

LET'S TAKE THE NECESSITY OF WALKING WITH HOLY SPIRIT A WALK



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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever pondered in your walk with Jesus, “There has to be more to this than this,” or, if you’re like me, ever wondered why ministry in the new testament seems so different from what we experience today? Good news, you are not alone and that is actually a good place to be. Why, because these questions will push us to pursue the miracle working God we read about in the Bible.

I have been in active ministry over a decade. Six of those years were filled with events, a full calendar, and always chasing something. That something was numbers, or if you want to get technical and sound a little more spiritual, people to fill our seats. During these years I felt so often “God did not call me to sit in an office and chase numbers.” I imagine that I can’t be alone in this. Like so many staff pastors I had my differences with my lead pastor but I understood my role, to serve his vision to the best of my ability. Some seasons I nailed it others I did not.

During this wrestling in my spirit, I started reading the book of Acts and simultaneously preaching through the gospel of Mark. It was through this wrestling with what I’m reading in the Bible and the ministry that I’m seeing play out in the church that the Holy Spirit started planting the seeds of a book in my heart. Holy Spirit helped me see some discrepancies that answer the questions posed at the beginning. The church is not walking with Him for ministry and life.

From my experience, I have seen pastors chase the next “How to grow your church” book and even preach out of books and use the Bible as reference to support another book. Yes, I see the irony that this is a book. This book is not a book to tell you how to grow your church in your community. That is the Holy Spirit’s job to grow His church.

This book is a gentle challenge, push, shove, etc. to help us get back to walking with Holy Spirit and intimacy with Him. A relearning what walking by faith really is. Hopefully this book will take all the taboo, baggage, and preconceived notions that we have in our head of what a move the Holy Spirit is and the supernatural work He wants to do through us. We say we serve a supernatural God and we do. We read of His miracles and how the Holy Spirit did great things through Jesus and the early church, yet we seldom see that in our life and the church.

The gospel of Mark is my favorite gospel. In chapter 16 it says something that made me ask some questions about how we do ministry. This is what it said “And then he told them, “**Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won’t hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed.**” Mark 16:15-18 NLT.

Jesus is speaking here and He says this statement that made me think, "These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe." He doesn't say "These signs might," or "These signs will only follow the super spiritual" etc. The qualifier is just believing in Him. This statement made that part of me that asked "There's got to be more to this," made me start asking questions like "If miraculous signs aren't accompanying me or the church what am I believing in? Because Jesus guaranteed that they will."

Then the last verse of Mark says this, "And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs." Mark 16:20 NLT. This made me ask another question "If we aren't seeing miraculous signs, maybe what we are preaching Jesus doesn't want to confirm." So I started praying, reading, and seeking the Holy Spirit in this.

I was pondering all this while I was a student pastor. I started to be intentional about trying to simplify what I believe the church model in the USA has twisted. Jesus said go and preach the gospel and pastors tell their congregants to invite people to church to hear the gospel. Instead of equipping the saints to do the good work of the gospel, pastors in an effort to make evangelism simple have robbed the saints of their purpose by calling invitations to church evangelism.

Then God started putting a burden in my heart to move from student ministry to lead pastoring. This is the very definition of poetic justice, I never wanted to be a lead pastor,

but God in His sovereignty thought differently. So my family made a leap of faith and took a lead pastor position in TN. One month in I found myself crying because I felt so unqualified and had no idea what I was doing.

It was during this specific prayer time, I heard God say so clearly, "Go downtown, pray with people, and tell them I love them, and share the Gospel." So the next day I started walking downtown, praying with people, telling them Jesus loves them and sharing the gospel. I have been doing this now for over three years. It was during this time of pounding the pavement and praying that I have learned to listen to the Holy Spirit like never before in my life. I learned that faith looks crazy and if I want to walk in step with the Holy Spirit I need to have a willingness to look crazy.

During these years I have seen the miraculous nature of God like never before. Everything from Holy Spirit healing a veteran's hand, seeing a leg grow, chronic back pain disappear, cancer leave a body. I have had random people walk up to me and ask for prayer. I have had God read people's mail through the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work that led to their salvation. Then I have just had conversations that were life giving.

While all this is happening and still happening, the Holy Spirit is reconciling in my heart expectations and reality. Whenever God has done anything through me, it never met my expectations, it was different but better. I didn't have

tingly, I didn't hear a booming voice or a still small voice, it was more just a passing thought, but I acted and God moved.

These verses from Mark started to come alive. God started reconciling my expectations to the reality of how these things manifest, I started realizing something so important in the first questions I posed that question is "There has to be more to this." It's not found in what we do or the miraculous nature of God, although He wants to do that through all His people, the more to this is just intimacy with our Father through Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

I believe that we have got to stop chasing results and start chasing God again, come back to our first love and let God do what He promised to grow His church.

I pray that as you read this book, the Holy Spirit ministers to you and challenges you to walk with Him like never before. I pray that this book will minister to those who are asking those same questions I asked and show them that God is the more. I pray this book will make normal the supernatural that God wants to do through His church.

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1

EMBRACE THE LONELY PLACE

I was at a ministers' retreat and on my last night there I found myself laying awake thinking about what I wished someone would have told me when I was in Bible college that I know now. What would that one message be that I could tell His church today what would that be? What would be the most beneficial thing your church needs? Laying there praying and thinking about these questions, this one thought went through my head "Tell them to embrace the lonely place."

In a culture where people can't stand to be alone, we have to be entertained 24/7. We have come to despise quiet, lonely places. I am guilty when I'm alone, I have something going. But what's crazy about this whole system, is that you can be surrounded by people and still feel completely alone. It seems in our efforts to fill the lonely with stuff, we are now more alone than ever.

It seemed like a crazy thought at first, but as soon as I let it resonate in my spirit so many scriptures started flooding my mind. I started to see why we need to embrace the lonely place. If we want to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, we need a place to know Him, align ourselves to Him, learn His voice and trust Him. I would submit to you that this place is the lonely place with Him.

There is a section of scripture that is very revealing about the lonely place, it is found in the Gospel of Luke chapter four starting in verse one through fifteen. It's the temptation of Jesus. Let's give it a read.

'Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread." But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. "I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me." Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came. ('Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus. ' Matthew 4:11) Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. He

taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ' Luke 4:1-15 NLT

Notice this in verse one and in verse fourteen. "1 Then Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness...14 Then Jesus returned to Galilee, **filled with the Holy Spirit's power**. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region." Luke 4:1, 14 NLT

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit before he was led into the lonely place, but He came out of the lonely place full of the Holy Spirit's power. This was not a one time occurrence for Jesus. Throughout His physical ministry on earth Jesus had this pattern of embracing the lonely place. He understood what the lonely place afforded Him. Let's look at a few more examples of Jesus' embrace of the lonely place.

