



LET'S BEGIN HERE

In one delightful account of a junior Sunday school class studying the Trinity, the teacher asked her students, “Who can tell me who makes up the Holy Trinity?” The children excitedly raised their hands, begging to reply. Unwilling to wait, one boy blurted out, “the Father, the Son, and the *Holy Smoke!*”

That’s a funny story, though not far off from describing the confusion many people experience about the nature of the Holy Spirit. Thankfully, God’s Word and, particularly, this section from John’s gospel, dispel the fog with clear teaching on the functions of the Spirit. Let’s listen in.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

When beginning a study of a subject as expansive as the Holy Spirit, a good overview of the topic can jumpstart your thinking. Chuck Swindoll has provided a helpful chart that surveys the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of both unbelievers and believers. Take a few minutes to study the chart and make any observations.

Quotable

*The Holy Spirit
is never the
One exalted—
the Spirit has one
singular message—
Jesus Christ,
God’s Son.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



SURVEY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S WORK

In what areas does the Holy Spirit work? With whom does He sustain a ministry? The chart reveals the answers. He works in two realms—first, among unbelievers, and second, within believers. In each realm He sustains a direct impact.

UNBELIEVERS		BELIEVERS
		At Salvation —once for all—
Restrains Wrong 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12		Regenerates John 3:3–7 Titus 3:5
Convicts of Sin John 16:8–9		Indwells 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19
Sanctifies 2 Thessalonians 2:13 1 Peter 1:2		Baptizes 1 Corinthians 12:13
		Seals 2 Corinthians 1:22 Ephesians 1:13; 4:30
		Gifts 1 Corinthians 12:4–11
		During Christian Life —repeatedly—
		Fills (Controls) Ephesians 5:18
		Illumines (Teaches) John 16:13 1 Corinthians 2:10–13
		Leads Romans 8:14
		Glorifies Christ John 16:14
		Assures (Witnesses) Romans 8:16 1 John 5:7–12
		Comforts Romans 8:26–27

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What did you learn by studying this chart?



What questions arose from your study of the chart?



Observation: Looking at the Ministry of the Spirit

Just by reading John chapters 13 to 16, you can sense a growing uneasiness among Christ's disciples. In John 13, Jesus told them they couldn't go with Him where He was going. In John 15, Jesus warned His disciples about future persecution. Knowing they were feeling unsettled about their future, Jesus explained to them in detail precisely how the Holy Spirit would minister to them.

The Reaction of the Disciples

The disciples' need for support is seen in John 16:4–6.

What did Jesus give as His reason for not previously revealing to His disciples the things that were about to happen to Him (John 16:4)?

Where did Jesus say He was going (16:5)?



What did Jesus say to His disciples in John 16:5 that signaled to them they were about to experience a significant change in their experience?

What emotion did Jesus indicate the disciples were expressing as a result?

Using your imagination, describe what may have been going through the minds of the disciples as they contemplated Jesus' departure and the uncertainty surrounding that realization.

The Solution Jesus Offers

Sensing the disciples' worry, Jesus told them about the Holy Spirit and how He would help them after His departure.

In what way did Jesus frame His leaving? Was this going to be a good experience or a negative one?



Read again John 15:18–16:14, and note how many times Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as He spoke to His disciples. What were some of the various ways in which Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit?



Interpretation: Understanding the Functions of the Holy Spirit

When the Gospel writers included the actual words of Jesus, they intended not only to provide a chronicle of what He said but to teach powerful truths as well. We can learn much about the Holy Spirit, for instance, by the names Jesus used to refer to Him and by studying the roles Jesus indicated the Holy Spirit plays. Let's take a closer look at Jesus' words about the Holy Spirit and the functions of the Spirit's ministry.

The Functions of the Holy Spirit—John 16:8–11

In verses 8–11, Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would have a ministry of convicting the world of three specific things:

Concerning Sin—John 16:9

What specific sin does the Holy Spirit convict the world of committing?

How would you describe the sin of unbelief in the world today?



In what ways do you think the Holy Spirit convicts the world of the sin of unbelief?

Concerning Righteousness—John 16:10

In what way do you think the Holy Spirit brings a knowledge of true righteousness that contrasts the false righteousness of the Pharisees?

According to Jesus, how is true righteousness made available to people who seek it?

Concerning Judgment—John 16:11

Some might read John 16:11 and think Jesus was referring only to future judgment. But He made a statement that helps us interpret this judgment as present and ongoing.

What did Jesus say that brings us to this understanding?



Take a few moments to consult a Bible commentary on John 16:11. Read carefully what is written, and make notes about what you learn. Why did Jesus mention Satan’s judgment in this statement about the Holy Spirit?



Correlation: How Does It Relate?

Correlating the Scripture passages you’re studying with other biblical passages helps you fine-tune your interpretation. Up until verse 13, Jesus was speaking about the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the world—that is, to unbelievers. Starting in verse 12, Jesus spoke about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers.

Based on John 16:12–13, what did Jesus say will be the ministry of the Holy Spirit to His followers?

Turn to 1 Corinthians 2:9–13. How do Paul’s words about the Holy Spirit compare to what Jesus said about the ministry of the Spirit to believers?

How do Paul’s words help us interpret Jesus’ words in John 16:12–13?





Application: The Holy Spirit Working in and through Us

To apply this wonderful teaching on the Holy Spirit, we must think about it from a two-fold perspective:

- First, the Holy Spirit desires to work *through* us.
- Second, the Holy Spirit desires to minister *to* us.

In convicting the world of sin, the Holy Spirit desires to use channels.

How can you be a channel of the Spirit to unbelievers around you?

In communicating the Word to us, the Holy Spirit desires to see our lives transformed.

In what ways does the Spirit bring about lasting change in your life? What are some areas in your life that you need the Spirit's power to overcome?



A FINAL PRAYER

Take a few moments to compose a personal prayer in the box below asking the Holy Spirit to use you and change you based on the truths you've learned today.



EXALTING CHRIST . . . THE LAMB OF GOD

Functions of the Holy Spirit

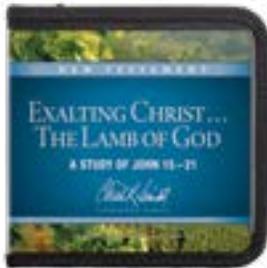
John 16:4–15

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

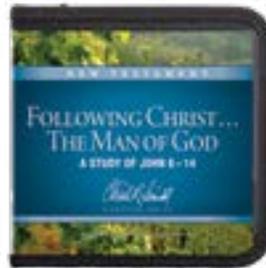
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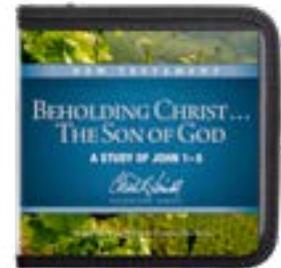
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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