



THE HELPER DEVOTIONALS

The Helper Devotional #1

HOW CAN THIS BE GOOD?

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you (Jesus in John 16:7).

Can you imagine being one of the disciples in the upper room at the Last Supper and hearing Jesus say, "It is good that I am going away"?

How can that be *good*? Yet Jesus, just hours before going to the cross in a very intimate time with His disciples, explains the importance of His leaving so the Holy Spirit can come. After three and a half years spending time with the disciples, Jesus showed them the way to the Heavenly Father through believing on himself to be the Son of God. They had all grown so close to Jesus through spending time with Him teaching, sharing meals, performing miracles, traveling dusty roads, laughing and weeping together.

So...How can it be good that Jesus will go away? Could there be anything more wonderful than being in the presence of Jesus himself? Yet Jesus knew his time was coming, explained to the disciples the importance of who was coming in His place, the great gift of the Holy Spirit.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counselor to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you (John 14:16-18).

Jesus was limited during his time on earth his human body. He was subject to time and space and only those who were in his presence had the ability to hear or touch Him. Christ fulfilled his mission on earth by being obedient to the Father even in death. He was resurrected from the grave overcoming the last enemy of death. He was the perfect sacrifice for our sin, making a way to God the Father. Jesus has promised His presence to every believer through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is the third person of the Trinity and we know Him because we have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and savior.

As Jesus promised, He lives WITH you and IN you. The Holy Spirit is God living in you! We are no longer orphans, we are adopted into God's family and are now a holy people set apart for God.

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...(Ephesians 1:13).

A PRAYER FOR TODAY

Lord, it is hard for me fathom your loving kindness. I know you have given us the beautiful and precious gift of the Holy Spirit. Help my eyes to see, my ears to hear, my mind to understand and open my heart so I may yield to the working of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Holy Spirit, you are the Spirit of Truth, lead me into all truth today. You are also my counselor, counsel me in the ways of Jesus as I go through this week, so I may love in my words, thoughts and deeds

The Helper Devotional #2

A NEW HEART

I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Consider **God's love for us**, how he fulfilled his promise given years prior in to the prophet Ezekiel. God's amazing plan from the beginning was to dwell with us in loving relationship. **God alone provides the way** for this to happen. He sent his son Jesus to cleanse us from our sins (*I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from your impurities and from all your idols*), He gives us a new heart (*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you*), **He places the Holy Spirit within us** (*And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws*). **His Spirit moves us** to follow God's good and perfect will for our lives.

There are **times when I struggle with keeping my new heart from becoming hard**. I allow myself to be loaded down with a stony heart and I fail **to truly love God and love others**. I build concrete walls around my heart to protect myself from being hurt again. Yet God has promised to melt the hardness away and keep my new heart soft, **giving me a heart of flesh by filling me with the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit in me, moves me, enabling me to have the **power and ability to trust and love** so that my heart remains soft desiring to know and follow God's ways. I want my heart to remain soft so I will be able love deeply and be fully available to God, but **how does my relationship with the Holy Spirit make this happen?**

Jesus said **the Holy Spirit is our ultimate helper**; leading, guiding, counseling, speaking, praying, filling, loving, powerfully moving and

transforming us into the fully alive person God created us to be. He is continually fashioning us and reminding us of the Heavenly Father's best plans (John 14:15-20, 25; John 16: 5-14).

The following is a short story of how **the Holy Spirit transformed a situation** that had the potential to be a hardened heart to one that created harmony and love.