'But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray. ' Luke 5:15-16

"After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone."
Matthew 14:23

"During those days he went out to the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God" Luke 6:12

"35 Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. 36 Later Simon and the others went out to find him. 37 When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you." 38 But Jesus replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came." Mark 1: 35-37 NLT

Jesus' physical ministry book ended with lonely place experiences. In the wilderness and Gethsemane. Let's look at that for a moment.

36 Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." 37 He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. 38 He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." 40 Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? 41 Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!" 42 Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done." 43 When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open. 44 So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But

look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!" Matthew 26: 36-46 NLT

I feel so strongly about this, I know for a fact that this is a message for today. Jesus understood the value of the lonely place. Before or after almost every great miracle or teaching Jesus is recorded at going off to be alone with the Father to pray.

We are going to explore what Jesus knew and we can learn to embrace the lonely place. There are some of us reading this right now that the Holy Spirit is making this resonate with you because you are in a lonely place and the enemy has been coming at you. You feel like something is wrong with you. I'm here to tell you that there is nothing wrong with you, your lonely place serves a purpose. Some of us are entering one, you can hate it or embrace it, because the reality is it's not going away, but I know that God does good work in lonely places.

The first question is how did Jesus embrace the lonely place? The answer is quite simple with prayer, fasting, and communion with the Father. The second question is why do we need to embrace the lonely place? I would argue that if Jesus, God almighty in the flesh needed to embrace them, we do also. It was in the lonely place Jesus was filled with the Spirit's power.

Jesus got away and prayed, in a day and age being 2022, where the average Christ follower in the United States prays less than ninety seconds a day (yes, you read that right 90 seconds, 1 ½ minutes a day) and the average pastor prays just at three minutes a day. We wonder where God's power is. I would say it's in the lonely place but we don't embrace it, we avoid it. But when we embrace the Lonely place we will see the following.

I want to look at what happens when we learn to embrace the lonely places that we find ourselves in versus avoiding them or complaining through them. I am a firm advocate that God wastes nothing in our lives and He won't let a lonely place go to waste if we allow Him to use it.

God Leads in lonely places

We see this actively throughout the ministry of Jesus. Luke 4: 1 says the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted. God had a purpose in the lonely place for Jesus. Jesus didn't complain, He didn't argue. Jesus just came off a spiritually amazing moment, He got baptized, the heavens opened, God spoke and affirmed Him, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and rested on Him, and the first thing the Holy Spirit does is lead Jesus into a lonely place.

What if I told you that your lonely place isn't by mistake, I don't care if you're the reason that you're there. Because the Holy Spirit cares so much about our destiny that even though we might have put ourselves there God can still use it if we let

Him lead us through it. There is something about how we learn to embrace the lonely place that affords us to hear the Holy Spirit better.

Elijah is another great example of a person who learned to embrace the lonely place. He found himself under a broom tree in the middle of nowhere wanting to die, asking God to kill him and God showed up and gave him direction. God led him to a more lonely place where He gave him more detailed direction.

The lonely place affords us to hear God more clearly where we wouldn't be able to otherwise. Jesus came out of a morning with the Father in Mark 1 with instructions of where to go to preach the Gospel. Because God leads through lonely places

God Opens doors through prayer in lonely places

Go back and look at the scripture above. Jesus went to the lonely places with the Father, then God opened doors, miraculous doors. He prayed all night then called the twelve to be apostles. He walks on water after spending time with the Father. God instructs Him where to go to do ministry. Going back to Elijah, he was in a cave and God gave specific instructions for Elijah to do. Elijah thought the ministry was over and God was just getting him to a place where he could see the open door moving forward.

I am telling you, that if we learn to embrace these lonely places and use them as an opportunity to chase after God as Jesus, God will open doors for us that we won't be able to explain. It won't even make sense. God wastes nothing and He most certainly will not waste a good lonely place in your life.

God Never leaves us while we are in lonely places

What's so ironic about the lonely places in scripture and in our lives is that we aren't truly alone. Lonely Places only feel lonely when we have fixed our eyes on our problem and complain about how bad it is. I don't want to diminish the circumstances that might have been the onset of this lonely place. But I do want to tell you that we have a very loving Heavenly Father, God Almighty, who is right there beside you wanting to nourish you during the time of the Lonely Place.

For Elijah under the broom tree, it literally looked like God sending an angel to give Him food twice while Elijah was fighting the depression of a lifetime. My lonely place looked a little different and quite frankly I am still discovering how much God is with me.

My mom and my hero, the person that introduced me to Jesus went home to be with our Lord in August of 2020. She was an anchor for me, and she was suddenly ripped out of my life. It was in the months and the years that followed that I discovered that even in the most lonely of places that God is so close, that his love is deeper than I could imagine, His

peace is more than my mind could process, and His strength is truly strongest when I am truly weakest.

In this lonely place when I just stopped trying to figure it out, make sense of it, process something I've never experienced, I discovered that God is with me more than I ever could have imagined. You know when something you know finally settles into your heart and you have that moment. For example we know God is with us, but when that knowledge becomes real. That is what the lonely place affords us.

God Encounters us in lonely places

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit going into the wilderness but He was full of the Holy's Spirit Power coming out of the wilderness. The thing is with how God encounters us in lonely places we might not enjoy but know that God is working for His glory and our good. Jesus' ministry was marked by doing ministry between lonely places, why? He needed an encounter with Father regularly. Jesus modeled this perfectly, to the point that the apostles continued this. They appointed people to take care of the day to day so they could devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.

If there was ever man who could have done life and ministry without lonely encounters with God, it was Jesus, why because He was God. He chose instead to set a precedence in life and ministry to get alone with God. We

cannot do life or ministry out of our talents or God given gifts, we must have frequent God encounters in lonely places.

We wonder where the power of God is in our lives, it's there but we see it very evidently when we embrace the lonely place and let God encounter us there.

God Loves us through lonely places

After Jesus' was tempted, Matthew's gospel tells us that angels came and attended to Jesus. In Elijah's case an angel came and made him food because the journey ahead was too much for him. God did not abandon them to their lonely place but met them in the midst of it and took care of them in it. God's love is revealed in ways that we cannot experience in any other time or place apart from lonely places with God.

To see His love for us in lonely places we must first stop looking at ourselves, circumstances that led to this moment. When we realize that God does not waste anything, we can and will start seeing His love at work through even the worst of circumstances. Knowing that God's love for us never diminishes whether we can trace Him or not, changes us. Changes how we pray in lonely places, changes how we praise in lonely places. It's this raw praise that comes out of these seasons that allows us to see God's power in us and work through us.

God's Yoke is revealed in lonely place

Another thing that the lonely place affords us is to learn the yoke of God. Jesus says in Matthew 11 a few short verses that carry tremendous weight. He says starting in verse 28, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

I used to think and have heard it preached so many times that this yoke is like a yoke between two oxen that binds them together. A yoke has another meaning in the context of Jewish culture. The yoke of a teacher would be the teacher's teachings, how that teacher would interpret the law of moses. This could be very burdensome to the students and even heavy to the point that even some of the teachers wouldn't be able to walk under the weight of their own yoke.

