

Session 5 Fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Paul wrote of the blessing of fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1).
¹⁴May the...love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Cor. 13:14, NIV)
¹...if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy... (Phil. 2:1)
- B. The Holy Spirit is a dynamic Person who lives inside our spirit. We are to fellowship, or commune, with Him by talking with Him often. We must value and cultivate our friendship with the Spirit in an intentional way. One way to do this is by speaking to Him as the God who dwells within us.
- C. Some refer to this activity as abiding prayer, contemplative prayer, communing prayer, centering prayer, or the prayer of quiet. There are other names for this type of prayer in various traditions.
- D. A vibrant walk with the Spirit is essential in our quest to experience more of God. It is futile to seek deep experiences with God while neglecting the Spirit's leadership and relationship in our lives. We cannot go deep in God with a dull spirit. It is a glorious privilege for every believer to be able to fellowship with the Holy Spirit to the degree to which he desires.
- E. Our greatest destiny is to grow in intimacy with God through the indwelling Spirit and thus share in the "family dynamics" of the Trinity. God has so opened His heart and family life to His people so that we may have deep fellowship with Him. This is the essence of Christianity and of true prayer.
- F. Many think of prayer only in terms of seeking God's help to solve their problems and gain blessings in their circumstances. Prayer is first a call to communion with God by the indwelling Spirit.
- G. I want to be a "person of the Spirit"—to know the Spirit in my interior life as well as in my exterior ministry. Walking in the Spirit involves much more than prophesying, healing the sick, or praying in faith to release God blessing on others. I also want to be a "man of the Spirit" in my inner life.

II. GOD CREATED US WITH THREE PARTS

- A. God created every human being with three parts: a spirit, a soul, and a body. One man summarized this reality: "*We are a spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body.*" Our soul is our personality, which consists of our mind, emotions, and will—sometimes referred to as our "heart" in Scripture.
²³...and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord... (1 Thes. 5:23)
- B. At the new birth our spirit is joined to God so that we are one spirit with Him (Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:17). The reality of the new birth is that the Spirit comes to live in our born-again spirit. Salvation involves more than being forgiven. We have a new connectedness with God by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him...¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you... (1 Cor. 6:17-19)

- C. The Spirit flows from our spirit, which is translated as “belly” in the King James Version, and more accurately as “innermost being” in the New American Standard Bible.

³⁸He that believeth on Me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (Jn. 7:38, KJV)

³⁸He who believes...from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. (Jn. 7:38, NAS)

- D. The Holy Spirit springs up from our spirit to impact our heart, i.e. our mind and emotions (Jn. 4:14).

¹⁴“...the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (Jn. 4:14)

- E. Jesus promised that the Spirit would flow like a river springing up out of our spirit to inspire, direct, and transform our mind and emotions and minister through us to others. He lives in our born-again spirit in fullness at the new birth, yet the measure with which He expresses Himself in our mind and emotions grows progressively. The more we engage our mind with the indwelling Spirit, the more our mind and emotions are renewed; thus we are transformed by renewing our minds (Rom. 12:2). The more our minds and hearts are renewed, the more God expresses Himself in and through us.

- F. Because the Scripture describes God as light (1 Jn. 1:5), we can think of light as being inside our born-again spirit where the Spirit dwells. I think of the Spirit as the Shekinah glory of God dwelling in my spirit. When I talk to the Spirit, I picture Him as a glorious light—a bright, diamond-like, glorious person shining in my spirit. (That is not exactly how it is, but this helps me to focus.)

- G. Focusing on the Spirit will always lead us to glorify and obey Jesus and His Word (Jn. 16:14). Some false religions speak of gazing into an internal light; they present a counterfeit because they neither possess the indwelling Spirit, nor lead people to love and obey Jesus.

¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:14)

III. WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

- A. Paul exhorted us to walk in the Spirit, promising that, if we do so, we shall not end up yielding to the lustful desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

¹⁶Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh [sinful desires]. (Gal. 5:16)

- B. Walking in the Spirit is the primary way to walk in victory over our flesh. We are to *put more focus on walking in the Spirit* than on denying sinful desires. The way to walk in freedom is by walking in the Spirit, not by focusing on the desires themselves as we grit our teeth seeking to resist them. We overcome darkness by turning on the light—focusing on Christ in us, our hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

1. Paul did not promise us that all fleshly desires would be gone; he said we would have the *power* to avoid yielding to them. The way to overcome the power of sinful desires is to grow in our relationship with the Spirit by being actively engaged with Him.
2. *We walk in the Spirit to the degree that we talk to the Spirit.* It is as simple as can be and is accessible to every believer. We set our mind on Him and speak to Him (Rom. 8:6).

