
WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

STUDY GUIDE

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Exploring how the Holy Spirit is central to New Testament theology, from salvation and daily discipleship to the fulfillment of God's eternal promises.

KEY SCRIPTURES (ESV):

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." — John 6:44

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." — Ephesians 2:8–9

"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God... The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'" — John 3:5, 8

"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." — Ephesians 1:13–14

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." — Romans 10:4

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." — Galatians 5:18

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." — Ephesians 3:20–21

SUMMARY:

The Holy Spirit is the key to understanding how New Testament theology works in daily life. Faith is not simply intellectual but deeply practical, lived out in real-world pressures just as it was for the early church. The Spirit initiates our salvation—drawing us to God, giving us new birth, and sealing us for eternity. He makes theology personal and practical, guiding us in daily decisions and shaping us into Christ's likeness. The Spirit replaces the law as the source of holiness, leading us from within. He also anchors believers in the "already/not yet" tension—granting present experience of eternal life while preparing us for final salvation at Christ's return.

KEY INSIGHTS:

Theology is lived: Every believer is constantly forming and reforming their theology through life's trials, guided by the Spirit.

The Spirit initiates salvation: No one seeks God apart from His Spirit's drawing.

New birth is Spirit-born: Christianity is not human effort, but Spirit-initiated and Spirit-sustained.

The Spirit replaces the law: Believers are led daily by the Spirit rather than bound by 600+ Torah laws.

Already/Not Yet: Eternal life begins now, but awaits its fullness when Christ returns.

The Spirit builds the church: He forms God's covenant people, empowers gifts, and produces fruit for witness and worship.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How have you experienced the Spirit's drawing power in your own life story?
2. What does it mean for you personally that the Spirit is both the guarantee of your future and the power at work in you now?
3. Where might you still be relying on "law" or self-effort instead of living by the Spirit's leading?

PRAYER PROMPT:

Holy Spirit, thank You for drawing me to God, for giving me new birth, and for sealing me for eternity. Teach me to walk daily by Your power, not by my own effort. Conform me to Christ's image, form me into Your people, and keep my eyes fixed on the hope of His return. Amen.

THE HOLY SPIRIT | RESTORED PRESENCE

God created humanity for His presence, but sin caused its loss. Through Christ and the Holy Spirit, His presence is restored—first to the church as His new temple and also to each believer individually.

KEY SCRIPTURES (ESV):

“Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!” — Psalm 139:7–8

“And he said, ‘My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’ And he said to him, ‘If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.’” — Exodus 33:14–15

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” — Exodus 40:34

“As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.” — 2 Chronicles 7:1

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?” — 1 Corinthians 3:16

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God... In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” — Ephesians 2:19–22

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” — 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

SUMMARY:

The story of Scripture shows humanity patterned for God's presence, but sin caused its loss. In the Old Testament, God's presence returned through the tabernacle and later the temple, but Israel's disobedience led to its departure. The prophets, however, promised that God's presence would return in a new way through a New Covenant. In Christ, that promise is fulfilled. The Holy Spirit now indwells the church corporately as God's new temple and each believer personally as His dwelling place. This restored presence means God is no longer distant but near, guiding His people, shaping their holiness, and distinguishing them from the world.

KEY INSIGHTS:

Humanity was created for God's presence—sin fractured it, but Christ restored it.

In the Old Covenant, presence was tied to sacred spaces (tabernacle, temple); in the New Covenant, presence is tied to people filled with the Spirit.

The church is now God's corporate temple; believers individually are personal temples of the Spirit.

God's presence demands holiness; how we live in our bodies reflects our relationship with Him.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How does it change your view of daily life to realize you are God's temple?
2. In what ways have you experienced God's presence personally and in the gathered church?
3. What practices help you cultivate awareness of the Spirit's indwelling presence?

PRAYER PROMPT:

Holy Spirit, thank You for restoring God's presence to us. Make us aware of Your indwelling, both in the church and in our own lives. Teach us to glorify God with our bodies and live as people of Your presence. Amen.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE TRINITY

The Holy Spirit is not a vague force or an afterthought—He is fully God, the third Person of the Trinity, working in unity with the Father and the Son to accomplish God's eternal purposes.

KEY SCRIPTURES (ESV):

“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” — Colossians 2:9

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” — 2 Corinthians 13:14

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” — Romans 8:11

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” — Galatians 4:6

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.” — 1 Corinthians 6:19

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.” — 1 Corinthians 12:4–6

SUMMARY:

Understanding the Trinity is essential for Christian life and faith. While the Father and the Son are easier for us to grasp through human imagery, the Spirit often seems elusive. Yet Scripture reveals the Spirit as fully divine, working inseparably with the Father and the Son. The Spirit raised Christ from the dead, confirms our sonship, indwells believers as God's temple, and distributes gifts for the church. The Spirit sustains our relationship with the Father through adoption, with the Son through faith and redemption, and with the church through fellowship and empowerment. To marginalize the Spirit is to misunderstand the Trinity. True Christian life requires a living relationship with the Spirit as part of the Godhead.

KEY INSIGHTS:

The Spirit is fully God: not a force, but the third Person of the Trinity.

He is the “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ,” showing His unity with Father and Son.

The Spirit sustains our sonship, unites us to Christ, and empowers us for mission.

Trinity is not three separate gods but one God in three Persons, working together in every mission.

Relating to God properly means cultivating an ongoing relationship with the Spirit.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think many Christians find it easier to relate to the Father and Son than to the Spirit?
2. How does the Spirit keep you connected to both the Father and the Son in daily life?
3. What steps can you take to grow in sensitivity and fellowship with the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER PROMPT:

Holy Spirit, thank You for being fully God and fully present in my life. Draw me closer to the Father, strengthen my faith in the Son, and empower me to live as Your dwelling place. Teach me to walk in Your fellowship every day. Amen.

THE SPIRIT AS A PERSON

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or abstract power—He is the third Person of the Trinity. As a Person, He relates to believers intimately, transforming hearts, guiding lives, and empowering the church for mission.

