**Learn in Community**



Small Group Study



**Volume Overview**

**Who is the Holy Spirit?**

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! ([Galatians 5:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.22-23))

*In His most famous sermon (*[*Matthew 5–7*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5-7)*), Jesus taught us to love our enemies, give to the needy, and put God’s kingdom first in our life. As His words outlined the high expectations of those in His kingdom, it doesn’t take us long to recognize a problem—our behavior. We simply can’t perfectly meet this standard on our own. It’s not in us to naturally love those who mistreat us. We often are too selfish to be generous. And we spend a lot of time building the kingdom of our own life, rather than God’s kingdom*.

*So, why did Jesus command us to live a life He knew full well we can’t live on our own? The key is that Jesus never asked us to live the Christian life on our own. In fact, Jesus spent significant time teaching about His indispensable gift for living the Christian life: the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His followers it was good for them for Him to go away because the presence of the Holy Spirit would be coming into their life. God in the flesh was a wonderful gift, but God living inside us is even better. When God lives inside us, He can empower us, help us grow, and equip us in a unique way. Let’s look closer at the Holy Spirit as God*.

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**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**  Share about a time when you were caught doing something wrong by a parent, teacher, or other authority figure. |

Some of us have a strong relationship with the truth because our parents refused to tolerate lies. Small lies we may have told as children were punishable offenses. But many of us have grown up around people we respected and loved who fibbed to get out of tough spots. They may have lied to get out of paying a speeding ticket or going to an event they didn’t want to attend. Maybe they called in sick at work when they weren’t sick. Or they might have told seemingly harmless “white” lies to avoid hurting someone’s feelings. The way we see truth handled as children leaves a lasting mark on us as adults. In today’s Bible story, we’ll see a couple of people who thought they could get by with lying to others—but no one can lie to the Holy Spirit because He is God.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: Were you taught about the Holy Spirit as a child? If so, what were you taught?



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| **QUESTION**  Were you taught about the Holy Spirit as a child? If so, what were you taught? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

The Bible is very clear: The Holy Spirit is God. All the attributes that are true of God the Father and Jesus the Son are true of the Holy Spirit as well. So we must respect Him as we do the Father and Son. Telling the truth before Him is the bare minimum we can do to show respect to the Spirit of God, who lives in us.

In today’s Bible text, we’ll see how one couple realized too late the fatal result of lying to God’s Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira thought they could get away with lying because only the two of them would really know what they had done. But we serve an all-seeing, all-knowing God, whose Spirit is not bound to one place or time.

In [Psalm 139](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps139), the Psalmist wondered where he could go to get away from God’s Spirit. The answer to that question is nowhere! This thought is comforting when we go through times of trouble. But it should put the fear of God in our heart as well. We should maintain our integrity, whether our actions are visible or invisible to others, because the Spirit of God sees all things.

**The Holy Spirit Guides Us into Truth**

Read [Acts 5:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac5.1-4).

Ananias and Sapphira weren’t punished for the amount of money they brought to the church. They were punished because they lied about their actions to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is present among us when we interact with fellow believers. He takes our interactions with each other seriously. And He can reveal truth. Even though the couple lied to Peter, the Holy Spirit guided Peter to the truth.

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| **QUESTION**  What does this story tell us about how we should behave with our fellow believers? |

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| **QUESTION**  Think of people in your life who are honest. What are some of the positive attributes that accompany those who choose to always tell the truth? |

**The Holy Spirit Knows Our Thoughts**

Read [Acts 5:5–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac5.5-10).

Instant death is not the usual consequence for a single lie. This story shows us the seriousness of trying to deceive God’s people and the Holy Spirit. It should cause us to pause and seriously think about our interactions with fellow believers.

Both Ananias and Sapphira had a choice. They could lie or tell the truth. Sapphira had the opportunity to come clean. But each chose to disrespect the Spirit of God by insisting on their lie. They each paid for this disobedience with their life.

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| **QUESTION**  When someone has opportunity to come clean, what usually keeps them from telling the truth? |

When we’re in a position of authority, our bad example can reach far into the lives of those we lead. Ananias was the head of their household. Sapphira would have been expected to follow her husband’s example. Similarly, other people may be expected to follow us, like our kids or employees we supervise.

