



ONWARD

21 DAY FAST // 2017



WEEK TWO
DEVOTIONAL

Day 8 // January 23

He's Always Here // Robert Morris

... He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:17

When Debbie and I were first married, before I was saved and before I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I dealt with some emotional issues and a lack of confidence. At times, I felt extremely inferior and, quite frankly, was very uncomfortable around people in large groups. Debbie, on the other hand, was confident and outgoing. So when we would go to get-togethers, she would quickly find a friend to chat with and leave me standing by myself. I just always felt alone and very uncomfortable in those situations. When we'd get in the car, I'd be furious with her and say, "You left me! I was all alone!"

However, several years later, after I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, something completely changed. We went to a party and as usual, Debbie found a friend to talk with for a while. I remember standing there alone and thinking to myself, She did it again! She left me. Right at that moment, I heard the Holy Spirit say, "I'm here. You're not alone," and we began to have a conversation. It's something we still do to this day. I can be in a crowd of people and have a conversation with the Holy Spirit, and He will begin to direct my attention to people around the room and show me ways I can pray for them.

At one party, the Holy Spirit pointed out a man who had just received a bad report from the doctor and was fearful about his future. I was able to encourage him and pray with him. Another time, I was led to speak with a lady who had recently lost her husband. All of these things happened because of my friendship with the Holy Spirit. I went from feeling insecure and alone to being an encouragement to people who desperately needed it.

If you struggle with loneliness, I can assure you that you'll never feel alone when you have a friendship with the Holy Spirit. He has become my closest friend, and He wants to be yours too.

[illegible]

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." - Romans 5:5

Holy Spirit, thank You for never leaving me alone. When I feel lonely or insecure, please reveal Your presence to me and teach me how to be a blessing to those around me. Lead me daily and help me to develop an intimate relationship with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Psalms 139:7,8; John 14:16-18; Acts 5:32; 17:24-28

Day 9 // January 24

God's Word Is His Voice // Robert Morris

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

Did you know the Holy Spirit has a voice? In fact, He speaks to me all the time. It's not because I'm a pastor or some special, hyper-spiritual person. The Holy Spirit wants to talk to everyone, even you. In fact, He wants to speak to you just as much as you want to hear from Him! To some who don't have a personal, dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit, this might seem like a strange statement. But I can say with certainty, the Holy Spirit speaks to us directly and clearly, and He does so several different ways.

One of the best ways to hear the Spirit's voice is through God's Word. You might not think reading the Bible has a lot to do with hearing from the Holy Spirit, but think about this for a second: If you'd like to get to know someone better, and you discovered they've written a book about their life, wouldn't reading that book be a great place to start? Every word written in the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit. God's Word is His voice.

The Word is alive and able to speak to us when we read, memorize, and meditate on it. Of course, the Bible is a big book and sometimes it's difficult to know where to start. But hearing the Holy Spirit through His Word is simple and powerful.

When I want to hear the Holy Spirit speak to me through the Word of God, here are the steps I follow. The first step is to enter His presence by praising Him (Psalm 100:4). When you begin to feel His presence, begin to pray and "let your request be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). The next step is to open your Bible. A lot of times when I need a word from God, I ask Him where He wants me to read. If a Bible story comes to mind when you're spending time in God's presence and praying, read it. If you're going through a financial problem, read verses about finances and stewardship. If you're going through a health

I believe the Holy Spirit has a word for you today. Just open up your Bible and ask Him to speak to you.

[illegible]

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." - Romans 5:5

Holy Spirit, thank You for inspiring every word written in the Bible and for giving us a way to know You better. As I read Your Word today, speak to me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Psalm 100:4; 119:105; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 6:17; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 4:12

Day 10 // January 25

A Familiar Voice // Robert Morris

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 10:27

When you're married to someone for a long time, you become really familiar with their voice. If Debbie calls me from a phone number other than her own, all she needs to say is "Hey," and I instantly know it's her. I know her voice because we've been married for more than 35 years. In fact, no one knows her voice better than I do.

