *Spirit* is a neuter noun in Greek, the Gospel writers refer to Him by using the masculine *he*. The Spirit refers to Himself by using the pronoun for the first person in Acts 13:2—*me*. Thus, it is appropriate to use *he* when speaking of the Spirit. The neuter gender for the Spirit, both in the original Greek and in English, has undoubtedly contributed to the popular use of *it* as have the symbols or emblems used in the Bible to present His nature and operations—fire, wind, oil, seal, and others.

**What should it mean to you that the Holy Spirit isn’t just some divine force but God Himself?** How is it more comforting to know that God the Holy Spirit, as opposed to an impersonal force, is intimately and closely working in our lives?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
omnipresence of the Spirit enables Him to represent Christ everywhere and perform a simultaneous work of grace, guidance, and guardianship worldwide. *(See Eph. 2:18 and Rev. 22:17.)*

Consider how the unity among the Three Members of the Godhead and the richness of Their concerted benevolence toward all creation serve to root out of the universe anything that approaches a spirit of rivalry, contention, and lust for power.

**Life-Application Approach**

**Icebreaker:** When we see newborn babies, one of our first instincts is to try and decide who they look like. Share your experiences with your Sabbath School class. Did you look like your mom or your dad? Genesis 1:26 tells that we are made in God’s image. In what ways do you reflect the Holy Spirit’s presence and power? What would we look like without the Holy Spirit’s leading in our lives?

**Thought Questions:**

1. As we read through the Bible, we meet God who is Three. The plan of salvation is portrayed through the different facets of their ministry to us: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What texts help you to understand the vast concept of Their unity, yet individuality of purpose and activity? (See Job 33:4; Ps. 139:7-10; Matt. 12:31, 32; Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Cor. 13:14.) How would you explain what you have discovered to a friend?

2. When Mom says to get a job done in a certain way, we are more likely to follow through than if a sibling had given us the same instructions. An actual quote from a recognized authority gives weight and power to discussions or directions. Read Matthew 28:19. Discuss the implications of Jesus’ specific command to baptize in the name of all Three Members of the Godhead. Consider also John 3:5. Why do Jesus’ disciples need the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives?

**Application Question:**

Isaiah meets God in the sanctuary *(Isa. 6:1-8).* He is changed and moved to action through the encounter. He becomes an agent of salvation through receiving the gift of prophecy. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28. Think of individuals in your congregation that display these spiritual gifts. Which spiritual gifts are evident in your life? How has the Holy Spirit made these gifts blessings for the growth of God’s kingdom?

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 616.

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 617.

“The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.”—Page 617.

“We are to co-operate with the three highest powers in heaven,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.”—Page 617.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have those in the class who are willing talk about their own personal experiences with the Holy Spirit and how He has changed their lives.

2. Trying to understand the idea of the plural nature of one God isn’t always easy. There are limits to how much we can understand. Why, though, should these limits not be a barrier to our believing the Bible teaching on the triune nature of God? In other words, do we have to fully understand something in order to believe it? Defend your answer.
The Holy Spirit Symbolized in Scripture

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: Matt. 3:11; 10:16; John 1:9, 32; 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 1:20-22; 1 Pet. 1:22.

Memory Text: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

In addition to numerous references to the Spirit by name, both in the Old and in the New Testament, the Spirit is frequently alluded to through the use of a variety of symbols. It only is through an acquaintance with the symbols, emblems, or illustrations used for the Spirit that His work and ministry in the believer’s life can be adequately understood.

“In us as a Light to illuminate; in us as a Friend to counsel; in us as Water to refresh; in us as a Comforter to cheer; in us as a Teacher to teach; in us as a Guide to direct; in us as Oil to make us shine; in us as a Fire to purge; in us as a Dove to sympathize; in us as the Seal to secure; in us as the Witness to confirm; in us as the Strength to keep; in us as the Power to pray; in us as the Source of fruitbearing; in us as Sap to make us grow; in us as the Remembrancer to remind us that all the precious promises of God are yea and amen in Christ; and in us as the Earnest of the coming glory.”—F. E. Marsh, *Emblems of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1957, 1971), p. 246.

This week we’ll take a look at what some of these symbols mean.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 8.*
Dove

“John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (John 1:32).

“The Lord had promised to give John a sign whereby he might know who was the Messiah, and now as Jesus went up out of the water, the promised sign was given; for he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, hovered over the head of Christ.”—Ellen G. White Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1078.

When you think of a dove, what qualities do you think of? Why would this type of bird—as opposed to a crow, a vulture, or a hawk—be used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit? See Matt. 10:16.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

The word in Matthew 10:16 often translated as “harmless” can more accurately be translated as “unmixed,” “pure,” “without a mixture of evil.” This is certainly an apt description of Jesus, but it is also an indication of what the Spirit can do in the lives of believers.

Read Ephesians 5:9, 10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; and 1 Peter 1:22. What is the Lord telling us with these texts?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

The Bible is abundantly clear about the kind of lives those who follow the Lord should live. Yet, it’s also clear, too, that we can be what God wants us to be only through a power from above working in our hearts. In and of ourselves, we are simply too far gone to reform ourselves in the sight of God. Only the purifying, regenerating, and sanctifying power of the Spirit can enable us to reflect the purity and character of Jesus. This is the goal of all who profess to follow Christ.

What areas in your own life need the greatest reformation? What are practical ways in which you can cooperate with the Holy Spirit so He can work the changes in you that are needed?
COMMENTARY

Introduction

So rich and varied is His work, that the Holy Spirit is symbolized in Scripture in a variety of ways, several of which are considered in this week’s lesson. No one symbol or wide array of symbols can fully portray the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Each symbol highlights some aspect of His infinitely glorious character and work.

I. Dove

Most Scripture references to the dove are redolent with positive and peaceful associations. (See, for example, Gen. 8:8-12, Ps. 55:6, 68:13, Song of Sol. 2:14, 5:2, 6:9.) Christ’s anointing by the Holy Spirit lighting upon Him at His baptism as a dove (Matt. 3:16),
Water

“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, ‘If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” ’ Now this he said about the Spirit” (John 7:37-39, RSV).

Jesus here likens the Spirit to water. Water is essential to life. There can be no life without water. So, there can be no spiritual life without the presence of the Spirit. Also, water is not something we can make ourselves. We are totally dependent upon God for it. It’s the same with the Spirit.

Notice, too, the idea of water flowing out of the hearts of those who believe in Jesus. Here the Lord reveals a crucial truth about those who believe in Him: That which they received through the Spirit will in turn flow out from them to others.

Read Isaiah 44:3, 4. How does this text reflect the same idea Jesus expressed above?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

The second part of verse 3 explains what the first part actually means. Verse 4 indicates that as there will be growth as a result of pouring out water upon parched land, so there will be spiritual growth as a result of the outpouring of God’s Spirit. And growth alone is positive evidence of life. As parched land is clothed with verdant growth because of water, so the Spirit can transform a barren soul into a person of Christian beauty. “The Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 176.

Read Matthew 18:21-35. What principle is seen here that powerfully expresses the idea of today’s lesson?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What are some things the Holy Spirit has done for you that you also should be doing for others?
aptly betokens the beauty of Jesus’ work as the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6, 7). The Holy Spirit empowered Christ to meet every situation with calm self-possession that blended with far-seeing perception and efficiency for service.

Just as a dove ascends heavenward in its flight, so does the Holy Spirit lift receptive hearts into realms of heavenly thought and sensibility to view life through God’s eyes. The Spirit wishes to anoint us for service, just as He did Jesus. (See 1 John 2:27; compare John 14:26.) “The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 805.

II. Water

Water turns parched deserts into fertile fields. In like manner, as the Spirit irrigates our arid hearts, we bear the fruit of the Spirit bountifully in all the seasons of life. Water benefits every living thing through which it flows, whether a riverbed or a human heart. “He who waters will also be watered himself” (Prov. 11:25; compare John 7:37-39).

“As is the palm tree in the desert—a guide and consolation to the fainting traveler—so the Christian is to be in the world. He is to guide weary souls, full of unrest, and ready to perish in the desert of sin, to the living water. He is to point his fellow men to Him who gives to all the invitation, ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.’

“The sky may be as brass, the burning sand may beat about the palm tree’s roots and pile itself about its trunk; yet the tree lives on, fresh and vigorous. Remove the sand, and you discover the secret of its life; its roots strike down deep into waters hidden in the earth.

“Thus it is with the Christian. His life is hid with Christ in God. Jesus is to him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life. His faith, like the rootlets of the palm tree, penetrates beneath the things that are seen, drawing life from the Fountain of life. And amid all the corruption of the world he is true and loyal to God. The sweet influence of Christ’s righteousness surrounds him.”—Ellen G. White, In Heavenly Places, p. 240.

III. Oil

Oil is presented as a symbol of the Spirit, not primarily to emphasize its properties as a nutrient or lubricant, but as a fuel for lamps, which variously symbolize the church (Rev. 1:20), the believer (John 5:35), and Scripture (Ps. 119:105). Oil (the symbol of the Holy Spirit that makes God’s Word effectual) must enter our hearts and freely circulate through us, if we are to receive its benefit. (See Zech. 4:12-14.) “The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the
Oil

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (Matt. 25:1-4).

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. As lamps in the time of Christ did not give light without oil, so a Christian cannot bring light to the world, as he is commissioned to do (Matt. 5:14-16), without the Spirit in his or her life. The wise virgins in the parable “had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life.”—Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 394.

In what terms is the light-giving power of the Holy Spirit described in Zechariah? Zech. 4:1-6. In particular, what do you think the angel meant by his words in verse 6?

The lamps or the lampstands (the candlesticks) represent the church, or Christ’s followers. (See Rev. 1:20.) From the holy ones that stand in God’s presence, His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. It is only through the anointing and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit upon the heart that we may develop the right attitude toward divine light and truth. It is only through the Spirit, as opposed to human power and might, that we can be channels of mercy and grace toward a sinful, dying world.

In Zechariah’s vision the two olive trees that stand before God are represented as emptying the golden oil out of themselves through golden tubes into the bowl of the sanctuary. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a continuous bright and shining light. So, from the anointed ones that stand in God’s presence, the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His people, that they may impart to others light and joy and refreshing. They are to become channels through which divine instrumentalities communicate to the world the tide of God’s love.

In the past 24 hours, were you a dim bulb, a fickle lantern, or a bright beacon of hope and grace?
church becomes a light-bearer in the world.”—Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, p. 17.

IV. Seal and Guarantee

With all the authority of Heaven behind them, a seal and guarantee are potent forces. Therefore, the promise of the Spirit (see 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5) is not blithely or casually extended. We must meet the conditions of the promise. Ephesians 1:13, 14 states the primary positive condition on which we are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” What is that condition? Ephesians 4:30-32 states three positive conditions (all interrelated) for receiving the seal of God, and six ways by which the sealing Spirit is grieved into withdrawing His presence. What attitude is at the root of these hindrances?

V. Light and Fire

Without apology the Bible declares, “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29; compare Deut. 4:24). While fire consumes infe-

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** John 3:6-8, 7:38, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

1. The Bible often uses symbols that are familiar to us in our daily lives. What are some of these symbols? Do you find them illuminating, or do they raise more questions?

2. Why does the Bible use a variety of symbols to help us understand the Holy Spirit? Why is any one symbol inadequate to reveal all we need to know about this Member of the Godhead?

3. Given that the Holy Spirit is a personal Being, why do so many of the symbols for Him remind us of natural phenomena or substances (for example: wind, water, and oil)? What is the Bible trying to teach us through these symbols?

4. What common thread runs through all of these symbols? Could it be that the multitude of symbols suggest that the Holy Spirit is the most difficult aspect of the Godhead to understand in human or natural terms? Explain your answer.

5. The images used for the Holy Spirit often suggest power and, occasionally, force. In spite of that, we can—and sometimes do—resist the Holy Spirit. How is it possible for us to resist such an irresistible presence?
Seal and Guarantee

“He has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Cor. 1:22, RSV).

Read a few verses (starting at verse 20) that precede 2 Corinthians 1:22. What is Paul basically saying to us?

Paul here uses the figure, or symbol, of money, kind of like a down payment, to illustrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers. This is a first installment, an assurance of their full inheritance when Christ returns.

Where do you see the work of the triune God in the preceding texts? Why should that also give us assurance regarding salvation?

Notice too, in the above texts, in whom we have all these promises. Of course, it’s in Jesus, for “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (vs. 20, RSV). The assurance Paul talks about here, which is sealed with the Holy Spirit, comes because of what Jesus has done for us at the Cross. It’s only because of the Cross that we have been given the Holy Spirit, the seal of our redemption.

The gift of the Spirit to the believer is the pledged guarantee to the believer on the part of God that He will ultimately bring him the full gift of salvation by taking him out of this world of sin and give him an inheritance in His eternal kingdom. Even in human affairs the earnest money, or down payment, is the purchaser’s pledge that he will go through with a particular transaction. The Spirit is God’s down payment on His promised salvation, which was paid in full at the Cross.

The texts, though, do not teach “once saved always saved.” We can resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51); we can fall away. God’s sovereignty does not infringe upon human free will. As long as we choose to follow Him, living by faith—claiming His power to overcome when tempted, claiming His forgiveness when we fall—we can be sure He will do all He has promised for us. What more assurance do we need?

Paul wrote that “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (2 Cor. 1:20). What promises that we have in Jesus mean the most to you and give you the most comfort and assurance? Share them with the class on Sabbath.
When we really accept the Holy Spirit into our hearts, He fills us up so completely with the love of God that we have absolutely no alternative but to share the overflowing abundance with those around us. We can’t bottle up His blessings any more than steam can be bottled up—it has to escape—because it can’t be contained any longer!

When the Holy Spirit has taken up permanent residence in our hearts and minds, we demonstrate daily to others His influence in our lives. Some of the ways in which others see His presence may be through our efforts to bring about peaceful solutions to problems. Whether it is a problem within the church family, issues in the neighborhood where we live, or perhaps at the school where our children attend, our efforts to find peaceful solutions send positive messages to those who witness these attempts.

Perhaps we observe someone at work who desperately needs a friend but is too reserved (or prickly!) to allow anyone near. We can ease our coworker’s pain a bit by being an invisible friend for a while. We can leave messages of encouragement on this person’s desk for him or her to find after lunch. We can place a small plant on this person’s desk to brighten the day. And best of all, we can pray continually for the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit to minister to this person’s life.

Witnessing through our own personal relationships also may positively touch the lives of those around us. When others see that we treat our spouses, children, parents, friends, coworkers, and others with respect and care, at all times, we clearly send the message that the Holy Spirit abides in our lives.

Like steam that can’t be contained, the Holy Spirit will permeate hearts and minds so that the actions that follow are visible outpourings of the abundance of God’s grace and love.
Light and Fire

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

“Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God’s Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The ‘Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.”—Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 385.

Dwell on Ellen White’s understanding of John 1:9. What important issues does it answer? What questions does it leave unanswered?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

With what did John the Baptist say Jesus would baptize His followers? What do you think he meant by what he said? Matt. 3:11.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Fire had a significant meaning to people familiar with Old Testament traditions, for it denoted the presence of God (Exod. 3:2). It also represented the protection and leading providence of God (Exod. 13:21), the approval of God (Lev. 9:24), and the cleansing and sanctifying power of God (Isa. 6:6, 7).

In what ways have you experienced a baptism of fire? What happened? What lessons did you learn?
Word, and is the means by which this connection is established and maintained.

Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** One of the most powerful signs in sign language expresses the feeling “I love you.” What forms of nonverbal communication do you use in your family? How do they transmit powerful positive and negative messages? Why was it necessary for God to use so many symbols to communicate the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

**Thought Questions:**
1. Ask several members of the class to describe fire and what it does. Then read Matthew 3:11 together. Why do we need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire? Now read Acts 2:1-39. How is the story of Pentecost related to John’s prediction? In what ways were the disciples’ lives changed by the Holy Spirit’s presence in their lives? How does the Holy Spirit’s work in your life compare or contrast with the disciples’ experience?

2. Who you know and follow does make a difference in where you go and in your final destination. Read John 1:9 and then Matthew 10:16. How does knowing “the True Light” help us to “be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (NIV)? Share a time when your connection to Christ and the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life made a difference in a difficult situation. In what ways did that situation provide a positive witness to another person?

**Application Question:**
Paul describes a profound transaction in 2 Corinthians 1:20-22. What does it mean for God’s promises to be “Yes” in our lives? In your journal, or on a sheet of paper, mark two columns. In one column write what God has done for us based on this passage; for example, He has “anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts” (vss. 21, 22, NIV). In the other column write how these changes are evidenced in your life. Then spend some time praying, praising God for these gifts. If you have difficulty filling out the second column, spend time in prayer and in God’s Word asking Him to lead you into an experience that will guarantee “what is to come.”
Another example used to describe the work of the Holy Spirit was presented by Jesus Himself, when He compared the work of the Spirit to the wind (John 3:8). The wind is not visible; we do not know from where it comes or where it goes. But although invisible, its effects are plainly seen. Jesus likened the Spirit to the wind. He cannot be seen, yet, the effects He brings about in changed human lives are plainly evident. But the Spirit Himself is a mystery. Of the three Persons in the Godhead, He is the most unfamiliar to humanity. Jesus came to reveal, or make known, the Father (see John 1:18), and humanity saw Jesus in human form. But no one has ever seen the Spirit, nor has anyone revealed Him to us.

“Christ uses the wind as a symbol of the Spirit of God. As the wind bloweth whither it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so it is with the Spirit of God. We do not know through whom it will be manifested.”—Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, book 2, p. 15.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, compare your answers to the final question in Wednesday’s study. What promises, if any, came up again and again?

2. The week’s study emphasized the changes the Holy Spirit brings about in our individual lives and how these changes should be manifested. How, though, should the church, as a whole, be impacted by the Holy Spirit? What changes could He bring to the whole church? How would these changes be made manifest in, for example, how the church related to the local community?

3. What things could you do as a class to help your whole church be more receptive to the workings and power of the Holy Spirit?
SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week’s Study:** Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Matt. 1:18-20; 3:16, 17; Luke 1:35; John 3:3-8, 34; Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14.

**Memory Text:** “The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

The Holy Spirit was involved in the incarnation of Jesus and His coming to this earth. Jesus was conceived by Mary through the overshadowing of the Spirit. Before He entered upon His public ministry, Jesus was endowed with the Spirit as He descended on Him in the form of a dove at His baptism. Immediately after the baptism, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness.

Throughout His entire ministry Jesus was led by the Spirit. He unreservedly committed Himself to the accomplishment of His Father’s will, as unveiled to Him in the Sacred Writings and the promptings of the Spirit. He surrendered His own inclinations. He had no more desire to die at the age of 33 than you and I would. In fact, He pleaded with His Father to take that cup away, if possible. But He would rather die at 33 than go contrary to His Father’s will. He did not insist on having His own way, although He could easily have escaped death.

His work, His ministry, and His miracles were accomplished, just as ours must be, through the direction of the Holy Spirit.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 15.*
Miracle Birth

Read Matthew 1:18-20 and Luke 1:35. What role do these texts give to the Holy Spirit regarding the birth of Jesus into humanity?

If there are any texts in Scripture that show the limits of science and human logic and experience to explain the great truths of God, these two must be among the top. It’s amazing enough, a woman being impregnated by the Holy Spirit; that she was a virgin (Matt. 1:23) makes the miracle even more amazing. People all through the history of the church have come up with all sorts of explanations for the birth of Jesus other than what the texts say. Those who limit what they believe only to what their senses can tell them or what past experience has shown them or what modern science can explain to them will have a very hard time with these texts and the great truths they contain. Those, however, who trust in the power of God (Luke 1:37, Heb. 11:6) and the truth of God’s Word (2 Tim. 3:16) can accept the texts for what they say, regardless of how little we can understand the processes behind the truth revealed in them. The just, after all, shall live by faith (Heb. 10:38), and what is faith other than belief in what we can’t fully understand, and who can fully understand a sinful human woman bearing in her womb the Son of God?

How do these few texts (Gen. 1:2, Job 33:4, John 3:3-8, Rom. 8:11) help us better understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the pregnancy of Mary and in the birth of Jesus?

However unfathomable the incarnation of Jesus, it’s not hard to understand why the Holy Spirit Himself, One of the Godhead, would be the acting Agent. Who else other than God could perform such a miracle? It’s hard to imagine an angel, or any inferior or created being, as the causative agent in this incredible act.

What are some things in the natural world that you believe are true but don’t fully understand? How do these examples help you realize there are things about your faith you can believe in but not understand either?
Introduction

Christ’s mission was sustained and guided by the Holy Spirit throughout every phase of His earthly life. The Spirit’s infinite intelligence, capabilities, and full sympathy with the Divine purpose qualified Him to labor as an equal Partner with the Father and the Son for our redemption.
Anointed by the Spirit

What do Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21, 22; and John 1:32-34 tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s ministry?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Though He was the spotless Son of God, the One who was with God from the days of eternity (John 1:1-3), Jesus, in His human manifestation, was totally dependent upon the work of the Spirit in His life. That is, in His humanity, He allowed Himself to be guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

Notice, too, at this scene that all three Persons of the Trinity were manifested in a special way not always revealed in Scripture: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were all there. This fact alone should tell us how significant the anointing and baptism of Jesus were. Indeed, here, in a special way, began His work, not only for the redemption of humanity but for ending the great controversy with Satan.

What do Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12, and Luke 4:1 tell us about the continued work and role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Here, too, we are shown the influence of the Holy Spirit on the life and mission of Christ. It was here, in the wilderness temptation, that Christ went over the same ground that Adam did, only in a situation much worse than Adam (after all, Adam had a full belly in paradise while Jesus, with a growling empty stomach, was in a barren wilderness). The three writers who wrote about the temptation all emphasized it was the Spirit, which had just fallen on Christ in a marked way at His baptism, that had led Him into the wilderness. They also expressly state, too, that it was Satan who had tempted Him.

In what ways have you faced your own “wilderness temptation”? How did you fare? What can you learn from Christ’s experience that can help you with future temptations?
I. Miracle Birth

Christ’s incarnate nature presents unfathomable mysteries to our minds, but Scripture reveals as much about this subject as we can grasp in this dispensation. Christ, being God come in human flesh (John 1:14, 1 Tim. 3:16), must of necessity be conceived in human flesh by divine power. A mere mortal being could not possibly inseminate another mortal with “Immanuel” (God with us). Hence, Jesus was conceived in Mary’s womb by the Holy Spirit. This is marvelous, but not baffling; from the beginning the Spirit was actively involved in the work of creation. It is no less complicated for God to create a human by supernatural impregnation than by means of the laws of biological reproduction that He has established. The greatest marvel in this process is that the Creator (Jesus) condescended to become a created being (human) for the sake of our redemption. (See Phil. 2:5-9 and Col. 1:12-19.)

II. Anointed By the Spirit

Christ’s visible anointing by the Holy Spirit (see Luke 3:21, 22) unveils several core truths:

2. Christ’s renunciation of His inherent divine powers and His entire dependence on the other Two Persons of the Godhead for the conduct of His mission. Thus, He retained no advantage that we cannot possess through the same dependence on God that He exercised. (See John 5:19, 30; 8:28; 15:4, 5; Phil. 4:13.) This also reveals that it was not exclusively Christ’s desire to save us; the Father and the Spirit are equally committed to our redemption and are unitedly laboring to consummate it. (See John 6:37-39, 63.)
3. The omnipotent efficacy of the gospel to save people from their sins and restore them to the image of their Creator—a twofold work that only the unmodified power of God can perform. (See Gen. 1:27; Rom. 8:1-30; Eph. 4:23, 24.)

III. Guided By the Spirit

Christ’s submissiveness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit clearly displays the variety of the Spirit’s work in His life. Consider some aspects of this work—daily direction with regard to duty and its proper performance; discernment; endurance; energy; power; and clarity of mind to comprehend, teach, and apply Scripture. This work is also to be carried out in and through the life of Christ’s disciples but only as we completely submit to God. (See Isa. 11:1, 2; 50:4-10; 59:19-21; 61:1, 2; John 9:4.) In concert with the Father, and in submission to His will, the Spirit glorifies Christ. (See John 16:13, 14.)

IV. Spirit-Directed Activity
Guided by the Spirit

“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John 3:34).

Today’s English Version lucidly renders this verse as follows: “The one whom God has sent speaks God’s words, because God gives him the fullness of his Spirit.”

What is Jesus saying with those words? What do they tell us about the influence of the Holy Spirit in His life? What should they tell us about what the Holy Spirit should be doing in our lives?

Acts 1:1, 2 makes it plain that it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus “had given commandments unto the apostles.” Here, too, we have another clear reference to the dependence of Jesus upon the power of the Holy Spirit in His life.

What was Jesus’ main objective during His life on earth? John 4:34, 6:38, 8:29. How does this objective fit in with the work of the Holy Spirit in His life?

“Jesus stood, with reference to His human nature, during all the days of His humiliation, under the constant and penetrating operation of the Holy Spirit. The Son, who lacked nothing, but as God in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit possessed all things, compassionately adopted our human nature. . . . Although He was the Son, He did not take its preparation, enriching, and operation into His own hand, but was willing to receive them from the hand of the Holy Spirit.” —Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 96.

What changes do you need to make in your life so every word you speak could be done through the influence of the Holy Spirit? How different would your words be than they are now?
Christ’s paramount mission was “to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). This involved a full restoration of Bible truth and personal demonstration of its beauty and power. (See John 18:37.) The Holy Spirit anointed Christ to perform His work with flawless mastery, skill, and plenitude, as the great Medical Missionary who came to save us from sin and from every conceivable form of life-robbing affliction (see Acts 10:38). Because of Christ’s single-minded submission to the will of God, and full obedience to His Word, the Spirit was granted to Christ without measure (see John 3:31-35).

