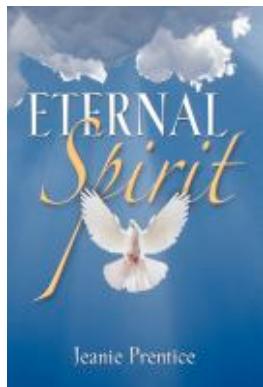




ETERNAL *Spirit*

The title "ETERNAL" is in large, white, serif capital letters. Below it, the word "Spirit" is written in a flowing, orange cursive script. A white dove is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, positioned centrally below the script "Spirit". The background is a solid blue color with white, fluffy clouds at the top.

Jeanie Prentice



ETERNAL SPIRIT is an easy-to-understand study on the Holy Spirit. In simple words, using Scriptures and personal stories as references, Jeanie Prentice explains Who the Holy Spirit is; why the Holy Spirit was sent; and how the Holy Spirit works in the Christian's life. Prentice dismisses the mystery that is often associated with the Holy Spirit, and shows what a wonderful addition the Holy Spirit is to the Christian life.

Eternal Spirit

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Eternal Spirit

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First Edition

1: Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit may be the most misunderstood part of the Trinity. People seem to get strange and vague ideas about who the Holy Spirit is. Even Christians seem to think the Holy Spirit is some sort of mystery that we simply can't understand. The Holy Spirit is often put in that category of topics that we just don't talk about because we don't have full understanding of the topic. Some people are even afraid of the Holy Spirit, as though he is something spooky. However, the scriptures talk about the Holy Spirit and give us some insight as to how and why he is an integral part of the Christian's daily life.

Some call the Holy Spirit *it*, but we know from the Bible that the Holy Spirit is a person. He is part of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is the third person of the Godhead. Another way to think of this is:

- **God the Father** is the Supreme Being, Eternal Spirit, Creator, Sovereign One, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.
- **Jesus is God among us.** John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:14 says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- **God within us.** 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” In 2 Corinthians 13, Paul closed with telling the saints that, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

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The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He exercises the power of the Father and the Son in creation and redemption. The Holy Spirit is the power by which believers come to Christ. It is through the Holy Spirit that we can begin to understand and believe in Jesus Christ. When people come to know God, they often speak of having felt a *nudging* in their heart. That nudging is the Holy Spirit doing his job of bringing people to their Redeemer.

In John 16:13-14, Jesus tells us, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. He shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.” The Holy Spirit illuminates the truth and things of God so we can *see* God.

He wants to teach us all things if we are willing to listen and be open to his teaching. We cannot understand the Word of God, unless the Holy Spirit opens our minds and helps us to understand. The Holy Spirit enlightens our reading and studying of the Word and helps us understand the Word. Often people say that before they came to know God, the scriptures seemed like a foreign language to them, but once they welcomed the Holy Spirit into their reading of the Bible, they could understand what they were reading. There have even been reports of people who could not read, but were able to pick up a Bible and read and understand the words. The Holy Spirit is always at work in our lives, in many ways, to teach us what we need to know.

I Corinthians 2:12 says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” God’s kingdom is not the same as man’s kingdom. Man has his own way of thinking, and it is not necessarily the same as God’s way of thinking. (Think about how wonderful this world would be if man’s thinking always lined up with God’s thinking!) Sometimes man’s thinking lines up with God’s thinking, and sometimes it doesn’t. As Christians, our goal is for our

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thinking to line up with God's Word, and we hope to see things from God's perspective. If we receive the Holy Spirit, he will help us see, know, and understand the things of God. By the Holy Spirit, we have insight that we would not otherwise have, and we have compassion that may not come naturally to us.

I remember a time when my folks had fallen on hard times and were very destitute. It was a time of severe economic problems that is similar to what our country is experiencing today. My parents did not have a car, and my dad was having a hard time finding work. My husband and I took food to help my family survive the hard times they were experiencing. We also drove my dad to the unemployment and welfare departments once a week so he could manage his business with them. During the time that was so difficult for my family, I mentioned to a non-Christian woman that I wished I had a thousand dollars to buy my dad a car and help him with a little gas money until they could get past such hard times and get back on their feet. The woman I said this to looked at me and said, "What a foolish idea! If he needs a car so bad, let your dad figure out a way to get one."

