

Getting to Grips with

God

How our understanding of God changes everything

Part 3: Welcoming The Spirit

Session #2 The ministries and manifestations of The 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: The ministries and manifestations of The Spirit

Having established that The Holy Spirit is not only a person, but a Divine Person, we begin to dispel any notions of The Spirit simply as a force from God and embrace something much more personal. Scripture states that we are *“a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you.”* (1 Cor. 6v19) Never intended to be an estranged tenant, or someone to exchange the occasional word with, God in His grace has granted us the comforting presence of The Spirit that we might be transformed from within into the image and likeness of Christ.

So how does that look? Moving beyond nominal notions, how would each of us describe what it feels like to have the Holy Spirit living within us? The reality for most Christians, (mostly quiet, well behaved, hardworking individuals anyway) is that it is not much different! Tozer said: *“If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95% of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”* It seems that when it comes to discerning the activity of the Spirit, the indictment on the church is that we’re either guilty of pious presumption despite the lack of anything supernatural, or quick to evict anything unexplainable before it gets “out of hand.” These are dangerous extremes, both lacking any serious Scriptural backing. Poor teaching, convenient teaching, or even no teaching appears to prevail as the church waddles on in weakness rather than striding confidently in The Spirit!

The Holy Spirit seeks to engage us in the Spirit-filled life: It will always be an ordered life; He will always promote the glory of Christ, always draw us back to the Bible and will never promote the emotional, fleshy extremes often attributed to Him. Yet for some, just hiding behind those criteria – never testing them, seems sufficient! The reality is the ministries and manifestations of The Spirit demand full and frequent opportunities for expression. We need to be constantly reminded of why the Holy Spirit is here, what He does and how that should look in our lives.

Read: Acts Chapter 2 v1-18, 22-24, 32-33 & 37-39

(Also: John 16v 12-15; Rom. 8v 1-27; 1 Cor. 12-14; Gal. 5v16-26; 1 Thess. 5v19-21; - for more refs. about The Spirit’s ministries and manifestations.)

The ministries and manifestations of The Spirit

When getting to grips with God The Holy Spirit, it is essential that we understand what His ministry is and how it is meant to manifest in our lives.

1. Ministries of The Holy Spirit: John 16v 12-15; 2 Corinthians 3v 7-11

It is important to understand why the Holy Spirit has come and what His ministries are if we are to confidently discern, appreciate and covet His activity.

2. Manifestations of The Holy Spirit: Acts 2v 1-13; 1 Corinthians 12v 7

The ways in which The Holy Spirit works are many, varied and essential. Demonstrations of His presence and power are what make the Church distinct.

3. Moving in The Holy Spirit: Romans 8v 14; Galatians 5v 25

Learning how the Spirit works is one thing, but keeping in step with the Spirit's lead is something else and is vital for spiritual formation and Christian maturity.

Welcoming the Spirit:

Questions:

- *How supernatural do you consider your Christian life to be? Explain.*
- *Share one experience where you felt the clear leading of the Spirit.*
- *Be honest with yourself and ask: did my Christianity start my heart and now it just fills my head? How can this happen?*
- *How can we promote the need for both head and heart Christianity?*
- *Discuss these statements:*

"Some Christians say we no longer need certain gifts of the Spirit and should no longer expect miracles, because we now have Scripture."

"When I read my Bible it exhorts me to desire spiritual gifts and I find examples of how the Holy Spirit worked everywhere. I cannot find a credible reference that assumes this is no longer so."

Response:

*Try this week to give some time and opportunity to "keep in step with the Spirit." Make a note of how this differs from simply doing your quiet time, attending church or regular acts of service. **Try and discern what the Holy Spirit might be saying to you outside of your routines.***