

The Holy Spirit
Life Through the Holy Spirit

Lesson #10 for June 3, 2006

Scriptures: John 3:3-6,15-17; Rom. 8:6-11; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 1:6, 7; Col. 2:6.

1. "The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.**" {DA 671.2} What is God trying to tell us through these words?
2. Read *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Sunday, May 28, 2006: "Yet, the truth about Jesus isn't just that He is God, which He is, or that He entered into humanity, which He did, or that He lived sinlessly, which is true; instead, the crucial truth about Jesus is that He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. **No matter how important everything else about Jesus is, in the end, they all culminate in His substitutionary death in behalf of humanity. Any theology that ignores or weakens this point is deviating from the work of the Holy Spirit, who is to guide us into "all truth" (John 16:13), and Christ on the cross as our Substitute is the center of all truth (1 Cor. 2:2).**"
3. "Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.
"Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men." *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890 (2ST 351:2:0-3:1); compare *ST* December 4, 1893; *Manuscript Releases*, vol 18, 359; *RH* August 14, 1900; *YI* November 21, 1883
4. **Is the most important thing we need to learn from Jesus: 1) that He died a substitutionary death on our behalf, making it possible for us to be saved, or 2) that He revealed the truth about God (the Father, Himself, and the Holy Spirit) so that we can see and behold Him and thus be transformed?**
5. What would you understand to be the meaning of "the assurance of salvation"? (*Ibid* for Sunday, May 28, 2006): "As Christians, the foundation of our hope, our acceptance with God, stems not from anything we can do, not from any works of righteousness we can produce, not even from any fruit of the Spirit but only from the righteousness of Jesus credited to us by faith. This is our surety, our guarantee, the only sure foundation upon which we can have any assurance. Through the merits of Christ's perfect life, granted to us through nothing but God's grace—which is His unmerited favor toward us as wayward sinners—there is no condemnation for us (*Rom. 8:1*), either now or in the judgment. Of all the truth the Holy Spirit could bring us, what could be more precious than this?"

6. **“The truth is that we do have to do something but that something is surrender.** Staying surrendered to the will of God is often the hardest part of our lives. Yet, if we daily focus on our relationship with God we will find that there is actually a joy in surrendering to Him.” (*Adult Teacher’s Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* p. 115.) **If the last portion of the fruit of the spirit is self-control then why all the talk about surrender?**
 7. In the section for Monday, May 29 Jesus’ death is described as a “life-changing force”. What do you think is implied by this? “Without it, we might know intellectually about Jesus’ death, but it would never save us,”...
 8. Read Romans 8:6-11. What is Paul trying to say when he suggests that the Spirit gives life? How does the flesh cause death?
 9. **How would you describe the day-by-day struggle of the Christian life? Why is it difficult to accept Jesus and live according to the Spirit? What are the opposing forces that tend to keep us from doing this? How can we win this most important battle?**
 10. Review John 6. What do you think the people who listened to Jesus on that occasion thought he was saying? Did they understand the issues clearly? Do we?
 11. “Unless this converting power shall go through our churches, unless the revival of the Spirit of God shall come, **all their profession will never make the members of the church Christians.** There are sinners in Zion who need to repent of sins that have been cherished as precious treasures. Until these sins are seen, and thrust from the soul, until every faulty, unlovely trait of character is transformed by the Spirit’s influence, God cannot manifest Himself in power. **There is more hope for the open sinner than for the professedly righteous who are not pure, holy, and undefiled.** . . .” {*SW*, December 5, 1899 par. 6; *RH*, February 7, 1957 par. 9; *1MR* 366.3; *YRP* 51.2}
 12. Why are the “works of the flesh” so dangerous to the spiritual life? Could someone live in the heavenly kingdom with the works of the flesh still active in his life? Why or why not?
 13. **How does our will operate in cooperation with the Holy Spirit? Who is really in charge? Does the presence of the Holy Spirit working in your life make it less difficult to resist evil? Make it more difficult to sin?**
 14. Do you believe it is possible to know for sure that you are born of the Spirit? Is this an experience that comes and goes? Do we need to be born of the Spirit anew every day? When a child is born he takes his first breath. He must continue to breathe through the rest of his physical life. Does this give us some clue as to how the Holy Spirit needs to work in our lives? What do you think Ellen White had in mind when she said: “The tempted one needs to understand the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man-- the power of decision, of choice. **Everything depends on the right action of the will. Desires for goodness and purity are right, as far as they go; but if we stop here, they avail nothing. Many will go down to ruin while hoping and desiring to overcome their evil propensities. They do not yield the will to God. They do not choose to serve Him.**”–[*MH* 176.1 (1905); *2MCP* 685.2]?
- “Many are inquiring, ‘How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?’ You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. **What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus**

your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.” {SC 47.1}
“Desires for goodness and holiness are right as [48] far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians.” {SC 47.2}

