

God as the Holy Spirit

STEP 1 Life Need (5–10 minutes)

- Examine the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian life.
- *Optional:* Create a collage.
 - ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ Pencils or pens
 - ☐ Whiteboard and markers
 - ☒ (Optional) newspapers and magazines, assorted colored construction paper and tape

STEP 2 Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

- Examine Romans 8.
 - ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
 - ☐ Paper, pencils or pens, whiteboard and markers

STEP 3 Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

- Students discover how to harness their destructive habits.
 - ☐ “Harnessing Destructive Habits” from *Blueprint*

STEP 4 Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Teens will take a quiz and write sinful habits with lemon juice.
 - ☐ Pencils or pens
 - ☒ Lemon juice
 - ☒ Cotton swabs
 - ☒ (Optional) an empty pinata and stick or mallet

Memory Verse

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.

—Romans 8:26a

☒ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Bible Basis:

The Holy Spirit enables believers (Rom. 8:1, 5–11, 14–17, 26–27).

Bible Truth:

God the Holy Spirit enables Christians to live according to God’s will with power and confidence.

Lesson Aim:

That your students desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

In his epistle to the Christians in Rome, Paul devoted the first half of his letter to the doctrine of salvation. Prior to

chapter 8, he emphasized that every person was a sinner according to the moral standards of God. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and died in our place. He bore our sins so that we might be acceptable to God.

After talking about God the Father and God the Son, Paul brought the third person of the Godhead into the picture—the Holy Spirit. He had just described how terrible it was to live a defeated life under God’s law. In chapter 8, however, Paul showed how believers can experience a victorious life through God’s Spirit.

After assuring his readers that no one in Christ will stand condemned (vs. 1), Paul said all who believe will also have the Holy Spirit (vs. 9). According to Paul, when we allow God’s Spirit to control our lives, we will set our thoughts on those things that will please God (vss. 5–8). In fact, the Holy Spirit will not only give us the power to resist sin and evil, which we could not do on our own, but He also has the power to raise us from the dead as He has done with Christ (vs. 11).

The Holy Spirit gives Christians a new status as God’s children. Indeed, it is the Holy Spirit who teaches us how to be sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. We can

Continued on next page

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE —cont'd

even call Him *Abba*, Father–Daddy (vss. 14-17). In addition, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in ways that we cannot do for ourselves (vss. 26-27). Thus, the Spirit gives believers the power and confidence to enjoy life as God's children.

TIPS

CLASSROOM

So what if failure happens, anyway? Remind your students that the Holy Spirit is still there, consoling and encouraging them to try again. His guidance draws them away from the worldly failures and toward the success of becoming more Christlike. An appropriate time to bring this up might be when your students are completing the worksheet in the Bible Application section of this lesson.

PRESESSION ACTIVITY



Objective: That the students encourage one another on an individual basis.

- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Paper, pencils, envelopes

As students enter the class, have each one choose a name from a hat. These can be names of church leaders, parents, teachers, or fellow students. (If a student draws his own name, it must be put back and another one drawn.) Have them keep the name secret. Offer paper, pencil, and envelopes to each. You might want to provide colorful stickers and felt-tip markers to decorate their creations.

Ask them to write their person a short note of encouragement. (The New Testament character Barnabas had the reputation of being an encourager, especially to the apostle Paul.) They don't need to sign their names. Collect the letters to address and mail later in the week. Ask your class to spend time in intercessory prayer for their assigned person.

Understanding Your Students

"Everybody loves a winner," or so the cliché goes. At this stage in their emotional and physical development, teens are struggling to discover their abilities. In the midst of this struggle, many value winning above everything. Whether it's in sports or in their spiritual goals, losing can be an emotional experience. Occasionally, teens will go to drastic lengths to avoid failure.

The Holy Spirit offers a counteracting power to those who feel less than competent. He welcomes them when the world turns away from the weak and flawed. Through His enabling strength, they can discover abilities they never knew they had. They can draw new courage to try when they'd have given up before.



STEP 1

Life Need
(5–10 minutes)

Lesson Aim:

That your students desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Objective: That your students examine the difference between the Christian and non-Christian life.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Whiteboard and markers

Before class, create a chart with two columns on a board or a piece of poster board. Label the two columns “Worldly” and “Christian.”