Jesus starts with all who are weary and burdened and that He will give rest. How, through the yoke of His teachings, He invites us into His yoke to learn from Him. Why, for He is gentle and humble with His yoke, it's truly resting in this we find rest. Jesus' yoke is easy and the burden of His teachings is light.

Jesus' yoke is highlighted to those who are in lonely places, who are weary and burdened. Jesus' yoke brings rest. The lonely place brings us to a place to learn from Him like no other place can.

I truly believe in a time where everything is grabbing for our attention, we must take notes from what Jesus modeled. We must first learn to embrace the lonely place if we want to walk in all the power and authority the Holy Spirit has for His church. We will not experience the power of the Holy Spirit depending on our talents and abilities. We need alone times with God where we learn Him, we learn His voice, we learn how to listen to Him, where we allow Him to wreck us and make us new. If Jesus embraced lonely places to walk out His God given assignment on earth, we must do this walk out ours.

APPLICATION QUESTION: HOW CAN I EMBRACE THE LONELY PLACE?

2

WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

You might not feel like you have anything that God can use. The good news is that you and I are very much alike. We often think we need to have everything in order, we need to know all the verses in the Bible, we need to pray for at least one hour a day, etc. Jesus doesn't base whether He's going to use you on you, He uses us on our willingness to say yes in faith even if it's just a small amount of faith. So what do you have? If all you have is a heart that says 'yes' to Jesus and a willingness to step in faith even if it's just a little faith, then you have all that Jesus is looking for to do great things in His Kingdom.

I am convinced that if we want God to use us in a mighty way, we have got to be willing to look like a fool for God. How this happens is when God asks us to take a step in faith. It can be a small step or a huge step but almost 100% of the time that if it's God asking you to take a step it will require faith and it will not make sense on the front end. Faith looks crazy until it happens. Faith does not make sense on the front end while we are stepping in it, that is why it is called faith.

I believe that God is raising up men and women who are hungry for a move of God and are hungry to be a part of it. I am convinced that there are followers of Jesus who are asking themselves "There has to be more to this than what I see" or "Why even pray, nothing happens." But they know that is not right and they know there is more.

What if I told you, there is more. God wants to do more through you than you could imagine and it starts with faith. Faith that makes us move, faith that makes us look like a fool unless God shows up. Faith is such a big deal to God, it's the how in our relationship. We are saved by grace through faith. Jesus' number one rebuke to his disciples was concerning their lack of faith.

So let's define faith. God defines faith this way in Hebrews 11:1 - 'Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.' A layman's way of putting it might be - faith makes what we cannot see or feel, feel so real that we can almost see it.

The Need for Crazy Faith in Jesus

As we say yes to Jesus and step in faith, we must understand that it will look crazy what He is asking you to do. It will not make sense. Faith looks crazy until it happens. Jesus asked His disciples to feed fifteen to twenty-thousand people with a child's first century lunchable. He first blessed it and broke it but the miracle happened when His disciples took the pieces from Jesus and they started passing it out.

I can give several examples but the craziest I can remember, I was praying for a lady who was going deaf and in the middle of the prayer, Holy Spirit prompted me to put my fingers in her ears. I almost gag still thinking about it, but I know this, if I argue with God only one of us is wrong and it's not Him. So I asked her if I could and I told her, "I think Holy

“Spirit wants me to put my fingers in your ears” and she let me put my fingers in her ears. I fully expected that the ringing in her ears would stop and that her hearing would be restored. I removed my fingers after praying in Jesus name healing over her ears and nothing happened that day. Luckily she understood, and even ended up having lunch with us after church. Then a week later I get a text from her that says “all the ringing in my ears has stopped!” Then two weeks later I got a text from her about a test that her Audiologist ran and it showed that her hearing was restored.

If we want Jesus to use us powerfully we must be willing to let our faith look crazy.

Jesus spoke several times about the power of faith in Him. We can't just have faith, it must be faith in Jesus. So from this point forward when referencing having faith, it will be understood as faith in Jesus. Listed below are two examples of Jesus teaching His disciples the power of faith in Him. He was trying to get them to understand if they just believe God will do it, He will through them.

'In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” And immediately the fig tree withered up. The disciples were amazed when they saw this and asked, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this

and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it."

'Matthew 21:18-22

Jesus said, "You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well.

Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, "Why couldn't we cast out that demon?" "You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible. " 'Matthew 17:17-20

Jesus gave His disciples some pretty crazy examples about mountains, this seems almost hyperbolic. Yet He gave these examples after easily casting a demon out that they couldn't and then after literally speaking a curse to a fig tree and it literally dying in front of them. Jesus took God's word as true. Faith is simply believing what we pray for will actually happen. Faith is so powerful that when we operate in it, it can move impossible situations.

What would happen in our lives if we just believed God? I know our faith would start looking crazy, our faith steps wouldn't make sense to most people, but obedience to God isn't supposed to make sense to people, it's supposed to bring Him glory.

Our faith can amaze God

'When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer came and pleaded with him, "Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain." Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." But the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who were following him, he said, "I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!" Matthew 8:5-10

We have a scene here where Jesus, God almighty, was amazed, not because this guy was something special, did something magnificent, but because he had such faith in Jesus and understood what Jesus could do. Jesus literally said that this Roman had the most faith in Israel. All this Roman did was have crazy faith in Jesus.

Our lack of faith can amaze him

'Jesus left that part of the country and returned with his disciples to Nazareth, his hometown. The next Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. They asked, "Where did he get all this wisdom and the power to perform such miracles?" Then they scoffed,

“He’s just a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us.” They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family.” And because of their unbelief, he couldn’t do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people. ¹ Mark 6:1-6

As much as Jesus was amazed at the Roman officers faith, Jesus was amazed at the lack of faith and rampant unbelief. Too often, we the church can border this. He will show himself faithful and work miracles in our lives, then another problem hits us and we act like Jesus has never done anything. It is a good exercise to write down when Jesus has worked a miracle in your life, whether it be your health, finances, emotions, provisions, family, etc, just write it down. So when the next issue of life hits, you can look back at every single time Jesus has come through. When you look at Jesus’ track record of faithfulness in your life, to doubt Him in your current circumstance is actually illogical.

Jesus was amazed because of unbelief and utter lack of faith. Jesus was amazed because of overwhelming crazy looking faith. What we do with our faith matters.

Let's Revisit what We have

I want to paint a picture of what it looks like to give Jesus what you have.

Jesus and the disciples just got back from an extended time of heavy ministry. On top of this Jesus just found out John the baptist is dead. So Jesus is mourning, He's emotionally drained, He and his disciples are physically drained from this ministry trip.

