



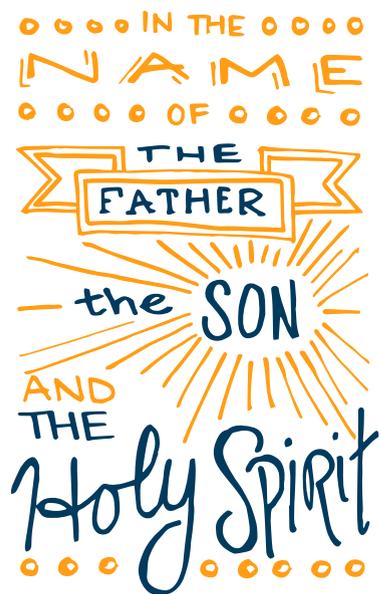
SESSION EIGHT

*The*

# HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, I invite you into the very depths of my being. Lead me, guide me, coach me, encourage me, and challenge me. Direct me in all things. Teach me to become a great decision maker, so that in every moment of every day I can choose what is good, right, noble, and just. Amen.

•—————Matthew Kelly—————•



## 8. THE HOLY SPIRIT

Have you ever noticed the difference between a person who is inspired and one who is not? Sometimes when you watch two teams compete in sports, you can tell one team is inspired and the other isn't. Inspiration makes a huge difference.

For twenty years I have been working with people of all ages and from all walks of life, and one thing that I have noticed over and over again is that people don't do anything until they are inspired, but once they are inspired there is almost nothing they cannot do.

The disciples are a perfect example. Before Pentecost they were full of fear. After Pentecost they were full of courage. What changed? They got inspired. They got filled with the Holy Spirit. Just like you are going to at Confirmation.

Think about those times in your life when you have felt inspired to do something really great. Where does that inspiration come from? The Holy Spirit. God inspires us to do great things with our lives.

Jesus didn't leave us to face the world alone. He promised he would be with us and that he would send the Holy Spirit to guide, inspire, and encourage us. Jesus made that promise not just to the disciples, and not just to other people; it was a promise he made to you. And in Confirmation Jesus is going to make good on his promise.

So let's take a look at who the Holy Spirit is and what he means to your life.

### 8.1 WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

One of the shortest Christian prayers is the Sign of the Cross. Sixteen words. (In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.) It's not just the way we begin and end prayer; it is a prayer unto itself. And it contains one of the most sublime mysteries of our faith: the Trinity.

The Trinity is three Persons in one God. We don't worship three different gods, but one single being who is threefold and yet remains one. Confusing? It should be a little confusing if we really think about it.

But to get us started, think about water. Water can take different forms: liquid, ice, or steam. It is still H<sub>2</sub>O; it is just taking different forms. Now, God does not change from one form to another at different times; God is always three and always one. Still confused? That's OK.

You see, you cannot come to the conclusion of the Trinity by reason alone. It would not matter how much you thought about it; you would

never arrive at the Trinity through reason alone. And science cannot prove or disprove the Trinity. We know about the Trinity through Revelation. If God had not chosen to reveal himself to us we would not know about the Trinity. This is one of the beautiful mysteries of our faith.

You cannot know everything through reason and science, some things we only know because God has revealed them to us. And if there were no mystery there would be no need for faith, because without mystery religion would be simply an intellectual pursuit . . . and it is so much more than that.

In the Scriptures God is revealed as the Father who creates us (Genesis 1), his Son who redeems us (Matthew 1), and the Holy Spirit who inspires us (Acts 1). The whole history we find in the Bible is the story of God's ongoing concern for the human family, and for each of us individually as his children.

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity. He is the one whom Jesus promised the Father would send to guide and encourage us. When you think of it, the Holy Spirit is incredibly practical. How often in your life do you need guidance and encouragement? Whether you are aware of it or not, you need these things every day, and the Holy Spirit is within you to provide them.

But it would be a mistake to think that the Holy Spirit just came into being after Jesus died and rose from the dead. The Spirit has always been with the Father and the Son. Open your Bibles to the very beginning and you will discover the Holy Spirit in the second verse. Genesis 1:2 reads, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters."

But what does all this mean to you? Why should you care about the Holy Spirit?

Think about it like this. In the previous session we talked about the power of Jesus' presence. Well, listen to what Jesus says in John 16:7: "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away." Now, why would it be to our advantage for Jesus to go away? Jesus continues, "For if I do not go away the Spirit will not come to you."