- ▶ **If a believer is living close to the Lord and led by the Holy Spirit, how will he or she be different from people who are not Christians?** *Encourage students to mention specific things that can be outwardly observed about a Christian’s life, and things that can be observed about a non-Christian’s life. Students should realize that genuine faith in Christ significantly affects a person’s lifestyle, including his or her activities, interests, and concerns.*

On the chart you created before class, write your students’ suggestions of lifestyle activities that are appropriate for each side. Ask your students for contemporary expressions (advertising slogans, slang expressions, etc.) that reflect the secular philosophy behind these activities. For example, anything dealing with crime, corruption, disunity among people, materialism, greed, etc., belongs to the “worldly” side. Items that express generosity, concern for others, helping, cooperation, kindness, etc. could illustrate the Christian side.

- ▶ **What is responsible for the difference between the Christian and worldly person?** *Help your students understand that there is nothing in the Christian’s human abilities and attitudes that enables him or her to resist doing wrong and to please God more easily than a non-Christian. A Christian’s life is different because of the Holy Spirit’s presence in him or her.*
- ▶ **How do moral, upright, decent non-Christians differ from Christians who are led by the Spirit?** *(Non-Christians generally are not concerned about the will of God as revealed by Jesus Christ. Although these people are doing respectable things, they are not motivated to follow Christ.)*

God the Holy Spirit enables Christians to live according to God’s will with power and confidence. Let’s look at some passages in Romans 8 that will show us how God’s Spirit can accomplish these things in our lives.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

- ☒ Newspapers and magazines, assorted colored construction paper and tape

If you have time, expand upon the above activity by having your students make a collage illustrating the contrast between Christian and non-Christian lifestyles. Divide the class into pairs and have each pair make one collage. Have newspapers and magazines, plus some assorted colored construction paper and glue or tape available for the students. Be sure to note that God looks at a person’s heart. These pictures may not be a true indicator of Christian and non-Christian lifestyles depending on what is depicted and chosen for the collage.



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STEP 2

Bible Learning

(15–20 minutes)

Bible Basis:

The Holy Spirit enables believers (Rom. 8:1, 5–11, 14–17, 26–27)

Objective: That your students discover the role of the Holy Spirit in setting the Christian apart from the world.

Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Whiteboard and markers

Have students turn to the Bible study on page 41 of *Blueprint* and begin working on the questions. You may want to work through this together as a group, or have the students work on the questions individually, then have the students give their responses. The Bible study is reprinted below, along with suggested answers. Read the introduction out loud to your students to get them started.



■ FROM *Blueprint*—Spirit Controlled

Once a person becomes a Christian, he or she receives the Holy Spirit. The Spirit helps us live in such a way that we please God. In one sense, our “flesh” is dead (Gal. 5:24), but the “corpse” still hangs around and tempts us to go back to the old ways.

Read Romans 8:1.

- ▶ List the characteristics of the “sinful nature” (flesh) and another list of those of the Spirit-controlled person. (*People are condemned for their sin, for their rejection of Christ, for their rebellion. Christians are not condemned because God has rescued them from the consequences of their sinful choices. Christians have been set free from the law of sin and death.*)

Read Romans 8:5–11.

Fill in the chart below, giving the characteristics of the “sinful nature” (flesh) and those of the Spirit-controlled person.

Flesh

Concerned with the things of the flesh, spiritually dead now, and headed for death in the future. Hostile toward God and not subject to the law. Cannot please God.

Spirit

Not condemned. Concerned with the things of the Spirit. The Spirit-controlled mind has life and peace. Bodies are dead to sin but alive to the ways of righteousness. The Spirit-controlled person can look forward to the resurrection.

- ▶ Why do we still struggle with the desire to sin if we are “dead to sin”? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our struggle? (*Even though we are dead to sin, we are not as yet freed from its tempting presence—that won’t happen until we are glorified. The temporary pleasure of sin never stops trying to lure us back to our old ways of living before we knew Christ.*)

The Holy Spirit’s role in this is to prevent us from being tempted beyond the limits of our resistance. If we give in to sin, He is there to convict our spirits and lead us to repentance so that our fellowship with God can be restored.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:1, 5-11,
14-17, 26-27

¹Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

⁵Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the flesh desires. ⁶The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are not in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Read Romans 8:14-17.

- ▶ What are some of the responsibilities and privileges of being an adopted child of God? (*Privileges include an intimate child-father relationship with God, an inheritance in the kingdom of God, and sharing Christ's glory.*)
- ▶ Why is it necessary to suffer in order to share in Christ's reward? How does the Holy Spirit help us in this kind of suffering? (*As Christians we share in the suffering of the God who saved us, meaning we may be persecuted or ridiculed for our beliefs just as Jesus was. It is the deliverance from this persecution that will make sharing in His glory that much more glorious.*)

Read Romans 8:26-27.

