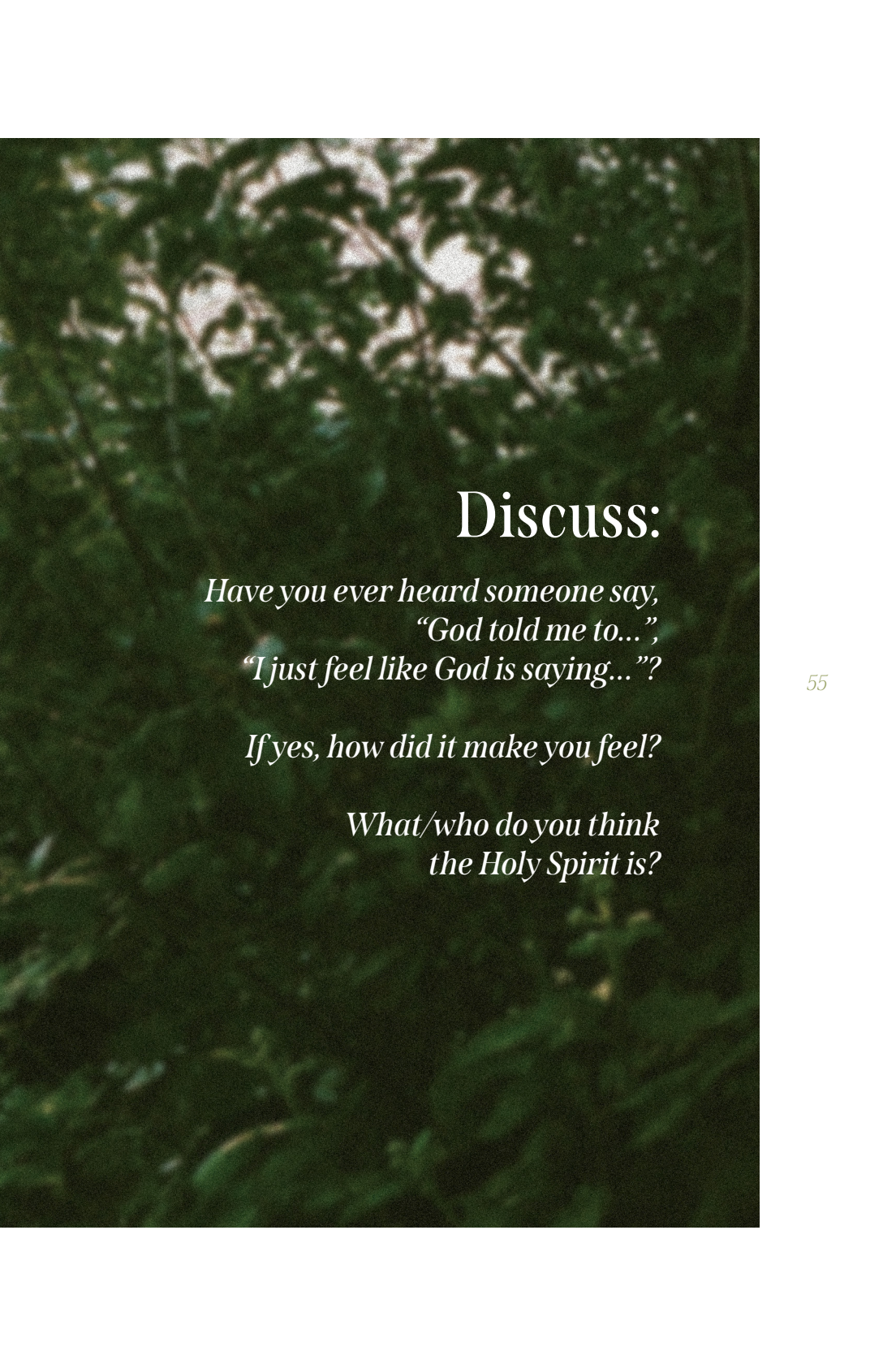


07

Holy Spirit

How do I do what God wants me to do?



Discuss:

*Have you ever heard someone say,
“God told me to...”;
“I just feel like God is saying...”?*

If yes, how did it make you feel?