How powerful must the Spirit be? Are you ready to have that power unleashed in your life? What will unleashing the Holy Spirit in your life mean to you?

The Holy Spirit will help you find and understand truth, and you will never have more happiness in your life than you have truth. The more truth you allow into your heart, mind, and soul, the happier you will be. But if you allow the truth to be crowded out with lies and deceit, you

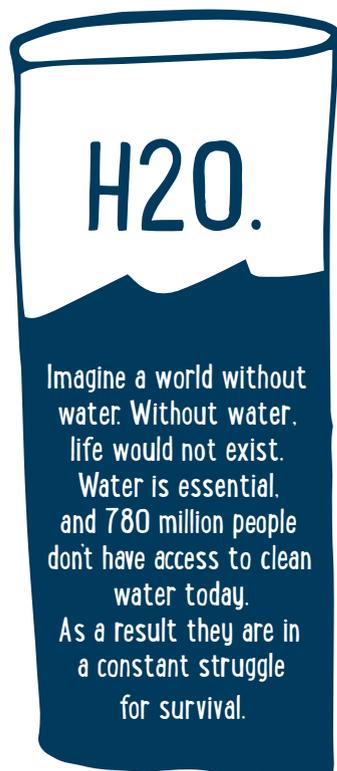


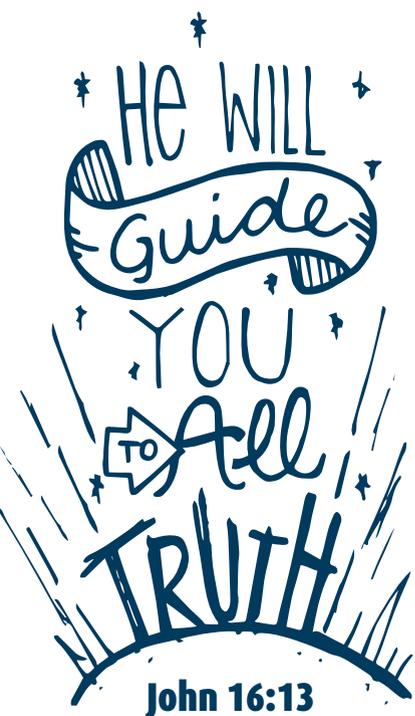
### Genesis 1:2

**KNOW IT:** God created the heavens and the earth. Creation is not an accident. You are not an accident. God intended to create you and the whole universe.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Not only did God create you, but he created you in his image. You are therefore creative in your own ways.

**LIVE IT:** How is God inviting you to be creative?





will find yourself miserable. The Holy Spirit wants to help you build a throne for truth in your heart.

The Spirit of God is within you. This is good news. It means that you have a power within you that you have not even begun to comprehend.

The Holy Spirit will give you the courage to face difficult situations.

The Holy Spirit means that you are never alone. He is always with you, ready to guide you, encourage you, comfort you, and challenge you.

The Holy Spirit is a true friend who always wants what is best for you.

The Holy Spirit gives you the wisdom to know what is right and what is wrong, and leads you in the path of what is good and right.

The Holy Spirit empowers you to do things you would not otherwise be able to do.

The Holy Spirit is transformational. Think about Peter, who denied Jesus three times before his death out of selfish fear. But after Pentecost he literally risked his life just to let people know about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit doesn't change us into someone else; he just brings the best and the most out of us.

The Holy Spirit will help you know and do God's will.

But here is my favorite: The Holy Spirit will allow you to maintain joy even in the midst of suffering. Suffering is an inevitable part of life. It is easy to be joyful when things are going well, but the Holy Spirit brings us joy in times of suffering, and that is a thing of beauty.

Saint Paul is a perfect example here. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are called the "prison" epistles because they were written during Paul's first imprisonment, mentioned in Acts 28. Throughout these writings he talks about his joy and all the things he rejoices about. When you think about the fact that he was in prison for being Christian and you consider the filthy conditions of prisons at the time, you have to ask yourself: What did he have to be joyful about?

He was joyful even in the midst of suffering because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

All this is what the Holy Spirit wants to do for you.

I don't know how seriously you are taking this whole Confirmation thing, but trust me, it is worth taking a little more seriously. You will never regret it. But if you don't take it seriously, I can guarantee you there will come a time when you will regret that.

