

Embracing The Holy Spirit in My Life

By Jean Elizabeth Klee 2024

Asked to share my thoughts about Christian Discipleship by my friend Steve, I've been remembering times the Holy Spirit was clear and true with his love for me. Truth is a big part of my faith. God is here, and he loves us. That is the truth.

Embrace what you see when God pours out his grace, your eyes wide open. Look for His truth in it, then go forth with what you know and live it.

**I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what He will say to me and what I will answer. Habakkuk 2:1*

I met Steve Schimmele in college in St. Cloud, MN, probably September of 1979. Neither of us are exactly sure. We both belonged to a nondenominational Christian campus group and became fast and lasting friends. God did that no doubt. The group of close friends we shared back then have remained close still, entirely as God wishes it. Always God. He has always been the foundation of this old gang of about 20 of us. Seriously that many. The 1970's until today is a long time to drift apart. Jobs, marriages, families, moving away all over the country. But the Christian foundation we have has held on. Lessons I learned, just knowing them, has kept my faith strong and shown me the way.

St. Cloud, of course, was not where I knew and learned about God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit first. I had a very strict and wonderful religious family background. God was first in all things. I was encouraged in my youth to go with friends to other Christian churches because knowledge is power. The more I learned and the broader my view the stronger my faith grew. God was guiding me all the time throughout my childhood, always in my ear, guiding my choices.

It's interesting to me that no one has ever asked me when I became a Christian. It's such a common Evangelical thing, to share your testimonial. Once a co-worker asked my husband if I was a Born-Again Christian. He told her that I have always been a Christian. I love that reply.

One day when I was 4 years old I had to be alone in the house for 10 minutes. I was the youngest by a lot in my big family. Everyone else was going to a church event without me. But my oldest brother was on his way home. So, I needed to be brave for 10 minutes. I stood there alone in the living room waiting. *And I heard my name.* And at 4 I knew it was God's voice and I was safe. I've never told this to anyone. Who is going to believe a 4-year-old? I knew God's voice. I knew it then, and know it still, just as my husband told his friend.

That is my Testimonial.

**For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God (as a prayer.) 1 Corinthians 14:2*

The Holy Spirit took my High School years and placed me into situations that drew me closer to him. A youth center in St. Paul MN introduced me to the Charismatic Renewal of the 1970's. I was given the gift of Tongues and a group of young believers to freely practice it with, out loud. I didn't mention it to my family and to very few friends. One morning on the school bus there it was, rattling around in my head. As I got older, started working, got married, the language slipped away. I wonder sometimes if it is gone because I ignored or wasted the gift? But I am grateful to have had it at all. I taught in a Jewish Day school for a time in the 1990's. The prayers I would hear in Hebrew made me wonder, because it was somehow familiar. Could this be the tongues I was given? Certainly a possibility.

**Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Holy Spirit says. Revelations 3:22*

I have heard God often throughout my life. And no that's not weird. It comes with a strong devotion to the Holy Spirit. I see it, so I believe it, not the other way around. But I also spend time in scripture study and prayer. Hearing God's voice requires an effort to learn all I can about His Son, as well as in conversation with the Holy Spirit. I don't think it is a stretch to say that He will do that for everyone.

God has used the wisdom of others to guide my way. My mother is gone, but her lessons still ring in my ears. She would often tell me to rejoice in the good fortune of others. Having that in my head all the time makes it very hard to be jealous of anyone. On the way to see my mom on her very last day, angry and sad, I heard these words right out loud! "What would Debbie do? " WHAT WOULD DEBBIE DO??? At the time she was a friend I didn't yet know all that well. That actually startled me. Then I thought of the words of John the Baptist-

**He must increase but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above us all. John 3:30-31*

Debbie had just recently said that very thing. Along with that, I thought about this verse- **Do nothing from a selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, value others above yourself.*

Philippians 2 verse 3.

Debbie is the poster child for this verse. So once again I was given directions and a plan. I moved forward to grieve with my family when mom died, with the right way to handle a very difficult situation.

I think that much of the time it is being aware that God is around me all of the time that makes his voice clear. Every so often in a Bible Study or conversation this question will come up- Do you ever doubt God? I always say "No, never." There are clearly those who don't believe my sincerity when I say that. But they were not there with me when I was 4.

Working at my desk in the late afternoon in my classroom one day, I noticed a strong silence; serious silence. I knew something big was up. I needed to pay attention; no mistaking it. Something big was about to change in my life. And something big did happen to me, but fully aware of God's warning and guidance I worked my way through it.

