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God the Spirit: Old Testament Power

Aim: The aim of study one is to seek God's understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the life of Old Testament believers. We'll traverse through Old Testament passages seeking to understand how the Holy Spirit acted. Then we'll draw some conclusions about the character of the Holy Spirit and lastly, make some application points to our own lives.

Context: Relationships are based on knowledge; we grow in love of people due to positive and loving experiences. This creates a potential problem which theologian Abraham Kuyper spoke about, 'we know not what spirits are, nor what our own spirit is.' The issue is we know about God as he is the creator, we can read about Jesus as an historical figure, but we cannot touch, smell, look at nor hear the Spirit.

1. How could our inability to touch and see the Spirit affect our understanding of the power and personhood of the Holy Spirit?

The Creative Power of the Spirit: *Genesis 1:1-2,26-27, 2:7; Psalm 33:6, 104:29-30; Job 33:4.*

2. Why in Genesis 1:2 is the Spirit of God hovering over the waters? What imagery is conveyed by the Spirit's presence?

3. Why is it important that the Spirit of God is co-creator of the earth and humanity in Genesis 1:26-27? (also look at *Gen 2:7* and *Psalms 104:29-30*)

4. Genesis 1-2, Psalm 104:29-30 and Job 33:4 all state the Spirit gives breath to humanity, why is this the Spirit's role and how does this help us relate to God?

Personal Spiritual Power to enact God's will: *Exodus 31:1-5, 35:30-35; Numbers 11:25-29; Judges 3:10, 14:6; 1 Samuel 10:6-10, 16:13-14; Daniel 4:8-9, 5:11-14.*

5. Why does God fill people with his Spirit? And, how did and Old Testament believer know they were filled with the Holy Spirit?

6. How is this both similar and dissimilar to a New Testament believer being filled with the Holy Spirit? And what differences does it make to the Christian life?

The Power of the Spirit: *Psalm 51:11-12; Isaiah 11:1-5, 31:3,40:7, 59:19, 63:7-11;*

Ezekiel 39:29, 3:12; Micah 3:8,

7. What are the results for Old Testament believers in being filled with the Holy Spirit?

8. What is the personality and character and morality of the Spirit from the bible references you have read?

9. From the above answer, list three behaviours the Holy Spirit could help you change?

God the Spirit: New Testament Personhood

Aim: To see how the revelation of the Holy Spirit is a revelation of personhood. This means, God the Spirit increasingly shows himself to have the same personality, character and ethics of God.

Context: Who cares anyway has been a cry of many Christians over the years when controversy abounds regarding the Holy Spirit. Most ancient controversies about the Holy Spirit were over his place in the godhead: was he merely the energy of God the Father or was he our imaginations positive thoughts?

1. Does it matter if the Holy Spirit is God or the energy of God the Father? List three reasons you think why it matters and three why you think it might not matter.

The Godhead of the Holy Spirit: *John 14:15-17, 25-26; Acts 5:3; Romans 8:9-17, 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 3:7.*

2. How does the bible demonstrate the Holy Spirit is part of the godhead?

3. What works of the Holy Spirit are not done by the Father or the Son? And what work is done by more than one? How can the unique work of the Holy Spirit help Christians?

4. List the outcomes of having or not having the Spirit in Romans 8:9-17.

Work of God the Spirit: Acts 1:2,8,16, 2:17-18, 38, 4:8, 25, 31, 5:3, 6:10, 10:19, 45, 11:12-16.

5. What work does the Holy Spirit do in the life of believers in the book of Acts? How can this be like your life now?

6. How did the Holy Spirit enable these works to occur? Is this like you and if so what plans can help this happen in your life? What dangers are there in adopting the exact way the Spirit worked in Acts for your life?

Work of God the Spirit: *Romans 1:4, 5:5, 8:2-16.*

7. In Romans, what power does the Spirit exert? How does the Spirit help you live a life of grace rather than a life of law?

8. What would you say to someone who is struggling with the following,
- i. They don't feel the Spirit in them.
 - ii. The doubt they have the Spirit.
 - iii. The don't understand what it means to be an heir of Christ, to be free from law or how the Spirit helps with our desires.
 - iv. The cannot understand how the Spirit is a person in the godhead like Jesus or the Father.

God the Spirit: Spiritual Mission

Aim: To understand how the Holy Spirit equipped Jesus for his mission. Then, we'll see how the Spirit can equip us for his mission.

Context: Life is a battle, emotionally, physically and spiritually and we'd all like life to be easier, but Jesus' reliance upon the Spirit shows us life is filled with spiritual battles we need to face.

1. How do the difficulties in life sometimes lead us to ignore the power of the Spirit to help us? Why do we do this?

Jesus and the Holy Spirit: *Luke 4:1, 14-18, 10:21, 11:13, 12:10-12, Mark 13:11-13, Matthew 10:20, 12:18,28, 31-32, 28:19.*

2. How does the Spirit lead Jesus and then help Jesus in his battle with Satan in Luke 4:1-11? Is Jesus' method of fighting Satan unique to him or are there things we can learn and apply to our own spiritual battle?

