



**Unit 3: God's Power and Me**  
**Session 1: The Powerful Helper (see pp. 142-145)**

**The Question:** Who is the Holy Spirit?

**The Point:** The Holy Spirit is the eternal powerful presence of God in this world.

**Background Passage:** 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; Romans 8:26-27

**Focal Passage:** 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; Romans 8:26-27

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, "Who is the Holy Spirit?" and drive home this one truth: The Holy Spirit is the eternal powerful presence of God in this world.

**Focus on These Points**

***He Is the Inspirer of God's Word***  
***(2 Pet. 1:19-21)***

Peter was not perfect. He had his problems and his hang-ups. But Peter knew Jesus. He walked with Him. He saw His miracles, heard His preaching, and experienced His presence. In fact, as one of the so-called "inner three" with James and John, Peter saw things that none of the other disciples got to see.

One of those times was on the Mount of Transfiguration, which Peter referred to in verses 16-18. To refute the attacks of false teachers who were denying the truth of Scripture, Peter reminded readers that He was eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus. The term we in verse 19 refers to Jesus' apostles, including Peter. This reference indicates that he and the others held a special authority when it came to spreading God's message to a new generation of believers—just as the Old Testament prophets held authority for previous generations. In later years, as church leaders wrestled with what books to include in the New Testament, a genuine connection to an eyewitness of Jesus' life and work was an important point. Peter affirmed that he had a "prophetic word" that was confirmed over time and that his readers needed to listen to what he had to say.

Peter's message of hope—the gospel—offered the only light that could help people see how to escape the darkness of sin. This light points readers toward the coming day of the Lord. The prophetic word and the transfiguration were signs that this day was real and imminent. Until then we can count on His Word and use it as a guide for our daily lives.

But Peter also understood that he didn't hold ultimate authority when it came to interpreting God's message to His people. He could speak the words of God, but He could never inspire the Word of God. That was a role for the Holy Spirit alone. As Jesus provided the walking Word of God during His time on earth (John 1:1), the Spirit inspired the written Word of God. Opponents in Peter's day claimed that Scripture was the invention of the human mind—and, therefore, subject

to personal interpretation. Because he understood the divine origin of Scripture, Peter denied this objection and drew a strict distinction between what humanity thinks up for itself and what God inspires through the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Spirit's inspiration serves as the litmus test for its proper interpretation. For any prophecy to be genuine Scripture—the actual Word of God—it had to find its origin in the Spirit. It must align with the prophetic word.

### ***He Is the Interpreter of God's Will (1 Cor. 2:10-14)***

Paul opened 1 Corinthians 2 by noting that God is a mystery to most people. The primary mystery in this case was the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. But even though no human being can completely understand this truth on their own, believers have a unique relationship with God. And through His Spirit we have the ability to understand and act upon the power of His act of redemption.

This guidance by the Spirit also had implications for the future. Paul noted that God has great things in store for believers, blessings that extend beyond this world into eternity. That is the ultimate will of God for His people. And the Spirit provides assurance of that truth, along with the guidance for day-to-day living. Paul said believers could trust the leadership of the Spirit because He searches out everything there is to know about God. Nothing is too deep for His understanding and interpretation. To emphasize this point, Paul pointed to an idea his readers could grasp. He noted that no one really knows what happens inside a person's mind and heart except for that person. Likewise, the Spirit of God has "inside information" on the mind of God. As God, He knows the plans and purposes of God. That makes the Spirit's explanation of God's will perfect and trustworthy.

Having verified the Spirit's role in sharing God's plan, Paul warned his readers against following the wrong voices. He did this by drawing a sharp distinction between believers and unbelievers. The Spirit is God's gift to Christ followers. He is the only One who can point us in the right direction or gently nudge us when we're going the wrong way.

The consequence of failing to follow the Spirit's guidance is living in foolishness (v. 14). Paul stated that the worldly person is tethered to the things of earth, making it impossible to discern the things of heaven. But Christ followers have no such disadvantage. Believers have the Spirit living inside them.

### ***He Is the Interceder for God's People (Rom. 8:26-27)***

God's love moved Him to step into humanity and offer redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ. That redemption is His free gift to us, but it means we are called to live in the power of His Spirit.

One area where He serves is through the ministry of prayer. The Spirit carries believers through times of weakness, especially when it comes to prayer. In the middle of our weakness, He intercedes on our behalf. In a real sense He prays for us. He brings our needs to the Father—including those needs that are so deep we find it hard to voice them ourselves. While Jesus had

promised the Spirit's help before His death and resurrection, Paul's explanation here provides an intimate look at how that assistance plays out in our most raw and desperate moments. Paul described these prayers as "unspoken groanings." The term implies that the Spirit is moved by our situation and responds at the deepest possible level. It also brings to mind the emotional upheaval Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane. What the Spirit expresses to the Father is not something we could understand even if we were present to hear it, but it makes a difference all the same.

As a result, God hears and responds to the Spirit's work. God understands the Spirit because they are one. They are unified in purpose, and God knows the Spirit is seeking what is best for His people. It's impossible for the Spirit to pray for anything contrary to God's will. As a result, His intercession is powerful and effective—even at times when we feel least effective. This passage represents an encouragement for believers to approach God in spite of their frailties.