

SPIRIT OF HELPING
'GOD IS' SERIES - WEEK 4
Dan Burrell

Good morning Life Fellowship. My name is Dan and I am one of the teaching pastors here. Now let me ask you this question - does anyone here know of anyone in your life that has the spiritual gift of stubbornness? (*Laughter.*) And I saw several of you look over at your spouse very quickly, so quickly you may have strained your neck. But I think we all pretty much know a least one person in our life who seems to be resistant to help, to advice, to counselling, and to assistance, and sometimes we look at that person every morning when we look in the mirror. And I will confess that I have been called many things over the course of my life, and one of them is definitely 'stubborn.' I have lost track of the number of times I have injured myself, quit things, was late, became frustrated which is a nice word for angry, missed something, or lost an opportunity simply because I was too stubborn to ask for, or receive, help.

Now I like to make excuses. *'I'm from Missouri. We are kind of a stubborn lot and we don't believe stuff until we see it with our own eyes.'* *'I am from the country, and from the Midwest,'* so I like to cling to that. *'Well, I'm an introvert. By nature I don't talk to people.'* So I use that as my excuse. My favorite excuse I guess is, *'It's just easier to do it myself.'* Or if I want to sound gracious, *'I really don't want to put somebody else out.'* Or, *'I don't want to be in debt to someone.'* Or, *'I know how I want it done.'*

But in the end my reasons for being stubborn are often far less noble than the excuses I use. Sometimes it is simply because I am proud. Sometimes it is because I am being controlling. Sometimes it is because I am being passive aggressive. *'Well, no one ever wants to help me.'* Woe is me. Sometimes it is simply because I am clueless and I have not yet reached the point where I understand that I am probably not the best person to be attempting what I am attempting. But whatever my rationalization is the ending result is that I will frequently limit my successes, my interaction with community, my level of excellence, my opportunities in general when I insist on doing things my own way without involving others.

However there is another side of that coin, and some of you have experienced that as well. It is that side of frustration when we are in a position where we want to help someone and they won't let us. Every parent of a teenager has probably felt that at some point. Let me correct that - every parent of an adult child, young child, middle aged child, every aged child have had those times when you have just said, *'If only they would let me take care of this for them.'*

I have watched my friends and others, sometimes total strangers, struggle mightily with situations that I would have been delighted to be able to help them with had I simply been invited to do so. I know someone who once walked miles and miles in the

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rain, and caught a bad cold because their car had broken down. And when I asked them, 'Why didn't you call me?' they simply said, 'Well, I just didn't want to put you out. I didn't want to bother you.' All they had to do was say, 'Hey, can you come over here and give me a ride?' I would have been there like that. In fact not only would I have been there, I would have been happy to have been there. It would have been a blessing to me, and a privilege, but no, they couldn't even ask me for help. Quite frankly it left me a little bit miffed and frustrated with them.

Even though I may not be wired to ask someone else for help, I think most of us in our hearts would really like to be that help for someone else. And I realize when I say that there is going to be a bunch of people waiting for me outside here today wanting a loan afterwards. (*Laughter.*) It is the reality. But I think most of us in our hearts want to help others.

I grew up just outside of an Amish community in Missouri, and if you are familiar with the old order Amish you know that they don't believe in electric lights, cars or tractors, televisions, Super bowls or any of the important things in life. (*Laughter.*) And a lot of people think that it is simply some twisted convolution of Scripture that drives them to that, but because I have known some in the Amish community and literally was neighbors with them, I can tell you that the primary reason they don't use modern conveniences is because they have a high value of community. And the reason they don't use modern conveniences is because they want to be interdependent. They want to be reliant on each other. So for them if they need a new barn they say, 'You all come, we're going to put a new barn up.' And they can do it in a day or two. It is amazing to watch them do that.

Whenever a young couple in their community get married, they will often build them a house as a community. And they will often furnish the house with a year's worth of canned goods and supplies. Everybody comes and everybody brings things. And they come together in assistance helping each other.