3. What were the visible signs of Jesus being in the power of the Spirit? How is like us as Christians and what is not like us? How do you decide? (*i.e. does the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus mean he manifests himself in the life of Jesus differently to Christians*).

4. From the above readings, what does Jesus reveal to humanity through his ministry with the Holy Spirit? How does this help us understand the way God reveals himself to us?

5. What is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Why is it unforgivable? What does this teach us about the power and importance of the Holy Spirit?

6. How does Mark 13:11, Matthew 10:20 and Luke 12:12 help the disciples and us during spiritual battles?

7. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the mission of God called the Great Commission, see Matthew 28:19-20?

8. Summarise how the Holy Spirit helped Jesus achieve his mission. Second, how does the Spirit help us achieve the mission of God.

God the Spirit: Spiritual Birth

Aim: The aim of study four is to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of a non-Christian to a Christian.

Context: The age-old debate which has split more churches than a treehopper trees is over the role of the Spirit versus the role of the person in conversion. For example, does the Spirit convert or do I play a part? If the Spirit converts, how can a non-Christian be held accountable for remaining a non-Christian, maybe the Spirit is at fault? What are your thoughts on the age-old debate, who converts, the Holy Spirit or the person or both?

Spiritual Birth for the Spiritual Depraved: *Romans 3:10-12, Psalm 14.*

2. What is our spiritual state before God? What is the answer to the often-said statement, "I am good enough to go to heaven!"?

3. Do Romans and Psalm 14 sound harsh because there are lots of nice people in the world, if so, what does this say about our view of sin and the judgment of God? Can anyone be saved without first knowing the state of their soul before God?

Spiritual Birth: *John 3:1-21*

4. What are the similarities between John 3:1-8 and Romans 3:10-12? Why is this important for Jesus' description of how to be born again?

5. Define 'born again' in John 3:3 & 7, and 'born of water and the Spirit' in John 3:5.

6. How does the Spirit enable being born again to occur? This is another way of asking, what is the process of becoming a Christian. (see John 3:14-17) Are you born again? The leader might give time for each person if they wish to give a short 2-minute testimony.

Spiritual Birth in the Later New Testament: *1 Peter 1:3, 23, Titus 3:4-7, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Ephesians 1:13, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6.*

7. Describe the role played by all the members of the Trinity in the conversion of a non-Christian to Christ. How can you know for certain you have the Spirit of God?

God the Spirit: Spiritual Growth

Aim: To seek to work with the Holy Spirit's desire to help us grow in our service to the mission of God. This means, after conversion, the Holy Spirit's aim is to help us grow in spiritual maturity with the aim of equipping us for the mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ.

Context: why am I such a horrendous sinner? I mean if the Spirit is alive in me, why do I repeat the same sins all the time or feel completely apathetic to the mission of God?

Spiritual Ethics: *Romans 2:28-29, 2 Corinthians 3:3-18, Galatians 3:1-5.*

2. What is the difference between law and Spirit? Why does one condemn and the other save? How does the Spirit help us obey God's ethic without it becoming like commands and laws from the Old Covenant?

3. "the Spirit gives life," in 2 Corinthians 3:6, describe a life which is given by the Spirit and a life fuelled by the flesh. How can you help maintain this strong contrast in lifestyle?

4. In Galatians how does receiving the Spirit from what you heard result in spiritual growth?

Spiritual Growth: *Colossians 1:7-10, Ephesians 1:17, Galatians 5:5, 5:13-6:10, 1 John 3:24-4:1-6, 13.*

5. What is the link between spiritual growth and wisdom? How does this help a Christian grow in maturity?

6. Summarise and rewrite Galatians 5:5 in your own words. List practical measures which will help this righteousness be a reality in your life?

7. Give Christian examples of the fruits of the Spirit. How are these different from non-Christians living out the same virtues?

8. From Galatians 6:1-10, why does the Spirit encourage Christians to restore one another? How is this a sign of spiritual growth for both the encourager and the receiver? Allow time for people to give examples when they have received this encouragement and how it has helped in their spiritual maturity. (*some might have negative examples*)

God the Spirit: Spiritual Gifts: Empowered

Aim: To learn, appreciate and participate in how the Holy Spirit equips us to serve him.

This study is centered on the equipping of the Spirit to help us worship God, whether this be at church, at home, at work or at leisure.

Context: Most of the time church seems pretty dry, there seems little attempt to engage the Holy Spirit or for the Holy Spirit to engage us in worship- if Anglicanism is the epitome of worship than heaven must be a dull place. The charge of boredom, dullness and dryness is often made against church, how do we answer this accusation? If there is some truth to this accusation, what does it say about our worship of God prompted by the Holy Spirit?

