

*This midweek study will explore the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.*

#### Essential Doctrine: Illumination of Scripture

Because of the vast difference between God's wisdom and ours, and because of humanity's sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process of illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God's Word, Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in the process of interpretation, and we do not rely solely upon an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian's ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Spirit of God who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Matt. 13:13-15; Mark 8:18).

#### 1 Humans are incapable of fully grasping spiritual truth without the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14, 1 John 2:27).

Invite students to describe things that cannot be done or understood without outside assistance.

- ▶ *Why are humans unable to fully grasp spiritual truth without the help of the Holy Spirit?*

##### Read 1 Corinthians 2:14.

- ▶ *Why are we unable to understand God's Word apart from the Holy Spirit?*

The Scripture says in our natural state we are unable to understand God's Word.

- ▶ *Based on this passage, why should we always rely on the Holy Spirit to illuminate God's Word?*

##### Read 1 John 2:27.

This passage teaches believers that the Holy Spirit not only illuminates Scripture, but also assures believers that the Holy Spirit always tells the truth.

- ▶ *Why is understanding that the Holy Spirit never lies vital for understanding God's Word?*

#### 2 Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in interpreting God's Word (Matt. 13:13-15, 1 Cor. 2:13).

Option: Give students a random passage from a book. It doesn't have to be much, just a sentence or two. Ask the students to apply their reasoning skills to interpreting what the passage means. Based on their past, emotional state, attitude, and so on, they could come up with a few different explanations of what that particular sentence could mean. Explain that simply analyzing the text may not ultimately lead you to the right conclusion. You might need some more information, or someone more acquainted with the text to illuminate it for you—maybe even the author.

Explain to the students that reasoning, as good as it is, may not get us to the root of what God's trying to do in our lives through the words in Scripture. For God to truly illuminate the Scripture to your heart and mind, you need the Author's guidance, not only for the meaning of text, but for an accurate application as well.

##### Read Matthew 13:13-15.

- ▶ *How is it possible to see, hear and understand with one's senses, but not truly understand in the heart? What was Matthew saying about the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating Scripture?*
- ▶ *What purpose does Matthew's quote from Isaiah give for the Holy Spirit illuminating Scripture?*

##### Read 1 Corinthians 2:13.

The illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary because ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who is the author of Scripture.

#### 3 Christians rely upon the work of the Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Mark 8:18).

##### Read Mark 8:18.

- ▶ *In what ways can you move from having an understanding of what Scripture says to a life transformed by Scripture?*  
When believers read and study Scripture, it is not simply for mental purposes, it molds us more into the image of Christ.
- ▶ *What would change in your life, if you read your Bible with the sole intention of being more like Jesus?*
- ▶ *What ways can you be more intentional about relying upon the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scripture in your heart and mind?*

#### WRAP IT UP

Challenge students to recognize that we are incapable of understanding Scripture rightly apart from the Holy Spirit.