

EMPOWERED
Choosing to Live by the Power of the Holy Spirit

Lesson 3:
“The Power of the Holy Spirit in the Word”

Introduction

☐ Read John 14:26; 16:13-15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

The Apostle John declared Jesus to be the Living Word of God. (☐ Read John 1:1-14; Revelation 19:13.) The Apostle Paul declared that all that must be known about the Godhead has been manifest in bodily form in Jesus Christ. (☐ Read Colossians 2:9.) Jesus is the living and complete description of the Godhead. In harmony with the Living Word of God, Jesus Himself attested to the power and revelation of the Scriptures – the written Word of God. Jesus said that the written Word revealed God the Father’s character and plan and bore witness to Jesus as Messiah. (☐ Read Matthew 5:43-48; John 5:39.)

The writers of the Old and New Testaments declare that the written Word of God is living, active, powerful, fully tested and purified, unchanging, altogether righteous, able to convert the soul, make wise the simple, cause blessing and fruitfulness, cleanse a person’s life, renew a person’s mind, refocus a person’s faith in the midst of trial, and thoroughly equip a man or woman of God for every good work. (☐ Read Psalm 1:2-3; 19:7-10; 119:9-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12.) The study and application of the written Word of God is a preeminent priority for any true disciple of the Living Word of God. Here is an important key: the written Word was inspired by the Holy Spirit through faithful scribes and can thus only be understood by the Holy Spirit to faithful students. We need the Spirit’s power to understand and appropriately respond to the Word He inspired, and to teach us all things.

Investigation of the Word

Investigation is about discovering what the Word of God says. The writer of Hebrews says that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (☐ Read Hebrews 11:6.) The words *diligently seek* in the original language have to do with intense investigation, inquiry, and scrutiny of a subject. How can we effectively investigate and accurately represent a God who is infinite in wisdom, power, and glory? The prophet Isaiah tells us that when the Holy Spirit rests on a person, He gives that person wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the revelation of how to fear the LORD. (☐ Read Isaiah 11:2.) This Spirit rested on Jesus, which is why people were so astonished at His understanding of the Scriptures in the absence of the formal training of the day. (☐ Read John 7:15-18.)

Jesus tells His disciples that when the Helper, the Holy Spirit, comes, He will teach them all things. (□ Read John 14:26.) Before the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were greatly limited in their ability to investigate and understand the Scriptures. Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, unfolded everything the Scriptures said concerning His messiahship. (□ Read Luke 24:27; 44-48.) Yet, the apostles didn't fully understand. But once Pentecost had come, the Spirit who inspired the written Word of God instilled power and wisdom into the apostles to accurately investigate God in the Scriptures and accurately communicate God's plan to the people. (□ Read Acts 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:23-30.) The apostles' doctrine was born out of Holy Spirit anointing. (□ Read Acts 2:42.)

All investigation of the Scriptures must begin with asking and earnestly desiring a fresh filling of the Spirit's power, knowledge, wisdom, and instruction. He faithfully revealed, protected and preserved the Scriptures through the disciples of old, and He is faithful to do the same through you and me.

Interpretation of the Word

Interpretation is about discovering what the Word of God *means*. The Apostle Peter wrote that the Scriptures were written by men moved by the Holy Spirit. (□ Read 2 Peter 1:20-21.) The words *moved by* in the original language denote the idea of having something laid upon you by another or given to you by another. The authors of the Scriptures received the Word and its meaning from the Holy Spirit – not themselves. We too need the Holy Spirit to give to us the interpretation of the Scriptures through His empowerment and teaching.

In a moment of sorrow as His disciples anticipated the coming departure of their Rabbi, Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit, their soon-coming Helper, would be just like their Lord. (□ Read John 14:16.) As Jesus opened the understanding of His disciples to comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures, so the Holy Spirit does for us, just like Jesus. (□ Read Luke 24:45.) Spirit-empowered investigation is about knowing where to dig and what to learn in the massive goldmine of God's Word. Spirit-empowered interpretation is about being taught by the Spirit to understand what the text means and what it requires of the reader.