What did Jesus try to do? He tried to get alone, and decompress and process with His friends/disciples. People didn't know what they were going through, so the multitudes (15,000-20,000 people) followed Jesus and as Jesus was getting to that desolate place to be alone, He saw the multitudes and Jesus had compassion on them because they traveled so far.

Jesus ends up doing ministry all day, healing the sick, casting out demons. The day gets late and the disciples are thinking of the people to send them away for all to eat, including themselves.

Then Jesus says to them something that sounds crazy "you feed them,"

The disciples start flexing their intellect to make sense of an impossible situation.

Here's a couple lessons about faith:

- **You don't need faith if you can figure it out**
- **Faith isn't required until it's impossible**

Back to the story. Jesus already knows what he is going to do, but He is letting the disciples get to the end of their intellect to posture them for a move of faith. Jesus asks a question in Mark's account about what the disciples have to feed these multitudes. Jesus asks

"What do you have?"

Then they look around and find a boy, who isn't counted among the men, with 5 loaves and two fish

Then Jesus says this in Matthew's account

"Bring them here"

We know the rest of the story, Jesus took what they had and blessed it, broke it, then multiplied it.

But I just can't get over this perfect example of practical faith. Jesus is still asking us "what do you have?" If we want to walk in faith, look at what you have, it doesn't have to be a lot, just give it to Jesus, then be willing to let Him bless then break it. The miracle doesn't happen until it's blessed and then broke. Our faith sometimes stops when Jesus gets done blessing, but the multiplication that Jesus wants to do through us only comes after the breaking.

This is what faith looks like. God, all that I have is yours and I trust and place my faith in you to do with it what brings You glory.

APPLICATIONQUESTION, HOW CAN I GIVE WHAT I HAVE TO JESUS:

3

WHAT IS THAT TO YOU

Have you ever seen a person that just has the favor of God all over their life and have gotten jealous or maybe even envious. No judgement you're in good company, Peter the apostle did also and countless other brothers and sisters in Christ have too. It's so good to celebrate what Jesus is doing through other ministries, churches, pastors, and people but when we cross the line into comparison we end up robbing our lives of what God wants to do through us.

Comparison robs us of seeing the fact that Jesus only created one of you, one of me, and one of whoever we compare ourselves to. If Jesus wanted more than one of whoever He would have created them. That means that you and I are created with a particular purpose that only we can fulfill for God's glory. It might not be as glamorous or it might be more but it is up to us to fulfil it for Jesus' glory.

I want us to look at a moment where Jesus addresses how to handle comparison in our lives and the overflow of what it will do to us. In John 21, Jesus deals with this very thing when speaking to Peter.

“Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19 Jesus said

this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." John 21: 18-22 NIV

This is the last lesson that Jesus leaves Peter and the disciples with on the lake of Gensenerat.

Have you ever got something that made a job so much more simple, I mean like night and day difference. So Amy and I love camping and fire pits etc. I love building fires, there's an art to it, I just love the process of it. I don't know why I just enjoy it. Part of the process is blowing into the small embers to fan them to flame. We had a fire pit that had a screen around it to keep embers from floating off.

So if I had a small fire going and I am trying to blow into fire through this screen, the screen kept my face away and I couldn't blow hard enough to get the fire to grow to the point it could take larger sticks. Then there's the fact that my lung capacity is not what it used to be, and I was down trying to blow it through this screen which keeps me back a little too far to be effective. lol I am blowing so hard I am getting dizzy trying to blow this fire into a large flame.

Then it occurred to me I have an electric air mattress pump. So I go get this pump that can put out a constant source of air. I used that thing and by golly it looks like I have a flame thrower under this fire. In a fraction of the time the fire is blazing and we can add logs.

Could I have got the job done without this little pump, for sure, but I would have probably passed out from blowing so hard and constant. I was light headed, I was struggling to generate enough force out of my lungs to push the flame fast enough and constant enough, but I could have maybe just maybe eventually got the fire roaring. I have done it many times before but with that screen it is much harder.

We just read five short verses. In these verses Jesus tells Peter twice to follow Him. What Jesus does before both of these follow me statements is what Jesus does for us, He gives us what we need that will make following him so much easier. It's like He gives us an electric air mattress pump for following Him. If we do what He says, our relationship with Him will be roaring in no time.

We are going to explore what Jesus gives us that will make following him so much more beneficial and less frustrating. Can we follow Jesus without these, yes but it will be so much harder. Why because that is not how God intends for us to follow Him. What Jesus gives us, is what to look out for. He gives us a warning without a warning. He addresses two areas that we all wrestle with without coming out and saying it. Once we do see it we can un see it and we will be so

grateful that He took time to speak to these issues we all deal with.

Jesus is getting ahead of these issues in all believers' lives. He is addressing two issues that will assassinate our ability to walk with Holy Spirit. The first issue that Jesus addresses is our trust in God.

We Must Trust God Regardless

In these few verses in John a lot is happening. Peter just got reinstated as an apostle just before this conversation and this is one of the first things that Jesus says to him. Not "I'm glad your back, let's go." Nope, what Peter got from Jesus is this is how you will die by execution, in the meantime follow me.

Peter had to literally put this principle into practice, to trust God regardless of what he just learned. Peter knew that God was in charge, and at that moment Peter chose to follow Jesus knowing this outcome, because God is sovereign.

When we trust and follow God regardless of circumstances even the worst circumstances will glorify God.

We will not be able to trust and follow God completely if we think God exists for us. Here is an issue we must reconcile in our hearts, God doesn't exist for us, we exist for Him.

We need to take a moment to truly process the level of trust that Jesus is calling Peter to and the level of trust He is calling all of us to. Jesus tells Peter He will die by crucifixion. Well, Jesus doesn't exactly say crucifixion, but to a first century Jew they would have known what being clothed, being led, and being stretched out meant, and that was a roman crucifixion. Just a few weeks before this Jesus literally just went through the Roman process of crucifixion. He was clothed, led to the place of crucifixion, then literally stretched out on cross.

Then after this Jesus calls him to follow him again. Then tells Peter how He will die in this calling.

Jesus is saying trust me regardless of the outcome

Jesus didn't leave them without a warning, He tells them plainly what will happen to Him, then tells them plainly the cost of following Him. The blessing of following Jesus is always worth the cost. Jesus tells his followers in Luke chapter 9 the price.

21 Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was. 22 "The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things," he said. "He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead." 23 Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. 24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your

life for my sake, you will save it. 25 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. 27 I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God." Luke 9: 21-27 NLT

Jesus drops this truth on a group of people who are physically following Him but not spiritually following Him. He gives parameters to what truly following Him looks like. To trust Him regardless of the physical outcome. We too often take this instruction "take up your cross daily" or we say it like this "it's my cross to bear" and apply so loosely to our lives that we miss the gravitas of what Jesus is truly calling us to as His disciples.

Jesus was speaking to a group of followers that saw hundreds of their people crucified in their lifetime by the Romans. Some might have even seen their own family members crucified and He says to them, "If you want to be my disciple you must give up your own way and pick your cross and follow me."

