



an apprenticeship with Jesus in the art of spiritual conversation

HOLY CONVERSATION Session Nine—He Will Testify: It’s Not All Up to You! John 14:15-18, 25-27; 15:26–16:11

Key verse: *He will testify about me* (15:26b). Spiritual conversation is propelled and enlivened by the work of the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit). Jesus promised his disciples that the Father would send the Paraclete, who would both convict and convince the world in the process of bringing people to their next step toward faith and discipleship.

DEBRIEFING

Seeing the Holy Spirit at work: In your conversations recently, how have you seen the Holy Spirit at work?

Leader’s input: Session overview

Before leaving his disciples, Jesus spoke of the coming of the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who would do the hard work of convicting and convincing the world and bringing people to faith.

In the same way, Jesus has not left us alone in our efforts to share Christ in the world.

Today we explore reasons why we can be more relaxed in our spiritual conversations, knowing that conversion is a process, and this process is guided by personal work the Holy Spirit.

ENCOUNTERING THE STORY

Read **The Text in Context: *Jesus Promises the Spirit.***

Jesus is beginning to prepare his disciples for his departure from this world. His disciples were to remain in the world. He assured them that the world would hate them even as it hated him (15:18-25). In John, the term “world” refers to the sphere of creation that is loved by God (3:16) but lives in rebellion to God (7:7; 14:17, 30; 15:18-19; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14). The world is guilty before God, and ignorant of the Father’s word and work. It is a place of trouble for Jesus’ disciples, a place ruled by the devil. The world rejoices at the Son’s demise. Jesus predicted that his disciples would not only be hated by the world, but also by their own people, the Jews. The disciples would even be excommunicated from their own synagogues (16:2). The disciples did not know how to handle news of Jesus’ departure. They were filled with grief and fear.

It is into the intensity of this relational and emotional context that Jesus made promises to his disciples regarding a coming Paraclete. The Paraclete is the third Person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit. The personhood of Holy Spirit is a core but often misunderstood doctrine of the Christian Church. The Holy Spirit is not an “it” or a “force.” See SESSION NINE APPENDIX 1 on the ways that the personality and personal work of the Holy Spirit is revealed throughout the New Testament. The personhood of the Holy Spirit is essential to our understanding of the relational communion within the Godhead. A *person* can experience relationship. An “it” cannot. A *person* is able to draw another person into relationship, and this is essential to the process of conversion. A *person* is also able to draw another person into conversation.

The Greek word Paraclete is used throughout John 14:15-18, 25-27; 15:26–16:11. It is most often translated into English as “helper,” “counselor,” or “comforter.” According to Carson, however, the best translation for the word in this context is the legal term “Advocate.”¹ Jesus teaches that the Paraclete, in his work of drawing people into the life of God, will function both as prosecuting attorney (giving evidence of guilt: 16:7-11) and a defense attorney (on behalf of Jesus and his disciples: 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:13-15). Jesus is teaching that the Advocate will work “both sides of the courtroom” in the process of bringing people to faith.

The Paraclete is also called “the Spirit of Truth” (15:26; 16:13). As he works in defense of Jesus, he reveals the truth about Jesus to the world. As he works in prosecution of the world, he reveals the truth about its guilt. Both aspects of truth are essential. In the process of conversion, the Holy Spirit reveals truth that both convicts and convinces. As he convinces, the Holy Spirit reveals the facts about spiritual realities as they actually are. He also reveals the truthfulness of God’s character and the way his truthfulness is demonstrated in his Son’s work and words.

The work of the Paraclete is more than simply a legal work, however. He is highly relational. You could say the Holy Spirit is like the “host” of the Trinity. He lays out the “welcome mat” to the “house of fellowship” within the Trinity. In the words of one of the great Church Fathers Athanasius, The Holy Spirit “joins believers in Jesus in the divine communion of the Father and the Son.”² In perfect harmony, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together for our redemption. Redemption is what the Father wills, what the Son fulfills, and what the Holy Spirit instills.

Interactive Bible Study: selected readings from John, chapters 14, 15 and 16.

Individually skim 14:1-14 (NLT) to get a sense of the dynamics at this stage in Jesus’ “farewell discourse.” Describe what you observe of the current mental and emotional state of the disciples. “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.² There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”⁵ “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.⁷ If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”⁹ Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.¹² “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

¹ D.A. Carson, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, 499.

² Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary Vol II*, 1042.

Read 14:15-18. Jesus has begun to talk about leaving, and his disciples are filled with grief. ¹⁵ “If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸ No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

How will the Paraclete fill the void?

Note the personal pronouns used for the Paraclete (see SESSION NINE APPENDIX 1). How do you react to Jesus’ description of the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit) as a *Person*?

