

Two-Part Bible Study

The Work of The Holy Spirit

Leaders' Guide

Part One: *Presence*
John 16:13-15

&

Part Two: *Power, Performance, Purity, Presentation*

Titus Fellowship
Richmond Chinese Alliance Church

by Jason Cheung
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These studies are written for young adults in mind. Specifically, the group in mind is a mix of Christians and non-Christians, all students in college or university, and part of a fellowship group that meets weekly.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

Introduction to Two-Part Bible Study

Who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do?

To the first question, here is a brief answer: The Holy Spirit is the Counselor or Paraclete (from the Greek word *parakletos*, meaning one who gives support) who Jesus promised to send to his disciples as a replacement that would, after he is gone, carry on the teaching and ministry that Jesus started (see John 16:6-7).¹ The Spirit is also one of three different persons of the Trinity, distinct from the Father and the Son, fully God, and together with the Father and Son, "one in essence, one in their essential nature."²

¹ J.I Packer, "Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs," *Tyndale House*, Wheaton, Illinois, 1993, p. 143.

² Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine," *Zondervan*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994, p. 238.

Next, to the second question: "What does he do?" There is a lot that he did, and continues to do. In the Old Testament, the Spirit is always at work as *creator, controller, revealer, quickener and enabler*.³ In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is said to "hear, speak, witness, convince,...lead, guide, teach, command, forbid, desire, give speech, give help and intercede for Christians with inarticulate groans, himself crying to God in their prayers."⁴ He can also be lied to and grieved (see Acts 5:3, 4 and Ephesians 4:30), which altogether shows that he, like the Father and the Son, is a person.⁵ And this work the Spirit was sent to do continues to this day, as he indwells the hearts of every Christian, and in so doing empowers and equips the church for ministry in the world.

Now, as we aim to explore and learn from the Bible more about the work of the Holy Spirit, let us be aware of a potential misstep. As Christians have done in the past, when thinking and speaking about the Holy Spirit, undue emphasis has been given to one aspect of the Spirit's ministry. For example, as true as it is that the Spirit gives power (or "strength") for Christians to live life in faith and obedience, when this aspect of the Spirit's work is seen as *central*, it becomes problematic. How is it a problem? We'll see and discuss this in the upcoming studies. For now, along with *power* for living, three other categories of the Spirit's work that have mistakenly been given priority are *performance* in service, *purity* of motive and action, and *presentation* for decision.⁶ It is not that thinking about the Spirit in these ways is wrong, for these are all vital ways in which the Spirit ministers, but when these ideas become *primary*, our understanding of the Spirit is, as J.I. Packer calls it, "certainly smudgy and not true enough."

So, this begs the question: What then is the central work of the Holy Spirit today? Is there one basic work of the Spirit that relates to and encompasses all of his life-giving action? Packer, in his book, *Keeping in Step with the Spirit*, says yes. That one central work of the Spirit is *presence*. And by this he means,

...that the Spirit makes known the personal presence in and with the Christian and the church of the risen, reigning Saviour, the Jesus of history, who is the Christ of faith.⁷

And so, following this perspective, this two-part Bible Study on the Work of the Holy Spirit will be organized in this way:

Part One will focus on this one, central activity of the Holy Spirit, *mediating the presence of Jesus Christ*. With John 16:13-15 as the key text we'll study the various ways the Spirit makes Jesus known, and look particularly at what this means for the Christian, and what it can lead to.

Part Two will look closely at key texts that speak of the Holy Spirit's work in the four categories mentioned: *Power, Performance, Purity and Presentation*. Attention will also be given to the limitations of these views, if given undue emphasis.

The aim of these studies is to help introduce and engage you with the teaching of the Bible, so that you would have a good and beneficial grasp of how the Holy Spirit ministers to you and all Christians today.

³ J.I. Packer, "Keep in Step with the Spirit," *Revell Company*, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1984, p. 58. Packer mentions: The Spirit molds *creation* into shape (Gen. 1:2), reveals *God's truth and will* (Num. 24:2), teaches God's people *the way of faithfulness and fruitfulness* (Neh. 9:20), *elicits a personal response to God* (Ps. 51:10-12), equips individuals for *leadership* (Gen. 41:38) and equips individuals with *skill and strength* (Ex. 31:1-11).

⁴ Packer, p. 61. See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15, Acts 2:4; 8:9; 13:2; 16:6, 7; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27; Gal. 4:6; 5:17, 18.

⁵ This point is emphasized by Packer who reminds us that, just as John refers to the Spirit with the masculine pronoun "he," so we must never call the Spirit "it," but "he"—as we would with any person (who is male). See, Packer, p. 61-2.

