

Being Led by the Spirit—NOTES

Continuing our series on the person and work of the Spirit....

Jesus was led by the Spirit

- Jesus relied on the person, presence and power of the Spirit.
 - Luke 3—the Holy Spirit came upon him
 - Luke 4:1—He was FULL of the Spirit
 - Luke 4:14—He ministers in the power of the Spirit.
 - Jesus was anointed by the Spirit to teach and minister.
 - **Throughout His ministry we see that Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit**

Luke 4:1 (NASB)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

Jesus was led by the Spirit to live in the will of the Father.

- **He lived his life in full submission to the Father.**
 - Jesus only did what the Father wanted Him to do (John 5:19)
 - Jesus only said what the Father wanted Him to say (John 12:49)
 - Jesus only did and said things when the Father told Him to (John 16:12)
 - **This is the example for our life as we desire to be led by the Spirit.
- **WHY did Jesus live His life “Led by the Spirit”?**
- **Why would Jesus surrender control of His life to the Father?**
- **Because of love...**

John 5:20 & 30 (NASB)

20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing...

30 I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Love is the motivation!

- It was because of His LOVE that the Father shows Jesus what He's doing...
- And it's because of love that Jesus obeys the will of the Father.

Being led by the Spirit is a LOVE relationship initiated by God.

- We are loved by God and so we, in turn, love God.

When you say, “I want to be led by the Spirit”, you are saying, “I want to fulfill the will of God.”

- This is what the Spirit will lead you into—the will of the Father!

Why do you want to do the will of God?— God loves you, and you love Him.

- LOVE is foundational to being led by the Spirit.

Being led by the Spirit starts with KNOWING, BEING CHANGED BY, GROWING IN, ENJOYING, and CELEBRATING God's love for you!!

God LOVES you!

Not only does God LOVE you, but He wants to LEAD you.

- God wants to lead us on paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

So being led by the Spirit is not only about God's love, it's about His GLORY.

- As we know and grow in God's love for us, we will glorify Him in our lives.
- **Being led by the Spirit is the activity of receiving God's love and responding to it by obeying Him and bringing Him glory as He leads us on paths of righteousness.**

The Holy Spirit is the agent of the Father's work—the Father works by the Spirit.

- So we can EXPECT to be led by the Spirit.

Jesus promised this:

John 16:13-15 (NLT)

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

Galatians 5:16-25 (NLT)

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18 But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

- The Spirit GUIDES us through life
- The Spirit GIVES us good desires
- The Spirit DIRECTS us in specific details and decisions
- The Spirit PRODUCES good things in us
- The Spirit LEADS us!

Romans 8:14-16 (NASB)

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

In Christ, we are NEW CREATIONS—sons and daughters of God.

- **The Holy Spirit REMINDS US of this!**

Because we are God's dearly loved sons and daughters, there ought to be an EXPECTANCY in our lives for the Father to lovingly lead us.

This is a very clear point in scripture—our Father wants to lead us by His Spirit!

- We are to be a people who are led by the Spirit.

- We are a people who are led by God because He loves us.
- We are a people who are led for God's glory.

- Some Christians don't believe that the Spirit leads us in our lives today.

- Some don't believe that He gives us specifically what we need when we need it.

If we are to be a people who READ THE BIBLE and follow the God of the Bible...

We see & know God has ALWAYS desired relationship, leadership with His people!

From Genesis through Revelation we see a God who is anxious to speak to His people!

- God who is eager for His people to know His love.
- God is persistent in pursuing His people who have strayed away from Him.

Scripture shows us a GOOD FATHER who wants to be with and lead His children.

- We have NOT been abandoned as orphans...
- The Bible CLEARLY shows us that we are the beloved of God!

This is the testimony we see in the book of Acts.

- We see the same progression in the early church as we see in the life of Jesus.

1. The Spirit comes UPON them.
2. They are then filled with the Spirit
3. They then begin to minister in POWER of the Spirit.
4. And then they are LED by the Holy Spirit.

Examples of WHO the Spirit Leads:

1. The Spirit Leads Individuals

2. The Spirit Leads Groups of People (Show list when read, then build the list as I teach it)

3. The Spirit Leads the CHURCH

1. The Spirit Leads Individuals

Acts 8:26-39 (NASB)

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert *road*.) 27 So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." 30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

"He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth. "In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth."

34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please *tell me*, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this

Scripture he preached Jesus to him. 36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" 37 [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

THE SPIRIT TOLD PHILIP—This is one man being led by the spirit.
The Spirit **LEADS** individuals to do the will and work of the Father.

The Spirit not only leads individuals, but also groups of people...

2. The Spirit Leads Groups of People

Acts 16:6-10 (NASB)

They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; 8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- How is the Spirit leading your family, your CommGroup, your group of friends?