KEY SCRIPTURES (ESV):

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” — John 4:24

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” — Romans 8:14–16

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” — 1 Corinthians 3:16

“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified... my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” — 1 Corinthians 2:2–5

“But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.” — 1 Corinthians 2:9–10

SUMMARY:

The Holy Spirit is not an “it” or a vague force—He is a Person, equal with the Father and the Son, who works personally and powerfully in believers. Jesus introduced the Spirit as God’s presence in us, the One who makes worship possible “in spirit and truth.” Misconceptions persist, from believing the Spirit ceased His work after the apostles, to viewing Him as unreliable because of human weakness, or even as an “entertainer” in charismatic settings. Scripture, however, shows the Spirit as God’s intimate presence: convicting, guiding, teaching, empowering, interceding, and testifying that we are children of God. To embrace the Spirit as a Person is to live in ongoing relationship with Him—moment by moment, He shapes us into Christ’s image, sustains our faith, and equips the church for mission.

KEY INSIGHTS:

The Spirit is a Person—He thinks, leads, searches, intercedes, and testifies.

Misunderstandings diminish His work; the Bible reveals Him as God’s presence in us, not an impersonal force.

The Spirit initiates salvation and sustains sanctification—transforming us from the inside out.

Leaders are called not to replace the Spirit, but to equip believers to walk in personal relationship with Him.

True mission and church vitality flow from intimacy with the Spirit, not technology, performance, or control.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think many Christians struggle to see the Spirit as a Person rather than an impersonal power?
2. How has the Spirit personally testified to your identity as a child of God?
3. What daily practices can help you nurture sensitivity and intimacy with the Holy Spirit?
4. How might your church or small group depend more on the Spirit's leading rather than human control?

PRAYER PROMPT:

Holy Spirit, thank You for being present with me as a Person—teaching, guiding, convicting, and comforting me. Help me walk with You daily in obedience and intimacy. Keep my heart sensitive to Your voice and empower me to live and serve as part of Your mission. Amen.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE END

Exploring how the Spirit connects God's people to His presence now and prepares them for the fullness of redemption in the age to come.

Objective: To understand Paul's eschatological theology of the Spirit—the “already/not yet” tension—and how the Spirit assures, sustains, and transforms believers as they await final redemption.

KEY SCRIPTURES (ESV)

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” Romans 8:23

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” Ephesians 1:13–14

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30

SUMMARY NOTES

From Eden to Pentecost:

In Eden, Adam and Eve walked with God “in the cool of the day” (the *wind* or *breath* of God).

After the fall, direct communion with God was lost. The temple/tabernacle later symbolized restored presence, filled with God's glory.

At Pentecost, the Spirit came as a **rushing wind**, not to fill a building but to indwell God's people.

Already/Not Yet Tension:

The Spirit allows believers to experience salvation and God's presence now.

Yet creation still groans and believers await full redemption at Christ's return.

The Spirit bridges this tension: real presence today, fuller glory tomorrow.

Firstfruits and Guarantee:

The Spirit is the *firstfruits* (Romans 8:23), a foretaste of eternity.

He is also the *guarantee* (Ephesians 1:13–14), God's down payment of what is to come.

Unlike a 20% down payment on a house, God gave Himself—100% God—as the pledge of our future inheritance.

THE SPIRIT'S ROLE IN PREPARATION:

Conviction: Keeps believers in faith, softening hearts against sin's hardening.

Formation: Produces Christ's character (Galatians 5:22–23).

Sustaining Hope: Strengthens believers amid suffering, reminding them of the glory to come (Romans 8:18–27).

Identity: Testifies we are children of God (Romans 8:16).

Love as Primary Evidence:

Romans 5:5 teaches that God's love is poured into our hearts by the Spirit.

Love is the ultimate proof of the Spirit's reality and the root ethic of the kingdom now and in eternity.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does tracing the presence of God (Eden → Temple → Pentecost → Church) change your perspective on the Spirit's role today?
2. In what ways have you personally experienced the "firstfruits" of the Spirit?
3. How does viewing the Spirit as God's "down payment" affect your confidence in His promises?
4. Where in your life do you feel the Spirit's conviction and His testimony that you belong to God?
5. How can you cultivate greater daily awareness of the Spirit rather than striving to "get more" of Him?
6. In trials and suffering, how does the Spirit strengthen you to endure with hope?
7. How might your church community live differently if it truly embraced the Spirit as the guarantee of glory to come?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT THIS WEEK

Morning: Begin each day with the prayer, "*Holy Spirit, I yield to You today—form Christ in me.*"

Scripture Meditation: Read Romans 8:18–27 daily. Write one phrase that stands out and carry it through the day.

Awareness Practice: Pause mid-day and pray Romans 8:16: *“Spirit, remind me I am a child of God.”*

Community Sharing: Share one way you see the Spirit’s firstfruits (joy, peace, love, hope) in your life with a friend or small group.

Evening Reflection: Ask, *“Where did I notice the Spirit today? Where did I resist?”*

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD

This session explores the role of the Holy Spirit in forming not just individual believers, but a Spirit-shaped community—the people of God. Paul's vision of the church is not individualistic but communal, rooted in the Old Testament promises to Abraham and Moses, fulfilled through Christ, and empowered by the Spirit. The Spirit dwells within and knits together a people who reflect God's love, unity, and holiness, preparing them for eternity with Him.

KEY SCRIPTURES

God's promise to Abraham: "I will make you a great nation...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:2–3

God to Israel: "You shall be my treasured possession...a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Exodus 19:5–6

"For just as the body is one and has many members...so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..." 1 Corinthians 12:12–13

"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Romans 5:5

"...you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance..." Ephesians 1:13–14

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession..." 1 Peter 2:9–10

The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Galatians 5:22–23

Jesus' prayer for His people: "that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you..." John 17:20–23

KEY TERMS

Oneness – Deeper than simple unity; a Spirit-born reality that reflects the oneness of the Trinity.

Seal/Guarantee – The Spirit as God's pledge of our eternal inheritance, given to the whole people of God.

Living Temple – God's people as His dwelling place, built together by the Spirit into a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2).

Fruit of the Spirit – Evidence of transformation by the Spirit, shaping believers for community life.

1. GOD'S PLAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PEOPLE

God promised Abraham not just personal blessing, but a nation through which all families would be blessed.

