

Series Guide

The **Helper**

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS
GOD'S GIFT

TO HIS CHILDREN.

 WORD OF LIFE

WEEK 1

The Holy Spirit

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Monday Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Key Scripture

2 Cor. 3:17 (NIV)

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

Devotional

As a little girl growing up, I heard the stories of how the Holy Spirit worked in my family's lives. Both drawing family members to salvation and transforming their lives as a believer. My grandfather, Raymond Theobald, was born in 1910. The Holy Spirit was at work knocking on the door of his heart, through the example of his parents and others, just as He does with each one of us. As a result, Grandpa gave his heart to the Lord as a young teenager and was baptized in a horse trough.

I can't remember all the details surrounding Grandpa's salvation experience, but his excitement in sharing this story and so many others were seeds planted deep in my young heart. What has stood out the most to me over the years is Grandpa's passion for the Word of God and the power of God at work in his life. This same passion has trickled down from generation to generation, and may the fruit of that never end in our family. While the seeds start small, it's amazing what time, cultivation, and the power of the Holy Spirit can do.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God. God with us and within us. He's the same Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11). He is mighty. He is glorious. He is our Helper! He inspired men as they wrote the scriptures giving them the wisdom and insights they needed. He is from everlasting to everlasting. He sets captives free. His power is limitless. His majesty, glory, holiness and wisdom are immeasurable.

The Holy Spirit is called: the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, the Eternal Spirit the Helper, the Comforter, the Holy One, the Lord, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Counsel, the Spirit of your Father, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Glory, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Prophecy, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Might, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Knowledge, the Spirit of a Sound Mind, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of the Holy God.

The Holy Spirit stands outside of time and works within time. Hebrews 9:14 (NASB1995) “...the eternal Spirit... (Hebrews 9:14 NASB1995).” He brings order to chaos and light to darkness as He carries out God's perfect design. In Genesis 1:2 it says, “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

The Spirit of God knows all things. “...for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10 NASB).” He reveals the unseen to mankind. “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard...For to us God revealed them through the Spirit (1 Cor 2:9-10 NASB).” The Spirit of God is everywhere!

The Holy Spirit gives life; both spiritual and physical. Job said, “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the almighty gives me life (Job 33:4 NKJV)” and Psalm 139:13 (NKJV) says, “You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.” The Spirit of God formed everything we see (Job 26:13).

The Holy Spirit is at work on the earth to both convict hearts, leading people to Jesus, and to empower and transform the believer's life. Whether you have known God your whole life or you just met Him, He's known you. His Spirit formed you in your mother's womb. He's been there, slowly drawing you to his heart (John 15:26). To the believer, the Holy Spirit is...that gentle nudge inviting you to soften your heart and say sorry to your spouse. He's the whisper imparting wisdom. He brings to your remembrance His word and directs your paths. He imparts His power and boldness with the infilling of His

Spirit to do the impossible for His kingdom.

That little girl version of me who saw the Spirit of God at work in her family has grown up. I have a zeal and passion for the Word of God and the Power of God that was passed down to me from one generation to the next. If this is not your heritage, be the one to start it. Plant seeds genuinely, day in and day out, living your faith “out loud” and telling the next generation of His power!

Reflection

- Have you considered how vital the Holy Spirit is in your life?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, have Your way in my life. Help me operate out of Your strength, boldness, direction, and power that I may live my faith “out loud” by Your grace. Give me Your heart to bring heaven to earth until Jesus’s return and plant seeds in the generations to come of Your goodness. Lead me to be more sensitive to Your voice and quick to obey. In Jesus’s name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- **Psalm 78:4 (ESV)** “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.”
- **Romans 8:11 (NASB1995)** “...the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead...dwells in you.”
- **2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)** “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness;”
- **Psalm 139:7-10 (NLT)** “I can never get away from your presence.”
- **Romans 2:4** “The kindness of God leads you to repentance.”
- **Job 26:13 (NKJV)** “By His Spirit He adorned the heavens...”
- **John 15:26 (NASB)** “...the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, He will testify about Me...”

Tuesday Jesus Depended Upon the Holy Spirit

Key Scripture

John 5:19 (NASB1995)

“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.’”

Devotional

I find joy in helping people through learning and then sharing the knowledge I’ve gained to improve their lives or at least

take them one step closer to where they want to be. For a period of years, after I got married, I worked at a publishing house. One time in particular, I remember a co-worker sharing with me a problem she encountered in her marriage. I was excited and almost compelled to go home, pull out my books on marriage, and see if I could find answers or nuggets of wisdom I could impart to her. I did, and she was thankful.

I could never have imagined using those same skills of studying, learning and communicating what lights me up on a large scale. In my mind, I was always a behind-the-scenes girl. Fast forward fifteen years later, when my husband and I moved out of state to be in leadership at a church, I was asked to speak regularly to a group of women and eventually to the entire congregation off and on. My flesh didn't want to take the assignment. Surely others knew more than me, were older and more experienced, with more to give. I was ready and willing to sit and receive.

God has called you and me to be on a mission with Him. The timing is never what we think it will be. The circumstances aren't usually what we expect. We may not feel equipped, or we'll look at others thinking they can do it better. And yet, the Holy Spirit is looking at you and me, nudging us to step up and lean on Him.

Jesus did not try to do life on his own terms. He knew where his mission, direction, knowledge, wisdom and power came from. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh and yet, He limited himself to operate as an anointed man to be our example of what a Spirit filled life could look like (Phil. 2:6-7).

Jesus was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him. "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased (Matthew 3:13-17 NASB1995).'" A dove represents peace. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit; with His peace and power.

Jesus started his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness for 40 days and nights, where he fasted and the enemy tempted him. Jesus stood firm, speaking the Word of God and did not give in! **"And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit,** and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all (Luke 4:12-14 NASB1995)."

Under the anointing, everything Jesus spoke came to pass. "Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm (Mark 4:39 NKJV)." "Rise up and walk" "Be made whole" "Lazarus come forth"

Guided by the Spirit, Jesus knew where to find resources. "As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her (Matthew 21:1-3 NIV).'"

Being led by the Spirit He only did what He heard and saw the Father do. "Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner (John 5:19 NASB 1995).'"

Jesus depended on the Father. "The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works (John 14:10 NKJV)."

Jesus was empowered, taught, and conceived by the Holy Spirit. "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20 NLT)."

The Holy Spirit has been surrounding you and me our whole lives. Like radio waves, all around us, waiting for us to tune in. Breathing life into our lungs, forging our journey to salvation, and teaching us in our faith walk as a believer. He knows when we're to spread our wings and fly, as we depend upon him.

I took the microphone as my hand was shaking and began speaking to a precious group of women of all ages for the first time. I was nervous, but once again excited and compelled. I had studied and over-prepared with pages of notes. As I read the scripture where Jesus tells Moses, "I Am that I AM," goosebumps rose on my arms, tears welled up in my eyes, and the hair on my arms stood at attention. I felt God's presence and power flow through me significantly. Later that afternoon, I told God, "I will obey you and do whatever you ask of me as long as you continue to show up and anoint me with your Spirit." I may not always get goosebumps, but I know when His grace and power are with me. For a former behind-the-scenes girl, God has continued to stretch me in new ways and I have never looked back.

If Jesus limited his Godhood, His divinity, when he came to earth and depended on the Holy Spirit to complete his mission, how much more do you and I need the Holy Spirit to complete our mission today?

Reflection

- Is there something the Holy Spirit is nudging you to do? Are you reacting out of your flesh or depending on the Holy Spirit?

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for showing me by example how to live fully dependent on the Holy Spirit. Where I feel unqualified, remind me that You are my qualification. Where I feel hesitant, nudge me forward so that I may lean into Your strength. I surrender my flesh and say yes to every assignment You have for me, trusting that where You lead, You will show up. Anoint me afresh with Your Spirit. In Jesus's name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- **Philippians 2:6-7 (NIV)** *"Who, being in very nature God...He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."*
- **Acts 10:37-38 (NASB1995)** *"...God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power...He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."*
- **Luke 4:1-14 (NASB1995)** *"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil...And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit."*
- **John 14:26 (NASB1995)** *"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 that I said to you."*

Wednesday Our Need for the Holy Spirit

Key Scripture

John 14:16-17

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

Devotional

Have you ever asked someone a question, and the response given isn't what you thought it would be? You try to decipher the person's words, almost like picking up a puzzle piece and examining it to see if it fits the picture or if it belongs to an entirely different puzzle.

It can feel like they jumped into the middle of another conversation without giving you the roadmap to get there. To avoid talking past one another, you recalibrate your own thoughts and figure out another way of asking the same question with more clarity, so you can get the answer you desire to know.

I'm sure the woman at the check-out counter thought I was the crazy one as she asked me a question I couldn't seem to answer. Maybe she thought I couldn't hear. All I know is that she was a fast-talker with a strong accent, and I couldn't understand what she was saying. So when she repeated the question again, it didn't help. I wasn't used to her sound or the expression of speech she used. My mind was stuck, and I'm sure my face showed it.

Maybe this is how the disciples and others felt as they heard Jesus say things like, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:43-45 NIV).'" Maybe they thought to themselves, what did he just say? Did we hear him right? And if we did, why and how do we do that? It often takes time for truth to resonate and sink into our spirits. Our willingness to recognize and remove preconceptions and open ourselves up to a new way of thinking goes a long way. "Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out (Romans 12:2 MSG)."

When Jesus told the disciples he would suffer many things Peter pulled Jesus aside and rebuked him. Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me (Matthew 16:22-23)."

The disciples couldn't relate. They had a different perception of Jesus' future and what he would accomplish on the earth, and it didn't match what they were hearing him say. **Their mindset was a roadblock to their understanding.** Jesus didn't have bad communication skills. He wasn't talking too fast or with an accent they couldn't understand. The disciples were seeing through a lens of what they believed Jesus should do, which was clouding their thinking. Does that sound familiar? I know it does to me.

Jesus knew once he left this earth that his followers would need a helper and a teacher to give them understanding, direction, and power to accomplish the Father's will. He said in John 14:26, **"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you."** And then in John 14:16-17 Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever."

Jesus called Him "another Helper"—one who would come alongside, strengthen, guide, reveal truth and wisdom, empower, and remain. The word "another" means one of the same kind. Just as Jesus walked with his disciples, the Holy Spirit would now dwell within them.

My husband was my helper that day in the store, as he interpreted what the check-out clerk was saying. Being Australian, he was more familiar with her accent and the vernacular she used. His ear was attuned to the right frequency. The question was so easy, "Is that the lot?" In "American" talk, "Is that all?" So simple and yet, so foreign sounding to my ears. We all need help in the natural and the supernatural. The Holy Spirit is our Helper! Jesus without limitations; God dwelling in us.

The disciples were human beings, just like us. They made mistakes. They didn't always "get" what Jesus was saying or understand fully what he was doing, even though they had a front-row seat to His ministry, being WITH Him day in and day out. **If Jesus knew they needed to be "clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49 NASB)" how much more do you and I need the Holy Spirit?**

Reflection

- Is there a time recently when you needed help? Did you reach out to God first or try to manage it on your own in the hurry of life?

Prayer

Jesus, help me recognize my need for help instead of trying to do life on my own ability. Open my eyes to see when I'm walking in pride and give me the strength and humility to lay it down. Make me more aware of Your presence than anything else in this life so I can be sensitive to Your Spirit and grow in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- **Luke 24:49 (NASB)** *"And behold, I am sending the promise of MY Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*
- **John 16:13 (NASB)** *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth."*
- **1 Corinthians 2:12-14 (NIV)** *"What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us."*
- **Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)** *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord."*
- **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)** *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."*

Thursday The Promise & Power of the Holy Spirit

Key Scripture

Acts 2:4 (NASB1995)

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues, as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out."

Devotional

When my mom promised me, I could spend the night at my grandparents' home, just a few miles from ours, I was always so excited. Grandma taught me how to snap fresh green beans (harvesting and preparing them) from her garden. She would clear off her sturdy, round coffee table and it became the kitchen in my restaurant, as I cooked and served Grandpa and Grandma mountains of delicious "food." Then I would transform it into a stage. I would put on my pink, long, flowy nightgown that twirled when I spun in circles, and sing and dance to children's worship music. Grandpa and Grandma were so patient and such devoted fans, as they would cheer and clap for my performances. When it was time to wind down for the evening, they would tuck me into bed with goodnight prayers. As I was drifting off to sleep, I could hear Grandpa and Grandma praying in their bedroom together.

