

Holy Spirit: Learning to Listen

This class is "Holy Spirit: Learning to Listen" (Recognizing the promptings of the Holy Spirit.) This is like Spirituality 101. If you get this concept, everything else will make sense to you in time. If you don't get it, you will always be questioning, wondering, and doubting. We were not meant to wander through our lives in darkness. We CAN know the Lord's will for our lives, if our decisions are sound ones, and how to find guidance in everything we do. I will tell you these things and more.

Holy Spirit

**Learning
to
Listen**

*Healing
Spirituality
Preparedness*

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It was a real no-brainer deciding what the topic would be for the first NurseHealer Podcast. The topic I spend the most time talking about, and the basis for everything else in life, is the Holy Spirit. This really is like Spirituality 101. If anything is amiss in your life, go back to the notes on this talk and check to see if there's an important step you're leaving out or if you're neglecting some aspect of your relationship with the Holy Spirit, and, ultimately, that with God, the Father.

The Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood member of the godhead. You don't hear people saying, "I saw the Holy Spirit in a vision." If we had a visual representation of the Holy Spirit, perhaps we would better understand who he is. We could paint a picture of someone we think God or Jesus might look like; but the Holy Spirit is a being of Spirit without a body or human-like form; so getting a visual image of the Holy Spirit is difficult, if not impossible. Instead, to conceptualize the Holy Spirit, we have to think more in terms of how spirit "feels." For most of us it is much easier to think analytically in concrete terms of size, shape, and weight rather than in abstract terms of feeling, sensing, and knowing. To understand spirit, though, we have to reach beyond the tangible and into the intangible.

It is easy to be unnerved by spiritual experiences. We may want to shut out anything we don't understand. But, if we pray for help and guidance, then shut out the influence of the Holy Spirit because we don't understand the principle of God speaking to us through the still, small voice, we reject God's answer to our own prayers. The Holy Spirit is the Great Comforter, not someone or something to be feared. The simplicity of God's plan may cause us to overlook or dismiss it as "too easy." But, as with many things in life, we can know the truth if we only LISTEN. No matter how advanced you are spiritually, this is a lesson we will do well to review from time to time. Listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit is paramount to our spiritual growth and understanding. If I never recorded another message, this one would be worth all the effort to making a podcast.

2 Corinthians 2:9-10 tells us:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The Holy Spirit is our bridge to understanding the deep things of God. He knows and understands these things, and can reveal them to us when we are ready to receive these truths, as it is pleasing to our Heavenly Father. A telephone line carries communication from one person to another in the physical world. The Holy Spirit carries understanding, revelation, and enlightenment from the spirit of deity to our own spirits, which transcends the spiritual into the physical mind and understanding. As we attempt to "plug into" God through prayer, it is the Holy Spirit that completes the circuit. It is the Holy Spirit who provides us with that moment of clarity when we hear ourselves saying, "Oh!" or "Ah-ha!" Through the Holy Spirit, we receive a knowing that permeates our being from our innermost spirit outward to the completeness of even our physical body. I often say that, when I receive personal revelation through the Holy Spirit, I know it is true in every fiber of my being, every sinew of my soul, every cell in my body, and every hair on my head. It is a knowing that cannot be shaken. It is an absolute knowledge of truth that is undeniable in the moment. This is how we know we have received an answer to prayer.

Every question can be answered by first seeking communion with our Heavenly Father through the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We can likewise receive the answers we seek from our Heavenly Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. It has been said that angels speak through this power. If we understand who the Holy Spirit is and what he can do, we can know better how to welcome his influence into our hearts and minds so that we are prepared to receive the answers we seek in prayer.

If you still find yourself asking why we need the Holy Spirit in our lives, consider this scripture regarding the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Each of us is blessed with one or more gifts of the Spirit. Knowing this can serve as a guide for our lives. If I am blessed with a spiritual gift for healing, I can anticipate many opportunities to serve the Lord through healing my fellowman and other living things. If I'm blessed with spiritual knowledge, I can anticipate receiving revelation through prayer and study in regular installments if I am a willing vessel. Being blessed with spiritual faith would guide one through life's maze of adversity if one is accepting of the gift and attune to the teachings of the Word. Whatever gifts of the Spirit we possess, these will certainly guide us in our lives if we pray and study to know the best use of these gifts and how to develop them with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in accordance with divine will.

One simple way to practice listening to the Holy Spirit in our daily lives is to utilize a simple exercise in making inspired decisions. Here is a list of steps to find an answer.

1. Identify the question.
2. Pray for spiritual guidance.
3. Study the question.
4. Make a decision.
5. Pray for spiritual confirmation.
6. Act on your decision.

These simple steps can be applied to any question, problem, or desire.

Identifying the question may seem rhetorical; but it is an important first step. Sometimes we think we know the question we want answered; but, after prayer and study, we come to understand that the actual question was some derivation of the original thought, if not in fact entirely different. For example, we may think that the question is, "What job should I take as I change my employment?" After prayer and study, we may find that the question truly is, "What employment or career change should I make?" Although the two questions may sound the same initially, they're actually quite different. The first question assumes that you are looking a new and specific job in the same line of work. The second allows for greater revelation as you seek guidance in employment and your new or a different job and open yourself to a career change if one is out there for you. Knowing the question to take to your prayers will enhance your spiritual revelation.

