

Walking In The Way Of Jesus; How To Be Sensitive & Yield To The Holy Spirit Considering the path from the tomb to the world

Acts 13:1ff

- Yieldingness
- Sensitivity

Why do we struggle?

Control

Trust

Time

I want to talk on the most practical level this morning via ministers sitting among us this morning. Normal men and women just like we are reading about in the book of Acts.

God created man and woman to know Him.

Reread John 16 in regards to the Acts of the Holy Spirit through Jesus' Apprentices.

The Holy Spirit is the earnest or the sealing of our salvation. He is with us and in us if we have made the decision to trust and follow Jesus as Savior & Lord.

I believe that many of us are looking for those big events or movie moments when it comes to the Holy Spirit.

Sorta like things in our bodies that we just take for granted because they are part of who we are and what we do like breathing, blood flow, eye sight, or hearing.

I asked this question of some of you this week:

Describe your personality in general terms then explain to me how you believe you are led by the Holy Spirit. How does the Holy Spirit get your attention? (Responses anonymous)

My personality... This is hard and I've pondered this for days because my first response is my negative personality quirks so here goes:

- detail oriented (I notice things others often do not, good and bad, and wonder why did God have to make me this way?!)
- questioning and quizzical (about any and all things)
- simple (although others may say complicated?)
- helpful •loving •encouraging •insecure at times

I believe the Spirit leads me to be aware of things - a situation or person, an attitude, comment or simple observation that often leads to a question ("How are you? Do you need help with that? Are you OK?") I love people and I'm quite content to serve others from the background. The Spirit leads me into conversations and interactions that I don't think I would have started by myself. Often God teaches or exposes things to me by repeating a theme or lesson until I finally get it "aha!" I think the Holy Spirit is the same (I must be a slow-learner!) and it's a nudge, prompting, prodding almost like a tap on the shoulder or a shove if I'm not picking up the cue. There are times when I miss the cue or was second-guessing or questioning it, then the opportunity is lost. I have to apologize for missing it and feel a sense of disappointment for letting Him down.

I would describe my personality as somewhat introverted but love being around and helping people. However being alone, in quiet, outdoor settings is what recharges me. I'm a peacemaker that does not like conflict (at all) and I sometimes think too much about what people think of me, both make me shy to speak up at times.

Holy Spirit gets my attention in various ways. Sometimes a song or Bible verse/passage hits my heart and makes something new click in my mind. Other times Holy Spirit whispers a subtle yet firm message that pierces my mind and soul, making it known to me that this is not my own thoughts. When Holy Spirit wants me to speak up (or really wants to make Himself known), my heart starts pounding and continues increasingly until I release whatever it is He wants me to say either to a person or during prayer. I used to think that when I started crying during a sermon, song or while praying out loud it was some kind of emotional sensitivity, but I've learned that this is simply how I feel the overwhelming presence of Holy Spirit working in and through me which is a beautiful thing (and nothing to be ashamed of).

In John 16 Jesus talks about them not being able to bear everything He has to say and therefore is sending helper. This sparked an analogy in my head of a sort of flash light on an infinitely large canvas (God). Then I thought of Plato's Allegory of the Cave where the prisoners in the cave only see shadows on the wall (limited perception of reality). When a prisoner escapes and sees the world in the light of the sun and understands "reality". When we first encounter God through Jesus, it's like coming out of the cave where we see a new reality beyond the shadows but the light is almost blinding and have a hard time discerning what is "real". We gradually adjust to the light and the revelations of God become more clear. Now, I'm thinking that as the Holy Spirit illuminates our lives, the more clearly we see God. In doing so we become more aware of the shadows that obscure God (our sinfulness), but through the process of sanctification, the Holy Spirit makes the light brighter and leads us to greater understanding of God. Not sure if any of this makes sense.

I am introverted at heart. I have to work hard to be social. Though I appear to be outward and outspoken. It is really smoke and mirrors for how afraid I am of public opinion. I am a fighter. I love deeply and loyally. I put Jesus first and it is important to me that His character is seen in me.