The Bible has a word for this, and we can see it used in a variety of ways throughout the New Testament. It is the Greek word *paraclete*, and *paraclete* means 'to come alongside of.' And there is a connotation with it, 'for a purpose.' So when you see the word *paraclete* used in the New Testament, it is an idea that someone is drawing up alongside of you on purpose, for a reason. This is the word that you would see when someone is needing help, when someone is traveling alone, or when someone is having a difficulty.

But it is also the word that you see throughout the New Testament that is frequently used to describe the Holy Spirit's relationship with us. He comes alongside of

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us. And when He comes alongside of us, He is doing that for a purpose. It can be translated comfort, it can be translated console, it can be translated encourage, but whenever you see the word *paraclete* it is the idea of drawing near to someone to be a help, to be alongside of them.

And that is what I want you to remember this morning. You and I have God alongside of us intentionally, on purpose to help us. If we will get a grasp of this truth, I promise you it will revolutionize your relationship with God. It will revolutionize the way you see the world around you. It will revolutionize the way you handle everything from opportunity to obstacles in your life, because you are never again going to face a situation where you feel like you are facing something alone, where you are facing something without help, where you are isolated. If we can get a hold of this truth, I guarantee you will understand something about the nature and operation of God that will make you encouraged every single day.

So let's look at some passages if we can. We will begin in John Chapter 14. We will look at two passages in the book of John, then we are going to jump over and look at Romans. By the way, trying to find just a couple of Scriptures to focus on was a great challenge on this because there are so many passages that deal with this. Actually after we go through this Scripture we are going to take a little bit of time and I am just going to like blitz you with different passages of Scripture that remind us of how the Holy Spirit is there to help us.

But let's look at these first three a little more compressively. The first one is John Chapter 14 and verses 25 through 27. Here is what the Scripture says: "***These things I have spoken to you***, this is Jesus speaking, ***while I am still with you.***" So Jesus was here and He was preparing the disciples for the fact that He wasn't going to be there. This was still a mystery to the disciples. They didn't quite understand what was going on because they thought He was there to set up a kingdom. They thought that something supernatural was going to happen that was yet to be revealed. And they had no idea that Jesus was going to be murdered, that He was going to be put in a grave and then He was going to rise again and go back to Heaven. So understand that Jesus is speaking mysteriously to them, and when He says, "***while I am still with you,***" He is giving them hope.

And He says: "***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 have said to you.***" By the way, He even brings this sentence back to their remembrance; that is part of what the Holy Spirit does. He helps us to recall Scripture. "***Peace I leave with you;***

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my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Okay, now let's go over a couple more chapters to John Chapter 16 and verses 13 through 15. It says, "***When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you.***" Notice again here that He says, "***He will guide you,***" not it will guide you. The Holy Spirit of God is not an 'it.' It is not some kind of ethereal existence, some kind of mysterious essence. He is indeed God Himself. So He says, "***He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears he will speak.***"

Let me pause again and try to help you understand when He says, "***He will not speak on His own authority,***" He is not speaking of any authority of all. It means He will not speak separate from God the Father, nor does He speak separate from God the Son, who is also called the Word of God, that is the living Word of God which is the person of Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God which is the Bible. So He tells us to understand the Spirit is never going to lead you contrary to the will of the Father, to the written Word of God, or to the teachings of Jesus Christ. And that is because they are all one, they don't speak with individual voices; they only speak with unified voices.

So understand then that as He says this: "***Whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that He will take what is mine and declare it to you.***" This again is a reemphasis of the Trinity. Jesus is saying very specifically that we are to understand there are three parts of the Trinity. He is just one of them, then there is God the Father, and there is the Holy Spirit. They all speak as one. They all love us as one. They are all available for us as one.

And we need to understand that because so many times we pray to God our Father, or we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, and then we completely leave out the Holy Spirit. And here Jesus Himself is saying this Holy Spirit is here and He is here for purpose to be alongside of us. He is here to help us.

