

## “Holy Spirit” Devotional

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*“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him...But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you...But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.” - John 14:16–18, 23; 16:5-7, 12-14*

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the chief glory of the New Covenant. Just as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit had been with the people of God but through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus men would be joined to God and have Him dwell within. Why is this truth so vital to worship? Our first thought might be to link the indwelling with holiness. The Holy Spirit in us helps to make us holy. This is so wonderfully true, and it is also true that apart from sanctification and a life of walking in the Spirit we cannot be vibrant worshipers. Yet the work of the Spirit consistently emphasized as paramount in the New Covenant is knowledge. Yes, knowledge. Jesus said that the Helper would guide us into all truth and disclose to our hearts the riches of His glory (cf. Eph. 3:8). The climax of the main prophecy of the New Covenant found in Jeremiah is that the law will be written on the hearts of the people and "they will all know Me." (Jer. 31:31-34) Paul says that the Spirit searches out "the depths of God" and that we have received "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God." (1 Cor. 2:10-12).

Worship or prayer, whether spoken or sung, is always and ever a response to a Person. Stemming from this recognition that worship and prayer are both personally and relationally oriented is the conclusion that the authenticity and vitality of worship in a community directly corresponds to the accuracy and depth of its knowledge of God. The ‘problem’ of worship in modern Church is not the wrong worship pastor, a bad sound system, an incapable band, the question of traditional or contemporary, or any other question of form. The problem is that shallow knowledge will never produce deep expressions of worship. Personal or corporate devotion will simply never ascend beyond the knowledge of the Person to whom we are devoted. Where the vision of that Person is dim, obscure, or marginalized, true adoration will be rare and fervent cries of intercession scarce. Yet where Christ is treasured and exalted in the hearts of the people, worship and prayer alike will have both their impetus and their staying power.

Thus, to worship "in the Spirit" means, in part, to worship with the knowledge of God at the forefront because the Holy Spirit loves to make God known. This is why Jesus adds "and truth" and Paul says "and glory in Christ Jesus" in the passages above. As worship leaders we need to cultivate the knowledge of God in our own lives through the revelatory power of the indwelling Spirit, and actively invite the ministry of the Holy Spirit in corporate settings so that He can move among the people and put the splendor of Jesus on display. When we recognize that the height of our times of worship are directly related to the depth of the knowledge of the One we praise, then we make ourselves desperately dependent on the Holy Spirit to come and do what only He can do.

- Steven Venable (*from the worship initiative*)