**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 how the Holy Spirit equips us*.

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| ***You Will Need***  *•* ***My Spiritual Gifts*** *page, one per person*  ***Getting Ready***  *• Print copies of the* ***My Spiritual Gifts*** *page, one per person* |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | *First time leading* Learn *for Adults? Check out the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). | |   *To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [*BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads*](http://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads) |

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**  What’s something in life you have done or felt compelled to do, but you didn’t feel qualified for? What excuses did you use to attempt to get out of it? |

If you feel like you’re not gifted enough or find yourself wishing you had the gifts you see in others, you’re not alone. We all feel this way at times. We need to understand that when we believe God should choose someone else to accomplish His purposes, we insult Him more than ourself. This false humility doesn’t give God His due credit. Through the Holy Spirit, He can equip each one of us with spiritual gifts to fulfill His mission in unique ways.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What are your thoughts about spiritual gifts as tangible expressions of God’s grace?



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**Consider What the Bible Says**

In [Acts 6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac6), the apostles realized that taking time to meet certain practical needs of their faith community was keeping them from the prayer and Bible teaching they should be focused on. So the apostles chose seven men who were full of the Holy Spirit to help in the practical work of serving the growing church community.

One of the seven was a man named Philip. Because he was full of the Holy Spirit, willing to serve his community, and obedient to the nudges of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit greatly expanded Philip’s ministry. We’ll discover a man who was used by the Holy Spirit to spread the good news about Jesus all over the region.

**The Holy Spirit Inspires Us to Take Action**

Read [Acts 8:26–35](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac8.26-35).

Jesus commanded His followers to share the good news with the whole world ([Matthew 28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19)). Opportunities to fulfill the mission are all around us. The problem is we aren’t always aware of them. Enter the Holy Spirit. Philip didn’t know what the Ethiopian man was reading or thinking, but the Holy Spirit did. Philip’s willingness to follow the Holy Spirit’s nudge led to an incredible opportunity to share about Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**  What does this story show us about how the Holy Spirit leads us? |

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| **QUESTION**  On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your level of readiness to follow the leading of the Spirit? |

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| **QUESTION**  How do you think believers could develop more sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s voice and then take action, so others can ultimately hear about Jesus? |

**The Holy Spirit Uses Us All**

Read [Acts 8:36–40](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac8.36-40).

The eunuch immediately asked to be baptized! We should never forget the greatest miracle of all is salvation. The Holy Spirit chose Philip for this assignment even though he wasn’t a “super-apostle” or even a pastor. He was a deacon, chosen to serve others on behalf of the church leaders.

But look at how powerfully God used him! None of us are qualified, but *all* believers have the Holy Spirit in them. He begins working in our life immediately after salvation. But that equipping can go to another level when a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Spirit baptism opens up the receiver to the full range of spiritual gifts. That gift of God for all believers can prepare us for everything God calls us to do. Our role is to choose to be available and obedient just as Philip was.

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| **QUESTION**  How does learning that Philip wasn’t a pastor make you feel about how the Spirit worked through him? Do you see a difference between how the Holy Spirit speaks to church leaders and those in the congregation? |

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| **QUESTION**  In your own life, have you felt the Holy Spirit speak to you to take immediate action? How did you respond? |

**The Holy Spirit Equips Each Person Uniquely**

Just as the Holy Spirit equipped Philip to do His work, He also equips each one of us. In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul explained some of those gifts as well as indicating their purpose.

Read [1 Corinthians 12:7–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.7-11).

We are each given gifts by the Holy Spirit so we can help each other. We should be eager to learn what gifts the Holy Spirit has chosen for us. Then we must use them as Jesus would—for the benefit of others.

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| **QUESTION**  What is one spiritual gift you have seen operating in someone else’s life? How have you benefited from it? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why is it so vital to remember that our spiritual gifts are for the benefit of others rather than ourself? What might happen if we make our gifts about ourself? |

**Did You Know?**

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| From the days of the reign of Manasseh until the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC, a large population from Jerusalem relocated to parts of Africa. Most notably, they lived in an area known as Elephantine, which was on the border of Egypt and ancient Ethiopia, which isn’t in the same location as Ethiopia today. At Elephantine, the Jewish settlers built a new temple to Yahweh and began sharing their faith in the region. This resulted in an expansion of Ethiopian Judaism. As in Israel, Jews such as the Ethiopian eunuch made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the most important religious holidays. |

**Reflect**

**The Holy Spirit Equips**

The Holy Spirit’s activity in our life is a gift from God. The Spirit gives us spiritual gifts to accomplish the mission Jesus gave His Church. Without the Spirit’s work and His gifts, the Church lacks what it needs to build itself up.

But our gifts are not just for us or about us. Our gifts from the Spirit are an extension of God’s grace in our life. The word Paul uses for these gifts in [1 Corinthians 12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12) means “grace gifts”*.* We don’t deserve the gifts we’ve received any more than we deserve salvation. Yes, the gifts are ours, but we are to use them in the same way Jesus used His gifts—to share with others.

Imagine for a moment a group of people who are all uniquely gifted in mutually beneficial ways. They choose to put the interests of others before their own ([Philippians 2:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php2.4)) and use their gifts to bless and build up the group. You have imagined the Church as God designed it! How powerful the Church can be as the Holy Spirit equips us!