Moses and Israel were called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Paul sees this fulfilled through Christ, where the Spirit creates a people not bound by race, tribe, or status.

2. FROM INDIVIDUALISM TO COMMUNITY

Western culture often emphasizes personal faith: “me and Jesus.”

Paul's vision: salvation is communal—the Spirit creates a new community, a spiritual temple made of living stones.

To belong to God is to belong to His people.

3. THE SPIRIT'S WORK: ONENESS, NOT JUST UNITY

The Spirit births oneness that reflects the Trinity's nature.

Diversity of gifts, cultures, and backgrounds reveal the Spirit's creative power.

Love, poured out by the Spirit, is the foundation for life together.

4. THE SPIRIT AS SEAL AND PLEDGE

The Spirit is given as the guarantee of our inheritance.

This sealing is not just for individuals but for the whole community of believers.

Our identity is both personal and corporate—we are God's people together.

5. TRANSFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY LIFE

The Spirit sanctifies and matures believers, shaping them to live together in love.

Fruit of the Spirit is essential for maintaining oneness.

Division, envy, or selfishness grieve the Spirit and undermine the witness of the church.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How does Paul's vision of salvation challenge the “me and Jesus” mindset common in Western Christianity?

In what ways do you see God's plan for a people (not just individuals) woven through the Old and New Testaments?

What does it mean for the Spirit to be the "seal" and "pledge" of our inheritance as a community?

How can you actively contribute to oneness in your church family this week?

What fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23) needs to grow in you to strengthen life together with others?

APPLICATION: WALKING IT OUT THIS WEEK

Seek Community: Attend a prayer gathering, worship service, or small group. Don't isolate—participate.

Practice Love: Look for one way each day to tangibly show love to someone in your church family.

Cultivate Fruit: Choose one fruit of the Spirit (patience, kindness, self-control, etc.) and pray for the Spirit's help to walk it out in community.

Pray Together: Make space to pray with others, not just alone. Healing and encouragement often come in shared prayer.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit produces a **transformed life**—personally and communally. The “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22–23) is not self-improvement or legalism; it is the Spirit revealing God’s own character in and through believers as a living witness of the coming kingdom.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end, participants should be able to:

Explain why the fruit of the Spirit sits at the center of Paul’s vision of Christian maturity.

Contrast “deeds of the flesh” with “fruit of the Spirit” and diagnose counterfeits.

Practice concrete rhythms that cultivate Spirit-led character in daily life and in the church community.

KEY TEXTS

Galatians 5:16–26 (walk by the Spirit; fruit vs. flesh)

Romans 5:5 (the Spirit pours God’s love into our hearts)

John 4:24 (worship in Spirit and truth)

Ephesians 4:2–3 (preserve the unity of the Spirit)

Philippians 1:6 (He who began a good work will complete it)

CORE TEACHING NOTES

1) Why Fruit Matters (Paul’s Frame)

Salvation is eschatological: the life of the age to come starts now.

Fruit = visible evidence that the life-giving Spirit is present, not just as message but as lived reality in persons and in a people.

2) The List (Gal 5:22–23) and What It Shows

Love – God’s chief attribute; governing motive for all the others (Rom 5:5).

Joy & Peace – posture of the heart; stability and delight in God that overflow toward others.

Patience, Kindness, Goodness – relational fruit; requires real people and real proximity.

Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control – covenantal integrity, strength under control, Spirit-enabled mastery over old appetites.

“Against such things there is no law” → Spirit-formed character surpasses external regulation.

3) Not Legalism, Not Willpower

Paul rejects ascetic self-punishment or mere rule-keeping.

Fruit comes from walking with the Spirit (daily yielding), not from performing for God.

4) Practices that Cultivate Fruit (Personal)

Choose the walk each day: deliberate surrender and attentiveness to the Spirit.

Prayer in the Spirit: lingering, worship, praying Scripture; if applicable, praying in tongues.

Consecration: fasting, resisting dark influences, Scripture meditation.

Honest examen: where did I act from flesh vs. Spirit today?

5) Practices that Cultivate Fruit (Community)

Fruit grows best in family, not isolation.

Commit to a local body where you can practice patience, kindness, confession, and forgiveness.

Guard the “unity of the Spirit” (Eph 4:3): choose reconciliation over withdrawal; serve and be served.

Use gifts for edification (1 Cor 12) so love becomes visible.

6) Spotting Counterfeits

Human programs and ideologies can mimic virtues but are often powered by pride, fear, or control.

Real fruit is Spirit-sourced, Christ-shaped, and endures under testing (1 Cor 3:12–15).

Counterfeits fracture community; real fruit builds up the body in love.

7) When You’re Discouraged

Expect the “already/not yet” tension. Growth is real but progressive.

Anchor in Phil 1:6—the Spirit finishes what He starts.

Keep sowing to the Spirit; harvest follows in due season (Gal 6:8–9).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Which fruit have you seen the Spirit grow in you over the last year? Which feels most lacking? Why?

Where do you sense the pull of the “deeds of the flesh”? What would “walking by the Spirit” look like in that exact moment?

How has community (or isolation) affected your capacity for patience and kindness?

Describe a time you encountered a “counterfeit virtue.” How could the body have discerned it sooner?

What practices help you start the day **choosing the walk**?

PRACTICUM (7-DAY PLAN)

Daily (10–20 min): Quiet prayer; invite the Spirit to lead your day. Read Gal 5:16–26 slowly; ask for one fruit to practice intentionally.

Midday Check-in (2 min): Name one flesh impulse you felt; surrender it; ask for the corresponding fruit.

Community Touchpoint: Attend a prayer meeting / small group this week; offer one concrete act of kindness to someone there.

Weekly Fast (one meal): Fast and intercede for deeper love and peace in your church family.

Evening Examen (5 min): Where did I walk by the Spirit today? Where did I resist? Confess, thank, and ask for fresh filling.

FOR LEADERS (FACILITATION TIPS)

Open with testimonies of **small but specific** fruit seen this week.

Model gentle correction when debate drifts toward rule-keeping; re-center on **relationship** with the Spirit.

Plan a simple service opportunity for the group to practice kindness/goodness together.