3. The Spirit Leads the CHURCH

We have seen that individuals AND groups of people are filled with the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we see both individuals AND groups of people being LED by the Spirit.

Acts 13:4 (NASB)

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

The Church is together worshipping and fasting and they're led by the Spirit CORPORATELY.

- The Spirit spoke to the WHOLE CONGREGATION!

SUMMARY—Scripture clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit leads—clearly & specifically.

- Philip—go to THAT SPECIFIC chariot—RIGHT NOW...
- Paul—go directly to Jerusalem—it's going to be TOUGH...
- Paul & his missionary buddies—DON'T go into Asia, but go into Macedonia...
- Antioch Church—Send THESE SPECIFIC MEN to THIS SPECIFIC PLACE...
- God's Spirit leads God's people...

BUT it is VERY unclear HOW this happens—we are not told many details in scripture...

- Often all we get is, "The Spirit said"...

- Or “the Spirit told me...”
- Or “he was forbidden by the Spirit...”
- Or he is “bound by the Spirit”
- Or someone is given a vision...
- Or Paul would say “the Spirit solemnly testifies to me...”

So what does this mean?

- Is it an audible voice?
- Is it a physical limit put on an individual?
- Is it just that circumstances don’t work out so they conclude the Spirit is saying no?
- Are there visual signs?
- Is it an impression that they got?
- Maybe an inescapable thought they couldn’t shake?

We are not told these details...

The way the Spirit communicates to each of us is UNIQUE...

- God is our good father who KNOWS each of us individually.
- God KNOWS how you need to hear Him.
- God knows how to communicate to you.

God will speak to me while driving, shower, hiking, sitting alone studying, when I’m praying with someone, worshipping, reading the Word...

God KNOWS me and KNOWS how and when to speak to me!

- Any good father/mother is careful to communicate with their child intentionally.
- I don’t speak to each of my 5 kids the same—they are different!

How much BETTER is God at communicating to each of us??

- God wants to communicate with you and lead you!
- And yes, it is mysterious...

It is a lifelong endeavor to hear the Holy Spirit speak and lead you.

- So is it an audible voice? An impression? a vision you see?—MAYBE YES...

For me, I’ve never heard the audible voice of God and I have never physically seen any visions...

- BUT, God speaks to me and God has shown me “visions”.
- Often I feel a deep, unshakable conviction that I KNOW that I KNOW is from God.
- Often I’m in the Word or in prayer and there is usually some form of confirmation...
 - Because God knows me and knows I act when I’m sure that I’m sure...

I remember VIVIDLY when the Spirit led me to leave my job and work at RVTA...

My example may not be very helpful for you—not a practical step-by-step.

- I don’t think there is a practical step-by-step guide to being led by the Spirit.
- It is and will always be mysterious.
- It is a spiritual relationship...

Just because it is mysterious doesn’t mean there are not practical guidelines.

2 Practical guidelines to being lead by the Spirit:

1. The Spirit **TEACHES** us the Word of God before **LEADING** to **WORK** for God.

- Spirit **TEACHING** precedes the Spirit **LEADING**—before He leads us He **TEACHES** us.

John 14:26 (NASB)

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 said to you.

- The Holy Spirit first teaches and makes clear to us, the Word of God.
- The Spirit then **APPLIES** the Word of God to the particular situations of our life.

John 16:13-15 (NLT)

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

The Spirit teaches us the Word of God and He tells us about the future!

- Why the future??

There are a lot of details that aren't spelled out in the Word!

- Which job opportunity?
- **WHOM** should I marry?
- **IF, WHEN** and **WHERE** do I leave the US and serve overseas??

The Spirit wants to lead us in these things and more!

- **The Holy Spirit wants to lead us more than we are willing to be led.**
- God cares more that we care about these things...

But it starts with the **TEACHING** ministry of the Spirit—immersing ourselves in the Word.
...and **then** the **GUIDING** ministry of the Spirit leading us to **OBEY** and **WALK** in the Word.

We **NEED** to be taught and **KNOW** the nature and character of God!

- The Holy Spirit will **ONLY** and **ALWAYS** lead you in line with God's nature and character.
- The Spirit will **NOT** lead you in a way contrary to the nature and character of God.

How do we know the nature and character of God?—**Spirit + SCRIPTURE = KNOWLEDGE**

2. To be led by the Spirit requires **SURRENDER** to His will and a **WILLINGNESS** to be convicted of sin.

When we sincerely desire to be led by the Spirit, this is what that means:

- I am willing to submit to the will of God.
- I am willing to be convicted of and repent of sin.

If you are not willing to do these 2 things then you are not willing to be led by God.

Philippians 2:12b-16a (NASB)

...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life...

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. **2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.**

Because the Father loves us He leads us—HOW? By His Spirit.

