

The most important conversations you will likely ever have will be three-way conversations in your mind and spirit. Yes, you heard that right! *The most important conversations you likely will ever have will be three-way conversations in your mind and spirit!* No, I'm not talking some weird new approach coming from Mars or the latest claim from some pseudo-scientist. I'm actually talking about an approach you have probably utilized your entire new life as a born-again believer! Are you intrigued? Well, I should hope so!

Let's start by talking about the Bible. There are 66 books in the Bible, and here's what Scripture reveals about itself: the Apostle Paul wrote this in 2 Timothy 3:16-17...*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."* And since you and I are always looking at teaching that is profitable for us as leaders, the Bible is obviously a very major source—actually the core Source!

Now, traditionally, there are 35 people credited with being one of those authors of Bible books. So that means 35 people were the instruments of God in writing Holy Scripture. And, as we read the Bible, we count on the Holy Spirit to bring clarity and edification to our reading.

Surprise! There we have it! We are in a three-way conversation with each of the Bible's authors every time we are seriously reading and thinking about Scripture. Yes, we are striving to faithfully capture the author's intent and context—as it should be! That proper approach is called "exegesis." But the Holy Spirit is working in us to bring clarity, to teach each of us in the context we are operating in. For example, does what you are reading have different applications for a 21<sup>st</sup>-century businessperson in Brazil than a 12<sup>th</sup>-century peasant in Europe? Here's the deal: if we allow the Holy Spirit to operate freely in our mind and spirit, then the Holy Spirit will give us the understanding we need for our time *and* place *and* context. That's an amazing, essential three-way conversation: the human author, the Holy Spirit, and you!

What, you say? How does this type of three-way conversation actually work? Well, when a Scripture verse seems a bit cloudy, a bit opaque, then just call out to God for help in your understanding. That "calling out" could be your silent prayer, an inquiring thought, or an out-loud voice. And I assure you: God will answer your call for help and edification! That answer may be immediate, or it may take a while for God to provide clarity...perhaps through forthcoming circumstances or an edifying word from someone who may have no connection to what you are wrestling with. Wait, let's talk a bit more about that for a minute! Have you ever had a revelation about something on your mind, a revelation made by some other happening in your workplace or by a news report or by a friend's stray comment? Of course you have! And when that happens you just smile to yourself...another real-world fruit of the Christian life!

What's happening here in a situation like this is really pretty amazing. You know from experience that God often puts your mental and spiritual "conversation" with the Bible author you are reading on "hold" for a while, and then God brings remembrance to all that later, at just the right time and place.

This is one dimension of what Jesus meant when He said that the Holy Spirit would bring remembrance to His words. Here's how Jesus said that, in John 14:26 (ESV): *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."* But notice this astonishing point! It was the Apostle John who wrote this in his Gospel. In this very passage, the Holy Spirit brought Jesus' words to John's mind in order for John to transmit those words to us! That means John was having his very own three-way conversation among (first) himself, (second) the Jesus he knew in-person long before, and (third) the Holy Spirit who brought remembrance of Jesus' words...all that in order for John to write the Gospel narrative where John embedded this truth!

Here's one big takeaway of this: a meaningful three-way conversation can and often does take place in segments over a long period of time. The striking thing is, like the Holy Spirit did with John, the Holy Spirit is *perfectly* managing both you and the process of your gaining truth and knowledge—if you are willing!

That brings us to a powerful Bible verse, the second portion of Romans 12:2: “... be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Note that “passive” voice that starts that Word from God: we are to “be transformed” by someone! And that would be God doing the transforming, of course. The overarching message is this: our positive, essential result is the renewing of our minds. And that’s what the 35 authors of the Bible do for us, with the essential help of the Holy Spirit. That’s right, a series of essential three-way conversations!

But the renewal of our minds happens well beyond what we learn directly from the Scripture! We can and do learn from current-day expositors, teachers, and preachers of the Word. And it all works on the same principle—but with an important twist. In these cases, we must rely even more on the Holy Spirit, because the words of current-day authors and speakers are not credibly infallible. So, asking God to insert Himself into the conversations we are having in our mind and spirit with whomever we are listening to and reading from becomes a foundational part of our toolkit for learning.

Now, having God lead us in our learning helps us amidst both positive truth and negative falsehoods. The *positive* truth that we may hear and read...that’s the accurate learning from on-target speakers and authors. But, all the more important, God helps us discern *negative* falsehoods that are so prevalent in our message-saturated world. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to put a book down and forget it...or prompts you to dismiss a speaker’s point of view...then follow God’s prompting! Honestly, this happens a lot for the serious believer who is canvassing large volumes of data and information.

And, to be sure, this principle...this practice of three-way conversations...is vital for properly processing absolutely every bit of human-supplied information we are provided or confronted with. So, say you’re a computer specialist, a youth pastor, a paralegal, or an executive. Then immediately—and constantly—ask the Holy Spirit to directly guide you in correct paths. This crucial, proactive approach can consistently lead you to ask just the right follow-up questions, to search for input using very effective best internet-search questions, to look to another source to validate a book’s assertions. In fact, this is why some Christians are leaders in their workplace, well ahead of fellow workers—including other Christians!

Hey, you may be asking, are you serious? This three-way conversation approach of three parties—the source, the Holy Spirit, and me—can work everywhere, every time? Yes! When reading Scripture, when hearing Bible teachers, when reading technical journals, when hearing speakers, when watching documentaries, or even when watching a Hollywood drama!

Even when remotely hearing assertions when you are physically far removed from the author or speaker, in your mind you should be directing questions to the author or speaker—the person claiming authority: “What are you really saying? What about this issue or that issue that you seem to be missing? How do you integrate this claim you are making with what we already know to be true?” Yes, even when an author has been dead for decades or centuries, *with the instantaneous help of the Holy Spirit* the text can speak truth into your mind and spirit. Or the Holy Spirit identifies exactly what the problem is with the text.

*This...this* is one key way how our minds can and should be renewed: that’s when sources of possible information are validated or refuted by our minds that are helped very specifically and directly by God. These are the essential three-way conversations by which real knowledge and real truth is gained and stored for fruitful use down the road. So, how to get started? That’s the easiest step of all. Just ask the Holy Spirit to be your guiding Helper every moment of every day. Then listen to His steering nudge in the very midst of that next office huddle, that next speech, that next search result. Wow! Essential three-way conversations. A key tool in the Christian’s exhilarating, high-impact toolkit. Powered by the Holy Spirit!