MEMORY & MEDITATION VERSES

Galatians 5:22–23

Philippians 1:6

Ephesians 4:2–3

CLOSING PRAYER

“Holy Spirit, pour the love of God into our hearts. Uproot the deeds of the flesh and grow Your fruit in us—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Form us into a people who make Your character visible. Amen.”

THE SPIRIT AND THE GOSPEL – PART 1

Evangelism is more than persuasive words. In Paul's framework, the **Holy Spirit** empowers the *preaching*, prepares the *hearer*, and produces *repentance, faith, and new life*. Our part is faithful proclamation and Spirit-led obedience; **God gives the growth**.

KEY TEXTS (ESV)

"Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

"My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (1 Corinthians 2:4–5)

"And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." (John 16:8)

"One who heard us was a woman named Lydia... The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul." (Acts 16:14)

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (1 Corinthians 3:6–7)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8–9)

"...repentance from dead works and of faith toward God." (Hebrews 6:1)

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

HOW THE SPIRIT ADVANCES THE GOSPEL (PAUL'S FLOW)

Spirit-empowered proclamation

The message is delivered "in power... and the Holy Spirit" (1 Thes 1:5; 1 Cor 2:4–5).

Reliance is on **God's power**, not human polish.

Spirit-prepared hearing

The Spirit **convicts** (Jn 16:8) and **opens hearts** (Acts 16:14).

“Hearing through the word of Christ” births **faith** (Rom 10:17).

Spirit-initiated conversion

Grace produces **repentance from dead works** and **faith toward God** (Heb 6:1; Eph 2:8–9).

New believers are incorporated into a Spirit-formed community.

Spirit over the whole process

We **plant** and **water**; **God gives the growth** (1 Cor 3:6–7).

Weakness is not a barrier—**it’s the place His power rests** (2 Cor 12:9).

KEY TERMS

Word of Christ (Rhema): Spirit-breathed word that creates faith (Rom 10:17).

Conviction: Spirit’s inner persuasion regarding sin, righteousness, judgment (Jn 16:8).

Demonstration of the Spirit: God’s verifiable activity—power that authenticates the message (1 Cor 2:4–5).

DISCUSS

Where have you relied on human methods more than the Spirit’s power in evangelism?

What does it *feel* like when the Spirit is opening a listener’s heart? Share examples.

Why must **repentance** accompany **faith** (Heb 6:1)? What happens if we skip it?

PRACTICE (THIS WEEK)

Ask: “Holy Spirit, lead me to one conversation today” (Rom 8:14).

Tell: Share your **2-minute testimony** (BC → How I met Jesus → After).

Trust: Pray for the person by name; leave the outcome to God (1 Cor 3:6–7).

Stretch: After sharing, ask: “Can I pray for you right now?”—then listen for any Spirit-prompted Scriptures or simple prayers.

MEMORY VERSE (ESV)

“**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**” (Romans 10:17)

PRAYER

“Father, thank you that the gospel is Your power for salvation. Fill my words with Your Spirit. Open hearts as I speak. Lead me, use my weakness, and bring true repentance and faith—for Your glory. Amen.”

THE SPIRIT AND THE GOSPEL – PART 2

Conversion is **God's work** from start to finish. The **Holy Spirit** makes dead hearts alive (**regeneration**), applies Christ's saving work so we stand righteous before God (**justification**), and brings us into God's family (**adoption**). We respond by humbling ourselves, repenting, believing, and walking with the Spirit in a new way of life.

KEY TEXTS (ESV)

Regeneration: *"He saved us... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."* (Titus 3:5)

Justification: *"Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:1–2)

Union with Christ: *"All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... so we too might walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:3–4)

New Creation: *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Adoption: *"You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"* (Romans 8:15)

New Birth: *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* (John 3:5–6)

Grace & Faith: *"By grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God."* (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Assurance in Weakness: *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... the law of the Spirit of life has set you free."* (Romans 8:1–2)

CORE CONCEPTS

1) Regeneration — Born of the Spirit

What it is: The Spirit brings the dead to life—a real, inward renewal (Titus 3:5; John 3:5–6).

Not just words: Saying a prayer isn't the power; the Spirit turns the lights on.

Result: New desires, new awareness of God, beginnings of transformation (2 Cor 5:17).

2) Justification — Standing Righteous in Christ

What it is: Christ's death and resurrection are applied by the Spirit so we stand at peace with God (Rom 5:1–2).

Lived reality: The Spirit keeps us walking in the freedom of "no condemnation" (Rom 8:1–2) and into newness of life (Rom 6:3–4), not behavior management.

3) Adoption — Brought into the Family

What it is: The Spirit changes our status from slaves to sons/daughters and gives us the family cry, “Abba, Father.” (Rom 8:15)

Community: Adoption places us in a Spirit-formed family, where the shared “Abba” language and love identify us as God’s people.

YOUR PART (OUR RESPONSE)

Humble yourself before God (1 Pet 5:6; Isa 66:2).

Repent and believe—grace **produces** faith; we don’t manufacture it (Eph 2:8–9).

Sow to the Spirit: Prayer, Scripture, worship, tongues (if you do), fellowship. Feelings may vary; **faithfulness matters**.

Keep coming—for those with “stop–start” stories, today is the day of salvation; keep leaning in.

DISCUSS

How would you explain **regeneration vs. justification vs. adoption** to a friend?

Where do you most need the Spirit’s help right now: coming alive, living free of condemnation, or embracing your sonship/daughterhood?

Why is **community** essential to living out adoption?

PRACTICE (THIS WEEK)

Pray Romans 8:15 daily: “Spirit of adoption, help me cry ‘Abba, Father.’”

Name & nail one lie of condemnation with Romans 8:1–2; replace it with truth.

Share your story (2 minutes) with one person: *before Christ* → *how He met me* → *new life now*.

MEMORY VERSE

Titus 3:5 — “He saved us... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

PRAYER

“Father, thank You for saving me. Holy Spirit, make me fully alive, keep me in Christ's righteousness, and root me in Your family. Teach me to walk as a beloved child—today. Amen.”