In the same way I have become familiar with Debbie's voice, I've also become familiar with the voice of the Holy Spirit. The principle is the same in both cases—it's just a matter of spending time building a relationship with the Spirit, who speaks on behalf of God and Jesus.

Some believe God stopped speaking to people 2,000 years ago, but I beg to differ. Hebrews 13:8 says: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." If God spoke to people 2,000 years ago, then He still speaks to us today.

If you're just starting to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, you might have a hard time telling the difference between His voice and your own. But once you've spent time building a friendship with Him, it becomes much easier to know when He is speaking. Just get in His presence on a daily basis and spend time getting to know Him through the Word. The more you're with Him and get to know Him, the better you'll hear Him.

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"He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." - John 16:14

Holy Spirit, thank You that You're the same yesterday, today, and forever and that You still speak to us. As I read Your Word and listen, help me to learn how to distinguish the voice of the Holy Spirit from my own. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Jeremiah 33:3; Ezekiel 2:2; Matthew 4:4; 10:19,20; Mark 13:11; John 10:1-5

Day 11 // January 26

He Draws Us Near // Robert Morris

*He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take
of what is Mine and declare it to you.*

John 16:14

Many years ago, I was a guest speaker at a church. As I was sitting on the platform worshipping before I spoke, the Holy Spirit drew my attention to a lady in the congregation and spoke something to me about her. After I was introduced, I asked her to stand up and said, "When we were worshipping, the Holy Spirit asked me if I knew your past." Immediately, her countenance fell. She actually put her head down. "I said, 'No Lord, I don't know about her past.' Then the Holy Spirit responded, 'Neither do I.'" As she lifted her head back up with a big smile, I told her, "Ma'am, God knows everything about you, but He has chosen not to remember your sins. It's time for you to choose not to remember them either."

I'll never forget this moment because it shows an attribute about the Holy Spirit that's easy to forget. He is a kind, compassionate, and sensitive person who brings us closer to God and Jesus. In fact, according to today's verse, one of the major functions of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus. He also directly connects us to Jesus and God, the Father, despite our failings. If you're a believer, it's because the Holy Spirit initially drew you to Jesus. And once you become a believer, the Spirit continues to connect you to God and reveal how great He is. The Holy Spirit doesn't seek to remind us of our sinful past, but He wants us to see God's grace and love in our lives.

Isn't it wonderful to know the Holy Spirit has seen us at our worst but still desires to draw near to us with kindness and compassion? His job is not to expose our sin and embarrass us but rather to bring us into right standing with God. Is there something in your life the Holy Spirit wants you to bring to God?

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"He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." - John 16:14

Holy Spirit, I am so thankful You've drawn me close to You regardless of my past. Thank You for not remembering my sins and for showing me how wonderful God is. I love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Psalms 65:4; John 6:44; Hebrews 10:15-17; James 4:8

Day 12 // January 27

Knowing His Will // Robert Morris

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.
Jeremiah 29:11

I think one of the biggest struggles we face as Christians is figuring out God's will for our lives. Wanting to be in God's will is a good thing, so don't get discouraged when you aren't sure what to do. If you're struggling or confused, I'd like to tell you something that can change your life: You have Someone living inside of you who knows the will of God for your life.

The will of God comes in two forms: the general will and the specific will. The Bible gives us God's general will. It tells us stealing and lying is wrong and how to honor our parents and treat our spouses. However, if you want to know who you should marry or whether or not you should take a job, that's the specific will of God, and that only comes through the Holy Spirit.

So how do you know the specific will of God? Well, we know His specific will by His voice, which is the Holy Spirit. Before God sent the Holy Spirit 2,000 years ago, entire generations of people lived with only one person hearing God for everyone. Can you imagine how hard it was to seek God's specific will then? But today, we're living in an incredible time because we're able to hear the Holy Spirit speak to us personally. Remember what Jesus said in John 16:13: "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." The Holy Spirit speaks to us today!

God has a specific will for your life, and you can know what that is when you get to know the Holy Spirit and open your heart to hear His voice.