As a child, the anticipation of a promise to come, like going to your grandparents' house, or even more so, waking up on Christmas morning, is almost too great to contain inside of you. I wonder how the disciples felt as they anticipated the promise of the Holy Spirit to come? They had been through so much; witnessing the gruesome death of their Lord and Savior, the one they did life and ministry with for three years. Their teacher and friend, Jesus, whom they loved. Then, discovering He rose from the dead, and seeing Him in His resurrected body for the first time, where he could walk through walls. Their minds must have been blown all over again, like when they saw Jesus walking on water for the first time.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was given hundreds of years before Jesus walked upon the earth. God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel, saying, "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit ... and I will put my Spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:26–27). Jeremiah declared that God's law would no longer be external but written on hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). And Joel proclaimed, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28). The promise of the Holy Spirit foretold, echoing throughout the Old Testament, prophesying of a time when God would no longer be near His people—but dwelling in them.

The time had come. Over a period of forty days, Jesus taught them about the kingdom of God. "Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, 'Which,' He said, 'you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (Acts 1:4 NASB).'"

Before Jesus ascended to heaven He told the disciples, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8 NASB)."

The disciples didn't know what to expect, but they obeyed Jesus's command. "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a noise like a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And tongues that looked like fire appeared to them, distributing themselves, and a tongue rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues, as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out (Acts 2:1-4 NASB)."

This was just the beginning of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit working through His disciples. They were "...infused with such supernatural boldness that instead of hiding in fear as they had for the previous 50 days, they went out on the crowded streets of Jerusalem, speaking in tongues, and praising God so loudly that people came running to see what was going on. That one supernatural event changed everything. It released the Church into its divine calling and expanded it from 120 to 3,000 members in a single day." - Devotions for the Praying Heart by Lynne Hammond.

Then the power of the Holy Spirit continued working through Peter and John healing the cripple at the temple gate. The crowds gathered to see what God had done. Peter shared the Gospel with them, and by the next day the church grew from 3,000 to 5,000. We serve a God of multiplication!

The book of acts is full of the Holy Spirit moving in such amazing, powerful, and vital ways. He was a part of everything they did including:

- "Being sent out by the Holy Spirit..." Acts 13:4 NKJV
- "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." Acts 15:28 NKJV
- "They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia." Acts 16:6 NKJV
- Paul felt compelled by the Spirit to go over to Macedonia. Acts 19:21 NLT
- "They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them." Acts 16:7 NKJV
- "Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified." Acts 1:5 NKJV
- "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." Acts 20:29 NKJV
- The Holy Spirit tells me in city after city...Acts 20:23 NLT

- “You always resist the Holy Spirit.” - Acts 7:51
- “Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified.” Acts 1:5 NKJV
- “We are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit.” Acts 5:32

The manifestations of the Holy Spirit working through spirit-filled believers, sharing the Gospel, is God’s plan to grow His church. The disciples operated in the gifts of the Spirit; saw angels; had visions; fell into a trance; healed the sick; and were translated from one place to another. This became their new normal. It can be ours too.

If we want to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, we must prioritize spiritual things. Back in the day, while my mom was growing up, Grandpa and Grandma (her parents) lived behind the church they pastored in a parsonage. Mom tells the story that if she couldn’t find Grandma in the house, she knew where to find her. She would walk over to the church and find Grandma there, praying.

It’s incredible how the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus and moved throughout the book of Acts and yet, the power of the Holy Spirit was not meant just for the “Bible days.” Jesus said this, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these (John 14:12-14 NIV).”

Reflection

- Am I making room in my life for the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and empower me the way He did the early church?
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Prayer

Holy Spirit, forgive me for the times I have filled spaces where You wanted intimacy with me. Grow within me a greater hunger for Your presence and power at work in me and through me. I want to see Your manifestation power in my everyday life. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- **Romans 8:14 (NASB1995)** *“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”*
- **Galatians 5:25 (NIV)** *“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*
- **1st Corinthians 2:10-12 (NASB1995)** *“For to us God revealed them through the Spirit...”*
- **Acts 9:10-12 (NASB1995)** *“Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’”*
- **Acts 8:39-40 (NASB1995)** *“...the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus...”*

Friday The Gift is Already Yours

Key Scripture

Acts 19:2 (NASB1995) *“...Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”*

Devotional

The first time I tasted the Italian dessert, Tiramisu, with light hints of chocolate, Italian mascarpone cheese (think cream cheese w/double the cream and a mild flavor), Lady Finger cookies soaked in espresso, and so much creamy goodness—I savored every bite. So much so, I was passionate about ordering it from every Italian restaurant I visited thereafter. I then learned how to make it at home, and it was so good. It became a family favorite. Prior to tasting Tiramisu for the first time, I didn't know what I had been missing or that it even existed.

Life can be like this. We are going about our routine and do not even realize what all is available to us. Before I began a serious health journey in the last few years, I didn't realize our modern flour is stripped of the bran and germ (to give a long shelf-life), and is replaced with synthetic nutrients which can wreak havoc on our bodies. I didn't know you could buy bags of whole grains, wheat berries (like Joseph stored in the Bible days), mill fresh flour (in a modern little milling machine), and bake bread with it (before the nutrients oxidize), and eat it the way God intended (they had millstones in the Bible). But once I knew, I couldn't unknow what I now know. If Jesus compared himself to bread in scripture (John 6:35), how could bread be bad for you?

The enemy is a deceiver. He takes **God's good gifts (Matthew 7:11 & James 1:17), and diminishes, distorts, and defames them bringing so much confusion and pain.** He offers us a "counterfeit" that looks amazing but offers no real sustenance. He'll work on our minds to make us believe the good gifts God has for His children are not really good, but strange or no longer valid. Therefore, many Christians live defeated. **They are trying to do what Jesus did when he was on earth without the power Jesus had.** So they feel frustrated and wonder if God's Word is true. Or worse yet, they believe it is true, but they think God won't do it for them. Or, like some believers Paul ran into, in the book of Acts, they haven't even heard there was a Holy Spirit.

"He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said to him, 'No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit'...And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying (Acts 19:2-6)."

Growing up in a spirit-filled environment, I witnessed the Spirit of God moving. I received the gift of the Holy Spirit in Sunday school around twelve years old. The teachers taught on receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and asked who wanted to receive the gift. They laid hands on each of our foreheads and prayed. I felt the presence of God in such a tangible way. I had stammering lips and then spoke out other syllables as they came. It was the most beautiful experience. Tears streamed down my face from a genuine encounter with the Spirit of God. I couldn't wait to tell my parents after class.

However, in the days to come, it wasn't long before internally I wondered if I really received the Holy Spirit. I knew I had encountered His power, but did I speak in other tongues? Yes, I spoke some funny sounding words, but were they actual tongues? Did I make up the words, or was it the Holy Spirit giving me the words? Mine didn't sound the same as other kids'. Can I speak in tongues at will, or is it only when the Holy Spirit wills? And there I wrestled. Whether you are 12 or 44 years old, you may have had some of these same thoughts.

As I grew in age and in my knowledge of the Lord I learned, "The Holy Spirit gives you the utterance (or words)," but you have to open your mouth and speak. The Holy Spirit is a gift that requires your cooperation with Him. The syllables will sound strange to your mind. "Your understanding is unfruitful (1 Cor. 14:14 NIV)...", because tongues come from your spirit, not your intellect. Speaking in tongues starts by faith, like salvation. You may think it's simple syllables, but if you continue speaking, a flow will develop. You can control when you speak in tongues. And you can ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what you need to know and He will.

The enemy wants nothing more than to keep you bound by overthinking so you never step forward into experiencing the powerful benefits of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus didn't compare himself to Tiramisu in the Bible, and it's a good thing He didn't. After a few years, I ate so much Tiramisu that I got burned out on the flavor. I stopped ordering it at restaurants, and I haven't made it at home in years. But I've never grown tired of bread or water. You? Especially the "real bread" I make now from freshly milled whole grain for my family. Jesus is just the best. He compared himself to a staple in society, bread, saying, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (John 6:35 NKJV)." And the Holy Spirit is often referred to as living water. **Two things we should never live without: bread and water.**

"God never intended it to be optional to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He wants every believer to be infused with power." – The Helper by Pastor Joel Sims

Reflection

- In what area of your spiritual life have you been "settling for a counterfeit" — either doubting a gift God has freely offered you, or going through the motions without the power of the Holy Spirit?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive me for every time I settled for a counterfeit, doubted Your good gifts, or let the enemy talk me out of what You freely offered. Today I choose to stop overthinking and step forward, trusting that the same Holy Spirit who moved in the early church is available to me right now. Fill me with your Spirit, lead me, and let nothing be withheld that You intended for my life. In Jesus' name, Amen

Dive Deeper

- **Jude 1:20-21 (NASB)** *"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit..."*
- **1 Corinthians 14:15 (NASB)** *"I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing with the mind also."*
- **Ephesians 5:18 (TPT)** *"...be filled continually with the Holy Spirit."*
- **John 7:38-39 (NKJV)** *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."*
- **Isaiah 12:3-4 (NASB)** *"Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation."*
- **Luke 11:13 (NASB)** *"So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*

Saturday The Benefits of Speaking in Tongues

Key Scripture

1 Corinthians 14:2 (NASB)

"For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people, but to God; for no one [a]understands, but [b]in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

Devotional

After winter, as the weather warms and spring showers come, our yard comes alive. The trees and foliage brighten to vivid hues of green. What previously looked dull suddenly looks lush. What was dormant in appearance shows signs of new life, with fresh leaves coming forth and sprouts shooting up from the earth. If you have been in a dormant season of life, I want to encourage you to lean into the Holy Spirit. He is the living water that our human souls need when we are thirsty. The Holy Spirit is our refreshing. He revitalizes and gives us rest. “For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, ‘This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,’ and, ‘This is the refreshing...(Isaiah 28:11-12 NKJV).”

In Pastor Joel’s book, *The Helper*, he talks about the rule of 100: “This rule states that if you spend 100 hours a year, which is 18 minutes a day—in any discipline—you’ll be better than 95% of the world in that discipline.” He challenges you and me to put this rule to the test. Are you ready? He encourages us to pray in other tongues at least 18 minutes a day and see how our lives transform.

John Bevere from Messenger International and a world renowned minister, tells a story about a man whose son was extremely sick and the doctors offered no cure. The father went into his office and prayed for 5 hours, speaking in tongues. Afterward he went to his son, and when he spoke, there was such authority that the son immediately got out of bed and was completely well. Praying in tongues prepares you to pray effectively in situations you don’t understand. It takes you to a higher level in prayer as “the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us (Romans 8:26 NKJV).” It expands your capacity for the power of God to dwell in you and flow through you. “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 1:20).”

1 Corinthians 14:4 says, “The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...” The Greek word means to build like a house or a structure. When we pray in the spirit, we are building our entire self (spirit, soul, and body) on the foundation of our faith. We are God’s Holy temple. As we speak in tongues, we are receiving a strengthening and restoring to our spirit first, and then it affects our mind, emotions, and even our body. When you pray in English, it edifies your mind, and when you pray in tongues, you edify your spirit.

When we are praying in tongues, we are releasing and drawing up the rivers of living water. God’s able to pray out your greatest desires or needs through you when you speak in tongues. God has so much He wants to reveal to his children. You might speak in the spirit for a period and hear nothing. And then later in the day, be going about your business eating lunch, driving, or taking a walk and revelation hits you. A thought comes to call this person or respond to a challenge in this way—a result of praying in the Spirit. Proverbs 20:5 (ASV) says, “Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”

Praying in the spirit comes from the deepest place, not the mind. This is the labor to enter into rest. You keep speaking in tongues until you get past all the distractions and your mind calms. You may go back and forth from tongues to English and find ideas or wisdom bubbling up from your inner man, the depths, where the rivers of living water flow. “For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries (1 Cor. 14:2).” As you cultivate this gift your worship to God will deepen.

