

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## There's More: Learning to be Led by the Spirit

by Dan Trygg

“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit...” Luke 4:1

“Jesus, the One from Nazareth, as God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power, who *then* went about doing good and healing all the ones having been dominated by the devil, because God was with Him.” Acts 10:38

“So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh,<sup>13</sup> for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.<sup>14</sup> For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God.” Romans 8:12-14

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.<sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.<sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law...<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law...<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” Galatians 5:16-18,22-23,25

We have been talking about discipleship skills, ...the abilities that we are to learn to become proficient in as followers of Jesus Christ. As disciples, or apprentices-in-training, we are to study our Master and learn from Him. The end goal of the discipleship process is *to become like Him in His character, example and in our ability to do the kinds of things that He was able to do.* That may sound kind of far-fetched, but **that is what a disciple is: one in training to think and act like the one they are following.**

Did you know that Jesus never did *anything* while He was here using His own divine powers? Hebrews 2:17 says that “**He was obligated to be like His brothers and sisters in all things**”? The parameters that the Eternal Word had to operate within while He was here as Jesus of Nazareth was to live a fully human life. He chose to empty Himself of His divine greatness and glory to be encapsulated in human flesh (Phil 2:5-8). Apparently, He retained His divine capabilities, but He never chose to utilize them while He was here. **He lived a fully human life**, experiencing and identifying with human existence and limitations, so that He could have understanding and compassion for us as our High Priest, and so that He could make atonement for us as our representative.

One aspect of this mystery is that **everything He accomplished was done as a human being empowered by the Holy Spirit.** He never performed even one miracle by His own power. If He had, He would have disqualified Himself from being our human representative. **Remember that this was part of Satan's temptation in the wilderness?** He tried to incite the famished Jesus to turn stones into bread. Now if someone were to come to you and challenge you to do that, you would look at them like they were crazy. **But the point of that temptation was that Jesus could have done that in His own power,** ...or He could continue to wait on and rely upon His Father, as any other human being would. **He chose to remain dependent upon His Father's timing, and stayed within the limitations of His human existence.**

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit came upon Him. **From that point on His life was empowered and led by the Holy Spirit.** We read about how the Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1). Then, after completing the testing He went through, He returned in the fulness of the Holy Spirit, and was led about by that Spirit (Lk. 4:1,14). In Peter's summation of Jesus' life in Acts 10:38, he said that “**God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good and healing those dominated by the devil.**” Earlier, at his message at Pentecost, when the Spirit first came upon the apostles, Peter described Jesus as “**a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst**” (Acts 2:22). **God worked through Jesus!**

In Luke 5:17, we are told that “**the power of the Lord was-being-present for Him to heal.**” Jesus Himself said that **He cast out demons by the Spirit of God** (Matt. 12:28). In fact, Jesus made a point to say that **He did nothing by Himself** (lit., ‘out from Himself’), but He did what He saw the Father doing. **He was always watching for what God was doing, and would “join Him in like manner”** (Jn. 5:19,20). He also said that **His teachings did not originate from Himself** (Jn. 7:16,17). He said that the Father who was living inside of Him “**does His work**” (Jn. 14:10). In Acts 1:2, we are told that **He gave directions to His apostles “through the Holy Spirit”.**

This is a very important realization, because **IF Jesus meant to show us an example of how a human being can be empowered and led by the Holy Spirit, THEN this is an attainable reality for us to pursue.** Then this entire idea of being an apprentice learning the skills of his or her Master takes on a much greater level of relevance. **Of course, let us not overlook the FACT that this is exactly what Jesus did with His original twelve disciples. He**

taught *them* to minister in the power of God, ...to cast out demons, heal the sick and even raise the dead! They learned to receive revelation and instructions from the Holy Spirit, and they followed His leading, and the results were powerful. ***This was part and parcel of what it meant to be one of Jesus' trainees. And it did not stop with them, either.*** (cf., Matt. 10:1,8; Lk. 9:1,2; 10:1,9; Acts 2:43; 3:1-12; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8-10; 8:5-8,13,29; 9:10-18,32-42; 10:9-20; 13:1-3,9-12; 14:8-10; 15:12; 16:9-11,18; 19:11,12; 28:8,9; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Heb. 2:1-4.) The scriptures list not only the 12, but also a group of 70 others, whom Jesus sent out to minister like this. We see this same dynamic happen with Stephen, Philip, Ananias, the apostles Paul and Barnabas, ...and ***this was an ongoing expectation that believers everywhere would be prompted, empowered and led to minister in the giftings of the Holy Spirit which are given to every believer to use in building up the body of Christ. Being led by the Holy Spirit is a crucial discipleship skill for us all to develop!***

