

You Can Know the Holy Spirit

5-6-2020

SWEET HOLY SPIRIT

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,
And I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord;
There are sweet expressions on each face,
And i know that it's the presence of the Lord
Sweet Holy Spirit, Sweet heavenly Dove,
Stay right here with us, filling us with Your
love.

And for these blessings we lift our hearts in
praise;

Without a doubt we'll know that we have
been revived,

When we shall leave this place.

We often talk about our “personal relationship with Jesus,” and that’s good. But what about the Holy Spirit? Can we have a real relationship with him?

Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit as a person. Discussing the Spirit, **Jesus says, “He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14).**

Jesus uses a singular, masculine pronoun. The Spirit is a “he,” not an “it.” And that makes all the difference.

He speaks. (Acts 13:2)

He teaches. (John 14:26)

He guides. (Acts 8:29)

He is obeyed. (Acts 10:19–21)

He is walked with. (Galatians 5:16)

He is grieved. (Ephesians 4:30)

And he wants us to know him. In Scripture, the Spirit acts like a person (**speaking, teaching, guiding**) and is treated like a person (**obeyed, walked with, grieved**) because he is a person! The Spirit is a divine person to be known, worshiped, and enjoyed.

Listen to the Spirit

Vibrant relationships are marked by a regular exchange of listening and talking. Which means, in order to develop a personal relationship with the Spirit, we have

to both listen and talk. Listening to the Spirit requires an awareness of his presence, an attentiveness to God's word, and recognition of how he works.

When listening for the Spirit, sometimes he will prompt us to do something. Philip was prompted by the Spirit to witness to the Ethiopian eunuch: **"The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and join this chariot'"** (Acts 8:29). Peter heeded the Spirit when he decided to go with some strangers to visit Cornelius: **"The Spirit told me to go with them"** (Acts 11:12). And Paul remarked, **"The Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me"** (Acts 20:23). Because these Christians listened to the Holy Spirit, the gospel spread to Gentiles in Jerusalem, Ethiopians in Africa, and beyond!

Talk to the Spirit

Paul also encourages us to talk with the Spirit when he says to pray in the Spirit at all times (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20). Praying at all times means making the Spirit a regular reality of your life.

We see this vividly in the life of David. In Psalm 139, he describes a sense of God's Spirit being with him wherever he goes: "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me" (Psalm 139:9–10). He also addresses God's Spirit at the highest and lowest points of life, repeating twice, "You are there!" (Psalm 139:8). David related personally with God's Spirit, even when making his bed in Sheol.

When reading Scripture, I often ask the Spirit to guide me into fellowship with him, the Father, and the Son, saying, "Spirit, you search out all things, even the

depths of God, so guide me into the depths of your presence” (see 1 Corinthians 2:10). If I am at a loss for what to pray, or where to go in life, I will pray, “Holy Spirit, I don’t know what’s next; I need you to guide me. Will you show me what the Father wants?” Sometimes the Spirit brings images or verses to mind to guide my prayers. And sometimes, when we lack the words, the Spirit just groans for us (Romans 8:26).

Can We Pray to the Spirit?

Some object to praying to the Spirit because the Bible does not explicitly say, “Pray to the Spirit.” But praying to the Holy Spirit is an implication of his being a person in the Godhead. While John Piper says the normal pattern of prayer is to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, he also says, “It is just strange if [the Spirit] is a person, and I have grieved him, that I would just ignore talking to him and go to the Father and say: I am sorry I grieved your Spirit.” Jesus and the Spirit are persons, not just the Father — “and to speak to them, as a saved sinner would, cannot be unnatural.” If we don’t relate personally to the Spirit, we hinder our appreciation of the fullness of God.

Whether you’re a new convert, like John, or have walked with God for years, it’s never too late to begin, or renew, relating personally to the Spirit. He hears. He helps. He leads. He guides. He teaches. And especially when we’re at our weakest, he loves to comfort us with his presence and lift our eyes to Jesus.