My thoughts were of helping my family, but my thoughts were foolish to this woman. She could not understand that the Holy Spirit had put it in my heart to be compassionate toward my family during their time of need. This woman could not understand that I wanted to give and help, not judge my family for what they were going through. My wanting to give away such a large gift (a thousand dollars was a lot of money back then) was not something the woman could understand. She had a different thought process that included looking out for her own needs, and she expected others to look out for themselves. In this particular case, my thought process was lined up with Scripture, which tells us to help those in need when we have the power to do so. My thinking was in agreement with God's word, his thinking, and the urging of the Holy Spirit.

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When the woman responded in such a negative way to my desire to help my family, my mind went back to 1 Corinthians 2:14, which says, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The woman was listening to the selfish thoughts that came into her mind. She was viewing and evaluating the situation from a physical, natural perspective. She was not spiritually discerning the situation.

The Holy Spirit gives us discernment to understand things through the eyes and thoughts of Jesus. Sometimes these things do not make any sense to us, but the Holy Spirit helps us understand them anyway. We can’t begin to comprehend the true ways of God without him, through his Holy Spirit, giving us discernment and helping us to see things differently than we normally do with the carnal mind.

The Holy Spirit guides us in many ways. His guidance is spiritual, but also practical for our daily living. For we have the Spirit of God in us, and we walk by the Spirit, but we still live on this earth, and we don’t always see everything as clearly as we want to. We don’t always know which way to go or what to do. Sometimes this causes us to make mistakes or walk head-on into something that we later regret. As we listen to the Holy Spirit, he guides us when we can’t see. The Holy Spirit knows what is around the corner, even when we have no idea of what may come next for us. How good of our heavenly Father to provide us with the Holy Spirit to guide us!

Once, on a beautiful day, I attended a writer’s group meeting. In fact, the day was so beautiful that the group decided to sit outside and enjoy the sunshine while we had our meeting. The pollen in the air was heavy that day. As we worked in our group workbook, I noticed that my eyes started to cloud over. I asked the other women in the group if they were having the same problem. None of them had any reaction to whatever it was in the air that was causing me problems, but I had a horrible time trying to focus on the study, and I felt disoriented.

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When I got ready to leave the meeting, I called my husband, Jim, and told him which route I would take home, just in case my eyes got worse and I couldn't continue to drive. He said he would come and look for me if I wasn't home in a certain amount of time.

I made it home okay, but I could barely see by the time I arrived. Jim called the ophthalmologist's office, and they said I should go in to see the doctor as soon as possible. An exam revealed that I had had an allergic reaction to something that was in the air. The doctor gave me medication for the allergic reaction, and I was sent home, thinking the problem was solved. I thought the medication would take care of the problem.

The next morning, my eyes were worse than the night before. I was unable to see at all. It was as though I was blind. After another visit with the ophthalmologist, it was determined that I was also allergic to the medicine I'd received for the allergic reaction that had caused my eyes to fail! I was given another prescription for a different medicine.

I was blinded for about three and one-half days. In my blind state, I could move from the bedroom to the living room by feeling along the walls and chairs with my hands, but if anything was moved out of its normal place, I was quite bewildered. I had to have those markers and guide targets in order to move around in my own house, even though I'd walked that same path hundreds of times before. My husband was also there to help guide me and make sure that I did not fall or hurt myself.

As I went through this time, I thought of how, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we would go through life blind, not being able to find our way. Without the Holy Spirit, the things of this world can blind us, and if something we do not know about is put in our path, we become bewildered. We stumble and flail about like a scared bird with a broken wing. If life throws us a few changes, we bump into things and get off track. Life is full of uncertainties, and we all face them from

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time to time. We stop in our tracks, uncertain about which way to go, because we can't see the path without the light of the Holy Spirit.

As children of a holy God, we need the Holy Spirit to guide us in all ways; to lead us toward the path that God has chosen for us. We are like blind men and women without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Psalms 119:105 reminds us that God wants to illuminate our path through the Holy Spirit and his Word. We find comfort in the Scripture, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 110:105).