THE SPIRIT AND THE GOSPEL – PART 3

How the Holy Spirit keeps us in faith and forms a new life

The Christian life isn't maintained by rules, routines, or willpower. **The Holy Spirit**—God's empowering presence—keeps us in faith, reshapes our desires, and steadily forms Christ's character in us **within the community** of God's people.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Walk by the Spirit; fruit of the Spirit vs. deeds of the flesh **Galatians 5:16–18, 22–25**

Mind set on the Spirit; help in weakness; destiny in glory **Romans 8:5–9, 26–30**

New creation; know no one according to the flesh **2 Corinthians 5:16–17**

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit **Ephesians 4:30**

Restore gently; bear one another's burdens **Galatians 6:1–2**

CORE CONCEPTS

Life by the Spirit, not by law:

The Law reveals God's character but cannot produce it in us. The Spirit **induces** the life the Law describes.

“Flesh” clarified:

In Paul, *flesh* often means the **old, outside-of-Christ condition**, not a permanent inner twin you must forever obey. In Christ you are **no longer “in the flesh”** (Rom 8:9).

Desire transformation:

A hallmark of real conversion: **new wants**. The Spirit redirects our loves, not merely our behaviors.

Linear growth, eternal aim:

Salvation begins now and moves toward future glory. The Spirit keeps “recomputing”—correcting course and maturing us.

Community is essential:

Individual temples (our bodies) grow inside the **corporate temple** (the church). Isolation starves formation.

HOW THE SPIRIT EMPOWERS DAILY

Guides & reminds (Jn 14:26): brings Scripture to mind at moments of decision.

Convicts & strengthens: adds power to your “**no**” to sin and your “**yes**” to righteousness.

Bears fruit: love, joy, peace... (Gal 5:22–23) are **produced**, not performed.

Helps in weakness (Rom 8:26): intercession, groans, prayer in the Spirit.

Shapes identity talk: the Spirit speaks to **who you are and where you're going**, not who you were.

COMMUNITY PRACTICES THAT PROTECT THE WORK

Don't grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30): refuse speech and patterns that drag people back to their "old story."

Restore gently (Gal 6:1–2): spiritual people help the fallen back to life, not out of the room.

Know one another by the Spirit (2 Cor 5:16): relate to the *new creation* in your brother/sister.

Submit to wise correction: let Scripture-shaped leaders and friends test your impressions and traditions.

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

Legalism: rules to manage sin instead of the Spirit to transform desire.

License: redefining grace as God "looking away." True grace is **power to become** (Rom 8:2; 1 Cor 15:10).

Privatized faith: "me and Jesus" Christianity cuts you off from Spirit-given help.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where have I relied on rules or routines instead of the Spirit's power? What changed when I surrendered?

Which **new desires** has God awakened in me? Where is He still "recomputing" my course?

How can our group "know each other after the Spirit" this month—practically?

When did gentle restoration (Gal 6:1–2) help you—or when could you offer it to someone now?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Daily "First Five": 5 minutes to *acknowledge, ask, align*:

Acknowledge the Spirit's presence.

Ask for guidance in one concrete decision today.

Align by praying Galatians 5:25 ("Since we live by the Spirit...").

Scripture recall: When tempted, pause and ask, "Spirit, remind me of Your word here," then wait.

Community step: Share one area needing "recompute" with a mature believer; invite prayer & follow-up.

MEMORY VERSE

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." —
Galatians 5:16

THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH | SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Spiritual warfare isn't about living in a constant inner tug-of-war between two equal selves. Paul teaches that life "in the flesh" (our old existence outside of Christ, bound by law and sin) has ended. In Christ, the **life-giving Spirit** creates a new reality: we are no longer defined by sin but by the Spirit's presence. Spiritual warfare, then, is about resisting condemnation and false teaching, living as God's new creation, and walking together in the Spirit.

KEY SCRIPTURES

"Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:24–25 (ESV)

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Galatians 5:16 (ESV)

"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you." Romans 8:8–9 (ESV)

CORE CONCEPTS

Flesh in Paul's writings = life outside Christ, under law, dead to God. Not a permanent inner "old self."

Spirit's role = to end dualism, make us new, and empower us to walk in freedom.

Condemnation vs. Conviction: Condemnation shames and traps; conviction lifts and frees through repentance.

Already/Not Yet Tension: We live between the Spirit's present work and the fullness of redemption when Christ returns.

Community Warfare: Much of Paul's language about "flesh vs. Spirit" refers to church culture—division, strife, and law-dependence versus Spirit-led unity and fruitfulness.

PRACTICAL STEPS

Reject Condemnation: Recognize voices of shame and defeat as not from the Spirit.

Stay in Community: Let the Spirit work through the church to remind you of your new identity.

Practice Gratitude: Praise God daily that you are a new creation, not defined by your past.

Accountability: Share struggles quickly with mature believers so they can be covered in prayer and encouragement.

Walk by the Spirit: Cultivate habits of prayer, scripture, and Spirit-led worship that keep your focus on Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How has Romans 7 often been misunderstood? What changes when we read it as describing life outside Christ?

What voices of condemnation do you need to silence in light of Romans 8:1?

How does “knowing one another by the Spirit” (2 Cor. 5:16–17) reshape relationships in the church?

Where have you seen the Spirit produce fruit in your life that blesses others?

MEMORY VERSE

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
— Romans 8:1 (ESV)

Paul's vision of the Christian life is **experiential and communal**: the Holy Spirit is God's empowering presence **in us and among us**, preparing a people (not just individuals) for Christ's return. The Spirit anchors the "already/not yet"—assuring us of the future while transforming us today.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Eph 2:18–22; Rom 8:9–17; 2 Cor 1:21–22; Eph 1:13–14

John 14:16–17,26; John 6:44; Rom 12:4–8; 1 Cor 12–14

Ps 51:10–12; Matt 16:16–19; 1 Thess 5:19–21

PAUL'S NINE CORE THEMES

Essentiality of the Spirit — Christianity isn't mere cognition; the Spirit forms Christ in us.

Revelation & Grace First — We come to God because the Spirit draws; grace generates faith.

Down Payment of Glory — The Spirit is the pledge that Jesus is returning and we're being readied.

God Dwells Among a People — The Church is a Spirit-built temple; salvation is personal but never private.