As far as how the Holy Spirit speaks to me....I pray hard and sincerely to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. I have seen visions at times, sometimes God shows me things in picture form or in dreams. Sometimes God speaks through His Word, but mostly, for me, it's a gut feeling or a thought that just won't let go. I won't have peace or sleep until I "do" that thing or say that thing or follow that thing. Peace is how God gets my attention. My husband and I have always worked hard at having a peaceful home environment. When that peace is disturbed, I know God has something to say to me. He usually won't let go until I do. Pastor, this may all sound very "spiritual", but my walk with God is so important to me. I want to please Him in all things all the time. So, I read, pray and listen. I don't always get it right so I'm thankful for grace. But I try.

If you're familiar with the DISC assessment at all, I'm a high S and even higher C, which, in a nutshell, means I'm steady and compliant. When it comes to the S marker, I'm good at listening, teamwork, and following through on what I say I'll do. I'm pretty reserved. My

heart is full of bold thoughts, aspirations, and assertions, but I rarely see them come out. When they do, they often come out wrong or abrasive anyway. I like who I am on the inside, but other people don't see that; they see who I am on the outside and are not naturally drawn to me, some even avoid me, which makes me not like myself.

When it comes to how the Holy Spirit speaks to me, He has spoken to me through vivid dreams when there's something he wants to address in my life. When it comes to something he wants me to do or say, it just starts with an observation that He highlights, and then a thought comes to me to do or say this or that, and that unction is always accompanied by the question, "Is God asking me to do this, or is it just me thinking that God wants me to do this?" I usually never find out, because I'm usually too scared to actually do it. And I think, but I'm not certain, but I think the fear isn't for myself or how I'll look. The fear is that I heard wrong, and that God will be demagnified if nothing happens. The other fear is that the other person will be more hurt if nothing happens, thinking that God isn't real or doesn't care. The most common unction I get is either to heal a person, or a perceive that they may have a demon and I want to try to free them from it.

There have been a couple times when God spoke to me while awake, not audibly, just in my head, with my voice, but I know it was Him. Once was when I was coming back to Him after five years of pursuing the world. He re-baptized me himself, in a fairly violent way, and as I was recovering from a pretty serious neck injury, I heard him say, "You are no longer your father's son; from now on you answer to me." It was just so heavy and powerful and impacted me in a way that I never expected.

The other time was when I was reading "Wild at Heart" and Eldrege suggested asking God for a new name for yourself. I decided to do it, and to be as intentional as I could about it, expecting an answer in somewhat of a ceremonial feel. I've wanted to be more confident all my life, so I was hoping He would call me confident, or some other synonym. I prayed, and then asked the specific question, "What is your name for me?" It came immediately. He said, "Confidant." He didn't say it slowly. It just rolled off the tongue in my head. And yet, my mind was fast enough to track every syllable with the full gamut of emotions. Here's how it played out in my thoughts and reaction: CON - "yes, this is exactly what I wanted to hear." FI - "wait, is this just me hearing what I want to hear?" DANT - "oh, no. That is not what I wanted to hear at all." It was basically the opposite of what I wanted and expected to hear. I wanted "bold speaker of truth" and he gave me "trusted listener." And if I'm honest, I'm still a little disappointed to this day. And yet, the fact that he denied my hopes and expectations assures me that it was Him, that he was listening, and that he knows me very well, because that is who I am. And it's also kind of beautiful. Confidant, trusted listener, maybe even counselor. Anyway, that's me. Long, precise email, living up to my S and C.

Wife: I am stubborn, a little bit of an introvert, but sensitive, caring and dependable
Husband & Wife: The Spirit can speak to us through that still small voice (some call it our conscience). He speaks through other people and through scriptures. The primary way is through His Word. That's where we go to know Him and learn His voice. So when we're trying to discern whether it's the Spirit leading us is to ask "does it align with His Word". So whether it's that inner voice or other people, it has to align with scripture and what the scripture teaches about the character of God, His will and His work.

Obedying might be hard but God is not unclear. The more we are consistent in our time with Jesus I think it gets easier and faster to know when He is speaking.

And sometimes we get that gut level feeling (not to be confused with emotions) it's not always speaking.

My son in law says it like this. It's peace versus no peace. And peace isn't about comfort or ease but knowing that it's right even if it's going to be uncomfortable. My daughter always says the more we do the work to know and seek God, the natural outcome of that relationship with Him and discerning His voice the easier it gets to be led by the Spirit. It takes relationship and practice. And we have to remember that the Spirit is God.

