



Convicted by the Spirit

WHEN HAVE YOU LOST SOMEONE YOU CARED ABOUT?

The POINT >

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and points to the truth of salvation.

> JOHN 15:26-27; 16:7-15

²⁶ “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father —the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

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⁷ Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: ⁹ About sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

¹² “I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.



FOR LEADERS (15 minutes)

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has come to convict, teach, comfort, lead, strengthen, and seal us, as well as to produce fruit within and through us.

Message to Leaders

Jesus told His disciples when He was on earth that it would be better that He left because a Helper would come in His place. That Helper is the Holy Spirit, and He ministers to God's people in a number of ways, including convicting people of their sins against God and helping us to understand the truth about Jesus as the only way to be reconciled to God.

> Engage Option 1

Ask students to get into groups of four. Give each group a card describing a situation they may face that will require wisdom (e.g., what kinds of entertainment are acceptable, how to spend their money, etc.). Have the group discuss how to approach these situations based on a biblical perspective. Say, **"We're going to face tough decisions in life. We can make choices aligned with God's will when we study His Word and depend on the Holy Spirit for conviction and direction."**

> Engage Option 2

Decorate the room to look like a courtroom. Say, **"The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and directs us to the truth of salvation from the judgment we deserve."**

> Engage Option 3

Search the internet for "LOTR Fly You Fools." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"Losing someone close to us can be difficult. The disciples experienced this reality with Jesus, but He did not leave them alone. The Holy Spirit came to convict us and be at work in our lives."**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure it is appropriate for your church and ministry.

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

ITEM 1: Introduce the new unit by displaying the **Unit 1 Never Alone Poster**.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.



THE SETTING

Jesus had returned to Jerusalem, knowing that the time for His death was near (John 12:23-24; 13:1). He celebrated the Passover with His disciples and used the meal as a time to give them instructions regarding His departure. The Lord emphasized that the disciples were to remain in Him, keep His commandments, and love one another. He promised that when He left, He would send another helper to them.

FACT:

In filming the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the Riders of Rohan included a number of women outfitted with fake beards because they needed so many local extras with horse-riding skills.²

In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* series, there's a powerful scene when Gandalf is dragged over the edge of a broken bridge. He holds on just long enough to exclaim, "Fly, you fools!"¹—a warning to Frodo and his friends to flee the dangers that are all around them. The rest of them do escape with their lives, but Frodo is heartbroken at the loss. Gandalf had been his mentor, guide, and encourager. But now he is gone, and Frodo feels lost without him.

We understand loss. Whether it's the loss of a parent to death or divorce, or the loss of a close friend because they move away, we know the pain of losing someone meaningful to us. The Gospels describe such a loss for the disciples. Jesus had become their guide, their hope, and their Lord. When He explained He was going to leave them, we get a sense of their confusion and distress. After finding the one they believed to be the Messiah, how could the disciples continue without him?

But Jesus told them He would not leave them alone. He would send His Holy Spirit to be with them. This same promise applies to us and we are never alone.



IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.

JOHN 15:26-27

“When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.” **JOHN 15:26-27**

Jesus spoke these words during His final Passover meal with His disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem (Luke 22:7-13). Jesus knew that in a few hours, He would be unjustly arrested, put on trial, beaten, and crucified. He also knew His disciples would be scattered, confused, and afraid. So, as they finished the meal—a meal commonly known as “the Last Supper,” during which Jesus would give a whole new meaning to the Passover meal (vv. 14-20)—He began what was, in a sense, His farewell address. Of the things Jesus told them that night, perhaps the weightiest was His statement that He was leaving (John 13:33).

We can imagine the confusion of the disciples. John recorded questions from Peter, Thomas, Philip, and the other Judas. John also shared the tender way Jesus answered them. In response to their fear and uncertainty, Jesus told the disciples that He would not leave them alone, and He taught the disciples about the Holy Spirit and His work.

Jesus used two phrases to describe the Holy Spirit.

- **Counselor:** The original language speaks specifically of the Holy Spirit as a “helper” or “advocate.” Jesus promised not only that the Spirit would be with Jesus’s followers, but that He would give comfort, lead them, speak on their behalf, and provide the help they needed.
- **Spirit of truth:** A key role of the Holy Spirit is to testify about the truth of Jesus. In John 5:31-39, Jesus identified six witnesses who testified about Him, including John the Baptist, the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit. Even after Jesus was gone, the Spirit would continue to testify to the truth of Jesus—to the disciples and to the whole world.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be the One He sent from the Father. In this passage, we have a picture of the Trinity. God is one God who eternally exists as three persons. And as the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is sent by God the Father and the Son. Of course, the Holy Spirit is also God. In this same farewell address, Jesus said He would ask the Father to send “another Counselor” (14:16), which means specifically “another of the same kind.”³ In other words, Jesus would send someone just like Himself!

Just as Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples, Jesus sends His Holy Spirit to us today. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence with us. We may feel alone at times, but Jesus has promised never to leave us or abandon us (Heb. 13:5), and He is always present with us in the Spirit.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 6)

- 1 How would you describe the job of a counselor?
- 2 How have you experienced the Holy Spirit’s help? How can we lean more on the Holy Spirit and less on our own strength or ability?



IMPART

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.

