



# How the Holy Spirit Works In the Youth

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**I**n His Holiness Pope Shenouda III's book entitled The Holy Spirit and His Work in Us, His Holiness mentions five symbols of the Holy Spirit: 1) the dove, 2) water, 3) fire, 4) oil, and 5) violent wind. Of these five symbols of the Holy Spirit, "fire" most represents the youth.

**In the Old and New Testament there are many examples** of youth who had the "fire" of the Holy Spirit in them and who through their words, actions, faith, and purity are an example to all believers, old and young alike. These youth knew what St. Paul later instructed St Timothy, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12) and did not neglect the gift that was in them... "Do not neglect the gift that is in you" (1 Timothy 4:14).

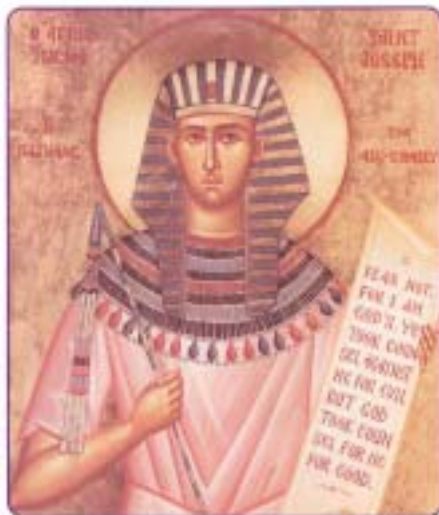
**Through the holy zeal of these youth came prophets** and leaders, and because of these youth giants were toppled, temples were built and restored, countries were fed and our Savior was born. These youth understood that regardless of age they are instructed to pursue the Word of God, and were not daunted or overwhelmed by the troubles and tasks ahead of them, but instead listened and were lead by the Holy Spirit within them.

**This is made most vivid in the story** of David when Samuel is sent by God to anoint the next king and God instructs Samuel not to look at "appearance or at the height of his stature... "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:6-7). At the time of his anointing, David was but a shepherd and the youngest of eight sons, but God saw past David's occupation, his age and appearance and saw straight through to David's heart.

**David was also chosen by God at a very young age** to defeat Goliath. Although, many people doubted David could defeat Goliath because of his youth, David never doubted that he, a mere child, could defeat Goliath, because he listened to the Holy Spirit within him and placed his trust in God.

**God also chose Joseph, who was then but a youth,** to serve Him. Despite being thrown in a well, sold to travelers, and placed in jail, Joseph listened to the Holy Spirit within him and never lost his faith or trust in God and because of Joseph's spirit God granted him many things. Joseph's purity and ability to deny Potiphar's wife, an example to all youth today who struggle with issues of purity, came from Joseph's ability to use and listen to the Holy Spirit within him. It is because of Joseph's character that God used Joseph and Joseph later became a great leader who saved the people of Egypt from great famine. Like Joseph, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit within us and God to help us flee from impurity. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

**God chose yet another youth to serve him and lead a** nation. When Solomon was chosen by God to become king, he said, "Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For what is able to judge this great people of Yours" (1 Kings 3:7-9). As a mere child, Solomon felt he was ill-equipped to be king, but he listened to the Holy Spirit within him and asked God to grant him wisdom to deal with God's people. From



*Joseph*

Solomon, today's youth learn that following and listening to the Holy Spirit within us allows us to place our trust in God's abilities to care for us and make wise decisions on our behalf, as well as produce from us amazing gifts.

**King Josiah became king at the** age of eight and "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (2 Chronicles 34:2). King Josiah is an example of a youth who sought after God's will. In the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year, he purged Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, wooden images, carved images, and the molded images. He broke all the altars of the Baals, the altars of incense and burned all the priests' ashes. He did likewise to all the cities of Ephraim, Manessah, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali did. When Josiah found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses, Josiah immediately followed the Law and restored the temples and the Passover to Judah. King Josiah sought God's Will and continued by following it. It is not beneficial to find a piece of jewelry and leave it where it is lost. Likewise, we must find God's Word and practice it.

**Even Jeremiah was in his youth when God made him** a prophet. "But the Lord said to me: 'Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid



of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,' says the Lord" (Jeremiah 1:7-8). The Lord then gave Jeremiah the tongue of a prophet so that he might bear witness to God.

**Daniel's determination was** one of his most inspiring characteristics. He and his three friends declined to eat the king's delicacies and were determined to preach the word of God by fasting and other actions. God blessed Daniel with the interpretation of visions and he used this to turn many kings' old religion to the true religion of God.

**Shadrach, Meshach, and** Abednego, were three youth who were determined to preach the word of God and when they were sentenced to being thrown in a furnace, that did not diminish their faith. The true fire was not the one inside the furnace but the one burning in the spirit of these youth. Their love for God rescued them from the fire,

without touching a hair of their head. This display of love inspired many to believe in God. These four youth, including Daniel, displayed determination in following God's Word, and are an example to today's youth.

**Queen Esther, an example of amazing faith in God,** while in her youth saved a whole community of Jews. She instructed her people to fast and pray for three days, before she went to the King. It is because of her faith and her works that God answered her prayers and freed the Jewish people from their captivity.



**Do not forget our blessed Theotokos St. Mary, who in her youth gave birth to our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.** Her humility was great, which is why God chose her to give birth to His Son. By being humble, we must take in our glory instead of taking pride in ourselves, for pride is the mother of all sin. “That your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret, will Himself reward you openly”(Matthew 6:4)

**Lastly, St. Paul instructs St Timothy saying, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1Timothy 4:12).** St Timothy was an example to all believers and as a youth was ordained Bishop of Ephesus.

**From these examples we learn** that the youth of the past were not at any distinct advantage over today’s youth, but that we all start out with the Holy Spirit within us and the difference merely exists in our pursuit of righteousness and our ability to listen, use, and multiply the strength of the Holy Spirit within us.

**Most importantly, communion** with the Holy Spirit brings forth the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. “But the fruits of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). The more the fruit of the Spirit increases, the more the spiritual fervor increases in one’s life. In the Holy Book of Romans, St. Paul demands us to be “fervent in Spirit” as God is said to be “a consuming fire.” Anyone, in whom God’s Spirit dwells, is certainly burning

with this holy fire. (His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, 1992).

**“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1Timothy 4:12)**

1. In Word- “That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”(Philippians 2:15-16)

2. In Conduct- “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your sojourning here in fear.” (1 Peter 1:17)

3. In Love- “You shall Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37)

4. In Spirit- “Do not Quench the Spirit.” (1Thessalonian 5:19)

5. In Faith- “Watch, stand fast in faith, be brave, be strong.” (1Corinthians 16:13)

6. In Purity- “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)

**May the fire of the Holy Spirit grow inside of you as it did inside these blessed youth.**



**David defeating Goliath**