This is important stuff. I want to encourage you to take it seriously. You'll be glad you did.

**"This is a prayer we need to pray every day, every day:**

**Holy Spirit may my heart be open to the Word of God, may my heart be open to good, may my heart be open to the beauty of God, every day."**

**—Pope Francis**



**Matthew 6:33**

**KNOW IT:** Seek first the things of God.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** What are your priorities? Are they worldly priorities or godly priorities?

**LIVE IT:** Make God's priorities your own today.



Solomon was the son of David and King of Israel from c. 970 to 931 BC. The Bible credits Solomon with building the first temple in Jerusalem and portrays him as the wisest man of his time. This wisdom was a gift from God; the first book of Kings recounts how Solomon prayed for wisdom. During his reign he became incredibly wealthy and powerful, but ultimately his sins, which included turning away from God and idolatry, led to the kingdom being torn in two. The story of Solomon teaches us how seductive and disorienting power, fame, and money can be.

**8.2 UNOPENED GIFTS**

If God appeared to you in a vision and said, "Ask me for anything and I will give it to you," what would you ask him for? Think about it for a moment. Would you ask for money, a long life, success in a career, victory for your favorite sports team?

This is exactly what happened to Solomon, the son of King David. Biblical scholars believe that Solomon was probably only around twelve years old when he became king. In 1 Kings 3:5–15 we read about God appearing to Solomon in a dream and asking what he would like God to give him. Solomon asked for wisdom. In particular, he wanted the wisdom to discern right from wrong, good from evil. This pleased God so much that he granted Solomon wisdom in abundance, but he also granted him riches, honor, and a long life.

Here we find a connection between how God treated Solomon and Jesus' teachings. In Matthew 6:33 we read, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you in addition." This is what Solomon did, and God responded lavishly.

God is a giver of gifts.

One Christmas when I was a child, I half-unwrapped gifts to see what they were, and if the gift was not the one thing I was looking for, I wouldn't even finish unwrapping it; I would just move on to the next parcel. I remember opening one of those half-unwrapped gifts a few days later and realizing that I had misjudged the importance and value of the gift.

At Baptism you received the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, but you may not have fully unwrapped them yet. At Confirmation these gifts will be strengthened in you; the question is, how will you respond to them?

I could put a million dollars in a bank account for you, but if you ignored it and never used it, it wouldn't do you any good. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are worth more than many millions of dollars, but if you don't engage them and nurture them, you will not experience all that they have to offer.



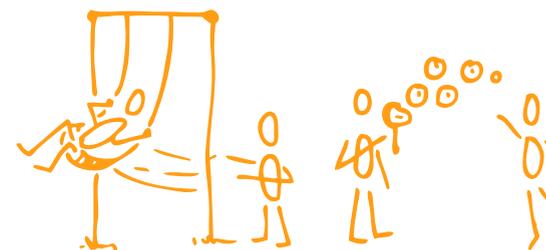
How was Mary different from Solomon?

So, what are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?

- 1. Wisdom:** The ability to discern what is true, right, and lasting. Wisdom enables us to see life from God's perspective. It helps you to establish the right priorities in your life, and leads you to think and act in mature ways.
- 2. Understanding:** Allows you to look beyond the shallowness of the world and see the lasting truth in every situation, by recognizing how God is working in our lives.
- 3. Counsel:** The right judgment that allows us to see what is right and what is wrong, and the prudence to act accordingly.
- 4. Fortitude:** The courage and strength of will to do what you know you should, even if that means personal loss or suffering.
- 5. Knowledge:** The ability to see things from a supernatural viewpoint. In particular, to know what God is asking of you.
- 6. Piety:** A loyalty to God that manifests as generous love and affectionate obedience. This is the gift that allows you to love and worship God as he deserves to be loved and worshipped.
- 7. Fear of the Lord (Reverence):** Helps us to grasp God's greatness and our dependence on him. As a result, we are filled with enormous respect for God and we dread above all offending him or being separated from him. Our Jewish ancestors believed that fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. Of course, it is not a fear like we usually think of fear today. It is more like an overwhelming sense of not wanting to disappoint the One who has done (and continues to do) so much for us.

These are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. When the bishop prays over you at your Confirmation, he will be praying that you are filled with them. Each of these gifts helps you to become the-best-version-of-yourself and live the life God created you to live.