JOHN 16:7-11

“Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.” **JOHN 16:7-11**

John 16 begins with Jesus explaining to the disciples how difficult their lives would be. That’s not great news, and it’s not exactly what they’d signed up for. To make matters worse, Jesus told them He’d soon be leaving them. However, He said that His leaving would actually benefit them. The disciples had left their fishing boats and tax booths, their families and homes—all in order to be with Jesus. Now He was leaving, and it simply didn’t make sense that this would be better for them.

But the Spirit would be with them in a way that Jesus hadn’t been. Because Jesus took on our humanity, He was limited in many ways just as we are, including being only one place at a time. The Spirit, however, is different and is present throughout the world.

Jesus identified a specific ministry of the Spirit: convicting people of sin. “Convict” is a legal term indicating that an offender is formally declared guilty. The Spirit doesn’t simply accuse of sin, but He brings sinners to the place where they realize not only their guilt before God, but also their helplessness to do anything about it.

The Holy Spirit convicts us in three ways. He convicts of:

- **Sin:** The Holy Spirit leads us to understand the evil in our own hearts, which is tied specifically to a lack of faith. This is not merely experiencing doubt, but willfully rejecting the truth of Jesus. Only the Spirit can convict us of our faithlessness, which leads to sinful behavior.
- **Righteousness:** This is connected with Jesus’s returning to His Father, which required His being completely pure and righteous. Because Jesus is the standard for humanity, every word and every deed is measured against His righteousness. We see our own guilt because we are convicted of His righteousness.
- **Judgment:** When we see our sin in contrast to the righteousness of Christ, it is clear that we deserve judgment. Satan has been judged for his rebellion. In verse 11, Jesus tied our conviction to the judgment of “the ruler of this world,” a reference to the devil. The Holy Spirit convicts us of having in our own hearts the same self-serving rebellion of the devil.

When the Spirit brings conviction, it’s not to beat us up or make us feel bad about ourselves. Instead, it’s to help us realize the truth about ourselves, lead us to change, and draw us to salvation. Jesus died on the cross so that we could experience forgiveness of sin and eternal life in heaven, and the Holy Spirit’s conviction is an important part of this reality.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 7)

- 3** How would you define or describe sin?
- 4** What does it mean to be convicted of sin? Why is this so important?
- 5** What do these verses teach us about Jesus’s righteousness? Our own?





IMPART

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.

JOHN 16:12-15

“I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.” **JOHN 16:12-15**

Jesus had explained much to His disciples, but He knew that they still didn’t fully understand all He wanted them to know. Until they saw Jesus raised from the dead and standing before them, they weren’t ready to hear. But when the Holy Spirit would come, He would lead Jesus’s followers into the truth. Even though the disciples had lived alongside Jesus, they simply couldn’t fully understand who He is. However, the Spirit would change that and would open their eyes to the truth about Jesus. Over time, the Spirit would remind the disciples of things Jesus had done and said, and the pieces would come together in their minds.

The Spirit would also help the disciples to understand Jesus’s mission in the world. As the apostle John wrote his Gospel account, the Spirit reminded him of Jesus’s words and inspired John to write down every word he recorded.

The Holy Spirit only speaks what He hears from God. This means that the Spirit never leads anyone to a different truth than what Jesus shared. Instead, the Spirit helped the disciples to understand more deeply the truths Jesus had taught them, and today, the Spirit similarly opens our eyes to the truths of Scripture.

Another aspect of the Spirit’s ministry is to bring glory to Jesus. To both believers and non-believers, the Spirit works to draw attention to Jesus, including His incarnation, His saving work on the cross, and His coming return.

The Holy Spirit is still the Spirit of truth! He continues to help people understand the truth about Jesus and the good news of the gospel. At times, we might struggle to clearly hear the voice of the Spirit, but when this happens, it’s often because we allow the noise of the world to drown out the voice of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants us to know the truth, and if we’ll put ourselves in the position to hear Him, He’ll speak to us and lead us to live like Jesus.

The Spirit helped the disciples to understand more deeply the truths Jesus had taught them, and today, the Spirit similarly opens our eyes to the truths of Scripture. #BSFLNeverAlone

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 7)

- 6** What are some ways the Holy Spirit speaks to us?
- 7** What are some obstacles that keep us from hearing from the Holy Spirit?
- 8** What practices or disciplines have helped you clearly hear the Holy Spirit’s guidance?



LIVE IT OUT (10 minutes)

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has come to convict, teach, comfort, lead, strengthen, and seal us, as well as to produce fruit within and through us.

Jesus told His disciples when He was on earth that it would be better that He left because a Helper would come in His place. That Helper is the Holy Spirit, and He ministers to God's people in a number of ways, including convicting people of their sins against God and helping us to understand the truth about Jesus as the only way to be reconciled to God.

>CHRIST

Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus gave Him to the first disciples. The Spirit convicts us of sin and calls us to righteousness. He speaks truth to us and draws our attention to Christ.

9 How can you experience the work of the Spirit in your life?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD





LIVE IT OUT

THE POINT // THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN AND POINTS TO THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.

> COMMUNITY

The Spirit not only convicts us of sin and leads us to the truth, but He also unites us together with other believers.

10 How do you experience the unity of the Spirit within your church and with other believers?

11 What steps will you take to pursue unity with your church family?



> CULTURE

It's our responsibility to share the gospel with the world. However, we can't convict of sin—only the Spirit can do that. This is one reason it's so important that we pray for non-believers.

12 Who has God placed on your heart that doesn't have a relationship with Christ?

13 This week, pray specifically that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes to the truth of the gospel. Do your part and share the gospel with them.