***How do we learn to be led by the Spirit?*** In Acts 1:8, Jesus said that we are to receive or “take” power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. A few weeks earlier, He had made the statement that the world could *not* receive the Helper, because *it did not perceive Him, or recognize Him* (Jn. 14:17). The same is true for us. ***How can we “take” or “engage with” the Holy Spirit, if we do not recognize His activity in our lives?***

***The first thing we must do is prepare our hearts for God's working.*** We come right back to John the Baptist's message: “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight his paths” (Mk. 1:3). We must change our minds about what God has for us in this area. Put aside your ignorance and unbelief, and read what the scriptures teach about this. Trust that *the Spirit does indeed live inside of you* (if you are a Christian), and that *He wants to guide and empower you*. If you can see you have given little thought or value to the activity of the Holy Spirit in your life, if you have disregarded Him, confess that to God, and ask Him to clarify your mind and heart. Ask Him to unite your heart with His. Apologize to the Holy Spirit, and humbly invite Him to be your Helper, Teacher and Guide. Ask Him to make you aware of His presence in your life, so that you can recognize His leading in order to obey Him. This last point is important: The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Him (Act 5:32). You must sincerely *want to do His will*.

***Secondly, put aside distractions, and focus more on raising your consciousness of God's activity in your life.*** Set aside times during the day to simply ask Him to reveal Himself in your life. Do not fill up every moment with activity or entertainment. Give *time* to Him. Spend some time in His word, or in unhurried prayer and reflection. Write down any new thoughts you may be able to identify. Become a “God-watcher”, someone who is always looking for God's activity in their lives. Take note of unusual circumstances or “coincidences” that seem to be “set up” or amazingly well-timed. If God comes up in conversation, that *is* His working at that moment.

***Third, pray repeatedly and diligently for a fuller and more conscious experience of His working in your life.*** Jesus taught His disciples to pray repeatedly and unceasingly for the Holy Spirit (Lk. 11:1-13). Ask in faith, knowing that this IS God's will. He will *certainly* bring it to pass. Jesus said that if we, who are evil, know to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

***Fourth, partner up with someone else***, or a group, to seek God *together*, and share what new insights or experiences you may receive. Many times, as we share, someone *else* will be able to identify when God has done something, when we may be oblivious to it. We will learn as we listen to others. This is the value of sharing “God sightings” with each other. It helps to sharpen each other's awareness, and also confirms to us what we saw. Partnering with others also can give us encouragement and accountability, so that we stay on track in our seeking.

***Fifth, be quick to obey any promptings that you judge may be from God.*** Remember, you are trying to develop *discernment*. Romans 12:2 says that we must “prove” what the will of God is. That word means to “test out by experimentation”. You are “testing out by trial to *discover* the will of God”. In other words, if we think we may be being prompted by the Spirit to do or say something, and it is not contradictory to the character of God, the only way to really find out is to take a risk and see what happens. Through such risks we will learn to discern what is the Spirit from what is not. Let this be a *faith adventure*, a personal learning process between you and your Teacher. *It is by virtue of practice, repetition, and taking new risks* that we discover new insights and experience God.

***Sixth, avoid doing things that you know are wrong, or are grievous to God.*** If you sin, be quick to acknowledge your sin to God and get restored. Wherever you know God wants you to change something, resolve to do it *by His strength and leading*.

***Seventh, wait with expectation and eagerness.*** The word for “wait” means “expect, hope, hopefully-wait, look for, look with eagerness.” The bottom line of faith is that “the one coming-near to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of the one seeking-Him-out” (Heb. 11:6).

***Finally, take note of how God is communicating with you.*** As you think you may be recognizing God's activity in your life, begin to take note of *how* He speaks to you, or leads you, so you *learn* from these experiences. You may see a pattern develop, or a common way in which He seems to communicate. This will help you more easily recognize His leading next time.