

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer

**"I pray to God to know Him,
to lay my request before Him
and to find direction for my
daily life."**

- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

I have a question for you to consider. If you needed advice, who is the first person you would ask? How would you go about making a difficult decision? If you are like most people, you would most likely consult some friends and relatives and bring your own wisdom to bear on the problem. You might pray about it, but more often than not, we tend to ask God to endorse (or "bless") the decision that seemed best to us. Let's face it, when it comes to receiving guidance from God, many of us aren't really sure how to go about it. But when we look at the early church, we see that the regular pattern was to listen to God first—to draw their guidance from the Spirit's leading. I invite you to look closely at the passages this week and let God show us both why and how we receive the guidance we desperately need—from Him.

Listening for His Voice,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Monday

Begin your time today asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart and mind to the truth of God's Word.

Today we will look at a portion of Jesus' teachings to His followers that was given in the upper room shortly before He is taken to be tried and crucified. In John 13 He told his disciples that soon He will be leaving them—they are obviously troubled.

Read His response to them in John 14:1-30. As you read the passage, write down any questions you may have in the space below.

The disciples had left everything to follow Jesus. During His ministry with them, He had been their teacher, comforter, friend and trusted counselor. Who does Jesus promise that the Father will send to them after He is gone?

What does verse 26 tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life?

The disciples had the teaching of Jesus to guide them, and now we have the Bible which contains the teachings of Jesus. Since the disciples (and we, later on) would not have the guidance of Jesus on a daily basis, He promised that in His place the Father would send the Spirit to continue to teach us how to live.

In what areas of your life do you need guidance? Comfort? Instruction or knowledge?

Close your time in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit for the guidance, comfort or instruction that you need.

Tuesday

Begin your time thanking the Father for sending His Spirit to live within us.

1 John was a letter written by John to the church to warn them about false teachers who were leading believers astray and to remind them of the core truths of who God is and who they are in relation to God.

Read 1 John 2:18-27.

If we are anointed, *have the Holy Spirit within us*, what truth will we know?

These false teachers were Gnostics telling believers that anything physical was evil, so the body was evil. Therefore Jesus was not fully a man, making His physical death impossible. They were undermining the foundational teachings of Scripture.

What does John tell the believers in verse 27?

The church had been tricked into thinking that the only way they could know about God was through a few enlightened teachers who were leading them astray. John reaffirms that the Holy Spirit is within them and can teach them to discern between false teaching and true teaching. The Holy Spirit is a trustworthy teacher.

Think of the teachers that are instructing you about the Word of God. Pray that they would listen to the Holy Spirit's voice in their lives and instruct believers in the truth. Ask for discernment from the Spirit regarding what is true and what is false as you listen to or read various teachings about God this week.

Wednesday

Begin your time today by asking the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your thoughts as you study God's Word.

Read Acts 13:1-4.

What role do you see the Holy Spirit play in this passage?

What is Saul and Barnabas' response to the Holy Spirit's guidance or call?

Give an example from your own life in which you sensed the Holy Spirit guiding you to take action or calling you to do something? How did you respond?

In your life right now, how might the Holy Spirit be calling you to obey? If you are hesitating to be obedient, what is causing this hesitancy?

Close your time in prayer, asking God for an open heart towards the Spirit's guidance and call in your life.

Thursday

Begin your time today, asking the Holy Spirit to give you discernment in your life between what is pure and holy and what is sinful.

Read Acts 15:1-29.

In the space below, make an outline of the events that occurred in this passage.

Reread verses 28-29. What role does the Holy Spirit play in these verses?

The Holy Spirit is within us helping us discern what is good and profitable for us and what is sinful and destructive.

Think through your day yesterday. How did you see the Holy Spirit at work helping you discern between pure and sinful choices?

Close your time, asking the Spirit to make your heart obedient today to His leading—helping you choose between what is pure and what is sinful.

Friday

This week we have seen multiple scriptural examples of the Holy Spirit as teacher or guide. Often we learn to rely on pastors, Bible teachers or even friends for guidance more than we rely on the Holy Spirit.

As we begin today, ask the Spirit to show you the many ways that He has been actively involved in your life over the last week. Write some of these examples in the space below.

Two important spiritual practices that will help us to grow in keeping in step with the Spirit are prayer and scripture reading.

Read Galatians 5:25. Pray this verse, replacing the *we* with *I*. Tell God about the areas in which you need comfort, guidance or discernment.

Practice listening in prayer by sitting in silence.

Were you prompted to take action in a certain area? Was a certain passage of scripture brought to mind?

Close your time today by memorizing Galatians 5:25.