

VBS 2019



1st-5th Grade

THURSDAY LESSON PLAN

God Speaks through the Holy Spirit

# God Speaks through the Holy Spirit

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word

**Objective** This lesson will show the class how God gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us in how we live our lives as believers.

## Key Verses

Acts 13:1-3; 16:6-15—Main Teaching Passages  
John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-14

## Memory Verse - John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

## Hook

Review yesterday’s memory verse, 2 Timothy 3:16.

Ask the students if they have ever been in a situation when they didn’t know what the right thing to do was. Share of a time when this happened in your own life. Ask how they decided what to do.

In life we may face many confusing choices and situations. While we learned this week that God may show us what to do through other people or the Bible, sometimes He uses the Holy Spirit to speak to us, as we will learn today.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

## BOOK

Today we are going to look at two short stories that show us how the Lord speaks to us through the Holy Spirit. First, in Acts 13:1-3 we see that there were five men leading a church in a town called Antioch. As these men fasted and prayed, the Holy Spirit said to separate two of them, Barnabas and Saul (who is also known as Paul), for a mission He had for them. The other three men prayed over them and sent Paul and Barnabas as missionaries.

In Acts 16:5-16, we read that several years later, Paul was still serving the Lord as a missionary, this time with a man named Silas. Paul wanted to go to a number of different places in a land called Asia (modern-day Turkey), but the Holy Spirit prevented him and his companions from going. Paul then tried to go to a few other cities, but the Holy Spirit didn't let them go there either. Finally, one night Paul had a vision of a man from a place called Macedonia asking him for help. Paul knew this was the Lord guiding him and immediately they left for Philippi, the main city in Macedonia.

While in Philippi, on the Sabbath Paul went to the riverside, where he knew that people prayed. There he met not the man from his vision, but a woman named Lydia, a woman who worshipped God but did not know about Jesus. Paul preached to her and her family, and they believed and were baptized. The Holy Spirit knew that Paul needed to go to Philippi so that this woman could hear about Jesus and believe. The Lord worked through Paul in other ways in Philippi as well, which is recorded in Acts 16:16-40 (although we will not be studying that passage today).

## LOOK

We have already learned this week that God speaks to us through other people and through His Word. The Bible and godly wisdom from other people can teach us right from wrong and tell us a lot about how we are supposed to live. However, sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we don't know what to do, either because we can't remember or because the Bible doesn't say exactly what to do in that situation. The good news is that God has a solution for this problem: He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit.

Before the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, He promised to send His disciples the Holy Spirit to help them follow Him on earth (John 14:16-18). Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would teach them and remind them of what Jesus said (John 14:26), testify about Jesus (John 15:26), convict the world (John 16:7-11), and guide them in all truth (John 16:12-14). Even though Jesus wouldn't be there to guide them anymore, the Holy Spirit would help them know what they needed to do.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

# LOOK (Continued)

The Holy Spirit's job is to point people's hearts toward Jesus. He convicts unbelievers of sin and points to their need for Jesus as Savior. In the lives of believers, He shows us what Jesus wants us to do, tells us how He wants us to live, and convicts us when what we're doing is wrong.

In today's passages, we see the Holy Spirit guiding Paul and his friends. He is the one who revealed that Paul and Barnabas that they needed to go on a missionary journey. Later on, He told Paul exactly where to go (and not to go). Paul would never have known where to go on his own, and the Scriptures didn't tell him exactly where to go, but God spoke to him through the Holy Spirit, and because Paul obeyed the Spirit, Lydia (and many other people) became a Christian.

In our lives, we may face situations where we don't know what to do. Perhaps you are making a decision that the Bible doesn't have much to say about, or you can't remember what it says. God can still speak to you through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit helps you to know right from wrong and see what God wants you to do. If you aren't sure what the right thing to do is, or you are facing a decision and don't know what God wants, pray and ask Him to speak to you through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will show you what's right.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize John 14:26.

Review the lesson by asking the class how God spoke to Paul through the Holy Spirit. How does the Holy Spirit speak to us today?

**Pray:** Thank the Lord for giving us His Holy Spirit. Ask Him to use the Spirit to speak to us when we don't know what we should do.

**Parent Question:** How does the Holy Spirit help us?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Acts 13:1-3 & 16:6-15 by David Guzik

A. Barnabas and Saul are called and sent by the Holy Spirit.

1. ([Act 13:1](#)) The people at the church in Antioch.

**Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**

a. **Now in the church that was at Antioch:** In [Acts 12:25](#), we learn Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark were all at the church in Antioch, having returned from delivering a gift of support to the church in Jerusalem ([Acts 11:27-30](#)). Saul and Barnabas were among the teachers and prophets there, as were **Simeon, Lucius,** and **Manaen**.

b. **Simeon who was called Niger:** Since **Niger** means *black*, he was presumably a black African among the congregation at Antioch, and possibly the same **Simeon** who carried Jesus' cross ([Luke 23:26](#)).

c. **Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch:** This **Manaen** mentioned here grew up with **Herod the tetrarch**. This was the same Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and presided over one of Jesus' trials ([Luke 23:7-12](#)).

i. Herod and Manaen grew up together, but went very different ways. One killed John the Baptist and presided over one of the trials of Jesus before His crucifixion. The other became a Christian, and a leader in the dynamic congregation at Antioch.

