

Are You Truly Engaging Holy Spirit When You Worship and Pray?

Years ago, when I was a backup singer on a worship team, I would be concentrating so much on singing the right part that I would sometimes forget I was meant to be worshipping. It's easy for a music teacher and a perfectionist to get focused on harmonies and pitch. One day I was singing away and heard the Holy Spirit say, "Who are you singing to?"

"You, Lord," I answered. But then I realized I was singing, "I love You," with my mouth but not with my heart. I absolutely loved Him in my heart, so that wasn't the problem, but I was having a conversation with Him without being conscious of what I was saying. I made a decision at that moment never to do that again. I told the Lord I never wanted to sing another worship song without being aware of to whom I was singing, the sincerity of my words, and the reality of His presence.

Imagine what that would be like with my husband. "Um, yeah, you're awesome, Tom," as I look around and occupy myself with other things. "Really great ... I appreciate you so much," while I yawn and check my e-mail. That's a bit strange, isn't it? It doesn't demonstrate sincerity or a desire for connection. That's what happens when we think we are worshipping but don't focus on God. I think that especially happens with the Holy Spirit, who can sometimes seem like the mysterious, forgotten member of the Trinity. The Father and Son can seem easier to relate to. We have natural fathers and sons in this world, so the concepts of God the Father and God the Son make sense to us. But what about the Holy Spirit? He loves our attention too, and He very often doesn't receive it.

I don't want to grieve the Holy Spirit in any way. I know He

doesn't take offense easily; that's a wonderful thing about God. "God is love," and love is not easily offended (1 John 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:5). The Holy Spirit is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Even when I have at times drifted from truth, He remained constant and kind. He is patient and understanding. He doesn't withdraw His love. We can worship by faith, believing that as we come to worship, He is always so happy to be engaging with us. Because Jesus has made us clean and pure by His blood, we can always approach the throne of grace.

I want my relationship with the Holy Spirit to be about much more than coexisting. I don't want to just mentally acknowledge His presence. I want deep, close companionship; the fullness of His power and love; His guidance and direction; His comfort and counsel; and so much more. I want to know and be deeply, passionately in love with the One who knows and is deeply, passionately in love with me. I want to do life with Him to fulfill every inch of my destiny and see His kingdom come on earth just as it is in heaven.

Do you feel the same way? You wouldn't be reading this if you didn't want these things too. This is what your heart was made for and what you've been longing for. The wonderful news is that the Holy Spirit wants to help you with everything. He wants to partner with you even more than you want to partner with Him. He wants your destiny in Him to be thoroughly, gloriously fulfilled.

The Holy Spirit wants to speak to your heart. He wants to encourage you, and He wants to refresh you. He wants to supernaturally expand your capacity to receive His love and demonstrate it to others. He wants you to move in His power. He wants to take you higher and higher into absolute, overwhelming joy. There is fullness of joy in His presence, and that's where you get to stand—you and Him together. A life surrendered to Him will change the world forever. Are you ready?

✖ Adapted from *Life With the Holy Spirit* by Katherine Ruonala, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House-Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. If you are hungry for true fellowship with God, are eager to experience His power and want to work with Him in ministering to others, then this book is for you. It will help you know the One Jesus sent to comfort, teach, fill, empower and guide you to fulfill God's purpose, while experiencing the delight and benefits of having a meaningful relationship with Him. To order your copy click on this link.

Prayer Power for the Week of Aug. 6, 2017

This week, take some time to “pray in the Holy Spirit” so that you can immediately connect with the heart of God and His priorities for you, your loved ones, the nation and the world. Continue to pray for those in authority over us and ask the Lord to surround them with wise counsel and give them wisdom as they make decisions affecting us and the entire world. Remember those who have suffered loss through recent natural disasters, crime and/or terrorism. Ask the Lord to show you what you can do to help. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, those serving the people in our communities and nation, and our allies. Read: 1 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 4:8.