We don't have physical crosses anymore, but the challenge to follow Jesus is none the less is the same. It's just as real as it was to the first century believers and as it was to Peter.

The challenge to following Jesus is: do we trust God with all of us, our whole being, our whole life, our whole family, our whole existence. To give up our own way, pick up our crosses daily to follow Jesus.

Are we willing to trust God with the outcome of our life even if it means we lose it?

Jesus doesn't call us to live for Him, He calls us to be willing to die for Him. Jesus was calling His followers to lay down their lives for Him. To trust him regardless. Laying down/giving up your life doesn't just mean physically dying, though that is a part of this relationship with Jesus. It also means that day in and day out we say to Jesus "my life is yours."

This is a prayer of surrender I pray day in and day out, whether my life is long or short before my feet hit the ground every morning. "Father, I give you my heart, my mind, my mouth, my hands and feet, I give you this body. All that I am is yours, all that I have is yours. Father, use me for your glory and Your Kingdom, In Jesus most powerful amen. If you just prayed that and meant it, congratulations you just started an amazing journey of surrender and adventure of faith.

The father of modern missions, is a man that most wouldn't even know His name. He moved to India and started ministering to local people groups. He started translating the bible into local languages. During his time on the mission field in India he lost his first wife to a fever after years of suffering

mental illness. Then he remarried and lost his second wife to fever and mental illness. He then had to bury three of his children. All his work at translating the Bible burned when his house and ministry buildings burned down, not to mention all his resources to translate the Bible, his the print shop, it all burned. He literally had to restart in marriage, in fatherhood, and had to restart in ministry after decades of work. He died an older man with one convert added to the kingdom under his life of ministry. His name is William Carey, and he is credited with being the father of modern missions. He laid down his life, he gave up his own way.

How did William Carey, Peter, and how do we follow Jesus like this? The answer is simple, trust God regardless. Don't put limits on your trust in God. Listen you don't need to be an apostle, the father of modern missions, a pastor etc. If you're a teacher, you're in ministry as a teacher and you're anointed for that. If you're retired you're in ministry and anointed for that. Fill in the blank, if you're _____ you're in ministry and you're anointed for that. Listen God's calling is always to do ministry but the ministry doesn't look like the way our brains too often define it. Some people are called to work with their hands and God has anointed you for that work

So trust Him regardless.

Predecide now, that no matter what, I am going to trust God. I am going to let Him be God over my life and I am just going to follow Him.

The second issue Jesus addresses that will assassinate our ability to walk with Holy Spirit is comparison.

Comparison will kill our purpose

During this conversation with Jesus, Peter looks back at John, and asks Jesus, "what about Him?" after hearing that He was going to die by crucifixion. Jesus looks straight at Peter and says "**What is that to you? You must follow me.**" Peter was over here thinking about how will die because he just received some news about his own death.

Jesus instantly course corrects Peter real hard, by stating something interesting, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" What is Jesus getting at? Jesus is telling Peter, that is irrelevant to your calling and purpose. You can compare to someone else's purpose or you can focus on accomplishing your purpose, you can't have both.

It would be such a tragedy if Peter focused on John and missed all that God wanted to do through Him. Because Peter heeded this warning and put to use this tool of not comparing, John was with Peter throughout Peter's public ministry. John and Peter were practically inseparable. They became vast friends not rivals.

Both understood that it is all about Jesus' glory not their own. They both understood their individual callings. They were to follow Jesus individually and to grow His kingdom mutually.

When we start comparing we lose sight that Jesus is calling each of us individually to follow Him. We start to feel inadequate or proud when we try to measure ourselves by someone else's life and calling. We will either think they have it all together, and we don't. Or we will think we are way better than them. When in reality we are all trying to follow Jesus and walk in step with the Holy Spirit.

If there is a standard to follow Jesus, Jesus, Himself, gave it to us: "Give up our own way, pick up our cross and follow Him." Instead of asking what about him or her. Instead we need to be asking, am I dying to myself daily, am I giving up my life for Jesus.

Let's recap for a moment of what Jesus gave to Peter and ultimately to us.

Jesus in one of his final conversations in person with Peter gives him some tools for walking with and being used by Holy Spirit. Trust God regardless, trusting God is the root of letting our faith run wild and believing God. When we trust God regardless, there's no limit to what God will do through you.

Then He leaves such practical advice for walking with Holy Spirit. Don't compare your calling, your walk with Holy Spirit, how He's using you to someone else. Jesus says "What is that to you? You must follow me." Let's keep our eyes on Jesus.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS: HOW CAN I TRUST GOD REGARDLESS; IS THERE ANY AREA OF MY LIFE I AM LIVING IN COMPARISON TO OTHERS INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON JESUS?

4

KNOW THE WORD OF GOD, STAND ON THE WORD OF GOD

In chapter 1 we focused on the lonely place, getting alone to spend time in prayer and learn the voice of God, through His Spirit. Time in the lonely place gives us an ear for Holy Spirit's voice, but time in His word gives us discernment to know Holy Spirit's voice. Knowing the Bible is not an optional choice if we want to walk with Holy Spirit, it's essential.

Some things we must understand about Holy Spirit. He always glorifies Jesus and He never contradicts the written word of God aka the Bible. He's the reason the Bible is inspired. In fact one of His jobs to the believer is to illuminate scripture to us or help us understand what the scripture means. He always leads us to all truth.

So the reason we need to know the word of God in our walk, is so we can discern if something is from God or from another spirit who is not the Holy Spirit. Demons know how to sound like Holy Spirit, they know how to quote scripture. When we have a close intimate walk with Holy Spirit and know the word of God, we will be able to discern if something that is spoken or heard is from Holy Spirit or not.

There's a story found in 1 Kings 13 that illustrates hearing the word of God and obeying that word in faith but then later not discerning another word that is claimed to be from God

which leads to death when obeyed. Let's look at this tragic narrative and hopefully we will see the need to know the word of God.