As we pray for guidance, we want to acknowledge the Holy Spirit. Remember that we are praying through the power of the Holy Spirit to reach our Heavenly Father in the name of our Savior. Likewise, we need to welcome the answer in revelation and comfort through the Holy Spirit. As we ask our question, we also need to ask for our Father in Heaven to impart revelation through the Holy Spirit to us as it pleases him. We should seek guidance through the Spirit in use of our spiritual gifts. As we welcome the Spirit, we should also prepare our hearts, minds, and souls to receive our answer as we receive the Holy Spirit.

We should not rely on the Lord to simply instill knowledge into us without studying for ourselves. The Holy Spirit can guide us to answers and revelations not only to the question at hand; but also to phenomenal understanding for this life with its immediacy and to eternal knowledge if we allow him to direct our minds in study. Feeling a "hunch" to visit a library, purchase a book at the store, browse our own bookshelves and archives, and perform a search online can lead us, through the Spirit, to great discoveries that will complement our scripture study immeasurably.

Making a decision may be where we get hung up because we are afraid of making the wrong decision. If we realize that this is not the final step; but a necessary rung in the ladder on the way up to the next step, making a decision may be easier to do. Once we've studied sufficiently, the time has come to make a decision based on the information we have gathered from scripture and other study. List pros and cons. Outline possibilities. Chart possible outcomes. Then weigh the possible answers and pick the one that seems to be the best decision.

Before acting on a decision, there is a most important step that should not be overlooked. Pray for spiritual confirmation. We pull the rug out from under the Holy Spirit if we skip this crucial step. If we understand that the Holy Spirit imparts revelation to us and completes our spiritual circuit with deity, then we know that we MUST go back in prayer to confirm our decision. It is not enough to simply feel that a decision is good, and act immediately. What good decisions have you made in haste? What bad ones? Taking this step provides the opportunity for our decision to gel in our minds and opens the windows of heaven to reveal to us spiritually the implications of our decision. Humility is paramount in this step. We are not going into prayer to tell God what we're going to do or explain to him why we've made a good decision. We are seeking his all-knowing mind to reveal the soundness of our decision and guide us in carrying it out. We welcome a sure knowledge through the Holy Spirit that this is right, good, and pleasing to our Heavenly Father. If we receive this knowledge, we move on to action. If not, it's time to reassess. We may have chosen a wrong answer, or one that is not exactly worded as it should be. For example, there is a big difference in choosing, "I will give \$100 to the humane society tomorrow" and "I will give a sizeable donation to a humane animal organization as the Spirit guides me." Often the answer to one question leads us to a more specific question. Starting with the specific may prevent us from discovering the direction that we are blinded to by our own narrow-mindedness. We should not limit God. He knows more about our lives, the world, and opportunities waiting for us to discover them than we could possibly know. If we do not receive spiritual confirmation of our decision, we should evaluate the decision for openness to Spirit and pray again. Sometimes we have to begin from the beginning again in order to avoid limiting the possible answers to our own prayers. If we continue these efforts and still do not receive confirmation of our decision, the answer may obviously be "no" or "not at this time." Even this can be confirmed by following the steps with openness and humility. We may have made a decision that is not really a bad decision; but it is based on the knowledge we have at hand, and there is more information we simply have not discovered yet that could strongly affect our decision. For example, we could decide to accept a job equivalent to or slightly better than the one we have, not knowing that soon we are going to receive a huge promotion or other change in our current position that will be much better suited to our needs. It would be impossible for us to know this beforehand. Or we could decide to give \$100 to the humane society because we cannot know that God is about to provide us with an opportunity to make a sizeable donation to a charity in great need that is also being guided to seek a donation from us. We may feel prompted to give; but not understand who to give to. If our decision is not confirmed by the Spirit, we should seek guidance. We may have to wait to act until we humble ourselves enough, study the situation enough, find the right scriptures, or the opportunity to act is revealed to us and those involved are guided to us. As we pray for our own guidance, we should also pray for guidance for those involved in our decision, even though we may not know who they are. We should pray for, and open ourselves to welcome the angels of the Lord as they minister unto us and our

fellowman. The important step of praying for confirmation must not be skipped, and must follow to fruition before action is taken.

Once we have received spiritual confirmation of a decision, it is important to act as the Spirit prompts us, and not delay. If we ignore these promptings, the Holy Spirit may just move on to someone who will listen and act. If a mother tells a child to take out the trash, and the child hasn't moved toward the trash by the next day, one can pretty well determine that there is no intention of action to take place. It isn't enough to say, "Ok, I'll do that." If we really feel the promptings of the Spirit, we need to act accordingly. We may have to act in stages to complete our goal; but action delayed is inaction. If we accept guidance and revelation, this will manifest in our lives through our actions. It is not enough to receive knowledge and do nothing with that knowledge. If you complete a course in drawing and sketching, then never draw again, what did the course teach you? What opportunities did it bring you? What will become of your new skill and talent? Just as your skill will diminish from nonuse, and your talent will evade you, so the Holy Spirit will move from you if you ignore him. Would you hang around someone who looks the other way when you speak and refuses to answer you? You wouldn't waste your time. We acknowledge the influence of the Holy Spirit, and, ultimately, of our Heavenly Father in our lives by acting on righteous spirit-led decisions.

Welcoming the Holy Spirit into our daily lives and our important decisions can be the most rewarding spiritual experience we'll ever have. As we become accustomed to feeling the promptings of the Holy Spirit, He will become our companion. This spiritual companionship with the divine is the comforting aura of peace that permeates our soul and seals our faith to instill in us the strength and joy to walk in the spirit through all that life may demand.



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