

Getting to Grips with

God

How our understanding of God changes everything

Part 3: Welcoming The Spirit

Session #1 Who is The Holy Spirit?

"... For this God is our God..." – Psalm 48v 14

Sladebrook Evangelical Church

www.sladebrook.org.uk

Introduction and Aim of this Teaching Series:

This series of Sunday morning talks introduces us to the magnificent doctrine of God. Often trivialised (and certainly simplified) Christian faith and maturity depends on an ever-increasing appreciation of who God is and what He has done. As well as “*getting to grips with God*” we will also attempt to loosen our grip on what God is not, dispelling some commonly held misunderstandings. It is hoped that with Scripture as our guide and with the Holy Spirit’s help, we will discover more about the God we worship and seek to apply this knowledge in our daily Christian walk and witness.

Subject in this series include:

- Honouring God the Father (September)
 - *Who God is (and isn't) – Reality, Trinity and revelation of God/unhelpful stereotypes*
 - *God in God's own words – biblical descriptions of God/Who He is/what He does*
 - *Finding the Father's Heart – understanding just how much God loves us, and how that should be experienced*
- Following God the Son (October)
 - *Why Jesus changes everything for everyone*
 - *Finding acceptance in Christ – what Jesus has brought us into: forgiveness/acceptance/purpose/unconditional love/grace*
 - *The current role/ future prospects of Jesus and His church*
- Welcoming God the Spirit (November)
 - *Who is the Holy Spirit? Confusions and clarifications regarding the Holy Spirit*
 - *What does He do? The ministries and manifestations of the Spirit*
 - *How should He work in me? The role of the Spirit in the life of the believer*

Getting to Grips with God: Who is The Holy Spirit?

Love. Gravity. Freedom. Magnetism. Truth. None of these can be observed directly. Yet the effects of each are real and, in every case, you know when (if not necessarily how) their effect is being felt. So it is with God The Holy Spirit. Of the three members within The Trinity, His identity and role are probably the hardest to discern and relate to: A Father figure can, in most cases, be compared to what we experience within our own families, likewise a Son: *But a Spirit?* Suddenly we are propelled beyond our own meagre memories or material comparisons into realms that few have ever ventured!

So who or what is The Holy Spirit? It is tragic how ignorant, even fearful, most Christians are when it comes to *Getting to Grips with God* in this most essential of ways. Error, abuse, neglect, even antagonism pervade church circles as people cannot quite make up their minds about the mysterious third member of The Trinity. Historically, God's people have tended to lurch nervously to extremes, attempting to sure up rather toothless truths concerning The Spirit. When this happens Christians polarise, bury their heads firmly in the spiritual sand and fail to grasp the wonder of who The Holy Spirit is. Ironically, The Spirit actually unites us in Christ: (Eph. 4v3) a oneness within the Body of Christ we should celebrate, especially if we are to witness effectively (John 13v35). Charismatic/conservative wings of the church continue to flap away, fudging the faith, as they rewrite the work of The Spirit to suit their style and needs. According to the Bible, The Holy Spirit is alive and active in our world today! Christians need to wake up and seek after a realistic, exciting, biblical theology of The Spirit which replaces such unhelpful, inaccurate extremes.

As we carefully study Scripture, a tantalising picture of The Holy Spirit starts emerging. We begin to perceive His role within The Trinity as well as in our lives. *Welcoming The Spirit* is learning to embrace what Scripture says about Him, whilst actively expecting to experience these truths in our lives.

Read: John Chapter 3 v1-10 & Chapter 4 v19-24

(Also: Gen. 1v1-2; Ex. 31v1-5; Num. 11v24-25; Judg. 16v13; Ps. 51v11; Isa. 61v1-3; Ezek. 36v24-28; Joel 2v28-32; Zech. 4v6; John 14v15-27; 16v5-16; Acts 1v 4-11; 2v1-13; Rom. 8v1-17 – for more refs. about The Holy Spirit.)

Who is The Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is more than just a mere force. He is fully God with characteristics and attributes that every Christian must become biblically conversant with if we are to experience His vital activity for ourselves.

1. The Person of The Holy Spirit: (Matt. 28v 19)

Not just an agent of Divine duty, the Holy Spirit is God. His ministry is revealed in Scripture and relates to us all.

2. The Promise of The Holy Spirit: (Acts 2v17-21)

The Spirit's presence, activity and power are everywhere in Scripture. As God's purposes unfold, an awareness/anticipation of His influence grows.

3. The Power of The Holy Spirit: (John 16 v5-15)

The Holy Spirit's role is essential within God's redemptive purposes. He alone brings the necessary revelation, conviction and transformation we need.

Welcoming The Spirit:

Questions:

- *Consider The Trinity: Which member of the Godhead do you embrace the easiest. Which One do you struggle with the most?*
- *How much do you think you know about the Holy Spirit?*
- *Share one fresh insight you have gained concerning the Holy Spirit recently. (Should Christians continually expect fresh insight from the Holy Spirit?)*
- *Define the Spirit-filled life.*
- *How much would you say you experience His activity in your life?*
- *In what area of your life do you believe the Holy Spirit needs to be in greater control?*

Response:

- *Consider your relationship with The Holy Spirit. Look again at some of the biblical facts about Him from this week's study and references.*
- *Pray for some time about what you have read. **Wait for The Spirit to highlight truth that you may need to wrestle over again** and invite His help in addressing any unresolved issues in your life.*