⁶ These four "p" categories are from Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 45.

⁷ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 47.

Remember, as with any time you read and study Scripture, God is wanting to change you through the renewing of your mind and a refreshing of your heart. Be open, then, to the touch of the Spirit—even as you learn more about him! And most of all, seek and desire to know Christ more, deeper than you do now.

Note to Leaders:

Before beginning the studies, be sure to spend some time acquainting yourself with every member of the group, especially if there are new friends. Pray for each person, asking the Spirit to help you know and love each person in the group.

→ All sections in the grey areas like this are Notes or Answers to assist leaders in facilitating groups.

→ The translation of Scripture used in this Leaders' guide is the English Standard Version (ESV).

The Work of the Holy Spirit – Presence

Part 1 of 2

More than anything else, the Holy Spirit's ministry to Christians today is *presence*—“namely, that the Spirit is here to glorify Christ and that his main and constant task is to mediate Jesus' presence to us making us aware of all that Jesus is, so that we will trust him to be all that to us.”⁸

In this study we will look closer into the Gospel of John and what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit. The focus will be on how the Spirit “glorifies Christ,” understanding this to be the Spirit's main and underlying work. Thus, this study has three parts:

- 1) The Spirit Glorifies Jesus
- 2) The Spirit Makes Jesus Known in Various Ways
- 3) Three Things That Happen as the Spirit Mediates Jesus

→ *As a group, pray and ask God to help you to understand the meaning of the Bible texts you are about to study. As a primer, read the following questions together as a group and discuss.*

Note to Leaders: Mindful that not everyone in your group may know or have thought much about the Holy Spirit, aim to simply initiate and facilitate discussion with the following questions.

⁸ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 67.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

Have you ever heard or thought of the Holy Spirit's *central* role as mediating Jesus to us? Discuss.

The Spirit Glorifies Jesus

John 16:13-15

Jesus is speaking here to his disciples in what is known as his "farewell discourse" (John 13-20). He knows that his crucifixion and death is imminent, and so he is preparing his disciples with what to expect. Two things are noteworthy: First, already in John 14, Jesus promises that he will send the Holy Spirit. We will take a closer look at this passage in the next section. Second, just prior to our passage in chapter 16, Jesus is cautioning his disciples to keep them from falling away, (16:1) that indeed the world will hate them as it hates him (15:8), and reassures them, again, that he will send the Spirit who will convict the world of "sin and righteousness and judgment" (16:8). Read John 16:13-15 and work through the following questions.

1. What, according to verse 13, will the Spirit do when he comes?

The Spirit will do three things:

1. The Spirit will guide disciples in all truth.
2. The Spirit will speak what he hears.
3. The Spirit will declare the things that are to come.

2. Notice, still in verse 13, that Jesus says the Spirit "will not speak on his own authority." If not on his own authority, then whose?

Although not explicit in verse 13, Jesus does say that the Spirit will speak what he hears, suggesting the Spirit will be a kind of messenger or mouthpiece for someone else. Reading ahead to verse 14, we see clearly that the Spirit is speaking what he hears *from Jesus*, who is also the sender of the Spirit (15:26, 16:7).

This is *not* to suggest that Jesus is "above" the Spirit in terms of importance or rank, for we believe in the co-equality of Father, Son and Spirit. Two further points: First, Jesus *also* speaks what he hears (see 3:32, 8:26, 40; 12:50; 15:15), and so this "act of speaking what one hears" is not a subordinate act, but in some way part of the divine, mysterious work of the Trinity. Second, that the Spirit declares "things that are to come," shows that he is in fact fully God, for only God knows the future.⁹

⁹ "ESV Study Bible," *Crossway Bibles*, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008, p. 2057.

3. Jesus says, in verse 14, that the Spirit will “glorify me.” Taking all of verse 14 into account, what is meant that the Spirit will “glorify” Jesus? And how is the “glorifying” to be done?

The Spirit glorifies Jesus by making Christ known to people

In saying the Spirit will “glorify” him, Jesus is saying that when he returns to the Father, the Holy Spirit will work to make Jesus’ glory known to men and women.¹⁰ Jesus, here, is simply saying that this work of revealing his glory—or, making his presence known to his people—will be the Spirit’s main task.

J.I. Packer says this basic task of the Spirit “gives us a comprehensive directional frame of reference within which the whole of the Spirit’s new covenant ministry should be seen, and apart from which no feature of that ministry can be adequately understood.”¹¹ As such, it is much like seeing the Spirit’s task of “glorifying Jesus” as the hub of a wheel: Only when the hub is properly aligned—or in focus—will the spokes and the whole of the wheel roll smoothly. Likewise, when making Jesus’ presence known is seen as the Spirit’s main task, then will his other work be in proper focus.