Spirit-filled worship is the only real worship: *Ephesians 5:18-19, 1 Corinthians 14:1-16*

2. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

3. Ephesians and Corinthians demonstrate the importance of a congregational context, meaning the Spirit encourages certain behaviours and thoughts depending on context.

List how the Spirit encourages worship depending on the context. You could choose the context of church, home and work.

4. Considering your answers to the above questions, how can a congregation know the Spirit is working in the lives of the congregation members? How can this be cultivated without it becoming programmatic? *(i.e. often spiritual acts of worship which are good and were spontaneous over time become programmatic in church, resulting in godliness and faith being equated with the Spirit's ability to do those visible acts, i.e. speaking in tongues, prophesy)*

5. Spiritual singing is singing fuelled by the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. How have songs helped your worship of God? How did you know this was a work of the Spirit?

6. List ways from 1 Corinthians 14, we as a community of believers could encourage each other to worship God, both individually and congregationally.

7. There are numerous examples of Spirit-fuelled songs and worship in the New Testament, *Acts 16:25, Revelation 4:8, 11, 5:9-10, 12-13, 7:10-12, 15:3-4, Ephesians 5:14, 1 Timothy 3:16, Colossians 1:15-18, 3:16-17, Romans 15:9, James 5:13, Hebrews 2:12-13*, how is the content of these songs representative of the Spirit's mission? Also, how does the content of these spiritual songs inform us, if our singing and worship is spiritually

driven? (*also reflect on 1 Corinthians 14:15-19 regarding comprehending what is occurring*). Lastly, are there changes we could make about music and worship either at church or in our wider lives, if so what could they be?

God the Spirit: Spiritual Gifts: Service

Aim: The second study seeks to demonstrate how the Spirit equips believers for works of service which promote the mission of Jesus Christ.

Context: The twentieth century saw an upswing in Christians wanting to discover their spiritual gifts, describe your experience in discovering and implementing spiritual gifts?

What are the dangers in the modern approach to gift discovery and what have been the benefits?

God the Spirit: Spiritual Gifts: Service- 1 Corinthians 12

3. 1 Corinthians 12 cannot be taken out of context to design a neat gift catalogue which can be dispersed to members of the church, what is the context of 1 Corinthians 12 and how might it shed light on our desire to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

4. How can a Christian be certain they have the Holy Spirit?

5. 1 Cor 12:7 says, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good," what does this mean in your life and church? Define common good according to Jesus Christ. Are there aspects of your life which need to be brought into alignment with the common good as defined by Jesus Christ, if so how can this happen?

6. How might a person discover if they have any manifestation of the Spirit? People might like to, like in the context question, discuss how this has happened in their Christian life.

7. Re-phrase 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 in our church context. How as a church community could we foster this attitude in our church? How does the Holy Spirit enable this to occur? As part of this discussion, discuss what are misinterpretations of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and how we can avoid them.

8.1 Corinthians 12:13 is a verse about unity amongst diversity, are there ministry initiatives we could adopt which would promote the Holy Spirit's mission in new diverse ways, if so what might some of them be?

9. End with each group member listing ways the Holy Spirit has gifted them and how they could use their gifts for the service of Jesus Christ.

God the Spirit: Spiritual work

Aim: to understand the Holy Spirit's battle against evil spiritual forces. Second, to grasp the future regenerative work of the Holy Spirit.

Context: It is said that 50% of people do not give the devil enough credit nor power whilst 50% give him too much. Do you believe in evil spiritual forces? Why, why not and what role has this knowledge played in your life?

God the Spirit: Current work against the evil spiritual forces: *Galatians 4:3,*

Ephesians 6:10-13, Colossians 2:8-10, 18-20, 1 Corinthians 10:1-5, Jude 1:19-20.

2. From the readings, what are evil spiritual forces and what is their power?

3. How do we know the Holy Spirit has more power than evil spirits? Also, how do we know evil spirits including the devil have more power than humans?

4. An assumption in Ephesians 6:1-14 is that a struggle is going on, how has your life borne witness to this spiritual struggle? How do we fight the battle (*i.e. what do the metaphors mean in real life*)?

5. Colossians 2:8-10, 18-20 link the evil of the world to the spiritual domain, how can this be both unhelpful and helpful in our spiritual battles?

6. Going back to the study of Jesus and his struggle against Satan, look at your notes and see if there are hints from the life of Jesus as to how we should be fighting against demonic beings? If so, what are they and how could we be similar? Additionally, using your answer from question 5 are there forces in your life which are examples of Colossians 2, if so, how must we fight?

God the Spirit: Future work in God's people: 1 Corinthians 15:42-58

7. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of the body? Why is this his mission and how is this supposed to be comforting to Christians?

8. What is the theological meaning of 1 Corinthians 15:45 and how is it designed to demonstrate the purpose and plan of God?

9. What is your future? How must this spur us on to fulfill the mission of the Spirit?
