

Benny Hinn: Knowing the Holy Spirit Person to Person

Note: This article originally appeared in the September 1991 issue of Charisma magazine.

It was three days before Christmas 1973. The sun was still rising on that cold, misty Toronto morning.

Suddenly, He was there. The Holy Spirit entered my room. He was as real to me that morning as the magazine you are holding in your hand is to you.

For the next eight hours, I had an incredible experience with the Holy Spirit. It changed the course of my life. Tears of wonder and joy coursed down my cheeks as I opened the Scriptures and He gave me the answers to my questions.

It seemed that my room had been lifted into the hemisphere of heaven. I wanted to stay there forever. I had just turned 21, and this visitation was the best birthday or Christmas present I had ever received.

In my room, it was pure joy. Yes, it was unspeakable. Yes, it was full of glory! From that very moment, the Holy Spirit became alive in my life. He was no longer a distant “third person” of the Trinity. He was real.

And now I want to share Him with you.

The Spirit Is Waiting

Let's start with the basics. The Holy Spirit was with me from the moment I asked Christ to come into my heart and become born again.

Then came the time when I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was “filled” with the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

So many Christians receive that same experience and stop right there.

But I want you to know this: Beyond salvation, beyond being baptized in water, beyond the in-filling of the Spirit, the third person of the Trinity is waiting for you to meet Him personally.

You learn volumes about people when you meet them in person. When the Holy Spirit and I met, I discovered things about His personality that changed me as a Christian.

As I came to know the Holy Spirit, I became sensitive to Him and learned what grieves Him—and what pleases Him. What He likes and what He doesn't like. What gets Him angry and what makes Him happy.

The Lord used a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting to prepare me for what happened that unforgettable day in December 1973. But never once did Miss Kuhlman sit with me and tell me about the Holy Spirit. Everything I learned was from Him.

When I returned home from that meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I fell to my knees. I was honest and transparent when I said, "Holy Spirit, Kathryn Kuhlman says You are her friend. Precious Holy Spirit, I want to know You."

I will never forget how nervous I was. But from that day I have grown to know Him like a brother.

Who He Is

What makes someone a person? Is it the physical body? I think not. I'm sure you have been to a funeral and have seen a body lying in a casket. Are you looking at a person? No! You are looking at a dead body.

What makes a person is not the body. Instead, the person is what comes out of the body. Emotions. Will. Intellect. Feel-

ings. These are just a few of the characteristics that give you a personality.

The Holy Spirit is a person. And just like you, He can feel, perceive and respond. He gets hurt. He has the ability to love and the ability to hate. He speaks, and He has His own will.

But exactly who is He? *The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father and the Spirit of God the Son.* He is the power of the Godhead—the power of the Trinity.

What is His job? The task of the Spirit is to bring into being the commandment of the Father and the performance of the Son.

To understand the job of the Holy Spirit, we need to understand the work of the Father and the Son. *God the Father is the one who gives the command.* He has always been the one who says, “Let there be.”

On the other hand, *God the Son performs the commands of the Father.* When God the Father said, “Let there be light,” God the Son came and performed it. Then, God the Holy Spirit *brought* the light.

Let me illustrate it this way. If I asked you, “Please turn on the light,” three forces would be involved. First, I would be the one who gave the command. Second, you would be the one who walks to the switch and flips it—you are the performer of the command. But finally, who brings on the light? It is not me, and it is not you. It is the power—the electricity—that produces light.

The Holy Spirit is the power of the Father and of the Son. He is the one who brings into action the performance of the Son. Yet He is a person. He has emotions that are expressed in a way unique among the Trinity.

I’ve been asked, “Benny, aren’t you forgetting the importance of Christ in all of this?” Never! How could I forget the one

who loved me and died for me?

I cannot forget the Father nor the Son. *But I cannot be in touch with the Father and the Son without the Holy Spirit* (see Eph. 2:18).

The Fellowship Meeting

During one of my first encounters with the Holy Spirit, I asked Him, "Would You please tell me what You are like?"

Here's the answer the Holy Spirit gave: "I am the one who fellowships with you." And like the snap of a finger, that verse flashed before me: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14).

That's what the Holy Spirit longs for—your fellowship! And there are no selfish requests in fellowship—just friendship, love and communion. That's how it was with me. My entire approach to prayer changed. I began to wait for the Holy Spirit before I prayed. I would say, "Precious Holy Spirit, would You now come and help me to pray?"

The Bible says: "The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

When we don't know what to say, He comes to our aid.

And here is another principle I learned: The Holy Spirit is the only teacher of the Bible. For so long, I struggled to understand the Bible. Then came the day that I said, "Wonderful Holy Spirit, would You please tell me what You mean by this?" And He spoke. He revealed the Word to me.

I came to understand that the Bible itself was written by the Holy Spirit. He used men from all walks of life, but every one of them was led by the Spirit. "Now we have received not the

spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God" (1 Cor. 2:12).

Accompanied by the Spirit

From my first encounter with the Holy Spirit, I began to know that He was the great teacher. But I still wanted to know who He is. So I said, "I'd like to know what You are like."

What He revealed to me was a mighty person and a childlike person at the same time. He said to me, "When you hurt a child, he will stay away from you; when you love a child, he will be very close to you."

