



THIRD PERSON

Thirty Days with the Holy Spirit

AMY W. VOGEL



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Introduction

God in the third person is more than semantics. It is the reality of our life as Christians. It is also our privilege to live in communion with Him. It hadn't occurred to me that the Holy Spirit was a person wanting a relationship, just as much as the Father and the Son did. Then, I read Francis Chan's *Forgotten God*, and got involved in a women's study focused on the Holy Spirit. I read quite a few books on what is termed "the victorious life," or as Jesus referred to it in John 10:10, the abundant life here on earth He came to engage us in. The switchboard to the Holy Spirit really started to light up.

A great deal of my effort for the last fifteen years of believing in Christ (more than thirty if you count being saved at a DC Talk concert at age fourteen) has taught me many lessons. The biggest one, and a repeated theme, is that this life with Jesus was never meant to be a solitary expedition. It wasn't meant to be a trek that breaks you; it's meant to be an adventure in getting to know God. At times, that certainly has meant breaking and breakthrough. I've found the center of it: the Spirit

of God is constantly teaching me how to be aligned with the mind and heart of my Father in heaven.

I haven't always known it was the Holy Spirit. It's only been recently when I've begun to look at the third member of the Trinity as someone who wants to be known. It's a challenging concept admitting I have God on the inside. Moving from that mind-blowing reality into a place where He wants to engage with me daily is quite a mystery I accept because it is what it says in the Word. I don't always get it. I have a friend who often reminds me I don't talk to the Lord "out there," but (as she points to my heart) "in there." Have you ever tried to talk to your chest? It's awkward.

To grow in my own faith, I needed to know more about this third person of the Trinity. I began this project from the beginning of Scripture to focus on the major themes of what and how the Holy Spirit thinks; how He is connected to the other two members of the Trinity; and how He has operated in the past so I can begin to grasp the idea of how He is operating in my present. These devotionals are a product of sitting with the verses, listening, and tying them into my personal history.

My eyes have been opened to these perilous times. We need the power of God the Holy Spirit brings. We need it personally to be conformed into the image of Christ and corporately to stand for the truth of Christ.

There is no other way we can overcome the cultural, political, and social calamity in our midst. We can't persevere without Him. We can't build Jesus-like character without Him. We can't be filled with hope without the Holy Spirit.

The good news is (and always has been) that His desire is to put Himself into our time and space. He is overjoyed when we ask Him to make our bodies temples of the living God that can make the kingdom of God available to all. He delights to enable and empower God's children to live like it. We need that now. We need Him now.

I hope these next thirty days are rejuvenating for your spiritual life. They have been for mine. To live from the place of access to God all the time is a marvelous feeling. It brings me peace and security I've never felt before. I've witnessed miracles I read about in the book of Acts. Scripture is indeed quick and powerful, sharpened by the presence of the living, breathing, and personal Spirit of God.



DAY 1

Creative Imagination

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

—Genesis 1:2 esv

How do you start to engage with the One who, as Eugene Peterson translates this verse in *The Message*, “brooded like a bird” over the waters? Let’s start with the pronoun, *He*. The Holy Spirit is a He—a person—and a real living, breathing, relatable person. He has identity, feelings, and responses. He isn’t necessarily in a *form* we understand. He isn’t human like Jesus. He is the Spirit of Jesus, which means He is alive. The Holy Spirit is here; He is present, real, ready, and waiting.

In this passage, He is hovering and looking things over. He is waiting on His cue to be the agent of creation and change. He is anticipating and excited about what is to come. He is complete: the fullness of God, lacking nothing—even as He is surrounded by nothing. This person of God is God. He is the starting point, the Alpha and the Omega. He is the “bang” in the big bang, even before there was a perceivable bang. He created light and space. This was *kairos*—time before time was created, and where there is only eternity. This *kairos* begets something new—*chronos*, our time-based reality. The Holy Spirit is a mother who delivers the universe into being.

I like to try to picture what He looked like hovering there in patient, pregnant waiting. He is waiting for the perfect timing of God—the moment to speak and begin. Having been there when three children were born, I can imagine the atmosphere of intense anticipation. Perhaps the angels around the throne that sing, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” held their breath in silence for a split second just before the Lord spoke.

These are fanciful imaginings; yet, I believe the Holy Spirit is worth dreaming about. He is worth getting to know and thinking about. To our church in this day and age, it is like seeking out a long-lost friend or relative. Francis Chan wrote a book about the Holy Spirit called

Forgotten God; and indeed, it seems He has been benched instead of given the opportunity to play in our lives.

In Peterson's translation of this verse, the Holy Spirit is waiting, like a mother bird waiting for the egg to hatch. He is still waiting for us—for our own desire to go deeper with God. Who better to engage with than the One whose job it is to reveal mysteries and explain all things; and the One who consoles, teaches, and even perfects our prayers so that they line up with God's will?