- ▶ When you're wiped out, and you don't know what to pray, what do you say to God? How does the Holy Spirit help us in our prayers? (*When I'm stressed out and don't know what to say to God, I just start by telling Him—"God, I'm stressed out and I don't know what to say." If I have the strength, I'll tell Him things that have made me feel this way, and that's as far as I probably can go. [Isaiah described a time when the people of Israel were at the end of their spiritual rope: "Lord, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer" [Isa. 26:16].] The Holy Spirit helps us by actually doing the praying and interceding for us. He knows our hearts better than we do, and communicates our concerns to the Father better than we could ever do.*)
- ▶ What have you learned about the Holy Spirit from these verses? (*Allow your students to speak freely here; encourage all of them to speak.*)

As we can see, being directed by the Holy Spirit makes a difference in a person's everyday experience. Such a person is different because of what the Spirit is doing in his or her life—not simply because the person is naturally more sensitive than anyone else.

STEP 3

Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)

Objective: That your students learn how to harness destructive habits.

Materials:

- ☐ “Destructive Habits” from *Blueprint*

These verses in Romans 8 teach that the Holy Spirit is responsible for all that is good and holy in our lives. Therefore, we want the Spirit to take charge in our lives. Today’s memory verse, Romans 8:26a, tells us one way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Have a student look up and read the memory verse.

- ▶ **Doesn’t God understand what we are praying? Why do we need the Holy Spirit to “interpret” our prayers?** (*The Holy Spirit prays for us and with us. He knows our hearts, our minds, and our deepest motivations. As we pray, the Holy Spirit sorts through everything we say. He says for us perfectly what we try to say for ourselves.*)
- ▶ **In Ephesians 5:18, we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. How does this happen?** (*Christians and churches differ in their teaching on the reception of the Holy Spirit. Do some extra research on your own about what your church teaches. Talk about this with your students. You might consider having your pastor or another church leader speak briefly to the class on this issue.*)

If we have repented and believed in Christ, the Spirit of God is within us (Rom. 8:9). If we need the Holy Spirit’s aid, we can ask God for that help and it will be given. That is a promise.

Have students turn to “Destructive Habits” on pages 43-44 of *Blueprint*. After finishing this article, discuss the following questions.

- ▶ **How is a habitual sin like a “ringing tower bell”?** (*It goes on and on, is loud and makes it hard to focus on anything else because it is so persistent.*)
- ▶ **What influences can support a destructive habit?** (*Friends, a desire to get ahead, not seeing the habit as very bad, wanting something to the point that it takes over your life, etc.*)
- ▶ **According to this article, how can we get help from the Holy Spirit, and how does the Spirit help us overcome sinful habits?** (*We need to ask for help; keeping a diary can help us see where we struggle; rely on the Bible not the media around us; etc.*)



STEP 4

Life Response
(5–10 minutes)

Bible Truth:

God the Holy Spirit enables Christians to live according to God's will with power and confidence.

Objective: Your teens will take a quiz and write sinful habits with lemon juice.

Materials:

- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☒ Lemon juice
- ☒ Cotton swabs
- ☒ (Optional) an empty piñata and stick or mallet

Hand out blank sheets of paper, a few bottles of lemon juice, and cotton swabs to your teens. Instruct your teens to write down on the paper (using the cotton swabs and lemon juice) a sinful habit they are struggling with. (By using the lemon juice, your teens can write down their sinful habits without others reading them). Encourage your teens to pray about these sinful habits and turn them over to the Holy Spirit.

(Optional) Have your teens fold their sinful habits papers and stuff them into a piñata. Hang the piñata and allow your teens to break it open using a large stick or mallet. This can symbolize the breaking of their sinful habits with God's help.

Challenge your students to seek out the Holy Spirit more and develop a deep relationship with Him. Close in prayer, thanking God for providing us with His Spirit to help us. Ask Him to help your students live in God's Spirit to the point where they can crush their sinful habits and develop godly habits that will help others to live in Him too.

Thank Him for forgiving you and your students through Christ when you trusted in Him as Savior. Thank Him for loving you in spite of your sinful habits. Thank Him for your home in heaven with Him forever.