The Spirit glorifies Jesus by taking what belongs to Jesus and declaring it to us

Jesus says the Spirit will glorify him, “for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” What does Jesus mean by this? It means everything which Jesus was sent by the Father to do, everything that was given to the Son by the Father (see the next verse, 16:15) will be made known to us. In other words, Jesus himself will be *mediated* to us. And the Spirit does this.

Packer’s take on what Jesus means here by “what is mine” is helpful. Jesus, must have meant:

‘...all that is real and true about me as your divine lover, your mediator, your surety in the new covenant, your prophet, priest and king, your Saviour from the guilt and power of sin and from the world’s corruptions and the devil’s clutches; and all that is true of me as your shepherd, husband, and friend, your life and your hope, the author and finisher of your faith, the lord of your own personal history, and the one who will some day bring you to be with me and share my glory, who am thus both your path and your prize.’¹²

4. Thus, what implication does the Spirit’s task of “glorifying Jesus” have in *our* task to know and follow Christ in our lives?

Following Christ goes hand in hand with listening to the Spirit

What this means is we must never—for we simply cannot, in any biblical way—separate following Christ from listening to the Spirit. For it is only by and through the Spirit that we may even know Christ and commune with him. Since the Spirit is the one who makes Christ known in our minds and hearts, we must walk closely with the Spirit. Since it is the Spirit who “declares to us” everything about Jesus (who he is, what he has done and what he sends us to do now) we must keep in step with the Spirit.

We should be humbled and grateful for God’s *personal* work through the Spirit

What this means, also, is that we should respond in gratefulness and joy that God has made it possible for us to know Christ *personally*. What we should humbly reflect on is that God reveals himself, and guides us to truth, by *his Spirit*. We are not simply given an impersonal instruction manual, but we are given his very presence! Because the Spirit mediates Jesus’ presence, and because this means that the Spirit declares everything that Jesus is to us, we are invited to be included in the very life of God. Such

¹⁰ It should be noted that Jesus desired for his disciples to *see his glory* (in fact, the Father desired this also) as can be seen in Jesus’ prayer in John 17:24.

¹¹ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 52.

¹² Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 52-3.

good news! For, as Jesus prays to the Father in John 17:22, "*The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one...*" Hence, as the Spirit mediates Christ to us today, and we receive him in faith and obedience, we can in our relationships with one another, experience and imitate a similar unity the Father and the Son share.

We are, in turn, called to glorify Christ

All in all, when the Spirit glorifies Jesus, and we see, receive and acknowledge Jesus as Redeemer, Saviour and Servant King, we are thus called forth to *be like him*, to imitate Christ in our lives. This is what the Spirit does in us, as he glorifies Christ to us: Jesus' goodness and grace becomes so appealingly beautiful that a new joy bursts from our hearts, crystallizing our heart's desire to solely and wholly glorify Christ with our lives.

The Spirit Makes Jesus Known in Various Ways

Since the Holy Spirit's main task is to make Jesus known, a question worth asking is "*How?*" Just how does the Spirit make Jesus known to us today?

Before exploring ways that the Spirit makes Jesus known, some words about the *nature* of this particular task are necessary. In mediating Christ to us, the Holy Spirit is self-effacing, never seeking the attention to himself, as he directs attention to Christ.¹³ The Spirit's work is to draw people into faith, hope, love, obedience, adoration and dedication to Christ. The way he does this is similar to how a floodlight works. A floodlight, positioned correctly, not only shines sufficient light to make its subject visible and clear, it's also unnoticed. Think of an opera or play or listening to an orchestra. You see the singers, actors and musicians but you never see the floodlights. Why? Because you're not supposed to see where the light is coming from. This is the same of the Holy Spirit's role: he is the one that shines light on Jesus, making Christ known.¹⁴

We turn now to John 14, to look closely at *what Jesus* says about what the Spirit will do, and how specifically the Spirit will make him known to us.

John 14:15-26, 16:8-11

Keep in mind that this is Jesus' "farewell discourse," where he is speaking only to his disciples, preparing them for his upcoming death and resurrection. The overarching point of the John 14 passage seems to be verse 15, in which Jesus ties love for him to keeping his commandments (a point he reiterates later in verse 21). In this context, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, the "Helper" and "Spirit of truth" who, as such, will shine light and give understanding on what it means to love him and keep his commandments. This plays out next when Jesus says something quite obscure, in verse 20, "...you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." But Jesus explains this in verse 21, and again in response to a clarifying question from one of his disciples, in verses 23 and 24.