The Holy Spirit Proclaims Jesus

The Holy Spirit also proclaims Jesus Christ and glorifies him. One way to understand how the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus is to think about what happens at a parade. As the parade travels down the street, the announcer of the parade introduces the leader of the parade and the creator of each exhibit. The Holy Spirit is like the parade announcer. He is the announcer for Jesus. He proclaims Jesus, "Here he is! Here is Jesus!" The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus; that is one of his chief functions.

We know from the story of Ananias and Sapphira that we are not to test the Holy Spirit or lie to him. Ananias and Sapphira belonged to a group of believers who decided to pool their resources by selling their land and possessions and giving the proceeds to the Apostles for the work of the ministry, so that no person would go without the things they needed. Those that had more would bless those who had little or nothing. However, in Acts 5: 1-6, we find that Ananias and Sapphira sold some property that was of a certain value when sold, and Ananias kept back some of the proceeds when he gave the money over to Peter the Apostle. Scripture says that Sapphira was privy to what her husband was doing. Peter confronted Ananias and told him that he had not lied to men, but had lied to the Holy Ghost, to God. Ananias died instantly upon telling the lie, and he was taken out and buried. A short time later,

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the same thing happened to Sapphira when she went to see Peter. This incident in the Scriptures shows the seriousness and severity of trying to hide anything from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit knows all things.

We have two gifts from God—Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, and a Counselor that abides in us. The gift of Jesus Christ was for redemption and the forgiveness of our sins. This was provided at Calvary when Jesus Christ spread out his arms on that old wooden cross and cried, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:24).

I was given a vision regarding the crucifixion of Jesus. In my vision, when Jesus was on the cross with his arms spread out wide, and he was nailed to the cross with nails in his wrists, his fingers curled up to form what we could call a “cupped” hand. (Think about how your hand would look if you were holding a tiny baby bird in the palm of it and your fingers were curled around the bird to protect it from falling out of your hand.) The curling was due to the tendons drawing up and causing Jesus’ hands to close partially, as though he was holding something in them. There is a song that depicts this action; it is called “He has the Whole World in His Hands.” I believe Jesus truly did have the whole world in his hands when he hung on the cross! He gently cupped the world in his hands and held it to himself for salvation and protection.

While Jesus was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, many of his disciples began to grumble and say that the statements he made were too difficult for them to understand. Jesus asked them if it was causing them to stumble. In John 6:62, he asked them, “What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?” Jesus was described as the Son of Man while he was here on this earth. In John 3:16 we read, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

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Again, in Romans 10:13 the Bible says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The Scriptures are very clear regarding salvation. It’s really very simple. It’s mankind that complicates the simple words that Jesus used. Too often, mankind tries to add their own doctrine and thinking to what is simple and straightforward.

In I Corinthians 1:18, the Bible says, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.” When Jesus was led to the place of the skull, there were two criminals awaiting death by crucifixion. One was on his right side, and the other on his left side. While the people and the rulers were looking on and sneering and calling him “King of the Jews,” and saying, “Let him save himself if this is the Christ, the Son of God, his chosen one,” Jesus was saying, “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”

In Luke 23:30, we read about how one of the criminals hurled abusive remarks at Jesus and yelled, “If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.” To the criminals, the Word of the cross was foolishness. The thinking of man is to save himself, but the thinking of the cross is always redemption for humankind.

Jesus was sent from God. He did not come to divide us, but to unite us. In this harsh world, we *need* the saving grace of Jesus Christ. He provided this for us *by the shedding of his blood*. The stamp of proof came when the Holy Spirit came to abide in us.

At any given time, Jesus could have called legions of angels to deliver him from the agony of the cross. But he did not! Instead, he said, “Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit.” This means he willingly gave up his life to save us. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

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If it were not for the cross, we would have died in our sins. But, there is another part that we don't always put together with this scene. Even while Jesus was in agony in the garden at Gethsemane, he prayed to his Father, "If it were possible, take this cup from me." He knew that he had told his disciples that he would have to leave them, but that he would send them a Comforter. He would send them the Holy Spirit. Because God cannot lie, the cross was what kept down the cup of agony as he walked down the roads of Jerusalem while people spat on him, pulled his beard, and mocked him as he trudged up the hill to Golgotha where the God of all eternity was nailed to a wooden cross. The wood that was created by God, also held him as he was crucified. Jesus knew that if he did not endure the agony of the cross, the promise would not be fulfilled; the promise of the Holy Spirit would not be possible.