Fully Divine, Intimately Present — The Spirit is God's agency on earth, making God known personally.

Assurance & Effectiveness — The Spirit stabilizes our salvation and leads a concrete walk with God.

Preparation for the Day — The Spirit matures a bride/body ready for Christ, not a self-help project.

Power for Holy Living — Transformation flows from surrender and Spirit-empowerment, not rule-keeping.

Prayer & Worship as Lifelines — The Spirit energizes prayer, intercession, and worship; not rote repetition.

DIAGNOSING TODAY'S GAPS

Institution over Presence: when liturgy, programs, or control replace Spirit-led life.

“Crazy-town” excess: unbounded experiences that drift from Scripture and love.

Christ-centered, Word-bounded middle: hungry for the Spirit, guided by Scripture, aimed at love.

PRACTICES FOR THIS WEEK

Personal

Hunger & Surrender: Each day pray, “Holy Spirit, fill me afresh; lead me today.” (Ps 51:10–12)

Scripture in Presence: Read Eph 1–3 slowly; pause to ask the Spirit to illumine and apply.

Spirit-led Prayer: Move from lists to listening—ask, wait, then pray what you sense (Rom 8:26–27).

Household/Small Group

Open Space (15–20 min): Worship, then invite brief Spirit-led prayers, Scripture, and encouragements.

Discernment Together: Weigh what's shared (1 Thess 5:19–21) with humility and Scripture.

Church Leaders

Teach the Middle Road: Christ-centered, Bible-bounded, Spirit-open.

Create Environments: Regular prayer nights; room for gifts (1 Cor 14) with gentle guidance.

Equip, Don't Perform: Shift from platform-centric Sundays to whole-church participation (Eph 4:11–16).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where have I substituted control, programs, or mere knowledge for the Spirit's living presence?

How does the Spirit's role as a **pledge** (Eph 1:13–14) change my view of assurance and hope?

In what ways is our church cultivating (or constraining) Spirit-led prayer, worship, and gifts?

What would a practical “middle road” look like in our context this month?

How can we move from **creed to reality**—affirming good theology while expecting present encounter?

PITFALLS TO AVOID

Legalism: behavior modification without transformation.

Consumerism: “TED talk + concert” church that bypasses encounter.

Anti-intellectualism: experiences unmoored from Scripture and love.

MARKERS OF SPIRIT-FORMED COMMUNITY

Presence: sensed nearness of God in gathered worship and prayer.

Participation: many members contributing grace-gifts.

Preparation: a people growing in holiness, hope, and love, ready for Christ's appearing.

A SIMPLE PRAYER

“Father, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit—Your empowering presence for today and tomorrow. Fill us afresh, anchor our hope, guide our prayers, and shape us into a people who bear Your presence for the sake of the world—until Jesus returns. Amen.”

THE SPIRIT AND WORSHIP

Christian worship is not a show to watch but a **Spirit-led, Scripture-formed, everyone-participates** response to God's presence. The Holy Spirit both **centers us on Christ** and **gathers us as a people** so our songs, prayers, and gifts build up the church and exalt the Father.

KEY SCRIPTURES

John 4:23–24 – Worship in SPIRIT AND TRUTH

1 Cor 14:26, 33, 40 – “Each one has...”; freedom **with** order

Col 3:16; Eph 5:18–19 – Psalms, hymns, **spiritual songs**; the Word dwells as we sing

Acts 2:17–18 / Joel 2 – Spirit poured out on **all flesh** (sons & daughters)

HOW THE SPIRIT SHAPES WORSHIP

Presence over performance: The Spirit makes God's nearness tangible; worship is God-centered awe, not trend or talent centered.

Participation, not spectatorship: “Each one has...” (1 Cor 14:26). Worship is a **body** activity—psalms, teachings, revelations, tongues/interpretations—for **edification**.

Freedom with peace & order: Space for spontaneity **and** shepherded flow (vv. 33, 40).

Whole-church inclusion: Men and women, young and old, across cultures and giftings—**no special caste**.

SINGING: WHY IT MATTERS

Vertical: We adore the Father; the Spirit helps us voice what prose can't.

Horizontal: Songs **teach and admonish** (Col 3:16). Sound theology sung forms discipleship.

Formations: Expect seasons where a Spirit-breathed song “sticks” to your soul to shape obedience and hope.

THE TRINITY IN WORSHIP

To the Father: the object of our praise.

Through the Son: the **Word of Christ** grounds content and posture.

By the Spirit: the Helper empowers, leads, convicts, and distributes gifts.

COMMON PITFALLS VS. HEALTHY PRACTICES

Performance culture → SWAP FOR presence & congregational voice.

Consumer mindset → SWAP FOR contribution: "What grace can I bring?"

Chaos or control → SWAP FOR shepherded spontaneity: liberty within loving order.

Talent-only platform → SWAP FOR training many to participate (including children).

PRACTICES FOR THIS WEEK

Arrive to offer, not just receive. Ask: "Lord, what psalm, prayer, scripture, or encouragement can I bring?"

Sing—out loud. Choose one song daily; let it become prayer. Journal how it shapes your heart.

Word + Worship. Read Col 3:12–17, then sing a song that echoes its themes.

Two-minute yielding. In gatherings, pause to ask the Spirit: "Who needs encouragement? What should I share?"

Family worship. Involve kids—one simple chorus; let each person thank God in one sentence.

Practice order. If you sense a contribution, share it briefly and humbly; submit to leaders for timing.

Write a "spiritual song." One stanza of Scripture-soaked gratitude in your own words; bring it to small group.

FOR LEADERS

Teach the theology of worship (Trinity, edification, Scripture-shaped lyrics).

Design services for participation: testimonies, scripture readings, open moments for short prayers/songs.

Shepherd the flow: protect peace; encourage brevity and clarity; model humility.

Develop many voices: rotate readers, pray-ers, and song leaders; mentor new contributors.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. Where have I slipped into **spectator mode** in worship? What one change will I make next gathering?
2. Which song is the Spirit using to **admonish/encourage** me right now—and why?

3. How can our group make more room for “**each one has**” while preserving peace and order?
4. What would a **child-inclusive** worship practice look like in our home or church?