- Years ago, I rented a small mobile home on a woman's property that was behind her house. It became evident to me after the first month the owner, Ida, would not be an easy person to live next too. Many situations transpired during that season that I felt were unfair and hard to overlook. One day in my frustration I told God that I did not have to put up with her behavior anymore and I was going to move. Immediately after I spoke those words the Spirit spoke to my heart with these three words, "Yes you do!" I knew it was the Holy Spirit because my prideful self would not have thought that way. I was also reminded how much she was loved by God. I stayed despite my grievances and after some time the Spirit gave me insight and love for Ida, and we became very close. My heart was softened and so was hers. Eventually our lives took different paths, I moved out of state, married and stayed busy raising four children. Years had passed and I very rarely thought of or spoke to Ida. I was in my room one morning seeking a quiet time with the Lord, (this did not happen as often as I would have liked at this stage of life) and I sensed the Spirit nudge me, "Call Ida and wish her Happy Birthday." In my mind I thought *this is crazy because I have not spoken to Ida for a long time and I do not even know if it is Ida's birthday*. The urge was strong, so I reasoned, "What do I have to lose?" I called Ida and when she answered, I said, "Happy Birthday Ida!" She was so overwhelmed with joy that I would remember her birthday and she let me know how happy it made her. I then was able to tell her, that the Holy Spirit had reminded me, and the Lord wishes her a Happy Birthday!

This simple story reminds me of how **the Spirit keeps our hearts soft and desires to bring joy and peace in our lives and others**. I am thankful for how the Spirit did not allow me to harden my heart toward a potential friend.

I am joyful at how the Spirit knows the heart of others and how the Spirit prompts us to even make a simple phone call to a person who might have been forgotten. The Holy Spirit softens hearts and makes things new and beautiful!

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Romans 5:5).

...Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3).

A PRAYER FOR TODAY

Lord, thank you for your loving patience with me. Lord forgive me for trying to do things on my own. I truly want a soft heart full of your Holy Spirit love. There are so many times I pass by special moments in my life because I am hurt or stubborn. Or there are times when I am so busy with other things that seem so important that I miss your movement in my life. Holy Spirit you are always present in me. Help me to be aware of your nudges and movement in my life. You desire the best for me and are ready to guide and fill me with what I need to be conformed to the image of Christ. Holy Spirit, keep my heart soft and fill me today.

The Helper Devotional #3

PETER STOOD UP

Then he [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:45-49).

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

At times, I feel I just sit in my car, in the driveway... I have adjusted the thermostat, so I am comfortable. I have dialed the radio to my favorite station and I sing along to worship music. I have a great view out my window. I am safe in my car. I don't need to worry about a speeding ticket because I am parked and have no fear of crazy drivers. I know I will not break any law while I sit here in my comfy seat. I even look like a driver as I place my hands on the wheel and adjust my mirrors. I have the traffic rules memorized. I am ready to go but I am going nowhere. Wait...*why* am I not going anywhere?

I know this is a ridiculous scenario. Who buys a car and sits in the driveway? Maybe I am taking a big leap, but I think **my life with Jesus at times resembles me just sitting in the car**. I feel as though I am doing the right things, I have everything I need, but I am going nowhere.

Jesus commanded the disciples to wait: *Do not leave Jerusalem until you receive the promise of the Father, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem, and all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4, 8).*

So, Jesus-followers were in the upper room waiting. Then on the day of Pentecost, the promise of the Father came. **The Holy Spirit** came in the room as violent wind, tongues of fire rested on each them, each one of them was **filled the Spirit** and they began to speak in other languages **as the Spirit enabled them** (Acts 2:3). What a great day! We have now been ushered into the age of **Jesus' Church**. Praise the Lord! The promised gift of the **Holy Spirit has been poured out and received by followers of Christ**. Such ecstatic joy, all were praising the Lord! (Acts 2:11). But all this joyful noise and the miracle of languages creating a raucous in the town causing the visiting people to question whether the Jesus-followers were drunk. The towns people started making fun of the disciples.