- The Spirit TEACHES us God's will for each of us!
- The Spirit CHANGES the way we think...
- The Spirit CHANGES the desires we have

If we want to be led by the Spirit we must give careful attention to spiritual growth:

1. Read and Study the Word of God.

- The Bible is the LIVING and ACTIVE word of God.
 - It renews our mind.
 - It transforms our life.

Don't say you want to be led by the Spirit but you don't spend regular time in the Word.

- That doesn't work...
 - **The Spirit will never lead you in a way that is contrary to the Word of God.**
 - **You cannot say that God's Spirit is leading you if you do not know the Word of God.**
 - **A BIG way the Spirit leads us is IN the Word of God THROUGH the Word of God.**

2. Practice regular times of prayer

- Prayer is a dialogue—not a monologue.

God wants to speak and lead and apply the Word as we practice prayer.

3. Giving oneself to undistracted, unhurried, quiet time with God.

We have to make room for this.

- We NEED this!

God, by His Spirit, wants us to be WITH Him and speak to us and lead us.

- We live in a LOUD and HURRIED culture.

This is necessary because this is a place of GROWTH and HEARING from the Lord.

- Without making time for this, we may never experience true intimacy with Christ.

Jesus is our model for this:

Mark 1:35

In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Where do you hear from God? Are you intentional to cultivate time to listen to God?

I love Zion N.P. & would go there every week if I could....

Realistically—I love listening to God at Arroyo Verde.

- Beautiful trail...
- Few people...
- Poor or no cell service...

I LOVE it there because the Spirit has space to speak and lead.

Why is that?

- These are the few moments in life where I am unhurried and undistracted.
- These are places where God can actually get my attention.
- When I'm alone at Zion or even Arroyo Verde I don't have a device in my hands.
- It is a SACRED time and place for me.
- It reminds me of the value of prioritizing time with the Lord.

If we want to be a people who hear from God, we need to be a people who spend less time with our devices and distractions and MORE quiet, unhurried time with Jesus.

- That we would MAKE ROOM for the Spirit to lead us.

Our culture trains us to NEVER let there be a quiet moment...

God is far more willing to speak to us than we are to listen.

- We seldom make room in our lives to hear from God.
- We seldom create space—in our life or heart or mind—to listen to the voice of God.

Some people will hear this and feel like I'm saying to throw away the devices & TV...

- TV and iPhones are not the problem—I am the problem.

If we want to be a people who hear from God, We need to be people who make space in our lives and not be so distracted.

For me this is a heart issue.

- All of life's fun distractions keep me from quieting myself and hearing from God.

Creating and exploring quiet times with God is necessary...but God speaks at other times as well.

But we need to cultivate ears to hear Him and discern His voice from other voices:

- Time in undistracted, unhurried quietness with God
- In the Word
- In Prayer

4. Repentance

If we want to cultivate spiritual growth, we MUST cultivate a heart of repentance.

- I will pray for more of the Spirit and ask God to lead me...
- But all the while I am not responding to the Spirit convicting me of sin.

We tend to do this, don't we—offer up **good requests** to God:

- What job do I take?
- Who am I supposed to marry?
- Help me be a better parent...

But we ignore the TOUGH work the spirit is leading us in letting go of control.

****Maybe some of us today need to examine our heart and ask, "Do I even WANT to be led like this?"**

It is arrogant of us to ignore the Spirit in some areas but ask Him to speak in others.

The leading of the Spirit is inseparable from the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

- The leading of the Spirit requires a teachable servant's heart and mind.
- If we want to follow God we MUST surrender control of our lives to God!

Matthew 16:24 (NLT)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

Galatians 5:24 (NASB)

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Today the Spirit wants to deal with our control issues.

- God wants to deal with our coping mechanisms, STRATEGIC DISTRACTIONS, mindless endeavors and the hours of wasted time in our lives.

God is more willing to speak to us and lead us than we are willing to listen and be led.

- Let’s cultivate a heart surrendered to the leading of the Spirit!
- **How does Spirit lead us?**

Psalm 23:1-3 (NASB)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quiet waters.

He restores my soul;

He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

God, our loving father, is our loving shepherd leading us in love!

We have time today to respond to the leading of the Spirit.

- We have set aside UNDISTRACTED, UNHURRIED time to be with God in worship.

Today, let’s use this opportunity to cultivate a willingness to be led by the Spirit.

- Let’s cultivate a lifestyle that is immersed in the Word
- Let’s cultivate a lifestyle of regular times in prayer.
- Let’s cultivate ears to hear the voice of God as we pursue undistracted, unhurried times with God.
- Let’s cultivate hearts of repentance.
- Let’s cultivate hearts of surrender.

Recognize your uniqueness—God wants to speak to you TODAY!

- How can you put yourself in a place to hear from God?
- confession? carpets? sitting quietly? singing and praising? hiking today?

Let’s think about this and respond to the Spirit this this week—and right now in worship.