

BRMC Small Group Study: Holy Spirit Session 2

Leader's Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

Scripture Passage:

Focus: 2 Tim 3:14-17

Supplementary: John 17:17 and 2 Pet 1:19-21

Open to the Spirit:

Focus chapter: 4

Supplementary chapters: 3 and 5

Context:

The Bible is not God, it is the platform from which God speaks to us. Are we open to the Holy Spirit speaking to us through the words in the Bible? The author in explaining the word Paul used ("theopneustos"), highlights that "God generates our Scriptures sending the Spirit to the author to make sure the words are God's. The Bible you hold is both Spirit-generated and Spirit-breathing." (p 31-32)

In the focus passage, Paul identifies 2 main ways that Timothy had received instructions: from those whom he knew and from Holy Scripture known from childhood. The underlying assurance must be from the Holy Spirit, through Holy men (2 Peter 1:21) and Holy scripture which is God-breathed (or God-Spirited, which is a more literal translation). (p 31)

Lesson Objectives:

- The Holy Spirit enables us to hear God through two means.
- The first is through scripture which is God breathed.
- The second is through others (teachers, preachers, prophets), but we should know them and they should be tested (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Introductory

1. From the focus passage, what could Timothy rely on to continue in what he was asked to do?
 - Timothy was to remember what he had learned from those whom he has known, such as Paul, and also from Holy Scripture (2 Tim 3:14-15). He was to use Scripture in his daily life and for every good work he was doing (2 Tim 3:17).
2. Where can we find the truth, according to John 17:17? How can the truth "sanctify" us?
 - The word "sanctify" used in John 17:17 means, "to consecrate, or to set apart persons or things to God". It also carries the connotation of holiness. God's word

sanctifies us when we are immersed in the word and there is expression of that word through our works, which we are sent to do (John 17:18). Similarly, Paul's instruction to Timothy includes the expression of what Timothy has learned from those he knows, and from Scripture, encapsulated by the word "all Scripture" being useful etc, for completeness, and for equipping for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).

- This question should lead to an Application of how we can engage the Holy Spirit, to be immersed in God's Word, and when we are being taught by those whom we know. Before the Application, encourage Reflection with the questions below.

Reflection

3. Whom have you learned from over the years? What impact, if any, have they had on your life and walk with Jesus?

- We learn from a variety of people. Pastors, friends, parents, are all examples of people we have learned from, whom we know. Online podcasts of godly, tested, preachers may also be included in the list. It is important however, to help the group use what Paul has suggested in 2 Tim 3:10-13 to lead to the importance of v14-17.
- It is an opportunity also to explore what impact these people have had in their life.

4. Can you remember an occasion where you were reading the Bible and experienced a thought or sense that seemed "out of the blue", yet was relevant to circumstances that you might be going through?

- You may want to prepare a testimony of an occasion where you had such an experience, or heard a testimony from someone you know to share with the group.
- In any event, the author shared (p 29-30) about an experience of the Holy Spirit while he was reading the Bible. Allow our group to share their personal experiences.

5. Are you open to hearing from God through the words in the Bible (2 Tm 3:15)? Are you willing to hear from God through the words of those whom you know (2 Tim 3:14)?

- Craig Keener wrote: "All Christians should read Scripture as people who are living in the biblical experience." It is the Holy Spirit that can make that happen. (p 30)
- This question is intended to help explore hurdles mental or spiritual that might be of concern to members of the group. Some members may highlight inconsistency in the teachings of known preachers, such as those who advocate the "prosperity gospel" with those who emphasis sin and confession. It would be useful to draw members back to a habit or practice of seeking the Holy Spirit to teach us to test what we hear with what the Scripture says, and with what our faith community's spiritual authority says, expecting that in each occasion, the Holy Spirit will guide and direct our understanding.
- This leads on to the Application question as to how we can go about sharpening our hearing of God's word with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Application

6. How do you enter into a time of Bible reading? Do you take time to pray for openness to hear God? Do you spend time listening to what the Holy Spirit may be communicating as you read? Do you spend time meditating or giving prayerful consideration to what you may have heard, and then to seek confirmation of what you have heard?
- McKnight suggests that we can nurture our reading of the Bible in a Spirit-prompted manner (p 34-35)
 - o Read with others who are in our faith community, i.e. BRMC, because we need to read the Bible in conversation with other Bible readers, it expands what we can hear in the Bible.
 - This is a significant and major point for this session. Scripture is primarily a word spoken to a people, God's people, and not individuals. We therefore cannot read and interpret Scripture in isolation but in community.
 - This is where the Methodist distinctive of "conferencing", meaning to confer with others, comes in. It may often be the case that it is the person who thinks he interprets Scripture better than others who lead people into heresy.
 - o Be intentionally reverent. If the Bible is God's word to us, then we enter God's presence whenever we open a Bible. Find quiet, tune out distractions, do whatever it takes to enter into His presence 0 find that posture of reverence.
 - o Be prayerful. Pray as you read. Pray before you read, ask the Holy Spirit to grant that you may hear from Him, digest, and do.
 - o Listen to the words in a receptive mode, being open to hear from God, "let the Bible take us where the Bible goes." Do not pressure the text to say what we would prefer to hear or tune out what we do not like to hear, apply sincerity in listening.
 - o Pause and ponder on the words. "We can't decide in advance what the Spirit will do, so we have to wait on the Spirit to use the Word to speak to us."
 - o Respond to the words (James 1:22-25) Do not just listen, but do what it says.
 - One reason for having a pulpit led sermon series is so that as a whole community, we can seek to discern what the Holy Spirit is teaching us together.

Prayer

7. Write out a prayer for yourself based on what you have heard and learned from this session.
- It may be useful to break into smaller groups and allow some time for people to process what they have heard and learned from the Holy Spirit. Then encourage them to share with one another what their prayer is for this session, and for themselves for the week.

- If it is appropriate, suggest to members to start the suggested Spirit-prompted readings with each other throughout the week, keeping one another accountable for this daily exercise in hearing God.
- It is always useful to collate these prayers and to refer to them for thanksgiving and sharing next week.