

MEET THE HOLY SPIRIT, PART 4

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it is coming from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”
(John 3:8, NIV)

THE FARMERS INSURANCE OPEN AT TORREY PINES was not the PGA Tour’s highlight this season. Storms raged through the area on Sunday, downing trees, stopping play three times, and finally forcing a Monday finish. That day was hardly better, although without rain, play could be completed and Brandt Snedeker, who had concluded his final round on Sunday before the worst of the weather roared, survived as the winner.

Normally speaking, when we say that weather is a factor in golf, we have something less harrowing in mind. All the same, it is something that makes the game variable from day to day, and thus enjoyable.

When it comes to playing the wind, though, we might say that Jesus’ words to Nicodemus about the ways of the Spirit make good sense to golfers too. Often, you cannot make a clear assessment of what the wind will do—but after the shot, you recognize just where it has been and what it has done. Ask the guy whose ball got blown into the pond!

What does this mean in spiritual terms, though? If the wind of the Spirit blows through the people he is indwelling, how can we know?

Part of that answer rests in what Paul called the fruit of the Spirit. Men and women of God always bear fruit. That is, they are not just ornamental in their religion; they are productive in their faith—which helps us understand what James meant when he wrote that “faith without deeds is useless” (or “faith without works is dead,” in the more familiar phrasing - James 2:20).

Still, we know that the work we do in our own power is not worth much, especially if our own righteous acts really are as “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). So where do good works come from and what do they look like?

The answer lies in that fruit of the Spirit, laid out in Galatians 5. When the Spirit is at work in us, he leaves behind a trail of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. What really is our task, then? To stand in the way of his wind and let him blow over us!

Opening questions How has your own golf course been altered by weather through the years? • How have you seen evidence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of godly people you know?

READING Galatians 5:22-25; James 2:14-24; Mark 13:9-11

Those juicy fruits (Galatians 5)

What aspects of the fruit of the Spirit do you think God is working on in you right now? How does one “keep in step with the Spirit”?

Faith-filled activity (James 2)

Which of James’ words serve best to exhort you to an active faith? How might you engage the Holy Spirit in working through you with increasing evidence and effect?

Spirit-led words (Mark 13)

In what way does the Spirit equip us, according to this passage? How is this an encouragement to you?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International. A 5-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/d5W9qr0NVsI>