



Counsel and Help are Available from the Holy Spirit  
John 16:5-15, 33  
January 26, 2020

God wants us to have peace and has given us resources for it. Honestly, though, some of the responsibilities God has given us, such as knowing his will, representing him in the world, and continuing his mission, can lead to anxiety instead of peace. But God has provided for peace in regard to these responsibilities as well by giving us the Holy Spirit. “These things” that Jesus told us to give us peace (John 16:33) include teachings about the Holy Spirit (16:5-15).

Jesus even says that his departure, which was upsetting, is actually to the disciples’ advantage because it would allow him to send the Spirit (v. 7). Does your current experience of the Holy Spirit seem more beneficial to you than having Jesus here in person (John 16:7)? If we have neglected the Holy Spirit, it may not. The words Jesus spoke here give us an opportunity to grasp the Spirit better, apart from any extremes that have been attributed to him.

The word used to describe the Spirit in this section is *paraclete* (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). It literally means “called alongside (to help).” It is translated in a variety of ways to try to capture its full meaning: “helper, comforter, counselor, advocate, mediator, intercessor.” Two of these help communicate specific ways the Spirit helps us and gives us peace in regard to our God-given but sometimes anxiety-producing responsibilities.

Helper (John 16:7-11). It may seem daunting to tell others about Jesus (20:21), but we are not alone in this mission. The Spirit has an absolutely indispensable role. He helps by convicting people about sin, righteousness, and judgment. He also testifies about Jesus (15:26), though human testimony is still needed (15:27)(see also Acts 1:8; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 7:51; 13:2; 14:3). Knowing the Spirit helps us with God’s mission does not mean we sit back and do nothing, but it does set our hearts at ease to

know we have such a powerful Helper.

Counselor (John 16:12-15). Jesus did not teach his followers all of God’s word. Instead, he sent the “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) to guide them into all truth and tell them what was yet to come. Later we see that God did indeed reveal his plan, will, word, and ways through specially chosen servants and prophets (Romans 1:16-17; 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 14:29-30; Galatians 1:12). Some of this is specifically attributed to the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Ephesians 3:1-5). The Spirit also inspired the writing of the Bible and uses God’s word to do his work (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12-13; cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

We may feel uncertainty about whether the Counselor still does all he has done in the past. Further, God has not given us a detailed “scheme” for discerning his will. Plus our impressions, emotions and desires are subjective and vulnerable to the sin in our hearts and so are not necessarily reliable for knowing God’s will. The Spirit-inspired Scriptures are more objective, but even they are subject to distortion and misunderstanding (2 Peter 3:15-16; cf. 2 Timothy 4:3; Jeremiah 23:36). In spite of all this, Jesus assures us that the Counselor will guide us, and this is a basis for us to have peace.

We can cooperate with God’s Spirit of Truth by humbling ourselves (Matthew 11:25-26), praying (Ephesians 1:17-19), guarding and purifying our hearts (Proverbs 4:23; John 7:17), reflecting on God’s words (2 Timothy 2:7), sharing communal wisdom (Acts 15:1-21), listening to Spirit-gifted teachers (Romans 12:7; Ephesians 4:11) yet also testing their words (Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; 1 John 4:1), taking God’s word to heart (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28), obeying what we hear (Mark 4:24-25), and allowing him to transform and mature us (Romans 12:2; Hebrews 5:14). We still won’t grasp everything (Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 131), but God has given us these ways of working with the Spirit of Truth so we can know God’s will.

Peace may be found in Christ

Every believer can expect trouble, persecution, and sin.

Already, Christ has won the Victory Over the World

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