

Knowing God: As the Spirit (Week 4)

Devotional Series—January, 2010

DAY 22—THE SPIRIT CONVERTS: CHRISTIAN REBIRTH

Read 1 Peter 1:1-3 (NASB); Titus 3:3-6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

It is God's Spirit who enables people to change. Anyone can change, because change is not brought about through human effort. The Spirit of God is the personage behind real change. Like the Corinthians, we all benefit from being reminded of what *we were* but *no longer are*. Sometimes it takes an outsider to see it. Our positive changes from conversion are sometimes more noticeable by an observer whose recollection is periodic. Outsiders remember the snapshots of our growth, whereas we tend to think of our shortcomings. It is always exciting to observe the changes the Spirit brings in the lives of others.

*Fill in the specific type of sinner best describing your past. Use 1 Corinthians 6:9 for ideas _____
When was the last time you told a non-Christian what you were like before you let God rule your life?*

DAY 23—THE SPIRIT UNIFIES: THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

Read Isaiah 11:1-12; Acts 2:1-13

Isaiah predicts the coming together of disunited and even hostile nations. The passage appears to be fulfilled beginning at Pentecost. Jews from adjoining nations, some who were hostile toward one another, were the first to be converted. In time, even the Gentile people of those nations became converted. It could be said that the wolf and the lamb represent all hostile parties unified through the gospel. This began with the outpouring of the Spirit, who enabled the disciples to speak in more than a dozen languages to Jews from other nations.

*What has the Holy Spirit done in order to bring enemies together?
Have you given up on any family member or neighbor from being united one day with you in Christ?*

DAY 24—THE SPIRIT SECURES: "SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED"

Read Ephesians 1:11-14; Romans 8:28-39; Hebrews 6:1-6

According to Scripture, the Holy Spirit resides in us as a seal, implying a guarantee. Scripture further states that no *experiences* (death, life), *time* (present, future), *beings* (angels, demons) *institutions* (powers) or *events* (heights, depths) can, by themselves, pose any threat to someone's eternal destiny. That's right—no external experience, being, institution or event can usurp someone's place in eternity! Forfeiture of our inheritance comes because of our own defiance rather than poor footing. Once we are saved, we are **very** saved!

Make two lists of verses: On one side, put a few Scriptures that are meant to ensure your security in Christ. On the other, put a few verses that alert the reader to threats toward their security. What is to be learned?

DAY 25—THE SPIRIT INCLUDES: THE DIVERSITY

Read Ephesians 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:13

Scripture clearly demonstrates equal access to God for all people. By referencing two of the most contrary groups of people (“whether Jews or Greeks” and “slave or free”), Paul is using opposites to make a point. God brings in those who are naturally different. He is including those who see life very differently. What is more, the phrase “baptized by one Spirit” might be better translated, “plunged by one Spirit.” This would mean that it is the Spirit himself who is orchestrating the conversion and inclusion of diverse cultures. How, then, should we view people of completely different customs and backgrounds?

Do you prefer to worship God in a crowd of people from your own background or from an assortment? Why is it important to strive to appreciate the differences of people in the church?

DAY 26—THE SPIRIT DWELLS: IN STEP WITH

Read Romans 8:1-27

The presence of the Holy Spirit absolutely makes a difference in the life of a Christian. Read carefully through the selected passage in Romans; it speaks powerfully for itself.

If you have been a Christian for a while, what can you do now (because of God’s Spirit) that you could not do as a non-Christian?

What area in your life would you like to have a victory through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11)?

Under what conditions are you most likely to be led by your sinful nature (late at night, during rush hour, all alone, with non-Christian relationships, during or after long work hours, etc.)?

DAY 27—THE SPIRIT PREVAILS: THE REMNANT

Micah 4:1-7; Luke 2:25-40

It is impossible to entirely destroy God’s remnant. The Holy Spirit ensures the survival of the remnant through faithful people. Consider Simeon and Anna, who were selected by the Spirit to prophesy about the next phase of God’s dream. They exemplify the kind of people God uses in each generation. From church history, it is possible to see how the Spirit of God always preserved a witness through humble servants.

If Anna and Simeon were in your role in your house church, how might things be different?

If every other Christian in the current movement of God were destroyed, would the Holy Spirit have you as his witness?

DAY 28—THE SPIRIT CONVICTS: OBJECT LESSONS
Read John 16:5-16

The Holy Spirit has a number of distinct roles; one of them is bringing conviction to the world. There are things that we can do in participation with God that helps the conviction process. As well, there are things that people do to inhibit the process.

*What can disciples do to cultivate an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit will convict them and those nearby?
What do people do to obstruct the Spirit from working in their lives to produce conviction?*

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION—WEEK FOUR

1. What could be done to help your small group better understand the Holy Spirit?
2. Why do Christians often approach the Spirit with tentativeness?
3. Discuss the level of holiness in your:
 - a. Entertainment choices
 - b. Language at home and at work
 - c. Relationships (both Christian and non-Christian)
 - d. Driving and dealing with customer service
4. What could be done to increase one's assurance about their salvation without giving in to cheap grace?
5. Name some people you know who remind you of Anna and Simeon.