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MEMORY VERSE

"He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." - John 16:14

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, I'm so thankful You live inside me and can guide me in God's will for my life. I open my heart to Your voice and Your plan for me. Speak to me today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:15,16; 1 Timothy 2:3,4; Hebrews 10:36

Day 13 // January 28

Grieving the Spirit // Robert Morris

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.
John 16:13

Have you ever lost a connection with someone close to you? Unfortunately, it's very common. You may have experienced the loss of a loved one, or you may have gone through a divorce. These are very difficult examples of times when intimacy is lost. There's a sadness that comes with the loss of intimacy and that sadness is grief. Did you know the Holy Spirit also experiences times of grief?

In today's verse, Paul warns us against doing things that will cause the Holy Spirit to grieve. On its own, that statement sounds a little unclear. But if you back up a few verses (Ephesians 4:25–29), Paul explains what causes such grief: lying, stealing, and corrupt language. In other words, sin causes the Holy Spirit to grieve. It's not because He's legalistic or doesn't want you to have any fun. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit because sin hurts people, and the Holy Spirit loves people.

When a believer sins and causes the Holy Spirit to grieve, it doesn't mean he or she has lost their salvation. Thankfully, we are saved by grace through faith; but sin does cause us to lose intimacy with the Holy Spirit. However, I want to give you some good news. If you're walking in sin, the Holy Spirit wants to set you free because He desires to be close to you. When we humble ourselves and deal with the sin in our lives, we can walk in greater intimacy with God. Each of us has sinned, but because of God's grace and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can all walk in righteousness.

Is there an area of sin in your life that is causing you to lose intimacy with the Holy Spirit? If so, the Holy Spirit desires to be close to you once again. If you will humble yourself right now and allow the Holy Spirit to help you turn from sin, He will draw near to you.

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"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."
- Romans 8:1

Holy Spirit, I humble myself right now. I don't want to grieve You. Please reveal any area of my life that grieves You, and forgive me and help me to walk in greater intimacy with You. Thank you for loving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

John 14:16; Ephesians 4:25–31; 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Day 14 // January 29

He Sets Us Free // Robert Morris

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:31,32

Before I was saved, I was an immoral person. Yet, even after I received salvation, I continued to struggle with lust. But on my 30th birthday, the Holy Spirit allowed me to live victoriously in that area of my life. Every year since I became a Christian, He has asked me what I want for my birthday, and for my 30th birthday, I asked for the ability to hear God more clearly.

The weekend before my birthday, I ministered at a prophetic meeting at a church. The first night, I was hearing God and prophesying like never before. When I returned to my hotel room after the meeting, I flipped through the channels on the television and saw something I shouldn't have seen. After I watched it, I felt so unclean and immediately confessed my sin to God and repented. However, the next night at the prophetic meeting, I couldn't hear anything from the Lord.

The following day at the Sunday morning service, one of the other speakers asked if he could preach instead of doing the prophetic meeting. I was secretly relieved—until I heard his message. He preached on iniquity and bondage and how even mature Christians experience these. I knew he was talking to me. Then he said, "When the Holy Spirit convicts you about a sin and you do it anyway, it grieves Him. God told me to say that if you'll humble yourself and come to the altar, He'll set you free." I went forward and God did a work in my heart I'll never forget, and since that moment I've been able to hear God more clearly than ever before. The next morning was my birthday, and as soon as I opened my eyes I heard the Holy Spirit say, "Happy birthday!"

If there is an area of sin you keep returning to, that's an iniquity. In other words, it's a sin with which you continually struggle. Just as the Holy Spirit freed me from lust that morning,

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"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."
- Romans 8:1

Holy Spirit, please reveal to me any iniquity in my life. Today, I ask that You would set me free from any bondage and give me a clean heart. Thank You for helping me live victoriously. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mark 16:17,18; Acts 8:18-23; Hebrews 12:15; James 3:14

This devotion was adapted from
The God I Never Knew
Gateway Church, 2017
gatewaypeople.com



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