"At the Lord's command, a man of God from Judah went to Bethel, arriving there just as Jeroboam was approaching the altar to burn incense. Then at the Lord's command, he shouted, "O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: A child named Josiah will be born into the dynasty of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests from the pagan shrines who come here to burn incense, and human bones will be burned on you." That same day the man of God gave a sign to prove his message. He said, "The Lord has promised to give this sign: This altar will split apart, and its ashes will be poured out on the ground." When King Jeroboam heard the man of God speaking against the altar at Bethel, he pointed at him and shouted, "Seize that man!" But instantly the king's hand became paralyzed in that position, and he couldn't pull it back. At the same time a wide crack appeared in the altar, and the ashes poured out, just as the man of God had predicted in his message from the Lord. The king cried out to the man of God, "Please ask the Lord your God to restore my hand again!" So the man of God prayed to the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and he could move it again. Then the king said to the man of God, "Come to the palace with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift." But the man of God said to the king, "Even if you gave me half of everything you own, I would not go with you. I would not eat or drink anything in this place. **For the Lord gave me this command:**

‘You must not eat or drink anything while you are there, and do not return to Judah by the same way you came.’” So he left Bethel and went home another way. As it happened, there was an old prophet living in Bethel, and his sons came home and told him what the man of God had done in Bethel that day. They also told their father what the man had said to the king. The old prophet asked them, “Which way did he go?” So they showed their father which road the man of God had taken. “Quick, saddle the donkey,” the old man said. So they saddled the donkey for him, and he mounted it. Then he rode after the man of God and found him sitting under a great tree. The old prophet asked him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” “Yes, I am,” he replied. Then he said to the man of God, “Come home with me and eat some food.” “No, I cannot,” he replied. “I am not allowed to eat or drink anything here in this place. For the Lord gave me this command: ‘You must not eat or drink anything while you are there, and do not return to Judah by the same way you came.’” But the old prophet answered, “I am a prophet, too, just as you are. And an angel gave me this command from the Lord: ‘Bring him home with you so he can have something to eat and drink.’” But the old man was lying to him. So they went back together, and the man of God ate and drank at the prophet’s home. Then while they were sitting at the table, a command from the Lord came to the old prophet. He cried out to the man of God from Judah, “This is what the Lord says: You have defied the word of the Lord and have disobeyed the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back to this place and ate and drank where he told you not to eat or drink. Because of this, your body will not be buried in the grave of your

ancestors." After the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the old prophet saddled his own donkey for him, and the man of God started off again. But as he was traveling along, a lion came out and killed him. His body lay there on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. People who passed by saw the body lying in the road and the lion standing beside it, and they went and reported it in Bethel, where the old prophet lived. When the prophet heard the report, he said, "It is the man of God who disobeyed the Lord's command. The Lord has fulfilled his word by causing the lion to attack and kill him." Then the prophet said to his sons, "Saddle a donkey for me." So they saddled a donkey, and he went out and found the body lying in the road. The donkey and lion were still standing there beside it, for the lion had not eaten the body nor attacked the donkey. So the prophet laid the body of the man of God on the donkey and took it back to the town to mourn over him and bury him. He laid the body in his own grave, crying out in grief, "Oh, my brother!" Afterward the prophet said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones. For the message the Lord told him to proclaim against the altar in Bethel and against the pagan shrines in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true." But even after this, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil ways. He continued to choose priests from the common people. He appointed anyone who wanted to become a priest for the pagan shrines. This became a great sin and resulted in the utter destruction of Jeroboam's dynasty from the face of the earth." 1 Kings 13:1-34 NLT

We step into a snapshot of a man of God, this young prophet we never learn the name of. A lifetime of ministry in front of him yet His ministry is cut short not because He didn't know the word of God but because he didn't stand on the Word of God. He knew what God told him, he told the king and the old washed up prophet. Yet this old washed up prophet gave him a word "from God" that contradicted what God told him.

There are lessons that we can learn from this passage that I truly believe if we put them into practice they will 100% help us walk with Holy Spirit and in His power.

The first lesson we need to learn from this young prophet

Do what God tells you to do

It's really that simple, the young prophet just came and obeyed and God moved, the message was sent. He didn't add to it or take from it. He even started off in a different direction home. God's instructions were simple and he just simply obeyed them.

You just read God's instructions were simple, some of us thought easy. I didn't say it was easy, simple doesn't mean they were easy. He had to get up and move, he left his home in a different country to deliver this message to the king as he was making the sacrifice.

Here is a simple truth I've noticed, it is very hard to obey God not moving. Unless God tells you to wait, almost all obedience requires movement.

When my wife and I got new phones, our phone company made a lot of promises about our plan and the phones we got. They completely delivered on that promise for my wife, but they didn't for me. So I was on the phone a lot speaking to them, just to get them to keep their promise they made. I was getting frustrated. They finally told me that I have 30 days to turn my old phone in and they will give me about 1/10 of what they told me in their store they would give me for it.

So I prayed about it and Holy Spirit told me to wait. I was about to turn it in, but I stopped. Then a few days later I received a call from our carrier. I explained again for what felt like the 100th time that week what was happening with my plan and my phone. This lady was awesome, up to that point they wouldn't work with me, this lady made everything happen that they promised.

Then as we were talking, she asked if there was anything else she could help me with and I heard Holy Spirit tell me, "Share the Gospel with her." So I told her that there was something I'd like to share with her. This lady was from a Hindu culture, so I asked her if she had ever heard about Jesus. She didn't know who He was, so on the phone I shared the Gospel message of Jesus with her half a world away. As I shared how He died for her sins and rose for her to have

eternal life, I heard her crying through the phone. I shared with her how to pray and call on Jesus to be saved.

God told me to wait because He wanted me to move and obey at the right time. So even when God says wait, it's so we move at the right time. So when God says to move, move.

What motivated this young prophet's obedience to God? The reason he obeyed God is because he had a proper fear of God.

We will obey God when we properly fear God.

In this scripture we have a prophet who fears God and one who doesn't. Think about this, there was a prophet that still heard God's voice in Bethel but God didn't use him, because he didn't properly fear God. We know that the king had no respect for God and the men of God who lived there. Also, we know that Jeroboam had a history of buying prophets to say what he wanted them to say, instead of truly hearing from God. It's not a stretch to believe that this old prophet has been bought and won't say anything against the king.

We might not have a king but we have a government and a society that will try to cancel us, condemn us, hate us, censor, etc. us if we speak in a way they don't like or say anything that might go against their demonic agenda. Listen very carefully, our loyalty is to a king, not just a king but the King, the King of all Kings, the King of all glory. Our job is to

preach the word whether it lines up with society or not, the narrative our government is spinning or not. We are to speak truth in love.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is counter-culture always has been and will be. God had to send a man of God to speak the truth because the local "man of God" feared man more than He feared God. When we fear man more than God, we will live a life of cowardice and mediocrity instead of a life walking with Holy Spirit full of faith and power.

Characteristics of a person who truly fears God

- **They will obey Him quickly**
- **They will obey Him even if doesn't make sense**
- **They will obey Him even if it hurts**
- **They will obey Him even if we don't see a benefit**
- **They will obey Him to completion**

This young man was deceived because He didn't stand on the word of God. He didn't obey to completion and his disobedience cost him.

This man of God obeyed, He confronted a king, and God protected him while he was walking in obedience. This young prophet didn't discern the contrary word from the washed up prophet. We must know the word of God and stand on the word of God.

Discernment is a must, not an option

This young man of God, had discernment, when the king offered him a gift, he knew it was a bribe, he stood on the word of God and it protected Him. His guard was up when he was confronting the demonic, he knew this king was evil. It's easy to have your guard up when evil is apparent

When evil isn't as apparent, it is essential that we know God's word, we stand on it, and we learn to know Holy Spirit's voice. It's then the enemy loves to strike because we can be caught off guard. When this old prophet came to him and said, "I am a prophet too." All His discernment went out the window. He trusted that a prophet wouldn't lie to him. This old man probably wanted to reminisce about his glory days back when God used him before He was bought by the king. He was being selfish.