Bottom line: The Holy Spirit gathers ordinary people into an extraordinary chorus. Lift your voice, bring your grace, and let love guide the flow.

Spiritual gifts are **manifestations of the Holy Spirit** given to build up Christ's body and advance the gospel. They're neither personality labels nor status badges; they're love-in-action for the **common good**—"already/not yet" foretastes of the coming kingdom.

KEY TEXTS

1 Cor 12–14; Rom 12:4–8; Eph 4:7–16

Acts 2; Mark 16:15–20; Gal 3:5

1 Cor 13:8–12 (gifts cease **when the perfect comes**—at Christ's return)

CORE FRAMEWORK

1) Three Broad Ranges of Gifts

Service Gifts (often quiet): helps, administration, leadership, mercy, giving (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12).

IMPACT: organize mission, care for people, make fruit last.

Power/Miracle Gifts: healings (often progressive), miracles (instant boundary-breaking acts), faith.

IMPACT: the future age breaks into the present; strengthens witness.

Inspired Utterance Gifts: prophecy, tongues, interpretation, words of wisdom/knowledge.

IMPACT: God speaks to edify, guide, console, correct.

2) "Manifestations," not identities

1 Cor 12 calls them **manifestations of the Spirit**—the Spirit distributes **as needed**.

We don't "own" a gift; we **yield** to the Spirit for the moment's need.

3) The "Already / Not Yet"

We live between ages: weakness and futility remain, yet the Spirit is a **down payment** of what's coming.

Expect gifts; don't demand them. Seek in faith; submit to God's wisdom.

CLARIFYING THE CONTROVERSIES

Two Ditches to Avoid

Denial / Cessationism: "Gifts ended."

1 Cor 13 says they cease **when the perfect comes** (Christ's return), not when apostles died.

Over-exaltation / Spectacle: chasing platforms, monetizing gifts, or using them to excuse sin.

Gifts operate under **love, humility, and Scripture**.

Tongues: Private & Public

Private prayer language (1 Cor 14): edifies the individual; Paul practiced it "more than all."

Public tongue: for the church **only with interpretation** so all are edified.

Prophecy: More than predicting

NT prophecy primarily strengthens, encourages, and consoles (1 Cor 14:3).

God may reveal future matters, but **purpose = edification**, not brand-building.

Healings vs. Miracles

Healing can be immediate or progressive (like a prescribed course).

Miracle is an instantaneous, visible override of natural limits.

Service Gifts Matter

Helps, administration, and mercy are **Spirit-empowered**, not "unspiritual."

Paul refuses a hierarchy: all parts honor Christ and serve the body.

HOW TO PRACTICE (ORDER + FREEDOM)

Posture

Center on **Jesus**, depend on the **Spirit**, aim for the **common good**.

Pursue gifts **eagerly** (1 Cor 14:1) with **love** (1 Cor 13) and **sound teaching**.

Guardrails for Gatherings (1 Cor 14)

Intelligibility: contributions must **edify** (clear language or interpretation).

Accountability: "Let others weigh what is said."

Peace & order: multiple voices, but no chaos; leaders steward the flow.

Everyday Rhythms

Pray in the Spirit daily (Jude 20; 1 Cor 14).

Ask, “Lord, how do you want to serve someone **through me** today?”

Practice: share a short encouragement, scripture, or prayer; offer to pray for healing.

DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS

1. Does this align with **Scripture** and the **word of Christ**?
2. Does it **edify** the body and reflect **love**?
3. Is there **humility** and willingness to be corrected?
4. What fruit (repentance, peace, courage, holiness) follows?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which “ditch” tempts you more—skepticism or spectacle? Why?
2. Where could your church make **more room** for “each one has...” (1 Cor 14:26) while preserving order?
3. Share a time you sensed the Spirit’s nudge. What happened?

TRY THIS THIS WEEK

Private: Pray in the Spirit for 10 minutes; journal any scripture or person that comes to mind.

Public: Bring a 60-second encouragement or prayer to your small group.

Service: Volunteer in a “quiet” gift (helps/admin/mercy) and watch how the Spirit multiplies it.

MEMORY VERSE

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit **for the common good.**” — 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7

The Spirit and Baptism — One-Page Study Guide

BIG IDEA

For Paul, life with God is **linear and ongoing**, not a chain of separate “events.” At conversion you are joined to Christ, baptized into His body **by the Spirit**, and called to keep receiving “more” as you walk in faith. **Water baptism** publicly enacts union with Christ (death–burial–resurrection). **Spirit baptism** (Paul’s language is “receiving the Spirit”) is not a later credential but the animating presence that begins at conversion and keeps empowering you.

KEY PAULINE TEXTS

“By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... and were all made to drink of one Spirit.” **1 Cor 12:13**

“You were washed... in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” **1 Cor 6:11**

Baptized **into Christ**; united with Him in death and resurrection. **Rom 6:3–5**

Baptized **into Christ**, clothed with Christ. **Gal 3:26–29**

Baptism as burial with Christ and raising through faith. **Col 2:11–12**

God “supplies the Spirit and works miracles... by hearing with faith.” **Gal 3:5**

HOW PAUL FRAMES IT

Who baptizes? The **Spirit** baptizes us **into one body** (1 Cor 12:13).

Into whom? Believers are baptized **into Christ** (Rom 6; Gal 3; Col 2).

Washed how? “Washed... in the Spirit” = cleansing/renewal language, not water mechanics (1 Cor 6:11).

When? At conversion—then **continual fillings** as you walk by faith. Not a schedule of “second blessings,” but a life of ongoing **more**.

ACTS SNAPSHOTS (TO READ IN HARMONY WITH PAUL)

Acts 10 (Cornelius): Spirit falls **before** water baptism.

Acts 19 (Ephesus): Disciples of John believe in Jesus, are **baptized in water**, Paul lays hands, they **receive the Spirit**—all together.

Acts 8 (Samaria): Believe and are baptized; apostles later lay hands for reception of the Spirit (early Jewish-Christian leadership context).

Takeaway: Timing varies, but the **normative Pauline vision** is: believe → belong → be filled → keep being filled.

