

SESSION 4

SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

The Holy Spirit indwells, empowers, and transforms us to live in tune with God.



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Read through the following Scripture passages this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses.

Day 1

John 14:25-26

Day 2

Ephesians 5:18-20

Day 3

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Day 4

Romans 8:18-27

Day 5

Ezekiel 36:22-38

Day 6

John 16:5-15

Day 7

Galatians 5:16-26

A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FROM PAUL'S PERSPECTIVE

Paul made attempts to live in tune with God's design and desire. In Philippians 3:4-6 he even says that according to the law, he was "blameless." However, Paul's conclusion was that all these things added up to "filth" (v. 8). In other words, he was living out of tune. However, he didn't realize he was living out of tune until he encountered Jesus in all of His perfection. As a result, Paul was willing to trade his out-of-tune life for knowing Jesus "and the power of His resurrection" (v. 10). Then the rest of Paul's life was an ongoing journey of tuning and retuning his life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Like Paul, we can choose to live either in tune or out of tune, in harmony or in cacophony.

In the same way Paul came to the conclusion he was living a life out of tune with God, describe a time when you realized you were living out of tune.

What spiritual disciplines, relationships, or experiences have helped you get back in alignment or help keep you in alignment with God?

As Paul was on a journey of living in tune with God through the power of the Holy Spirit, he taught and equipped others to do the same. In his missionary journeys and letters to the churches, we see some of his teaching that reminds us of the Holy Spirit's integral role in living in tune as individuals and as a community of disciples.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18 he writes, "We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit." In other words, through the Holy Spirit we are continually being fine tuned to become more like Jesus. Though we can't live in tune on our own power, through God's Spirit, our lives will begin to resonate more and more with Jesus who lived a life perfectly in tune. God never gives up on us and His Spirit is constantly at work empowering and guiding us.

What words or emotions come to mind when you learn that God is continually tuning your life to become more like Jesus?

As we well know, there are things in our lives that can quickly cause us to get out of tune. In Galatians 5:17 Paul writes, “The flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want.”

Paul goes on to list two different ways of living: works of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit. To paraphrase, these two different ways of living are not compatible and can never be in harmony with one another. A life filled with works of the flesh—such as envy, anger, and jealousy—will always clash with a life filled with fruit of the Spirit—such as joy, love, and self-control.

Though we might choose to live by the Spirit, works of the flesh will continue to be a temptation in our lives. There will most likely be moments or even seasons where we stop listening or obeying God and get out of tune. It’s essential that we don’t give up on the journey that God is committed to in our lives.

In Philippians 1:6 Paul writes: “I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” In other words, God always finishes what He starts. No matter how difficult or out of tune you may feel as a disciple of Jesus, God will complete that work in and through you until the day you are face to face with Christ.

Tuning an instrument is critical to making music, especially in combination with other instruments. As you think through this week of study thus far, how does the Holy Spirit help us be in tune with God’s purposes and desires for us?



THE HOLY SPIRIT'S NINE-NOTE SCALE

The apostle Paul's metaphor of "the fruit of the Spirit" could be paraphrased to "notes of the Spirit" as a way to describe the sound of a life that is in tune with God. Living a life that is in tune with the Holy Spirit is to resonate the nine-note scale of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as described in Galatians 5:22-23. To tune our lives to anything other than the Spirit is to live off key. Our lives, like instruments, desperately need the true pitch of the Holy Spirit as our tuning fork.

An easy test to see if we are out of tune is to reflect on the words, thoughts, and actions in our lives, while at the same time considering the nine-note scale from the Spirit. If our lives are out of tune, then there is something other than the Holy Spirit resonating within us. Sometimes it is fear, anxiety, pride, lack of trust, or an inability to remember who God is and who God created us to be that causes us to get out of tune. As a follower of Jesus, we have God's Spirit dwelling inside of us and we can make the choice to cooperate with the Spirit in retuning so that our lives better resonate with the fullness of His Spirit.

As you consider whether your words, thoughts, and actions are in tune with God's Spirit, examine each of the following in the nine-note scale of the Holy Spirit.

Love: "Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Joy: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13).

Peace: "I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world" (John 16:33).

Patience: "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains" (Jas. 5:7).

Kindness: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ" (Eph. 4:32).

Goodness: “As we have opportunity, we must work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

Faithfulness: “Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much” (Luke 16:10).

Gentleness: “... to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people” (Titus 3:2).

Self-control: “... instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age” (Titus 2:12).

Choose one of the nine fruits of the Spirit that God is currently growing within you. Give an example of how you have seen the Spirit changing your thoughts, perspective, attitude, or behavior in that area of your life.

What is one of the characteristics listed in Galatians 5:22-23 that you would like to reflect more in your life? What simple and practical steps could you take this week to cooperate with God in further developing that attribute? (For example, if you would like to grow in patience, you might consider letting cars merge in front of you in traffic or allowing people to move ahead of you in line when you get coffee or at the grocery store.)