**Inductive Bible Study**


1. Describe the Holy Spirit’s role in Jesus’ life and ministry. How is this similar to the Holy Spirit’s role in the life of a Christian? How is it different? Why was it necessary for Jesus, Himself a manifestation of God, to rely on the Holy Spirit?

2. Jesus’ entry into the world through the virgin birth was accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Why was this necessary? What spiritual lessons can we learn from the Holy Spirit’s role in Jesus’ birth, and from the virgin birth itself?

3. We are told that Jesus was guided and led by the Holy Spirit. Yet, we usually think of the Holy Spirit as being a gift to the church, from the apostolic age on. How do we reconcile appearances of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ life—and indeed, in the Old Testament era—with statements by Jesus, and others in the Bible, that the Holy Spirit would make Himself known after Christ’s departure? Can we assume that the apostles, and others at the time, were familiar with the concept of the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.

4. A close look at the Gospels indicates that God and the Holy Spirit were active in Jesus’ life and ministry at different times and places. What does this say about the nature and character of the Holy Spirit manifested in the Godhead?

5. Jesus performed His miracles strictly through the power of the Holy Spirit. Presumably, we have access to the same power, but we rarely, if ever, perform such miracles, or see them performed by others. Was Jesus different in this sense? If so, how? Did He have an advantage in being God, or was He closer to God’s ideal for humanity—an ideal that is at least theoretically attainable for us?
Spirit-Directed Activity: Part 1

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19).

As you read the above text, focus on where Christ’s emphasis is. In other words, though He’s talking about the Spirit of the Lord being upon Him, how was that reality manifested in His life?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Jesus preached the gospel to the poor demoniacs (Mark 5:1-16); He forgave fallen Mary Magdalene (see Luke 7:36-48, John 8:1-11) and delivered her from captivity in sin; He restored sight to the physically blind (see Mark 10:46-52), as well as to the spiritually blind; He set at liberty those who were bruised and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Pharisees asserted that Jesus cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub. But He made it clear that He performed His miracles through the power of the Spirit (see Matt. 12:28). Jesus was dependent on the power of the Spirit to perform His miracles during His earthly ministry.

What part did the Spirit play in Christ’s offering Himself as a ransom for our sins? Heb. 9:14.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________


____________________________________________________________________

None of us, of course, is Jesus. But in what ways can we, if filled with the Spirit, do some of the same things Jesus did (John 14:12) for the benefit of others? How have you been able to, under the power of the Spirit, do some of these same things?
“Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied life. With unwearying patience and sympathetic helpfulness, He met men in their necessities. By the gentle touch of grace, He banished from the soul unrest and doubt, changing enmity to love, and unbelief to confidence. . . .

“At the sound of His voice the spirit of greed and ambition fled from the heart, and men arose, emancipated, to follow the Saviour.”—Ellen G. White, Reflecting Christ, p. 43. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).

V. Resurrection Power by the Spirit

To the many Scripture references that the Father raised Christ from the dead (see Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 13:30-37), Peter adds that Christ was “quickened” (zoopoieo, which means “made alive”) “by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18; compare Rom. 1:4, 8:11).

Witnessing

Jesus Christ was born into the family of a tradesman—a blue-collar worker by today’s standards. He followed His earthly father, Joseph, into the building trade and became a carpenter. Jesus worked with wood. While we don’t have a mental snapshot of the pieces he handcrafted, we can imagine Him lovingly stroking a beautiful piece of olive wood, turning it this way and that in order to see how best to work with the grain to bring out its inner beauty. We can visualize Him hand-rubbing and polishing the piece until the finish is smoother than warm honey.

Jesus cherished and respected manual labor. He never missed an opportunity to reach down and uplift the oppressed of His day and those who performed the most humbling tasks. Fishermen, tent makers, tax collectors—all were precious to Him. He was not ashamed to be seen with them; rather, He worked on some of the roughest hearts to bring out the beauty of holiness in them.

Christ’s example demonstrates to us today that there is no work, occupation, or endeavor too lowly for the Christian to undertake. By example, He showed that wherever we are in the earthly chain of wealth, education, social status, and so forth, we are chosen children of His.

Every day, those around us observe our responses to jobs, personal relationships, financial situations, and more. If we are constantly complaining about our bad luck, our lousy paycheck, our difficult boss, bad politicians, our kids’ inflexible teachers, or whatever else sets us off, others will have a difficult, if not impossible, time seeing Christ reflected in our lives. We will be witnessing all right, but not in a positive, affirming way. If we’re not careful, our behavior may actually further discourage someone who is already struggling hard with life.

We must always remember that our behavior needs to mirror Christ’s—positive in thoughts and in actions. Not only will we encourage others, we might just give ourselves a much-needed boost!
Spirit-Directed Activity: Part 2

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18; see also Rom. 1:4, 8:11).

God is one, but triune. The three Persons of the Trinity work together. They are intimately united in Their work. Thus, although this text says Jesus was raised from the dead by that Spirit, the other two Persons of the Deity united in resurrecting Jesus.


____________________________________________________________________

What did Jesus Himself say about His resurrection? How does this text help us understand all that was involved in His resurrection? John 10:17, 18.

“Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 785.

Although Paul spends little time on the events of Christ’s life, His death and resurrection are constant themes in Paul’s letters. When Paul speaks about what is of “first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3, NIV) for believers, it is that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared” (vss. 3-5, NIV). No wonder, then, the Bible links all three Persons of the Godhead with the resurrection of Christ as it did with His baptism. It’s of crucial importance to all that we believe as Christians. Without that belief, as Paul says, we have no hope (vs. 17, NIV).

Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important to us as Seventh-day Adventists, especially with our understanding of the state of the dead?
This again atests to the intimacy with which the Father and Spirit worked together in all aspects of Christ’s life and ministry, from His birth to His resurrection. God desires this same intimacy with us from our new birth onward to final glory. *(See Romans 6–8; Eph. 1:17-19.)*

“Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 388.

**Life-Application Approach**

**Icebreaker:** Discuss the meaning and practical implications of *power.* Consult a dictionary if necessary. Describe someone you consider to be a powerful person. Share a time when you felt powerful. What were some of the common themes or concepts from your dialogue? How does our understanding of *power* contrast with our understanding of the Holy Spirit’s power?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Imagine Mary’s encounter with the angel. Make your mental image as vivid and detailed as your creativity allows. Now read the account in Luke 1:26-38. The angel told Mary that she would conceive the Messiah when “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (vs. 35, NIV). Try to describe how this could happen. Why is this miracle so beyond our ability to explain? What does this tell us about the Holy Spirit and one of God’s greatest miracles—the salvation of a sinful human being?

2. Take a moment to remember your baptism or to recall a baptism that you have witnessed. Share those experiences in class. What kinds of feelings and thoughts did the class members share about baptism? If you had been at Jesus’ baptism, what would you have seen and heard? Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 3:16, Luke 3:22). Why must we each experience the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives?

**Application Question:**

When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus, He said, “God gives the Spirit without limit” *(John 3:34, NIV).* Why was this important for Nicodemus and for us to know? Consider John 3:3-8. What barriers prevent us from receiving the Holy Spirit and acting in accordance with His direction and power? In a season of prayer, either corporately or individually, ask the Holy Spirit to anoint you and your class or church family for His service. Be prepared to act under His guidance in ways that take you out of your usual routine.

“Jesus is our example. . . . He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God’s service just as much when laboring at the carpenter’s bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ’s example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, ‘Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.’ Isa. 42:1.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 74.

Everything pertaining to Christ’s life on earth was accomplished by the power of the Spirit: (1) His conception (*Luke* 1:35); (2) His baptism (*Luke* 3:21, 22); (3) His justification; that is, the manifestation of His righteous life (*1 Tim.* 3:16); (4) His guidance in His life of service (*Luke* 4:1; see also *Luke* 2:49); (5) His miracles (*Matt.* 12:28); (6) His resurrection (*1 Pet.* 3:18). This reality powerfully points out the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation and our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, talk about the incarnation of Jesus, about what it means that God Himself would “come down” into our world and then die for our sins. What hope does this great truth give us?

2. According to Ellen White, stories were circulating about the “illegitimate” birth of Jesus. What lessons are there for us today? Do you know someone who is pregnant out of wedlock or has made some similar mistakes? As a class, what can you do to help that person, in contrast to just gossiping about the situation?

3. In what practical ways can you, as a class, do for others the kind of things Jesus did, such as visiting the sick or inviting people to a meal? How are these types of acts visible expressions of the Holy Spirit working in our lives?
Many Old Testament writers promised an outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28, 29). John the Baptist—the forerunner of Jesus—informed the crowds that the One who would come after him, the Messiah, would baptize the repentant with the Holy Spirit and fire. However, the disciples of Jesus did not see the need of the Spirit during Jesus’ ministry. Jesus was close to them. Why should they need another?

Of course, Jesus wasn’t going to be around forever, at least in the flesh. The plan of salvation called for Him to leave, to minister the merits of His atonement in the sanctuary above before coming back and claiming those bought with His blood.

Thus, He promised to send them His Spirit. The Spirit would be their Guide and Comforter as they would not be able to follow their beloved Master where He was soon to go.

The coming Comforter was to be the disciples’ constant Companion. He would sustain and comfort them in their loss and more than compensate for their Friend’s departure. Yet, as we will see this week, the promise of the Spirit was not only for them but for us, as well.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 22.*
The Promise of Water

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezek. 36:25-27).

Look at the promises in the above text. What is God saying He will do for His people? Though these were written to those in another time, why are the principles behind these promises applicable for us today, as well? See also Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:3; 5:17; 7:1; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 4:3.

Ezekiel speaks of the Spirit under the symbol of water. By using the emblem of water, the prophet presents the Spirit both as a cleansing and life-giving Agent. Followers of Christ will have new lives, one in which through the power of the Holy Spirit they are cleansed of filthiness of the flesh and live a life of faith and obedience.

Thus, it’s clear from these texts that whatever the work of the Spirit, it includes the process of sanctification. It includes a change of habits, of actions, of words. Most important, it also includes a change of heart.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:3. How does this text help explain what the Holy Spirit will do in our lives?

Focusing on the above text, ask yourself this question: As an “epistle of Christ,” what’s my message to all who read me?
Introduction

Christ’s departure from earth when He ascended to His Father did not mark any abandonment or diminution of His presence among His disciples, but opened the way for Him to be closer to humanity. Now He would be able to reside in the depths of human hearts through the interpenetrating power and presence of the Holy Spirit, His greatest gift to the church.

I. The Promise of Water

Through Isaiah Christ exhorted, “Be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord” (Isa. 52:11). Paul echoes this thought: “That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel [personal...
John the Baptist’s Promise

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt. 3:11).

“John proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and called the people to repentance. As a symbol of cleansing from sin, he baptized them in the waters of the Jordan. Thus by a significant object lesson he declared that those who claimed to be the chosen people of God were defiled by sin, and that without purification of heart and life they could have no part in the Messiah’s kingdom.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 104.

But John was keenly aware that his baptism would not suffice to fit men and women to stand in the presence of God. More was needed than a baptism with water. There was also the baptism of fire.

It’s very interesting how both water and fire are used as symbols of the work of the Holy Spirit. It’s hard to think of two things that, in one sense, are more opposite from each other than fire and water. And yet, both are used to describe the actions of the Holy Spirit.

How do these texts help us understand the fire image in regard to the Holy Spirit? Isa. 6:1-7; 48:10; Mal. 3:2, 3; Luke 12:49; Heb. 12:29.

Fire and water are two great natural purifying agencies, and it is appropriate that both should be used to represent the regeneration of the heart, the work of the Holy Spirit. And yet, fire acts very differently upon us than does water. They both might, in a spiritual sense, accomplish the same thing, but the processes by which they work are different. When we think of water, we often think of something soothing, refreshing, delightful; in contrast, though fire brings with it warmth, it also implies trial (1 Pet. 4:12), as well as pain and suffering. The image of a refiner’s fire is one that doesn’t express a process that would be comfortable or pleasant. And that’s, no doubt, because sometimes the work that needs to be done in us is like a refiner’s fire: We have to be purged of sin; the dross has to be burned away.

What have been some trials “by fire” that brought about important changes in your life? What did you learn from these experiences that could be of benefit to others?
being] in sanctification and honor” (1 Thess. 4:4). One of the indispensable characteristics of God’s true servants is purity of motive, life, and behavior. Nothing will more quickly disgrace Christianity than the morally polluted lives of its professed adherents. God’s Spirit, “given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32), sanctifies our lives, enabling us to “cleanse ourselves of all filthiness from the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). It can hardly be overstressed that it is not by our works of righteousness, but according to His mercy that God saves, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit that He sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. (See Titus 3:5-7.)

It is this cleansing and renewal that enables us to become living epistles for Jesus. Lives guided by His testimony become a transcription of His counsel applied. He wishes for the pages of our life’s record to bear the watermark, “Holiness Unto the Lord” and a continuous succession of entries that prove His power “to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13) in lives yielded to the sovereignty of His grace. (See Isa. 26:12; Eph. 5:25, 27; Phil. 2:13.)

II. John the Baptist’s Promise

John recognized that his baptism was entirely symbolic of Jesus’ regenerative work. (See Matt. 3:11.) Jesus declared to Nicodemus that one must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God, for only the Spirit can create the new birth (John 3:5, 6). Water both cleanses and sustains life, and so it is with the Holy Spirit.

The fiery aspect of the Spirit’s baptism indicates the superintensity of God’s work to refine our coarse, earthly natures. God manifests Himself as a refiner’s fire to purify His people. Notice, however, that this fire—though it may afflict us at times with the anguish of conviction over sin—does not blister or injure us. (See Ps. 66:10-12; Isa. 6:1-7; 48:10, 11; Mal. 3:1-4.) Its ultimate effect is to remove obstructions to our fellowship with Him, and make our lives a transparent medium to display His glory (see Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, pp. 470–472).

III. The Spirit Not Yet Given

We are not to understand from John 7:39 that the Holy Spirit was uninvolved with human affairs until this time (see Ps. 51:11, Isa. 63:11). The Spirit was not yet manifested in its full power, as at Pentecost, before Christ’s ascension and inauguration as our High Priest. Then the manifestation of the Spirit confirmed the reality of Jesus’ resurrection and the authenticity of His claims. The outpouring of the Spirit was the supreme gift of the gospel, for this gift included all blessings pertaining to eternal life and godliness. (See Acts 2:38, 39; Eph. 4:8-16.)
The Spirit Not Yet Given

“On the last and most important day of the festival Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, ‘Whoever is thirsty should come to me and drink. As the scripture says, “Whoever believes in me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart.” ’ Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were going to receive. At that time the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not been raised to glory” (John 7:37-39, TEV).

When Jesus spoke these words, the Spirit as a dove had already descended upon Him. An abundance of Old Testament references indicate that the Holy Spirit had long been at work in behalf of humanity. What then does John mean when he says “The Spirit had not yet been given”?

Even though the Spirit had worked with men and women from the entrance of sin, He had not come to earth in His fullness. That was not to take place until Jesus had been glorified (see next week’s study).

_As Jesus was about to leave them, what promise did He give His disciples with reference to His presence? Matt. 28:20; Acts 1:4, 5._

______________________________

_How does John 16:7 help us understand Christ’s promises to remain with us even unto the end of the world?_

Christ’s departure would enrich the disciples and all believers rather than impoverish them. While on earth, Jesus was geographically limited to one particular place at a time. While He was with the three disciples on the mountain, He could not be with the others at the foot of the mountain. He was limited in space, as we are. But the Holy Spirit was not to be cumbered with humanity or limited in space. Being omnipresent, the Spirit is not confined by the limitation of a human body. He is equally accessible to all everywhere. And it’s through the presence of the Holy Spirit that Jesus remains with us, even to the end of the world.

Go back and read the text written out at the top of today’s lesson. Is there anyone you know from whom “streams of life-giving water” have poured out upon you? What was the person like? How could you be more like him or her in those positive areas?
IV. Jesus’ Promise

On the night before His crucifixion, Christ described with great detail and methodical development the work of the Holy Spirit (see John 14–16). He knew that His disciples would feel His physical absence with heartbreaking intensity. He earnestly wanted them to understand that His departure was not a desertion, but the very means by which He would now be able to link with their lives in a far more intimate and unceasing way than was previously possible. Christ was now enabled through the Holy Spirit to be simultaneously and continuously present with them all. This promise of the coming Spirit was not a meager compensation for His return to heaven, but the very means by which the glory of Heaven would come down and fill their souls, to magnify the Prince of heaven in their lives.

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Numbers 11:25, 26; Malachi 3:3; John 6:63; Acts 2:1-4; Revelation 19:10

1 Jesus—and Old Testament prophets—foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit, which would not happen until after Jesus went back to heaven. There is, however, plenty of evidence that the Holy Spirit was present and active before then. How is the Holy Spirit’s ministry after Christ different from His ministry before and during Christ’s ministry?

2 Gifts of the Spirit have, and have had, a reputation for being flamboyantly supernatural and miraculous. Certainly that is part of it, but should this be the primary emphasis of the gifts? Explain your answer. What is the higher purpose of all phenomena connected with the Holy Spirit?

3 The Holy Spirit is often spoken of in terms of substances that are crucial to life, like water and breath. As Christians, we receive a new life when we accept Christ and what He has done for us. How does the Holy Spirit help us to sustain this new life?

4 In addition to being a life-giving agent, the Holy Spirit is a purifying agency. What needs to be purified, and why? Does being purified necessarily imply suffering? Why, or why not?

5 The Holy Spirit’s mission is to bear witness to Jesus’ earthly life and ministry. How does this occur? Has the Holy Spirit, over the centuries, changed His methods for accomplishing this? If so, how and why?
Jesus’ Promise

Shortly before His crucifixion, what did Jesus again promise His disciples? What hope exists for us today in that promise (John 14:16)?

The word Jesus uses for “pray” in this verse has the basic meaning of “to ask” or “to enquire.” In John’s writings it usually connotes a person asking something from an equal.

This is the first direct promise made by Jesus to His disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Evidently, He is referring to the Day of Pentecost. Yet, this was not the Spirit’s first appearance on the earth.

“Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 669.

What do these texts tell us about the influence of the Holy Spirit on human beings prior to the coming of Christ? Exod. 31:3; Num. 11:25; 1 Sam. 10:6; Ps. 51:10, 11; Ezek. 36:25-27.

John 20:22 shows that before He left His disciples, Christ “breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Again He said “Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you” (Luke 24:49). But not until after the Ascension was the gift received in its fullness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working was the outpouring of the Spirit received. Then, in a special sense, the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ. In other words, though Christ gave them this wonderful promise, they had to be prepared to receive it. Is it any different today for us?

We’re often told to pray for the Holy Spirit, but what must you do in order to be prepared to receive it?
V. Another Comforter

“Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.

“[Christ adds] ‘The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.’ No more will you say, I cannot comprehend. No longer will you see

Witnessing

Witnessing

Have you ever wished for a new start in life? Maybe you’re tired of your job—your coworkers are unfriendly and the working conditions are poor. Maybe you’d like to get out of financial debt—pay off the credit cards, the school loans, the huge house payment. What about longing for a better relationship with your home church—a church family that isn’t so critical and that is more accepting of you? Maybe you feel like your personal relationship with God is marginal—you pray when you need His help, but otherwise, He’s always on the periphery of your life. You just haven’t had time to make Him a priority yet, but you plan to get to Him someday.

The new start you long for in life starts with repairing and renewing your relationship with God. Be still and listen with an open heart, and it won’t be long before you feel the Comforter fill the open spaces in your life. He’ll guide you as you begin the process of setting your life back on course. No longer will getting out of debt seem impossible. Relationships at work will improve because you begin to see things in a new and better light, and you’re more tolerant and willing to cut others more slack.

About that improved relationship with your church family: You’ll find that if you, even on a tentative basis, reach out to them, they, in turn, will reach out open arms to you.

The most dramatic change that needs to take place must be in your personal relationship with God. Once you begin to open your mind and your heart to Him, the Holy Spirit will lovingly lead you daily into a renewed and strengthened walk with Christ. No more longing for a new start—your new life has arrived. Because of the change you have experienced, you’ll welcome the opportunity to reach out to others who are hurting as you were, so that they might also know this life-changing experience. They, in turn, will witness to others who will witness to others . . . and on it goes. All of this is possible if hearts and minds remain receptive to the power of the Holy Spirit and His promise of a changed life.
Another Comforter

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:18).

“Another Comforter” (John 14:16) was coming to take the place of Jesus. Up to this time Jesus had been with the disciples and had been their Helper in every emergency. But now another Person was coming to take His place.

The Greek word translated “Comforter” is a compound word made up of para, which means “alongside,” and kletos, which means “one called.” Thus parakletos means “one called to stand alongside another,” or one called to take his or her part to help another in any emergency that arises. It has the meaning of “advocate” or “counselor.”

Further, the same verb form is translated “exhort.” Thus, He is also an “Exhorter.” In fact, this latter meaning is the prominent feature of the work of the Spirit as outlined by John. He will “teach” and “bring all things to your . . . remembrance” (John 14:26). He will testify of Christ (John 15:26). He will “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). He will guide into all truth and show things to come (vs. 13). He will glorify Christ and receive from Him and impart to the disciples (vs. 14).

Yet, the Word also conveys the thought of a helper always at hand with counsel, strength, exhortation, or whatever help is needed. Though Jesus all but equates Himself with the presence of the Spirit, it’s clear the Holy Spirit will do for them what Christ Himself would do.

How do these texts (1 John 3:24, 4:13) help us understand the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

The apostles and their fellow believers were not to be left alone or without help after Jesus ascended to heaven. An all-adequate Helper was to be with them. “By the Spirit, He said, He would manifest Himself to them.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 670.

In what ways have you experienced the reality of the Holy Spirit as a Comforter? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.
through a glass, darkly. You shall ‘be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.’ Eph. 3:18, 19.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 670.

“The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned to the measure of our desire, and the faith exercised for it, and the use that we shall make of the light and knowledge that shall be given to us.”—Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, p. 188.

**Icebreaker:** Have each person in your Sabbath School class share one thing that they are good at doing. Now read Exodus 31:3. “I have filled [Bezalel] with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts” (*NIV*). Why is it important for us to recognize the gifts of ministry given to us by the Holy Spirit? How does this insight help us realize that each person is an important agent of God’s mercy and salvation to the world?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Fire and water: We welcome the first when we are cold and the second when we are thirsty. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Isaiah 6:1-7, 48:10. Why do we have difficulty with the concepts of *cleansing* and *refining* or *purifying*? Why is it so critical to allow God’s Spirit to work change in our lives? Share a personal testimony of how a *trial by fire* in your life was a blessing and gave you a new desire to serve God.

2. When a friend is near, letters and phone calls seem unimportant. After they leave, those contacts are necessary to maintain the relationship. Discuss Jesus’ promise to send “another Counselor” (see John 14:16-18, *NIV*). What does this gift tell us about our need? How is this an example for us to follow when dealing with those who are uncertain or misinformed about salvation?

**Application Question:**

Sarah has a live orchid and two living (and very lively) little dogs in her home. Describing something as *alive* connotes activity, vibrance, and enthusiasm. Read 2 Corinthians 3:3, then rewrite it in your own words. Take a moment to list how you are currently acting as a “letter . . . of the living God” (*NIV*). If you are currently discouraged about your witness for Him, ask Him for a new anointing of His Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

“If we look to Jesus and trust in Him we call to our aid a power that has conquered the foe on the field of battle, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit, and Jesus will be our helper and will lift up for us a standard against him.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 426.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, discuss your answers to Thursday’s final question.

2. Do you know anyone going through a fiery trial right now? Why not, as a class, get in touch with that person and let him or her know your concern and ask whether there is anything the class, as a group, could do to help?

3. In what ways can we do some of the same work as the Holy Spirit? That is, how can we comfort, exhort, or teach others? Are we not, by doing these things, showing the reality of the Spirit in our lives? What other ways can we manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit? How does the work of the Holy Spirit in us harmonize with all the Bible commands for loving others and ministering to their needs?
The Promise Fulfilled

Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week’s Study: Exod. 23:16; Mark 16:17; John 4:35; 14:16-26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:4, 5, 14; 2:1, 2, 5-7, 22-35.

Memory Text: “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:2-4).

This week we read about one of the greatest and most important events in salvation’s history: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This remarkable and phenomenal event came in fulfillment of what the Lord had promised before He returned to heaven: that these apostles and disciples would be “baptized with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 1:5) and would be given “power from on high” (Luke 24:49). The Holy Ghost came upon them as He had promised, and they began speaking in other languages “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). How interesting and insightful that the first thing they did with this gift was witness for their Lord. Of course, this was only the beginning of what the Holy Spirit would do, and is still doing, for the Lord’s church.

As we will soon see, this great event didn’t happen in a vacuum. It was the culmination of many other events, all centering around the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Among those events, too, was the Lord’s preparation of His people in order that they be ready to receive this wonderful outpouring from heaven.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 29.*
Faith and the Promise

“Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4, 5).

In the above verses, Jesus talked about the promise that you “have heard of me.” What promise is He talking about? See John 14:16-26, 16:7-13.

According to Acts 1:4, the disciples were to remain or stay or even sit in Jerusalem until the promise was fulfilled. The emphasis in the command to “wait” or “sit” is upon the fulfillment of God’s promise in due time. The waiting itself would not bring the Spirit. The word translated “promise”—epaggelia—as it is used in other parts of the New Testament, stresses God’s grace rather than human effort. It is God’s gift, received by faith.