Now look if you will in Romans Chapter 8 and verses 26 through 27. And this is just a great comforting passage which is one of the reasons why I wanted us to use this. "***Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.***"

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This is so important because when we are absolutely at the end of our rope, when we are at the end of our emotions, whenever we feel so empty and dry and hopeless that we feel completely isolated from everybody including God, whenever our words are gone, whenever our heart is empty, whenever we don't feel like we have the energy to even pray - understand something - part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is that He goes to God on our behalf. He goes as an intercessor. He goes as the one who says to God, '*He is broken. He is hurting. He is empty. He is dry. He is confused. He is lost.*' And He makes intercession for us. That is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

Now I want to kind of pause here and say this, because every time we kind of delve into the supernatural, there is always a certain element in any audience of people who like to think logically. You are the type of person that doesn't believe it until you see it. You are the type of person who believes in natural science. And by the way if you are going to believe in natural, then what would be the opposite of natural, or in contrast to natural - it would be supernatural. So by the virtue that we even talk about natural we are tacitly acknowledging that there is a supernatural, that there are things beyond our capacity to understand them.

And by the way, it is not unusual for humans to think this way. Read your Facebook feed for instance, will you? And look at all the supernatural nonsense some people want to attach themselves to. I mean I was reading about a friend of mine who by all other accounts seems to be quite normal, and he is now into yoga. And he is 'downward dogging' and I don't know what that means, but I find it a little disturbing. (*Laughter.*) And he is trying to explain how it clears his mind, and connects himself. And I am like, '*to what?*' I look at my dog, and there isn't anything about that dog I want to be connected with. He just slobbers and barks and chases the neighbors. But this friend has all these poses he does. Now some of you who do yoga are thinking, '*Oh Dan, you are such a Neanderthal.*' And you would be correct.

But the deal is this - there are people who talk about things, like meditators. Or what about the people who like to go to Ashville where they have the harmonic convergent up there in the mountains. And they feel like it resonates with everyone. So you know what - everyone on the planet in some level acknowledges that there are things in this universe that cannot be explained by natural law. So we ought to explore them in a way that is at least intellectually honest.

And the bottom line is this - yes, this is supernatural. This working that God does in our lives upon salvation where He guides us to truth, where He reminds us of values, and He reminds us of absolutes, this part of God that lives within us and that warns us,

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corrects us, and encourages us in the quietness of our own minds, in the mediations of our own heart - you bet, that is supernatural. That is the work of God.

There are things going on in this universe that you and I cannot explain, that science cannot explain, that the Bible chooses not to explain, but the fact that we don't see them, or understand them, or fully comprehend them does not in any way diminish their reality. It is not dependent upon whether or not we believe it for them to exist. That is the case with absolute truth, and that is the case with the supernatural power of God. By God's very definition He exceeds, lives beyond the expectations of natural science, because He created the expectations of natural science. And He can dismantle the creation of natural science by His very power, authority and will.

When you understand that fully, whether you are a philosophy major or not, when you understand that fully, even if it doesn't fully make sense to you as a Christ follower, you can still trust in the fact that God is bigger and more powerful and more knowing than any of our abilities can comprehend Him in the least. And we must accept that because in accepting that we pursue Him, we gain knowledge of Him, and we move toward Him. So understand I may not actually comprehend how the Holy Spirit works in my life, but I will tell you this, if you know God, if you are connected with Him, if you are reading His Word, and if you are listening to His voice, you will experience things that cannot be explained by man, but can only be explained by the fact that there is a God, He matters, He is alive and well in your and my lives as we pursue Him.

And in knowing that, the Holy Spirit takes on a new meaning. I want to say this too before I kind of get into the meatier part of this message. Do you understand that the presence of the Holy Spirit provides more evidence of how much God loves us? When God the Father could not leave our sin unaddressed, what did He do? He sends His Son to pay the penalty for the sin. That is love. However, when God the Son completed His mission and needed to return to His Father in Heaven, what did He do? He sent His Spirit to stay with us. And inasmuch as God is love because He sent His Son, God is love because He sent His Spirit as well. And His Spirit reminds us constantly that He has not forgotten us, He will not abandon us, He cares for us, and He loves us.

