

MEET THE HOLY SPIRIT, PART 1

“The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” (John 14:17, NIV)

IF YOU PLAY PUBLIC COURSES OR TRAVEL AND PLAY, it’s common enough that one of your golf routines is first tee introductions. The same is true in tournament play, where those paired together may be meeting for the first time. Unique to the game, golfers might spend several hours walking and talking with people they’ve never met before.

How you do with introductions is of course somewhat dependent on your personality. Maybe you enjoy meeting new people and break into conversation quite easily, maybe not. But what we have all experienced is an introduction that has led to a meaningful and lasting relationship. In fact, it can be an intriguing little game to look back on how some of our close friendships began. Usually, those starts were completely modest.

If it weren’t for the fact that Jesus was doing the talking, we might say the same about the way the disciples were introduced to the Holy Spirit. It’s not that they didn’t know there was a Holy Spirit, for the Old Testament spoke of the way he would come upon the prophets, for instance, and essentially fill their mouths with the words of God. What the disciples did not realize was the Spirit’s personal nature and how closely connected he was to Jesus.

You may have your own set of questions about the Holy Spirit, and we’ll address a few of these in the weeks to come, as Links Players president Jeffrey Cranford has been doing this season at the Red Door Community in La Quinta, California.

But before considering how the Spirit comes to us and demonstrates his presence in us, we should notice from John 14 how the Spirit was sent and why.

Jesus told the disciples that when he went away (that is, when he ascended into the presence of the Father), he would ask the Father to send “another Counselor to be with you forever.” This Counselor was the himself part of the godhead we call the Trinity. Though unseen in the way that Jesus was seen, he is relatable—“you know him”—and he is the presence of God “with you” and “in you.” If Jesus was God with us (Emmanuel) in the flesh, the Holy Spirit is God with us in our spirit. Try explaining to your friends that God lives in you and you may be in for an odd conversation, but know it to be true for the promise of Christ makes it so.

Opening questions How did you first meet one or two of your favorite golfing friends? • What initially comes to mind for you when we start speaking of the Holy Spirit?

READING John 14:16-20 and 14:26, Acts 9:31, Romans 5:5

What the Spirit does (John 14)

What is the difference in the way the world perceives the Holy Spirit and the way those who know Christ do? According to Jesus in these verses, what is the function of the Holy Spirit (don’t miss verse 25!)?

The Spirit at work (Acts 9)

What two actions are credited to the Spirit in this verse? Have you seen the Spirit at work in this same way in your life and your fellowship/church?

Love poured out (Romans 5)

How does God pour out his love to us? Where? What effect do you think this has on the man or woman who in faith receives it?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International. A 4-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/Q1r5xS02Cb8>