Faith, of course, is a gift from God, as well (Eph. 2:8), but there are things believers can do in order to strengthen faith. It’s very foolish and presumptuous to assume that just because we have been promised faith that we will be given all we need, with no effort or cooperation on our part. Great things are promised to those who have faith (Rom. 5:1, Heb. 11:6), but faith is something believers must cherish, cultivate, and protect.

What are some practical ways in which we, even with a modicum of faith, can cultivate that faith and create a personal environment in which it can grow stronger? The following texts will help provide answers (Deut. 4:9; Ps. 119:1, 2; Col. 3:1, 2). What other things can you think of that protect and even strengthen faith? What works especially well for you personally?
Key Text: Acts 2:1-4

Teachers Aims:
1. To discuss the importance of faith, obedience, and unity in the church.
2. To examine the significance of not only the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit but what it signified in heaven.
3. To highlight the importance of understanding the gift of tongues and its purpose.

Lesson Outline:
I. Gathered in One Accord (Acts 2:1)
   A. They stayed together physically.
   B. They prayed together and reached unity of heart.

II. The Promise Fulfilled (Acts 2:1-4)
   A. Pentecost—a celebration of material and spiritual blessings.
   B. Mighty wind and fire—represents the power and passion of the Holy Spirit.

III. Like the Holy Spirit, Tongues Is a Gift From God (Acts 2:5-15)
   A. They spoke in languages they didn’t understand but their hearers did.
   B. Gibberish is NOT a sign of the Holy Spirit for His gift of tongues is meant to be understood.

Summary: At the appointed time, and when the believers were united in their faith and willingness of heart, the promise was fulfilled. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were manifested in accordance with the needs of those God was trying to reach. Just like the listeners on that day needed to hear the truth in their own languages, people today need to hear and see the truth in ways that reach them. All gifts of the Holy Spirit have a purpose: to glorify God, and God alone. No gift was ever given to glorify people. Let us then use all the gifts of God to further His work and to meet the needs of those He directs us to.

Commentary

Introduction
   Christ’s completion of His sacrifice, followed by His resurrection and ascension, gave full release to the gifts and power of the Spirit (see Ps. 68:18; 19; Eph. 4:8-16). This bestowal was signalized at Pentecost by a marvelous outpouring of power to witness for Christ and to exercise divine gifts for the salvation of humanity. Thus the Father honored Christ’s sacrifice and imbued the church with power to fulfill the great gospel commission of Matthew 28:19, 20. The Spirit was given not to exalt the disciples or their amazing gifts, but rather Christ and His atoning sacrifice.
Waiting as Preparation

Yesterday, we looked at the texts where Jesus told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem, which is exactly what they did (Acts 1:12). Here we see immediately one of the great principles of faith: obedience. One can hardly expect the promises to be fulfilled in those who disobey the Lord.

Read Acts 1:14. What key element is found in this text that helps us understand the attitude among the disciples that enabled them to be ready to receive, as a group, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? See also Acts 2:1, 46.

There’s a story told about the great English Admiral Lord Nelson, who, right before a major naval battle, took two feuding officers to a place where they could see all the enemy ships amassed to make war against them. “Yonder,” said the admiral, “are your enemies. Shake hands and be friends like good Englishmen.” In other words, the issues at stake were too great to let personal differences stand in the way of victory.

In the same way, we can see here how important unity was among these disciples, who, in the past, weren’t always united.


What the above texts from Acts show is that after the disciples had come into unity and were no longer striving for the highest place, the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. Differences had been put away. They had a common goal, a common purpose much more important than any and all personal quibbles. They had to work through these things before they would be ready to work together toward their common mission. “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32).

What are some of the things that work against unity in your own local church? What can you do to be a unifying force in your church?
I. Faith and Promise

During their 40 days with Christ after His resurrection, “The disciples began to realize the nature and extent of their work. They were to proclaim to the world the wonderful truths which Christ had entrusted to them. The events of His life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies that pointed to these events, the sacredness of the law of God, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins,—to all these things they were witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour. . . .

“The more abundant impartation of the Spirit did not take place till after Christ’s ascension. Not until this was received could the disciples fulfill the commission to preach the gospel to the world. But the Spirit was now given for a special purpose. Before the disciples could fulfill their official duties in connection with the church, Christ breathed His Spirit upon them. He was committing to them a most sacred trust, and He desired to impress them with the fact that without the Holy Spirit this work could not be accomplished.”—The Desire of Ages, p. 805.

II. Waiting as Preparation

As the disciples tarried in Jerusalem awaiting the promise of the Spirit, they did not lounge in idleness, but prayed, repented, made amends to one another, reverently reviewed Christ’s teachings together, and pondered the exalted privilege that had been theirs to walk with the Lord of glory for three and a half years. Gone forever was the wrestling for supremacy, the collision of wills, the exalting of self, and the practice of evil surmising about one another. They endeavored to keep the unity of the Spirit and a bond of peace (see Acts 1:14), and when they came into one accord (see Acts 2:1), God blessed their efforts beyond their highest expectations and their natural abilities.

III. The Pentecostal Fulfillment

“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers, as a token that He had, as Priest and King, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.

“God is willing to give us a similar blessing, when we seek for
The Pentecostal Fulfillment

“When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1, 2).

Pentecost is derived from a word that means “fiftieth,” a reference to the 50 days between the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and Pentecost—which is the Feast of the First Fruits. In this feast, the children of Israel would present a wave offering of the wheat harvest to the Lord, expressing their thankfulness for His material benefits to them (Lev. 23:15-21).

Also, because the rabbis had concluded that 50 days after the Exodus the Lord had given Israel the law at Sinai, the festival came to be understood among the Jews as a memorial of Sinai, as well. In that sense, it commemorated the founding of the 12 tribes of Israel as the nation that had entered into a covenant relationship with the Lord, a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:6) that would preach the truth about God to a world steeped in sin and idolatry. How fitting that this feast day would represent a crucial phase in the founding of the early Christian church, which also was called to preach the truth about God to a world steeped in idolatry and sin.

Look up Exodus 23:16 and John 4:35. How do these texts help us understand the spiritual context of what was happening in Acts 2?

What’s fascinating, too, about this time is that of all the festivals, Pentecost attracted the largest number of Jews from different lands. Acts 2:5 talks about the devout Jews from “every nation under heaven” who were there. What a perfect opportunity for the incredible outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early church in order that it be ready to fulfill its mission to the world.

How do you understand your own role in the mission of the church to preach the gospel to the world? What role are you playing? What more could you do?
TEACHERS COMMENTS

it as earnestly. The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We also may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised.”—Ellen G. White, God’s Amazing Grace, p. 193.

IV. Heaven and the Outpouring

A close analysis of Acts 2 reveals that Peter’s Pentecostal sermon is a full-blown scriptural exposition of the purpose and power of Calvary, and the triumphant reality of Christ’s resurrection. This brings forcibly to our notice that the key to a new Pentecost is

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Mark 10:37; Acts 1:4, 5; 2:5, 22-24; 1 Corinthians 12:10

1 In the days immediately after Christ’s departure, the disciples were instructed to wait—literally to sit still and stay where they were—for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Why might they not have been inclined to do so? What lessons could they learn from following these instructions?

2 The disciples were a rather unruly lot. In fact, to say they were greedy and self-serving would not be an exaggeration. However, we see few, if any, examples of such attitudes in the opening chapters of the book of Acts. What caused them to change? How can such a change occur in us?

3 The visible descent of the Holy Spirit was timed for the important festival of Pentecost. What do we know about this festival? Why was it an appropriate time for the Holy Spirit to come in such a special way, both from a practical and a symbolic viewpoint? What does this tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit in building up Christ’s church?

4 What was the significance of the events that occurred with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? What do these events tell us about the role and nature of the Holy Spirit?

5 Many Christians today claim the ability to speak in tongues. Is this practice in any way similar to what occurred at Pentecost? If not, is there any biblical support or justification for it? Are there any benefits to it, or conversely, any dangers or pitfalls?
Heaven and the Outpouring

Read Acts 2:22-35 and then answer the following questions:

1. What contrast is Peter making there between David and Jesus? What was his crucial point?

2. How central is Christ’s death and resurrection to Peter’s whole speech?

3. What was the promise of the Father? (vs. 33).

4. What incredible event in heaven prompted this outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.”—Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 38, 39.

What does today’s study reveal to us about the close harmony between heaven and earth? In what ways can you be more sensitive to the reality of this close tie between heaven and earth? What things might you have done in the past 24 hours that showed a callousness toward the reality of this close link?
immersion in the study and the absorption of the practical benefits of Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

**V. The Gift of Language**

The gift of tongues given at Pentecost was not some ecstatic form of utterance given to generate emotional excitement, but a reversal of the confusion of languages that God had caused at Babel to shatter the confederacy of evil.

“‘There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.’ During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in

**Witnessing**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing at an enormous rate of speed. Each of the 13 world divisions located around the globe are reporting exciting advances in soul winning. As a result, the Adventist Church has in excess of thirteen million members who represent every culture, race, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, gender, and so forth. How to keep united a church family this diverse is a challenge requiring the commitment of each individual church member. How, with all our differences, can we accomplish the degree of unity required for a wholesome, fulfilling Christian experience in our church?

First, we need to embrace—not hold at arm’s length—our unique qualities. We must remember that in God’s eyes, we are all the same. So if God is color-blind, draws no gender lines, nor values us according to socioeconomic or cultural differences, why should we?

Second, we need to educate ourselves, and others, as to how our individual differences enhance our collective strength, making our church healthier as a result. Just as certain chemical compounds become stronger when additional elements are added to the mixture, so our church becomes richer and better fortified when diverse components are mixed together. We must guard against letting our greatest strength—our diversity—become our greatest weakness. Satan would love nothing better than to keep God’s church fractured rather than whole.

Finally, we always must keep the example of Jesus Christ before us as a church. Christ invited all sinners to follow Him. He offered kindness and love in exchange for hatred and bitterness. He made the plan of salvation available for all. So, too, must His church be for all people. We must *treasure*, not tolerate, our differences so that our church reflects a true mosaic of God’s children.
The Gift of Language

Read Acts 2:5-15. In what clear way does the Bible here explain the meaning of the gift of tongues that accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? What kind of languages were being spoken here, and why is this answer important for us today?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Try to imagine the scene. Devout Jews from all over the then-known world were assembled (as they did every year) for the great festival, when suddenly—what happens? A bunch of Galileans, known as rather rough rural types (not exactly the sophisticated elite of Israel) suddenly start speaking in all these different languages! What’s going on here?

One could imagine the consternation of those who suddenly heard them speak in their own language. They were so baffled that at one point (Acts 2:13) someone accused them of being “full of new wine,” a rather silly reply if you think about it. (After all, how many people under the influence of alcohol suddenly start speaking in foreign languages that they never knew before?)

Along with what’s here in Acts 2, read Mark 16:17. How does that verse help us understand what the gift of tongues meant?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

It’s very clear from Acts 2, where the gift of tongues is first mentioned, that “tongues” is the Spirit-endowed ability to speak in foreign languages. In fact, the word translated “tongue” (such as in 1 Corinthians 14) is glossa, which means “language.” If we use the principle of interpretation, in which difficult passages are interpreted on the basis of simpler ones, then some of the more difficult texts that deal with tongues (1 Corinthians 14) need to be examined in light of what’s clear—and it’s clear that in Acts 2 the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in foreign languages. This point is important, especially in light of the phenomenon now called “speaking in tongues,” in which people believe their repetition of unintelligible utterances are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This is certainly not what happened when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost.
a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.”—Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 39, 40.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Take a census of your Sabbath School class. How many different languages can the members speak? Share how these languages were learned (the speaker grew up in the country, studied abroad, and so forth). Read Acts 2:1, 2, 5-7, and 22-35 together. Discuss what was happening to the disciples and the community. What was the first thing the disciples did with their new gift?

Thought Questions:

1. Consider the act of gardening. What are the necessary steps to having a successful garden? How do you determine if your garden has been productive? What hazards do gardeners encounter? Jesus encouraged the disciples to “Look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35, NIV). What did He mean? What was He trying to teach the disciples? What keeps us from being involved in spiritual gardening?

2. Read John 16:7-13. At the top of separate sheets of paper write each of the things Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would do when He came. Then discuss how you have seen these things happening around you. For example, under “convict the world of guilt in regards to sin” (vs. 8, NIV), you might list a neighbor who had been abusing his family, then changed as he learned about Jesus, and so forth. If you find this to be a difficult assignment, why aren’t we more aware of the Spirit’s activity in our world? How can we prepare to be more receptive? Consider Acts 1:4, 5, 14.

Application Question:

When my daughter, Eva, was a toddler, she had a favorite blanket. Even when it was falling apart, she refused to let her parents replace it with a new one. Jesus told His disciples He was preparing to grant them a powerful Gift. (See John 14:16-26, NIV) What if they had refused the ministry of “another Counselor” (vs. 16)? What does it mean to be a spiritual “orphan” (vs. 18)? If you recognize that you have been refusing the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life, ask God to lead you on a journey of understanding and acceptance.

“The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 39.

“Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 412.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. As a class, read aloud Acts 1:14. What important elements help bring about such unity among those who, in the past, had been at variance with one another? What can you do, as a class, to help your whole local church find the same kind of unity so apparent in the early church?

2. We saw how the disciples had to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Is there anyone in your class or church who is waiting for a promise from God—of any kind? If so, what can you do, as a class, to help keep this person or persons from being discouraged as they wait? What can you do, in a practical way, to help them not give up?

3. The “tongues” phenomenon has been growing. Why not, as a class, work together to create a good Bible study on this topic that you could give to help anyone with questions about “tongues”?
The **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

**SABBATH AFTERNOON**

**Read for This Week’s Study:** Acts 2:37, 38; 9:5, 6; 1 Cor. 12:1-13; 2 Cor. 7:9-11; Gal. 3:1-11; 5:5, 6.

**Memory Text:** “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

There’s been a great deal of speculation and argument in the Christian church over the centuries about what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means. It is clear from the few references in Scripture that it deals with the Holy Spirit in the life of a person who has been born again. Without the prompting of the Spirit, no one can experience the new birth; those who have had that experience have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:5, Jesus told His followers they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit; the spectacular events of Pentecost ten days later seem the obvious fulfillment of His words (see Acts 2), when many people accepted Christ and became born-again followers of the Messiah.

One thing is sure: Anyone who has surrendered in faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. A loving and lovable Christian, giving of himself or herself for others, is the greatest manifestation of that baptism.

This week we’ll look at this promise for all who give of themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 6.*
One Spirit, One Body

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-13. What point is Paul making here, especially in verse 13?

Paul is dealing with a church that was fighting over spiritual gifts. In response, Paul exclaims, “Don’t get divided over this issue.” Or, as he specifically expressed it: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13, NASB).

The word translated “by” in the above verse (NASB) may also be translated “in” (as in NEB, etc.). Thus, genuine believers are baptized in one Spirit into the body of Christ (vs. 13), which is the church. Whatever other points Paul wanted to make, one point is clear: All believers share the reality of being baptized by the Spirit, and this makes us part of the body of Christ, the church.

Baptism in the Spirit, or conversion, ideally precedes water baptism. Baptism in water is an outward demonstration of the change that has already taken place in the heart. The true believer is born by the Spirit (John 3:5, 6); the Spirit is the sealing Agent (Eph. 1:13, 14); and the Spirit has been given as an earnest (guarantee) and reminder that one belongs to God (2 Cor. 5:5).

How important is it that the Holy Spirit dwells in us? Rom. 8:9.

In personally accepting Jesus as our Savior, we receive the Spirit as a heavenly endowment, or assurance, of ultimate and complete salvation. His indwelling becomes our guarantee and constant reminder that someday in the future Jesus will not merely dwell within us; we shall dwell with Him and the unfallen angels in a realm where temptation and sin will no longer touch us. In order to remind us constantly of this ultimate deliverance from the realm of sin, He constantly gives us His Spirit.

Every true believer since Pentecost has received the guarantee of the Spirit, which is the same experience as baptism in the Spirit. The important question for us is this: How willing are we to receive the Spirit?

What is your understanding of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? If someone were to ask, “Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit?” how would you respond?
COMMENTARY

Introduction

The baptism of the Holy Spirit comes in answer to cheerful, willing compliance with God’s authority and purposes. This spiritual baptism produces sanctified unity among believers. It also produces a coordinated action for soul winning, and constant advancement in spiritual life, which includes a growth in character development and in faith to receive and impart the blessings of Heaven.

I. One Spirit, One Body

Christ prayed for present and eternal unity among His disciples (John 17). In union is strength, peace, and joy; from disunion arise contention, misery, and weakness. Angels of heaven are united in heart, purpose, and action. The universe itself functions in system-wide harmony. At the same time God prizes diversity, as 1 Corinthians 12 makes plain. Analogizing from human
Guilt and the Spirit

“No when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

Look at the action depicted in the above text. If you read the verses preceding it in Acts 2 (starting in verse 14), you can see clearly what was going on here. Peter, quoting the Old Testament, preached to them about the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. He was giving them the plan of salvation.

Notice, too, their immediate response. Was it joy? Gladness? Happiness? On the contrary, they were “pricked in their heart.” The Greek verb means “to pierce,” and the idea given in the text is that they were pained, they suffered, their consciences were troubled. And no wonder, especially when you read verse 36. Of course, in one sense, we are all just as guilty as these men in that it was the sins of all of us that ultimately brought Jesus to the Cross.

Nevertheless, the idea here is clear: It was guilt, it was sorrow, it was pain that helped bring them to where they needed to be.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. In your own words write what Paul is saying here and how it relates to the experience of the Jews at Pentecost.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

In this context, it’s easier to understand Christ’s words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). However much the gospel is a message of joy, of peace, and of hope, the process of salvation, of repentance, and of sanctification does involve some suffering on our part (Acts 14:22). Indeed, one of the acts of the Holy Spirit is to bring to us conviction of sin (John 16:8), and this can happen only to the degree that our hearts can be “pierced” over the reality of just how sinful our lives have been.

How has the Holy Spirit brought conviction to your heart? What kind of feelings did you have? How has the Spirit been able to use this conviction toward your own spiritual growth?
anatomy and physiology, Paul reasons that if all bodily parts were identical in form and function, then no viable organism would exist. On the other hand, the striking diversity of organs that comprise the body is no call for competition among these diverse parts. Without strife or discord they can all work together to keep the whole person alive and healthy. So it is to be with the church; the gift of the Spirit includes a diversity of operations for the express purpose of engendering gracious interdependence among believers in extending the triumphs of the Cross worldwide through many lines of service. (See Eph. 4:8-16; 1 Cor. 14:12, 26, 40.) This effective harmony makes it possible for the Lord to add daily to the church those who should be saved (Acts 2:46, 47), without lowering His standard or distorting His gospel in the least particular of His stated will.

II. Guilt and the Spirit

Sin has made the human heart almost impervious to shame or compunction concerning the evil in our lives. In fact, the carnal mind glories in its depravity and is spellbound by earthly things (Ps. 4:2; Phil. 3:18, 19). It is the work of the Holy Spirit alone to break through this wall of impenitence. He flashes the light of holy truth into our hearts and holds it in clear contrast to our natural corruption. Peter’s Spirit-charged preaching of the Cross enabled his hearers to discern their guilt for high treason against God’s government and to receive the first dawning of insight into His reconciling love. In the clear moral atmosphere of this setting they cried out in desperation, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). For the first time in their lives they were ready to fling aside their deeply ingrained self-righteousness as the sin-infested rag that it was. They were awakening from their deadness in sin to the righteousness of Christ and the full legitimacy of His claims to be Lord and Savior of their lives. If Peter had given a muffled message, sprinkled with jokes and diverting anecdotes, no such result would have ensued. The Spirit comes to us all to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (See John 16:7, 8.)

III. Repentance and the Spirit

It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). When we clearly recognize that unrepentance is the chief obstacle to conversion and salvation, then it becomes evident why Scripture calls repentance a gift. (See Acts 3:26; 5:30, 31.) Genuine repentance is not the fruit of harrassment, persecution, or emotional manipulation by skilled communicators; it is an enlightened response to Calvary—love.

IV. Obedience and the Spirit

It is clear from Scripture that the Holy Spirit is given to all
Repentance and the Spirit

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

Though Peter here promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who repent and are baptized, it’s only through the working of the Holy Spirit that they could be brought to repentance. Thus, we can see here the reality of the Holy Spirit working in every stage of a person’s relationship to his or her Creator. Theologians sometimes refer to this as “common grace.”

Repentance is a change of mind and life. The words for “repentance” in both Hebrew and Greek involve the idea of change, especially a change of mind and direction. It is acknowledgment that one has been wrong, an acknowledgment that leads not only to sorrow but to a change, a turn to the Source of life and moral understanding. Repentance, true repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), is powerful evidence that a person has been touched by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 2:4, along with John 15:26 and 16:13, 14. How do these texts help us understand the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing us repentance?

The Holy Spirit is Christ’s Representative here on earth. Only through His work of revealing to us the truth about Christ can a person be brought to conviction and, hence, to true repentance. Only through the power of the Spirit can we be moved to make the conscious choice to surrender our sinful ways and live in submission to the Lord. By revealing to us the love of God, the Spirit touches us and gives us the only true motive for wanting to serve God: a grateful heart that loves a God who first loved us (1 John 4:10).

True love for God, however, cannot be forced. The Spirit comes and touches us; we have the freedom to surrender to His convictions or to push them away. In the end, the choice is ours, and ours alone.

Write out a paragraph explaining your own experience with repentance. Where were you when you first felt conviction? What was your immediate reaction? How did you finally respond? What changes took place? Be prepared to share your response with the class.
those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). God’s Spirit is omnipotent. How could it companionably abide with anyone who is willfully disobedient? Jesus told His disciples, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:15, 16). Christ makes it clear that He sends His Spirit to those who are committed to keeping His commandments.

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Isaiah 8:20; John 16:7-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 3:5, 6; 1 John 5:7

1 Seventh-day Adventists typically believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in several places in the New Testament, refers to an inner experience of conversion. Many charismatics and Pentecostals believe this baptism should be accompanied by “supernatural” manifestations, such as speaking in tongues. If we are not to expect these manifestations as a matter of course, how can we be sure of the genuineness of our Spirit-baptism?

2 Even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one could probably find many different beliefs about what the Holy Spirit can, should, must, or does do. Is there any test by which we can determine whether something is, or is not, a sign or gift of the Holy Spirit?

3 One thing we know the Holy Spirit does is convict us of our sin. Does that mean the Holy Spirit is what we popularly refer to as the conscience? If not, what is the difference between the Holy Spirit and the conscience?

4 In a Christian context, is there a contradiction between the letter of the law and the Spirit, as 2 Corinthians 3:6 suggests? If so, what is the nature of that contradiction? Does it mean that observance of the law is somehow unnecessary or even harmful to someone who is or wants to be guided by the Spirit? Explain your answer.

5 Faith is perhaps the most important gift of the Holy Spirit, because it is the gateway to all the other gifts. How does one exercise this faith? How do we receive it? What is the relationship of the faith spoken of in this context (Gal. 3:5, 6, for example) to correct doctrine or belief?
Obedience and the Spirit

**Read** again Acts 2:37, the reaction of these Jews to Peter’s witness. What was their response? Compare this response with Saul’s response *(Acts 9:5, 6)*. In both cases, what immediate evidence shows that their conversion was genuine?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

“We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” *(Acts 5:32)*. As this text suggests, obedience is one of the prerequisites for receiving the Holy Spirit. However much we are saved by faith, it’s only Christ’s righteousness credited to us that saves us from the final consequences of sin. We cannot live in disobedience to the Lord. The Spirit was given to bring conviction to us, a conviction that will lead us to obedience. Anything else is a counterfeit.

**Look** up the following texts. What do they tell us about the role of the Spirit and obedience?

*Acts 16:7*

____________________________________________________________________

*Gal. 5:5, 6*

____________________________________________________________________

*Gal. 5:22-26*

____________________________________________________________________

*1 Pet. 1:2*

____________________________________________________________________

When here, Jesus admonished His followers to obey God, to walk in the commandments, to love and forgive one another as God loves and forgives us. How foolish to believe that the Holy Spirit, which is here in His place, would admonish us in any other way. Those who claim “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and use, for instance, “speaking in tongues” as proof of that baptism yet live in disobedience to God’s commandments are fooling themselves. The greatest proof of living by the Spirit is a life lived in faith and obedience to God.
our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”

**V. Faith and the Spirit**

Faith is not a magical feeling or mystical power that we conjure up. Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. In Hebrews 11 we learn that faith is a living principle that enables its posses-

**Witnessing**

Human beings are incapable of ever fully comprehending the enormous sacrifice of Christ in offering His blameless life in exchange for our sinful, degenerate souls. Nevertheless, when we pause to consider this incredible gift of eternal life, our hearts wonder at the tremendous cost our Savior paid for redeeming each one of us. His road to Calvary brings heartache and great joy for so many reasons.

**The mental and physical pain that He bore for us.** Think back on the most painful, emotional time in your life. Remember how you felt during that time—confused; vulnerable; the hurt washing over you, battering you to the point that you felt yourself way off-balance, out of control. Now, pile on to that pain the trauma and distress of a significant physical hurt. Combine the two sets of memories and you have just an inkling of what Jesus endured before and during His crucifixion. We can’t really grasp the enormity of it all. No one could have endured what He did. Only God could bear the burden of sin.