And whenever we acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit in us as believers, we are embracing the special relationship, that costly bond, that constant presence, of God with us. So when you are aware of the Holy Spirit, when you are talking to the Holy Spirit, when you are listening to the Holy Spirit, you are constantly going to be affirmed as to the presence of God in your life, and that He still loves you. He hasn't forgotten you. He has not given up on you. And He is coming again for you.

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It reminds me of when I was a kid growing up in a rural area. And it was like the great American artist, Norman Rockwell, who used to paint for the Saturday Evening Post back in the 40s, 50s and 60s. That was my upbringing. I lived in the country several miles from town. The town consisted of 12 or 13,000 people, and where every 4th of July they would have flags up and down Main Street. This was before Walmart, and some of you don't remember a day before Walmart, but in small town America before Walmart they would have tons of stores. There would be five or six shoe stores, there would be many clothing stores, there would be several drug stores, and there would be five and dime stores. Now everyone goes to Walmart and buys all those things and all the downtown stores have become dead.

But in those days being downtown was the place to be. Because I lived out in the country, and if you want to know how far we lived in the country we would describe it as when we were going hunting we went toward town. While most people would say they were going out of town, when we went hunting we would say we were going toward town. And so we only went to town for two reasons - church and to get supplies. Now we never missed a church service; I have even seen my dad break down snow drifts using a tractor to get us to church.

Now we always went to town on Fridays shortly after lunch and we would be home in time for dinner, so it would be about four or five hours that we would spend in town and Mom would do her shopping for the week. Maybe you wonder what we would do if we ran out of something before shopping day. Well, we just did without and waited until the next Friday. She would take us kids to the library, we would check out a big sack of books and we would be good for a week. That is just how we did it in those days.

Some of you young people are looking at me like, '*What planet did you grow up on?*' But it wasn't a bad way to grow up. My youngest sister wasn't born yet, so it was just my sister and I, and we didn't like going in the stores because we wanted to read our new library books. And you guys all know how women are in the stores, right? So can you imagine if they only got to go once a week? Even at eight years old I knew how much I hated women shopping. Now that was just horribly sexist of me, and if you were to ask me if I am, I would probably have to say yes.

But I would say, '*Mom, I don't want to go in the store, I want to read my book.*' So she had a deal with us. We could sit in the car - now again this isn't 2020 we are talking here, this is 1969. So she would tell my sister and I that we could stay in the car with the windows rolled down because we didn't have air conditioning in those days. And she would go inside and shop for around 30 minutes while we sat in the car reading our books.

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Now as awful as that sounds it was perfectly safe in those days. It wasn't a big deal except in the back of my younger sister's mind because she felt sure that this was mom's chance to run away from us. She was absolutely convinced that if mom left that she would never be seen again, that we would be left in the front seat of her car, and there would be no hope for us whatsoever, and we would eventually starve to death in the middle of Moberly, Missouri. So mom had a deal with her, and it was that she would take her wallet out of her purse, but she would leave her purse sitting between my sister and me. And then she would go do her shopping. And in our heart of hearts both my sister and I realized this - my mom was fully capable of leaving her children, but she would never be capable of leaving her purse. (*Laughter.*) We knew that if she left her purse that she would come again, and be with her children forevermore.

So it was the oddest thing but as long as mom left her purse, even though she took her wallet with her driver's license and cash which was everything that she needed, as long as she left her purse we were good to go, we felt taken care of, we felt like mom still loved us. Now the fact is, God would have loved us even if He hadn't left us the Holy Spirit. But the fact that He did leave us the Holy Spirit is a reminder to us that God does indeed love us, and He cares about us, and He is coming back for us.