This is a heavenly language that the enemy cannot understand. We are in a war, so of course God has provided a way for communicating secret intel that keeps the enemy in the dark. If Satan had realized that Jesus’s death was not the end of the story, the scripture says, “they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8 NIV).” We serve an over-the-top God who thinks of EVERYTHING! His plans are in-depth, beautiful, and magnificent!

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery (1 Cor. 2:7 NKJV)...” The Greek word, *mustērion*, refers to hidden, not fully manifested yet, wisdom. Truth that is not yet revealed. So we can know things that were formerly concealed, which the Holy Spirit reveals to us. This is so powerful! I don’t know about you, but this makes me want to speak in tongues more and more each day. No wonder Paul said, “I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all (1 Cor. 14:18).”

No wonder the enemy brings so much confusion, distortion, and weirdness to speaking in tongues because he doesn't want us walking fully empowered by the Holy Spirit!

Reflection

- Have you been intentional about praying in the Spirit, and what would it look like to commit to even 18 minutes a day to see how it transforms your life?

Prayer

Father, thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit — my refreshing, my rest, and my strength. Where I have been dry or dormant, I invite Your living water to flow. Teach me to lean into praying in the Spirit, trusting that even when I don't have the words, You are interceding through me and building me up from the inside out. I yield to You today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

- **John 7:38-39** *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"*
- **1 Corinthians 2:7-12** *"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard...these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit."*
- **Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV)** *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."*
- **Ephesians 3:16 (AMP)** *"May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened and spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self..."*
- **Acts 10:44-46 (NKJV)** *"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word... For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."*

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

WEEK 2

The Gift

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Monday Knowing God's Word Makes Receiving Simple

Key Scripture

Luke 11:13

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Devotional

One of the greatest gifts God has given to His people is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not reserved for a select few, for spiritual elites, or for certain personalities. He is God's promise to every believer. Receiving the Holy Spirit is not a side topic in the Christian life—it is central to the life Jesus intended for His disciples to live.

Sometimes people make receiving the Holy Spirit feel complicated, mysterious, or even intimidating. But when you open the Bible, you discover something powerful: God has always desired to pour out His Spirit on His people. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture paints a clear and convincing picture of a God who longs to dwell within His children and empower them by His Spirit.

The more you see this in God's Word, the more faith rises in your heart. And faith makes receiving simple.

Long before Jesus walked the earth, God spoke through the prophets about a coming day when His Spirit would be poured out freely. Isaiah declared that God would "pour water on the thirsty land" and "pour My Spirit upon your offspring" (Isaiah 44:3). Ezekiel prophesied that God would place His Spirit within His people and empower them to walk in His ways (Ezekiel 36:27). Joel gave the incredible promise that God would pour out His Spirit "on all flesh" (Joel 2:28).

This was always God's heart.

The Old Testament prophets were pointing toward a future reality—a day when ordinary people would experience the living presence of God dwelling within them.

Then Jesus came.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus continually prepared His followers for the coming of the Holy Spirit. He spoke of the Spirit as a gift from a loving Father. In Luke 11:13, Jesus says that if earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Notice the heart of God in that verse. God is not reluctant. He is not withholding. He is a good Father who desires to give the Holy Spirit to His children.

Jesus also told His disciples that the Spirit would dwell in them, teach them, guide them, and empower them. In Acts 1:8, He promised, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Jesus knew they could not fulfill their calling in their own strength. They needed the Helper.

And then, in the book of Acts, the promise became reality.

The Holy Spirit was poured out. Believers were filled. Lives were transformed. Fearful disciples became bold witnesses. Ordinary men and women were empowered by the presence of God. Again and again throughout Acts, we see people receiving the Holy Spirit—not as a rare occurrence, but as part of normal Christian life.

The epistles continue this theme. Paul writes that we have received the Spirit from God (1 Corinthians 2:12). Galatians says God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6). Ephesians instructs believers to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

The message throughout Scripture is consistent: God wants His people filled with His Spirit.

That means this promise is for you.

You do not have to strive to earn His presence. You do not have to convince God to give what He already promised. Your role is not to force something to happen—it is simply to believe His Word and receive by faith.

When you see the panoramic picture Scripture paints, confidence begins to replace uncertainty. The Holy Spirit is not God holding something back from you. He is God giving Himself to you.

Reflection

- After seeing this expanded view across Scripture, will you personally accept that being filled with the Holy Spirit is God’s will for you—and act on it today?

Prayer

Father, I see in Your Word that Your plan for me is to be filled with the Spirit. Open the eyes of my heart to Your Word, show me my next step to receiving all that You have planned for me! In Jesus’ Name I ask. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Check out this book on receiving the Holy Spirit: *Seven Steps to Receiving the Holy Spirit*, by Kenneth E. Hagin, published in 1995.

Tuesday Today is Receiving Time

Key Scripture

Acts 2:16

...This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people.

Devotional

Do you see, in our key Scripture above, Acts 2:16: “...This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people,” that Peter is saying: “what God has promised, the Holy Spirit that Jesus and the Scriptures promised: this (what you see here, today...) is that”? We could say it’s done, fulfilled. The Holy Spirit is no longer “coming,” but He is here. Peter was essentially saying we have now crossed over into “that day” that Jesus mentioned so often.

The Holy Spirit hasn’t left since then. He’s here. Look at what Jesus said: And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—John 14:16 NKJV

So, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit on that day. He is poured out. He is here with us. That He may abide with us forever. Now, it’s up to us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Growing up, my grandfather was a fisherman. He was retired, so he spent many hours in a boat, catching lots of fish. As a boy, I went with him a few times. One thing I noticed was that he was very attached to this little pocket knife he had; it had “Old Timer” on the handle. He used it to cut fishing line, peel the countless tangerines he loved to eat, and fix stuff. I would ask to borrow it because I wanted to carry a knife like that, just to be like him. I began to notice, as I got older, one thing: that knife was dull and worn out! He was always struggling to cut something. After spotting a new knife similar to his at a store, I gathered some money and bought him a new knife. I gave it to him, and I was so excited for him to use it.

Years later, I saw that empty knife box on top of his mantle. I thought, “Wow, he kept that box!” I opened it, and it had the knife in there. It was not empty. The knife was unwrapped, brand new. He had never used it. I guess it was too precious to open. For years, I had delighted in the idea of him actually benefiting from a new, sharp knife. But, although I gave him the knife, he never actually received it. If he had received it, it would have made his everyday tasks easier.

If you haven’t received the gift of the Holy Spirit, it’s your time! It’s time to receive Him. So much of God’s plan laid out in the Scriptures culminated in Jesus dying on the cross to take away our sins, and then Jesus sending the Holy Spirit into us. That might be a simplification, but that’s the point of this article.

Jesus said in John 16:7 (NASB1995): “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

Jesus Himself said it is better for you that instead of His remaining on the earth, to leave, so He could send us the Holy Spirit.

In John 14:26 (AMPC): “But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things...”

I hope you see here the overwhelming desire of the Lord to get you the Holy Spirit.

There’s no indication from Jesus that He even conceived of your life without the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Spirit is essential. It’s time to receive Him and live out the full picture of God’s will for your life!

Reflection

- If the Holy Spirit has already been given, what is stopping you from receiving Him right now?

Prayer

Father, I lay down now, any ideas that conflict with simply receiving from You what You have promised in Your Word. Reveal to me now any thoughts, ideas, or suggestions that would rob me of my simple faith in You. It's receiving time for me, now! In Jesus' Name I ask. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Check out the word translated "receive", *lambano*, that is used many times in the New Testament, and is the relevant word in this devotion. Try googling "translate lambano to English". When you think of receiving anything God has promised, see the word picture you see in this definition.

Wednesday Receiving Jesus Qualifies You To Receive the Holy Spirit

Key Scripture

Acts 2:38

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Devotional

When you accept Jesus, you become a new person. A new creation. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, we see that "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Since old things have passed away, there's nothing to hold you back from receiving!

In our key Scripture, Peter invites the people to receive Jesus, be forgiven of their sins, and then receive the Holy Spirit. He says it all in one sentence, all in one flow.

In Acts 19:1-3, we see that when Paul came across a group of disciples, he fully expected them to have already received the Holy Spirit:

"And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?'"

You can almost hear Paul saying, "What are you waiting for?" You can also hear that receiving the Holy Spirit was

considered essential by Paul. Not optional to him, not to serious disciples. Also, no further qualifications. Like he's saying, "you've received Jesus, you should have received the Holy Spirit." If not, no worries, but also no waiting. And he led them to receive right then.

When Peter was addressing the crowd in our key Scripture above, when he said "...receive the gift of the Holy Spirit..."—back up a few words. He said he was talking to "...each one of you...". The Holy Spirit led Peter to address each person in the crowd. No exceptions. Everyone qualified. Isn't that great news!? Receive Jesus, be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of your sins, and here's the emphasis: "...you will receive—the gift of the Holy Spirit."

I'm gonna assume you want everything God has for you. You might not have the highest opinion of yourself. You may have some thoughts from the enemy trying to get you to back off from receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. But let's be honest. You and I aren't any different from everyone in the crowd that day. A crowd is a crowd. All types of people. You and I are people. In Romans 3:22–24, you see that God makes no distinction in people:

"And this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

We were all in the same sinking boat. Jesus rescued us, giving us a new boat—for free. So now, "...[all] are justified [made right with God] freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." When you accept Jesus, you are justified, made right with God. So, if you have accepted Jesus, you qualify to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Reflection

- If God has already qualified you through Jesus, what reason are you still holding onto for not receiving the Holy Spirit?

Prayer

Father, I see that I am washed clean by the blood of Jesus. I accept Jesus, and what You did for me through Him, washing away my sin. Now that I am a new and justified creation in Christ, I am ready to receive! In Jesus' Name I ask. Amen!

Dive Deeper

Read Acts 2:38, Acts 8:14–17, and Acts 19:1–6. Notice how consistently people who believed in Jesus were led to receive the Holy Spirit, with no obstacles. Simple.

Thursday

Let's Not Make Something Simple Complicated

Key Scripture

Luke 11:30

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Devotional

Here's my testimony of how I received the Holy Spirit: I read our key Scripture above, and that was it. That was enough for me. That's right. One verse.

Let's break down the verse above. "...know how to give good gifts..." The Holy Spirit is a good gift. This is Jesus talking in this verse. The Holy Spirit is a good gift, which means the Lord is giving you the gift, so He expects us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is essential. Why would anyone give a gift that you couldn't receive? That's silly. Also notice, He didn't say, "I'm giving you a good option." Since He initiated the gift and called the gift good, we can and should—we must—receive the gift.

Notice also that Jesus implies that you can leave the "how" up to Him. "If you...know how to give good gifts to your children..." This implies that He can handle the "how." And further, the context implies that the Father is giving the gift of the Holy Spirit to His children. Do you hear the acceptance? Also, Jesus uses the words "your Father..." See? You have been accepted by Him. Receiving a gift from your Father is not complicated.

I have trained my kids that when they ask me for something, my words are where the request is won or lost, approved or declined. I just figured it was easier for me to work with my words rather than a complicated system that requires all my effort to keep moving. One of my daughters often asks me for a specific snack that can be hard to find. So, smartly, she plans ahead. "Dad, when we get out of school on Friday, can we get my favorite snack?" She really wants me to say yes. Can you guess when she has that release inside her head, that "Yes!" that goes off in her mind? It's when I say, "Sure!" Not after school on Friday. When I say the words that resemble any form of "yes." And she starts celebrating, doing a little dance. I bet she can practically taste her favorite snack already. When Friday comes, it never occurs to her that the snack won't be forthcoming. She knows I will travel all around town until we find it. So, consequently, I am very careful with my words. I make sure I've got enough time to find that snack. And that event is on my mental calendar, just as important as any other event.

Let's bring this back to God, to what He said. God is not flippant with His words. If He said it, heaven and earth will pass away before a single letter of a single word will change.

You desire God's best for you—you're reading this devotional. I'm assuming you desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit if you haven't already. And He desires to "...give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." So let's keep this simple and respond with childlike faith. Take Him at His word.

Your next step? Simple: Ask. Continue reading this devotional series!

Reflection

- What would it look like for you to take God at His word right now, without adding anything extra to it?

Prayer

Father, I see in the key scripture that You give the Holy Spirit when I ask. Just that simple. If you didn't complicate it or add any other qualifications, then neither will I. Thank You, Father, for giving the Holy Spirit so freely!

