

Depend on the Spirit
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John 15:26 - 16:15

Because we missed Sunday School last week, we missed a great passage in the first part of John 15... “the vine and the branches.” I included the study guide in my email.

Opening Question: **Think of a time when you discovered a new tool, or product, or a piece of technology that sort of revolutionized how you do something. Maybe it was something that had been around for a while and you finally began using it and it really gave you a great benefit? What are some examples in your life? Here’s another, have you ever discovered a “hidden feature” in a piece of equipment or software that you didn’t know was there?**

Here’s the point: Many times we have something available to us that would revolutionize our lives but we just haven’t taken full advantage of it...we haven’t accessed it. In the Christian life it’s not a THING but a PERSON...The Holy Spirit.

- It’s the evening before Jesus’ arrest. We’re still in the upper room with Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples. In John chapters 14-17 Jesus gives a “discourse” or a message preparing them for what was to come beginning that night. He also described for them and us what life would be like after he ascended to Heaven.
- In these verses Jesus revealed to the disciples the person who, I believe in many ways, is the most neglected member of the trinity: The Holy Spirit.
- If we want to learn about the Holy Spirit, what better source could we have than the words of Jesus himself describing the third person of the trinity.
- Jesus first mentioned the promise of the Holy Spirit in chapter 14:

John 14:15–17 (ESV)

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (How can we do that Jesus?)

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:26 (ESV)

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Now, a few minutes later, Jesus tells them more about this “Helper” this “Comforter”:

John 15:26–16:4 (ESV)

26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

(Moving to chapter 16, Jesus us WHY they would need this “Comforter” the Holy Spirit)

16 “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. 2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

- **Verse 2: Why would Jesus’ followers be “put out” of the synagogues?**
- Verse 2 also says, “...whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.”
- **Who was a man in the Bible who did just that? How is this happening today?**
- There is always a COST to following Christ. Those who don’t know Christ may punish us or try to put us “out.”

William Barclay wrote:

“It would be hard for them to be ostracized, with all doors shut against them. Men have sometimes to learn, as Joan of Arc said, that: “It is better to be alone with God.” Sometimes loneliness among men is the price of fellowship with God.”

Barclay’s Daily Study Bible

Jesus continued...verse 4:

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

- **Verse 6 - Why were the disciples so sorrowful?**
 - When we lose something or someone dear to us it brings great sorrow. However, as we’re about to see, through the Holy Spirit living within us, God can turn LOSSES into greater blessings. Often as we follow Christ we have to GIVE UP some things we counted as dear so we can GO where God wants to take us.
 - **Verse 7 - Why was it good that Jesus went away?**
- (1) Without Jesus’ death and resurrection we could not be saved. His death made it possible for him to remove our sins. (2) Christ’s presence on earth was limited to one place at a time. His leaving meant he could live, through the Holy Spirit, in every believer in the whole world. Life Application Bible Commentary – John.
What work would the Holy Spirit do in this world? Look at verse 8...

8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Verse 8: What does this verse tell us about the job of the Holy Spirit? Can you and I convince someone of their sin? What about convicting or convincing them they are not RIGHTEOUS compared to God? What about convicting or convincing them of the reality of God’s JUDGMENT against them?

I like how J.I. Packer describes it:

“This threefold conviction is still God’s means of making sin repulsive and Christ adorable in the eyes of persons who previously loved sin and cared nothing for the divine Savior.”

Warren Wiersbe writes:

“When a lost sinner is truly under conviction, he will see the folly and evil of unbelief; he will confess that he does not measure up to the righteousness of Christ; and he will realize that he is under condemnation because he belongs to the world and the devil (Eph. 2:1–3). The only person who can rescue him from such a horrible situation is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There can be no conversion without conviction, and there can be no conviction apart from the Spirit of God using the Word of God and the witness of the child of God.”

Here’s the reality: We might “guilt” someone into coming to church a time or two, but we won’t “guilt” them into Heaven. Bringing people to a TRUE saving knowledge of Christ can only be done by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

What else did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do? Verse 12...

12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Verse 12: Jesus has so much He needs to teach us...but we can’t handle it yet.

How does verse 13 solve that problem?

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV) tells us...

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

There’s a word we don’t use often, ILLUMINATION. What is ILLUMINATION?

ILLUMINATION is one way the Holy Spirit “guides us into all truth.”

J.I. Packer uses the illustration of a FLOODLIGHT to describe the Holy Spirit’s work:

When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are so placed that you do not see them; you are not in fact supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you see it properly. This perfectly illustrates the Spirit’s new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior.

Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder, on Jesus, who stands facing us.

The Spirit's message is never, "Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me," but always "Look at him, and see his glory; listen to him, and hear his word; go to him, and have life; get to know him, and taste his gift of joy and peace."

—Keeping in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God, 2nd ed. (GR: Baker, 2005), p. 57

Often believers will say, "I really want to understand the Bible! I really want to hear God speaking so I can obey! I just don't seem to understand it all!" You need to turn on THE LIGHT! That light is the ILLUMINATION of the Holy Spirit.

Question: Based on your experience, how can we sense when the Holy Spirit is at work in our situation? Any personal stories or experiences? Any other thoughts?

Chuck Swindoll writes:

"Imagine what it means to have the presence of the living God within you. Pause and ponder this,...: the third member of the Godhead, the invisible, yet all-powerful representation of deity, is actually living inside your being. His limitless capabilities are resident within you, since He indwells you."

Adapted from Growing Deep in the Christian Life: Returning to Our Roots (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1986), 175-80. Copyright © 1986 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide. -

So, What's the Takeaway?

If we're a BELIEVER in Christ we have this POWER SOURCE, the Holy Spirit, living in us. So, how do we ACCESS His supernatural power?

- If you don't remember anything else today. Remember THREE WORDS.
- When we were kids and they taught us THREE WORDS to remember before crossing a road? What were those three words? The Holy Spirit is already at work in our lives.
- We just need to STOP before we go running ahead on our own.
- We need to LOOK into God's Word asking the Spirit to ILLUMINATE truth for us.
- Then we need to LISTEN for His voice as we pray, asking Him to show us where to go; what to say; and how to live.
- Before any encounter, STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN for the Spirit's voice.

The last verse of chapter 16 reminds us of the reality of living in this world:

John 16:33 (NIV) Jesus said,

33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

He's warned us we WILL have trouble. And He gave us His Spirit inside us to have PEACE in the face of that TROUBLE.