And so understanding that we realize that it is a great gift. God knew we needed a reminder of His love. He knew we would need ongoing reassurance. He knew we would become frightened, confused, and lost unless He stayed with us. So He gave us His Holy Spirit, the constant eternal wonderful reminder, this powerful helper, that preserves and assists us until we are fully restored into His complete presence. So we see in these passages that we read, He is our helper, He is our intercessor, He is our *paraclete*, He has chosen to walk alongside of us, and to never leave us.

Maybe you are wondering how the Holy Spirit helps us then. Why did Jesus call Him our helper? Why is that specific term used? It is because God wants us to know that the presence of God in our lives through His Holy Spirit is not there for a placid, passive relationship with us. But it is intentional, intended to be dynamic and it is supposed to be vibrant.

So I want to very quickly just tell you some of the ways in which the Holy Spirit is there to help us. First of all He is there to be our guide. John Chapter 14 and verse 26 reminds us that He is our navigator. In other words God is interested in where we are going. He is interested in what we are doing. He is interested in the choices we make. And when we understand that the Bible says, "***In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.***" The fact is that many of us are walking through life and

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we never acknowledge that He is there to be our guide, to keep us from going astray, to keep us from making stupid decisions.

The second thing He does for us is He assigns us gifts. One of the ways that He helps us is He gives us spiritual gifts. We see this in I Corinthians Chapter 12 where it says that in the church there are some who have the gift of this, and some who have the gift of that. Some people are teachers, some are administrators, some have the gift of mercy, some are big givers, but we all have a gift that the Holy Spirit stirs up in us. And He wants us to use our gift not only for His glory, but for the good of those of those who are our family, the good of those who are part of the body of Christ.

And there is another thing that He does and that is He provides clarity. Galatians Chapter 5 and verse 25 reminds us of that. And the reality is that we live in a confusing world where there is a lot of darkness and a lot of unsound messages. And it can become overwhelming at times. I don't know about you, but I crave clarity. I like knowing what is expected of me. I need to know what is right, what is wrong, and what direction I should be going in. And that is part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit that is available for us if we will acknowledge that is His role in our lives. Today many Christians walk in confusion. They stray into sin because they never seek the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to help them make wise decisions.

Another thing the Holy Spirit does is He gives us the power to overcome sin. Galatians Chapter 5 and verse 16 tells us that. The fact that many of us fall repeatedly is the fault of us because we don't acknowledge the power of God in our lives to overcome sin. The Bible says, "***Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.***" We don't have to live in bondage to sin anymore; we can live victoriously over sin. And when you and I choose to sin, we are choosing to ignore the divine nature of God that lives within us.

And beyond that, He also offers us peace, not only the peace with God, but the peace of God. When the Holy Spirit makes you a part of God's family, when He adopts you and gives you son-ship in an official adoptive way, where you can really say, '*Abba, Daddy, Abba Father*' to God the Creator, at that moment you have peace with God. Understand that when we walk apart from God, when we walk in sin, when He is not our Father, we are the enemies of God. But Jesus Christ ended that war, He declared the victory and He gives us the opportunity to have peace with God.

And even beyond that there is something that is important and that is the peace of God. There comes into our lives a quiet confidence that knows that this world is not our home, we are just passing through. The fact that God Himself loved us enough to redeem us, that He is preparing a place for us as found in John Chapter 14 and verse 6, that He is

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going to come again for us, these facts allow us to navigate this world with a peaceful heart knowing that whatever comes our way God is good and worthy of our trust and confidence.

If we get diagnosed with cancer, if you lose our job, if our house burns down, if something goes bad at work, whatever it is, we can have the peace of God. But in order to have that, we must be connected with the Spirit of God. Do you know when I walk in fear, when I walk in anger, when I walk in frustration, that is when I am not listening to the Holy Spirit in my life. It is the Holy Spirit that says, *'Dan, who is your Father? Dan, who died for you? Dan, who loves you more than God? Dan, who has promised that if the sparrow can't fall without God knowing it, don't you think He is going to take care of you?'*

These are the things that the peace of God gives to us. Do you know what else He does? He helps us mature. He helps us become more like Him. We are on a journey, we are making progress, and the question is - are we becoming more like God, are we becoming more like Him? The weird thing is that the more time you spend with someone the more you think like them, and the more you talk like them.