What difference does it make—particularly in our practice of spiritual conversation—to know the Holy Spirit is a Person?

Read 14:25-27. Jesus now clearly identifies the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. ²⁷ “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Where will the Holy Spirit come from and what will he do in and among Christ’s followers?

What might have happened to the disciples if they had been left on their own?

Leader’s input: Summarize 15:1-25. **Jesus calls his disciples to “abide” in him (as branches abide in a vine), love one another, and be prepared to be hated by the world.**

Read 15:26-27. Again, Jesus refers to the coming ministry of the Paraclete. ²⁶ “But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. ²⁷ And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

What additional information do we learn about the Paraclete?

What are some ways the Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus to the world?

Read 16:1-11. Jesus continues to warn of coming persecution. “I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith. ² For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. ³ This is because they have never known the Father or me. ⁴ Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer. ⁵ “But now I am going away to the One who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told

you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate^[a] won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. ⁹ The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. ¹⁰ Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. ¹¹ Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

Why do you think Jesus says "it is for your good that I go away"?

How will the Paraclete function as a "prosecuting attorney" in relation to the world?

To "convict" is to provide evidence of guilt. Why is it critical that that we recognize our guilt in the process of conversion?

Read 16:12-15 on how the Spirit of truth guides people into truth. ¹² "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

How does Jesus say the Holy Spirit is involved in this process?

According to Jesus, what is the interrelationship between the three Persons of the Trinity in the work of conversion?

LIVING INTO THE STORY

Leader's input: **Jesus' statement, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear" (v. 12) implies that revelation is an unfolding process. This is a core conviction of this course—that conversion is a process, and that this process is guided by the Holy Spirit.**

Introduce *A Model for the Christian Spiritual Journey* (SESSION NINE APPENDIX 2).

Subdivide into subgroups to discuss the following:

At what stages have you been most aware of the Holy Spirit's work in your spiritual journey?

What difference does the Holy Spirit make in our spiritual conversations with people in the church and world?

How does this affect your attitude toward being personally involved in the work of helping people take the next step in the conversion process?

Leader's input: **Read John 20:21-22. Following his death and resurrection, the risen Jesus made an appearance to his disciples as they were still huddled together in fear and confusion in the Upper Room. He reaffirmed their participation in his mission: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." He knew his continuing work depended on their being filled with the Holy Spirit.**

We would like to give you the opportunity to ask Jesus to "breath on you" with his Spirit, empowering you to participate in his mission. There is nothing "magic" about this act. It is as simple as a son asking his father for a good gift (refer to Luke 11:5-13).

Leader's input:

Session conclusion

Before leaving his disciples, Jesus spoke of the coming of the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who would do the hard work of convicting and convincing the world and bringing people to faith.

In the same way, Jesus has not left us alone in our efforts to share Christ in the world.

Today we explored reasons why we can be more relaxed in our spiritual conversations, knowing that conversion is a process, and this process is guided by personal work the Holy Spirit.

Let's give thanks to God the Holy Spirit for his work.