*What/who do you think
the Holy Spirit is?*

Before Christ left, He commanded His followers to go into the world and turn it upside down through His truth. The disciples had been prepared, taught, trained, and commissioned for this task and yet, after Christ's death, we find them cowering in locked rooms (John 20:19). These disciples did not seem ready to take God's mission to the world. Nevertheless, Jesus wanted to use them to advance His kingdom. He called them to spread His gospel, knowing that He was giving them an impossible task that only God could accomplish.

Read Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, Ephesians 3:14-20 and John 16:7-14

In Acts, we see the event of God moving into man and the power that He brings. In Ephesians, we see Paul praying that God's people be filled with the power of the Spirit. Lastly, in John, we see Jesus casting the vision of why He's sending the Spirit, not as a consolation prize, but as a strategic and necessary part of the furthering of His plan.

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Jesus knew that people could not carry out His mission on their own. They needed help or specifically a Helper. The size of the mission required someone who could go with people wherever they went. The assignment demanded someone who could not only be present with people, but who could also work in and through them. Jesus knew that it was better for him to "go," because then he could send the Holy Spirit, who would live inside of them, continually be with them and empower them to take His love to the world. He knew that, through the Spirit, God would make His home in people. The Spirit intends to continue the work Christ stated: He leads us to "all truth," teaches us how to continually follow Christ, guides us to deeper intimacy with God, produces God's character in us, and gives us the ability to live out our new life. He helps us in our weaknesses, comforts us in trouble, reveals God to us in our ignorance, and convicts us of our sin. He also empowers us to be God's representatives on earth and enables us to uplift Christ and serve others.

When Christ left, He knew our need. He didn't intend for us to follow Him on our own. That is why this is so beautiful. Where with Jesus, the disciples had a companion, we have someone even closer. In Jesus, God dwelt with the disciples. With the Spirit, God dwells in His disciples. You have the spirit of the living God inside of you. If you have accepted Christ, you are not just a person living your life by human power. God wants to give you His strength to live in, His power to display, and His wisdom to help you make Him known.

How do you feel about God living inside of you?

Note that while a part of the Spirit's role is to be our Comforter and Guide, His main purpose is to lift up Christ. Often we desire power in order that we might be applauded or have control, but we can't approach the Spirit that way. We can't attempt to use Him for our purposes. Sometimes we try to direct Him when He was given to direct us. He's not a passive power to manipulate. He is God. Desiring the Holy Spirit means we submit to Him and allow Him to guide us, not the other way around. We're called to be led by Him, which can be somewhat daunting. He might ask you to talk to strangers, to move across the country, or to give up things you treasure. An easy life is not guaranteed. We do not know where He might take us. We do know, however, that He will call us to live intentionally wherever we are – interacting with others and seeing them as people to whom God wants to reveal Himself. When you follow the Spirit, you will find that He wants to use you. He doesn't intend for you to settle in and get comfortable. If you are alive, it's because He still has something He wants to do in and through you.

Are you open to God using you? How do you find yourself trying to use or manipulate God?