¹³ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 64.

¹⁴ This illustration is borrowed from J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 65-6.

Read John 14:15-26 and work through the following questions.

5. Jesus says, "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you," (verse 20), and goes on to explain what this means in the next verse. According to Jesus in verse 21, who "loves" him? And, what are the three outcomes of loving Jesus?

Whoever keeps Jesus' commandments love him

This is made clear here in verse 21, as well as in verse 15: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This association of love and keeping his commandments echoes the kind of obedient love between God and his people in the Old Testament.¹⁵ Likewise, Jesus demands the same from his disciples. Those who truly love him will obey him.

Those who love Jesus...

1. Will be loved by his Father
2. Will be loved by Jesus, and
3. Jesus will "manifest" (show) himself to them

→ *And so, the Spirit makes Jesus known by helping believers experience fellowship with Christ and the Father, by moving believers towards loving obedience.*

6. In verse 26, Jesus says that the Father will send, in his name, the Holy Spirit to teach. What will the Holy Spirit teach?

The Spirit will teach "all things"

In context, this is not to mean that the Spirit will teach about everything there is to know under the sun. Rather the Spirit will be focused on teaching all there is to know about Jesus.¹⁶ In 16:13, Jesus says something similar, referring to the Spirit: "...he will declare to you the things that are to come." Again, the intent is not so much that the Spirit will declare about the things to come *to believers*, but rather, to Jesus—namely, the cross, the resurrection, the reign, the return, and the restoring of all things.¹⁷ The Spirit, once again, shines light on Jesus.

The Spirit will remind of everything Jesus has said

Along with the teaching role of the Spirit, he will also help the disciples recall what Jesus said. This way of helping the disciples *recall* Jesus' words is especially important as his disciples would later—after-Pentecost—be teaching, preaching and writing about Jesus to anyone who would read or listen. And they would be able to do so, because the Spirit will help them recall and remember.

→ *And so, the Spirit makes Jesus known by teaching believers all there is to know about Jesus, as well as helping believers remember him and his words.*

Read John 16:8-11

7. In verse 8 Jesus says the Spirit will "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." From verses 9 to 11, Jesus elaborates on these three things. Describe what Jesus says. What does this tell us about the role of the Spirit?

For each of the three things that the Spirit will convict, Jesus explains why these things are important. Notice that the importance is grounded in who Jesus is and what he has done:

¹⁵ See also Deuteronomy 5:10; 6:5-6; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:13, 22.

¹⁶ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 65.

¹⁷ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 65.

Concerning sin, because they do not believe me. The Spirit will “convict” (or “convince”) people that Jesus was perfect, blameless and sinless, even though he was crucified as a criminal. And in so doing, the Spirit will also convince people of their sin, turning them to Jesus.

Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer. The Spirit will make clear that Jesus is truly righteous, even though many around him still do not believe it. Also, though Jesus was righteous and showed the way to becoming right with God, since he is returning to the Father, the Spirit will take over this task.

Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. The Spirit will convince people that Satan has been defeated and judged. And it is Jesus who, by this death and resurrection, has defeated death and judged Satan forever.¹⁸ Again, the Spirit will convince people of this.

The Spirit’s role, therefore, is as a witness to Jesus’ work of redeeming sinners, granting righteousness, and of the judgment of Satan.

→ Hence, we can say that the Spirit makes Jesus known by convincing people of his gracious work of salvation.

There are more ways, to be sure, the Spirit glorifies Jesus in his ongoing ministry today. But, reflecting on the three ways we have learned, how can each of these ways make an impact in our understanding and life with the Spirit now?

For each of the three ways the Spirit makes Jesus known (restated below), consider what practical difference this truth can make in your life? Ask yourself, “So what? How is God wanting me (or us) to change ?”

Note to Leaders: You have some options in approaching this reflection time. It could be an individual exercise where you ask members in your group to begin reflecting quietly, even writing responses on paper. Or you could openly discuss these, thinking and reflecting together the implications of these truths for each person, your church, and your ministry. Whatever approach you take, encourage sharing in some way so as to engender openness, vulnerability and trust among your group.

The personal reflections provided below are only to spur your own thinking and preparation.

A) The Spirit makes Jesus known by moving people to loving obedience.

I must grow in my awareness of the Spirit’s work in me when he calls me to “do this” or “not do this.” I must take seriously and heed the commandments of God—meant to show me the way to live and so *give* me life—and seek every opportunity in my day-to-day life, in my decisions large and small and in my relationships to other people to “love God with all my heart, soul and mind.” So, as God calls me to a difficult path in order to glorify him, I must trust him to be faithful, forgoing my own comfort and security, laying down my own dreams and ambitions, for the only thing that matters now is to obey.