Every day you face situations that require these gifts. We have taken a few minutes to explore them, but I want to encourage you to delve into them more. If you don't know what they are, you won't use them. Knowing them is essential if you are going to activate them in your daily life.



**WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO THINK ABOUT IS A REALLY IMPORTANT CHOICE YOU MAKE EVERY DAY.**



WISDOM  
Understanding  
COUNSEL  
FORTITUDE  
KNOWLEDGE  
Piety  
FEAR OF THE LORD (REVERENCE)



## 8.3 The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

• FRUITS •

OF THE SPIRIT

Love  
**JOY**  
 Peace  
**PATIENCE**  
 Kindness  
**GOODNESS**  
 Generosity  
**GENTLENESS**  
 Faithfulness  
**MODESTY**  
 Self-control  
**Chastity**

How do we know if we are filled with the Holy Spirit? How will you know if you are seeking God's loving plan for your life and responding to it? Jesus advises us that we can judge a tree by its fruits. "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit." (Matthew 7:18) What fruit is your life bearing today? What fruit do you want your life to bear in the future? What fruit do you think God wants you to bear?

If we are really allowing the Holy Spirit to flourish within us, the fruits should be bubbling forth in our lives. Those fruits are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity.

You might not know it yet, but these are the things you want. You want these fruits more than anything else you have ever wanted. In fact, every yearning you have is for these things. We try to substitute other things for them, but it never works.

Embracing and engaging the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we spoke about earlier—wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord—is the path that leads to the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Let's take a look at the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit.

**Love:** To love God above all things and to love others as God calls us to.

**Joy:** This is more than just being happy. It is a feeling awakened by the possession or expectation of something good. And this joy can be present deep within us even when things don't go our way.

**Peace:** The serenity and tranquility that flows from order. The world can make our lives disordered and chaotic. God wants to bring order to our lives – and with that order comes a deep and abiding peace.

**Patience:** Enables us to endure inconvenience, difficulties, and hardship without complaint.

**Kindness:** Concern for others who are in trouble or in need.

**Goodness:** Doing what is good and right in every circumstance.

**Generosity:** To give freely of our time, talent, and treasure beyond what justice requires.

**Gentleness:** To be submissive to God and considerate of others.

**Faithfulness:** To be reliable and trustworthy.

**Modesty:** The moderation of our speech, dress, and behavior.

**Self-control:** The control of our desires so that we can focus them on what is good and right.

**Chastity:** The moderation of desire for sexual pleasure according to right reason, faith, and state in life.

If you really take the time to consider what you want from life, you will discover that a life filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit is what you are yearning for. If you consider the opposite of each of the fruits, you will discover that they lead to a life of slavery and misery.

When we reject the fruit of the Holy Spirit we fall into a life of sin. Sin rejects God's design for who we are and the way we should live our lives. In doing so, sin rejects order and embraces the chaos of disorder. This disorder robs us of the tranquility and peace that God desires for us. When your room is tidy and things are in the places they belong, there is a certain peace and tranquility that comes from that. If your room is a mess, with things scattered all around, the chaos of that environment robs you of peace and tranquility and creates anxiousness.

The way of God is one of peace and order. The way of sin is one of chaos and anxiousness. Which will you choose?



VIRTUE IN  
  
 FOCUS

### Gentleness

[jen-tl-ness]

mildness of speech, temperament, and behavior; kindness and tenderness

Who do you know who exemplifies the virtue of gentleness?

In what ways is God calling you to be gentle with others?

How is God inviting you to be gentle with yourself?

"DO NOT BE AFRAID. DO NOT BE SATISFIED WITH MEDIOCRITY. PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP AND LET DOWN YOUR NETS FOR A CATCH."

—JOHN PAUL II



# 8.4 PROMPTED

When I was a teenager I thought I could make every decision on my own. As I got older I came to the realization that so many people have gathered so much wisdom from their successes and their failures—and most people are more than happy to share that wisdom if you ask them to. Since then I have learned many things from many people. But every day I call on the Holy Spirit to guide me.

Do you remember in Session 4 when I talked about walking the Camino? While I was walking that path across northern Spain, at every fork in the road I was looking for the sign that showed me which way to go. Life is a long journey. Every day we come to many forks in the road and we have to decide which path we will walk. The signs are there to guide us, but they tend to be less visible. Our conscience sometimes nudges us in a particular direction; at other times it alerts us to danger ahead. This is the Holy Spirit prompting us to act in ways that are good and noble.