I need us to hear this, This is what God was pounding in my head as I prayed about this chapter.

We must have discernment now more than ever. We must in our know hearts God's now word more now than more ever. than Because ever.there We must are people have it who claim to be men and women of God. They claim to have the word of God that will sound right and encouraging and it will be what we want to hear, but it will lead to death. We will want to believe them, but we must discern what's from Holy Spirit.

You might be thinking "That's great, how do we do that, isn't discernment from the Holy Spirit." Yes, it is. I can't give discernment to you, but I can tell you how to cultivate a discerning heart in you.

Get in the Word of God and get the Word of God in you. Know it, that's not enough though, live it, submit to it. Put God's word in your heart and submit your heart to it. Spend time with God in prayer. Then you will be able to tell what is God's presence and what is not. Fear God more than man.

My mom worked at a bank for over 20 years and they trained her to spot counterfeit bills. They trained her by showing her what to look for, but they trained her with only real money. During her training, the bank only let her touch real money. They trained her by showing her what to look for in real money. She knew the traits of real currency that made it authentic. She knew how it felt, she knew the marks to look for, she knew the fonts, the color, the color temperature. She knew what the real thing was. She knew the real thing so well that when she encountered a counterfeit, she instantly could tell this was fake.

That's how we discern. We spend time with Holy Spirit in His presence, we spend time with God in His word that when we encounter something that is different, we know this isn't God. This is literally how I knew there were demons present, the atmosphere is different, then I had to address them and cast them out in Jesus name.

This young man of God died because he didn't discern what the apostate prophet said wasn't from God. He let his guard down. If you hear something that seems a little off, it doesn't come into alignment with God's word, don't believe it, don't receive it, turn it off, and tune it out. This man of God believed a false word and obeyed it, then God gave him a new word because He disobeyed the first one. God will give you another word but you might not like it.

Believing God, trusting God, and obeying God affects our life directly and there are consequences for not believing, trusting, and obeying. This young prophet also discovered that there are consequences for believing a lie, trusting a lie, and obeying a lie.

The next lesson we need to learn for walking with Holy Spirit is.

God's word will come to pass

God keeps His word. In a world filled with internet prophets that only prophecy what people want to hear and never call anyone to repent. We need to know God's word. In a world filled with a false gospel that is centered on man not centered on Jesus. In a world filled with people trying to make a quick buck with this man centered gospel.

Let me remind you heaven and earth will pass away but the Word of God will last forever. We better know the word of God. God keeps His word and will not go back on it. Even if the

whole world is saying something that is contrary to what God has said in His word, God's word will come to pass. Let God be true and every man a liar.

This man of God disobeyed the Word God gave him. Then God gave Him a new word and the next day, God kept it. If someone comes to you with a new instruction, but you know what God told you to do, obey God.

We must discern whether a person is trying to help us accomplish our purpose or are they trying to get us to disobey God's instructions. It's not always clear.

The good news is that when we get in our hearts God's word will come to pass. We can walk in confidence. We can stand on God's word like never before because we don't have to make it happen. We just have to be obedient to God.

There are people who are reading this and God has given you instructions but you are wrestling with how obedience looks in this season of life. Listen to me God isn't mad at you, he just wants you to start. I pray you just start the journey of obedience with faith, God will keep His word. He's with you, He is in your corner. Just obey.

Know God's Word, Be in God's Word, and most importantly get God's Word in you.

APPLICATION QUESTION: WHAT CAN I DO IN MY LIFE TO MAKE MORE ROOM FOR GOD'S WORD, THEN START THAT JOURNEY.

5

Yes and Step With Time and Consistency

"If you are not willing to step out in faith, you will never see the power of God move."

- Smith Wigglesworth

What if I told you the only thing that is stopping God from using you powerfully is a simple word and step, then doing that over and over again, over time. That word is yes, just say yes to Holy Spirit, and that step is faith. The secret sauce to saying yes to Holy Spirit and a step of faith is time and consistency.

There was this man who lived in the late 1800's and early to mid 1900's, his name was Smith Wigglesworth. Smith was used by Holy Spirit greatly. Holy Spirit worked through Smith to heal literal thousands from serious illness and afflictions and fourteen people were resurrected over the course of his over three decades long ministry.

In one encounter this gentleman asked Smith Wigglesworth, "Why doesn't God heal when I pray for people?" Smith replied, "How many have you prayed for?" The person answered, "Two or three." Smith replied, "I have prayed for thousands."

What Smith was getting at was, it's not that God doesn't want to use us, it's saying yes to Holy Spirit and stepping with time and consistency. Not every person Smith prayed for

received healing, but thousands did because he consistently said yes over time.

Smith walked and operated in the power of Holy Spirit. How? By saying yes and stepping in faith time and again. Holy Spirit is essential to God using us, He is the one who empowers us to do anything for God.

Holy Spirit Empowers You to use You

Jesus says in Acts 1:8 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' Jesus wasn't messing around. When Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 in the upper room, He got right to work growing the kingdom. The book of Acts of the Apostles should be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The whole book is Holy Spirit doing this through the church, or Holy Spirit doing that through the Church, etc. He doesn't empower us to give us goosebumps or a heavenly language, those are perks of His empowerment don't get me wrong but He empowers us to use us to grow Jesus' kingdom.

Pastor Josh Howerton once said, "If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit for His life, How much more do you think you need Him for yours?" I would add if Jesus needed Holy Spirit for ministry, how much more do we need Holy Spirit for the ministry He's called us to.

Holy Spirit grows our Faith with our Yes

When God asks us to do something we often think that it be something like "become a missionary," "Pastor that

church," "get up and preach." etc. Now God does ask that of people all the time, but He doesn't start there. He starts with something that will stretch your faith, but not crush you. He wants your yes over and over again.

When we say yes to Holy Spirit over time with consistency, something amazing happens, our faith gets exercised and it grows. It's literally like going to the gym and exercising over time with consistency, this literally will grow your muscles.

Holy Spirit is gracious, He doesn't start us with a yes and step that will crush us. He starts us small and grows our faith.

When we say yes to Holy Spirit, we must remember this very important component: all the Power of God lives in us, we are to not fear the enemy but trample him underfoot. We need to operate in our authority and we need to learn and discern how. We learn by saying yes over time with consistency.

We don't need to fight out of our weight class or should I say faith class. We must operate in Holy Spirit's power and authority in us in proportion to our faith level. Listen, Holy Spirit isn't limiting us or limited to us, but in His grace He allows us to grow our faith so He can operate through us more powerfully. If He throws us into something that we aren't ready for, that something can crush us and mess us up spiritually, He won't do that. We might do that to ourselves, Holy Spirit won't. He will stretch us though. He will always stretch you and grow you but He won't cripple you.

