

ST. MATTHEW A.M.E. CHURCH
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP
SPRING SERIES:

THE DIVINE NINE

GALATIANS 5: 22-23



THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Women's Bible Study Fellowship

Spring Series: "The Divine Nine"

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

Session I: "The Divine Source"

I. "Know This First"

• Jesus was soon going to leave the disciples, but he would remain with them. How could this be? The Counselor—the Spirit of God himself—would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. The regenerating power of the Spirit came on the disciples just before Jesus' ascension (John 20:22), and the Spirit was poured out on all the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants and building Christ's church on earth. John 14:15-17, John 15:26

II. "The Holy Spirit Is God"

- The idea of the Trinity has been a point of confusion for many people throughout church history. Scripture clearly teaches that there is but one God. Yet, God is presented in the form of three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- The first reference to show that the Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity is found in the story of creation:
 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, Let there be light. Genesis 1:1-3
 - Notice how the author refers to God without making any distinction between the two. No explanation is necessary; the two are one! The God who created the heavens and the earth is the same as the Spirit who moved over the surface of the water. "Spirit of God" and "God" are used interchangeably.
 - Another reference to show that the Holy Spirit and God are referred to interchangeably is found in Acts 5:1-4
 - But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." Acts 5:1-4
 - The authors of both the Old and the New Testaments saw no problem with interchanging God and the Holy Spirit. To speak of one was to speak of the other. The actions and attributes of one were the actions and attributes of the other. They were seen as one in power, omniscience and wisdom. No distinction is needed.

II. "What Does The Holy Spirit Look Like?"

- The closer you get to believers who are truly walking in the Spirit, the better they look.
 - There is nothing plastic about them.
 - You don't get the impression they are hiding something.
 - They radiate integrity.
 - You get the impression; you could trust them with your most intimate secret.

- Intimidation is not their game.
- They don't rely on personality and trumped-up enthusiasm to win you over.
 - They seem to be at peace with who they are. And they seem almost anxious to accept you for who you are as well. For that reason, you may feel drawn to them. They are the people you find yourself wanting to be like, not because of a particular skill or talent or physical appearance, but because of the depth of their character.
- We are not talking about perfection. In fact, you will hear more apologies from the lips of those who walk by the Spirit than any other group of people. Their sensitivity to the Spirit provides them with an uncanny ability to know when they have offended or hurt someone. Their internal security allows them to respond quickly once they realize their sin or error in judgment. They are not afraid to admit their faults.
 - Spirit-filled believers make their biggest impression during troubled times. Then it becomes more apparent that the source of their abiding character is something that lies deep within them.
 - When all the crutches and props are kicked away and they are still standing, no one can argue that their uniqueness was simply a by-product of their environment.
 - It's one thing to have peace and joy when everything is going your way. It's another thing altogether to maintain your peace and joy when the bottom falls out.
 - They have their down times
 - They don't win every battle
 - Doubt and temptation take them out of the race from time to time, but their recovery time is remarkably short. They don't stay down. And once they are back, it's as if they actually benefited from their experiences. Specifically, their lives will be characterized by the following nine virtues: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

III. "Real Fruit vs. Fruit of Desirable Circumstances"

- What is often passed off as fruit of the Spirit is nothing more than the fruit of desirable circumstances or mutual beneficial relationships. This counterfeit fruit has its root system deeply embedded in the surrounding environment. Consequently, when the environment changes, the fruit withers, dies- and it is usually a quick death.

FOR EXAMPLE

- The peace and joy experienced by an unregenerate man is the fruit of peaceful circumstances. Once the circumstances change, that same man may exhibit a violent temper.
 - The affection shown by a man or a woman who is head over heels in love may be only the fruit of infatuation. But once the infatuation wanes, his or her love may become less frequent.
 - The self-control demonstrated by an employee who doesn't like his/her boss may be the fruit of wise company politics. But on the day, his/her boss hands him/her a pink slip- and there are no more perks for being kind- we may see a different side of this otherwise congenial employee.

REMEMBER

Just as unconditional love shines brightest in the midst of our differences, so the fruit of the Spirit demonstrates its divine source when circumstances and relationships take a turn for the worse. The reason is, the fruit of the Spirit is just that: fruit produced by the Spirit. It is not fragile. It is not subject to change. Its root is deeply embedded in the person of Christ. When we abide in Him and allow Him to live through us, the result is character that endures the chaos of life.

LOOKING AHEAD

Session II - May 8, 2021

"Don't Get It Twisted, You Are The Bearer, Not The Producer"