There is a song with the words, *I can only imagine ...* and it's with this thought that my mind goes to Jesus Christ as he carried his cross toward the hill of Golgotha, bleeding and beaten almost beyond recognition, spat upon, and nailed to the cross. He endured the agony and died for my sins and yours because he knew that there was one more thing that he would be able to give after his death—and that was salvation and the promise that the Father would give the Holy Spirit. This gift, Jesus Christ gave to us!

You can't speak of the Holy Spirit without speaking of our Savior, Jesus Christ. No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12: 3, we read, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

The second gift provided was the Holy Spirit. In John 16: 5-7, Jesus tells his disciples, "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the

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Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

Jesus comforted his disciples and let them know that it was to their advantage that he would go away. In my mind, I can almost hear Jesus saying, *My Holy Spirit is given to you freely. Use your gifts wisely in all that you do, that my name will be glorified. You cannot earn him or work to get him, because if you could, you would not know what to do with him. It would no longer be a loving gift that is freely given, but something that you earned, that you worked for, and you wouldn't consider him as a gift. He would be something that you would cast away after a while.*

You cannot say you have the Holy Spirit or use him without repenting of your sins and asking Jesus to forgive you of all your sins. You have to know the Holy Spirit’s source. In Romans 3:23 we read that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Again, in John 8:24 Jesus said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

Even though every Christian is given the Holy Spirit when they accept Jesus, the Holy Spirit does not have everyone. This simply means that many do not listen to what the Holy Spirit says. They do not acknowledge the working or leading of the Holy Spirit in their life. I heard a great rendition of the Godhead, using the sun as the body, and from the sun came forth the light. Jesus said “I am the light of the world,” and the heat is the energy or power sent from God as the Holy Spirit. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, the light of the Son comes in, while the Holy Spirit reflects that light back to God. It’s like the moon reflecting the light from the sun.

Without the light, there is only darkness, and there is no light to reflect back. You can’t have Jesus without the Holy Spirit, and you can’t have the Holy Spirit without Jesus. God is willing to give you as much of his Spirit as you are willing to receive. However, you must also be willing to give of the gift you receive. If you will not share the

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gift, the Holy Spirit will give it to someone else. Have you ever felt a nudging by the Holy Spirit to do a particular thing, and you simply ignored it and didn't do it? You were not heeding the leading of the Holy Spirit. It's important to listen carefully and pay attention to the nudging of the Holy Spirit. It is said that the Holy Spirit is gentle and doesn't overstep his boundaries with loud yelling and nudging. It is our responsibility to be quiet and hear his nudging. Often, our lives are so busy and our heads are filled with so much that we simply crowd out the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility to learn what is the nudging of the Holy Spirit so we can be obedient and faithful to his nudging. The Holy Spirit may nudge one person differently than another. When we are sensitive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit, it makes our life easier and we can walk closer to God under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit works in our lives, he has to use whatever is familiar to us. A certain emotion or feeling that we would understand is used. He does not use the same feelings and emotions for everyone. We all hear and perceive things differently, but we can rest assured that the Holy Spirit knows how to communicate with us in a way that we can understand. We don't have to worry about not hearing the Holy Spirit. He knows how to get through to us. We just need to make sure that we are listening.

One size does not fit all. God created us as unique individuals. I love my husband dearly, but we are not the same person, and we don't do things in the same way. When I have a problem, he wants to fix it for me. I don't need him to fix my problems every time. Sometimes, I just need him to listen to me talk about my problem as I solve it for myself. Sometimes that's the way I must work on my problem. I don't attack problems in the same way as my husband does. The Holy Spirit may communicate with my husband with words or emotions that I wouldn't understand, but he understands what the Holy Spirit is saying to him.

Sometimes my husband and I watch the same movie, and I become very emotional while he remains calm and not at all emotional. The

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movie doesn't have the same effect on him as it does on me. Other things have a great effect on his emotions, but not on mine. I do things differently. I perceive things differently. I react differently. The Holy Spirit knows this, and he works differently in my life than he does in my husband's life. He works in each life in the way that is needed to accomplish the purpose of God in that person's life.