2. ([Act 13:2](#)) The Holy Spirit calls Barnabas and Saul.

**As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."**

a. **As they ministered to the Lord:** This was part of what happened at the congregation in Antioch. Barnabas and others certainly ministered to the congregation, and the congregation also ministered one to another. Yet they also **ministered to the Lord**.

i. This is the first job of any servant of God, to minister unto the Lord. In doing this, they did the service of priests under the new covenant, offering their bodies as living sacrifices ([Romans 12:1](#)). Ministering to the Lord means doing what pleases Him and honors Him – worship, praise, prayer, listening to, honoring God.

ii. "The word translated *worshipping* [*ministered*, NKJV] is that usually employed in the LXX for the service of priests and Levites in the temple." (Williams)

b. **They ministered to the Lord and fasted:** As part of their service to the Lord, they also **fasted**. Presumably, they fasted because they sensed a need to seek God in a special way.

i. Judging from the calling described in the text, it is possible that they sought God about the need to spread

the gospel to all the earth.

ii. If we assume they fasted and prayed about the need of the world for Jesus, we can see how God answered their prayer – by using them. This is often how God moves, by sending the people who have it on their hearts to pray.

iii. Many want to be “back seat drivers” in God’s work. They hope to say, “I’ll have the burden and you do the work.” But God’s typical way of working is to send the people who have the burden to do the work.

c. **The Holy Spirit said:** As they ministered unto the Lord, God spoke to them. This was a word of *calling* that would guide **Barnabas and Saul** into a specific work.

d. **The Holy Spirit said:** Presumably, the call came through the ministry of prophets in the church at Antioch, though it could have come simply through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

i. “I do not for a moment imagine that the assembly heard a voice. That is the mistake we too often make. We try to force ourselves into ecstasies in order to hear the voice, then we imagine we hear it!” (Morgan)

e. **Separate to Me:** Before Barnabas and Saul could do anything significant for God, they first had to be separated to Him. If you will separate **to** God, it means you must separate from some other things.

i. You can’t really say “yes” to God’s call on your life until you can say “no” to things that will keep you from that call.

f. **Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work:** It is significant that the two men called to missionary service were – as far as we know – the two most gifted and able men in the congregation.

g. **For the work to which I have called them:** God had a specific **work** He had appointed to Barnabas and Saul to do. Paul would later write in [Ephesians 2:10](#): *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* Here, God called Barnabas and Saul to those kind of good works.

i. The calling God had for the life of Paul had already been stated in [Acts 9:15-16](#): *He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.* This was not a touchy-feely “feel good” call – it was a serious call to a serious ministry.

h. **Now separate to Me:** God gave a timetable – **now**. Before, God had told Paul through Ananias what his calling was, but not that it was **now**. **Now** meant there was to be no delay.

3. ([Act 13:3](#)) The sending of Barnabas and Saul.

**Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.**

a. **Having fasted and prayed:** They were sent with fasting and prayer. This whole work required a substantial dependence on God, and fasting and prayer demonstrated that dependence.

b. **And laid hands on them:** The laying on of hands was a formal commissioning to this work. Certainly Barnabas and Saul were “ordained” before this, but now they entered a different sphere of ministry.

c. **They sent them away:** Notice that the church in Antioch *sent* Barnabas and Saul out. They were supported and sent by a specific congregation. As far as we know, this had never happened before in the history of the church. Many went out as “accidental missionaries” (as in [Acts 8:4](#) and [11:19](#)) but there was never a concerted

and organized effort to win people to Jesus like this.

i. Being intentionally **sent** by the church in Antioch, many regard this as the first real known *missionary* effort of the church. “The word ‘missionary’ has to do with sending. The Latin word *mitto, mittere*, means ‘to send’; ‘mission’ and ‘missionary’ come from the forms *missi* and *missum*.” (Boice)

ii. They seem to have done this without a committee report, without a demographic analysis, without a marketing survey, without what is sometimes called “spiritual mapping.” Barnabas and Saul went out without any of these things, only with the call and power of the Holy Spirit.

3. ([Act 16:6-8](#)) The Holy Spirit forbids Paul to go towards the province of Asia Minor.

**Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.**

a. **They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia:** After strengthening the churches in the region, Paul sought to go next to the south-west, towards the important city of Ephesus. Yet, Paul was **forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to go there.

i. We note with interest that the Holy Spirit actually forbade Paul to do something we normally think of as *good* – preaching God’s Word to those who need it. Yet the Spirit of God directed this work, and Paul wasn’t the right person in the right place at the right time to begin bringing the gospel to the Roman Province of Asia Minor. There was certainly nothing wrong with Paul’s *desire* to **preach the word in Asia**; but it wasn’t God’s timing, so this was **forbidden by the Holy Spirit**.

ii. It is difficult to say exactly how the Holy Spirit said *no*; it may have been through a word of prophecy, or by an inward speaking of the Holy Spirit, or by circumstances. One way or another, Paul and his company got the message. Ephesus would come later, not now.

iii. **Asia** does not refer to the Far East as we know it today. It refers to the Roman Province of Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey.

b. **They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them:** After the attempt to go to Asia, Paul sought to go north into **Bithynia**, but was again prevented by the Holy Spirit. So, **they came down to Troas**.

i. Paul didn’t set out to go to **Troas**. It was at least the third choice for him. But it was the Holy Spirit’s plan to lead him there. Paul, beautifully responsive to the Holy Spirit, was willing to lay down his will and his plans for the direction that the Holy Spirit brings.

ii. Paul was guided by hindrance. The Holy Spirit often guides as much by the *closing* of doors as He does by the *opening* of doors.

iii. David Livingstone wanted to go to China, but God sent him to Africa. William Carey wanted to go to Polynesia, but God sent him to India. Adoniram Judson went to India, but God guided him to Burma. God guides us along the way, to just the right place.

4. ([Act 16:9-10](#)) God directs Paul to the region of Macedonia.

**And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

- a. **And a vision appeared to Paul in the night:** In Troas, God made Paul's direction clear. In **a vision**, Paul was invited to the region of Macedonia, westward across the Aegean Sea.
- i. This moved Paul and his missionary team from the continent of Asia to the continent of Europe; this was the first missionary endeavor to Europe.
- ii. The wisdom and greatness of God's plan was beginning to unfold. In Paul's mind, he wanted to reach a few cities in his region. But God wanted to give Paul a *continent* to win for Jesus Christ.
- b. **A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."** The Macedonian man wanted **help**. So Paul went to bring Macedonia the gospel – the best possible help.
- i. The greatest help we can bring anyone is the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ. It is good for us to bring other help along with the gospel, but without the gospel, little *real* help is given.
- c. **Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go:** Paul did not hesitate to answer the call of the Macedonian man. Paul's missionary team did not hesitate to follow him on the basis of this call. This was a strong, godly man, leading a strong, godly team.
- i. God still calls people to the mission field, and He may call through unusual ways. It's still possible for a type of Macedonian Man to give an unusual call to serve God in a distant place. When that happens, it's important to respond the way Paul and his team did.
- d. **Immediately we sought to go:** The shift from *they* (*they came down to Troas, [Acts 16:8](#)*) to **we** in this verse probably means that Luke joined the band of missionaries in Troas. Perhaps he even came as Paul's personal doctor.
- i. Now we see another reason why *they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia*. We see another reason why *the Spirit did not permit them* to go into Bithynia. God wanted Paul and his team to go to Troas and pick up a doctor named Luke. Because God said "no" to Paul these two times, we have a gospel and a Book of Acts written by Doctor Luke.
- ii. At the time, Paul probably had no idea of the greatness of God's purpose. God wanted to give him a continent for Jesus, to give him a personal doctor, and to give all of us the man whom God would use to write more of the New Testament than anyone else did. God knows what He is doing when he says, "No."

B. Paul's work in the Macedonian city of Philippi.

1. ([Act 16:11-12](#)) Arrival in Philippi.

**Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.**

a. **Sailing from Troas:** Paul and his missionary team (now including Luke) had to sail across the Aegean Sea, from the continent of Asia to the continent of Europe. This was a big step, perhaps bigger than Paul even knew.

i. "That they 'sailed straight for Samothrace' is quite revealing, because this is a nautical expression that means the wind was at their backs. So perfect were the winds that they sailed 156 miles in just two days, whereas returning the other way at a later time ([Acts 20:6](#)) it took five days." (Hughes)

b. **From there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia:** Paul here followed a plan



to plant churches in the major cities. He knew that it was easier for the gospel to spread *from* these cities than *to* these cities.

i. Philippi was “the place where the armies of Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius in the decisive battle of the second Roman civil war in 42 b.c.” (Hughes) Because of this, many Roman soldiers retired in the area, and Philippi was proud of its Roman connection.

2. ([Act 16:13-15](#)) The conversion of Lydia.

**And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded *us*.**

a. **On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made:**

The fact that the Jews of Philippi had no synagogue and met by the river means that there were not many Jewish men in Philippi.

i. “Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten.” (Bruce)

b. **Lydia...was a seller of purple:** Anyone who **was a seller of purple** dealt in a valued, luxurious product. The dyes used for making purple were expensive and highly regarded. This woman was the first convert in Europe, and one might say that the Macedonian man turned out to be a woman.

i. **From the city of Thyatira: Thyatira** was well known as a center for this purple dye and fabric made from it. Later, there was a church in Thyatira also, and it was one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation ([Revelation 2:18-29](#)).

c. **The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul:** Before Lydia was converted (as demonstrated by her baptism), **the Lord opened her heart**. This is a work God must do in all who believe, because as Jesus said, *no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him* ([John 6:44](#)).

i. Therefore, a most important element in evangelism is asking God through prayer to *open hearts*, for without this there can be no genuine conversion.

d. **She begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.”** Immediately, Lydia set about doing good. Her hospitality was touching and wonderful example.