B) The Spirit makes Jesus known by teaching everything about Jesus, and helping recall what Jesus taught.

The first thing to come to mind is that whenever I desire to know Christ, I should pray for the help of the Spirit, for insight and understanding. Second, I need also to give thanks for the Spirit, because it’s the Spirit who has ultimately helped me to know Jesus. It’s the Spirit who has helped me to truly see Jesus, as I study, read and listen to Scripture. It’s the Spirit who has helped me remember Jesus’ words, when

¹⁸ See John 5:22.

I am tired and weary and incapable of mustering any motivation or strength from myself, "Come, and I will give you rest." How am I changed, then? My heart is thankful for being taught. And I'm reminded that any wisdom or insight I've gained is *really* not from me, but all in all a gracious gift of God.

C) The Spirit makes Jesus known by convincing people of his gracious work of salvation.

Since it's the Spirit who acts "as humanity's prosecutor, working in heart after heart the verdict 'I was wrong; I am guilty; I need forgiveness,'" our ministry of evangelism hangs ultimately not on our words to others, but His inner persuasion of hearts, ears and minds.¹⁹ It is *not* that I am ineffective as I share or persuade my friends to know Jesus, but the encouragement here is that when I do, I am working with (for he is alongside of me), and in the power of (for he gives me strength), the Spirit who is already calling and convincing that person that Jesus is his Saviour and Lord.

Three Things That Happen as the Spirit Mediates Jesus

It has been the viewpoint of this Bible study that the Holy Spirit's primary work—even as important are his specific and multi-faceted functions—is to mediate Christ's presence to believers. When the Spirit does this, we can expect at least three good things happen, and keep happening. These blessings, according to J.I. Packer, are:

- 1) Personal **fellowship** with Jesus
- 2) Spirit-given **certainty** of being loved, redeemed, and adopted
- 3) Personal **transformation** of character into Jesus' likeness²⁰

Consider these things, and discuss.

Are any of these blessings realities in your life? Describe. Which of these can you see yourself grow deeper in? What steps must you take for this to happen?

Here are some further thoughts and reflections regarding these three blessings:

- 1) Personal **fellowship** with Jesus.

When the Spirit mediates Christ, he does so as he is indwelling us, living in our hearts. And so, as he glorifies Christ, Jesus' presence is with us, near us, *in us* in fact. As such, we are in fellowship with Jesus. This happens as we commit our lives to devoted times of prayer and reflection on Scripture. These disciplines of devotion are neither optional or impersonal. For, fellowship with Jesus, should naturally be a growing desire in every believer because, as the Spirit makes him known, we can't help but be drawn to his beauty, mercy and love. And that is why fellowship with Christ is never impersonal—his love for us, when we realize and receive it, doesn't allow us to see him as anything else but a compassionate and gracious Maker and Friend. All this, is a result of the Spirit's magnifying and glorifying of Jesus.

- 2) Spirit-given **certainty** of being loved, redeemed and adopted.

When the Spirit mediates Christ's presence to us, we are not only reminded that we are part of God's family, we are undoubtedly assured as "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). This is God's promise to us, according to Romans 8:15-16 "...you have received the Spirit

¹⁹ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 65.

²⁰ Packer, *Keep in Step*, p. 49.

of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Knowing this, we are filled with gratitude, joy and hope, and compelled to no longer live unsure about our lot and place with God—we are children of God! Imagine that. The Holy Spirit—God's very presence—living in us, giving certainty against doubting hearts that this good news is no mere fantasy, but a reality. It is a Spirit-given experience—a feeling of being loved, redeemed and adopted—prompted by the Spirit-given knowledge of Christ's presence. Rejoice!

3) Personal **transformation** of character into Jesus' likeness.

Jesus calls us to follow him, to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses daily (Matthew 16:24), a pattern of life he lived and asks us to imitate. Imitating Christ humility was also taught by the apostle Paul, calling us to be of the same mind as Christ, never counting ourselves more significant than others (Philippians 2:1-11). We certainly must look to Jesus as our model for life, for he lived life fully and perfectly in obedience to the will of the Father. But when the Spirit mediates Christ to us, Jesus is not just a model to emulate. We must also lean on Jesus for strength, and particularly strength to change. The Spirit helps us in this: when he reveals Christ to us, we not only see true obedience to the will of the Father, but also, in Christ, a Creator who dies in our place, a Rescuer who saves us from death, and a Sanctifier who makes us holy, as he is holy. And so, while we aim to be Christ-like, we are also made Christ-like by his sanctifying presence, through the work of the Spirit.