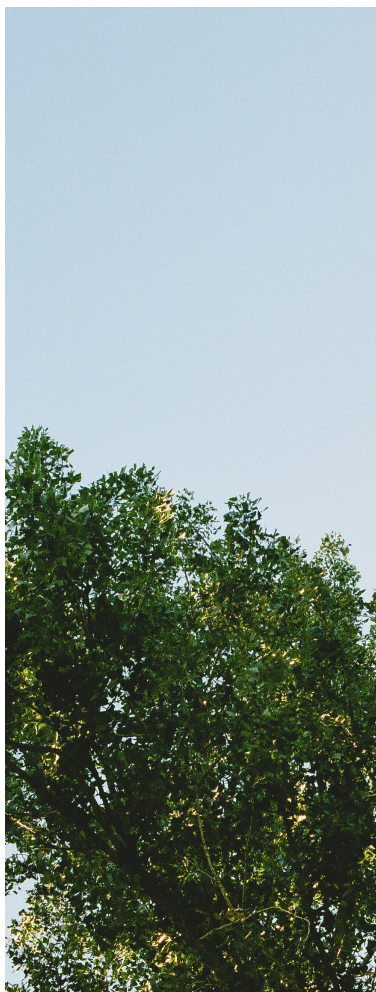
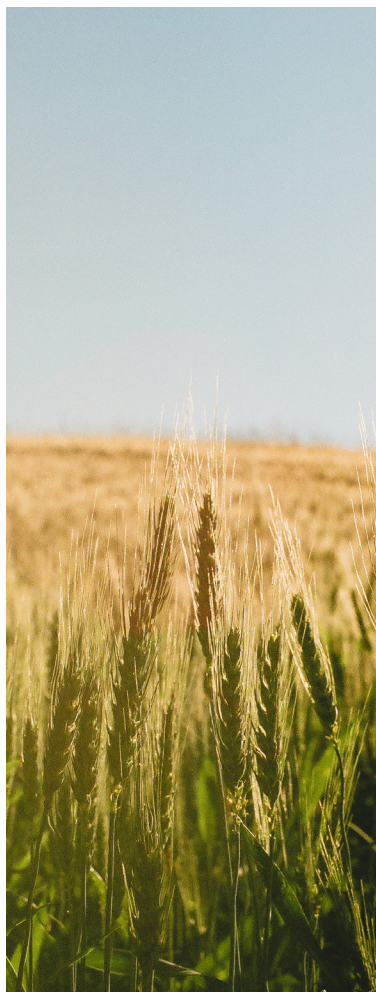
Read Galatians 5:16-25

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As believers, we are commanded to walk in the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit requires a daily reliance on God. This entails habitual, continual and active interaction. Throughout the day, you have a choice of how you will go through life. When trouble comes, who do you turn to? When you need advice, who do you ask first: your roommate, your family, your best friend? God wants us to turn to Him when we need wisdom, confidence, companionship, strength, someone to talk to, someone to vent to. When you plan your day, go to Him. Ask Him how He wants you to spend your time. When you want to sin, run to Him. You cannot walk in the Spirit and sin at the same time. That's not to say you lose the Spirit if you do sin. You are His permanent residence. That won't change. However, when you sin, you are not actively submitting to His presence in your life. Therefore, run to Him and you will not sin. When you do ignore Him and sin, the Spirit convicts you. You will then have to choose to submit and repent or continue disregarding His voice. As you can see, walking with the Spirit is continual. God wants to go through our everyday life with us. If we let Him, beautiful things happen. He shapes us and our lives start to look different. As we submit to Him, His traits grow in us. We become patient, loving, kind, joyful, and gentle because the Spirit is guiding us and those are the attributes that characterize Him. As we begin to reflect Him, He uses us to affect our surroundings. Ultimately, He makes us look like Christ so that the world might then see Christ.

God wants to change the world through us. We are the tools He intends to use to make His mission happen. He wants to use us and He wants to empower us, but we have to walk in Him.

He lives in us perpetually, but we have to pursue His presence and listen to His guidance. The world desperately needs to be touched by the love of our God. He lives in you so that the world might see Him. He wants to change you if you'll let Him and then He wants to use you to bring His love to others. This is the mission to which Christ followers are called. It is also what necessitates the work, power, and guidance of the Spirit in our lives. We can't do this on our own and we are not supposed to. God's plan is to move through us by changing us and empowering us to do what would be otherwise impossible.





ACTION STEPS

This week, practice walking in the Spirit. Write down here or in a journal what the Spirit says to you and where He leads you.

Start your day by thinking through your schedule and activities for the day. Ask the Spirit to lead you as you go and do. Later, write down how you saw the Spirit working in your day.

Ask God to show you how He sees the people around you. Write down what you see and record some new ways you can serve and connect with the people in your life.

Ask Him to make you aware of your surroundings, to see what He sees. What are the needs in your neighborhood/dorm/apartment building or where you spend your time? How does God want to use you there? What can you do?

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Allow the Spirit to guide your words. How does God want to use you this week to speak to someone else: words of encouragement, reminders of truth, the good news of Jesus. Ask God what He wants you to say, and then say it.