**Separation from the One who loved Him best.** During the last hours before His arrest, Christ pleaded with His Father to remove Him from the situation, if possible. How His Father’s heart must have grieved to hear His precious Son’s pleas! How easy it would have been for Christ to simply say, “Forget the whole sordid mess; I quit!” and return to His Father’s side. Think of the pain of separation felt by both the Father and Son. It was almost more than the Son could bear, but He knew that man’s salvation rested on His sacrifice. What great news for us!

Such a precious gift can’t be set aside, returned, or rejected. Helping others know that Jesus remains with us as manifested through the Holy Spirit, that He’s never far from us and will hear and answer our prayers, is one of the ways we have to say Thank You to Him for His gifts to us.
Faith and the Spirit

As we saw yesterday, those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit will be brought into what Paul calls “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26). However, because those who are saved in Christ obey, and because salvation is inseparable from obedience, people can easily slip into the trap of confusing the results of salvation (obedience) with the means of salvation (faith in Christ). This was a problem with the Galatians.

Read Galatians 3:1-11. What issue is Paul addressing here? What concern does he express for the Galatians? Note particularly the role he gives to the Spirit in these texts.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

The Holy Spirit was to lead people into “all truth” (John 16:13); the center of “all truth” is, of course, Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). The greatest and most important of all truths is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, that at Calvary He paid the penalty for all human sin, and that anyone can, by faith, be forgiven his or her sin and stand perfect before God. Central to this truth is that no works any human can do, even works of the law, can atone for his or her sins and bring forgiveness (Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:16). This forgiveness and atonement come only through the work of Jesus and become effective in the life of those who believe; that is, those who claim it for themselves by faith (Gal. 3:5, 6). Thus, the same Holy Spirit who guides us toward obedience is the same one that helps us understand the great truth of salvation by faith alone. It’s obvious the Galatians were somehow losing sight of this great truth.

Notice, too, the crucial role Paul attributes to the Holy Spirit here (Gal. 3:2-5) and how Paul so closely links the Holy Spirit coming to the people through their faith, as opposed to their works of the law.

What are some of the subtle traps of legalism we can easily fall into? How can we protect ourselves from these traps?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________


sors to appropriate every blessing of the gospel. Faith is not a substitute for planning, action, or courage, but the means by which every God-given faculty is engaged beyond ordinary human capacity. Faith is a distinct fruit of the Spirit that helps us to live in harmony with the will of God. (*See Gal. 5:5, 6, 22, 23; 1 John 5:4-8.*) “Through faith every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 564.

**Life-Application Approach**

**Icebreaker:** What was one of the best gifts you were ever given? On what occasion did you receive it? The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to those who are willing to receive them. (*See 1 Cor. 12:1-13.*) We can’t earn those gifts, but we can accept them. Ask each class member to share one spiritual gift that God has given to him or her. Then encourage the class to affirm how they see that gift being used in the congregation and in the community to bless and bring people to Jesus.

**Thought Questions:**
1. As a Sabbath School class, do a short survey in the Gospels of biblical characters who met Jesus. Make two lists; one list should include those lives that were changed for the good, the other list should include those who rejected Jesus. Discuss what made the difference between the two groups. How have you been “cut to the heart” (*Acts 2:37, NIV*) through your encounter with Jesus? Read about Saul’s encounter with Christ in Acts 9:3-6. Was your meeting a dramatic confrontation or was it a slow and gentle journey? Share your story with the class.

2. Review yesterday’s activities. How many times were you successful in keeping God’s law? Where did you fail? Read Galatians 3:1-11; 5:5, 6. Why is complete faith and trust in God so critical? How can our own efforts at obedience be dangerous stumbling blocks to our reliance on the Spirit’s work in our lives? What things do you need to surrender to God so that you may experience a victorious life (for example, busyness that keeps us from devotional time)?

**Application Question:**
Describe “godly sorrow” (*2 Cor. 7:10, NIV*) and the impact it has on our lives. What is the difference between a paralyzing guilt and a conviction that leads to repentance? How does the Holy Spirit bring us to salvation and to a life change? How did you experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit? What tangible differences occurred in your behaviors, attitudes, or perspectives of life? Who needs to hear your testimony this week?

“Let Christ work by His Holy Spirit, and awaken you as from the dead, and carry your minds along with His. Let Him employ your faculties. He has created your every capability that you may better honor and glorify His name. Consecrate yourself to Him, and all associated with you will see that your energies are inspired of God, that your noblest powers are called into exercise to do God’s service. The faculties once used to serve self and advance unworthy principles, once serving as members of unrighteous purposes, will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ and become one with the will of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 396.


Discussion Questions:

1. Share your answers to Tuesday’s final question with the class. What can you learn from one another’s responses?

2. As a class, read together Luke 11:11-13. Then talk about what it was like when you gave someone you cared about a gift that you knew they would really like. How did it make you feel? Why were you so eager to give it? What good would it do for the person you gave it to? With those thoughts in mind, what can we learn about the promise of the Holy Spirit offered to us?

3. As a class, see whether you can get some time before the lesson study to prepare a small presentation for Sabbath School on what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means. Anticipate as much as possible beforehand what questions people in the church might have regarding this topic and be prepared to answer them.
SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-25; Eph. 4:11.

Memory Text: “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:1, 4).

The New Testament introduces spiritual gifts as an endowment from Christ and imparted by the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit is one, the gifts, or the manifestations of the Spirit, are many and diverse. These gifts of grace (charismata) are presented primarily in three different passages: Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12 through 14, and Ephesians 4:7-13. Probably even these examples, taken together, are not exhaustive but rather illustrative of spiritual endowments. These gifts were promised to the church when Jesus ascended to heaven (Eph. 4:8, 11).

No one individual in the church should expect to receive all the gifts of the Spirit. Neither should all the members expect to receive the same and identical gift or gifts. The New Testament likens the church, in which the manifestations of the Spirit appear, to the human body: different parts, doing different functions, yet all working together for a common goal.

This week we’ll take a look at some of these gifts and how they are manifested in the church.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 13.
The Church as the Body

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-25 and then answer the following questions:

1. For what reason is the Spirit given to the church?

2. What seems to be Paul’s main concern here?

3. What is the role of the Spirit as depicted by Paul?

4. What point was Paul making through his use of the human body as an analogy for work of the Spirit in the church?

Through the Spirit we have been born again and become members of the body of Christ. Through the rite of baptism by immersion we then joined a local church. However, the members of the body of Christ, or of the church, are no more alike than are the different organs of the body. It’s very important not to try to make each one a carbon copy of another. We should rejoice in our diversity of gifts.

Nevertheless, just as all the organs are part of the same body and serve a very definite purpose in it, the church we have joined will not be complete or constitute a body without all its different members. That’s because, like a human body, we need these different parts; we need different people who can do different things.

At the same time, too, diversity is not the same as disunity. As Paul’s analogy shows, though the parts of the body are different, look different, and work differently, they are all working in unity for a common purpose. All the work done for the Master by different people with different gifts is to be connected with the great whole.

In your own experience, what’s the greatest cause of disunity among us? Is it because we are all different and have different gifts, or is it because of something else? If so, what?
Key Text: Ephesians 4:11-13

Teachers Aims:
1. To emphasize the benefits of diversity within the church.
2. To explore the differences and needs of the spiritual gifts discussed in this week’s lesson.

Lesson Outline:
I. The Holy Spirit’s Use of Diversity for the Benefit of the Whole (1 Cor. 12:7-25)
   A. Different gifts meet different needs.
   B. No one gift or person in a church is more important than another.

II. Some Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12).
   A. Wisdom and knowledge.
      1. God’s wisdom is powerful.
      2. Knowledge becomes understanding only through the work of the Holy Spirit.
   B. Miracles and Healing.
      1. Divine intervention can come in the form of miracles and healings in any area of our existence.
      2. Miracles and healings are the processes that God has designed and guided since the beginning of time.
   C. Prophecy and Administration.
      1. God calls spokespersons to speak to humanity.
      2. God organizes agencies to assist believers in accomplishing the Great Commission.
   D. Tongues.
      1. Clearly spoken human language is needed to spread the gospel.
      2. Gibberish is a counterfeit of true tongues.

Summary: Church bodies should value all spiritual gifts, whether they are publicly or privately expressed. Individually, we should strive for a deeper relationship and a more willing heart so that we might be open to whatever spiritual gift(s) the Holy Spirit chooses for us to use. As your faith grows, you may find that you develop new gifts, while some of your other gifts may seem to fade. Remember that the Holy Spirit’s goal is to draw all people unto Christ and that will often require different gifts at different times.

COMMENTARY

Introduction
Paul wrote, “Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:1). At the heart of his presentation on spiritual gifts, he embeds the most comprehensive and sublime description of spiritual love to be found anywhere in Scripture (see 1 Corinthians 13). Spiritual gifts of whatever variety or combination are given as vehicles to manifest divine love in redemptive ministry and are not to exhibit spiritual status.

I. The Church as the Body
God has decreed that through His church on earth, He will make manifest to all the universe His wisdom, and the inexhaustible benefits and joys of Christian fellowship. (See Eph. 3:8-10.) Part of God’s plan in distributing various gifts to each member of the church is to demonstrate that His gospel-transformed people can work in noncompetitive harmony with one another toward a common goal—the evangelizing and spiritual nurturing of the world. He varies His gifts from member to member to teach us how to work in loving, appreciative cooperation with one another, each
Wisdom and Knowledge

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8, 9).

How interesting that in the above text, the “word of wisdom” and the “word of knowledge” are seen as gifts of the Spirit. We often tend to think of those as acquired, what we learn through study and/or through the toils and lessons of life. Yet, the two ideas are not in contradiction. Some people can read and study and go through life and come away with no real “knowledge” or “wisdom,” at least as the Bible defines those things (Prov. 1:7, 9:10). Thus, we need the Holy Spirit to give us knowledge and wisdom, as the Bible defines those words.

How does 2 Timothy 3:7 help us understand the need of the Spirit for biblical wisdom and knowledge?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

It’s sad, but true, that through history some of the “greatest” Bible scholars didn’t believe the truths of the Bible. They might have been world-renowned experts in the original languages and maybe even have been unsurpassed in their knowledge of biblical history. But the spiritual wisdom and knowledge about God found in those texts was completely lost on them. What a waste!

Read 1 Corinthians 2:5-7. What is the wisdom referred to here? Why do we need the Spirit to know it?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Look at the contrast Paul puts between different kinds of knowledge and wisdom. Notice, too, how he contrasts the wisdom of the world with the “power” of God. That’s important, because the wisdom of God is life-changing. It brings power and change in our lives; it’s not just facts and propositions. It’s a life-changing power that comes only from the Holy Spirit working in us. This is something all worldly knowledge and wisdom can never perform.

What kind of knowledge has changed your life? What kind hasn’t? What can you learn from your answers?
estimating others better than ourselves. No believer stands as a complete unit, possessing the full array of gifts to render complete Christian service independently of Christ’s body, the church. It is not Christ’s purpose that we should become self-exalted through our gifts (as Lucifer did), but self-transcending in our service as we merge with Him and His church to fulfill its calling as God’s “appointed agency for the salvation of men.”—Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 9.

II. Wisdom and Knowledge

Solomon declared, “When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom” (Prov. 11:2; see also Matt. 11:25). (Note: “Shame”, in Hebrew, is kawlone, which means confusion, dishonor, ignominy, or reproach.) The gift of wisdom places one in intimate contact with God’s mind (see Prov. 3:14-23; 1 Cor. 1:30, 31) and in a position to glorify Him by living and teaching in harmony with His law and purpose. Christ used His matchless wisdom to save humans, and place them on a footing of honor to serve Him with capability and distinction. Wisdom, unless it is eternally linked with a personal knowledge of God and His ways, can degenerate into self-sufficiency and scheming. (See Ezek. 28:1-17; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 13:1, 2; Eph. 1:17, 18; Col. 1:9, 10.) For Christians, constant growth in wisdom and knowledge is indispensable for us to understand how to serve God and how to recognize and repudiate Satan’s deceptions—especially those that come in religious disguise. (See 2 Cor. 11:2-4, 13-15; 2 Thess. 2:1-12.) Closely allied with the gifts of wisdom and knowledge is the gift of “discerning of spirits” (1 Cor. 12:10), which is indispensable in these days of advanced spiritual delusion. (See Matt. 24:24; 2 Tim. 4:1-3.)

III. Miracles and Healing

The gifts of miracles and healing are not offered as a substitute for compliance with God’s natural and spiritual laws. God has through all ages worked miracles to help override stupendous obstacles or compensate for the lack of critically needed resources. At the end of time, when God’s people are brought into strait places through persecution and the general disintegration of society, He will work miraculously once again through His people and on their behalf as He did in the apostolic era.

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. . . .

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from
Miracles and Healings

The gifts of the Spirit will remain in the church until Jesus returns. This includes the gift of healing, as well as the gift of working miracles (1 Cor. 12:8-10). Yet, we do not regard it appropriate for a Christian to refuse medical help, expecting God to heal a person’s disease by a miracle without his or her having done anything to remedy the condition. God does not use miracles extravagantly or uselessly. “What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 535.

1 Corinthians 12:10 talks about “the working of miracles.” How are we to understand what this means?

Miracles, someone once said, are deemed miracles only because of their infrequency. If, for instance, the sun rose only once every thousand years, those who saw it would believe they had witnessed a miracle. Because we see it rise all the time, we deem it just an ordinary occurrence—despite how “miraculous” it really is. Imagine someone who never before saw a cell phone in his or her life: How miraculous it would seem to that person to actually hear a voice come through this little box!

What are some other “common” things that, under other circumstances, might be deemed “miraculous”? What can we learn from these that can help us better understand the nature of miracles?

While “miracles,” no doubt, can strengthen our faith, a faith that depends upon them is no real faith at all (Luke 16:31). Perhaps some of us have seen what could be deemed “miracles”; maybe for others, the greatest “miracle” is the change in their life brought about by the power of God working in them. Though the Holy Spirit can, in His divine wisdom, perform miracles (see Matt. 12:28) whenever He chooses, the manifestation of “miracles” is no proof God is working any more than the lack of “miracles” is proof God is not present with us.

What miracles has God wrought in your life? Be prepared to share your answers with the class.
heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

“The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God.”—Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, pp. 611, 612.

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** 1 Corinthians 12:8, Ephesians 4:11-13

1. The New Testament view of the church champions diversity in the variety of gifts the Holy Spirit gives to the church. At the same time, however, the New Testament calls for unity. How can we make allowances for this diversity while preserving necessary unity? For example, we can observe how human society seems to gravitate between extremes of tolerance and intolerance. How can this be avoided in a church that is composed of human beings?

2. The Bible refers to wisdom and knowledge as spiritual gifts. What is the difference between these concepts as seen in the Bible and the human concepts of wisdom and knowledge we commonly use in secular life? Does the fact that a person has a great capacity for such secular knowledge necessarily mean that he or she has the spiritual gift of knowledge if that person becomes a Christian? Or is the spiritual gift a completely separate category?

3. The Bible teaches us that God will provide for our needs (see Psalm 23, Matt. 6:25-34). Does that mean He will do miracles for us? Is it a sign of weak faith to seek out common sources of help, such as modern medicine, if we are ill? Under what circumstances might God work a miracle for us in order to provide for our needs?

4. Why are church leaders not necessarily prophets, and why are prophets not necessarily church leaders? Is it logical to say that if the church is to be guided by God, it should be led by those people who are most directly guided by God? Where is the flaw in this reasoning?

5. While many churches—virtually all charismatic and Pentecostal—claim the gift of tongues, it seems fairly clear that their definition bears little or no relation to the gift of tongues given to the apostles in Acts 2. As such, their definition can be considered counterfeit. What are the dangers in allowing oneself to believe in things that are clearly untrue, even if they seem trivial at first glance?
Prophecy and Government

**Read** Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; and Ephesians 4:11.

What one gift is mentioned in each of these sections?

A prophet is a spokesperson for God. Even after ancient Israel became a monarchy, it was the prophet who received messages and instruction from God. These he or she was to convey to the king. The prophet, consequently, is God’s spokesperson to the people as the minister is humanity’s spokesperson to God. The content of the message is not primarily predictive but may be any message that God desires to give His people at any particular time, whether it pertains to the past, the present, or the future. The church of God today, as in days of old, needs instruction from God. The principal agent by which this instruction is given is the prophet.

In addition to prophets who receive instruction from God, what is needed in the church to execute the relayed divine plans in efficient administration? 1 Cor. 12:28.

The Revised Standard Version translates “administrators” instead of “governments.” Although the gospel work is God’s, some human agent must direct it under God’s guidance.

**What** instances in the apostolic church indicate that God works through appointed agencies in His organized church? Acts 9:10-17, 13:1-3.

“The circumstances connected with the separation of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit to a definite line of service show clearly that the Lord works through appointed agencies in His organized church. Years before, when the divine purpose concerning Paul was first revealed to him by the Saviour Himself, Paul was immediately afterward brought into contact with members of the newly organized church at Damascus . . . And now, when the divine commission given at that time was to be more fully carried out, the Holy Spirit, again bearing witness concerning Paul as a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, laid upon the church the work of ordaining him and his fellow laborer.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 162, 163.

**Why has God committed the direction of His work on earth to His church rather than primarily laying the burden on solitary individuals?**
IV. Prophecy and Government

Prophets are the “eyes” of the church, to guide it in the paths of righteousness through the treacherous terrain of this sin-darkened world. *(See 2 Pet. 1:19-21.)* This is why Paul attributes such high value to the gift of prophecy. *(See 1 Cor. 14:1, 4, 5, 32.)* This gift would have flourished unchecked among believers if the church had not departed from the law of God during the post-apostolic ages of apostasy. *(See Lam. 2:9; Mic. 3:5-7.)* The gift is restored when the law is once more honored. *(See Rev. 19:10.)*

The gift of government (administration) is essential for the maintenance of gospel order, and the most effective allocation of the church’s talents and resources. This gift sets the seal to the

**Witnessing**

*Adverse selection* is a term used in the business world. It means to select only those risks that appear acceptable. Another way of looking at it is the de-selection of unacceptable risks.

*Cloning,* the act of scientifically reproducing an exact replica of the original, is another example of humanity’s fixation with producing only the best and eliminating the weak. While *adverse selection* and *cloning* eliminate what is financially unacceptable or genetically weak, history will prove in the long-run the wisdom of implementing these strategies and controversial technologies. The purpose of mentioning them here is not to argue for or against them but instead to show how the world’s thinking contrasts with the Bible’s attitude toward weakness. Instead of eliminating it, Jesus embraces our weakness, saying to us as He did to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” *(2 Cor. 12:9, emphasis supplied).*

In our lesson this week, Paul reminds us that although our bodies have many different parts, they all work together for a common purpose: maintaining a healthy human body. While some parts are more visible and well-known, the hidden, lesser known ones carry the same important purpose. *All* parts are essential for the body to function as intended, the strong members and the lesser, or weaker, members.

The same is true for the church body: women and men of different backgrounds, cultures, and races all working together in one common goal, which is to grow into and to nurture a healthy, vibrant, living church whose Head is Jesus Christ and whose ultimate goal is the kingdom of heaven.

No two individuals are alike. God created each as unique beings. In His great wisdom, He knows that our differences complement and strengthen the whole. Once we open our hearts completely to Him, He will help us treasure and prize one another’s contributions, and our differences become precious gifts that are shared with one another and our church!
Tongues (Revisited)

“The gift of tongues, as prophecy and miracles, has a counterfeit. The original gift on the day of Pentecost consisted of perfectly spoken human languages. Uttering sounds that cannot be identified with any human language is not a perversion of but a counterfeit of the genuine.”—Handbook of SDA Theology, vol. 12, p. 619.

As we saw in an earlier lesson, it seems clear that “tongues” mentioned here denotes foreign languages, because that was clearly the way the gift was manifested at Pentecost and on subsequent recorded occasions (see Acts 2, 10:44-46, 11:15, 19:6).

**Why** should the gift of tongues be so important to the early church? 
*Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:8.*

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

In the early church there was a need for the gift of tongues, or a mastery of foreign languages. The gospel had to be communicated to the world, and most of the postascension Christians did not possess a command of foreign languages.

**Who** spoke more often in tongues than anyone else? *1 Cor. 14:18.*

What do you think he meant by this statement?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

In his evangelization among the heathen, Paul constantly had to use a tongue other than his native Aramaic—the common language of the Jews in the day of Jesus and the apostles. Corinth was a large seaport and commercial city with people from many parts of the Roman Empire. It seems that some in the Corinthian church boastfully used languages that some other members could not readily understand. Paul admonished them not to do so, unless they had an interpreter, since no one in the congregation, other than the speaker, could be edified by it (see 1 Cor. 14:4).

**What are some types of counterfeits you have encountered or known about? What can you learn from them that can help protect you from other spiritual counterfeits you might face?**
validity of the church as God’s heaven-ordained agency organized to carry the gospel to the world. In the days of Moses, the church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) was carefully administered by men of wisdom, discernment, and integrity, and so is it in the New Testament dispensation. (See Deut. 1:15-17, Acts 6:1-7, 15:1-35.)

**Life-Application Approach**

**Icebreaker:** “We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13, NIV). What part of Christ’s body are you? How do your spiritual gifts bless and empower the ministry of your church? In what ways does your service for Jesus make your church more dynamic and give your life purpose, fulfillment, and joy?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Definitions of the word *wisdom* usually include such words as “knowledge,” “good judgment,” and “experience.” Proverbs defines it this way: “Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding” (Prov. 10:13). It also says, “The wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook” (Prov. 18:4, emphasis supplied). As members of the church learn about and employ their spiritual gifts, why is it important that they have support and guidance? Who are you mentoring in ministry?

2. As a class, review 1 Corinthians 12:7-25, Ephesians 4:7-13, and Romans 12:4-8. Make a list of the spiritual gifts that are mentioned. What others are implied in Scripture? For example, martyrdom is discussed in 1 Peter 4:12, 13 and 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Celibacy is found in 1 Corinthians 7:7-9, 27. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? What happens when they are misused or counterfeited? Consider the false use of such gifts as speaking in tongues and performing miracles. What has God done to protect us from error? How does the Holy Spirit guide our understanding and the use of our spiritual gifts?

**Application Question:**

Compare the best job you ever had with the worst. What made the difference? Paul encourages us to use our spiritual gifts “generously” and “cheerfully” (see Rom. 12:6-8, NIV). What makes the difference between passion and enthusiasm in ministry and a ministry of drudgery and discontent? How do the people in your church family affirm and support the ministry of each individual church member? Why does encouragement and support make such a difference? Consider how you can bring joy to a Sabbath School teacher, outreach worker, and others this week. How will this make their service more rewarding?

“Paul taught that the gifts—including prophecy, teaching, apostleship, evangelism, speaking in tongues, and working of miracles—were to be exercised by Christians from all walks of life. From his letter to the Corinthians it is evident that some misused them, especially that of speaking in tongues.

“While in some quarters great significance is attached to speaking in tongues, the NT makes it clear that other gifts are more important to the well-being of the church. Paul recommends the gift of prophecy as the most desirable. Therefore, a major portion of this article is given to a discussion of this gift.”—*Handbook of SDA Theology*, vol. 12, p. 610.

“The Jews had been scattered to almost every nation, and spoke various languages. . . . This diversity of languages was a great obstacle to the labors of God’s servants in publishing the doctrine of Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. That God should supply the deficiency of the apostles in a miraculous manner was to the people the most perfect confirmation of the testimony of these witnesses for Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 242, 243.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. As a class, talk about your answers to Tuesday’s final question. What is your understanding of just what a “miracle” is? What does the reality of miracles do for your faith? What danger is there in relying on miracles for faith?

2. As a class, talk about the role and ministry of Ellen White and the gift of prophecy. How does the manifestation of this gift help us understand what the purpose of spiritual gifts in general should be for the church?

3. Talk about the spiritual gifts of the members of the class. What can you do to help affirm one another in those gifts, as well as help one another put them to good use?
SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week’s Study:** Isaiah 53:3, John 3:16, 15:13, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 4:11-13, 1 John 3:16, 4:8.

**Memory Text:** “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

We are saved only through what Jesus Christ accomplished for us on the cross two thousand years ago. As Peter expressed it: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11). Or Paul: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Or Ellen White: “There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.”—Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, p. 19.

Yet, no Christian who enjoys the promise of salvation through Jesus can live without bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Matthew 12:33), the day-by-day manifestation in our lives of what Christ has done for us. We can profess all the sacred truths in heaven and earth, but the best evidence that we are in Christ is the fruit we bear.

This week we’ll take a look at what this fruit is and what it should mean for our lives.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 20.*
Love

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5).

Why do you think Paul listed love as the first of the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22? See 1 Corinthians 13.

A certain type of tree in the temperate zone inevitably and spontaneously produces leaves in the spring as the sap begins to rise in the trunk and reaches out into every branch and twig. In the same way, a Christian filled with the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit—love.

Jesus is God. As there is no life apart from God, so there is no love or virtue apart from God. If a human is going to possess and manifest divine love, he or she must receive it from God. There is no other source. Where else would it come from if not from above? Can beings—who are only protein, carbon, water, or even only atoms and molecules—express love? How can these elements, no matter how finely tuned, ever be able to love? No matter how good a painter is, no matter how perfect his or her paints and canvas, no flower that person paints will ever live or do photosynthesis or grow a seed. Carbon, water, and protein, in and of themselves, can’t even live, much less love. Love has to come from a source that in and of itself knows love and can impart it. And that source, of course, is God (see 1 John 4:8).