It is important to see in this imagery that He is over, not yet on or in. He is not yet a part of His creation—not yet joined with it. But in the creating, He is leaving a part of Himself. The Holy Spirit finally fully joined in the person of Christ and in the new church after Pentecost. Still, He has always been present. He wants to be joined with you and me. The Holy Spirit is still full of the excitement of the creation and of the possibility for each day. He is excited about the possibility of today. He hovers. He waits—for you. Will you reach out to meet Him?

Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit. I long for a deeper connection with You—the One who was present at the beginning and is present with me now. You are waiting on me to reach for You, and I am. Join with me today to better understand

what it means to be in relationship with You and all the possibilities that holds. In Jesus' name, amen.

Thought

What God-possibility can the Holy Spirit birth in your life right now?

Group Discussion

1. Using your creative imagination, how do you envision the conversation in the Trinity prior to the act of creation?
2. How does the calling out of the Holy Spirit's presence change or challenge your perspective on the creation narrative in Genesis 1?
3. What situation in your life is formless and void that you want to see the Holy Spirit hovering over?



DAY 2

It's Not Just Me

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

—Job 33:4

I have more than four decades of practice at thinking small. It has taken a work of the Holy Spirit to get me to look behind just what I see at my eye level. I've felt an active work—a persistent reminder—to stop leaning on my own understanding (see Proverbs 3:5). The Lord has been saying, "Okay, enough of thinking like you, Amy. Start practicing thinking like Me."

When I realize I'm applying my own understanding, instead of feeling guilty, it has become quite the relief. When I remember I'm not in charge or in control—not the one responsible to figure out absolutely every potential scenario and what-if—I nearly laugh out loud in joy.

There is immense freedom in being able to turn to the Holy Spirit and ask, "What do You think?" Like a fresh wind blowing in, I take a second and breathe deeply of His wisdom. I meditate on the impossibilities He can pull off, and focus my gaze on what He can do that I can't possibly achieve myself.

There are times I want to scream from the mountaintop, "I don't have to figure it out all by myself! Hallelujah!"

To actively turn to God with a feeling, circumstance, or relationship is one of those paradigm shifts of faith. When we do that humbly and expecting an answer (also called faith), I believe it makes the Lord very happy. What parent, pleased with his or her children, wouldn't respond with enthusiasm? Because it is God, He will also provide over and above what is needed—immeasurably more than we can ask or think (see Ephesians 3:20).

When you apply this renewal of your mind—to ask for the Holy Spirit's thoughts—it becomes the moment when the blinders come off. It is then you start to experience life with much more color, goodness, and wonder; and you will never want to put the blinders back on. When you give over to the truth that the almighty God has given you a life to live and is helping you to do it His way, it will wake you up to grab hold of bigger, better, and higher thoughts and ways.

I know this seems a very simple act in a world that values complicated thought. Still, when it is all you, you are all you have. When it is all God, you have infinite resources at your disposal. The more you turn to the Holy Spirit, the more you develop a secure, ridiculous, and joyful hope that everything is possible. I am close with some people whose very lives testify to this reality. My own life is marked by miracles. He has been there for me; He made me. Even when I thought I didn't have much to say about God, I see I wouldn't be here without His remarkable life-giving Spirit in me and keeping me close.

He is ready and willing—being the giver He is—to fill, refill, restore, and refresh. He is anxious to help, if I could use such a term. He wants to release His life into mine. It is that fresh wind of Himself that keeps me in line with His way. He raises my eyes to the hills to see “my help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1–2).

Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit. Give me the life Jesus promised—full of abundance, and that is dependent on You and not myself. Help me to practice engaging with You in every situation and trusting Your insight and resources. In Jesus' abundant name, amen.

Thought

In what situation today can you practice asking the Holy Spirit for His understanding and wisdom?

Group Discussion

1. What situations in your past have you thought little of?
2. What did the Lord do in the midst of that to expand your thinking about Him or His promises?
3. Given this verse comes from the book of Job and a larger context of a believer in a season of suffering, what impact does that realization have on your own suffering seasons?



DAY 3

Longing for Real Life

When You send Your breath [or Spirit], they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.

—Psalm 104:30

One of the remarkable things that stands out to me about the Holy Spirit is that He is precise. He is sent for a specific purpose. He is an agent of change, renewal, and redemption—that could look like fire at Pentecost, setting the faith of the earliest believers aflame; or it could look like rushing waters from Revelation, sweeping everything downstream that has not been tightly anchored to Him. He can come in as the consolation of the persecuted, the healing of the afflicted, or the resurrection of the dead.

He embodies the power of love but not as a nameless, faceless force. That He is an actual person is a hard