What does it mean to be prompted? To prompt means to encourage, inspire, or remind someone to act. Sometimes we need the Holy Spirit to encourage us. We know what we should do, but it seems difficult and we need the Holy Spirit to give us courage. At other times we need the Holy Spirit to inspire us. We don't know what to do and we need him to fill our minds with the right ideas. And then there are times when we get carried away or distracted and simply need the Holy Spirit to remind us.

Learning to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit is one of the most important skills you can develop. As with most things, we get good at recognizing the promptings of the Holy Spirit by practicing. The Holy Spirit is always prompting us toward truth and away from lies. He is always encouraging us toward the-best-version-of-ourselves and away from a-lesser-version-of-ourselves. The Holy Spirit is always prompting us toward what is good for us, and away from what is not.

So, how do we learn to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

A great place to start is with a few minutes of prayer each day. Prayer creates a stronger connection between you and God. The stronger the connection, the clearer the message. We have all been on phone calls when the connection is horrible and you either can't hear the other person at all, or you only get every second or third word. How is your connection with God? Is it a good, strong, clear connection? Or is it a weak and jumbled connection? How can you increase the number of bars you have in your connection with God?

PEOPLE DON'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL THEY ARE *Inspired* BUT ONCE THEY ARE INSPIRED THERE IS ALMOST *Nothing* THEY CAN'T DO.

Daily prayer is an opportunity to strengthen our connection with God. The stronger the connection, the more clearly we will hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The more we follow those promptings, the happier we will be.

In Session 4 we practiced The Prayer Process. Have you been using it each day in your daily prayer? I hope so. It is a game changer.

The reason I bring it up again now is because it is perfectly suited to teach us to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Let's walk through it again quickly and I will explain.

You will remember there are seven parts to the Prayer Process. The first part is Gratitude.

1. GRATITUDE: Begin by thanking God in a personal dialogue for whatever you are most grateful for today.

*Here we are asking the Holy Spirit to remind us of all the people, things, experiences, and opportunities we have to be grateful for today.*

2. AWARENESS: Revisit the times in the past twenty-four hours when you were and were not the-best-version-of-yourself. Talk to God about these situations and what you learned from them.

*Now we are asking the Holy Spirit to inspire us to learn from the events of the past twenty-four hours.*

3. SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: Identify something you experienced in the past twenty-four hours and explore what God might be trying to say to you through that event (or person).

*We don't always recognize the signs God places in our path at the time. Here we ask the Holy Spirit to let us know if we missed any significant signs today.*

4. PEACE: Ask God to forgive you for any wrong you have committed (against yourself, another person, or him) and to fill you with a deep and abiding peace.

*Here the Holy Spirit enlightens us to the mistakes we have made along the way, so that we can avoid them in the future.*

5. FREEDOM: Speak with God about how he is inviting you to change your life, so that you can experience the freedom to be the-best-version-of-yourself.

*Now the Holy Spirit challenges us and encourages us to change.*

What is a Promise?

A promise is a statement telling someone that you will definitely do something or that something will definitely happen in the future.

Jesus made many promises. One of those promises was that he would send us the Holy Spirit. What other promises did Jesus make? Do you believe him? Do you take him at his word? Do you trust Jesus?

“EVERY TRUE PRAYER IS A PRAYER OF THE CHURCH; BY MEANS OF THAT PRAYER THE CHURCH PRAYS, SINCE IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN THE CHURCH, WHO IN EVERY SINGLE SOUL ‘PRAYS IN US WITH UNSPEAKABLE GROANINGS.’”

—EDITH STEIN



# “LET’S ASK OURSELVES: ARE WE OPEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT?”

—POPE FRANCIS

6. OTHERS: Lift up to God anyone you feel called to pray for today, asking God to bless and guide them.

*Here the Holy Spirit reminds us of all those who need our love, support, and encouragement.*

7. Pray the Our Father.

Allowing the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit to animate us is an everyday job. With every choice you either embrace or reject the Holy Spirit—and the fruits and gifts he wants to fill you with.

Take a few minutes out of each day to connect with God in prayer. This will strengthen your connection with him and allow you to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit more clearly. Listen to those promptings and you will discover something I have learned over the years: Every regret in life comes from not listening to the voice of God in our lives. You will never regret following your conscience and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. All of life’s regrets come when we ignore our conscience and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.