What happens next is one of the most amazing transformations in Scripture: *"Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd"* (Acts 2:14). **Peter stood up!** The same Peter who ran away in fear from Jesus' accusers days prior, the Peter who cursed and said he did not know

Jesus... He stood up! **The power of the Holy Spirit came on Peter** in such a way that he now had boldness to face a very large crowd with the good news of Jesus. The **amazing gift of the Holy Spirit** empowered them, filled the disciples with power to rise up in holy love, overcoming their fears. Peter then goes on to preach a fiery, bold message to the crowd, reciting scriptures from the Old Testament that told of the the **promise of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection of Jesus**, who was and is the Son of God.

At the end of his message the people listening were cut to the heart and asked: "What shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off --- for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:37-39).

This was the start of the good news exploding throughout the world!

Sometimes **standing up is the first step in following the Spirit's lead**. I don't think Peter had a memorized sermon ready for the day. I believe as he followed the leading of the Holy Spirit, God filled him with wisdom and boldness. Peter knew scripture and he knew Jesus and now He had the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the good news. **This same Spirit is available to us** as believers. **The Spirit is ready to fill all of us with this same power**. The power to share the love of God to the people who surround us. The person of the Holy Spirit desires all people to come to know Christ. Trust Him. **Jesus left us with a great commission and the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill it**.

So why am I still sitting in my car, in the driveway, going nowhere? God has given me everything I need to move forward. Just like Peter I need to stand up or move! I need to use all the resources God has given me and fill the engine with fuel, put the car in gear and the foot to the gas. It is time for me to ask the Holy Spirit to fill me with fuel (power). **The Spirit gives me everything I need to move forward in becoming more like Christ**. The Holy Spirit's power and presence is with me to navigate the journey.

A PRAYER FOR TODAY

Holy Spirit, let the adventure begin! I ask that you fill me with your power today so I may move forward in following your will. I pray, I can be that willing vehicle to share with others the great love Christ has for them. Give me eyes to see people as you see them and a heart that loves so much that fear does not stop me. I know I cannot do any of this on my own, so again I humbly ask for your filling today.

The Helper Devotional #4

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit... (Ephesians 5:18).

The Bible tells us to “**be filled** with the Spirit!” Have you ever wondered what that means?

As Jesus' followers, we are **sealed** with the Holy Spirit at salvation then **filled** with the Spirit when we fully submit our wills to Him. In the “be filled” passage the original Greek word for “filled” is present tense, meaning **continually being filled**. Paul is contrasting being drunk with wine which controls a person negatively to being filled with the Spirit which motivate and move a person in living like Jesus. The result is being controlled by the Spirit rather than other forces. When we are filled with the Spirit, the result will be a display of the **fruit of the Spirit**.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).

The beauty of **spiritual fruit is that it grows in community**. For example, it is hard to display love in isolation. We grow when we are in community and can share the fruit of the Spirit with one another. The filling of the Spirit can vary in the life of every believer. We all grow at different rates and seasons. This variance makes way for opportunities for each of us to display the fruit of the Spirit. Such as joy when another is blessed, peace amid a stressful situation, patience when things are not going as planned, kindness when a

person is in need, faithfulness when the going gets tough, gentleness that disrupts wrath. and self-control when all else seems out of control.

As believers, we can sometimes "pour out" more than we receive as we neglect our spiritual health. Jesus promised rivers of living water, meaning the Holy Spirit's power in our lives (John 7:38). Rivers of living water can run dry if we do not continually come to Jesus, the source, to be replenished. A popular Christian evangelist in the nineteenth century, D.L. Moody, was asked why **he needed to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit**, he replied, "Because I leak!" Like Moody, we leak and need the power of the Holy Spirit to refill our lives.

Further on in Ephesians, we are told we can grieve the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it is hard for us to comprehend that unwholesome words that come out of our mouths can grieve God.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice (Ephesians 4:29-31).

Sinful actions can grieve God's Spirit and affect others in painful ways. They hinder the Holy Spirit's work in our life and the community. In contrast, when we are filled with the Spirit and displaying the fruit of the Spirit, we are given **the ability to walk in love and unity with one another**. Thus, following the Lord's command to us in John 13:34, "Love one another as I have loved you."