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| **QUESTION**  Have you experienced a situation where a person in authority wasn’t being honest? What happened? |

**The Holy Spirit Deserves Our Respect**

Read [Acts 5:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac5.11).

The outcome of this supernatural event had a chilling effect inside and outside the church. While some may have responded by distancing themselves from the Spirit, the right response is to engage Him with the respect He deserves as God. We can think of many ways to honor the Holy Spirit. First, we should choose to be people of truth. Second, we should realize that the Holy Spirit lives in all believers. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit ([1 Corinthians 6:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co6.19)).

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| **QUESTION**  How should thinking about fellow believers as the temple of God’s Spirit impact how we treat them? |

How we behave toward other believers directly relates to how we treat the Holy Spirit. We should treat fellow believers with the greatest care because the Holy Spirit lives in them. We should honor the Holy Spirit in our life too.

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| **QUESTION**  The most fatal of all consequences in the New Testament is tied to dishonoring the Holy Spirit. Knowing this, what can we do to appropriately honor the Spirit of God in our life? |

**Did You Know?**

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| We can find an account similar to Ananias and Sapphira in Greek history. Greek historian Herodotus tells of a man from Sparta named Glaucus, who was believed to be an honest, honorable man. But he withheld a large sum of money he had been entrusted with, resulting in his rebuke by the prophetess of Delphi. As punishment, Glaucus was struck with infertility, not death. Any Greek reading the Book of Acts would have made an immediate connection with this story. These more severe consequences reinforced the truth that the God of the Bible will not be mocked. |

**Reflect**

**The Holy Spirit Is God**

The word *spirit* or *ghost* may make us think of a being who is not as significant as one with a body. Many times we think of the Holy Spirit as someone without a will, personhood, or power. And worse, some people neglect to recognize the Holy Spirit’s personhood and instead refer to Him as an *it*.

The text we read shows the Holy Spirit was grieved, which means He has emotions. He punished Ananias and Sapphira with death, which was a decision that came from His “will.” In God’s Word, He is called Teacher, Helper, and Advocate. He thinks, speaks, and acts in one accord with the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is just as much God as the rest of the Trinity (one God existing in a unity of three distinct, divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). His personhood is reflected throughout Scripture. We must revere Him, respect Him, and worship Him. More importantly, we should have a relationship with Him. Responding respectfully to the Holy Spirit will transform our life. Meanwhile, dishonoring Him can have serious consequences.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal*.

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| **QUESTION**  Do you find it too easy to include seemingly harmless “white lies” in everyday conversation? If so, how can you partner with the Spirit of Truth to change your behavior? |

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| **QUESTION**  What has this session taught you about honoring the Holy Spirit as God? |

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| **QUESTION**  How does knowing the Holy Spirit as a Person change your relationship with Him? |

**Activate**

The Holy Spirit is the power of God at work within us. He is the agent of goodness who helps us obey God. He can also help us learn how to treat Him with respect and honesty, and be people who treat others with honor.

**Challenge**

Monitor your interactions with other Christians this week. Remember when you engage with them, you’re engaging with the temple of God’s Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit when they tried to deceive God’s people in whom He lived. If you struggle with responding to fellow members of the family of God with kindness, gentleness, love, or respect, find a trusted Christian friend or mentor and ask them to pray with you. Confess your shortcomings before God who is faithful to forgive ([1 John 1:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn1.9)). Ask your friend to help hold you accountable.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