Dive Deeper

Read Luke 11:5–13 in full. Pay attention to how Jesus builds the case for asking, receiving, and trusting the goodness of the Father. Notice Jesus says, "...everyone who asks receives..."

Friday What To Expect: How the Holy Spirit Will Affect Your Life

Key Scripture

John 16:13 NKJV

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Devotional

After receiving the Holy Spirit, you can expect every area of your life to grow and flourish. In this devotional, I want to focus on 2 areas: how you can expect the Holy Spirit to affect your relationship with God and your study of God's Word.

Spoiler alert: the Holy Spirit's work in these two areas will bloom into Him using you to spread the message of God's love for the world, and His message of the reconciliatory work that He completed in Christ, to the people around you, and you will see miracles happen and watch God change the hearts of those around you. For now, let's focus on these two I mentioned, so you can dive into this Spirit-led life that He has prepared for you right away!

God's Word probably has seemed mysterious to you. I think everyone can agree that at one time or another, we have all thought that. This is discussed in 1 Corinthians 2, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

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 (1 Corinthians 2:12).

The natural man, or the person not leaning on the Holy Spirit, cannot accept concepts that come from the Spirit of God, making the Bible essentially a closed book. The things of God are spiritually appraised, or recognized. Once you have the One who inspired the writing of the Word of God, the Spirit of God, He is the One who can open up His words to you. As you prepare to open God's Word, you can look to the Spirit inside of you to do what Jesus said He would do: "...guide you into all truth..."

I visited a museum one time, a big museum. It was quite intimidating to walk into. Then, I found out they offered guided tours. They gave us these headphones to wear, and there was a guide who spoke through the headphones, walking you through each exhibit, telling you which hall to turn into, and giving you all the details about the exhibits. Without my "guide," we would have all been wandering around, gotten lost, and enjoyed no understanding of what was in front of us. The same is true of having the Holy Spirit dwelling and moving in your life. After receiving the Holy Spirit, you have a Helper, a guide, who will direct you in every area of life, to keep you on track, and to give you understanding of the Father, of Jesus, and of who you are in Christ. You can expect to be "...progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]." Philippians 3:8AMPC

When opening up your Bible to study, in a church service, group setting, or in your private devotional time, you can expect the Holy Spirit to do His role, which Jesus gave Him to do. I like to do it this way: I lay my hand on my Bible, or point at the page, and say out loud, "Lord Jesus, You said the Holy Spirit's role in my life was to lead and guide me into all the truth. You said Your Word is truth. I'm diving into the Word, and as I read, I look to the Holy Spirit inside me, expecting Your Word to be revealed to me by the Holy Spirit."

Reflection

- Do you expect the Holy Spirit to actively guide and teach you when you open God's Word, or are you still approaching it on your own?

Prayer

Father, thank You for giving the Holy Spirit so I can know You more and more each day, both in fellowship with You through the Holy Spirit, and by being guided through the Word, as He floods my heart with understanding!

Dive Deeper

What expectation do you bring when you open God's Word? If you need to, shift your attitude toward studying God's Word. Open up Ephesians chapter 1, speak out what I demonstrated above, as a prayer to the Father. Then, journal what He shows you, right next to the verse(s) He opens to you. This way, you can build your faith by creating "footprints" where you and the Holy Spirit have walked through the Bible together.

Saturday What To Expect: Speaking in Other Tongues

Key Scripture

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Devotional

It is scriptural to expect to receive the Holy Spirit by asking in faith, as well as expecting to receive when hands are laid upon you. We see both in Scripture. You can receive the Holy Spirit because the Father has given Him as a gift to you, purely based on faith in His Word. You can also have hands laid on you to encourage your faith to receive the Holy Spirit. Either way, you simply ask and receive.

Notice in our key Scripture that when you receive, you can expect to speak in another language. In some older translations, it's called an unknown tongue. Don't let the words there trip you up. This is not weird stuff. It's simple. When you look up the original Greek words there, you have one simple word: language. So why the word "unknown" in some translations? Why in our key Scripture above is the word "other" added, i.e., "other tongues"? It's because we don't have a word in English that can portray what this word is saying for "tongues." It means a language that you didn't "acquire," or have to spend time learning.

In these next two passages, notice that when you speak in this prayer language, you are: 1. Speaking to God, and 2. When you are praying, the Holy Spirit is interceding, or praying for you with words that are not easily or clearly said in your native language:

1 Corinthians 14:2: "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries."

Romans 8:26: "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words".

I like how praying in my unlearned language is a way to communicate with God in prayer that removes any barrier to entry to praying out God's plan for my life and those He leads me to pray for. I don't have to understand the concepts He is addressing, or learn the language, or understand what glorious result He is trying to achieve. It also bypasses any interference from the enemy, because he can't understand it. And, I love that praying this way is something in the Kingdom of God here on earth that is beyond what we can wrap our minds around. Shouldn't God have a few things that are beyond our understanding? Wouldn't you be disappointed if the Creator of the heavens and the earth didn't have some things beyond your control and understanding?

The Holy Spirit can feed me the utterance of words and concepts that need to be spoken out to God so that He can bring His will to pass, and I don't have to learn another language or figure out the intricacies of what's happening. I can dive into all that God has for me, like a child, now!

Speaking in this language—or, 'tongues'—is a cooperative effort between you and the Holy Spirit. Here's what to expect: when you ask the Father to give you the Holy Spirit, receive when you ask, by faith. The end. Then, expect the Holy Spirit to move in you to speak out your first words in tongues. The Holy Spirit gives you the utterance, and you do the speaking. Look to Him, and speak out what comes; do not speak anything in your own language.

The Holy Spirit will give you words; it will seem as though your tongue wants to say something. For me, I kept sensing a word bubble up from way down on the inside that I thought I knew, but I couldn't place it. I literally thought it was a word I had heard from a "word of the day" type trivia page that I couldn't quite remember. I had a peaceful urge to just speak it. I did. Over and over as I spoke, I realized this wasn't my language, English. Then another word floated up, and I finally turned off my head and just went for it. I've been speaking like this ever since. It's almost effortless speaking. What's powerful, though, is that the Holy Spirit is giving you what's called the utterance. I've heard it explained that the Holy Spirit provides the specific content, inspiration, and authority for what is being said.

That makes what you speak out in other tongues powerful. So, expect to receive, expect to speak, and then cooperate with the Holy Spirit and open your mouth. As you trust God and the Holy Spirit as you receive, you will step into the beginning of the best days of your life!

Reflection

- When the Holy Spirit gives you the utterance, will you step out and speak? Will you let anything from your head hold you back?

Prayer

Father, I see in Your word what You have been doing since the book of Acts church. There's no reason for me to be left out. I ask You right **now** to fill me with Your Holy Spirit! I receive based purely on what You said. That is enough for me! I am now filled with the Holy Spirit. Thank You for helping me now, as I yield my voice to the Holy Spirit and begin speaking out in this new prayer language...

Dive Deeper

Review the following verses in your bible, and journal/mark up your bible with what is highlighted to you by the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 14:2 (NASB1995):

"For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries."

Jude 1:20 (NASB1995):

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,"

Romans 8:26 (AMPC):

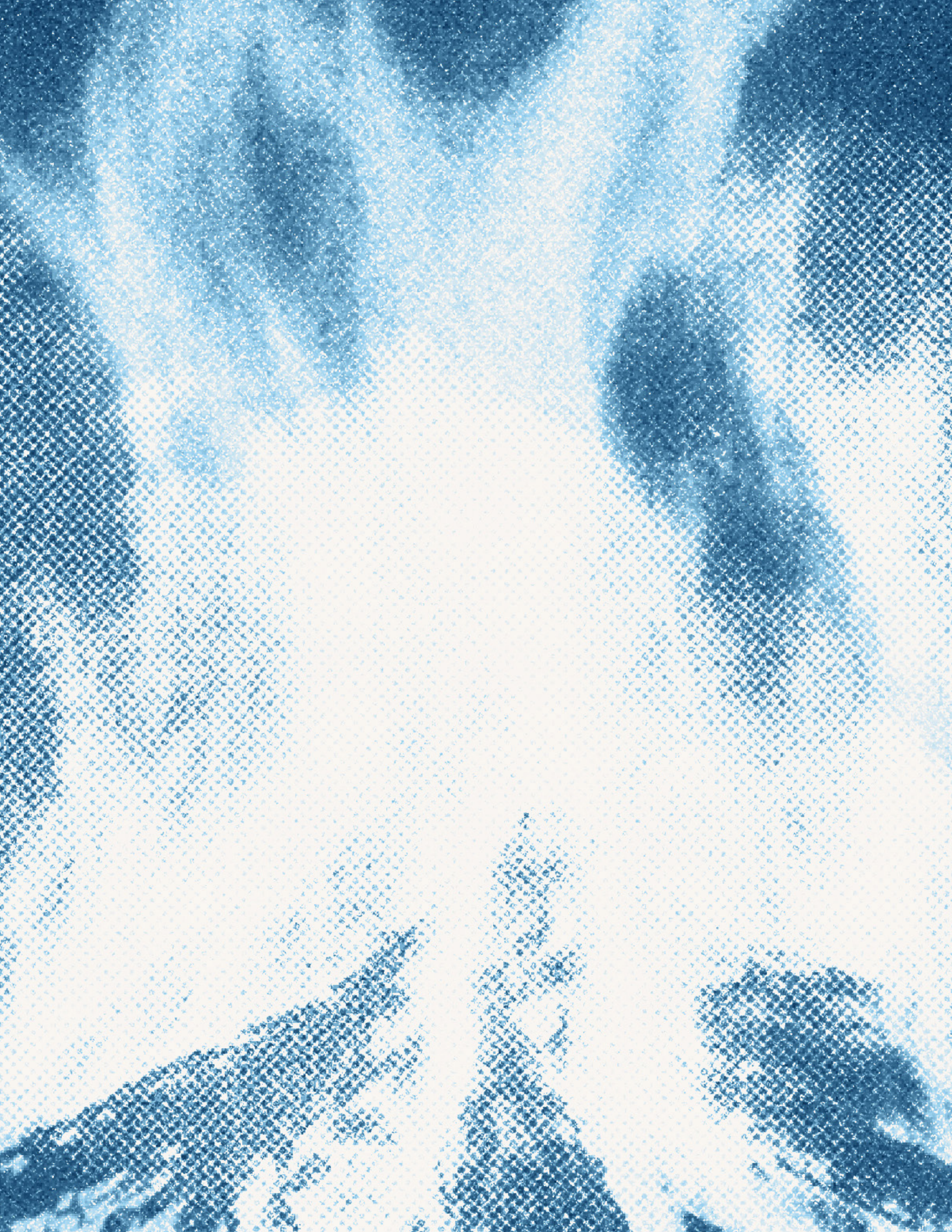
"So too the [Holy] Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance."

[illegible]

WEEK 3

The Power

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Monday He's Another

Key Scripture

John 14:16 KJV

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

Devotional

Have you ever read stories from the Gospels and thought, *Man, I sure wish I could have lived back then?* To walk through life with Jesus, hear His teachings, see His miracles, receive His wisdom, and watch how He responded to every situation—that would have been amazing. But while that window may seem like it closed, in a miraculous way, it didn't.

In John 14:16, Jesus said, *"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."* When Jesus said this, He knew He was about to leave the earth. And in that moment, He made a powerful promise: the Father would send *"another"* Comforter. That word *another* matters. Jesus wasn't talking about something different or distant. He was revealing that the Holy Spirit would be to us exactly what He had been to the disciples—the same comfort, the same help, the same wisdom, the same presence.

In fact, Jesus went on to say in John 16:7, *"It is to your advantage that I go away... for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you."* Think about that. Jesus said it was actually better for Him to go so the Holy Spirit could come. Only now, He wouldn't just be with us—He would be in us, a constant presence we can always count on.

Let me ask you something. Imagine it's Thanksgiving Day, and your favorite pie is sitting on the dessert table. You eat a slice, but it's just not enough, so you go back and get another piece. Is that second piece of pie different than the first? No. It's the same pie—same taste, same ingredients, same satisfaction. It's simply *another*.

