



**YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!**  
**Winter 2018-19 Leader Commentary**

**Unit 3: God's Power and Me**  
**Session 2: The Powerful Counselor (see pp. 146-149)**

**The Question:** Why do I need the Holy Spirit?  
**The Point:** The Holy Spirit continues the work of Christ.  
**Background Passage:** John 15:26–16:15  
**Focal Passage:** John 16:7-15

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “Why do I need the Holy Spirit?” and drive home this one truth: The Holy Spirit continues the work of Christ.

**Focus on These Points**

***Facing the Facts***  
***(John 16:7-11)***

In the short term, Jesus’ death and resurrection would separate Him from His disciples. But this was a necessary part of God’s plan for humanity. Without the crucifixion, humanity could never find forgiveness. Without the resurrection we would have no hope for eternal life. So, the fate of the entire human race depended on Jesus’ leaving His disciples for a while.

In the longer term, Jesus would be returning to heaven. But Jesus’ departure meant that the Spirit would be coming to lead His followers deeper in their faith. But He could not send the Spirit unless He went back to the Father. Once the Spirit arrived, He would serve as a “Counselor” for them. The Greek word implies one who stands beside another person. Usually, it referred to advocates in legal hearings. The Spirit would walk beside Jesus’ followers and defend them in any circumstance.

Because Jesus lived under the constraints of humanity before His resurrection, His ministry was limited by time and space. He could only be in one place at one time for 33 years. But the Spirit has no such boundaries. He can reach every corner of creation and has been at work for 2,000 years. Jesus recognized the benefits of the Spirit’s work among His people even if His disciples could not. The Spirit’s presence in the world would also have an impact on those who were not following Christ.

John used three terms in these verses that carried legal implications, indicating that the Holy Spirit would serve as both lawyer and judge in the world. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would fulfill these roles through conviction. The word translated *convict* here (*elenchein*) relates to confronting someone with the facts in an effort to reveal the truth. In a sense the Counselor would cross-examine the people of the world by revealing the truth of their situation. And while Greeks

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sometimes used the word to elicit shame and condemnation, the Spirit would urge people toward repentance and transformation.

In addition to convicting people of their sins, the Holy Spirit challenges the world in the area of righteousness. The Spirit empowers us to show people how they fall short of Jesus' standard and how their self-righteousness can never measure up. The Spirit leads us to grow in righteousness, which directs others toward the Savior.

Finally, the Spirit moves us to warn the world about judgment. Sometimes, we're tempted to think that evil will always have the upper hand in our society. But Jesus reminded the disciples that Satan—the ruler of this world—will eventually face his day of judgment. By implication, so will those who choose to follow him by rejecting Christ. We can point others to Jesus and allow the Spirit to convince them to change their course before it's too late. This final point should prompt believers into action. The wording implies that Satan's kingdom is not awaiting a future judgment. Instead, it already stands condemned. The final execution of God's wrath is yet to happen, but the verdict is in. As a result, Christians can't afford to waste opportunities to bring others to Jesus.

### ***Telling the Truth (John 16:12-13)***

Jesus' time on earth was drawing to an end. He didn't have much time left to prepare His followers for what was about to come, and He knew it. That's another reason the presence of the Holy Spirit was so important.

The disciples were still trying to digest everything Jesus had just told them about His departure. Plus, they would never understand some things until the Spirit was an active part of their lives.

Jesus promised that the arrival of the Spirit would extend the disciples' learning process. The Spirit of truth would guide Jesus' followers toward "all the truth." This would include the truth about Jesus' identity, the integrity of His message, and the implications for His disciples. In time many of those same disciples would write down what the Spirit taught them for other believers to read. The Godhead is marked by unity. And because of His unique connection to the Father and the Son, the Spirit continues the work of redemption in the lives of believers. And He can be trusted because He will not lead believers in a way that contradicts God's purpose for their lives.

Jesus also shared that the Holy Spirit would give Christians insights about the future. Nothing catches Him by surprise, so Christ followers can depend on Him to guide them toward their best possible future. Christians typically divide prophecy into two categories: foretelling (preaching) and forthtelling (predicting). The Spirit's work involves a hybrid of both. He reminds Christians of the truths Christ presented—and expects us to live by. But He also provides insights and discernment about the future, which gives us hope in the face of uncertainty.

### ***Lifting Up the Lord (John 16:14-15)***

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The Spirit's purpose in continuing to share God's truth with disciples—both in the first century and today—is to bring glory to Jesus.

John emphasized that the Spirit is real and personal, but he also made clear that Christ holds the central place in the gospel message. John opened his Gospel by noting the glory of Jesus through the incarnation (John 1:14). John, along with James and Peter, saw the physical glory of Christ on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-17; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Here one of the Spirit's primary functions is to glorify Christ by drawing attention to Him.

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