Review:

Did you gain any insights as you read through Genesis 21-30?

THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHO HE IS

If someone asked you to explain who the Holy Spirit is, what would you say?

Do you typically think of the Holy Spirit more as a “force/energy” or as a “person”? 

What do the following verses teach us about the Holy Spirit?

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and Son.

Acts 5:3-4 (NIV)
3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV)
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

The Holy Spirit is God.

Romans 8:11 (NIV)
And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

The Holy Spirit is the one who gives eternal life.
**Ephesians 4:30 (NLT)**

*And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.*

The Holy Spirit can experience sorrow

Think of the idea of a person, not so much in terms of a being with a physical body, but as an individual who has personality, can think, talk and feel, etc.

Consider how God has designed us. When we die do we cease to exist, or does a part of us continue on?

Our spirit continues on and either goes to a waiting place for judgment or to be with Christ in Heaven.

When we are with Christ in Heaven, will we be able to think, feel, remember, talk, etc?

See passages such as Luke 16:19-31 (The story of the Rich man and Lazarus). Jesus implies that the dead can think, remember, and communicate.

Revelation 6:9-11. Jesus reveals that the martyred saints before his throne could remember, feel, and communicate.

When we are dead, existing in spirit form, are we merely a floating energy or are we still persons with intellect, personality, feelings, and the ability to communicate?

If this is how God has designed our spirits, does it give any insight as to the nature of his Spirit?

The obvious difference is that our spirits are finite where his Holy Spirit is infinite.

**SUMMARY:**

The Holy Spirit has characteristics of a **person** vs. a force.

The word “Spirit” is **gender neutral** and so sometimes the word “it” is used, but it is more in line with the term “person” or “child” which has no gender qualification, but is still a person.

The Holy Spirit is the **presence of God** in a non-physical form.

**Illustration of understanding the nature of the Holy Spirit:**

One of the best ways to understand the nature of God is to look at his image – us. When God designed us, he made us as both spiritual and physical beings. Our spirit, apart from our body, will still have memory, intellect, and personality – it is still us – just absent a body. However, our bodies and spirits are finite and must remain together while on earth.

Jesus, in his body, was also limited physically and geographically. However, his Spirit was still eternal and omnipresent. Even now, though Jesus reigns in heaven, his Spirit is free to be in all places at all times. His Spirit is not just a force but part of his personhood, in the same way that our spirits are fully us (simply minus the body).
Read the following passages and discuss the Holy Spirit’s activity.

**John 16:8 (NIV)**
*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:*

The Holy Spirit **CONVICTS US OF OUR GUILT**

**How does the Holy Spirit convict us?**
When we do wrong the Holy Spirit convicts us through our conscience to steer us back to the right path. It is the convicting work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to a point of repentance and a restored joy with the Father.

If God chooses to speak through our conscience, then what does that say about how one should listen to their conscience?
If our conscience is our moral compass for life, to go against our conscience is to do what we believe is morally wrong. Therefore we are defiantly choosing to do what is evil as opposed to what we believe is good. In our hearts we have sinned. If our conscience is the avenue through which the Holy Spirit convicts, particularly for the believer, then to ignore your conscience may be the equivalent of rejecting God’s leading in your life.

It is possible for our consciences to be wrong. However, God looks at our heart regardless of our actions. If we choose to do what we “believe” is wrong, then we sin. It then becomes a matter of studying Scripture to discover what God truly teaches and aligning our consciences with that.

**John 14:26 (NLT)**
*But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.*

The Holy Spirit **TEACHES US**

**How does the Holy Spirit teach us?**

**1 Corinthians 2:12 (NIV)**
*We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*
Have you ever met someone who has read the Bible, but nothing sinks in or makes any real sense to them? How is this possible?

The Holy Spirit helps us to understand spiritual truths that don’t seem to make sense apart from Christ. Once we enter into a relationship with God, his Spirit speaks to ours, helping us to grasp concepts that never seemed to click or make sense before. God himself becomes our teacher.

_Romans 8:14 (NLT)_
For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

_Matthew 4:1 (NIV)_
Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

The Holy Spirit LEADS US

How does the Holy Spirit lead us?

The Holy Spirit leads through:

a) **The Bible**
   As we prayerfully read God’s word, the Holy Spirit is able to bring certain passages to life that will help guide us through life. This is not so much a mysterious encounter, but simply an open conversation whereby he can lead us through his word.

b) **Promptings**
   We will sometimes receive a strong burden, conviction, or message about something we need to do or stop doing. This will always be in sync with Scripture and the character of God to bring glory to Jesus Christ and strengthen the church.

c) **Dreams, Visions, Messages**
   On occasion God will use an extraordinary means to convey a message that is deeply significant. These may require spiritual discernment from others within the family of God. Not every vision is a message from God.

d) **Other believers**
   Sometimes, in order to strengthen community, God gives someone else a message he wants us to hear. We believe this takes place at church services, small groups, etc., but also on an individual basis.
2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)
And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.

Philippians 3:21 (NLT)
He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.

The Holy Spirit **CHANGES US – spiritually and physically**

He immediately changes our nature when he indwells us.
He continues to renew our minds to make us increasingly like Jesus Christ.
He changes our bodies when Christ returns.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Ephesians 3:16 (NIV)
I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

The Holy Spirit **EMPOWERS US**

What are some of the different ways the Holy Spirit enables and empowers us for life and ministry?
To date, we have looked at the Father, the Son and now the Holy Spirit. How might you explain the difference between the roles of all three in how they relate to us?

(Very simplistically)

The Father: God as sovereign architect, overseeing the plan for humanity.
All authority in heaven rests in the Father’s hands.
We pray to the Father, through the Spirit, in the Son’s name.
The Father sends the Son.

The Son: God dealing with humanity on the physical level.
The Son is the visible expression of God in creation.
The Son fulfills the Father’s purposes in creation and redemption of mankind.
The goal of the Son is to bring us to the Father.
The Son sends the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit: God dealing with humanity on the spiritual level.
The Holy Spirit convicts us with regard to sin, righteousness and judgment.
The Holy Spirit gives us new life by applying the death & resurrection of Christ to us.
The Holy Spirit renews our minds to be like Christ.
He fills and empowers us to walk the Christ-like life.

HOME STUDY:

Read: Genesis 31-41