There are times when my wife and I will be driving somewhere, or watching something on television, or having dinner, and she will bring up a topic and I will say, *'Where did that topic come from?'* And she will say, *'I was just thinking about it.'* And I will say, *'I was just thinking about that too!'* It was like we were talking about the same thing in our heads without using words and we just decided to use words for a little bit. It is the weirdest thing. Why is that? It is because we are in sync. After 35 years we are still working on it, but we are getting better at it.

And don't you want to be in a place with God where you know what He wants impulsively, or instinctually? Don't you want to be in a place with God where His Words are not shocking, but an affirmation that *'Yes, this is what I am supposed to be doing. It is going to be okay, I don't have to worry.'* And these are things that help us mature so that we can handle the ups and downs in life without falling out of the roller coaster every time a new dip comes.

But what about the fact that He calls us to repentance? There have been times in my life where I have walked in disobedience. There have been times in my life when the decisions I had been making were not godly. There have been times every single day that I have ever lived when I have been faced with the choice on whether to do right or do wrong, and sadly, invariably, way too many times I have chosen to do wrong. And when I do, something pierces me, something calls to me, *'Hey Dan, you are better than that.'*

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Hey Dan, why did you do that? And do you know what that is - that is the Holy Spirit who calls me to repentance.

By the way that is one of the evidences that you are a believer. Many people I know struggle with, *'Am I really a Christian? Did I really get saved? Does God really love me? I keep sinning, and I lay awake at night worrying about my sin.'* And if you are worrying about your sin, that's the sign the Holy Spirit lives within you and is calling you to better action. That ought to be an affirmation to you. God doesn't like our sins, He is not happy when we sin, but God loves us in spite of our sins, and He calls us to better action. That is part of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit also warns us against false teaching as found in I Corinthians Chapter 12 and verse 10. This verse tells us that one of the things that the Holy Spirit does is He helps us discern what is false and what is truth. And folks, we need that big time in this generation where everybody with a keyboard has an opinion and a lot of it is nonsense. And you are going to have to have the Spirit of discernment in you or otherwise you will get sucked into false teaching.

I have known people who have degrees from seminaries who have been sucked into false teaching. I have known people who have walked in faith apparently but not realistically who have been sucked into religious cults or into denying Christ. I have seen guys that literally once preached the gospel who have now walked away from it. And why is that? It is because they were not discerning about the false teaching, and the teaching that they had supposedly previously believed they did not really believe, and they were revealed to be goats in a field of sheep. You have to watch out for those and you have to watch out for our own heart because some of those guys are pretty subtle and pretty slick.

Next we also understand that the Holy Spirit provides comfort as found in Acts Chapter 9 and verse 31. And that is a wonderful thing because the Bible literally calls the Holy Spirit a comforter. Have you ever been so heartbroken that you think that no one cares, and then God reminds you that He does; that is the Holy Spirit speaking to you. He is the comforter. He heals the broken heart. He restores broken relationships. He desires for us again to know comfort and peace with God in our lives.

The Holy Spirit gifts us with His presence. In I Corinthians Chapter 3 and verse 16 it says Christ promised us that the Holy Spirit's mission within us is that He will never leave us, nor will He ever forsake us, that He provides us with presence. He also assists us as we pray. We just looked at that in the passage in Romans Chapter 8. Understand that when words fail us they don't fail God. And He with words that do not sound right in English, and words that may not be true to any language we know, He has the ability to

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look deep in our hearts and to tell God what we need. God knows us so intimately. He knows us so perfectly that He desires to intercede for us in prayer.

We also know that He reinforces us with confidence. Romans Chapter 8 and verse 16 we read where we can have the confidence we are the children of God. How is then that we can stand boldly before the throne of God and ask for these things? It is because we have confidence the Holy Spirit lives within us. Not only that but the Holy Spirit offers us discernment, this discernment that allows us to know this is best, not just good, but best. He offers us the ability to be able to make those miniscule decisions every day in such a way that we can glorify God in the process.