Pentecost is the feast commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles of Jesus as described in Acts of the Apostles 2:1–31. For this reason Pentecost is referred to as the Birthday of the Church.



# PSALM 139

O LORD, thou hast searched me  
and known me!

<sup>2</sup>Thou knowest when I sit down  
and when I rise up; thou discernest  
my thoughts from afar.

<sup>3</sup>Thou searchest out my path and my lying  
down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>Even before a word is on my tongue,  
lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

<sup>5</sup>Thou dost beset me behind and before,  
and layest thy hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is high, I cannot attain it.

<sup>7</sup>Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

<sup>8</sup>If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!

<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

<sup>10</sup>even there thy hand shall lead me,  
and thy right hand shall hold me.

<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Let only darkness cover me,  
and the light about me be night,"

<sup>12</sup>even the darkness is not dark to thee,  
the night is bright as the day;  
for darkness is as light with thee.

<sup>13</sup>For thou didst form my inward parts,  
thou didst knit me together in  
my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>I praise thee, for thou art fearful and  
wonderful. Wonderful are thy works!

Thou knowest me right well;  
<sup>15</sup>my frame was not hidden from thee,  
when I was being made in secret, intricately  
wrought in the depths of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance;  
in thy book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.

<sup>17</sup>How precious to me are thy thoughts,  
O God! How vast is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>If I would count them, they are  
more than the sand.  
When I awake, I am still with thee.

<sup>19</sup>O that thou wouldst slay the wicked,  
O God, and that men of blood would  
depart from me,<sup>20</sup> men who maliciously  
defy thee, who lift themselves up  
against thee for evil!

<sup>21</sup>Do I not hate them that hate thee,  
O LORD? And do I not loathe them  
that rise up against thee?

<sup>22</sup>I hate them with perfect hatred;  
I count them my enemies.

<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart!  
Try me and know my thoughts!

<sup>24</sup>And see if there be any wicked way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting!



**1 Corinthians 6:19**

**KNOW IT:**  
You are a temple  
of the Holy Spirit.

**THINK ABOUT IT:**  
Are you honoring your  
body as a temple of  
the Holy Spirit?

**LIVE IT:** What changes  
do you need to make to  
make your body a better  
home for God?

# 8.5 DECISION point

You have another decision to make. Are you going to welcome the Holy Spirit into your life or ignore and reject him?

If you are going to welcome the Holy Spirit, then prepare yourself to receive him. If you had an important visitor coming to your home, you would tidy up and make special preparations.

In the previous session we talked about the beautiful churches all around the world and why we build such beautiful churches. The reason is because they are Jesus' home. But visit a great cathedral in any major city in the world and you will find two types of people. The first type is there to pray. The second is just there to look around. The first recognizes that Jesus is present. The second does not. Pilgrims and tourists. Don't be a tourist!

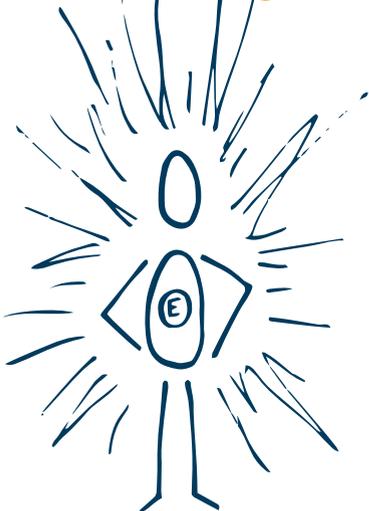
The Scriptures teach us that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Holy Spirit is always present within us. Embrace that. Celebrate that. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate adviser.

You are of course free to ignore or reject the Holy Spirit. But keep in mind that there are consequences if you do. The consequences of embracing the Holy Spirit are peace, joy, order, and purpose. The consequences of rejecting the Holy Spirit and his direction in your life are anxiety, chaos, and the despair of purposelessness.

If you do choose to welcome the Holy Spirit into your life, he will invite you to join in his work. The Holy Spirit is the great encourager. Life is not easy and everyone needs daily encouragement, because the world is full of discouragement and bullying.

I hope you will live an inspired life. I hope you will live in the Spirit. If you do, I know you too will become a great encourager.

**JESUS  
I TRUST  
IN YOU**



What do you think was the best conversation Mary ever had with the Holy Spirit?