A crucial question, though, needs to be answered: What do we mean by “love”? The word itself has been so broadened and, hence, cheapened until it covers a multitude of acts and emotions that hardly do justice to the term. Scripture, however, gives verses that help us understand the biblical concept of love as a fruit of the Spirit.

Read John 3:16, 15:13, and 1 John 3:16. What’s the crucial factor here that helps us understand the nature of love, as depicted in the Scriptures? How, too, does this idea help us understand why “the love of God . . . shed abroad in our hearts” (Rom. 5:5) comes from the Holy Spirit?
Key Texts: Matthew 7:16-20, John 15:1-8

Teachers Aims:
1. To emphasize the importance of bearing spiritual fruit in accordance with the will of God.
2. To discuss the reality that everything we have is from the hand of God, including our faith in Him.

Lesson Outline:
I. Evidence of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25)
A. Love.
B. Joy and peace—God’s gift to see beyond the now.
C. Longsuffering—forgiveness, patience, and consistency.
D. Gentleness and goodness—seeing and reacting to those around us through the eyes of God.
E. Faith—the ability to trust, rely on, and believe in God.

II. Faith—the Gift and Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:8)
A. Salvation comes by faith in Jesus alone.
B. Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
C. Belief isn’t faith, but faith includes belief.

Summary: Being filled with the Holy Spirit allows us to be like Jesus in thought, word, and deed. Yet, it is not the actions that draw us closer to God but the motivation. We should be living out our salvation by bearing the fruit of the Spirit with the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. If we are striving on our own to bear fruit, to somehow make ourselves good enough for God, then it is all worthless.

COMMENTARY

Introduction

The fruit of the Spirit is the manifestation of God’s character attributes in the life of regenerated believers. This fruit reveals the attractiveness, power, and reality of the gospel. It fosters purity, grace, pleasantness, and stability in the fellowship of believers.

I. Love

God is love (1 John 4:8); that is His essential, all-pervasive attribute. Accordingly, the foremost fruit of the Spirit is divine love—love that was supremely manifested in Jesus’ voluntary sacrifice for our redemption.

“As we stand] under the shadow of the cross of Calvary, the inspiration of His love fills our hearts. When I look upon Him whom my
Joy and Peace

The idea of joy and peace as fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23) is susceptible to misinterpretation. Our world is a sinful world; we are sinful beings, each one of us suffering the effects of sin: sickness, loss, separation, fear, worry, uncertainty . . . the list goes on. No one, even a Christian, is immune to the painful struggles that afflict us in a fallen world. Jesus suffered; we are going to, as well.

And yet, as Christians, there should be a difference. Unlike many people who attribute pain and suffering to the mindless and purposeless forces of nature or to pure chance or to anger of evil spirits, we should, day by day, live with the constant knowledge that we serve not only a living God but a loving God and that this God not only knows our troubles but loves and cares about us and our woes. After all, as a human, He has known plenty of woe Himself (Isa. 53:3, Mark 15:15, John 11:35, Heb. 4:15, 1 Pet. 4:1). Thus, we can know that whatever happens, if we stay faithful, whatever our mistakes, whatever our shortcomings, God loves us and promises to see us through it all. God also promises us an eternity in bliss. This realization should give us joy and peace that will enable us to better endure whatever difficult circumstances we find ourselves in now.

We must remember, too, that as fruit of the Spirit, joy and peace aren’t the same as always feeling happy; instead, joy and peace are what comes from knowing—even though we aren’t feeling happy or if circumstances aren’t good—that God is close and promises to get us through whatever happens.

**How** do the following texts help us understand why we should have, if not always happiness, joy and peace in our lives as Christians, regardless of our tight circumstances? Matt. 6:31, 32; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:11-13; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 21:4.

Dwell on the above texts (and any other relevant ones you can think of). If you know anyone who is struggling right now, share these texts with that person.
sins have pierced, the inspiration from on high comes upon me; and this inspiration may come upon each one of you through the Holy Spirit. Unless you receive the Holy Spirit, you cannot have the love of God in the soul; but through a living connection with Christ, we are inspired with love and zeal and earnestness.

“We are not as a block of marble, which may reflect the light of the sun, but cannot be imbued with life. We are capable of responding to the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness; for as Christ illuminates our souls, He gives light and life. We drink in the love of Christ as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted into Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the living Vine, we shall give evidence of this fact by bearing rich clusters of fruit.”—Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, p. 71.

II. Joy and Peace

“These words I have I spoken unto you,” Christ said, “that my joy might remain in you and your joy might be full” (John 15:11). Jesus also promised His disciples that they may ask what they would (in keeping with His will), and they shall receive, that their joy may be full (see John 16:24; 1 John 5:14, 15). Jesus clearly associated His disciples’ joy and peace with their receptivity to His word, and acceptance of His messiahship. (See John 14:27; 16:22; 17:8, 13.) Joy and peace are spiritual fruit that impart the boundless hope we need to endure our own trials and to encourage others in theirs. This peace and joy surpass natural human understanding, but have sustained the persecuted in their most trying hours, missionaries in their most arduous tasks, and Christians in their daily tests and toil. (See Col. 1:11; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:7, 8.) “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). See also Ellen G. White, My Life Today, p. 51.

III. Long-suffering

Long-suffering is an indispensable quality for Christians to possess in this world of decadence and perversion, where it is regarded as a mark of sophistication to be “despisers of those that are good” (2 Tim. 3:3). Truly sanctified Christians perpetually yearn for more, and still more, of Christ’s righteousness and fellowship. Enamored of Christ and His righteousness, they find the moral tawdriness of this world jarring and repugnant. The godly do not exude an atmosphere of revulsion toward the sinful. Compassion and love prevail over the longing to “fly away and be at rest.”

“Try to live peaceably with all men, and let the atmosphere surrounding your soul be sweet and fragrant. The Lord hears every unwise word that is spoken. If you will battle against selfish human nature, you will go forward steadily in the work of overcoming hereditary and cultivated tendencies to do wrong. By patience, long-suffering, and forbearance you will accomplish much. Remember that you cannot be humiliated by the unwise speeches of someone else, but
Long-Suffering

Another one of the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5 is “long-suffering.” It comes from a Greek word that means, basically, “patience,” “endurance,” “constancy,” “steadfastness,” and “slowness in avenging wrongs.”

In what ways is the practice of long-suffering a reflection of the character of God? *Exod. 34:6, Rom. 2:4.*

How do the following examples reveal to us the long-suffering of God?

*Gen. 15:16*

*Isa. 5:1-5*

*Hos. 11:8*

*Rev. 2:21*

“Long-suffering bears something, yea, many things, without seeking to be avenged by word or act.

‘Long-suffering’ is patience with offence; long endurance. If you are long-suffering, you will not impart to others your supposed knowledge of your brother’s mistakes and errors. You will seek to help and save him because he has been purchased with the blood of Christ. . . . To be long-suffering is not to be gloomy and sad, sour and hardhearted; it is to be exactly the opposite.”—Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, p. 52.

Our patience and long-suffering with others should stem, at least partly, from our realization of God’s patience and long-suffering with us. Imagine if God treated each of us as we often treat one another! Fortunately He doesn’t, and the fact that He is exceedingly patient with us and our faults means we should be patient with others and their faults. As we look in the mirror and see ourselves for what we are and know that God loves and endures with us despite what we see in the mirror, we will be better able to truly manifest this fruit of long-suffering. In and of ourselves, we can’t do it; only as we surrender our will to God and keep before us the Cross and what it represents about God’s long-suffering toward us will we bear the same fruit in our own lives.

How long-suffering have you been with someone who has recently frustrated you, someone who is “hard to love”? What changes do you need to make in order to treat him or her as Christ treats you? What’s the only way to be able to do it?
that when you answer unwisely, you lose a victory that you might have gained. Be very careful of your words.

“Forbearance and unselfishness mark the words and deeds of those who are born again to live the new life in Christ.” —Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, p. 52.

**IV. Gentleness and Goodness**

“Oh, we must educate the soul to be pitiful, gentle, tender, full of forgiveness and compassion... The Spirit of the Lord is to rest upon you until you shall be like a fragrant flower from the garden of God. You are to keep talking of the light, of Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, until you shall change from glory to glory, from character to character, going on from strength to strength, and reflecting more and more

---

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** Romans 8:28; Galatians 5:2, 23; Ephesians 4:3; 1 John 4:8

1. Why are love, joy, peace, and the rest, referred to as the “fruit” of the Holy Spirit? What does this say about the role of the fruit in our salvation? Why can we not achieve these things on our own? Why are they not the conditions of salvation that we must meet before we are saved? Can others judge our salvation on the basis of their presence or absence? Explain your answer.

2. We often hear that God is love, and that all love comes in some way from God. How does (or should) love manifest itself in human relationships? We also hear in Christian circles that love is a principle, not an emotion. What does this mean? Can love exist apart from loving feelings, or even in the presence of feelings that are not loving? Can we will ourselves to love because God tells us we should?

3. A Christian should react to the circumstances of the real world with joy and peace. Is such joy and peace based on the assumption that God is somehow going to rescue us from our circumstances, perhaps just in time? Or should we be peaceful and joyful regardless of the actual outcome?

4. Faith and works automatically are connected. Is it accurate to say that faith comes before works, or can good works help us to develop more faith? Can a person with no faith to speak of come to faith by acting as if he or she had it? Explain your answers.

5. Some of the fruit of the Spirit are so similar as to seem almost synonymous. A closer look, however, reveals that they have subtle differences. How are they related to each other? What common element draws them together?
Gentleness and Goodness

Write out your definition of what you understand as “gentleness and goodness.” What is a person like who reflects these two fruit of the Spirit?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

It’s interesting, too (if you haven’t already noticed), how the fruit of the Spirit all reflect aspects of the character of Jesus. Go back over what we’ve looked at so far regarding the fruit of the Spirit: In each case, these attributes are all found in Jesus. Thus, when we look at Christ, we can see the greatest revelation possible of goodness and gentleness, because as God, Jesus reflected these traits perfectly. Thus, as we can see, the more we manifest the fruit of the Spirit, the more we will be like Jesus.

Go back through the Gospels and pick out one example of where you see Jesus exhibiting specifically “goodness” and an example of where He was exhibiting specifically “gentleness.” What can you learn from each of your examples?

**Goodness**

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

**Gentleness**

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

If, for instance, you took the story of Jesus’ fast in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11), you would see an aspect of goodness in His denial of self for the good of others. Or if you took the example of Jesus with the woman at the well (John 4:5-42) or with the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11), you saw an example of gentleness consisting of treating people, even those who have done wrong, with courtesy and respect.

Go back over the examples you chose. What can you learn from them about changes you need to make in your own life?
of the precious image of Jesus. When you do this, the Lord will write in the books of heaven, ‘Well done,’ because you represent Jesus.

“Christians should not be hard-hearted, unapproachable; Jesus is to be reflected in our deportment, and we are to have a character beautiful with the graces of heaven. The presence of God is to be an abiding presence with us; and wherever we are, we are to carry light to the world. Those around you are to realize that the atmosphere of heaven surrounds you.”—Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, p. 75.

David said, “Thy gentleness hath made me great” (Ps. 18:35). He was not referring to worldly greatness, but to enrichment of character with the gracious goodness of God, which is available to all who believe. (See Rom. 3:22, 1 Thess. 2:7, 2 Tim. 2:24, James 3:17.)

V. Faith

Faith empowers us to experience all that the gospel has to offer. Christ is the “author and finisher [consummator, perfecter] of our faith”

Witnessing

Most people are not agriculturalists and have little idea how to differentiate between trees based on leaf shape, root design, and tree bark. Sometimes we don’t know that the tree is fruit-bearing until the apples, pears, or bananas appear. It is this product of the tree that sets it apart from other trees, even though there may be striking similarities in other ways.

Our lesson this week reminds us that those around us are able to see whether Christ really lives in our hearts and fills our minds by the way in which we act and behave in various situations.

When your next-door neighbor receives a visit from a military chaplain explaining that her enlisted son or daughter has just been killed in a case of friendly fire, how do you assure her that God is grieving too? How do you convince her that He cares deeply about her pain and that, at that very moment, He is present to offer her comfort? When she asks you the question “Why?” how can, and do you, respond to her?

If one day at work you learn that a coworker with a terminally ill spouse has just been fired because of budget cutbacks, how do you show that Jesus Christ is concerned and caring? What actions do you take that clearly demonstrate His presence in your life?

Finally, when your faith is tested by a personal event that comes unexpectedly and with bruising effect, how do you react? Do others see you draw away from the Father, because He did not prevent this from happening, or do they watch you ask for His strength to carry you through?

The great Comforter, the Holy Spirit, is present at times of great loss, pain, joy, and love. His presence in our lives makes the difference, not only for ourselves but also those who witness His influence. Use every opportunity to bear witness to the fruit of the Spirit.
Faith

**Read** Ephesians 2:8. What does it tell us about where faith comes from?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

In English, *faith* and *belief* or *believe* are translated from the same original Greek root. And that makes sense because you have to believe in something first before you can have faith in it. You might get rich from a job you hate, or you might be healed by a doctor you don’t trust—but you’ll never have faith in a God you don’t believe in. Belief is inseparable from faith.

Yet, faith and belief are not the same thing. *Faith* might mean “belief,” but *belief* doesn’t automatically mean “faith.” Scripture warns about confusing the two.

**Read** James 2:19. How does this verse help us to understand the difference between belief and biblical *faith*?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

In many ways the key to understanding what James meant in 2:19 is what is found in verse 20. Biblical faith and works are related to each other as human life is to breath: One automatically means the other. An alleged faith that does not lead to surrender to God’s will is not genuine but Satan’s counterfeit. No living or saving faith is merely theoretical. Rather, it is always experimental and leads to action. Or, as James bluntly put it: “Faith without works is dead” (vs. 20), just as a body without breath is dead, as well.

Faith is a gift, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), but it isn’t something that is just supernaturally bestowed upon us and we go on our merry way. A daily cultivation of that faith, based on your love for God and what He has done for you, is crucial to keeping that faith. If faith is not cherished, if it’s not nurtured, protected, and strengthened, it will degenerate into mere belief and, maybe eventually, into unbelief. The world is filled with people who, once fervent in faith, don’t even believe anymore. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb. 3:12).

**What things do you do that tend to strengthen your faith, and what weakens it?** Dwell on the implications of your answer.
Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Have your class members share what is their favorite kind of fruit and why. Read the memory verse, Galatians 5:22, 23, from as many versions of the Bible as are available in the class. In what ways is the fruit of the Spirit, as displayed in the lives of Christ’s disciples, a powerful testimony of His presence? How do you see them displayed by your class members? Pray together, asking God to make each person’s witness more intentional and fruitful for His kingdom.

Thought Questions:  
1 When Christ stood before the rabble who were calling for His crucifixion, His behavior was caring and peaceful. How did Christ’s mission on our behalf give Him courage to be calm in such a storm of derision and hate? Discuss long-suffering or patience. (See John 3:16, 15:13, and Rom. 5:5.) How does our worldview of the great controversy and our understanding of Christ’s victory over sin help us to live and to serve in a tumultuous world?

2 If you were drawing a timeline of your journey into a saving, personal relationship with Christ, where would you put the attribute of faith? Would it show up more than one time? If you drew a graphic to demonstrate the change in your level of faith, what would it look like? Make a list of some Bible texts that have strengthened your faith. Make plans to share them with someone whose faith is wavering.

Application Question:  
Automobiles like the Lexus, the Cadillac, and the Mercedes Benz, are considered to be top of the line and are highly sought after. As a preamble to 1 Corinthians 13, Paul says, “And now I will show you the most excellent way” (1 Cor. 12:31b, NIV). How does the quality of our witness and of our relationships improve receptivity to the gospel? As a class, what tangible, practical activity will you perform this month to actively portray the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Two other fruit of the Spirit are meekness and temperance: “Moses was the greatest man who ever stood as leader of the people of God. He was greatly honored by God, not for the experience which he had gained in the Egyptian court, but because he was the meekest of men. God talked with him face to face, as a man talks with a friend. If men desire to be honored by God, let them be humble. Those who carry forward God’s work should be distinguished from all others by their humility. Of the man who is noted for his meekness, Christ says, He can be trusted.”—Ellen G. White Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1113.

“Discipline and control the mental faculties. Self-control is a power that all may possess. It is gained by placing the will wholly on the side of God, taking the will of God for your will.”—Ellen G. White, Our High Calling, p. 219.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, talk about the meaning of love. You’ll probably notice that it’s hard to define. Nevertheless, what points do your definitions have in common? What can you learn from these points?

2. Is there someone from your church who is no longer attending, who is struggling with faith? If so, as a class, why not plan on visiting that person or inviting him or her for a dinner or some activity? What things can you do to help him or her regain the faith that has slipped away?

3. Let each person in the class talk about someone, not from the Bible, who exhibited the traits of goodness and gentleness. Do the same with meekness, as well. What can you learn from these examples about the meaning of these terms and how these characteristics should be manifested in our lives?
The death of Jesus for the sins of the world is the most important of all truths. In contrast, what else really matters? And because it is so important, God hasn’t left it up to us to try to figure it out on our own. Instead, we have been given the promise of the Holy Spirit, which will guide us in our understanding of this truth. For this reason, in the end, no one will have an excuse in the day of judgment.

Indeed, the Spirit is a gift from God to us as fallen beings. Without the death of Jesus, there would have been no salvation for anyone; at the same time, without the Spirit to guide, regenerate, and empower us, there would be no personal salvation. Jesus and the Spirit are knit into One in order to bring humanity, lost in the wilderness of transgression, back into the presence of the Father. It is the Father’s plan to restore, through Jesus and the Spirit, the peace and harmony that reigned between God and humanity before the entrance of sin.

This week we’ll look a little more at the crucial operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 27.*
The Spirit, a Guide

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

As an ambassador speaks in the name of his home government to a foreign government, so the Spirit will speak to men and women in Jesus’ name and with His authority. Jesus has perpetuated His earthly teaching ministry through the Spirit. “The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters of God, p. 282.

In addition to teaching, what else will the Spirit do? John 14:26.

“It was not until after Christ’s ascension to His Father, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, that the disciples fully appreciated the Saviour’s character and mission. After they had received the baptism of the Spirit, they began to realize that they had been in the very presence of the Lord of glory. As the sayings of Christ were brought to their remembrance, their minds were opened to comprehend the prophecies, and to understand the miracles which He had wrought. . . . His lessons, which they had but dimly understood, now came to them as a fresh revelation. The Scriptures became to them a new book.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 507.


The Spirit is a living, personal Teacher. Every time we open the Bible, it is possible to have the Spirit unveil to us the true meaning of what we read. The key to this is daily to surrender ourselves to the Lord, asking Him to open our hearts and minds to truth, whatever it is, wherever it may lead us. In such circumstances the Holy Spirit can surely guide.

Ask yourself how open you are to the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Do you listen to Him, or do you make excuses in order to do your own thing?
Given to impart genuine spiritual life and power for service, the Holy Spirit is our Guide, Teacher, Sanctifier, and Source of victory over all sin. The more closely we study God’s Word with a resolve to obey it, the more richly and extensively the Spirit can work in our lives.

I. The Spirit, a Guide

God is not coercive. If we are humbly receptive to the truth, the Spirit will guide us unerringly into all truth. He will teach us with grace and compassion and not drill us like soldiers. Heaven-bound saints do not need to be “pulled into line,” but are cheerfully and speedily compliant with all God’s wishes, knowing that everything Father will bring all unto you” (John 14:26).

Key Text: John 14:26

Teachers Aims:
1. To explore the meaning of an experiential faith.
2. To show the importance of testing everything we learn of God by making sure it is in harmony with Bible teachings.

Lesson Outline:

I. Following the Holy Spirit’s Guidance (John 16:13)
   A. The Holy Spirit gives us the words we need to answer for our faith.
   B. The Holy Spirit helps us to make our decisions in accordance with God’s will.
   C. The Holy Spirit reveals God’s character through us by His power.

II. Testing All of the Spirits (1 John 4:1)
   A. God tells us to test the spirits and even tells us how to test them.
   B. The Bereans were praised for testing the message of the apostles with the Scriptures.
   C. The Holy Spirit will never contradict the Scriptures.

Summary: When we experience a living and vibrant faith, we live with the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome and to serve. Yet we must be sure that it is the Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit, that we are relying on. God encourages us to test everything that we learn of Him. We can do this only with the Bible. Let us not be like King Ahaz (Isa. 7:10-12) and reject the Lord’s challenge. It is for our benefit that God gives us this instruction, for we are easily led astray, and sometimes it is so subtle that we don’t even realize it.
**M**

**MONDAY**

May 22

---

**Flesh and Spirit**

**Read** Romans 8:4. Write in your own words what you believe Paul is saying. Focus specifically on what walking “after the Spirit” means. See also Rom. 13:14, Gal. 5:22-24.

---

The Christian chooses not to follow his or her own impulses and gratify his or her own inclinations but to follow, instead, the biddings of the Spirit. The dedicated follower of Jesus will never do anything without seeking the advice and guidance of God. “Lord, what do You want me to do?” is the question the Christian continually asks.

Neither is the Christian to dwell in the realm of mere belief or theoretical faith. Our faith will be experimental rather than theoretical. Under the guidance of the Spirit, the heavenly mind-set of belief will be poured into the earthly mold of action and behavior.

Yet, however much the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a miracle of faith, it doesn’t just happen automatically. Few of those who have given their hearts to Christ and have been baptized in the Holy Spirit suddenly find themselves living pure, sanctified lives without diligent effort on their own part. Here is where people make a mistake: Not to rely on your own works for salvation, or even not to rely on your strength in the battle against sin, isn’t the same as not having a daily struggle with self and the flesh. The battle is there, and real, and it will require suffering on our part in order to be victorious. The good news, however, is that we have been promised victory through the indwelling Spirit.

**Read** 1 Peter 4:1, 2. What is the message there for us regarding the battle against the flesh?

---

Is there some specific sin that you struggle with that causes you a great deal of suffering in the flesh as you seek to overcome in Christ’s name? What practical things can you do, on a daily basis, that could make you more open to the power of the Spirit in order for Him to give you the victory that is yours for the asking?
He teaches and requires is for our best good and highest happiness.

“ Provision is made by God Himself for every soul that turns to the Lord, to receive His immediate cooperation. The Holy Spirit becomes His efficiency.

“It is the Spirit’s power that we need. This can do more for us in one minute than we can ever accomplish by talking.

“Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train.”—Ellen G. White, My Life Today, p. 47.

II. Flesh and Spirit

Unlike pagan philosophy, Scripture does not teach that our bodies are intrinsically evil. God created us with a body of flesh (Gen. 2:7, 2 Cor. 4:11, Gal. 2:20), possessing senses, organs, and faculties that are all to be used to His glory (see Phil. 1:20-24). He calls our bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies our lives (see 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 6:16–7:1). Scripture also uses the word “flesh” as a metaphor for the fallen, carnal nature. In this sense the flesh is said to strive against the Spirit. (See Gal. 5:17 and Rom. 7:23, 8:5-12.) That is to say, our carnal nature is antagonistic to God and intensely resistant to Him. The Spirit, on the other hand, strives (to our benefit) against our fallen natures to subdue them to the will of God, thus bringing our physical being into harmony with the will of God. This does not mean that our fallen nature is rendered extinct in this life, so that we have “holy flesh,” but that we reckon ourselves dead in practical reality to our sinful propensities. Accordingly, we do not nurture or coddle our fleshly natures, but crucify them through Christ and come increasingly alive to Him and in Him. (See Rom. 6:6-19, Gal. 2:20.) If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the passions of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

III. The Spirit and the Word

God’s Spirit and the Scriptures are integrally connected. The Holy Spirit never reveals anything that is at variance with the Bible, for “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 8:16), and is the touchstone of all spiritual manifestations and experience, and of all doctrine. Never will the Spirit supersede Scripture, for the Spirit and the Word eternally agree in one. God’s Word is truth and His Spirit is truth. (See John 17:17, 1 John 5:6.) He imparts the effectual force of divine life to “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Clothed with the power of the Spirit and the Word, we are enabled to fight the good fight of faith, going on from strength to strength, victory to victory, and grace to grace. (See John 1:16, Eph. 6:10-17.) God’s Spirit, guiding us through the Word, protects us against fanaticism, bigotry, false doctrine, spiri-
The Spirit and the Word

“Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

The Word of God is here called the sword of the Spirit. It was the Spirit that inspired the written revelation, since “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). This is an important point that all Christians must always keep before them. God promises us His Holy Spirit, but we are also given warnings.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Timothy 4:1, and 1 John 3:24–4:1. What’s the message here for us?

The fact of the matter is, there are lots of various spirits out there teaching all sorts of doctrines. Even in the Christian church, strange beliefs, not to mention strange practices, are promoted by those who claim to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Though, in some cases, the deceptions and counterfeits are so obvious it’s amazing anyone can fall for them; in others, the deceptions can be quite subtle, promoted by people who might be kind, loving, gentle, even sincere. How, then, can someone ultimately test the spirits, whether they be of God or not?