That's exactly what Jesus was saying. The Holy Spirit isn't a lesser substitute or a distant replacement. He is *"another"*—the same kind of help, the same kind of presence, the same kind of relationship the disciples experienced with Jesus. Only now, that presence lives inside of us every single day.

This is what our relationship with the Holy Spirit can look like—real, personal, and constant. Just as real as it was for the disciples who walked with Jesus, heard His voice, received His direction, and experienced His peace in the middle of storms.

I knew a lady whose life was marked by her awareness of who the Holy Spirit was to her. She would say often, "I love the Holy Spirit, and the reason I love Him so much is because He is everything to me that Jesus promised He would be." This woman had walked through some incredibly difficult seasons—losing her husband, losing a child, facing health challenges, failed businesses, bankruptcy, and more. And yet, she never lost her joy or her peace.

Her life demonstrated something powerful to me: when you truly know the Holy Spirit as your Helper, circumstances may shake you, but they don't have the final say. He was so real to her—present, faithful, and constant.

Friend, while it would have been incredible to sit at Jesus' feet when He walked the earth, I want you to know that we haven't missed out on anything. The Father, in His goodness, made sure of that. He didn't leave us without help. He didn't leave us without direction, peace, strength, or answers. He sent the Holy Spirit to be everything Jesus was to His disciples, and now, He lives in you.

Today, take a moment to acknowledge Him. Talk to Him. Thank Him for being present in your life—not distant, not removed, but right there within you. He is your Comforter. He is your Helper. And He is “another,” just like Jesus.

Reflection

- Do I truly see the Holy Spirit as “another” like Jesus? Is He someone real, present, and involved in my daily life, or do I tend to think of Him as distant or abstract?
- How can I become more aware of Him in my everyday life?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for being present in my life. Thank You that You are not distant, but near. You are living in me and ready to help me every day. Help me to become more aware of You, to acknowledge You in the middle of my thoughts, decisions, and situations. Teach me to lean on You as my Comforter, my Helper, and my Guide. I don’t want to walk through life on my own when You are right here with me. Today, I choose to recognize You, trust You, and walk with You. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read John 14

Tuesday Acknowledge & Cooperate

Key Scripture

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengthener, Standby), to be with you forever.”

Devotional

Yesterday, we talked about what Jesus meant when He said the Father would send “another Comforter.” The Holy Spirit is everything Jesus was to His disciples, yet He lives in us. Because of this, we have been empowered by Him to live beyond the realm in which mere men live.

In John 14:16 AMP, Jesus gives us a broader perspective of who the Holy Spirit is. It says, “*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengthener, Standby), to be with you forever...*”

He provides comfort to us, advocates for us, intercedes for us, counsels us, strengthens us, and stands ever ready to help us. Though He is all of this to us, it doesn’t happen automatically simply because you are a Christian. We must

acknowledge Him and cooperate with Him in our everyday lives.

One of the things I really enjoy doing is decorating my home. My husband and I embarked on a massive renovation project several years ago that transformed our home. Through the process, I came to really appreciate contractors who are skillful at their craft.

What if, when we began that project, one of our family members, who is a master contractor, told us they would come stay with us to oversee the entire project. Then once they arrived, we never utilized them. Instead, because we are busy with our own lives, we ignored their presence and never used any of their skills or abilities.

That would be a tremendous loss for us, right? Do you know the same thing happens every single day in the lives of countless believers because they never make use of the wonderful Holy Spirit? He is there, ever ready to help, but without their acknowledgement and cooperation with Him, they miss out on the greatest gift a believer can receive.

I remember one time in particular when I desperately needed help in my personal life. I was blindsided by someone that I deeply loved, never imagining they would hurt me like they did. In that moment, there was no human who could have comforted me like the Holy Spirit did. During that time, I came to know Him as my personal Comforter in a way I had never experienced before. How did He comfort me? He used a phrase from the Bible that I was familiar with.

After going to the Lord in prayer and asking Him what I should do about the situation I was facing, the Holy Spirit spoke a Scripture to me. Not audibly, but I heard it on the inside. He said, "Guard your heart..." Immediately I knew to turn to Proverbs 4:23 in my Bible which says, *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."* At the time, I had a lot of questions for God. How did this happen to me? Why did this happen to me? What will happen to my family? What will my life look like 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years from now? Yet in the midst of all the loud questions, He answered me by bringing me back to one thing in the Word of God...*to guard my heart.*

With that one Word, He brought tremendous help to me. And as I look back now to where I was on that day compared to where I am today, I see the entirety of who the Holy Spirit is with those words. Through it, He comforted me, strengthened me, fought for me, interceded for me, and counseled me.

He's just so good. So sweet. So caring and faithful. There's no detail of your life that He can't help you with. But here's the key—He doesn't force His way into your situations. He needs our acknowledgement and cooperation.

In my situation, He didn't override my emotions or take control of my thoughts. He gently spoke and pointed me to truth, but I had a choice in that moment. I could either acknowledge His voice and follow it, or I could stay caught up in my questions and emotions.

Friend, the Holy Spirit is present. He's ready. He's willing. But He is waiting to be invited into the details of our lives. He responds when we turn our attention toward Him, when we ask, when we listen, and when we choose to follow what He shows us.

Reflection

- When I sense the Holy Spirit prompting me through Scripture, a thought, or a nudge, do I tend to follow it, or do I reason it away?
 - How can I better position my heart to yield to the Holy Spirit's leading?
-

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for being present in my life and for being everything I need. Forgive me for the times I've overlooked You or tried to handle things on my own. Help me to become more aware of Your voice and more responsive to Your promptings. Teach me to acknowledge You in the middle of my thoughts, decisions, and situations.

I choose to trust You, to listen, and to follow what You show me. Thank You for caring about every detail of my life and for always leading me into truth. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Romans 8:1-17.

Wednesday The Cost of Not Listening

Key Scripture

Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Devotional

Yesterday, I shared how the Holy Spirit helped me through a troubling situation. He spoke a word to me through Scripture, and it carried me into a place of peace and rest. But what happens when He gives us direction, and we don't listen?

If you're a parent, you probably already know the answer. Like a loving parent, the Holy Spirit never throws His hands up and gives up on us. At the same time, He doesn't force His direction on us either. He leads, but He allows us to choose. When we don't listen, we don't stop God's plan, but we often make things more difficult and complicated for ourselves.

I remember a time when this became very real in my own life. There was a situation where a group of people were gathering to discuss a matter that would directly impact my future. At the time, I was busy with everyday life—raising kids, working, and managing responsibilities. As the meeting approached, I prayed about it often. I asked God for the outcome to go a certain way; I wanted it to be favorable for me. I had full confidence that God could do it and that He even desired to do it.

But every time I prayed, I sensed the Holy Spirit nudging me with one simple instruction: "Go." He was leading me to be there. And every time I sensed that, I reasoned it away. I thought about the inconvenience—buying a plane ticket, arranging childcare, taking time off work. One by one, I built a case for why I shouldn't go.

Can you guess what happened? It didn't go in my favor. Even though I believe it was God's will for that situation to turn out differently, my lack of obedience cost me. What could have been resolved sooner became a much longer and more difficult road.

Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us, *"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."* God's plans for us are good, and the Holy Spirit is continually working to lead us into those plans. Looking back, I am fully convinced that had I obeyed His leading and gone, I would have seen a very different outcome.

So what do we do when we miss it? First, we repent. We acknowledge where we missed His leading and make the

decision to obey the next time He speaks. Then, we draw close to Him again. We remind ourselves of who He is to us—our *Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengtheners, and Standby*. We don't pull away, but rather, draw close.

My disobedience didn't cancel God's plan for my life, but it delayed my experience of it. It's like turning a two-hour drive into a four-hour one because of a major traffic jam. You can still reach your destination, but it takes longer and costs more along the way. By God's mercy, I still walked into victory, but it wasn't without unnecessary difficulty and delay.

The Holy Spirit sees everything—every detail of your life and every factor surrounding it. His purpose is not to complicate your life, but to guide you into God's best.

Yesterday, I shared how I listened when He said, "Guard your heart." Today, I've shared what happened when I didn't listen when He said, "Go." Both taught me something valuable.

The Holy Spirit is always leading, but the outcome we experience is often connected to whether we acknowledge Him and cooperate with Him. And I've learned this: life flows much better when you simply say yes.

Reflection

- How do I typically respond when I realize I've missed His leading—do I draw closer to Him or pull away?
- What would "simply saying yes" look like in my life today?

Prayer

Father, I come before You today choosing to trust You with all my heart. Forgive me for the times I've leaned on my own understanding and reasoned my way out of Your leading. Help me to recognize Your voice more clearly and to respond with a willing and obedient heart. Teach me to say yes quickly, even when it's inconvenient or doesn't make sense in the moment. Holy Spirit, I invite You into every detail of my life—lead me, guide me, and direct my steps into Your best. I trust that Your plans are good, and I choose to follow You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Acts 8:26-35 & Mark 10:17-22 to see what followed someone's "yes" and another individual's "no".

Thursday You Can Know

Key Scripture

John 16:13

"Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

Devotional

I love this verse because in it, Jesus gives us another description of the Holy Spirit in our lives. First, it calls Him the Spirit of truth. In a world where so much attention is placed on selling people on material things, stories, and even outright lies, believers have been given the greatest advantage—having the Spirit of Truth living on the inside of them. With Him, you don't have to guess what's real and what's not. You don't have to be led by pressure, opinions, or fear. You can know.

Second, we are promised that He will guide us into all truth. Not only will He never lie to us, He will never lead us down a wrong path. He is only interested in guiding us into what's true. That means when you follow His leading, you can have confidence—not because you have all the answers, but because He does.

Third, we are told that whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will show us things to come. The word “shew” is also translated to *declare, disclose, and transmit*. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not trying to keep things from you; He's looking for opportunities to reveal things to you. He desires to prepare you, to give you insight ahead of time, and to help you walk through life with confidence instead of confusion.

We see this clearly in the life of Paul. In Acts 20, he said that the Holy Spirit was witnessing to him in every city that challenges were ahead. Paul had a heads up that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Then later, in Acts 21, that message was confirmed again when the prophet Agabus declared what would happen to him in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit was showing Paul things to come. Not to frighten him, but to prepare him.

And what was the result? Paul wasn't shaken or confused. Even when others tried to discourage him, he remained steady. Why? Because when the Spirit of Truth shows you something ahead of time, it doesn't produce fear. It anchors you on the inside so that when the moment arrives, you're not reacting like everyone else. Instead, you're responding from what God has already revealed to you.

Many years ago, when my son was in the eighth grade, I was attending one of his football games. As I sat in the stands watching him with his team on the sidelines, I suddenly sensed that one day he would join the military. He had never expressed a desire to do that, and we had never even talked about it as a family. But in that moment, I just knew.

Four years later, my son came to us and shared his desire to join the military. It didn't matter to him that it wasn't considered a “good” or safe time to go. As a parent, I had to process that. There were people around us—friends, teachers, coaches, others—who discouraged it and voiced their concerns. And naturally, those voices can stir up fear if you're not careful.

But deep down in my heart, I had peace. Why? Because the Holy Spirit had already shown me what was coming four years earlier.

Do you know how powerful that is? While others were worried, I was anchored. While others were reacting, I was prepared. The Holy Spirit knew what was ahead, and He took the time to prepare me long before I ever needed it.

That's the advantage we have as believers.

You don't have to live surprised by everything that happens in life. You don't have to be shaken every time circumstances shift. The Spirit of Truth lives in you—to guide you, to speak to you, and to show you things to come. And when you learn to listen to Him, you'll find yourself walking in a peace and confidence that the world simply can't explain.

Reflection

- Am I allowing the Spirit of Truth to guide my decisions, or am I being influenced more by pressure, opinions, or fear?

Prayer

Spirit of Truth, thank You for living in me and leading me into what is right and real. Quiet the noise around me and help me recognize Your voice above every other voice. When fear tries to rise or confusion tries to settle in, remind me that You already know what's ahead and are preparing me for it. I choose to rely on Your guidance today and walk forward with peace, knowing You are leading me every step of the way. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read John 16:1-14

Friday From Ordinary to Powerful

Key Scripture

Acts 6:5

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost..."

