

The Spirit Questions

Way in

Can you think of a time when someone was trying to explain something to you and you just couldn't understand it? What was it? How did it feel?

Read **John 16:5-16**

Jesus is explaining to his disciples why it is a very good thing that he is about to leave them. It is good because of what the Holy Spirit will come to do. The Holy Spirit will convince people about several key truths.

1. How would most people define sin? What is so surprising about how Jesus defines sin (verse 9)?
2. What sort of righteousness do we need to understand about? Have a look at Romans 3:21-22 and try to work out why people find it hard to see the need for this righteousness.
3. Many people look at the world and think that God is not in control of history. How can we be sure that this 'judgment' is wrong (verse 11)?

4. Some look at the Bible and doubt that it is the reliable word of God. In verse 12-15 Jesus is speaking primarily to the first disciples. What reasons are given here that help us trust the Bible? Have a look at 2 Peter 1:16-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16 to see Peter and Paul explaining why we can trust the Bible. Are you convinced that the Bible is God's word?

5. In a secondary sense for us today the Holy Spirit will lead us into truth as we read the Bible humbly. How can you do that more?

Quote for **Reflection**

"I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books, and praying over, if possible, every line and word. This proved meat indeed and drink indeed to my soul. I daily received fresh life, light and power from above." (George Whitfield 1714-1770)

Concluding **Prayer**

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." Ephesians 1:17-19

Walk the Talk

Questions

Way in

Is there such a thing as a perfect Christian?

Regardless of your answer, what would the life of a perfect Christian look like?

Read **Philippians 3:10-16**

1. In verse 15, Paul mentions that any mature Christian should 'take such a view of things'. What, according to verses 12-14, does a mature Christian therefore look like?

2. In verse 12, Paul mentions that he has not yet 'been made perfect'. The word translated in v15 as 'mature' is actually the same sort of word as the word 'perfect' in v12. Essentially, Paul is saying that a mature Christian knows that they are not yet perfect or fully mature! What might this liberating truth look like in your life?

3. What challenges are there in your life that seem to get in the way of you 'pressing on towards the goal...for which God has called me heavenwards' (v14)?

4. In 1 Timothy 4:15-16, Paul reminds Timothy of what it looks like in his life to keep on pressing on; he is to 'watch his life and doctrine closely'. What does this look like in practice?

5. 'The closer we get to Jesus, the more we realise how far we have to go.' Do you think that this statement is true, in the light of verse 12-16?

Quote for Reflection

A year after his conversion, John Wesley wrote in his journal, 'My friends affirm I am mad, because I said I was not a Christian a year ago. I affirm that I am not a Christian now....For a Christian is one who has...love, peace, joy. But these I do not have. Though I have given, and do give, all my goods to feed the poor, I am not a Christian. Though I have endured hardship, though I have in all things denied myself and taken up the cross, I am not a Christian. My works are nothing; I have not the fruits of Christ. Though I have constantly used all the means of grace for 20 years, I am not a Christian.' (John Wesley)

What is there in this statement that reveals that John Wesley is wrong about himself - that, actually, he is very much a Christian?

Concluding Prayer

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
Amen

(John Wesley)