What do these texts teach us about the ultimate test of whether or not teachings are inspired by the Holy Spirit? Ps. 119:105, Isa. 8:20, Luke 10:26, 16:29-31, Acts 17:11, 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

John Calvin admonishes: “We ought zealously to apply ourselves both to read and to hearken to Scripture if indeed we want to receive any gain and benefit from the Spirit of God. . . . But lest under his sign the Spirit of Satan should creep in, he would have us recognize him in his own image, which he has stamped upon the Scriptures. He is the Author of the Scriptures: he cannot vary and differ from himself. Hence he must ever remain just as he once revealed himself there.”—John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion I, 9:2 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

What kinds of spiritual deceptions have you encountered? How did the Word of God protect you? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.
tual lassitude and religious tyranny. (*See Acts 20:28-30, Eph. 4:8-16.)*

**IV. The Work of the Spirit**

“Heavenly intelligences are waiting to co-operate with human instrumentalities, that they may reveal to the world what human beings may become, and what, through union with the Divine, may be accomplished for the saving of souls that are ready to perish. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. All who consecrate body,

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** *Galatians 3:2-5; Philippians 2:12-16; Hebrews 11:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 1 John 2:22*

1. The Holy Spirit guides us in our conduct and in our understanding of the Scriptures. Why, then, do people still disagree on points of behavior, doctrine, and biblical interpretation? How can we know whether or not we are rightly guided if the guidance we receive seems to differ from the guidance others claim to have received?

2. One of the flaws in English and other Western languages is confusion over the difference between faith (experiential) and belief (intellectual). As a result, some might conclude that they can put their “faith” in one compartment and the rest of their life in another, with no interaction between the two. Why is this wrong? What is the role of intellectual belief?

3. The Spirit-guided life is not effortless. Our negative or destructive impulses do not suddenly disappear or somehow become sanctified. We still struggle against them. What is the role of our own efforts in these struggles, and what is the role of the Holy Spirit?

4. Everything the Holy Spirit does in our lives points us—and others—to Jesus. However, people may sometimes manage to achieve good or even “spiritual” things without glorifying or drawing attention to Jesus. Is it possible for apparently good, positive things to become stumbling blocks in the absence of Jesus? Explain your answer.

5. How does the Holy Spirit speak to us through the Scriptures? How is it possible for the Scriptures to legitimately say something to one of us personally that it may not say to others?
The Work of the Spirit

Read John 16:14. What does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will do?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

The work and purpose of the Spirit are centered on Jesus. He does not call attention to Himself, but He directs the attention to Jesus. The litmus test of any alleged workings of the Spirit in believers or organizations is the place they accord Jesus. If they call attention to and glorify self or humanity, and even magnify humanity’s spiritual experience, they lack the insignia of the Spirit.

The Spirit was not to present His own ideas or notions but only what Jesus taught. Jesus said, “He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:14).

Being the Spirit of truth, He will especially bear witness to Jesus, who is the Truth (see John 14:6). And it is only through the Spirit’s speaking directly to our hearts that we ever come to a true and living knowledge of Jesus Christ and bear fruit for His glory.

What are other ways the Holy Spirit can glorify our Lord? John 15:8, Gal. 5:22-25, Eph. 5:9.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

As believers, one of the greatest ways to bring glory to God, both before people and angels (1 Cor. 4:9), is by the lives we live, the characters we form, and the way we treat others. These actions and attitudes come through the work of the Holy Spirit in us; to the degree that we cooperate, to the degree that we are willing to die to self and to surrender to God’s will, to that degree the Lord can work in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). How crucial for all who profess the name of Jesus to live daily in an attitude of faith, thanksgiving, and surrender to His Spirit.

Look at your own life in the past 24 hours. What things did you do that brought glory to God? What things brought shame? What changes do you need to make?
soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories that because of our own erroneous and preconceived opinions, our defects of character, our smallness of faith, have seemed impossible.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 159.

**V. An Example of the Spirit’s Guidance**

Simeon was receptive to the Holy Spirit’s direct guidance and

**Witnessing**

Deception . . . falsehood . . . illusion. Highly negative words that raise suspicions as to what is really true and what is only a decoy used to lure someone away from the actual thing. This description is dead-on for describing the methods used by humanity’s greatest enemy, Satan, in creating ingenious ways to ease God’s people away from Him. Satan is the master deceiver, the one who can, and most certainly does, create smokescreens in order to blur and distort God’s simple truths. So, how can Satan be stopped in his tracks?

It’s essential we stay in daily communion with our heavenly Father. Prayer and Bible study on a regular basis cement our relationship with Christ and leave no room for Satan to wedge in and chip away at the cement.

Prayer must be intentional. We must develop a real need in our hearts not only to speak with God but allow Him to speak with us. He will, if we give Him the chance. We also need to listen to Him. The Father already knows the innermost secrets of our hearts. While He invites us to lay these personal issues before Him anytime, He also wants us to give Him the opportunity to respond to us. He isn’t able to do that as effectively if our communion with Him is one-sided.

Also required for a spiritually healthy Christian is daily Bible study. It’s a powerful way of staying well grounded and focused on heaven rather than distracted by Satan’s temporary attractions. Not only are we able to personally benefit from prayer and Bible study, we’re able to reach out to others and to share the blessings. While it might be a bit challenging at first to begin a neighborhood Bible study group, listen to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit; He’ll lead you gently as you make the Word of God available to those in your community. What we must avoid at all costs is a creeping immunity to the urging and nudging of the Holy Spirit. His quiet voice is one we must listen for and obey without pause!
An Example of the Spirit’s Guidance

Read Luke 2:25-30 and then answer the following questions:

How did Simeon know when to go to the temple in order to find “the Lord’s Christ” (vs. 26)?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What in these texts reveals why Simeon was so open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit? What’s the important message for us in there?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What was the significance of Simeon’s prayer; that is, what was he doing through it? See John 15:26, 16:14. Why is this point the key in understanding the work of the Holy Spirit?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Notice, too, the words of Simeon, under the inspiration of the Spirit, to Mary. What gift of the Spirit was being manifest here? See Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:10, 13:2.

Simeon, obviously, enjoyed such an intimate relationship with God that the Spirit told him to go to the temple on the day the child Jesus was being dedicated. From among the several boys who were being dedicated to God that day, he was led to choose Jesus, who, from all outward appearances, surely didn’t look any different from any other baby. Meanwhile, the officiating priest did not recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah; apparently, unlike Simeon, he was not susceptible to the promptings of the Spirit. But Simeon recognized Him because God showed him who was “the Lord’s Christ.” Some of the other boys whom Simeon bypassed might also have been born in Bethlehem as the firstborn child to mothers who were of the tribe of Judah. But only Simeon’s intimate acquaintance and communion with God through the Spirit enabled him to interpret the factual prophetic pieces of information and recognize in Jesus the Promised One of God.
revelation concerning the identity of the little “peasant boy” of Nazareth as the true Messiah (see Luke 2:25-35). Simeon walked by faith and not by sight. His vision pierced beyond the veil of the seen to discern the glorious mysteries of the unseen. So may we, according to the measure of our faith, if we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. (Consider 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; 4:18.)

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: When cutting lumber, a guide can be set so that every piece of wood cut is the same size. What other things have you made using a guide or pattern? How is your use of a pattern similar to the work of the Holy Spirit? Read John 16:12-14. In what ways does the Holy Spirit help our lives conform to God’s desires for us?

Thought Questions:
1 Simeon was “moved by the Spirit” (Luke 2:27, NIV) to recognize the world’s Redeemer in the Infant whom Mary brought to the temple. How might the biblical record be different if Simeon had disregarded the Holy Spirit’s prompting? Review the past week of your life. Did you sense the Holy Spirit asking you to speak with or to call someone to offer encouragement? How did you respond? What happens when we ignore this gentle guidance? Spend some time with God asking Him to help you be more aware of the Holy Spirit’s still, small voice.

2 If you made a list of all the things you have learned through life experiences or through the pursuit of education, how long would it be? How much have you forgotten? Jesus said the Counselor would “teach you all things” and even “remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26, NIV). Discuss what God desires us to know and remember. Why are these things important? How would you explain to a friend what you have learned about God and His value in your everyday life?

Application Question:
Describe the most perfect thing you have ever seen. Would it be easier to draw it or write a poem about it? Do you wish you had taken a picture of it (or, if you did, is the picture displayed in your home or office)? How do the beautiful things of this earth compare with the heavenly things God invites us to experience? How do we discern the difference between the blessings God wants to encourage us with now and the enticements the adversary uses to distract us? Journal your thoughts and then make plans to share them with at least one person this week.

“Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 43.

Concerning the statement in John 16:14 that reads “He [the Spirit] shall glorify me,” Ellen G. White says: “In these words Christ declares the crowning work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit glorifies Christ by making Him the object of supreme regard, and the Saviour becomes the delight, the rejoicing, of the human agent in whose heart is wrought this transformation.”—*My Life Today*, p. 49.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, go over your answer to Tuesday’s final question. What are some of the spiritual deceptions people have faced? What things have you learned that could be helpful to others?

2. Take two people: One has very good theology but is mean, nasty, vindictive, and judgmental; the other, though theologically suspect, is kind, loving, forgiving, and generous. Which one do you think is revealing more of the Holy Spirit in his or her life? Be prepared to defend your answer.

3. How should the church respond to someone who, acting rather strange, claims to be moving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

4. What can you do, as a class, that would bring glory to God? Does it take something fancy, some loud production, in order to do this, or can you, as a group, in a quiet and simple way glorify your Lord? If so, how so?
Life Through the Holy Spirit

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: John 3:3-6, 15-17; Rom. 8:6-11; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 1:6, 7; Col. 2:6.

Memory Text: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are the spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 671.

What incredible thoughts! What a powerful and precise revelation of the importance of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, we must always remember: In the same way that Jesus never forced Himself upon anyone, neither will the Spirit. We must make a daily choice to cooperate; otherwise, He can do little for us.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 3.
Salvation and the Spirit

As we’ve already seen, the Holy Spirit guides us into truth; that means, of course, He guides us to Jesus, for as He Himself said, “I am . . . the truth” (John 14:6). Yet, the truth about Jesus isn’t just that He is God, which He is, or that He entered into humanity, which He did, or that He lived sinlessly, which is true; instead, the crucial truth about Jesus is that He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. No matter how important everything else about Jesus is, in the end, they all culminate in His substitutionary death in behalf of humanity. Any theology that ignores or weakens this point is deviating from the work of the Holy Spirit, who is to guide us into “all truth” (John 16:13), and Christ on the cross as our Substitute is the center of all truth (1 Cor. 2:2).

Look up the following texts and write what they tell us about the foundation of our salvation:

John 3:15-17

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Rom. 3:22-24

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Eph. 1:6, 7

____________________________________________________________________

As Christians, the foundation of our hope, our acceptance with God, stems not from anything we can do, not from any works of righteousness we can produce, not even from any fruit of the Spirit but only from the righteousness of Jesus credited to us by faith. This is our surety, our guarantee, the only sure foundation upon which we can have any assurance. Through the merits of Christ’s perfect life, granted to us through nothing but God’s grace—which is His unmerited favor toward us as wayward sinners—there is no condemnation for us (Rom. 8:1), either now or in the judgment. Of all the truth the Holy Spirit could bring us, what could be more precious than this?

Are you struggling with assurance of salvation? Pray over today’s study. Make the Bible promises your own. Ask the Spirit to help you learn to trust only in Christ’s merits as the basis of your salvation.
**Key Text:** Romans 8:6-11

**Teachers Aims:**

1. To emphasize the availability of salvation as a gift of God’s grace and love.
2. To explore the practical aspects of a living salvation.

**Lesson Outline:**

I. God’s Love Motivated Jesus’ Sacrifice *(John 3:15-17)*

   A. Salvation is freely given to ALL who will accept it.
   B. Jesus’ sacrifice is the only means of salvation and only through the Holy Spirit are we able to accept it.

II. The Holy Spirit Is at Work Preparing our Hearts for Salvation *(Rom. 7:6, 24–8:4; Col. 3:12-16)*

   A. Efforts made without the Spirit are “dead works” of no value to us.
   B. Effects of the Holy Spirit in our lives are the fruit of the Spirit and a natural result of living in Him and Him in us.

**Summary:** For us to truly live as Christians we must be filled with the Holy Spirit in a daily intimate relationship. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives will be as evident as a neon sign in the darkest night. Sometimes we become frustrated because we feel we must do something to help God accomplish His work. The truth is that we do have to do something but that something is surrender. Staying surrendered to the will of God is often the hardest part of our lives. Yet, if we daily focus on our relationship with God we will find that there is actually a joy in surrendering to Him.

---

**COMMENTSARY**

**Introduction**

The Holy Spirit is the primary Agent in producing the new birth and forwarding the work of renewal and sanctification in our hearts.

**I. Salvation and the Spirit**

“The promised Holy Spirit, that He [Christ] would send after He
Death to Self: The Spirit in Us

No question, the Holy Spirit will guide us into the truth about Jesus. But His work for us doesn’t stop there; on the contrary, it only begins there. Leading us to Jesus, pointing us to the way of salvation, is only the first step in the Spirit’s work. For not only does the Holy Spirit work for us, guiding us to Jesus; He also works in us, changing us, taking the salvation we have in Jesus and making it manifest in our lives. The Christ who died for us is now the Christ who lives in us, as well.

Of course, the only way Christ can live in men and women is through His Spirit. Jesus infiltrates our minds by the Holy Spirit. The operations of God, in and for humanity, are through His Spirit. Without it, we might know intellectually about Jesus’ death, but it would never save us, for it would never become the life-changing force that it must be for all Christians.

Read Romans 8:6-11. In your own words, write out what these verses are saying to you. How do they help you understand what the Spirit does in the lives of all followers of Christ?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Notice the importance Paul placed on the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Though the great preacher of salvation by faith alone, Paul is just as emphatic about the place of holy living and obedience. There is no ambivalence here: If we live after the flesh, we will die; if we don’t have the Spirit working in us, we are not Christ’s. It’s hard to imagine how much plainer he could have been.

According to Paul, we should be dead to the flesh; in other words, our carnal desires, though there, should not dominate us. The same powerful Spirit that raised up Jesus from death is now working in us, making us dead to sin and alive unto righteousness. Paul isn’t talking just theory here: This is the reality of salvation in the life of the believer.

What is your own experience with being “dead” in Christ? Does this “death” occur only once, or is it a daily, ongoing process? What does your answer tell you about the day-by-day struggle Christians must face?
ascended to His Father, is constantly at work to draw the attention to the great official sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary, and to unfold to the world the love of God to man, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things in the Scriptures, and to open to darkened minds the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the truths that make their hearts burn within them with the awakened intelligence of the truths of eternity.”—Ellen G. White, Reflecting Christ, p. 132. Consider Acts 2 and the centrality of the Cross in Peter’s Spirit-inspired sermon at Pentecost. (See also Gal. 3:1-4, 5:1-7, 24-26.)

II. Death to Self: the Spirit in Us

Prayerfully ponder Romans 8:1-14 in conjunction with Colossians 3:1-11. Consider what it means to “mortify the deeds of the body . . . through the Spirit” (Rom. 8:13) and come alive to Christ and His righteousness (see Rom. 6:3-13). We need more than doctrinal explanation here, but Spirit-blessed application of the truth as it is in Jesus.

“Candidly and seriously we are to consider the question, Have we humbled ourselves before God, that the Holy Spirit may work through us with transforming power? As children of God, it is our privilege to be worked by His Spirit. When self is crucified, the Holy Spirit takes the brokenhearted ones, and makes them vessels unto honor. They are in His hands as clay in the hands of the potter. Jesus Christ will make such men and women superior in mental, physical, and moral power. The graces of the Spirit will give solidity to the character. They will exert an influence for good because Christ is abiding in the soul.”—Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, p. 51.

III. The Spirit and the Life

When Jesus told the multitudes that the words He spoke to them were Spirit and life, and that “he who feeds on Me will live because of Me” (John 6:57, last part), most of His listeners turned away in disgust. This was not because they thought that Christ was prescribing a literal or mystic form of cannibalism, but because they rejected the invitation to come under His life-transforming authority. (See John 6:51-66, 1 John 5:9-12.)

“Unless this converting power shall go through our churches, unless the revival of the Spirit of God shall come, all their profession will never make the members of the church Christians. There are sinners in Zion who need to repent of sins that have been cherished as precious treasures. Until these sins are seen, and thrust from the soul, until every faulty, unlovely trait of character is transformed by the Spirit’s influence, God cannot manifest Himself in power. There is more hope for the open sinner than for the professedly righteous who are not pure, holy, and undefiled . . .

“Who is prepared to allow Jesus to enter the soul and cleanse it from everything that tarnishes or corrupts? The standard is ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matt. 5:48). God calls upon men and women to empty their hearts...
The Spirit and Life

Yesterday, we saw how firmly Paul linked the Spirit with life, in contrast to the flesh and death. It’s a theme found elsewhere in his writings. Obviously, it’s something the apostle considered of major importance. We who were once dead in sin (Eph. 2:1) are now, through the Spirit, dead to sin and alive unto God (Rom. 6:11). What a radical change!

Read Galatians 5:16-25. Notice the contrast he expresses here between “works” (vs. 19) of the flesh and the “fruit” (vs. 22) of the Spirit. If you could summarize these texts in a single sentence, what would you write?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Here, too, Paul is very plain: If you do the things of the flesh, you will die, you will be lost. It’s that simple: The Spirit brings life, the flesh brings death.

Interesting, too, is how he contrasts “works” of the flesh with the “fruit” of the Spirit. Perhaps Paul was contrasting how we reap from the flesh what we sow from the flesh. In other words, sin is what we work at, suffer with, and finally reap the results of. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is something that naturally happens in a person who is under the control of the Spirit.

How are we to understand these two phrases (“you are not under the law” [vs. 18] and “against such there is no law” [vs. 23]) in the above texts?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Paul, for sure, is not saying Christians should no longer follow the Ten Commandments. That would contradict so much not only of what he wrote in other places but of what other parts of the New Testament teach, as well. Instead, he seems to be saying that if you manifest the fruit of the Spirit, you are automatically obeying the law and thus are not being condemned by it. The fruit of the Spirit is an expression of the law just as the works of the flesh are violations of it. The Galatians were Jews who were falling back into legalism; Paul was seeking to lead them toward something higher than dead works, which could not save them. Far from negating the law, he was urging them to live in the Spirit, which is expressed in obedience to the law.
of self. Then His Spirit can find unobstructed entrance. Stop trying to do the work yourself. Ask God to work in and through you until the words of the apostle become yours, ‘I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’”—Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, p. 51.

IV. Born of the Spirit

The new birth is not a compound of human and divine efforts, but it is a miracle carried out solely by the power of God operating deep within us and completely irradiating our lives. (See John 1:12, 13; Eph. 5:8-14.) Our part is to receive Christ without conditions or stipulations of our own. Take Him completely; He will make you complete. (See Acts 8:36-38, 26:13-20.) The Holy Spirit works on our hearts to present Christ as a living, personal reality, whom we receive as our Savior and Sovereign. Subtle, penetrating, persuasive, and infinitely powerful is the Spirit’s work to bring forth the new birth.

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: John 1:1; Romans 6:22, 23; 8:1-3, 12-15; Galatians 3:5

1 Christ is present to us in the form of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Spirit makes available to us knowledge of Jesus Christ and His salvation. How would you describe the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of someone who already has accepted salvation?

2 The Holy Spirit makes Christ present to seekers and believers. Yet, we also know that the Spirit is a distinct, personal entity in His own right. What do these two facts about the Holy Spirit teach us about the relationship between the members of the Trinity?

3 The Holy Spirit gives us new life and sustains that new life. Why is it necessary that we have new life? In what sense is our life in the Spirit new, or distinct, from our old life? In what sense were we “dead” prior to our conversion? In what sense are we alive after our conversion?

4 The Holy Spirit expresses Himself in our lives in what is essentially obedience to divine law. How might such obedience differ from the outwardly flawless obedience to the law one may see in those who adopt a legalistic approach to Christianity, or in those who adhere to legalistic religions?

5 What is the role of the human will in the work of the Spirit? Can the Holy Spirit compel us to do anything? If not, how does He make it less difficult for us to make the right choices? Is it still difficult for us to be good? Why?
“Born of the Spirit”

**Read** John 3:3-6. What does Jesus mean by making the distinction between being born in the flesh and being born in the Spirit?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

We are all, by nature, born in the flesh. Unless “born again” (which, in the Greek, really means “born from above”) by and through the Holy Spirit, we remain in the flesh and will, of course, die in the flesh.

Our only hope is the new birth, a regeneration and a partaking of the divine nature. The divine nature is imparted or mediated by the Spirit through the Word. Regeneration is, therefore, not our natural life brought up to the highest level of attainment but rather divine life from above imparted to us “who were dead in trespasses and sins” (*Eph. 2:1*). This comes through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us (see *Titus 3:5*).

The new birth, though, isn’t the end of the experience of salvation. It’s the beginning. No matter how life-changing the new birth is, we must daily live out that experience. We’re not just born again and then go happily and obliviously into the kingdom of God. It just doesn’t work that way.

**Read** Colossians 2:6. What do these words say regarding what it means to live out our new-birth experience?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

The life of someone born from above includes self-denial (*Luke 9:23*), self-sacrifice (*Rom. 12:1*), and a surrender of our sinful desires (*Rom. 6:19*). Though in and of ourselves we are not capable of these things, the Holy Spirit working in us will bring us to the point where we have to make the choice to yield to Him as opposed to the flesh. Once that decision is made, He will give us the power to obey. In the end, everything depends upon the right action of the will. We have to make the choices.

**The next time you face temptation, consciously dwell upon your free choice at the moment of temptation. Realize that the decision to obey God or to sin is yours. Will you yield to sin, or will you surrender to the Holy Spirit, claim His power, and get the victory?**
V. Connection

Salvation in Christ introduces us to intimate fellowship with the entire Godhead through the Spirit. No part of the Deity remains aloof from us or inaccessible. This communion is most directly open to us through the avenue of receptivity to the Word of God (see John 14:15-17, 21-23; 15:7-15). God’s Word begets new life in the soul, a life that conforms to the image of Christ, the Living Word, thus making us partakers of the divine nature. (See 1 Pet. 1:2-5, 9-14; 2 Pet. 1:1-4.)

“God’s holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. Truth is there revealed, and words and sentences are made bright and appropriate for the occa-

Witnessing

Born-again Christian. What exactly does the term mean? Obviously, it means different things to different people; however, all would probably agree that its overall meaning connotes a complete change in character and focus. Someone who is born again is incapable of living the same lifestyle that he or she lived before conversion. This person is filled with the good news. Haven’t we all met people who have truly experienced a life-altering spiritual change? Wouldn’t we agree that they are changed people? We are all still sinners, to be sure; however, such people are now no longer hopeless but are people of hope!

What has brought about this miraculous change? Coming face-to-face with the plan of salvation, accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, beginning a daily walk with Him. The Christian learns how deeply Christ loves and yearns for His children, so much so that He has sent a part of Him, His own Representative, the Holy Spirit, to guide and lead us on the salvation journey. What joy it is to be aware that the Holy Spirit is not physically limited to one zip code, one point in time, one Christian’s troubles. Rather, He has unlimited access to all at any time, any place, under any circumstance. Truly, He is the great Comforter!

The new Christian learns quickly that example will lead others to Christ or that example will turn others away from Christ. The importance of setting the right example is willingly undertaken, because there is a great need to share the joy and liberation that comes with accepting Christ—His life, teachings, death, and most importantly, His resurrection and intercession for humankind.

A true believer is absolutely unable to hoard the good news. The urgency, the need to share with others, is first and foremost in his or her heart. This individual has received a precious gift that has been opened and, like the sweet scent of a priceless perfume, draws others to its Source.

Are you drawn to this Source? Have you opened the gift? Will you share it with others, whenever and wherever you can?
Connection

Before Jesus died, He gave His followers the promise of the Holy Spirit. Notice, however, what He said specifically in John 14:18: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

The Bible is clear—Jesus is now ministering for us in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:24). What, then, did He mean when He said “I will come to you”?

Jesus is no longer here in the flesh, but He is here in the Spirit, which is His Representative on earth now. Through intimacy with the Spirit, we have intimacy with Christ. The Holy Spirit keeps the presence of Christ alive for us. Through the Spirit we can have a close and intimate walk with Christ.

And this walk is, in many ways, the crucial issue of life through the Holy Spirit. We want to serve God because we love God; we want to be cleansed of sin because we love God and we know what sin has wrought in God’s creation. Sure, life through the Spirit demands surrender, sacrifice, and death to self; but if the Spirit dwells in us, it will keep before us the amazing sacrifice of Jesus in our behalf. If we, day by day, under the unction of the Holy Spirit, dwell upon Jesus and upon the wonderful love manifested toward us through His death on the cross, we will be empowered from above to live as God asks us to live. To be sanctified isn’t just to stop doing bad things; it is to be “set apart” for God, to live for Him in faith, repentance, and surrender. This can happen only through a living connection with Him. “We may leave off many bad habits, and yet not be truly sanctified, because we do not have a connection with God. We must unite with Christ.”—Ellen G. White, The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Jan. 24, 1893.

In your own religious experience, what are the things that allow you to connect with Jesus? Write just what it is that connects you to Him and helps you know and love Him better. At the same time, write alongside your answer whatever Bible verses you find that correspond with your answers. Be prepared to share your response in class.
sion, as the voice of God speaking to the soul.

“[Through] the Holy Spirit . . . the promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation.

“The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character”—Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 132.

This is not a religion of imaginary ideals, but of divine fellowship that is elevating, instructive, and fully satisfying. (See 2 Cor. 13:14.)

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: From your childhood, share a conflict you may have had with a sibling or parent and how it was reconciled. Why did these struggles diminish as you became older? As you read Galatians 5:16-25, make two lists. One should include “the acts of the sinful nature” (vs. 19, NIV) and the other, “the fruit of the Spirit” (vs. 22, NIV). Ask God to change your life so it will look like the second list as you “keep in step with the Spirit” (vs. 25, NIV).