Although the Holy Spirit has all the characteristics of God the Father and God the Son, and they are equal in every way, he has specific roles and functions in each individual's life. In Acts 1: 8, we read what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit right before he ascended up in a cloud after his resurrection. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

What an exciting time for the disciples! Jesus left them with the comforting words that they would receive the power that they needed to carry out his work after he was no longer with them in bodily form! What a relief it must have been to them to know that Jesus wasn't leaving them on their own. They probably knew him well enough to know that he would not give them a commission without providing all that was needed to carry out the commission.

Of course, that promise for power was fulfilled. We read in Acts 2: 1-4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

When I read about the Holy Spirit being released on that day when the people were gathered in that house, in my mind I can almost hear Jesus saying, "My Holy Spirit is given to you." This brings great peace

and much comfort. In Acts 2:17-21 we read, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The Holy Spirit was given to serve a purpose. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit was given for power to be witnesses for him. The Holy Spirit does not come in order to be *contained*. In Peter’s sermon in the second chapter of Acts (verse 33), Peter says, “Therefore being by the right hand exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

Jesus has ascended and is sitting on the right hand of the throne, but the Holy Spirit comes to us as power for a purpose, and we must release the Holy Spirit—let the Holy Spirit out to do his work. Why would we expect the Holy Spirit to come if we are not going to release him? How can the Holy Spirit serve his purpose and show forth his power on this earth if the Holy Spirit is not acknowledged?

When I was a child, money was very scarce in our family. It was after World War II and there weren’t many jobs available. Money was scarce for most families. It wasn’t like today where many children have so many store-bought toys that they don’t know what to do with all of them. There simply wasn’t money for buying toys, so we created our own toys out of things that we could scrape up around the house and in the yard. We made games out of tin cans, sticks, and anything else we could find. Getting new store-bought toys was a rare event. In light of that, you can imagine the excitement I felt when my dad came home one day and said he had a surprise for me. He called me to sit next to

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him. Once I was seated, he gave me a package. When I opened the package, I found a game of jacks. It was a simple gift, a small, inexpensive toy, but how I cherished it! The jacks game became of great worth to me. I didn't want to share it with anyone else because I feared some of the jacks would get lost. I hid the gift away to keep it safe. I didn't play with the jacks, and I didn't allow anyone else to play with them.

Eventually, I got over the fear that some of the jacks might get lost. I shared the game with my friends. It was then that the gift became useful to me. It was then that I enjoyed the game and it served the purpose of fun for a little girl and her friends.

So it is with the Holy Spirit. He is not a treasured gift that we should hide and fret over how he will be used. He isn't to be hidden away out of fear that he might manifest or be used in a way that we don't agree with or think is wrong. The Holy Spirit isn't a topic for debate and argument over how he may function or how he may manifest in one's life. He is a gift that comes to us through Jesus. He is a gift that we share with others. When we allow the Holy Spirit to empower us for God's purposes, we find great joy, just as I did with my jacks game. When we share the gifts from the Holy Spirit, others will benefit, and through unity in Christ, we can make God's church complete. It's really such a simple concept, and yet there are many problems in church that stem from different perceptions of the Holy Spirit. We need to just come together with the heart of a child that accepts the greatness of the gift we have been given. There is no need for the argument and striving to explain everything about the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained all that we need to know. The rest that we need to know will come from our own experiences with the Holy Spirit, as long as we give him access to our lives and do not fearfully hide him away because we are fearful that someone might "misuse" him.

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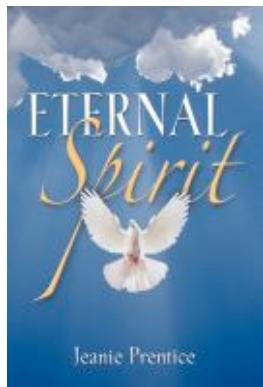
Questions for Reflection

There are no right and wrong answers to these questions. I have put them here to help you stop and reflect on the Holy Spirit.

1. Who is the Holy Spirit to you?
2. Is the Holy Spirit evident in your life?
3. Does the Holy Spirit at work in your life always point to Jesus?
4. Do you have concerns and fears that the Holy Spirit is misunderstood in your church and among fellow believers? If so, how do you handle the concerns?

Action

1. Start a journal and write down your thoughts about the Holy Spirit.
2. Do a scripture search on the Holy Spirit.
3. Start a Bible study with friends and study Scripture on the Holy Spirit.



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