We know He gives us strength as found in Romans Chapter 8 and verse 28. He gives us strength so we can accomplish anything that He desires for us to accomplish. It is a promise that He will give us the perseverance, the dedication, and the physical and emotional strength to be able to carry on. He teaches us as found in I John Chapter 2 and verse 27. He literally makes Scripture come alive in a personal way in our hearts.

He offers us counsel. He whispers in our ear as said in John Chapter 16, and talks to us about the need to hear His still small voice. He gives us leadership as emphasized in Galatians Chapter 5 and verse 18 how we are to follow His path. We are to walk in the Spirit, under the authority of it. He gives the orders; we do the marching. We also know that He serves as our advocate as found in I John Chapter 2 and verse 1. In fact He is called the great advocate and it mentions it again in Hebrews. We also know in Romans Chapter 8 again that He is our intercessor. He doesn't just send us, He takes us. He doesn't just talk to us, He represents us. He is our intercessor. Also He acts in partnership, He does *paraclete*. He doesn't leave us, He doesn't abandon us, He doesn't check in and out with us, but He is there constantly for us.

And I could go on and on and on and give you more examples, as I have only given you twenty examples of how the Holy Spirit is there in our lives to perform. And yet many of us, including me, can go days without even acknowledging that He is in our heart. And that is heartbreaking. That is tragic. That is like owning the keys to a Lamborghini and walking to work instead. It doesn't make sense. Why do we not listen for Him?

I am reminded of the story of Elijah, who had experienced this great mountaintop experience with God where he called upon God to send fire down and a miracle happened. And then Jezebel says, '*I am going to kill you. Ahab and I are going to kill you.*' And Elijah goes running off to hide. He has a bout of depression that just absolutely rocks his world, he is scared, and he is living in a cave. And an angel said, '*God is going to speak to you. Listen, God is going to speak to you.*'

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And all of a sudden there was a great wind that came by, and Elijah said, *'Is that you, God?'* But it wasn't. And then a great fire roared by him, and Elijah said, *'Is that you, God?'* But it wasn't. And then we read there was a great earthquake with boulders tumbling down the mountain, and God said, *'Is that you, God?'* But it wasn't. And then the Bible says there was a still, quiet, small voice that said, *'Hey Elijah, I am not done with you yet.'*

But sometimes because of the cacophony of racket and the misplaced expectations and our desire for the dramatic, we miss the fact that God just wants us to shut up and open His Word, and listen for His voice. And one of the things Satan does best is to fill our hearts and minds with things like schedules, calendars, and agendas, with so much noise that we never really listen for God.

So here is what we should do. Number one - acknowledge daily that the Holy Spirit is there to help us navigate our lives. What does that look like? I am going to be really practical for you this morning, and I dare you to try it. Tomorrow morning when the alarm goes off, and if you think you won't remember it put a sticky note on the front of your alarm so when you reach over to turn it off it will be there, and simply write on the note, *'Acknowledge the Holy Spirit.'* Before you swing your legs out of bed, say this, *'Holy Spirit, today let me acknowledge your presence in my life. Help me to hear from you. Help me to remember that you are there. Guide my path and I will listen for your voice.'*

The second thing is this - ask Him to guide your thoughts, attitudes and actions. Satan always wants to isolate us from God. Sin did that in the Garden, and sadly we do that today with selfish thoughtlessness by never acknowledging Him in our daily walk. So talk to Him and be real specific: *'Lord, help me know today what I should do.'*

Number three - accept His direction and leadership. Do this as you are shaving, or putting on your makeup, or taking a shower tomorrow morning - pray this prayer: *'Lord, today bring into my life one person that needs to see you in me, one person that needs to see you in me.'* And then walk out of your house with the expectation that God is going to direct and lead you to that appointment.

