

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

The Holy Spirit and Spirituality: Lesson Nine, “The Holy Spirit and the Church”

SABBATH AFTERNOON: Read title. The lesson two weeks ago was on the fruit of the Spirit. *Will members who live the fruit of the Spirit help make a better church?* Last week’s lesson was on the gifts of the Spirit. *How do spiritual gifts help the church?* The gifts are to edify, to build up the church both in quality (helping members grow) and in quantity (bringing in new believers). This lesson will bring out more ways that the Holy Spirit builds up the church. The main emphasis will be on how the Holy Spirit brings unity to the church.

Read the memory text. Share highlights from the narrative.

SUNDAY: THE HOLY SPIRIT UNITES US WITH CHRIST

Before we can have a united church, don’t we first have to be as individuals united with Christ? Share highlights from the first paragraph of the narrative.

Read Ephesians 2:18. *According to this verse, who does Jesus give us access to?* To the Father via the Holy Spirit.

Read Ephesians 2:19-21. *What symbol or metaphor is Paul using to teach about the church? A building/temple. Who is the foundation of the church? Jesus...is the chief cornerstone and....the prophets and the apostles are the foundation.*

How can the apostles and prophets be part of the foundation of the church? They have given us the messages of Jesus, the testimony of Jesus. They were God’s instruments in giving us the Bible. **(Hold up your Bible)** That’s how they continue to be the foundation of the church today (not by apostolic secession).

Read Ephesians 2:22. *How does verse 22 include us as part of the temple/building of God? It says we are being built into the building. 1 Peter 2:5 said that each member of the church is a living stone. According to Eph. 2:22, what is the purpose for us to be part of the temple building of God? To be a dwelling place for God. How is it possible for God to dwell in us according to the last part of this verse? In or by the Holy Spirit.*

Share/read highlights from the bottom two paragraphs of the narrative.

Read Colossians 3:12-14. *Why are these traits so crucial to the unity of the church?* These traits help people get along with each other. You can’t really have love without these traits. Without them people just annoy and irritate each other.

This is a good time to read the second quotation on Friday’s page and discuss question #1.

MONDAY: THE HOLY SPIRIT UNITES US THROUGH BAPTISM

(Some people have thought that getting baptized into Christ without joining the church is OK.)

Read title.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:13. *What does this verse say we join when we are baptized?* We are baptized into one body – the body of Christ, the church.

Following the symbolism of the church as a body, who is the head of the church? Jesus, of course (see Eph. 1:22-23). *How is the symbolism damaged by the idea of getting baptized into*

Christ but not joining His body, His church? That would be being baptized into a head without a body! So, how does baptism unite us with Christ and with the church? To answer, read the first paragraph of the narrative.

This may be a good time to draw on the Teacher's Comments with the "Opening Discussion" that starts at the bottom of p. 120 and goes to the top of 121. The point is that it's important that we recognize that we are different from one another just as the body has so many different systems, but everything [everyone] should work together anyway - in unity. This is also a good time to share highlights from p. 121, "Explore" section.

Read Romans 6:3-7. *What is symbolized through biblical baptism?* To answer, read the short paragraph in the middle of the page, and then read the following paragraph consisting of an Ellen White comment. *How would dying with Christ help unity in the church?* Disunity is caused by self, etc. Baptism should mark true repentance, the crucifixion of the old life of self, and signals the new birth, a new life or conversion. Read the questions at the bottom of the page.

TUESDAY: THE HOLY SPIRIT UNITES THE CHURCH THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

Read title.

Read Acts 17:11 and John 5:39. *What is the distinguishing mark of a true disciple of Christ in these two verses?* Searches the Scriptures.

Read John 5:46-47. *What's the distinguishing mark of a true disciple of Christ here?* Believing God's written word.

Read John 8:31. *What does a true disciple do with God's word?* Continue or abide in God's word. *What does it mean to continue in God's word?* It means to live it.

Read John 8:32. *Why is the Bible so indispensable in pointing us to Christ and in Him helping us to follow Him faithfully?* Only the Word shows us the essential truth. This is how God reveals Himself to us so we can discern between truth and error. It brings freedom. "The primary means by which the Holy Spirit unites us with Christ is through the Written Word of God."

Read John 17:17-21. *In this passage, what is the visible, observable, distinguishing mark of Christian discipleship? - OR - What should the world be able to observe among Christians that gives powerful evidence that Jesus truly was sent of God and that Christianity is true?* Unity among Christians. *According to verse 17, what is the basis for unity?* The truth of God's word.

Share highlights from the bottom paragraph of the narrative.

Read the questions at the bottom.

WEDNESDAY: THE HOLY SPIRIT UNITES THE CHURCH IN FAITH AND DOCTRINE

Read title.

Read text (Eph. 4:5-6).

Read the question.

Share/read highlights from the narrative.

Read from the box and question at the bottom of the page.

THURSDAY: THE HOLY SPIRIT UNITES THE CHURCH IN MISSION AND SERVICE

Read title. *What was the result of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the New Testament believers?* **Read Acts 2:4-11, 16-21.**

Repeat the above question. Answer: The followers of Jesus received spiritual gifts to enable them to evangelize. The result was thousands of people accepted Jesus and were baptized. Share highlights from the two paragraphs of the narrative in the top half of the page.

Read Acts 2:42-43. *In what other things were the New Testament believers united?* Besides finding unity in doctrine, here we see unity in fellowship, in breaking bread, and in prayers. In **verse 46**, breaking bread is sharing of food.

Verse 47 adds unity that was found in praising God in worship together.

Read Acts 2:44-45. *What united them in these two verses?* They were united in serving those in need when they freely shared what they possessed and had all things in common. The Holy Spirit will open our eyes, as well, to the needs of those around us.

With people of different backgrounds and different viewpoints, how can a local congregation have true biblical unity? How do the elements of unity, as outlined in the book of Acts, apply today? Ask the questions in the box at the bottom of Thursday's page.

Conclusion:

Read "Activities" #1 and 2 at the bottom of p. 123. Ask them to meditate and pray on these. Read the "Summary" on p. 119.