Thought Questions:

1. Discuss what it means to be alive. Why did you include more than breathing and having a pulse? Read John 3:3-6, 15-17. How do these passages broaden the definition of what it means to be truly alive? How does a worldview, that includes eternal life, widen and deepen our perspective? How would you describe the ways that your great-controversy perspective benefits your life to someone who hasn’t heard of it before?

2. When is it a good thing to be controlled? And, even more difficult to imagine, when might it be a benefit to be dead? Read Romans 8:6-11. How do Paul’s stark contrasts compel our understanding? Make a mental list of how allowing Christ to live in you through the Holy Spirit has changed your experience and attitudes. How would you introduce a friend or coworker to a new life in the Spirit?

Application Question:
The other day, Samantha had trouble with her computer. It wouldn’t boot, because the power cable was loose. What kinds of things (for example, busyness, apathy) loosen our connection to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit provides the power for us to claim and live out our salvation. As a class, share personal experiences about practical ways to remain linked to God. Spend a few moments in prayer, asking God to strengthen each one’s commitment to Him. Also, petition that He remove any barriers that interfere with our relationship with Him.

“The gift of righteousness is communicated to men through the agency of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:8). Herein lies the difference between the ineffective righteousness man seeks through works and the effective righteousness that comes through faith. In the former the Spirit has no part, for the effort is purely human and thus independent of divine grace.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 977.

“Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.’ Ezek. 36:26. The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 407.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, go over your answers to Thursday’s final question. What points do the answers have in common? What can you learn from one another? If you could summarize in a few lines, what’s the key to truly being connected with Christ?

2. What advice would you give to someone who says to you “I love Jesus, and I want to obey, but I keep falling into the same sin over and over”?

3. As we discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in us, why is it always crucial to remember that the basis of our salvation is what Christ has done for us? What dangers do we face if we ever lose sight of that crucial truth?
The Restorer

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: Genesis 1, Jer. 17:9, John 15:13, Rom. 1:21, 5:10-19, 1 Cor. 13:4-7, Titus 1:15, 2 Pet. 1:2-8.

Memory Text: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

One of the great hopes of all Christians is the hope of eternal life. After all, without that—what? We live, we die, we rot in the ground forever alongside the animals? No, that’s not to be our end. Instead, not only do we have the hope of eternal life—it’s not a continued life here in this world as it now is. Please! Our short existence world is hard enough; imagine that going on forever!

Instead, we’re given the wonderful promise: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13). Eternal life isn’t eternal life on this sinful earth but on a new one where there will dwell not sin, not death, not sinners—but “righteousness.”

From the beginning, God has been working toward that goal, that goal of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. And this is where the plan of salvation becomes crucial, for the plan of salvation is how God is working to get us into that new earth. That’s why salvation includes the process of restoration. God is getting us ready for a new heaven and a new earth and the righteousness that will dwell there.

This week we continue our look at what the Holy Spirit is doing in order to prepare us for our new home.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 10.
Created in God’s Image (Genesis 1)

Even the simplest reading of the Genesis Creation account reveals that our existence is no accident. We are not here because of blind, purposeless forces that, given enough time, just happened to coalesce into a people-filled planet. Instead, we are here because God purposely put us here. Verse after verse in Genesis 1 explicitly depicts God as the Agent of Creation. In other words, there was a distinct plan for our existence. Nothing was left to chance. Contrast this view to evolutionary theory, which claims we are here only by chance; that there was no plan, no purpose, no intention for us. We are a cosmic accident, nothing more. It’s hard to imagine any view more contradictory to biblical origins than evolution. No wonder Satan works so hard to promote it.

Genesis 1:26, 27 says that God created man and woman in His own image. What does that mean, being created in the image of God? How does 1 John 4:8 help us answer this question?

Whatever being in the image of God means, it must also include the capacity to love. As beings made in the image of a God who Himself “is love,” what else could it be? This ability to love sets us apart distinctly from the rest of what was created in Genesis 1. The moon, the grass, the seas, even the animals—none of which was made in the image of God—don’t have the capacity to love as humans do. Certainly the ability to love, as we have it, has made us different from everything else created in Genesis.

From your own personal experiences, along with what the Bible teaches (see John 15:13, 1 Cor. 13:4-7, 1 John 4:10), what is your best understanding of what love is? What does your answer tell you about what Adam and Eve must have been like after first being created? What does your answer tell you about what life on this earth was intended to be like? Be prepared to share your answer in class.
The very essence of the gospel is restoration” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 824), and the Holy Spirit affects our restoration to God’s image by recreating us “in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24), and removing the last vestiges of sin from our lives.

**I. Created in God’s Image**

Humanity came forth from the hand of the Creator a masterpiece of perfection, glowing with the image of God, innately pure, and capable of unlimited spiritual and intellectual development through an unbroken relationship with the Creator. This relationship was conditional on a worshipful, enlightened subordination to the will and law of God, from whom flows all life, love, wisdom and knowledge. Read Genesis 1:26-31, all of Genesis 2, and Ecclesiastes 7:29.
Love and the Fall

Read Genesis 3:1-6. What did Adam and Eve have to possess in order to be able to fall?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Yesterday, we saw we were created in the image of God, and whatever else that must mean, it must, at least, mean we were given the capacity to love. Yet, love, in order to be love, has to be free; that is, God can’t force His creatures to love Him, or one another for that matter. Love cannot be coerced. Because we were given the ability to love, we also were given free choice. The Fall is a powerful example of what happens when beings with free choice make the wrong choices.

And we, too, millennia after Eden, have free choice. Yet, our situation is much worse than Adam and Eve’s before the Fall. They were perfect beings, living in the full light of God’s glory; their natures were not corrupted or sinful. In contrast, we are fallen beings with corrupted, sinful natures steeped in iniquity. It’s one thing having free choice while perfect; it’s another having that same free choice while corrupted. What’s scarier: a kind, gentle, loving person who carries a gun or a nasty, spiteful, and hateful one who wields the same weapon?

What kind of picture do the following texts portray about unregenerate human nature? Jer. 17:9, Rom. 1:21, 5:12, Eph. 2:3, Titus 1:15.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

The Bible is very clear about the state of fallen human nature. It’s bad, very bad, and left unchecked it would lead to death and destruction for the entire human race. All one has to do is look around at the world today, and we can see, everywhere, the results of what our fallen nature has wrought: war, terrorism, addiction, exploitation, prostitution, crime, and on and on. It’s only because of the grace of God we haven’t destroyed ourselves. No doubt, if given enough time, we would accomplish just that.

What things do you see around you every day that testify to the corruption of human nature? What does your answer tell you about just how desperate our situation would be if left unsolved?
II. Love and the Fall

Adam and Eve’s fall produced a radical change in human nature. Now in possession of a sinful nature by their unwise choice, they were impotent to pass on to their progeny anything but that fallen nature, which we have all inherited without our choice (see Rom. 5:12-19). A subtle but profound perversion of all our faculties—particularly our moral and intellectual sensibilities—is the dire and deadly consequence of sin, of which the result is death. But God was not content to let the matter rest there. Just as we did not ask to be born into a crooked and perverse race of beings, nor did we ask God to choose the course that He took—to shoulder the burden of resolving the plight that sin has imposed on the human race. Let us praise Him for His gracious and self-sacrificing intervention, rather than intractably sulk over our fallen state, or revel in rebellion. (See Rom. 10:10-18, 16:25-27.)

III. Second Probation

It was impossible for God to abandon the human race to its grim and hopeless fate brought on by sin. Impossible, not because He is under anyone’s authority—for He is supremely sovereign in the universe—but because His infinite love for us constrained Him to do all that is consistent with His righteousness. God saved us from sin, while at the same time annihilating sin and its effects in one comprehensive plan of concerted action.

Romans 5 rises as a spiritual observatory for surveying the limitless expanse and constellated beauty of the plan of redemption and its effects. Through Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross, God envisaged nothing less than offering His righteousness to us through the abundance of His grace, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (See Rom. 5:17-21.) As beneficiaries of Christ and His righteousness, all repentant sinners are now empowered to live in conformity to God’s will, not through outward force, but through the motivating power of God’s love working from the inmost depths of our transformed being.

IV. The Restoration

“But those who are truly sanctified have a sense of their own weakness. Feeling their need, they will go for light and grace and strength to Jesus, in whom all fullness dwells, and who alone can supply their wants. Conscious of their own imperfections, they seek to become more like Christ, and to live in accordance with the principles of His holy law. This continual sense of inefficiency will lead to such entire dependence upon God that His Spirit will be exemplified in them. The treasures of heaven will be opened to supply the wants of every hungering, thirsting soul. All of this character have the assurance of one day beholding the glory of that kingdom which as yet the imagination can only faintly grasp.
Second Probation

Sunday and Monday we looked at first the creation of humanity and then at the Fall. Our situation, as fallen creatures, was bleak. The actions of Adam and Eve after the Fall perfectly reflected the state of humanity: fearful, alienated from God and each other, guilty, and ashamed. With their children, murder was added to the roster of human wickedness (Gen. 4:8), and before long their hearts were “only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

Of course, we know that God didn’t leave humanity to suffer the full and final results of sin. The whole plan of salvation was initiated by the Lord in order to rescue us from the utter ruin that would otherwise have been ours. Jesus came and went over the same ground as Adam, only where Adam failed Jesus succeeded—and because of what Jesus accomplished, the whole world was given another chance. Through faith in Jesus, anyone, anywhere, can have the promise of eternal life, the promise of having restored everything that was lost through sin.

Look at the following text (Rom. 5:10-19). What is the essential message it is giving to us? Notice the stark contrasts presented here. What brought death, and what brings life?

Jesus came, and through all He accomplished with His sinless life and then atoning death, the human race has been given another chance. In this sense, the human race, as a whole, has been restored to favor with God. This doesn’t mean the whole race is automatically saved or justified; it means, instead, everyone has been given another chance. The doom that should have been ours through Adam has been averted because of Jesus.

“The word of God declares that we are not our own, that we are bought with a price. It is at an immense cost that we have been placed upon vantage ground, where we can find liberty from the bondage of sin wrought by the fall in Eden. Adam’s sin plunged the race into hopeless misery; but by the sacrifice of the Son of God, a second probation was granted to man. In the plan of redemption a way of escape is provided for all who will avail themselves of it.”—Ellen G. White, Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, p. 15.

Think about what it means to have a “second probation.” Were you ever given a second chance at something? What did you learn from that experience that can help you better appreciate what you now have been given through the Cross?
“Those who have felt the sanctifying and transforming power of God must not fall into the dangerous error of thinking that they are sinless, that they have reached the highest state of perfection, and are beyond the reach of temptation. The standard the Christian is to keep before him is the purity and loveliness of Christ’s character. Day by day he may be putting on new beauties, and reflecting to the world more and still more of the divine image.”—Ellen G. White, *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 66.

**V. The Restoration (Continued)**

Growing from our standpoint of perfect acceptance with God through Christ (see Eph. 1:6), born-again persons are motivated by God’s love and truth to constantly “grow in grace, and in the

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** Genesis 1:26, 17:1, Deuteronomy 13:4, Joshua 24:15, Romans 9:22, Hebrews 2:3

1. The book of Genesis informs us that the first humans were created in God’s image. Does that still apply to us? What aspects of our being suggest that the image of God is still present in us? How has that image been distorted?

2. Freedom of choice is one of the defining characteristics of the human condition, but it is limited, or influenced, by our present circumstances. How has the presence of sin made it more difficult for us to choose God’s way? Do circumstances absolve us from responsibility? Why, or why not?

3. A look at the world in its present state reveals death, decay, and corruption of all kinds. Many scientific theories are based on the assumption that these things existed since the beginning of time. How can we know that the way things are is not the way they were meant to be? What evidence is there in life and nature that there is something higher?

4. The human race was given a second chance by the death and resurrection of Christ. Why, then, will some people still not be saved? Do some people make a conscious decision not to be saved? If so, can their decision be an informed decision?

5. If Christians are to attain perfection, how are we to understand perfection? Are we using the word *perfection* in the conventional sense of being without flaws or limitations? What does the process of becoming perfect mean in the Christian life? As Christians, how are we in some sense already perfect?
The Restoration: Part 1

Yesterday, we saw that despite our desperate situation, God did not leave us without hope. On the contrary, we have been given great hope through Jesus Christ, who has paved the way for each of us to return to what we would have been before the Fall.

And the process begins now. The gospel isn’t just salvation; it isn’t just a change in our legal status before God. The gospel is also restoration. We were originally made in the image of God; the plan of salvation is the process to bring us back to that state. This isn’t just something that will happen at the Second Coming: It’s a process that begins now. The Holy Spirit is working in us to restore in us what has been lost through sin.

Read 2 Peter 1:2-8. How do these verses, particularly the part where Peter talks about being “partakers of the divine nature,” help us understand the work of restoration that is going on in us right now? How do these verses relate to Genesis 1:26, 27?

God works to change fallen beings into His image by transforming their wills, minds, and desires. In short, the Holy Spirit works on our characters. Partaking of the divine nature, we are being transformed. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). And that image, of course, is the image of God, and this has been revealed to us in no better way than through Jesus, who was “the express image” (Heb. 1:3) of God’s person. Yet, because Jesus isn’t here in the flesh, the Holy Spirit is here as His Representative, revealing to us the truths that will change and transform our lives. This is a process of restoration that will not be completed until there’s a new heaven and a new earth. Until then, God is working on us now, getting us ready for a new existence that has been made available to us through Jesus.

Imagine what your life would be like if you more and more reflected the character of Jesus. What immediate changes would take place, particularly in your relationship with others, were you to start reflecting that character?
knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). At no stage of our growth in grace and godliness does the process become a “do-it-yourself” operation. It always remains true that without Christ we “can do nothing” (John 15:5). And it always remains true that we can do all divinely ordered things “through Christ who strengthens [us]” (Phil. 4:13). It is God working in us to will and to do His good pleasure, empowering us to cooperate intelligently with His will, if we continue to abide in Him. (See Eph. 3:16-21; Phil. 2:12, 13; Col. 1:10, 11.)

“Let the glorious conceptions of God possess your mind. Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is willing to shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power.

Witnessing

In the hands of a gifted plastic surgeon, miracles take place. A child born with a harelip is given a winning smile. A young man, burned in a terrible automobile crash, ventures back out in public and cherishes the hope that someday he’ll have a chance at a normal life. A middle-aged woman fighting a disfiguring disease is once again made whole with reconstructive surgery.


Our heavenly Father, the Master Restorer, has promised that someday His children will have the opportunity to live on an earth made new. God’s children will see, for the very first time, what Adam and Eve lost when they exchanged perfection for defection. Sin, with all its twisted and torturous side-effects, will be eradicated, never again to harm or to destroy God’s creations.

Not only will the earth be transformed but, most importantly, so will the children of God. The spiritual, physical, and emotional scars left by sin will be no more. The Master Surgeon will have removed them from His children for eternity.

There will be two sets of scars that will never disappear. These scars belong to the Master Physician, Jesus Christ. Someday soon, God’s children will be able to gently trace the nail holes in the hands and feet of Jesus—an eternal reminder of the price Jesus paid to purchase back each of His children.

Every human being needs the restoring power of the Holy Spirit. What are you going to do this week to make that possible?
The Christian life is a road toward perfection (Rom. 12:2, James 1:4), a word that in the New Testament comes with the idea of “completion,” “fully grown,” or “mature.” We are to be perfect in our finite and fallen sphere as God is in His infinite and absolute sphere (Matt. 5:48).

Apart from Christ, of course, we cannot attain any kind of “perfection.” Instead, it is Christ who “became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30, NASB). In Christ, these qualities constitute our “perfection” before God. He completed, once and for all, our sanctification and redemption. We are “complete in Him” even now (Col. 2:10). It is now the work of the Holy Spirit to take these “completed” products and make manifest in our lives the reality of what Christ has done for us. Our growth, our character development, our restoration toward the image of God become the living expression of what it means to “be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:19). In Christ, the Holy Spirit is making real in us the reality of what Christ has done for us. No one can be a Christian without both these aspects of salvation foundational to their new lives in Christ.
into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 149.

**Life-Application Approach**

**Icebreaker:** Many homes have a picture wall—pictures of parents at their wedding, baby pictures, and current family pictures form a visual history of the occupants. Who do you look like? Did any of your children look like you did at the same age? Plan to share at least one dated family picture in class. See if your class members can recognize you. Read Genesis 1 together as a class. Consider this big, cosmic picture of humanity’s history. What does it really mean to be created in the image of God?

**Thought Questions:**

1. It is so easy to see the faults in others, but we generally are far less objective with ourselves. Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Titus 1:15. In class, discuss why we wear blinders when it comes to our own flaws. How is this a consequence of sin and how does it separate us from God? In what ways does the Holy Spirit seek to heal us, even though we have contracted the chronic disease of sin? Why is it so difficult for us to grant the same compassion to others?

2. Recently, Michelangelo’s statue of David was restored. In the process of cleaning the surface of the marble, it was discovered that the ankles of the statue were beginning to crumble under its weight. How often do you take one step forward toward God only to find that you also took three steps on a side journey away from Him? When you “make every effort” *(2 Pet. 1:5, NIV)* to stay on the right path, who comes alongside you to help? Discuss the gift of the Holy Spirit and how it enhances our own attempts to be like Jesus. How can we keep from relying too heavily on our own plans and agendas for becoming right with God?

**Application Question:**

What were your family’s rules when someone was out of line? Did your parents say, “We’ll count to three,” mandating that the wrongful behavior must stop before the “three” was pronounced? How did this represent a second chance to conform to family guidelines? Humanity, and each of us personally, has chosen to rebel against God. Read Romans 1:21 and 5:10-19 in as many versions as you have available. What are these passages saying to you personally? Write a letter to God accepting salvation. Ask Him to make “the gift of righteousness reign” *(Rom. 5:17, NIV)* in your life.

“In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

“Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1101.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. As a class, go over your answers to Sunday’s final question. Before you do, have each person write on a card his or her own definition of love and have each person read it before the discussion begins.

2. Read aloud in class the second Ellen G. White quote listed above. How does that idea help us understand the close relationship between faith and works in the life of a Christian?

3. As a class, talk about the idea of a “second probation,” a second chance. Is there anyone you know who needs another chance? If so, why not, as a class, make a determined effort to find that person and let him or her know that he or she has another chance, not only with each of you but, more important, with God?
The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

SABBATH AFTERNOON


Memory Text: “Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (Mark 3:28, 29).

Of all the hard sayings in the Bible, this memory text has to be among the most difficult. Considering who Jesus was and what He did in order to be able to forgive our sins, the idea of a sin that even the Cross doesn’t make provision for should cause us to tremble. Murder, incest, pride, adultery, theft, idolatry, even words spoken against Christ (Matt. 12:21-32) can be forgiven (Eph. 1:7); yet, in the words of Christ Himself, “he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness” (Mark 3:29). That’s incredible!

Thus, the logical question is “What is this so-called ‘unpardonable sin’” (a phrase that, by the way, never appears in Scripture)? The whole idea of a sin that can’t be forgiven seems so contrary to all we know about the God who went through so much precisely in order to forgive us all our sins. That’s why this is a topic so worthy of study—for we all need to be aware of the one thing that, more than anything else, leaves us, as Jesus said, “in danger of eternal damnation” (vs. 29).

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 17.
To Save Sinners

**According** to 1 Timothy 1:15, what was the purpose of Christ’s coming to this earth?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Volumes could be written about the reasons for the incredible story of Jesus Christ, the God who veiled His divinity in humanity and died in our stead the death that we, as sinners, deserve. Among those reasons for the life and death of Jesus are:

1. He came in order to reveal to us just what God was like (John 14:9).
2. He came in order to be a Servant of God and show what servanthood was about (Matt. 20:25-28, Phil. 2:5-7).
3. He came to leave us an example of how to live (John 2:6, 1 Pet. 2:21).
4. He came in order to be a faithful and merciful High Priest in our behalf (Heb. 2:17, 18).

All these things, however important, would be meaningless to us without what’s undoubtedly the most crucial aspect of Christ’s earthly mission.

**Read** Mark 10:45, John 3:14-16, 1 Cor. 15:3, Heb. 2:9, and 1 John 3:8. What reasons do these texts together give for the life and death of Jesus?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Of all the reasons Jesus came and died, the most important—at least from our perspective—is that He died to save us from the legal penalty of sin, which is death, eternal death. And the great news is that through His work He is able to do just that for anyone who accepts Him. Salvation comes to all who believe, the Jew first and then the Gentile (Rom. 2:9). Those who believe are then spared the “eternal damnation” Jesus warned about in numerous places, including Mark 3:29, in which He talked about the one sin that could lead to this damnation. Thus, if through belief in Him we are spared this “eternal damnation,” and if the “unpardonable sin” leads to this damnation, what most likely is this “unpardonable sin” really about?
While the central aim of the gospel is to save us by bringing us to repentance, confession, and forsaking of our sins, human pride strenuously resists. God’s goodness is actively at work to lead us to repentance by convicting us of sin and revealing the righteousness, mercy, and judgment of God. Those who reject that revelation and convicting influence place themselves on the road to committing the unpardonable sin.

I. To Save Sinners

Christ came primarily to save sinners. (See Luke 19:10, 1 Tim. 1:15.) This supremely challenging mission also included a restoration of the knowledge and experience of God’s truth, which the stultifying effects of sin had obliterated.

God is love. Jesus came to break the power of Satan, the author of sin, and destroy him, while saving repentant sinners from the
“All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy”

Read Matthew 12:22-31 and summarize the context in which Jesus said what He did. Notice, too, to whom He was speaking. How does that help us understand what He was saying in regard to the “unpardonable sin”? See also Mark 3:22-30.

Christ’s strong words didn’t appear in a vacuum. Instead, they were expressed in response to a statement by certain Pharisees who, after witnessing a healing performed by Jesus, said He “cast out devils” (Matt. 12:24) by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. This attitude was taken in the face of undeniable evidence given them of His divine power: the holiness of His life, which they could but recognize and which they later tacitly admitted (John 8:46); His supernatural healing of the sick (Matt. 8:14-17, Mark 1:29-34, etc.); His casting out of devils (Matt. 9:32, 33); and His raising of the dead (Luke 7:11-17).

However, by refusing to admit Christ’s divinity, and by actively opposing Him, these men had placed themselves in such a position that they were forced to explain His works on some other grounds than divine and, hence, assigned to Satan the work of God. They thereby closed their minds to the evidence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit impresses truth upon the mind and heart (John 14:17, 16:13) and convicts of sin (John 16:8). But although God is long-suffering and merciful and not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9), His Spirit will not labor with the obdurate heart indefinitely (Gen. 6:3). If truth is persistently resisted and refused, the Spirit’s promptings cease to be heard, and the soul is left in terrible darkness.

This is possibly the condition to which Paul referred when he described certain consciences as being “seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:2). For a person guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, probation has closed, and there is for him or her “no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment” (Heb. 10:26, 27).

From what you’ve read so far this week, what’s your understanding of the sin against the Holy Spirit?
Christ came into the world not to condemn the world, but to save it through His atoning grace. He reveals Himself as “a God ready to pardon” (Neh. 9:16), who “delights in mercy” (Mic. 7:18). To reject our need of God’s mercy for pardon and sanctification is to turn the oasis of life’s supreme opportunity into a bleak spiritual desert. It is to choose death over life. (See Deut. 30:11-20; Prov. 1:22-33; Isa. 5:1-5, 18-24; Rom. 10:21.)

II. All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy

God can forgive the vilest of offenses if our hearts are open to the convictions of the Spirit to show us His way. (See Rom. 8:14.) People may reject the Bible and Christ (at least initially) because of misrepresentation, but if they are open to the Spirit of truth, God will lead them to repentance and belief in the truth they once ignorantly despised. If, however, the spirit of error is persistently chosen over the Spirit of truth, then we are flirting with the unpardonable sin.

Yet we are not authorized to tell anyone that they have stepped beyond the bounds of God’s grace, whatever appearances might suggest that they have. “The Lord sends warnings to His people, not to destroy them, but to correct their errors. I have never been given the testimony to bear to any one, ‘You have committed the unpardonable sin.’ God never told any one to say to a fellow being, ‘You have committed the unpardonable sin.’ ”—Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, vol. 78, no. 31, July 30, 1901.

III. The Unpardonable Sin

We must be clear—no one particular act of violation of God’s law constitutes the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin is not a single offense or category of sin so heinous that it does not come within the pale of God’s pardoning love. Jesus declared that sinners guilty of “all manner of sin” (including murder and adultery—consider King David) are within the compass of His saving grace. Therefore, the unpardonable sin refers to a mind-set, an intransient repudiation of God’s convicting and converting love. It is a fixed determination to regard the wooings of the Holy Spirit as a form of harassment or even as an accusing voice from Satan. Thus did the Pharisees who accused Christ of being Beelzebub. Judas, who linked himself in close association with Jesus, withdrew progressively (or, rather, regressively) from the Spirit of Christ because of his insistence on retaining his love of pride, wealth, and prestige.

“Wonderful had been the long-suffering of Jesus in His dealing with this tempted soul. Nothing that could be done to save Judas had been left undone. After he had twice covenanted to betray his Lord, Jesus still gave him opportunity for repentance. By reading the secret purpose of the traitor’s heart, Christ gave to Judas the
The Unpardonable Sin

Sin is fatal to our existence, but God delights to forgive us our sins. We need not perish, although “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Jesus died to earn the right to forgive repentant sinners.