15. How does the Holy Spirit keep the presence of Christ a living force in our lives? If we come to learn and know the life story of Jesus isn't that enough? In what sense would Jesus continue to walk with us on a day-by-day basis?
16. In what sense are we to be controlled by the Holy Spirit ? What does it mean to be dead to our old self? (Romans 8:6-11).
17. If someone is truly born of the Spirit will he sooner or later give up all sin? Is that possible in this life? If someone continues falling into the same old sins again and again is that proof that they have not been born of the Spirit?
18. **Would the Holy Spirit ever lead two people to opposite mutually-exclusive interpretations of a passage in Scripture? Could someone honestly study certain passages in Scripture and be led by the Holy Spirit to conclude that he should enjoy a certain kind of worship upon Sabbath while another person could study the same passages and be led by the Spirit to conclude that he should give the same kind of worship on Sunday?**
19. **What about actions? Would the Holy Spirit actually lead two people to do diametrically opposed things? Could the Spirit lead a young man to be convinced that he should marry a certain young woman and at the same time lead the young woman to be convinced that she should not marry him? How does the guidance of the Holy Spirit relate to our individuality-our power to think and to do?**
20. “Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. [18] Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. (*Education* 17.2).
21. **Remember that we are not only finite compared to God's infinite but we have been distorted by our experience with sin! Can you fully grasp the idea that God has no beginning? Or does your finitude make that difficult to comprehend? “If Adam, at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race, with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct. . . .” {CC 21.3} Furthermore, we are distorted by our sins.**
22. **What happens when we try to reduce God down to our comprehension level? Do we really worship God? Or do we worship the image of God we have formed for ourselves?**
23. Do we conclude then that everything is relative? That would make a creed very dangerous. Does the Seventh-day Adventist Church have a creed? We believe it is much safer just to have a consensus which constantly needs to be studied and updated! **While we may disagree and even be comfortable in disagreement let's not relegate our opponents or have them relegate us to some inferior moral level! Are there some truths which are absolute and will not change but our perceptions of them might?** Would it be correct to say that the only absolute truth is in God and not in us?

24. How different are our perceptions of God? What is the basis of these differences in our perceptions? Isn't it based at least partly on our past experience? **If it is true that "by beholding we become changed" are we really becoming like God or just like our perception of God?** So how is God going to deal with the enormous differences in perception of Him in different parts of the world: China; India; South America; North America?
25. Did God work with the Protestant reformers? How many errors were they still believing in? Did God work through Ellen White? How different were her times from our times? Our capacity for reception, our openness, our willingness to think and consider, our willingness to receive new ideas is the key to the truth and not the possession of some code agreed upon by some organization at some time in the past. Anyone whose mind is fully open, whose heart is receptive to the work of the Holy Spirit, will be led in the correct direction.
26. **But if you act contrary to what you really believe is the truth you're damaging yourself and that is the very essence of sin.**
27. **How many of us are Seventh-day Adventists because we have really studied for ourselves and are fully convinced that this is the truth? How many of us are Seventh-day Adventist because our parents were?**
28. **Are we capable of actually and honestly and openly thinking for ourselves trying to follow God's plan for our lives? (Education 17). God is not so concerned about what you believe but about why you believe it and how you came to believe it.**
29. **But if someone in his rigidity is attacking all who don't agree with him you can be reasonably certain that he's not being guided by the Holy Spirit!**
30. **Can you have a church body or a church organization without consensus? How much freedom should the church allow? What if we couldn't even agree on which day to go to church? There are certainly a lot of differences of opinion about how the Sabbath for example should be kept! Would it be correct to say that the less a person has a real experience of being led by the Holy Spirit the more likely they are to be rigid and fixed in their understanding of the truth?**
31. **Each one of us as we are being led to grow will be in a slightly different position as time goes by. This is proof that the Holy Spirit is guiding. If you are in exactly the same position as you were a year ago, and are afraid to move, there is a very high likelihood that you are not being guided by the Holy Spirit. In effect you are worshiping a graven image of God.**
32. **"It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions--is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia."** {GC 583.1}

© 2005 Kenneth Hart M. D. *Permission is hereby granted for any non-commercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials and we might even want to share good ideas with others, so let us know.* khart@llu.edu

Last modified: April 15, 2006
K:\ISS-HolySpirit#10-Final-2006-06-03.wpd