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| **The Holy Spirit Is God**  There is one true God. He has revealed himself as having always existed without any outside cause or agent bringing Him into being ([Isaiah 43:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is43.10)). God has further revealed himself as a single Being ([Deuteronomy 6:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Dt6.4)), consisting of three interrelated Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ([Matthew 28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19); [Luke 3:22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk3.22)). This concept of one God or Being of three Persons is called the Trinity. |
| **The Significance of This Doctrine**  It is contrary to the clear statement and meaning of Scripture to speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three gods or as three modes in which the one true God has revealed himself. Through the centuries such misguided teachings have created division and devastation in the Church. Though the concept of a “three in one” Trinity has no parallel in the human world, it is absolutely scriptural and essential to a proper understanding of the multifaceted nature of God. Other Scripture references support the nature of the one true God and the relationship between the three Persons: [Zechariah 14:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Zec14.9); [Matthew 1:21–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt1.21-23); [11:25–27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt11.25-27); [28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19); [Luke 1:35](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk1.35); [John 1:1–2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.1-2), [14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.14), [18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.18), [29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.29), [49](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.49); [5:17–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.17-30), [32](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.32), [37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.37); [8:17–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn8.17-18); [14:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn14.16-17); [15:26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn15.26); [17:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn17.11), [21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn17.11); [Acts 2:32–36](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac2.32-36); [Romans 1:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro1.1-3), [7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro1.7); [14:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro14.11); [1 Corinthians 1:24](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co1.24); [15:24–28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co15.24-28); [2 Corinthians 13:14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co13.14); [Philippians 2:8–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php2.8-9); [Hebrews 1:1–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb1.1-13); [7:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb7.3); [12:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb12.2); [1 Peter 1:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe1.8); [3:22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe3.22); [1 John 1:3–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn1.3-4); [2:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn2.22-23); [3:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn3.8); [4:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.1-5), [10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.10), [14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.14); [2 John 3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Jn3), [9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Jn9); [Revelation 1:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re1.13), [17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re1.17); [4:8–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re4.8-11); [5:6–14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re5.6-14); [7:9–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re7.9-10). |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: The Holy Spirit Is God**

Read [Acts 5:1–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac5.1-11).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**  What is God saying to you about the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Trinity? How about as equal with God the Father and Jesus the Son? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: The Holy Spirit Guides Us in All Truth**

Read [John 16:12–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn16.12-15).

Here the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth. Jesus taught His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into truth by speaking not only about current things, but also of things to come. Leaning on the Spirit of Truth is the answer for those of us who struggle with living in truth.

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| **QUESTION**  What does the word guide mean to you? How can the Holy Spirit being a guide of truth in your life help you? |

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| **QUESTION**  Although the Holy Spirit is God, He submits to the words spoken by the Father and Son. What does this tell us about our own need to submit to God? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: The Holy Spirit Deserves Our Respect**

Read [1 Corinthians 3:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co3.16-17).

As Christians, the Holy Spirit lives in us. How we treat other believers directly communicates our respect for the Holy Spirit. If we bring harm to the temple of God by slandering, maligning, deceiving, or disrespecting the community of believers, we’ll suffer the consequence of our disobedience.

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| **QUESTION**  What are some things you must stop or start doing in order to respect yourself as the temple of God? |

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| **QUESTION**  Fellow believers are also the temple of God. Knowing this, what are some ways we should or shouldn’t treat our fellow believers in order to respect the Holy Spirit within them? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: The Holy Spirit Deserves Our Obedience**

Read [Ephesians 4:25–32](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph4.25-32).

As we’ve seen through the story about Ananias and Sapphira, people can grieve the Spirit of God. We can honor God by bringing joy—and not sorrow—to Him. This passage addresses expectations for how we should live.

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| **QUESTION**  According to these Scriptures, how do we bring sorrow to the Holy Spirit? |

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| **QUESTION**  Much of what is listed here involves our mouth and what we say. Why do you think God’s Word emphasizes that these things impact our relationship with the Holy Spirit? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: The Holy Spirit Knows All Things**

Read [1 Corinthians 2:10–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co2.10-16).

The Spirit of God is all-knowing. He knows us better than we know ourself. He helps us discover the mind of God and align our life according to the will of God. He also knows when we are disobedient. We cannot get away with sin because the all-knowing Spirit knows what is hidden and will bring it to light.

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| **QUESTION**  The Holy Spirit knows all things. Does that knowledge bring you comfort or fear? Why? |

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| **QUESTION**  Do you have any secret sins you think no one knows about? Remember the Holy Spirit knows. Pray a prayer of repentance and ask God to help you overcome your sins. |