Devotional

Throughout the Bible, we find men and women who were well acquainted with the Holy Spirit in their lives. When we read their stories, it's important to slow down and place ourselves in their day and time. When we do, we begin to see that they weren't so different from us. They had pressures, opposition, and decisions to make just like we do. Hebrews 12:1 tells us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, and we are to run our race while looking unto Jesus. I often find myself imagining those heroes of faith cheering us on as we move forward in what God has called us to do.

One of those heroes, for me, is Stephen, and here's why: I can relate to him.

Stephen wasn't introduced as an apostle, a pastor, or a prophet. He was simply one of the believers. In Acts chapter six, the early church was growing rapidly, and there was a need for people to help with everyday responsibilities—serving tables and caring for widows. It was practical, behind-the-scenes work, and Stephen was chosen to be one of those people.

But look at how he was described: *"of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom"* (Acts 6:3).

That's where it started. Before the miracles, before the bold preaching, before the impact—Stephen was a man who was full of the Holy Spirit.

And then we read this: *"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people"* (Acts 6:8).

Did you see that? One day, Stephen is doing the behind-the-scenes work, yet full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Five verses later, Stephen was doing great wonders and miracles among the people. That's the difference the Holy Spirit makes.

Stephen went from serving tables to demonstrating power. From being one in the crowd to being someone whose life affected generations. Not because of a title, but because he was full of the Holy Ghost.

Imagine your name there. Imagine it being said of you that you are full of faith and power, and that God is working through you in a way that impacts others. That's not reserved for a select few. That's precisely what the Holy Spirit produces in a yielded life.

When you are full of the Holy Spirit and cooperating with Him, He shapes your character. He strengthens you in your weaknesses. He gives you wisdom when you don't have answers. He builds faith in you and empowers you to do what you could never do on your own.

Stephen's story, however, didn't stop with miracles. It moved into opposition when he was falsely accused and severely persecuted. Standing before the high priest, Stephen preached a Spirit-led message that walked through Israel's history and exposed a pattern—God continually reaching out, and His people continually resisting Him. Acts 7:54 says, *"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart..."*

In other words, Stephen's words reached the hearts of the people who opposed him. There was one man in that crowd, however, named Saul, and those Holy Spirit-inspired words reached his heart too. And not long after that event, we see those seeds come to life when Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus.

The power that Stephen carried by being full of the Holy Ghost didn't just impact a moment, but it impacted a man who would go on to affect the world.

What a life. Stephen started as an ordinary believer. But because he was full of the Holy Spirit, his life became powerful, his voice became impactful, and his legacy reached far beyond his lifetime.

And that same Holy Spirit lives in you.

Reflection

- Do I view my current role or responsibilities as "ordinary," or do I see them as opportunities for the Holy Spirit to work through me?
- What would it look like in my daily life to be described as someone "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom"?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for living in me and for working in my life. I don't want to live an ordinary life when You have empowered me for so much more. Help me to be sensitive to You and to cooperate with You in everything I do. Shape my character, strengthen my weaknesses, and build my faith so that my life reflects Your power and Your presence. Use me, even in the small and unseen moments, to make an impact that reaches beyond what I can see. I yield myself to You today. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Dive Deeper

What everyday responsibility or unseen area of your life could become a place for the Holy Spirit to move through

you? Take time to journal and pray about it this week.

Saturday Becoming Who You Were Made To Be

Key Scripture

Psalm 139:14

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

Devotional

Yesterday, we looked at the life of Stephen. He was just an ordinary man, and his life was completely transformed because he was full of the Holy Ghost. Today, I want us to look at who we are right now and consider who we could become as we grow full of the Holy Spirit.

I don't believe there is an assembly line in heaven when it comes to people. Psalm 139:14 tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. That means there are details within each of us that are uniquely designed by God. But what would your life look like if you had access to those details—if you truly became who God created you to be?

There is a way, and it comes through cooperating with and fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit.

Like Stephen, Peter is another powerful example of a life transformed by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was on the earth, we see moments where Peter did very well. He let Jesus use his boat. He followed Him after the miraculous catch of fish. He was the only disciple who stepped out of the boat and walked on water. And he received the revelation of who Jesus was: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

But we also see another side of Peter. At times, he was overconfident, impulsive, and self-reliant. He rebuked Jesus. He reacted in the flesh and cut off Malchus' ear. And in his lowest moment, he denied Jesus three times after boldly declaring that he never would. Peter had boldness, but it wasn't yet anchored in the right source.

Everything changed when he was filled with the Holy Ghost. Suddenly, that same boldness became something different. It was no longer rooted in himself, but in God. In Acts 2, Peter stands and boldly declares what is happening on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts 3, he speaks with authority to the lame man at the gate called Beautiful, and the man rises and walks. His confidence in himself had become confidence in God.

There are many examples in Peter's life that show the difference the Holy Spirit made. I truly believe he became exactly who God created him to be. The very tendencies that once worked against him were transformed into strengths as he learned to walk with and depend on the Holy Spirit.

And that leads us to a personal question. What could happen in your life if you gave that same attention to the Holy Spirit? What if the very things you've seen as weaknesses became strengths in His hands?

In my own life, I've always been naturally shy. I don't mind being in the room, but I've never been one to control it. At

times, that has felt like a disadvantage. I've missed opportunities because I lacked boldness. However, as I've grown in my relationship with the Holy Spirit, that same tendency has been transformed. What once felt like weakness has become something different. He has refined it into a steady peace—a calm presence in the middle of difficult situations. This has impacted me and others I love and care for in ways that would take an entire book to tell.

That's what the Holy Spirit does. He doesn't erase who you are; He reveals who you were created to be. He takes the details God placed inside of you and refines them, strengthens them, and uses them for His purpose. But it doesn't happen automatically. It happens as you acknowledge Him, spend time with Him, and cooperate with Him daily. The question isn't whether God has designed something unique and powerful within you, because He has. The question is whether you'll allow the Holy Spirit to develop it and transform you.

Reflection

- What are some natural tendencies in my life that I've viewed as weaknesses? How might the Holy Spirit want to transform them into strengths?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for creating me with purpose and intention. Thank You that every detail of my life matters to You. Help me to see myself the way You see me—not as limited, but as someone You are shaping and developing. I choose to yield to You today. Take the areas I've viewed as weaknesses and transform them into strengths for Your glory. Teach me to walk with You, to trust You, and to cooperate with You daily so I can become all that You've created me to be. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Dive Deeper

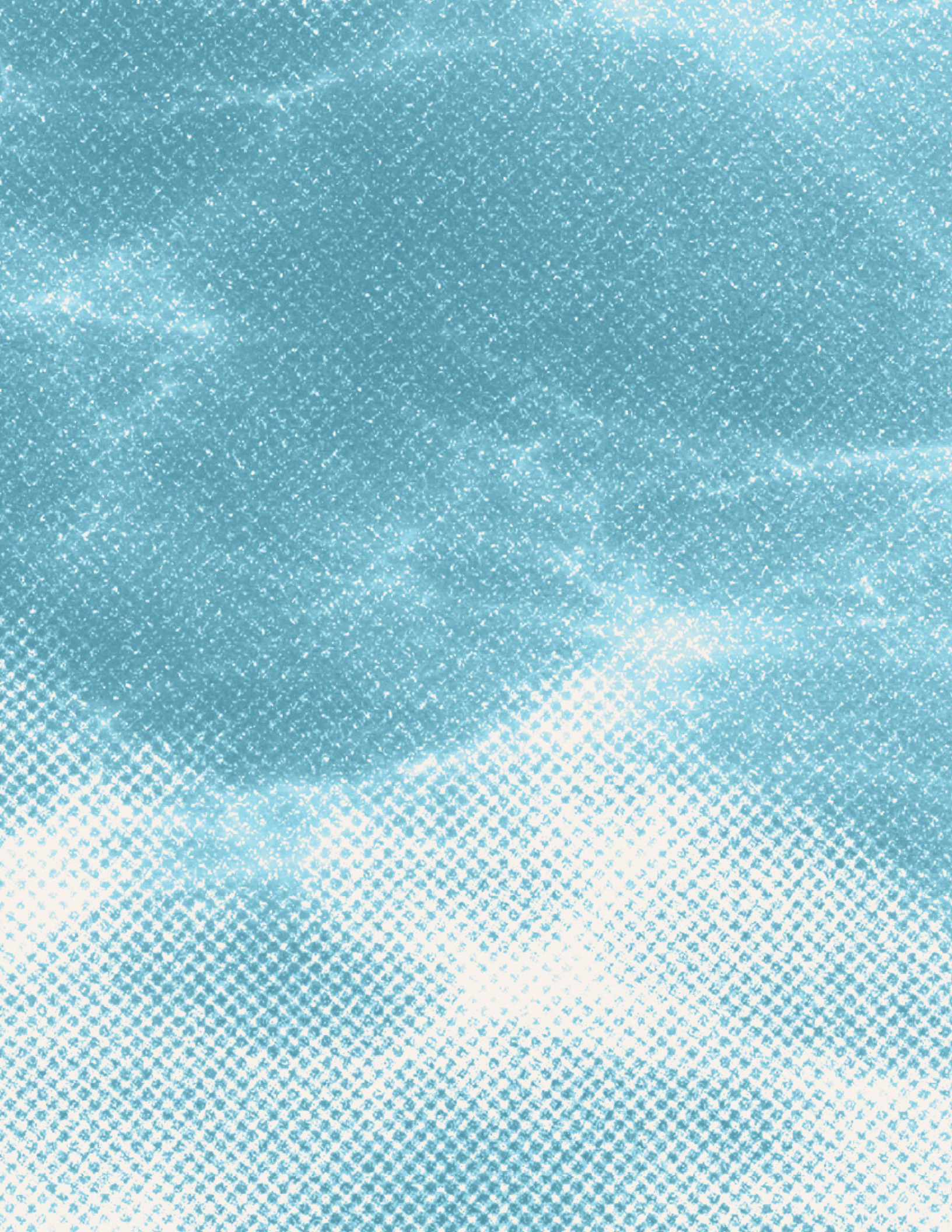
Read 1 Peter 1:1-8 and consider how much growth Peter accomplished before he wrote these things to you and me.

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WEEK 4

The Flow

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Monday

Let the River Do the Work

Key Scripture

John 7:37-39

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.” But this He said in reference to the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Devotional

Here's a fun exercise to kick your week off with an explosion of energy: Pause and take 2 minutes to make a list of everything in your life that requires your effort and energy.

Ready... go.

Pumped up yet?

Yeah... I was kidding about the explosion of energy thing.

More like an explosion of anxiety! Psychologists call this *cognitive overload*—when your brain sees all those demands and interprets them as a threat.

Get this: **Your body responds the same way it would if a tiger were chasing you.**

Because your brain is asking one simple question: “*Do I have what it takes to handle this?*” Do I have the energy? The strength? The wisdom? The resources?

And when the answer feels like “no”... anxiety takes over. Jesus diagnoses that feeling in the Gospel of John 7:37 with an interesting word. He spoke to a humanity toiling under the brokenness of sin—burdened with the cares of life and distance from God.

He doesn't say they were overwhelmed.

He doesn't say they were stressed.

He says:

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink...
and out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

You're not just overwhelmed.

You're thirsty.

And here's what's fascinating:

Jesus said this to religious leaders who were convinced they had it handled.

They looked at the demands of life—and even the demands of God—and said,

“*We've got this.*” Their pride made them blind to their own thirst. But what does drinking have to do with doing? When I

stop to drink water... I'm not being productive, right? Wrong. This is where it gets beautiful.

When you come to Jesus and “drink”—when you carve out time to pray and meditate on His Word—you're not stepping away from productivity...

You're stepping into the power that makes real productivity possible.

When you come to Him:

The Holy Spirit satisfies your soul...

...and then flows through your life with power.

You don't have to choose between presence and productivity.

Because as you rest in Him,

“it is God who works in you, both to will and to do...” (Philippians 2:13)

God fills your heart and restores the *want to*... and then supplies the power to follow through.

For years, people stood beside the Colorado River and just admired it.

They marveled at its beauty, and at the massive canyons it carved through solid rock. But one day, they realized something: The same power that shaped the past...could be harnessed to shape the future. So they built the Hoover Dam. And today, that same river powers millions of lives.