Pastor Ben and I were having lunch not long ago at a local restaurant with our chairman of the elders. We were just kind of talking about the elders retreat we just got back from. And I have this personality where I am just so focused sometimes, and it drives me crazy, and I am really working to fix it. But the waitress came over and Bob looked up at her and he said, *'We are getting ready to pray for our lunch here and I wondered how we could pray for you?'* And she kind of jumped like she was startled by his question. And I'm ashamed to admit it but the introvert in me was going crazy.

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But she looked at him and she said, *'Could you pray that I get a better job.'* Now that was kind of funny to say while you are working, right? And he said, *'Well, we will do that. Is there a story about that?'* And the waitress said, *'I am a single mom with four kids, and it is hard. I lost my better paying job, and I am doing this until I can find something better.'* And then she started weeping from the emotion, the stress, and the pressure combined with the compassion from someone else. So we prayed with her. She did something which is very dangerous, but she gave us her address, and I sent her a copy of a book on how to know Christ. And then I sent her some gift cards that some of you left in December and told her: *'Use these and go to Target and take care of your family, and know that the people at Life Fellowship Church are praying for you.'*

See it was a divine appointment. And I am embarrassed to say this, but on that day I probably would have just had my salad and not even looked twice at the waitress, but the Holy Spirit worked in Bob. And in working with Bob on that day, now I have a whole new approach when I have my salad, as well as a whole new focus. See that is the Holy Spirit maturing us and growing us and making us aware. Can you imagine what would happen in our community if every person sitting in here this morning prayed that prayer tomorrow morning and sometime during the course of Monday, February 4th, every one of us was Jesus in somebody's life? Can you imagine the ripple effect of that? That is what the Holy Spirit is here for, and we don't even acknowledge it some days.

Fourth - allow Him to do His work in you and through you. You know the more time that you spend with Him, the more you will be like Him. And God lives in us so that we will become like Him. And the fifth thing is - anticipate that He will bless and surprise you as you lean on Him. He will bless you and He will surprise you. When you go to your Life Community in a week, or when you are shaking my hand out here in the lobby next week, when you are talking with your family around dinner on Friday night, wouldn't it be cool if you had a conversation that said this week *'The Holy Spirit came alive in my heart in this way, because now I really realize He is my helper.'*

Would you bow your heads and close your eyes with me for a moment. I would like to ask you right there in your seat and in your heart in this moment to connect with the Holy Spirit. Pastor Ben has been giving us this prayer that I have been praying and I would like for you to pray it too. In fact I would like to do something a little different, and that is I would like to lead you in a prayer and for you to respond right there in your seats. I am not going to make a big show out of it, but I think sometimes when we speak audibly the words gain power. So would you pray this with me by repeating it after me: *'Holy Spirit, I acknowledge your presence in my life. I am asking you to be my helper. Help me to see the needs around me. Help me to appreciate my relationship with you.'*

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Help me to see you at work in me, and around me. Lord, speak to me through your Word and through your Spirit this week.' Now please keep your heads bowed as I pray.

Holy Spirit we love you. Thank you for being our comforter, our teacher, our helper. This week I ask you to remind me of the power that lives within me, to present you for who you are, and to realize how much you love your creation. Father, bring into my life that single mom, that broken man, that addict, that hopeless person, that person who may be thinking suicide, the person who needs a word of encouragement, the one who is wondering whether anybody loves them at all. Father, give me the discernment to see that person when you make him cross my path, and that I would be Jesus to her or to him, and that I would do what you would do as you live out your Spirit in me. Help us Father to obey that still small voice. For it is in Christ's name I pray. Amen.'

Let's stand together. If you need to pray this altar is open. I will be standing right over here or if you want to pray right where you are, just grab someone, put your arm around them, and spend some time together in prayer. This is a church that should be praying. If you need to ask someone what it means to have a relationship with Christ, come over here and someone will show you from the Bible what it means to be a Christ follower. Whatever your need is as we close out, ask God to show you why He brought you here this morning.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.