**This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 1 John 5: 14*

I have a Bible Study group of teacher friends that includes the Debbie I previously mentioned. We started a Prayer Journal years ago. We would write in it and pass it around for all to read. But we didn't do anything else with it. I'll get a call or text telling me to put something urgent into "The Book." I'll bring it along when any of us get together so they can read it and add to it. I've always thought it was a kind of lame way to pray. Then lately someone told me how much it means to everyone. I suppose it keeps us connected in a silent sort of way. When it's hard to say out loud, it goes in the book. It's all taped up, but no one will let me replace it. Prayer is essential. The sky is the limit when talking with God. The outlet is endless. The more I talk with God, the more I know God, and then I am that much closer to God. That tattered list of prayers is a witness to a great deal of faith.

There is a small country church near the town of Kellogg MN. It has a stained-glass window in it that is dedicated to my great-grandfather. He and his wife Theresia are buried in the graveyard across the gravel road. I had been in Winona visiting that older brother of mine. I was on my way home and decided to find their graves. With some directions I found them and made my way to their gravestone. They were surrounded by the graves of many of my mom's relatives and filled with my pioneer ancestors. Standing at my great-grandparents' grave I suddenly had a sad heavy heart. My biggest worry at that time was the unfortunate end of my job, and the need for a new one. You don't share despair like this out loud, at least not if you are from Minnesota. But I did in that empty graveyard. Then I was overwhelmed with extreme love. I can never truly describe it. A few days later I got a phone call. It was from the principal of a school I had written to quite a while before. She said that although the old positions had long been filled, she had set my resume aside because there was just something about it. Could I come to an interview for a new opening? It gave me chills I'll admit. The job was mine without trying at all. From despair to relief in a matter of days with God's grace outpouring.

**Look among the nations and see, wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. Habakkuk 1:5*

Remember those 20 college friends I mentioned before? Two of them were non-stop companions of mine at school. Kathy & Kathy. They were roommates and I lived near them in every dorm we were in. We planned it that way. (I'll call them Kathy P & Kathy E.)

Years went by after college, 40 years to be truthful, when we seldom saw Kathy P. We would invite her along to things we were doing since we all had landed in the Twin Cities, but she wouldn't come. Seldom anyway.

Three years ago, she joined us for a church event. She had so much fun that she and her husband soon joined the church. Kathy E and I became aware, it was obvious that Kathy P had a big health problem. We spent extra time with her, hoping to give her husband some respite. Kathy P was losing her personality and her memories. She had become abusive and violent with everyone but, strangely, not with Kathy E and me. Her life digressed quickly. After months of this unhappiness, at 64 she was diagnosed with Frontal Lobal Dementia. Her husband said that she was only remembering her happiest times, which were when she was in college and when her kids were little. She remembered Kathy E, Steve, her husband and me. Her adult children were strangers to her.

Kathy E and I spent a lot of time with her because of this, going over old pictures of us together and praying together because that is what we did together back then. In this case God clearly called us up for duty. We had been deployed, having been trained long ago. No question of his intent. The Holy Spirit did one very big thing. After all those years He made it clear that he had caused those things that had happened with us as young friends, to fulfill his plan for Kathy P, at her death.

**For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under Heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1*

There was a picture from an old dorm room where Kathy P and I were climbing out of the upstairs window to the fire escape. When she saw it again in her photo album, she remembered that day when we had been so silly. She would often mention it, until she started asking me if I had come into her room at Memory Care through the window. After saying no and explaining it a bunch of times, I finally started saying "Yes! Yes I did." And she would laugh that great laugh of hers. Steve came back to Minnesota several times and would go with me to see her. She always knew who he was. During these hard months with Kathy P our many old friends were steady comfort. Called often. Prayed always. They would come to see her when they could from out of state or out of town. And when she soon died, they all came to say goodbye and seriously comfort Kathy E and I. We knowingly and intentionally filled in for all of them knowing the love of our circle. She was our first loss.

After all of that time, I feel an even tighter bond with the young friends chosen for me. God gave me an impressive gift.

And every single gift is done with His graceful hands.

**Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. John 8:47*

**I will listen to what God the Lord says. Psalm 85:8*

We don't get to know the future. We seldom get to know the end of the story in life. God makes it clear that He has had control of my life all along and all of the time.

You belong to God. Seek him out. You will find him everywhere.

And that is the truth.