CORE TRUTHS

Conversion = Spirit's arrival. You can't come to Christ without the Spirit first drawing and then indwelling.

Water baptism enacts union with Christ, not a mechanical dispenser of salvation/Spirit. God responds to **faith**, not rituals.

Ongoing “more.” The Spirit keeps empowering, cleansing, gifting, and guiding—expect **fresh fillings** across your life.

No elite gatekeepers. Hands laid on you can help, but you do **not** need a celebrity minister or a special meeting to receive. Come to God in faith—daily.

CLARIFYING COMMON CONFUSIONS

“Baptized in the Spirit” vs. Paul’s wording: Paul emphasizes **receiving the Spirit** and being **baptized into Christ/into one body** by the Spirit.

“Second experience?” Paul presents a **Spirit-begun, Spirit-continued** life. Later empowerments are **renewals**, not a required two-tier system.

Water = Spirit? Water baptism is an **act of faith** that often coincides with powerful encounters, but the **Spirit is given by God** apart from any mechanism.

PRACTICES FOR INDIVIDUALS

Present yourself daily. “Lord, I yield to You. Fill me again. Lead me.”

Word + Prayer in the Spirit. Build faith (Jude 20); expect God to speak and strengthen.

Name your “more.” Where do you need fresh help—boldness, holiness, gifts, guidance? Ask specifically.

Remember your baptism. Rehearse Rom 6: you died with Christ; you now walk in newness of life.

PRACTICES FOR CHURCHES

Preach faith + expect the Spirit at conversion and in gathered worship.

Baptize promptly as a faith response to the gospel.

Create space for receiving. Prayer, laying on of hands, and orderly practice of gifts.

Avoid both ditches: (1) reducing life in the Spirit to rituals, or (2) chasing sensationalism/celebrity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does 1 Cor 12:13 reshape your understanding of “Spirit baptism”?

Where have you seen baptism (water) become a mechanism rather than an act of faith?

Share a time when God gave you “more” after conversion. What cultivated that?

What structures in our church encourage (or hinder) ongoing fillings of the Spirit?

How can we hold together **order** and **openness** in receiving the Spirit?

MEMORY/REFLECTION VERSES

1 Cor 12:13 • Rom 6:4 • Gal 3:27 • 1 Cor 6:11 • Gal 3:5

LEADER NOTES (FACILITATION TIPS)

Keep the focus on **faith in Christ** and **availability to the Spirit**—not on timelines or labels.

Invite responses: prayer for infilling, testimonies, and (optionally) water baptism sign-ups.

Model humility: “more” is for **all**—new believers and seasoned leaders alike.

THE SPIRIT: PRESENT IN WEAKNESS

Life with God happens in the **tension** of a fallen world (weakness, suffering, limits) and the **power** of the Holy Spirit (miracles, sustaining grace). Paul teaches that the Spirit meets us **in** weakness—especially through **prayer**—so that our faith rests on **God's power**, not our performance.

KEY TEXTS TO READ

Futility, hope, and the Spirit's intercession with "groanings too deep for words." **Romans 8:18–28**

Weakness + demonstration of the Spirit and power. **1 Corinthians 2:1–5**

The Spirit as **pledge/down payment** of what's coming. **2 Corinthians 1:21–22; 5:5**

Power perfected in weakness; grace is sufficient. **2 Corinthians 12:7–10**

The "course of this age." **Ephesians 2:1–7**

Build yourselves up by praying in the Holy Spirit. **Jude 20**

TWO COMMON DITCHES (AVOID BOTH)

Defeatism: "This is just how it is; God won't act."

Triumphalism: "If you suffer, it's your fault; real faith never struggles."

Paul's Way: Hold both together—**real weakness** in a broken age **and** real **Spirit-empowered** life.

WHAT "WEAKNESS" MEANS (AND DOESN'T)

Means: The frailty/limits of life in this age—pressure, illness, persecution, loss.

Doesn't mean: The consequences of ongoing sin. (See 1 Pet. 4:15–16.)

THE ALREADY/NOT YET

We live **now** in a world still marked by futility.

We carry the **pledge** of the future (the Spirit) who brings **miracles** at times and **sustaining grace** at others.

Both are authentic works of the Spirit.

How the Spirit Helps Us (Especially in Prayer)

Intercession: When words fail, the Spirit **intercedes** according to God's will (Rom. 8:26–27).

Alignment → Assurance: As the Spirit prays through us, our hearts align with God's will, leading to **confident hope** (Rom. 8:28 in context).

Pray in the Spirit: Praying in tongues and Spirit-led prayer **builds faith**, strengthens resistance to spiritual warfare, and clarifies what to pray with the mind (1 Cor. 14; Jude 20).

MARKS OF MATURE DISCIPLESHIP

Refuse **accusation**: don't accuse **God, yourself, or others** in hardship.

Expect **God's presence** in the mud, not just after the mess.

Practice **persevering prayer** ("pray through") until peace/faith rises.

Embrace **community intercession**—let others carry you when you're weak.

PRACTICES FOR THE WEEK

Pray Romans 8: Sit quietly; confess your weakness; invite the Spirit to intercede. Pray in the Spirit (if you do); then pray with your understanding what the Spirit highlights.

Journal a "Pray-Through": Record the situation, what surfaced in prayer, and the moment peace/assurance came.

Forgiveness Check: Ask the Spirit whom you must forgive to remove prayer blockages (Matt. 6:12–15).

Corporate Lift: Text two believers your specific need; ask them to pray in the Spirit over you this week.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where have you drifted toward **defeatism** or **triumphalism**? What would Paul say to you?
2. Describe a time you received **sustaining grace** rather than a miracle. How did it form Christ in you?
3. How does Romans 8:26–28 reshape the way you **interpret** hard seasons?
4. What rhythms help you **pray in the Spirit** and then with understanding? What could you start this week?

MEMORY VERSE

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” — **2 Corinthians 12:9a**

GUIDED PRAYER (1–2 MINUTES)

“Father, I bring my weakness into Your presence. Holy Spirit, help me pray according to the will of God. Align my heart with Yours; silence accusation; release either miracle or sustaining grace—whichever most glorifies Jesus. Strengthen me to persevere in hope. Amen.”