

Digging Deeper

Getting the Spirit in Focus

If you had to describe the Holy Spirit, what would you say? Many Christians are unsure what to do with the Spirit – there are so many different views. Perhaps we need to start by understanding *who* He is – not a ‘force,’ but a Person – a Person we all should know well.

The Spirit is *Not* ‘The Force’

- The Spirit isn’t about a *power* that we ‘plug into’
- The Spirit isn’t about a *performance* that we ‘act out’
- The Spirit isn’t about a *purity* that we ‘abide by’

The Spirit is all about Personal Presence

- The Spirit is a Person
- The Spirit animates Christ’s Presence in our lives

1. Compared to our understanding of God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ), our understanding of God the Holy Spirit is pretty slim. Why do you think this is? What makes it harder for us to grasp – or *interact* – with the Holy Spirit?
2. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a quagmire of confusion in the church today. In the last century, an emphasis on personal experience and expression provided fertile soil for the biblical teaching on the Spirit to be applied in unbiblical ways. What views on the person and work of the Holy Spirit have you been exposed to? How have they impacted your spiritual life – for good or for bad? What makes these teachings attractive for so many Christians?
3. One of the best places to start in our understanding of the Spirit is Jesus’ teaching in John 14-16. You may want to read these three chapters entirely, to get the context for Jesus’ instruction. But at least read the following passages: John 14.16-17; 25-26; 15.26; 16.7-15. Imagine you are one of the disciples, listening to Jesus’ words: How would you feel, hearing that Jesus was going to be going away? What encouragement and promise do Jesus’ revelation of the Spirit give to you?
4. We often think of the Spirit as a ‘thing’ – a force, a “presence,” an emanation. But the Spirit is a *person* – a ‘Him,’ not an ‘it’! What characteristics of personhood do the following Scriptures ascribe to the Spirit? Heb. 10.29? Eph. 4.30? Acts 10.19-21? John 14.26? Acts 5.3? Rom. 8.26? Acts 13.4? Acts 20.28?