But there is one sin that is unpardonable and inevitably results in eternal death. When someone refuses to respond to the goodness of God, which is designed to lead unto repentance (Rom. 2:4), this continued refusal to accept God’s overtures of grace will finally result in the commission of the unpardonable sin.

Read again Matthew 12:31 and Mark 3:29, in their respective contexts. How does this context reveal what’s being expressed in the above paragraph?

The unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Spirit, is persistent rejection of light, the persistent rejection of what Christ has done for us. This rejection inevitably blinds the spiritual eyes and hardens the rejecter’s heart to the wooings of the Spirit, as the example of those leaders in Israel. Finally, there is utter darkness in the soul, and the person is eternally lost because he or she has ruined his or her soul’s perceptivity to the promptings of the Spirit.

Placing one’s self beyond the power of the Holy Spirit is “unpardonable” because we cannot even repent without the aid of the Spirit of God. God can’t do anything for us unless He forces us, which He won’t do. We have, through our own choices, cut ourselves off from salvation.

Read again Matthew 12:32 and Mark 3:29; notice how Jesus ties the unpardonable sin with the idea of speaking. Why, considering the above definition, would He do that?

In biblical thought, words are deemed as actions. Words are part of the reality they depict. God spoke, and the world came into existence (Genesis 1); Jesus Himself was the “Word . . . made flesh” (John 1:14). In the Hebrew, the most common term for “word” (dabar) also means “thing,” “history,” “prophecy,” and that’s because words are linked to the reality they refer to. Thus, it seems that Jesus equates speaking against the Holy Spirit as a persistent rejection of the truth the Spirit seeks to bring us. Actions and words are inseparably linked.

Think about the last time someone hurt you with words. That should show you that, indeed, words are “real” things. Make a covenant with God right now to guard carefully your tongue.
Teacher's Comments

final, convincing evidence of His divinity. This was to the false disciple the last call to repentance. No appeal that the divine-human heart of Christ could make had been spared. The waves of mercy, beaten back by stubborn pride, returned in a stronger tide of subduing love. But although surprised and alarmed at the discovery of his guilt, Judas became only the more determined. From the sacramental supper he went out to complete the work of betrayal.”

—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 655. This typifies the character and conduct of those who commit the unpardonable sin in the face of divine mercy.

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Matthew 12:24-37, John 3:17-19, 1 Corinthians 2:8, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Timothy 3:7

1 One reason Christ came to earth was to make it possible for us to have our sins forgiven. Why does the sin against the Holy Spirit seem to be an exception? How does a person sin against the Holy Spirit?

2 Many refer to the sin against the Holy Spirit as the “unpardonable sin.” Although this may be correct in some sense, why can it be confusing to refer to it as such? Is there really a sin God can’t—or won’t—forgive? How might the sin against the Holy Spirit have more to do with our willingness to seek forgiveness than with God’s ability or willingness to grant it?

3 Most sins are committed with some degree of knowing there will be consequences, even if one feels helpless to refrain from sinning. Is the same true of the sin against the Holy Spirit? For example, do you think the Pharisees, who refused to acknowledge evidence of Christ’s divinity, were aware of the consequences of this refusal? Or had they gradually allowed themselves to be lulled into spiritual unconsciousness?

4 How can other sins, while not in and of themselves unpardonable, lead one to commit the unpardonable sin?

5 A cynic once said, “It’s not a lie if you believe it.” If you are used to believing lies about yourself, reality, and God, you gradually lose the ability to recognize the truth. The Holy Spirit is there to guide us to the truth. Is it possible that one component of the sin against the Holy Spirit is to prefer our own comforting lies to the uncomfortable truth that the Holy Spirit presents to us?
Convictions of the Spirit

“When he [the Spirit] comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me” (John 16:8, 9, RSV).

In order to qualify as a candidate for salvation, a person must recognize that he or she is a sinner. No person asks for help of the Savior unless sensing a need. One of our greatest needs is a personal conviction of sin. We cannot bring this conviction about ourselves; it is the Spirit’s prerogative and work to convict us of sin. His very first work is to make the sinner aware of his or her sinfulness and, hence, his or her lost condition. The Spirit is not merely the Comforter. He is also—and first—the Convictor of sin. He becomes the Comforter to those who have made peace with God by admitting and confessing their sins.


How did Jesus illustrate the availability of salvation for a contrite sinner, while at the same time pointing out the hopelessness of a person who thinks he or she is righteous? Luke 18:10-14.

“We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. The Pharisee felt no conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armor which the arrows of God, barbed and true-aimed by angel hands, failed to penetrate. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save.” —Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 158.

When a person receives a vision of the righteousness and holiness of God, as did the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 6:5, 6), the Holy Spirit will convince that person that he or she is sinful and nothing but judgment and utter destruction will await him or her unless Jesus intervenes. Thus, it’s the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that’s so important in leading us to Christ. Imagine, then, the hopeless state of people who have, through their own hardness, made themselves immune to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In what ways can guilt be good, a tool used by God? At the same time, at what point does guilt become bad, a tool used by the devil? How can we know the difference?
IV. Convictions of the Spirit

God’s Spirit does not come to soothe and comfort us in our rebellion, but to soften and subdue our hearts in order that we might clearly perceive our sinfulness and accountability, and God’s saving grace. If the processes Christ enumerated (see John 16:7-15) are bypassed or misconstrued, we set ourselves up for advanced delusions, including a false baptism of the Holy Spirit, full of sensation and excitement, but with no call to real holiness.

Let us be like David who prayed, “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then

Witnessing

Satan is working hard to trivialize one of the greatest cautions that the Christian receives from the heavenly Father: committing the unpardonable sin. How is Satan making a mockery of God’s warning?

First, by obscuring the real meaning of the phrase, “unpardonable sin.” When a spouse is unfaithful, is this an example of the unpardonable sin? No. While such an act is against God’s law, and the outcome is extremely painful and hurtful for the offended spouse, the act itself does not constitute the unpardonable sin. Human accidents and adversity are not considered by God to be the unpardonable sin.

Second, the longer sin remains in place, the longer Satan has to rationalize to sinners that there is no real unpardonable sin; it’s just smoke and mirrors, a ploy by God to frighten humankind into abandoning sin.

Finally, the most dangerous of Satan’s maneuvering is his constant interference when the Holy Spirit is trying to reach an individual’s heart and mind. Over time, it may become nearly impossible for an individual to be receptive to the Spirit’s leading.

Ellen White gives strong warning on the expected outcome if an individual adamantly refuses to listen to the Holy Spirit. “The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven’s invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 324. “So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.”—Page 325. Becoming desensitized and immune to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit will lead to the one sin that cannot be forgiven: the unpardonable sin. This is the sin that will deny the kingdom of heaven to someone for eternity. Let us pray fervently for ourselves and others that we will not resist the still, small voice of God.
Repentance and the Unpardonable Sin

At times, there have been church members who have lived in fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. In a sense, it’s not hard to understand why. We are sinners; if not moment by moment under the control of the Holy Spirit, we are capable of just about anything. And for a person who has known the Lord, who has gotten a glimpse of God’s holiness, his or her own sense of sin can appear horribly damning and condemning. The guilt can be overwhelming. Most Christians, at some point in their walk with the Lord, have had moments of fear, moments of believing their case is hopeless, that they cannot make it, that they, in fact, may have committed the unpardonable sin.

If, however, the “unpardonable sin” is constant rejection of the Holy Spirit, why is someone who fears he or she has committed that sin, someone who clearly has not committed it? See also Ps. 51:1-4, Luke 5:8, 18:13.

The commission of crime or sin is no permanent obstacle to salvation. Jesus can save anyone who is willing to accept salvation. He is not primarily concerned with anyone’s dismal past. Any sin and shortcoming may be blotted out through His shed blood. There is one condition for this forgiveness, and that is repentance, and that comes only from the work of the Holy Spirit. As long as we repent, there is forgiveness.

Of course, we must remember that sin cannot be trifled with. Each sin hardens us; every time we fall, we do so only because we have pushed away conviction. The more we do that, the easier it is to do it again and again and again. And though we can always repent and find forgiveness, the more we sin, the more we harden our hearts to the very Person who leads us to repentance, the Holy Spirit.

Thus, how crucial that we, each day, claim the power of God to cleanse us, to regenerate us, to remake us in the image of the Savior. (See 1 Cor. 10:13, Gal. 5:16, Titus 3:5.)

Have you ever felt your case was hopeless, that you were going to be lost even after you had made a decision to follow Christ? What brought those feelings? What caused them finally to leave? What did you learn from that experience that you could use to help someone who feels his or her case is hopeless?
shall I be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression” (Ps. 19:12, 13, italics supplied). David also understood that God instructs the conscience by applying His law as the test of our motives, words, and actions. (See Psalms 19:7-12; 94:11, 12; 139:23, 24.)

Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** Have you ever had a door slammed in your face? How did it feel? Why do you think this happened to you? Share your experience in class. Read Matthew 12:22-31 aloud together. What was happening in the different characters’ hearts: the demon-possessed man, the people, the Pharisees? In what ways are we like each of these individuals?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Using a concordance, look up how the words *reject, rebel,* and *refuse* are used in Scripture. Discuss a few of the passages and the characters that are depicted. How would you describe the lesson being taught? How are the attitudes embodied by these words different from what is portrayed in John 3:14-16? In what ways might these lessons be applied to your life?

2. As elections in many countries draw near, common rhetoric may intensify. Each candidate often depicts the other as inept, even hostile, toward the people they would be serving. How is this similar to what Satan does with humanity? How do we ignore his accusations in favor of the Scriptures’ affirmations? Make a list of scriptures that encourage and support the good news of salvation. Start with 1 Corinthians 15:3 and Hebrews 2:9.

**Application Question:**

“‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’” (Luke 18:13, NIV). What is positive about this desperate cry? Take a moment to read Luke 18:10-14. Sin, displayed against the backdrop of the goodness of God, is dangerously ugly. When we see it in ourselves, we fear it will cause God to reject us. Ask the Holy Spirit to heal your despair by leading you to the words of assurance found in Scripture (see Lam. 3:21-25, Heb. 13:5b). Then share your newfound hope with a friend or work associate who is struggling.

“He who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 322.

“Every impure thought defiles the soul, impairs the moral sense, and tends to obliterate the impressions of the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 302.

“But if a man, by repeated refusals of God’s guidance, has lost the ability to recognize goodness when he sees it, if he has got his moral values inverted until evil to him is good and good to him is evil, then, even when he is confronted by Jesus, he is conscious of no sin he cannot repent and therefore he can never be forgiven. That is the sin against the Holy Spirit.”—William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 81.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, imagine if you had to deal with someone who was convinced he or she had committed the unpardonable sin. What have you learned from this week’s study you could use to help that person find hope and forgiveness?

2. As a class, go through the Bible and see what examples you can find of those who, apparently, had committed the unpardonable sin. Make a list of these people and discuss their specific cases.

3. Read over the above quote from Barclay. What’s the process he is describing? Why is this a danger for everyone, even professed Christians?

4. As a class, pray together that each one will be more surrendered to the workings of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit
in the Last Days

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: Joel 2:28, 29; John 1:9; Acts 2:14-24; Acts 3:19, 20; James 5:7; Rev. 14:6-16; 18:1-5.

Memory Text: “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21).

It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and he will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light.”—Ellen G. White, Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Mar. 2, 1897.

What a message is in those words as we end this quarter’s study, focusing now on the Holy Spirit in the last days. We’ll look at what the Holy Spirit will do in order to prepare a people to spread this gospel and to stand in the final crisis.

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 24.
The Spirit in the Last Days

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28, 29).

Study the above verses, along with Acts 2:14-24. What message do you see here that’s applicable to us? In what ways, if any, have we, today, seen this prophecy fulfilled?

The words of Joel here are some of the most exciting in all Scripture. They point to a time when the Holy Spirit in a mighty way will be poured out just as it was at Pentecost. This outpouring, however, doesn’t happen in a vacuum; it’s all part of a single purpose: to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This point becomes especially clear in Peter’s Pentecost speech, in which, after quoting those verses from Joel, he begins preaching about Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-24).

Joel 2:28 says, too, that He will pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh.” This doesn’t mean all flesh will respond with the surrender and humility needed to receive the blessing of the Spirit. Through the action of the Holy Spirit the Lord is able to touch every soul with conviction. The Bible says: “The true light [Jesus] that enlightens every man was coming into the world” (John 1:9, RSV); unfortunately, though, not “every man” responds as God would like.

The good news is that all who do respond, all who will make that surrender, have the promise of eternal life in Christ.

What evidence do you see of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon those who aren’t Christians? What can we do, as Christians, to cooperate with the Spirit in order to help these people see Jesus in a fuller light?
Introduction

As Jesus brings His gospel call to a final climactic appeal to this confused, fallen world, the Holy Spirit works with heightened intensity to combat the forces of darkness with a revelation of God’s character of mercy and justice, and the power of Christ’s saving grace.

I. The Spirit in the Last Days

God’s promise is sure—He “will pour out [His] Spirit on all flesh” with enlightening and soul-winning results of great magnitude (Joel 2:28). In Acts 2:14-24 Peter identified the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost as a fulfillment of that prophecy. At that time Christ inaugurated His newly formed church with supernatural power to embark on its mission of worldwide evangelism. As the details of Joel 2:28-32 show, this prophecy demands a second and final fulfillment that will usher in Christ’s second coming.
Pentecost and the Last Days

As we saw yesterday, Joel speaks of an abundant outpouring of God’s Spirit upon His people, of young men seeing visions, old men dreaming dreams, and sons and daughters prophesying (Joel 2:28, 29). He even sets the time frame for this experience. There will be cosmic phenomena with the sun being darkened and the moon turned into blood. Disasters on earth are described cryptically as “blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke” (vs. 30). All this is to precede immediately “the great and the terrible day of the Lord” (vs. 31).

Peter, along with other early Christian believers, viewed Christ’s first coming as the last days (1 Cor. 10:11, Heb. 1:2, 9:26, 1 Pet. 1:20) and applied Joel’s prophecy to the Pentecost experience (Acts 2:16-21), linking the gift of prophecy to the gift of tongues.

Read Joel 2:23, which precedes his words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What imagery does he use?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Joel’s prophecy of the coming prophetic gift is set in the context of the early and latter rains (Joel 2:23-32). The refreshing, life-giving fall rains, which enabled the seed to sprout and take root, are called the early rain. The spring rain, which brought the grain to maturity and readiness for harvest, is called the latter rain. This phenomenon in the Palestinian agricultural cycle is a symbol of the spiritual refreshing God gives to His people through His Spirit (Hos. 6:3). Peter, fully believing he was living in the last days, experienced the early rain. The latter rain is yet to come upon God’s people at the end of time.

What are we to understand by the meaning of the “latter rain”?

“What near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain.”—Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 55.

What is your own experience with the “early rain”? Why is it so important to receive the early rain in order to be prepared to receive the “latter rain”? What does it mean “to receive” either rain? What changes do we need to make in our own lives now in order to be ready for the latter rain?
II. Pentecost and the Latter Rain

At Pentecost Peter indicted the religious leaders for their despicable treatment of Christ. He also exalted the saving merits of Christ and His sacrifice. Peter made a pointed appeal for the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and to receive the endowment of the Spirit as the controlling, sanctifying power of their lives.

Multitudes responded wholeheartedly and joined this faithful movement of God, braving persecution and ostracism. Read Acts 2–5. This harvest, resulting from the former rain, indicates the tenor and results of the work accomplished under the latter rain.

“It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies For Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 507. Read the whole chapter “Pray for the Latter Rain,” pp. 506–512. Also read Last Day Events, pp. 195, 196 by Ellen G. White.

III. The Latter Rain

God bids us to pray for the latter rain, not merely to wait for it in passive expectation. He promises to answer that prayer with an abundant outpouring of His Spirit that magnifies the efficacious power of Calvary. Compare Zechariah 10:1 with 12:10 and 13:1.

Prayer for the latter rain is not a quest for a spiritually thrilling experience, but for a deeper infilling of Christ and His righteousness. (See Hos. 6:1-3, 10:12.) It is highly instructive to look up references to rain in the Bible. See, for example, Deut. 11:11-17; 32:1, 2; Ps. 68:9, 10; Prov. 16:15; Isa. 55:10, 11; Jer. 3:3; 14:4, 22; James 5:7, 8.

IV. The Refreshing

“Nothing but the life-giving influences of the gospel can help the soul. Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world...
The Latter Rain

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain” (James 5:7).

In the context of what we’ve read so far, how do you understand the words of James above? How does this text show us our utter dependence upon a source outside of ourselves for spiritual power?

As we saw yesterday, Joel uttered his prophecy in the context of “rain.” The terms rain, early rain, and latter rain were borrowed by the Hebrew writers in the context of their agricultural seasons. The former, or early, rain fell in the seventh month, usually just after the Feast of Tabernacles. This corresponds to our autumn, or to September–October. For the Israelites, it was the season for the plowing of the fields and the sowing of barley and wheat. The latter rain fell shortly before the grain harvest in March and early April. This rain enabled the grain to fill out and ripen for harvest.

These terms are used by the Bible writers to symbolize great periods of spiritual refreshing in connection with the preaching of the gospel. The important point is that for the harvest to be reaped, there was the need of both rains.

Look up these few verses: How do they help us understand the significance of the rain imagery, especially in the context of our mission as a church? Matt. 9:37, 13:30, Rev. 14:15.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the spiritual “latter rain” is much like the natural one: It’s to prepare the harvest for reaping. What a powerful image regarding the work the Holy Spirit is to do among His people, for they are the ones God has used to preach the gospel message to the world. “While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work.”—Ellen G. White, The Faith I Live By, p. 334.
through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed.”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 267.

**V. The Loud Cry**

The loud cry is not a furious harangue or a frantic shriek. It is God’s final warning given in pointed terms and infinite love that lightens the earth with His glory. It is the ministry of Reconciliation’s last effort to extricate people from Satan’s snares of deadly delusions that masquerade as truth through spirits of demons working miracles and propounding unholy doctrines. God’s promise cannot be thwarted. “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14). See also Numbers 14:21 and Psalm 119:64.

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** Joel 2:28-32, Matthew 24:14, James 5:7, Revelation 22:17

1. Most aspects of the Christian faith have some application not only to Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection, but also to His second coming. How would you describe the Holy Spirit’s specific role in the last days?

2. Will people living in the last days have special access to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, at least for a time? If so, does this mean that people who lived and died before the last days had less opportunity to come to Christ? If this is true, will they be judged differently?

3. The early Christians believed the end was at hand partially because of the abundant evidence of the Holy Spirit’s activity in their time. How can we distinguish the outpouring of the Spirit that took place at that time from the outpouring that will occur shortly before the end really comes?

4. The periods of the Holy Spirit’s activity in salvation’s history often are referred to as the early rain or the apostolic period and the latter rain or the end time. How can we apply this pattern to the spiritual life of a believer?

5. What is the relationship of the latter rain’s appearance to other events in prophecy? Why is the latter rain necessary for most of the other prophetic events to occur? Do you think the church today is prepared to receive the latter rain? If not, what do you think needs to change? How will God help the church to change?
The Refreshing

“Repent therefore, and turn again [be converted, KJV], that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus” (Acts 3:19, 20, RSV).

Look at this incredible statement by Peter. Notice how closely he links repentance and conversion with the “times of refreshing.” In other words, what happens here in our hearts is linked with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We must never forget the reality of this close tie between heaven and earth.

What three great last-day events is Peter referring to in the text above? What does he say that shows these are, indeed, last-day events?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Peter’s statement contains a most definite temporal element. Under inspiration, Peter is referring to great events of earth’s last days—the mighty outpouring of God’s Spirit and the final blotting out of the sins of the righteous—which are tied to a third climactic event, the second advent of Christ.

Read Revelation 14:6-16. Why do we know that these are events that immediately precede the Second Coming? How do we see in these verses evidences of a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

All through these texts we see evidence of the Holy Spirit working through His people, not only to prepare them to preach the “eternal gospel” (vs. 6) to the world, not only to warn others against worshiping “the beast” (vs. 9), but also to prepare them to stand as those who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (vs. 12). If this isn’t the work of the Holy Spirit among us, nothing is.

As you look at the church today, why is it so evident that we will need a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit in order for it to do its work? Why is it so evident that you need it, as well?
“Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence.”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 126. See also The Great Controversy, pp. 464, 611, 612 by Ellen G. White.

“Many . . . will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained

Witnessing

Seventh-day Adventists believe that “the almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ’s coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times.”—Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, #24 (© 2004, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists). Retrieved October 11, 2004, from <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/>. In other words, we don’t have a lot of time to waste in getting our lives in order for Christ’s soon return to earth. Our family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, strangers, and others don’t have a lot of time either to prepare for Christ’s second coming.

Since the hour of His return is not known, we can’t count on having sufficient time before the end of time in order to decide at that point to follow Jesus. Knowing what we do about His soon coming, we cannot stand idly by while others say that they plan to enjoy the pleasures of this world first and then repent later while there’s still time.

Apathy has no place in our lives. A sense of urgency needs to be pushing us each day so that we do not become so comfortable with the way things are going for us that Satan regains a handhold in our lives. The devil would like nothing better than for all of Christ’s followers to lose sight of what lies ahead as the end of time approaches. However, we are told in Scripture that as the end time approaches, the Holy Spirit will intensify His efforts to lead God’s children home. Daily communion with God through prayer and study of the Scriptures will keep our connection to Heaven open and free of static. Assisting those with whom we come in daily contact to expand their own lines of communication with the Father should be a primary goal of Christ’s believers.

Plan a course of action that will provide you with the opportunities to share His good news in some way with at least one stranger each day. If you’re rebuffed, don’t be discouraged. The seeds of the gospel that the Lord has led you to drop in stony hearts may one day take root and flourish.
The Loud Cry

Though we saw at Pentecost a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we believe that in the last days we will see something even more powerful. The whole world needs to know the truth about the Lord Jesus in the context of the three angels of Revelation 14, as opposed to the false doctrines of Babylon that lead to the mark of the beast. And, quite simply, who else, at this point, but Seventh-day Adventists are preaching this distinctive message? And yet, what Adventist, looking at the task ahead, believes we can do it without a supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Thus, we believe that in the very end the Holy Spirit will bring His gifts to the church in a remarkable way. He will have to; otherwise, final events, as portrayed in prophecy, will never happen.

Read Revelation 18:1-5. What evidence do we find in these verses that shows what the results of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church will be?

This “loud cry” extends everywhere, as the Lord uses His church to call out all His people from Babylon, the false religious and political systems of the world united in some final last-day persecuting power. This cry contains the ultimate plea to escape the last plagues (Revelation 15) and find shelter under the arms of Jesus, the Savior. In this, the final battle between the followers of the Lamb and the followers of the beast, Christ will be exalted through the renewed Pentecostal power that’s to be poured out on the earth (Rev. 18:1) through the Holy Spirit. At this time, we will see the harvest reaped through the latter rain.

Thus, in the very last days, the consummation of the Cross and the work of the Cross will reach fruition. All the dead in Christ will rise (1 Thess. 4:16), and together with those who are alive, we all will be taken off this sinful planet, once and for all (vs. 17). Thus, at the end, we’ll see the climactic manifestation of the Holy Spirit as He works on the hearts, not only of those who are called to proclaim this message but on those who receive it and who stand with us—not only in the last days against the forces of Babylon—but on the sea of glass in heaven, as well (Rev. 15:1-5).

What a gift we’ve been given in the Holy Spirit!

Write out a prayer thanking the Lord for the Holy Spirit and asking for the preparation in your own heart that will be needed in order for you to stay faithful, not only during the final crisis but even now.
by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the Word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man’s machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit’s power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 700.

### Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** What are you anticipating? A visit from grandchildren, a birthday celebration, a special anniversary getaway? How long do you have to wait? God has promised the outpouring of His Spirit. Do we have to wait? We have heard stories of His working in mighty ways in the mission field. How have you seen the Holy Spirit working through the ministry of your church?

**Thought Questions:**

1. **At the dedication of the temple, King Solomon prays a prayer that contains a prophecy:** “When they sin against You” (1 Kings 8:46), and then presents his plea, “then hear... and forgive” (1 Kings 8:49, 50). How does your personal battle with the sin disease affect your witness? How does repentance and God’s cleansing empower your testimony? Who needs to hear of the victories God has made possible through His Spirit?

2. **What sparks your interest and compels you to action?** Read Revelation 14:6-16 out loud in your class. Ask each person to describe his or her feelings upon hearing this passage read. Our divine appointment and responsibility are to share this message. How did our ancestors in faith respond to it? In what tangible ways are we continuing their legacy?

**Application Question:**

Read Joel 2:28, 29, then compare it with what was happening in Acts 2:1-24. How does Peter’s understanding of Joel’s prophecy and its fulfillment help you understand the work of the Holy Spirit? Why is it so important to recognize that the Holy Spirit can and does perform the same type of miracles in our day? As a class, petition God to prepare your hearts and guide you to become more intentionally active in service to your church and to your community. Plan an outreach event for next Sabbath afternoon.

“We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

“The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 508.

Discussion Questions:

1. As a class, talk about world affairs and trends as they relate to our understanding of last-day events. Though we mustn’t be sensational, what evidence do we see that points to the final crisis? As a class, what things can you do to help your local church understand the times we are living in and the need to prepare to receive the latter rain?

2. As a class, think about the work of the Holy Spirit and ask this question: Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of all the work He does for the church, what’s the one thing you believe your local church needs the most? Discuss.

3. What did you learn from this quarter’s study that has impacted your life the most? What have you learned that impresses upon you the need for personal change? If the study didn’t touch on some things you wished were touched on, why not pursue studies in that area on your own?