

Back to School: Holy Spirit 101

God is calling the church back to the basics of our faith—including a true understanding of His Spirit

Mrs. Sunday. Mr. Newman. Mrs. Kuhn. Mr. Ewing. These were some of the outstanding teachers who shaped my life. Their words and actions in the classroom planted seeds that still bear fruit today. I doubt they'll ever know how much of an imprint they left on me.

You likely have similar teachers to credit—those who had a profound impact in steering your life in a certain direction. Even if we'd rather forget our school years, there's usually a teacher or two we'll always remember because of what they said or did to help guide us along.

Teachers hold one of the most important positions on the planet. They guide, counsel, explain, show, encourage, reprove, help, correct, empower ... the list goes on. Though other factors certainly play a role, students tend to succeed or fail based upon how good their teacher is. That's why every summer, long before the first bell rings to usher in a new school year, parents across the nation jockey to get their kids in with the best teachers possible. They know the lifelong effect a great teacher—or a lousy one—can have on their child.

So what if you had the chance to receive one-on-one tutoring from the greatest teacher on the planet? Better yet, what if you could call on that teacher anytime, anywhere, with any question?

Jesus was the greatest teacher to ever walk the earth. Yet He said that after He left, the Father would send “another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

Later, Jesus explained that “when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” (16:13). To top it off, this Counselor would help us do even greater works than what Jesus did (14:12). That’s some teacher!

If you’re a believer, you’ve already been given the awesome gift of the Holy Spirit, the Teacher like no other. Yet tragically a huge segment of the church never raises their hand to ask Him a question. Some sit in the classroom of life doubting if He’s relevant enough today or even necessary anymore, while others would prefer to act as if He didn’t exist.

Because you’re reading this magazine, I doubt you’re in any of those classes. But it’s possible to look like a tongue-talking charismatic and still not truly know the Holy Spirit. That’s because not only is the Holy Spirit easily the most misunderstood Person of the Trinity, people continue to have many foundational misconceptions about Him. Here are four fundamental lessons that many Christians either missed or need to re-learn:

1. **He is not an “it.”** An “it” doesn’t whisper, sing, speak, cry, convict, dance, hover, burn, wash, free, anoint, empower, quicken, reveal, teach, lead, supply, strengthen, enable, move, comfort ... and a million other things the Holy Spirit does. Like the Father and the Son, God’s Spirit is a person. As long as we see Him as an “it,” we’ll fail to know Him as He desires.
2. **He always glorifies Jesus.** This is where many Spirit-filled believers get derailed, because often the unspoken rule is that the goofier we act, the more the Holy Spirit must be moving in us. Want a full-proof test to know if something is truly of the Spirit? Ask if Jesus is being glorified. The Holy Spirit never stops pointing toward Christ. His No. 1 delight, passion and purpose is to bring Jesus glory. Just as the Father glorified Jesus in heaven, the Spirit glorifies Jesus

now on earth (John 16:14-15).

3. **He doesn't show up in part.** When my sons, who are 7 and 3, encounter God, they're not experiencing a kid-sized portion of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who works in me works in them. John 3:34 is clear that God "gives the Spirit without measure" (NASB). Let's stop acting like He comes in varying degrees.
4. **He wants to help you.** The word for *Holy Spirit* in John 14-16 (*parakletos*) means "Comforter" or "Counselor." He was sent to lead you to truth, to guide you on your journey. He wants you to succeed by God's standards. Why not ask Him for help?

Check out the May 2013 issue of *Charisma*. It is entirely dedicated to exploring the many facets of the Holy Spirit—His character, baptism, fruit, gifts, etc. We can only scratch the surface with these teachings, but I hope you'll use them as a launching pad for the Holy Spirit to teach you more about Himself as only the great Teacher can do.

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