⁶The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life... (Rom. 8:6, NAS)

IV. TALKING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. In prayer we can focus our mind on God in two ways—on the Father, who sits on His throne (Rev. 4) and on God the Holy Spirit, who lives in our spirit (Rom. 8:9).

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven... (Mt. 6:9)

⁹The Spirit of God dwells in you...¹⁰If Christ is in you...the Spirit is life... (Rom 8:9-10)

- B. The Spirit longs for us to talk with Him, but He will not force conversation or friendship on those who are not interested. When we talk to Him, He will “talk back” to us. Once we begin the conversation, He will continue it as long we as we do.
- C. Often when He “talks,” He does not use audible words but gives us impressions, sensitizes our emotions so we can feel His nearness, or speaks through His Word. He gives subtle impressions that release His power on our minds and hearts. God leads us by the still, small voice in our inner man—the still, small voice He used to speak to Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:11-13).
- D. Augustine testified that he lost much time seeking the Lord outwardly instead of turning inward.

V. GET STARTED

- A. I suggest being intentional about talking to the Spirit—start by setting time aside three to five times each day, aiming to speak to Him directly three to five minutes each time. If we talk to the Spirit only when we are tempted, rather than as a lifestyle, then we will not sustain our dialogue with Him.
- B. At first it may be difficult to bring your mind to focus on the indwelling Spirit. As you do it more often, you will become accustomed to withdrawing inwardly to speak to the Spirit. If your mind wanders, simply turn it back to the indwelling Spirit again.
- C. We practice the presence of God, knowing that it takes time to grow in our sense of connectedness with the indwelling Spirit. The more I speak directly to Him in private, the more I sense His presence in my public life with others.

- D. Linger in God’s presence: In dialoguing with the indwelling Spirit, take time to linger, speaking slowly to Him. Include declarations of your love for Him. Speak slowly, with occasional whispers of “I love You, Holy Spirit,” while gently and intermittently praying in the Spirit. Do not rush, and do not be wordy. He enjoys us when we recognize His indwelling presence. I know this because I can feel His pleasure when I acknowledge Him. I linger with my attention turned inward to Him.
- E. As I speak to the Holy Spirit, I do not fire off my prayers in rapid succession; I speak short, simple phrases to Him, slowly and softly. It is important to wait with a listening heart. Sometimes I will gently sigh as I pray with subtle “groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26) in between moments of total silence. I do this much more than I speak words.
- F. One of my favorite prayers—the one I use most often—is asking the Spirit to *let me see what He sees and feel what He feels* about my life, my family, and other people, as well as what He sees and feels about Jesus, the church, the great harvest, the nations, the end times, and so on.

VI. T-R-U-S-T

I use a five-letter acronym, **T-R-U-S-T**, to help me focus. I try to pray through this on a daily basis.

T: Thank You

The first thing is to turn our attention inward to recognize the Spirit’s presence and simply thank Him for His indwelling presence. I say, “Thank You, Spirit, for Your presence in my spirit.” Occasionally add affectionate phrases like, “I love You, Holy Spirit, and I enjoy Your presence.”

R: Release revelation of Your glory

Paul prayed that the Father of glory release the spirit of revelation to His people (Eph. 1:17) Moses prayed, “Please, show me Your glory” (Ex. 33:18). Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the realm of God’s glory that you may encounter more of His glory and heart.

U: Use me

Paul exhorted us to seek diligently to be used in the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1). The Spirit promised to release His gifts through every believer (Acts 2:17-21; 1 Cor. 12:7). Thank the Holy Spirit for His gifts and ask Him to release them to you in a greater measure. Ask Him to give impressions to you to bless people, that you may be a vessel of His presence to glorify Jesus.

S: Strengthen me

The Spirit will strengthen our inner man by touching our minds and emotions with the might of His presence. We can draw on His strength by thanking Him for the reality of His power that is already in our born-again spirit. Because the Spirit lives in us, the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, and so on—is in our spirit now. We can experience more of the power of this fruit by thanking Him that it is already in us.

¹⁶*...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man. (Eph. 3:16)*

²²*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³*gentleness, self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)*

T: Teach me

The Spirit is the Teacher who leads us into God's will and ways so that we are able to live in partnership with God. We ask the Spirit to teach us about God's Word, will, and ways by giving us wisdom and creative ideas for every area of our life, including how to steward our money, excel in a career, manage our time, prosper in relationships (in our family, church, workplace, etc.), function in ministry, and walk in purity and health (physically and emotionally). He will guide us in ways that help us walk in holiness, have health in our bodies, and so on.

²⁶*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit...He will teach you all things... (Jn. 14:26)*