That is how I began to approach Him. I felt that He was gentle, yet mighty and powerful. Like a child, however, He wants to stay ever so close to those who love Him.

Have you ever seen a little boy or a little girl tugging at mother's skirt or father's trousers? Wherever the parents go, the kids hang on and follow them. It's a sure sign that the kids are loved and cared for. That's the way it is with the Holy Spirit. He stays close to those who love Him.

How was it possible that the great evangelist Charles Finney could preach the gospel and people would be "slain under the power," confessing their sins? What was the power that fell when John Wesley opened his mouth to preach? It was the person of the Holy Spirit that *accompanied* their ministry.

In New York City, Kathryn Kuhlman had just finished preaching at a Full Gospel Business Men's convention. She was taken through the kitchen to an elevator to avoid the crowd. The cooks didn't even know she was walking by—but the next thing you know, they were flat on the floor. Why? Kathryn didn't pray for them; she just walked by. What happened? When she left the meeting, it seemed as though the power of His presence attended her.

Supper Can Wait!

The presence of the Holy Spirit became most evident to me when I began praying in my room—all alone. Day after day, hour after hour, I lifted my hands and said, “Precious Holy Spirit, would You come now and just talk to me?”

There were times when He came in like a wind, like a fresh breeze on a summer day. The joy of the Lord would fill me until I could contain no more. As we talked I would say, “Holy Spirit, I love You, and I long for Your fellowship.” And I found out it was mutual. He longed for my fellowship, too.

Once, in England, I was staying in the home of a Christian family. My room was at the very top of the house. One evening, I was lost in the Spirit, having the greatest time in the world talking to Him. The woman of the house called up, “Benny, supper is ready.”

But I was bubbling over and didn’t want to leave. She called again, “Supper is ready.” And as I was about to leave, I felt someone take my hand and say, “Just five more minutes.” The Holy Spirit longed for my fellowship.

Do You Recognize That Voice?

When Jesus was on the earth and the disciples had a problem, to whom did they turn? They went to the Son, and He instructed them.

But when Christ returned to the Father, they were not left alone. Jesus said to them: “The Holy Spirit will comfort you. He will counsel you and will remind you of things I have told you. He will tell you about Me.”

After Pentecost, the disciples were in such fellowship with the Spirit that He became a part of every action of their life. They were in total friendship—working together for the Son.

When Peter had his vision on the rooftop in Joppa, “the Spirit said to him, ‘Three men are looking for you. So rise and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing. For I have sent them’” (Acts 10:19-20).

Peter recognized the voice of the Holy Spirit. And that was the beginning of the gospel being preached to the Gentiles.

How was the Ethiopian eunuch converted? “The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near this chariot and stay with it’” (Acts 8:29). Philip recognized the voice of the Holy Spirit. It wasn’t God the Father that spoke to him—nor God the Son. It was God the Holy Spirit.

Grieving the Spirit

I believe the greatest sin against the Holy Spirit is grieving Him, which amounts to denying His power and presence. Nowhere in Scripture can you find the words, “Grieve not God the Father” or “Grieve not God the Son.” But throughout the Bible you find, “Grieve not the Spirit.”

God the Father said to the children of Israel in the wilderness, “You have grieved My Holy Spirit” (see Is. 63:10). He didn’t say, “You have grieved Me.” God the Son looked at the Pharisees and said, “And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven” (Luke 12:10).

The Holy Spirit is tender. He is sensitive. He is a gentleman. He doesn’t enter your room until you invite Him. And He doesn’t speak to you until you speak to Him.

My friend, you will never know His power and presence until you go to Him and say, “Wonderful Holy Spirit, tell me all about Jesus.”

Glorifying Jesus

Here is one of the most important lessons I have learned: A

person who knows the presence of the Holy Spirit will always glorify and magnify Jesus. When you really know the Spirit, you will glorify Jesus Christ because the Holy Spirit within you will glorify God the Son. It's automatic. Only Jesus is glorified in a life that's filled with the Spirit.

Every action of your life reflects what you fill your life with. If you fill your life with newspapers, you will speak news. If you watch soap operas, you will speak soap operas. But if you are filled with the Spirit and absorb yourself in His presence, you will seek Jesus and glorify no one but Jesus.

Christ said, "But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me" (John 15:26). So if I want to know about Jesus, I must go to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said it. And He knew what He was talking about.

In the Old Testament, Moses could go to the Father. In the New Testament, the disciples could talk to the Son. But when you and I have a need, where should we turn? To the Holy Spirit. He is a person, and He is waiting right now for you to welcome Him into your life.

It's Time to Begin

You ask, "How do I begin?" It's really very simple. You might start by saying, "Holy Spirit, help me pray now." That's exactly what He wants you to do. And when you begin, you'll have a prayer partner who will lead you straight to the throne of God.

The Holy Spirit is such a lovely person. He wants to be your dearest friend, and He is waiting to bring you closer to Jesus. Christ said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). Then He said the Holy Spirit "will guide

you into all truth” and will “glorify Me, for He will receive from Me and will declare it to you” (John 16:13-14).

The Holy Spirit is waiting. He wants to begin a new relationship with you—person to person.