Session Nine Appendix

APPENDIX 1	The Holy Spirit
APPENDIX 2	Conversion as a Pilgrimage

SESSION NINE APPENDIX 1

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- The Personality of the Holy Spirit
- a. The Spirit has characteristics of personhood
 - i. The Spirit has intelligence- Jn 14:26; Eph 1:17
 - ii. The Spirit shows emotion- Eph 4:30
 - iii. The Spirit has a will- 1 Co 12:11
 - b. The Spirit is distinguished among Persons of the Godhead
 - i. The Spirit is distinguished from Jesus- Jn 14:16,26
 - ii. The Spirit is distinguished within the Trinity- Mt 28:19
 - c. The Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns- Jn 14:16-17
 - d. The Spirit is affected as a person
 - i. The Spirit can be blasphemed- Mk 3:28-29
 - ii. The Spirit can be grieved- Is 63:10
 - iii. The Spirit can be insulted- Heb 10:29
 - iv. The Spirit can be lied to- Acts 5:3-4
 - v. The Spirit can be obeyed- Acts 10:19-21
 - vi. The Spirit can be quenched- 1 Thes 5:19
 - vii. The Spirit can be resisted- Acts 7:51
 - viii. The Spirit can be tested- Acts 5:9
 - e. The Spirit has moral capacities
 - i. The Spirit convicts the world of guilt- Jn 16:8-11
 - ii. The Spirit glorifies Christ- Jn 16:14
 - iii. The Spirit guides into truth- Jn 16:13
 - iv. The Spirit intercedes- Rom:26-27
 - v. The Spirit regenerates- Jn 3:3-5
 - vi. The Spirit restrains evil- Gen 6:3-5
 - vii. The Spirit sanctifies- 1 Co 6:11
 - f. The Spirit is a distinct personality with power- 1 Sam 16:13; 1 Co 2:4
 - g. The Spirit does what persons do
 - i. The Spirit commissions- Acts 13:2-4
 - ii. The Spirit communicates- Eph 3:5
 - iii. The Spirit encourages- Acts 9:31
 - iv. The Spirit gives gifts- 1 Co 12:7-11
 - v. The Spirit leads- Acts 8:29
 - vi. The Spirit speaks- Acts 10:19; Rev 2:7
 - vii. The Spirit strengthens- Rom 8:26
 - viii. The Spirit teaches- Jn 14:26
 - ix. The Spirit testifies- Jn 15:26
 - h. The Spirit gives life- Ezek 37:14; Jn 6:63
- The Deity of the Holy Spirit
- a. The Spirit is considered divine
 - i. The Spirit's deity in his own being- Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 3:17-18; 2 Pet 1:21;
 - ii. The Spirit's relationship to the other divine Persons- 1 Co 2:10; Rom 8:11; Is 11:2; Is 61:1;
 - iii. The Spirit's divine qualities- Ps 139:7-8; Gen 1:2; Rom 15:19; Jn 14:16-17
 - b. The Spirit is said to possess equality with divinity- 2 Co 14:14; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Co 12:4-6
 - c. The Spirit has a divine source- Jn 15:26; Jn 16:13-15
- d. The Spirit's work is divine- Ps 104:30; Jn 6:63; Jn 14:26; Rom 8:26-27; Jn 3:3-6; Jn 14:26; 1 Pet 1:2; Eph 1:13-14; Jn 15:26
- The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament
- a. The Spirit is active in the world at large- Ezek 37:14; Judg 6:34; Ezek 11:5; 1 Sam 10:6-7; Mic 3:8; Ps 143:10; Ex 31:3-5; 2 Chron 24: 20; 1 Sam 19:19-24
 - b. The Spirit was active in Israel's history- 1 Sam 16:14
 - c. The Spirit is present in OT prophecy- Is 44:3-4; Ezek 36:26-29; Is 11:1-2; Is 42:1-3; Is 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-29
- IV. The Holy Spirit and the Life of Christ
- a. The Spirit and John the Baptist- Lk 1:67, 14-17
 - b. The Spirit and Jesus in his early years- Lk 1:35
 - c. The Spirit and Jesus during his public ministry- Mt 3:16-17; Lk 4:1-2, 14;
 - d. The Spirit and Jesus during and after his passion- Rom 8:11; Jn 7:39; Acts 1:5
- V. Jesus' statements about the Spirit- Mk 13:11; Jn 3:5-8
- The Holy Spirit in the Church
- a. The Spirit's coming and baptism- Is 44:3; Mk 1:8; Lk 24:49; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 8:12-20; Acts 10:44-47; Acts 19:6; Eph 4:3-4
 - b. The Spirit's ministry in the church- Acts 20:28; 1 Co 12:4-11; Acts 4:31-33; Eph 5:18-21; Acts 9:31; Eph 2:19-21;
- VI. The Holy Spirit in the Believer
- a. The fullness of the Spirit- Acts 2:4; 9:17
 - b. Fruit of the Spirit- Gal 5:22
 - c. Gifts of the Spirit- 1 Co 12:4f; Rom 12:6f; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10f
 - d. Ministry of the Spirit- Rom 8:16; Acts 20:22; Rom 5:5; Acts 1:8; Eph 3:16; Gal 5:17; Eph 2:18; Jn 16:13-14; Eph 1:13-14; Acts 10:19-20; Rom 8:26-27
- VII. The Holy Spirit and the World
- a. The Spirit created- Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6
 - b. The Spirit convicts- Jn 16:7-11
 - c. The Spirit testifies and converts- Jn 15:26
 - d. The Spirit restrains evil- 2 Thes 2:7
- VIII. The Holy Spirit and the Bible- Jn 16:12-15; Jn 14:26; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 Pet 1:10-12; Eph 6:17
- IX. Metaphors for the Holy Spirit
- a. Clothing- Lk 24:49
 - b. Deposit- Eph 1:13-14
 - c. Dove- Mt 3:16
 - d. Fire- Acts 2:3-4
 - e. Oil- Lk 4:18
 - f. Seal- Eph 1:13
 - g. Water- Jn 7:37-39
 - h. Wind

Source: *Topical Analysis of the Bible*, Walter Elwell, Ed.

SESSION NINE APPENDIX 2

Conversion as a Pilgrimage

A Model by Paul Dugan



STAGE ONE

Context

Crisis

Encounter

STAGE TWO

Belonging

Insight

Spirit

STAGE THREE

Turning

Transformation

Communion of
Saints

Primary source for terminology: Lawrence Singlehurst, *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping*.