**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**  As many people in the Bible did, why do we sometimes shrink back when God calls us to serve? Why do we give in to the feeling we’re not qualified rather than trusting the Holy Spirit to equip us? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why is it vital for us to believe the Holy Spirit equips each one of us with gifts to serve the Church and love those who need Him? |

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| **QUESTION**  Are you currently being used in your giftings? If not, what’s keeping you from using your gifts to build up others? If so, how could you mentor others with similar giftings? |

**Activate**

The Holy Spirit equips us for action, so it’s time to take a step toward operating in the gifts God has given us. First, we need to discover at a deeper level what our gifts are. Next, we need to pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance for how we can use those gifts to build up others.

**Challenge**

The Holy Spirit has equipped each of us uniquely. We’ll look at a resource to help you to find out more about how you are created to serve. This resource is a starting point. It’s helpful to evaluate from time to time what gifts we have as we grow in our faith and the Holy Spirit equips us.

• *Give each person a copy of the* ***My Spiritual Gifts*** *page*.

**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 Equips**  The baptism in the Holy Spirit was the normal experience of all believers in the Early Church. With the experience comes the provision of power and productive service for victorious Christian living. It also provides believers with specific spiritual gifts for more effective ministry ([Luke 24:49](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk24.49); [Acts 1:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac1.4), [8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac1.8); [1 Corinthians 12:1–31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.1-31)). |
| **The Significance of This Doctrine**  Spirit baptism opens up the receiver to the full range of spiritual gifts. This is a natural consequence of having already submitted to something supernatural and suprarational by allowing one’s self to be overwhelmed by the Spirit. But this does not rule out spiritual gifts among those who are not Spirit-filled. Both the Old Testament and the Gospels show that most of the gifts occurred prior to the Day of Pentecost, yet it was not until after the outpouring of the Spirit on that day that among God’s people occurred a much higher incidence and a broader range of spiritual gifts. Since edifying God’s people is the overarching purpose of spiritual gifts in the assembly ([1 Corinthians 12:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.7); [14:3–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co14.3-6), [12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co14.12)), Spirit-filled believers should desire them earnestly ([1 Corinthians 12:31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.31); [14:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co14.1)). |

**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 Equips**

Read [Acts 8:26–40](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac8.26-40).

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 how the Holy Spirit is equipping you with spiritual gifts? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: The Spirit Equips for the Common Good**

Read [1 Corinthians 12:4–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.4-11).

Paul used an analogy of the Trinity to explain the variety of Spirit-given gifts for believers. Notice in the opening lines of this passage he said the “same Spirit,” “same Lord,” and “same God.” Each member of the Trinity has a different role, yet They are in perfect, singular unity. Together They empower us, so we can help each other*.* Similarly, each believer has different giftings, yet we are to exist in harmony. How is that unity achieved? In part, it’s by recognizing our gifts are not for our own benefit, but for sharing with all.

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| **QUESTION**  We are all unique members of God’s family. How could a focus on our different giftings lead to division rather than unity if we’re not careful? |

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| **QUESTION**  Think about the spiritual gifts you have. What is one way you could use one of those gifts this week for the benefit of other believers? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: The Spirit Equips Everyone**

Read [Exodus 35:30–35](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex35.30-35).

Moses gathered artisans to build the tabernacle, so the presence of God could dwell among His people. The craftsmen were inhabited by the Holy Spirit which equipped them to do their work. They were skilled workers and tradesmen, not priests or ministry leaders. Moses led God’s people. The craftsmen built the tabernacle. But they were all equipped by God’s Spirit for their work.

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| **QUESTION**  Is it easy for you recognize that the Holy Spirit equips everyone, including you, and not just those in official leadership positions? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**  How should this passage affect how you look at the work you do, both in and out of the church? |

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| **QUESTION**  Do you regularly ask the Holy Spirit to fill you, so you can accomplish what God has put in front of you? If not, how can you begin to do so? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: The Spirit’s Gifts Are All Necessary**

Read [1 Corinthians 12:20–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.20-26).

Paul’s point here is worth meditating on. A healthy church community needs all the members of God’s family to participate. And the church community also needs each member’s unique spiritual giftings to operate the way God intended. We shouldn’t covet each other’s gifts or look down on them either. We should value each gift and each member of the church for the critical role they play. Notice again Paul’s emphasis on members having harmony or unity. In [1 Corinthians 12:31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.31), Paul encouraged believers to “earnestly desire the most helpful gifts,” honoring God’s decision about their use.

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| **QUESTION**  What are some gifts others have that you have wished at times you had? Why is it so easy to covet, and even elevate, some gifts over others? |

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| **QUESTION**  Do you have some gifts that you haven’t valued? How can you begin to thank God for those gifts in a new way and pray for God’s help in growing in those gifts for the good of His Church? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: The Spirit’s Giftings Are Unique, but Love Is Universal**

Read [1 Corinthians 13:1–7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co13.1-7).

Paul spoke of the gifts powerfully throughout [1 Corinthians 12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12), but in chapter [13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co13) he put all the gifts into their proper context. Without love, the gifts of the Spirit mean little. That shouldn’t cause us to devalue the gifts, but instead to seek love above any of them. Gifts are a marker of activity through the Holy Spirit; love is the marker of life in the Spirit. If love is the context and culture that spiritual gifts operate in, then the unity Paul emphasized throughout his teaching will be present and powerful.

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| **QUESTION**  What is the danger of using gifts without love? How might that harm God’s family rather than bring good? |

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| **QUESTION**  Is your own life filled with God’s love? Stop and think for a moment. Do you value love above all else? |

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| **QUESTION**  What are some ways you could grow in the love of Jesus and allow love to be a greater motivation behind all you do? |

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