So let me ask you:

**Is the power of God something you just admire in Scripture...
or something you actually draw from to shape your life?**

Aren't you tired of trying to chip away by hand at every rock in your life?

Can you admit you're thirsty? Because that anxiety, frustration, anger, heaviness...

It's not just pressure. **It's thirst.** And often, it's made worse by trying to be self-sufficient.

Because when we refuse to stop and drink, we're essentially saying: *“I've got more power than the river.”* But you don't. And you were never meant to.

So today... Let the river do the work.

Give God your mornings.

Carve out 20 minutes at lunch to meditate on His Word.

Turn the music off and pray in the Spirit while you drive.

Before you go to sleep, pray over the next day—asking God to strengthen and prepare you. Be sensitive to what He tells you to start... and what He tells you to stop.

Let the Holy Spirit:

Quench your thirst

Fill you with joy

Supply you with power

Then watch as that flow reshapes things in your life...
that you could never change with your own hands.

You can't create the flow.

But you can step into it.

So come to Jesus.
Drink deeply.
And let the river do the work.

Reflection

- Where in your life are you trying to force results instead of receiving strength from the Holy Spirit?
- What shift do you need to make in your schedule to create time to drink from the river?

Prayer

Jesus, I come to You today aware of my need. I admit that I've tried to carry things in my own strength, and I'm tired. I'm thirsty. I choose to come and drink.

Holy Spirit, fill me fresh today. Quench every place of dryness in my soul. Restore my joy, renew my strength, and realign my heart with You. Teach me to stop striving and start flowing with You. Work in me—both to will and to do—what You've called me to.

I trust You to supply what I cannot produce.
Today, I step into the flow.
In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- Read *The Helper* by Pastor Joel Sims
- Read *Practicing the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence

Tuesday Let the Flame Tame Your Tongue

Key Scripture

Genesis 11:1-9; James 3:1-12

Devotional

If for whatever reason you're caught in a particularly bland spiritual conversation, and you just want to have some fun and light it on fire with controversy—bring up speaking in tongues!

I mean seriously.

Few subjects carry more confusion and passion than tongues.
It's no wonder the symbol associated with it is a flame—it packs some heat!

Astonishingly, the gift given at Pentecost to launch the Church has become synonymous with confusion. Now, two thousand years later, so much of the world still looks at the gift of tongues like confused cavemen must've looked at fire.

My prayer, though, is that, like the caveman, you may not understand it, but you're drawn to its warmth. **I pray that the idea of carrying the fire of God causes a deep fire to rise up in you to fully experience Him.**

So why tongues?
Let's rescue clarity from murkiness.

In Genesis 11, humanity decided to unite and build “a city and a tower” together to “make a name for [themselves].” They wanted a kingdom they could control and a way to God built on their own effort.

God's response in verse 6 is eye-opening.
The first thing He says is, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language...now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.” God said that when people unite with one heart, one mind and one language—nothing is impossible. So, God disrupted their entire foundation of unity by touching one small thing—the tongue.

By shutting down man's plan, God was actually foreshadowing His grand plan. Instead of a tower built to reach heaven, heaven would come down to earth. Instead of man establishing his kingdom of corruption, God was about to establish His Kingdom of peace.

How would God do that?
The Church—saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit!
What was one of the first tools He gave them to unite them?
Language. Tongues.

That's right—at Pentecost, God began reversing the division Babel symbolized—uniting people through the Holy Spirit and a heavenly language.

In Acts 2, the parallel to Babel is astounding.
Whereas in Genesis 11 people scattered because of the language of man, in Acts 2 people from every nation were gathered together and drawn together because of the language of heaven.

People from different nations and languages heard the same thing out of each mouth.
In this miracle of hearing, they all heard the Holy Spirit fire-carriers giving glory to God.
The result? They were drawn in and united.

So tongues is a gift designed to unify the Church and propagate the Gospel.
Are you surprised the enemy would want to distort it?

Now zoom out and realize this:
The enemy isn't just after the gift of tongues; he is after your tongue in general.

James, in chapter 3 of his book, calls the tongue “a fire” that can destroy a great forest and a tiny rudder that can steer a whole ship! In verse 8 he says, “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” James is giving a warning about what the tongue can do when yielded to evil. But imagine what the tongue can do when yielded to the Spirit of God!

Romans 8:6 says “the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.”

If the Spirit can control your mind and produce life and peace—He can do the same with your tongue.

Let me lay all the cards on the table for you: If you are a believer, filled with God’s Spirit, He wants to speak things through you that produce life and peace on the earth and in your own life as well.

There will be times where you’re fellowshiping with Him and something starts rising up in you—don’t push it back down! Press into that pressure, open your mouth and begin to express that flow with any sound that comes out. Don’t worry what it sounds like. Just stay focused on that flow. You might even experience a peaceful joy when the sound or words coming out of you really seem to align with the flow coming from inside of you. That’s when you know you’re fully yielding!

Just like anyone learning a new language, this process takes time.

And pro-tip: Your natural mind will scream, ‘You sound ridiculous!’

That’s okay.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to Him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

So you have a flesh in you, an old natural man, that won’t understand this process at all—but don’t let him stop you!

Bottom line: God gave you flame to tame your tongue.

His name is Holy Spirit.

When you yield to Him...

He creates order.

He produces life.

He brings peace.

He will steer your ship where you need to go.

He will set your world on fire for Jesus.

He will bring community around you to build something special.

You were made for this.

Leave confusion behind and take hold of the fire that belongs to you, child of God.

Reflection

- What has your tongue been producing lately—life or destruction, fear or faith, confusion or peace?
- In what areas of your life do you need to more fully yield your words, prayers, and speech to the Holy Spirit?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, I yield my tongue to You today.

Forgive me for the times my words have been driven by fear, pride, anger, or my own understanding instead of Your life and peace.

Set my mouth on fire with Your presence.

Tame what I cannot tame on my own.

Purify my speech.

Align my heart and my words with Your will.

Teach me to pray beyond my understanding.
Teach me to speak life where I've spoken fear.
Teach me to yield when my natural mind resists.

Let my tongue become a tool in Your hands—bringing peace, power, and praise. Steer my life like a ship directed by Your Spirit. Set my world on fire for Jesus.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- Take a normal routine from your day (driving, showering, walking, doing laundry, etc.) and commit to praying in the Spirit during that activity for one week. Notice any differences you see in your spiritual life!
- Read Tongues: *Beyond the Upper Room* by Kenneth Hagin

Wednesday Don't Let the Devil Have the Details

Key Scripture

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight."

Devotional

Ever heard the phrase, "The devil is in the details"?

Ever missed a detail that cost you?

Fine print. Wrong measurement. Tiny oversight—big consequence.
That's "the devil in the details," as they say. Turns out, details matter.

Actually, the original phrase, coined by a German architect, was, "God is in the details."
He wanted to highlight that when you pay attention to every small detail, you can create something grand and beautiful.

I'd rather have God in my details. How about you?

In the context of living by the Spirit, a better way to phrase it is—I **want to give God my details.**

I don't just want to come to Him with the major life decisions, the overwhelming health crisis, or the unexpected bill. I

want to invite Him into the smallest of matters—because, believe it or not, He cares about those too.

Philippians 4:6 says: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

I don’t know about you, but I want God’s peace guarding my heart and mind.
In order to have that, however, I must take *everything* to Him in prayer.

What is everything? Well, it’s everything!

Many people don’t think God cares about the small stuff.

Like a ride at a theme park, they feel like their concern must be “this tall” in order for God to care about it. After all, He has 8.3 billion people to manage, right?!

Meanwhile, we try to manage the “small” concern ourselves, then we finally run to God when we end up on a roller coaster of trouble.

When we assume God doesn’t care about the small things, the enemy is more than happy to manage them for us.

Brother Lawrence, in his classic *Practicing the Presence of God*, describes a life lived in the details with God. He writes, “We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of Him.”

The more I read early church fathers, the more I see a commonality in all of them—they invited God into the small things. They saw each moment as holy. They lived with an awareness of God at all times. They slowed down to see where He was moving.

They believed that **hurry made things blurry**.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we peer into precious wisdom given from a father to a son: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Did you see that?
ALL YOUR WAYS.

Not just your emergencies.
Not just your crises.
In ALL your ways acknowledge Him...

Does this mean to pray about whether or not to have whole milk or oat milk in your latte?
What about the blue shirt or the green shirt?
Chicken or fish?

No.

But it does mean:

“God I thank You for this latte. Show me what scripture to meditate on while I sip.”

“As I put on this blue/green shirt, I thank You for clothing me with Your righteousness. May I be more mindful of my appearance before You than my appearance before man.”

“Father, when I go buy chicken/fish for dinner tonight, show me who in the grocery store You want me to speak a word to, or just even smile at.”

What is that?

It’s living by the Spirit. Praying ALWAYS (Ephesians 6:18) about EVERYTHING (Proverbs 3:6) It’s giving God

my details. **When I invite God into the small steps, I avoid massive detours.** He directs my path.

So what can you give Him today?

How can you fellowship with Him in the household chores, the data entry, the business meeting, the drive home, the meal prep?

How would you live if you believed that all His attention was on you...always?

This is God. All-knowing. Ever-present.

Oh friend—**He wants to lead you into big things, when you give Him the small things.**

Start now.

Reflection

- What “small” areas of your life have you been managing on your own instead of inviting God into?
- How might your day look different if you truly believed God cared about—and wanted to lead you through—every detail?

Prayer

Father, I don't want to live distant from You in the details.

Forgive me for the ways I've leaned on my own understanding—handling small things by myself, then only running to You when life feels overwhelming.

Today, I choose to acknowledge You in all my ways.

Be Lord over my thoughts, my schedule, my conversations, my work, my errands, and my interruptions.

Teach me to slow down enough to notice You.

Give me wisdom in the details.

Give me peace instead of anxiety.

Give me awareness instead of hurry.

Holy Spirit, help me practice Your presence in ordinary moments.

Lead me in small decisions...

So I can walk confidently into big purpose.

Direct my paths today.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- Choose 3 ordinary moments today to invite God into:
 - Your commute
 - Lunch break
 - Grocery store
 - Folding laundry

- Read *Practicing the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence
- Read *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer

Thursday Building Better than Babel

Key Scripture

Genesis 1:28

“God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Devotional

Right now my living room is filled with giant cardboard boxes.

But they’re not just any cardboard boxes...no, they are houses birthed from my kids’ imaginations. Four houses, to be exact, that have been cut, taped, and colored on to create a whole village for my four civilization-building children.

And I thought I was just buying new patio furniture!

As I watch them, I’m reflecting on the fact that I didn’t have to teach them to *want* to build.

I didn’t say, “Now kids, you can use these boxes to build something really cool.”

Of course, when they were younger, I had to show them some of the “how-to” of cutting and taping, but even from the time they could pick up a block, I saw an instinct to create and build.

That instinct can be seen as far back as Babel and beyond.

In Genesis 11, the people of Babel looked at this new invention—the brick—and said “Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens.” (v4)

No prompt.

No directive telling them to do it.

There was nothing *outside* of them commanding them.

But something *inside* of them compelling them.

Of course, we can go back even further than Babel to find the origin of the “something.”

Back to the beginning. In Genesis 1:28, God told them to “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion.” What was He telling them?

Take your gifts and this garden...and build.

Build what? Heaven on earth.

Of course we know that we don’t have heaven on earth right now.

That is because sin twisted their motives from building for the glory of God to building for the glory of self. We see this clearly back in Genesis 11, where the people of Babel wanted to build a city and a tower to “make a name for

ourselves.” (v4)

Here’s what I want you to see:

The motivation may have been wrong...

But it was God who put a desire in them to build a city and a temple (tower).

And He has put it in you too!

But God had a better building plan than Babel.

At the great turning point of human history, Jesus came into the crumbled mess of human-built civilization and did two things:

He restored the garden.

He gave us a Helper with gifts.

Jesus went to the tree of the cross to restore us to the tree of life we lost in the garden.

Then, when He left the earth, He sent His Holy Spirit to help us.

Help us do what?

Build!

Build what?

The city of God. His kingdom, not ours.

It’s the prayer Jesus told us to pray: “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt 6:10) He wants to build a city through us with a kingdom culture of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

At the center of that city won’t be a tower for man to climb to heaven—because Heaven already came down to us. Now, instead of a tower, He wants to build a temple.