Meditation on the Word

Meditation is about discovering how the Word of God transforms. In Psalms we discover that meditation transforms a person's life into a state of constant fruitfulness and blessing. (□ Read Psalms 1:2-3.) David said that meditation on God's Word converts (or restores) a person's soul, makes the simple-minded wise, causes the heart to rejoice, and enlightens a person's perspective on the pure meaning of life. (□ Read Psalm 19:7-8.) We also learn that when the Word of God is hidden in a heart, it produces a life that strives against sin for righteousness. (□ Read Psalm 119:11.)

Followers of Jesus are called to meditate on the Word like He did. How was Jesus able to quote verses, passages, and entire chapters of Scripture at will? First, He was led by the Spirit

concerning what verses to hide in His heart. Second, the Spirit brought to His mind what verses the Father wanted Him to exclaim and explain to the people. (☐ Read John 5:19, 30; 7:16.) The word *meditation* in the Old Testament is likened to a cow chewing cud until it can be swallowed, digested, and used for energy. The Scriptures cannot be fully understood nor have their full transforming work in a person's life unless they are deeply mulling them over by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle James had been led by the Spirit to memorize a passage in the book of Amos, and as he meditated on these verses the Spirit transformed his understanding of God's plan for the Gentiles. (☐ Read Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:13-21.)

The Holy Spirit knows what verses and passages we need to memorize and meditate on so that He can transform us through the renewal of our minds. The power of the Spirit in the Word isn't just about daily investigation and interpretation, but a journey of Spirit-led, Spirit-empowered memorization and meditation. Jesus said the Spirit would take what the Father wills and the Son wills and declare to us. (☐ Read John 16:14-15.) Let us ask the Spirit to show us how the Father and the Son desire to transform us through the Word in every season.

Application of the Word

Application is about discovering what the Word of God requires. The Apostle James teaches his readers that they must be doers of the Word. (☐ Read James 1:22.) Jesus told His disciples that knowing His Word wasn't enough; the blessing comes from doing the Word. (☐ Read John 13:17.) The problem arises when a disciple of Jesus attempts to obey and apply the Word of God in their own strength and by their own wisdom. This is a key problem the Apostle Paul addresses in the church of Galatia. The church had turned from a grace-based, Spirit-led liberty in following Christ to an attempt to achieve righteousness through the human efforts of the Law. Paul explained that no man can be righteous before God through human effort. Only those who walk (or live) in and by the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit can live a life of freedom and obedience to Christ. (☐ Read Galatians 5:1-25.)

In his pursuit to lovingly obey Jesus, the Apostle Paul realized that the law of the Spirit of life was the only way to conquer the law of sin and death warring in his flesh. The Spirit of God shows us what the Word of God requires of us. Then, the Spirit of God provides the power and wisdom to respond. As one man put it, "The Spirit bids us fly and gives us wings." What the Word of God demands, the Spirit of God supplies.

Every Spirit-infused desire to respond to the Word of God should be accompanied by prayers for empowering grace. He is the Spirit of truth who guides us into all truth. He doesn't just guide us *to* truth; but *into* truth. (☐ Read John 16:13.) He illuminates what the Scriptures require and rejuvenates us to respond.

MEMORIZE: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Use the following lines to write out the scripture to help you commit it to memory.

KEY TRUTH: The written Word was inspired by the Holy Spirit through faithful scribes and can thus only be understood by the Holy Spirit to faithful students.

YOUR RESPONSE:

This is how you can choose to live by the power of the Holy Spirit as you apply the truths from this lesson to your life.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to teach and empower you every time you investigate the Word.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to interpret what He instructs you to investigate.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show what He wants you to memorize and meditate on in this season.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the power and wisdom to respond to what the Word requires.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Lesson Review

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages to fill in each blank below. This review will help to reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. The _____ and _____ of the written Word of God is a _____ for any true _____ of the Living Word of God.
2. _____ is about _____ what the Word of God _____.
3. _____ is about _____ what the Word of God _____.
4. _____ is about _____ how the Word of God _____.
5. _____ is about _____ what the Word of God _____.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of this lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following questions.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?
2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?

3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?