As far as my personality I asked a couple folks that know me best what they thought my personality was as that is a difficult question to ask oneself since I would only tend to pull out the good stuff in me. Here's what I received: Charismatic, Loyal, People person, Spontaneous, Humorous, and Psychotic

I've been thinking about how the Holy Sprit gets my attention and I've come up with two answers.

1) Situations- I feel as if the God puts me in situations where the Holy Spirit can use me if I'm paying attention enough to be used. Wether it's helping someone or just using my ability to talk, just to tell someone about our church or involvement to open the door for conversation. Sometimes it's just being laid back in a stressful situation where I can say, in the big picture this really isn't a big deal.

2) Nudges - This I think ties in with #1. This one I'm more confident and fully believe the Holy Spirit smacks me alongside the head when there's someone or something that I need to be aware of. I've definitely been way more aware of this and the smack doesn't need to be as hard or often because I'm looking and paying attention to this. I think the only way He can use me is to be open and aware of this. We talked last night about His plan for us and how it maybe just to get that "one more" rather than go to the DR and change the world. The Holy Spirit's nudges guide me in that path.

I don't know how to describe myself so I took a test from 16 Personalities. ISFJ Personality...."Defender". Defenders are very dedicated and warm protectors, always ready to defend their loved ones. This is personality type with the introverted, observant, feeling, and judging traits. These people tend to be warm and unassuming in their own steady way. They're efficient and responsible, giving careful attention to practical details in their daily lives.

I feel like I'm led by the Holy Spirit to want to help others. I probably get that from my mom. She was the type of person that would stop what she was doing in order to help someone in need. I'm trying to be more attentive to the needs of others by paying attention to things they say or do. As I learn more about God, I've felt more comfortable sharing with others about Him, but it usually takes some sort of trigger to get my attention.

I feel like the Holy Spirit gets my attention when I hear someone bring something into a conversation that relates to God. I also feel like it tries to get my attention when I miss an opportunity to share with others. Like a knock upside the head telling me after the fact that, "Hey, you should have said or done this instead."

I would describe my personality as Extroverted/outgoing/talkative, independent and find it hard to ask for help, driven and goal oriented but impatient, confident, humble, optimistic, caring

I feel that when I am praying for clarity on something, the Holy Spirit gets my attention by repeating messages to me through multiple modalities such as song lyrics, tik tok videos or Instagram posts, conversations with friends, testimonies of strangers, sermons, and bible study readings. I started feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit more when I stopped viewing “convictions” as a bad/shameful thing and started viewing them as positives. Because if I am feeling convicted, I know I need to make a change in that habit to bring peace/contentment. Most of the time that change is “simple”, I just don’t want to do it initially. I began to hear from the Holy Spirit more when I started to add like-minded platforms and people in my life. For example, reading Bible studies more than fiction or watching tv, following Christian influencers on social media and unfollowing those who don’t live the way I want to live (out of sight out of mind), asking probing questions to friends and strangers who are willing to talk about their faith, etc.

Wanted to add!!! Going off of your last weeks sermon. I love how you spoke of “simplifying” how we yield to God. It really is just that simple!! I feel like I approach my faith in a similar way to going to the gym or eating healthy. It’s a habit that takes discipline to establish, a daily simple decision if you are going to do it or not. It isn’t always easy, but can become easier with routine, and then it makes it easier to stay on task when you surround yourself with others that value the same things (like Bible study and our church family!)

I like peace not confrontation. I am loyal, hardworking, and I like routine. I can follow as well as lead and I like for things to be done as well as possible. I like to set and achieve goals. I like to dream.

In my daily walk, I normally feel a peace when I am following Him. Despite my circumstances, if I’m relying on myself and not Him, there is a definite uneasiness/unsureness that can surround me. He normally gets my attention by placing a thing or things on my heart that stretches me out of my comfort zone. If He wants me to go in a different direction I become uncomfortable until I obey. If it’s matters of discernment, I will simply feel an alarm in my spirit to be aware of my surroundings or a situation. It can also be that “gut” feeling if He wants me to speak or do something for someone. I will feel Him pressing upon my heart with a strong nudging upon which I won’t have peace until I do what I am supposed to do. At the end of the day, it’s all about wanting to be closer to Him and knowing Him more. The more I know Him, the easier it becomes to recognize His voice and prompts for my life. When I obey, I sense that I make more of an impact for His kingdom.