What is that temple? The better question is... WHO is that temple?

It’s us. You and me. From every nation, tribe, and tongue.

It’s a people redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

It’s a people no longer scattered, but drawn in from every part of the earth.

These people, these “living stones”, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

Let this sink down deep into your soul...

Right now, God is actively building you up and connecting you with other believers, so that He can build His kingdom THROUGH you on earth.

So what is your part to play?

Stay connected: “Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Use your gifts the Holy Spirit has given you to build each other up: “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Go build His Kingdom in the world together: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19)

This is the blueprint of the City of God.

As you run your business excellently...make disciples.

As you watch your kids play sports...build people.

As you work in your yard...cross the street and love your neighbor.

The Holy Spirit didn't just come to help you live... He came to help you build.
He came to help build you up in God's truth.
He came to help build you *together* in connection with God's people.
He came to help build *through* you with the gifts and talents God gave you.

So learn from Babel.
If you build for yourself, you'll be left confused and scattered.
God has a better building plan for you.

So pick up your Holy Spirit hammer, grab a friend, and get to work!

Reflection

- What am I building most intentionally right now—God's Kingdom or my own name?
- How am I currently using my gifts, influence, relationships, and daily opportunities to build people rather than just build myself?

Prayer

Father, thank You for creating me with the desire to build. Thank You that the gifts, passions, creativity, and influence You placed in me were never meant to be wasted on selfish ambition—but surrendered for Your glory.

Forgive me for the ways I've built for myself. Forgive me for pride, self-promotion, and the temptation to make my life about my own name instead of Yours.

Jesus, restore my blueprint.

Teach me to abide deeply in You, the true source of life. Holy Spirit, my Helper, build me up. Build my character. Build my faith. Build me together with Your people. Build through me in ways that advance Your Kingdom.

Help me use what You've placed in my hands to strengthen others, make disciples, and reflect heaven on earth. I don't want to waste my life building Babel. Teach me to build better.

Your Kingdom come. Your will be done. In me, through me, and around me.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

What is God asking you to build right now? Spend time journaling about the people, places, and opportunities He has entrusted to you, and ask the Holy Spirit how to build them for His glory.

Friday The Umpire Who Never Gets It Wrong

Key Scripture

Colossians 3:15.

“Let the peace of Christ, to which you were indeed called in one body, rule in your hearts; and be thankful.”

Devotional

One time my mother had to write an apology letter to the state’s High School Athletic Association...

With 2 seconds left in the last basketball game of my senior year, the opposing player took an extra step as he drove through the lane and heaved up a buzzer-beating, game-winning basket.

The packed gym exploded in a frenzy of elation and despair.

Not wanting to accept the heartbreak, I frantically searched for the referees to hopefully see them waving the basket off.

Instead, I saw them running for the locker room.

And then I saw her...my mom, running with fire in her eyes to cut them off before they reached safety. She was like a lioness hunting a pack of zebras.

Suddenly I forgot about the game and clawed my way through the crowd to keep my mom from spending the night in jail. I managed to reach her, but not before she had chewed them up and down, earning our school a piece of first-class mail from the state office!

You should know two things.

First, my mother is a wonderful, Spirit-filled woman of God...who had a bad day like we all do.

Two, those referees really were terrible!

Refereeing is challenging—I’ll give you that.

Trying to discern between right and wrong in the heat of the moment with packed crowds screaming at you no matter what you decide—it takes a special person to want to do that!

We have those same right and wrong choices in our everyday lives.

In so many big and little moments, we have choices that have ripple effects, not only for our futures, but for those around us.

So how do we walk through life with confidence, making decisions in faith, not fear?

Well, we listen to the Umpire. No, not the high school basketball referee—the Holy Spirit of truth Himself.

Colossians 3:15 tells us to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts.”

That word rule is the Greek word “brabeuetō,” which means “to act as an umpire.”

That’s right—God’s peace can act like an internal referee—calling “safe” or “out” in your internal life. This isn’t just an inner calm, but a governing presence that helps direct your decisions, reactions, relationships, and priorities.

In case you’re new to the idea of letting the Holy Spirit lead you, spend some time meditating on Romans 8:14: “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”

This reality was revolutionary for the early Church!

See, in the Old Testament, with sin separating the people from God, they had to be led by a cloud, fire, angels, prophets, priests, etc.

But with Jesus, everything changed!
Where sin made me a stranger to God, grace made me a son.
And a son can expect to be led directly by his Father!

Let's put it all together—you, as a child of God, have His Holy Spirit on the inside of you, and you can take every decision, thought, idea, feeling, and anxiety to Him, and He will show you what is from Him and what is not. How? Through peace.

This explains why so many live without true peace.
They are led by something other than God's Spirit!

So many are led by:

Opportunity: "I just couldn't pass up more money at that other job."

Logic: "It just made too much sense."

Feelings: "I'm never going to let them hurt me again."

Flesh: "They're just so cute..."

But you will spare yourself so much anguish, confusion, anger, frustration...
If you'll carry that decision past the courtroom of your head, down into the chambers of the heart. God's Spirit is there. Don't just try the case in your head—bring it before the peace of God in your heart. He will lead you. Guide you. Direct you. Warn you. Encourage you.
It's not always easy, especially when pressure, opportunity, or emotion all point one way... but peace rules the other way... trust peace.

When it feels especially difficult to discern that peace, it may be that your spirit has been drowned out by noise. Just like in a crowded gym where it can be hard to hear the umpire, when we pray in the Spirit and focus on Him, He strengthens our spirits and quiets the noise.
So many times the Umpire is making a ruling, but the noise drowns it out.
Get quiet and hear the call!

If there's anything I've learned in my life—He's the Umpire who never gets it wrong.
He'll keep you in the game. He'll faithfully lead you to the finish line.

Maybe you've gotten off track and feel like you're behind on the scoreboard...
He knows the best strategy for making a comeback!
And know this—the game isn't over until you win and fulfill all God has for you!

So if you feel like your decisions have left you lost...
Ask God today: What's one step in peace I can take to get back on track?

He didn't give you His Spirit to sit on the sidelines.
He's your Helper, your Umpire... and yes—He's absolutely in it to win it with you, child of God!

Reflection

- What has been influencing my recent decisions most—peace, pressure, opportunity, logic, fear, or emotion?
- Is there a current decision, relationship, or situation I need to carry past the courtroom of my head and into the chambers of my heart before God?

Prayer

Father, thank You that through Jesus, I am no longer a stranger—I am Your child. Thank You for giving me Your Holy Spirit, not just to comfort me, but to lead me.

Holy Spirit, teach me to listen. Quiet the noise of fear. Silence the pressure of people. Break the grip of anxiety, impulse, and confusion. Train me to recognize Your peace.

When my mind races, anchor me. When my emotions pull me, steady me. When opportunities distract me, guide me. When logic alone feels convincing, remind me to trust You deeper.

I choose today to let Your peace rule in my heart. Be my Umpire. Call what is safe. Expose what is out. Lead me in wisdom. Guide me in truth.

Thank You that You never get it wrong. I trust You to keep me in the game, guide my comeback, and faithfully lead me into all You have for me.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

- Read Isaiah 30:1
- Read the book of Acts and notice the Holy Spirit's involvement in guiding people's decisions.
- Read a biography of a spiritual giant and see how they were led by the Holy Spirit: *Is That Really You, God?* by Loren Cunningham; *The Spiritual Secret of Hudson Taylor* by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor; *God's Smuggler* by Brother Andrew; *George Muller of Bristol* by A.T. Pierson

Saturday Search & Rescue

Key Scripture

Romans 8:26-27

"Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the *will* of God."

Devotional

"Thank God for Life 360!"—the most common phrase I hear from parents of teenagers! In case you aren't familiar, Life 360 is an app that lets you track your loved ones wherever they go.

As my own young kids speed toward teenagehood while salivating for independence, I'm researching every app possible to have eyes everywhere!

I kid... somewhat.

I don't believe in helicopter parenting—hovering over your child every second of the day and never letting them take risks. I agree with Jonathan Haidt in *The Anxious Generation* that by removing normal childhood freedom—walking to a friend's house, climbing trees, solving social conflict, handling boredom—parents may unintentionally raise kids who are less confident, more anxious, and less capable of navigating life's stressors.

But I get it. We so desperately want to control every factor—not only for our lives, but for our loved ones as well. That temptation has grown stronger with innovation—now we actually CAN see and control so many elements of our lives and everyone else's.

And yet our anxiety as a human race is at an all-time high... hmm.

Maybe there's a reason why Jesus, right at the boiling point pressure of the cross, said: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." — John 14:27

Jesus is saying—don't be tempted to find peace through the world's methods. They may actually take you farther from it.

The harder you grip what only God can hold, the more peace slips through your fingers.

Instead, in the verse before that, Jesus shows us how to have peace God's way:

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things..." — John 14:26

The message? The Helper is here to lead you into peace.

Even when you feel like you've lost control—He still has it.

Now, you may be asking—does that mean I just sit back and do nothing? Absolutely not.

God has given you supernatural tools—so much better than Life 360—to affect change on this earth. Atop the list? Prayer.

Put this in your arsenal—Romans 8:26–28: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us... according to the will of God... And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God..."

Notice how Paul honestly identifies what you and I so often feel—weakness.

When you don't know what to do—weakness.

When your child or loved one is off somewhere doing who knows what—weakness.

When you see friends heading down the wrong path and their future looks bleak—weakness.

BUT.

Your weakness is not where God steps back—it's where the Helper steps in. Paul uses the word "intercession," which carries the idea of "a rescue mission." That means when you admit you don't have control and begin to pray, you take your hands off and let God's hands go to work—His way.

When we pray in the Spirit, we are partnering with God's perfect will in situations we cannot control.

Verse 28 gets quoted all the time, but very rarely do people connect it to verses 26–27.

God works all things together for good... yes.

But He does it as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit in prayer.

And yes, “groanings which cannot be uttered” can feel a little strange sometimes.
My logical brain still screams at me when I pray in other tongues.
But I’ve proven this power too many times for anybody to talk me out of it.

My second child developed RSV when he was 7 weeks old. I stayed home with our oldest while my wife took him to the hospital. At midnight I woke up to my phone buzzing. That’s never good.

Caden’s airways were blocked, and they had to call a Code Blue to intubate him.
One of the scariest moments of my life.

Thankfully they saved him, rushed him to a children’s hospital, and he was fine after a few days in the ICU. The next morning after that episode, I called my pastor to tell him. There was a pause.

Finally he said, “Wow... I woke up at midnight and felt like I should pray in the Spirit for Caden!”

I don’t have room to tell you all the stories I have like that—stories of the Holy Spirit moving through prayer to radically intervene, protect people in danger, open spiritual eyes, give boldness, release wisdom, and advance the Gospel.

Friend—you have a Helper who is not just a guide by your side, but One who is already working where you cannot see.

More than Life 360, you need Holy Spirit 360! Life360 may show you where your loved ones are. But the Holy Spirit can move where you cannot.

He’s working all around you, within you, and ahead of you.
He’s the Helper who wants to teach you peace.
He’s the Intercessor who works through yielded prayer.

So loosen your grip.
Stop hanging on to control.
Admit your weakness.
And experience the strength of the Helper.

Because when your control runs out, your Helper has not.

Reflection

- Where am I gripping for control instead of admitting weakness and trusting the Holy Spirit?
- What situations is God calling me to “send rescue” into through prayer?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, I surrender what I’ve been trying so hard to control.
Forgive me for carrying fears, pressures, and burdens You never asked me to hold alone.

Teach me to trust You more than my own understanding. When anxiety rises, remind me that You are my peace. When fear takes over, help me pray first instead of panic. When I feel weak, be my strength.
When I don’t know what to do, guide me.

I release my loved ones, my future, and my unanswered questions into Your hands.

Fill my heart with the peace of Jesus—not peace built on control, but peace built on confidence in You. Thank You for being my Helper, my Guide, and my Intercessor.

- Read *Tongues: Beyond the Upper Room* by Kenneth E. Hagin
- Read *Rees Howells: Intercessor* — by Norman Grubb
- Read *The Ministry of Intercession* — by Andrew Murray

Sunday Sermon Notes

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*The*Helper



WORD OF LIFE

Series Guide