You might ask “Are you saying don't pray for people in wheel chairs, or cast out demons, etc.” The answer is, absolutely no I am not. If you truly believe they will get out of that chair, go for it. What I am saying is you need to operate in your level of faith so it can grow and not get injured.

There's this teenager at my church that is pretty athletic. In 2025 this kid did the Murph work out with me on Memorial Day. That is a great workout, two miles of running, one hundred pull-ups, two hundred push-ups, and three hundred squats. This exercise is no joke.

This kid is 5' 8" and 150lbs soaking wet, I am 6' 2" and 225lbs. There's a noticeable difference between the two of us. Though I am much larger and stronger than this teen, guess what I don't have one muscle that he doesn't have. We have all the same muscle groups. The difference is that I have said yes to the gym over time with consistency. I have worked my muscles for 24 years more than him.

This means I am not going to take this kid to the gym and expect him to lift what I lift or do what I do. Don't get me wrong this kid is a beast, he did this crazy exercise on Memorial Day with me, but it pushed him pretty good. He can do all the same exercises I can do and he should do them and quite frankly he probably does do them but He doesn't do them at the same weight that I do them. He can do them at the same intensity but not the same weight.

If I lifted his weight it would be so easy but if He lifted mine it would crush him. I warm up with more than his max on some stuff. The same is true with our faith. We all have the same Holy Spirit in us. Not one born again person has more Holy Spirit power than the other, but we all don't have the same faith level that His power can flow through.

We need to exercise our faith, keep saying yes and stepping with consistency over time but do it all in proportion to our faith. That's why we need people in our lives who have been there, that have done what we want God to through us. The type of people who, when you see them operate in the power of Holy Spirit, it just looks natural and easy. Those are the people you can learn from by asking them questions. Also we need people behind us that are asking those questions to us.

But we grow our faith by trusting Holy Spirit and keep saying yes to Him, stepping in faith with consistency over time. So pray those big prayers, do those things that push us to trust Him. Just like lifting heavy weights pushes our muscles to grow, so does saying yes to Holy Spirit and stepping out in faith.

This teenager and I can both lift heavy weights but heavy to me and heavy to him are two different things. Casting out demons to me doesn't stretch me like it used to or praying for sick people and seeing Jesus heal them wherever I am is not the step of faith that it used to be. It's just another weekday, but for some reading this book, If I ask you to join me doing

either of those, it would really stretch you, some might even say no thank you because you'd be freaked out by it.

We all have the same Holy Spirit living in us, but all our faith levels are not the same. I imagine if you made it this far in this book you want Holy Spirit to use you like that. So start exercising your faith. We exercise our muscles by going and using them. Faith in Jesus is the same way, we go and use it.

Say yes to Holy Spirit and step out. You might not be ready to cast out a demon right now. But you can say yes in obedience to Holy Spirit when He prompts you and then step in faith. I challenge you to convince yourself. To get it from your head to your heart, that Holy Spirit is in you, He's with you, He's empowered you, His power lives in you, and He wants to use you whether you feel ready or not. When that settles into your heart, buckle up, God is about to move through you.

Saying yes and Stepping is Always worth it!

Every time Holy Spirit has used me, it wasn't what I expected but it was so much better than I thought. I have prayed for people and felt God's power leave me and they were healed and I have prayed for people and felt nothing and Holy Spirit still healed. He's shown up in Wal-Mart just and Planet Fitness just as much as He's shown up at the altar in the church building. I am going to share some testimonies. The point of testimonies is always to build our faith and to get us to believe that God will do it again with the same power

and authority. If God can do it then then He can do it again. Believe me if God can use me, then God can use you.

African witch

In 2011 I had the privilege of going on a two week mission trip in South Africa with my college's basketball team. While there we got to play local basketball teams and share the Gospel of Jesus. Then we got to go into schools and my team split into different classes. Each class we had the privilege of sharing the gospel with 50 students. We team split up and we were able to hit about 7 class rooms and then the students would rotate.

One of the classes I was in, there was this one 13 year old girl and she was absolutely causing distraction the whole time. Making noise, not sitting still, scooting her desk, opening her bag, clearing her throat etc. She was doing all this while two of my team mates were trying to share their testimonies how Jesus saved them. My two team mates and I were getting pretty annoyed, but we thought she might have had ADD so we tried not to show our annoyance on our faces.

The rest of the class was paying really close attention, Americans were in their class sharing about how the gospel has power and how it saved them from gang life. Then this girl stood up and said "You say your God has power, I have power I am a witch." I remember it so clearly because Holy Spirit was jumping like crazy in chest and both my teammates turned and looked at me.

At this moment the annoyance I had changed to anger toward these demons. The enemy was trying to distract from the Gospel of Jesus. I didn't know what to do, but Holy Spirit was prompting me to tell her to sit, be quiet and not move. So I said in response to her claim of power "In Jesus name you sit and not make a noise or move for the rest of class." That's exactly what happened, she set down promptly and sat like a statue, perfectly still for the rest of the class which was about 40 minutes.

This was my first interaction with a demonized person. I was nervous and quite frankly what I would say I was bold scared, but Holy Spirit was growing me.

Demonized girl at prophetic night

Every month our church hosts a prophetic night. It is a wonderful time of Holy Spirit moving. People are healed, delivered, encouraged, and built up. One night Prophetic Night there was this lady that kept standing up during the presentation that was about the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church.

She stood up and said the church needs to listen to me. Before this the whole night my spirit was unsettled and as soon as she stood up I understood why. I knew there was an unclean spirit. So I went over there and told it in Jesus name you don't get to speak. Then in Jesus mighty I cast these unclean spirits out of her.

Then we took the lady into another room and continued deliverance ministry with her. She left the church building that night free.

Demon oppressed man at Cabin Coffee.

Every Tuesday morning I meet with my friend AJ at 6 AM. That morning as AJ and I walked up to Cabin Coffee there were some people who were sleeping under the awning. Holy Spirit prompted me to buy them breakfast and some coffee. So I told them, when they are ready to head in and it would be my honor to get them some breakfast and coffee.

I knew Holy Spirit wanted us to pray with them. So before AJ and I left we went and spoke to them and shared the Gospel and led them to Jesus. As we were sharing, I just felt there needed to be freedom and deliverance. I felt there were demonic spirits afoot in their lives. As I was leaving the husband walked out and Holy Spirit said now is the time

So I went and started talking with Him and He said his mother-in-law messes with voodoo dolls. I knew that was it. So I asked if he wanted to be free from those demonic spirits, he said he did. So I led him through deliverance, and He experienced freedom that only Jesus can offer. He told me that he had never felt peace like that before and that his head was clear, there was no confusion.

I left and Holy Spirit told me to go back and pray for his wife who just got out of the hospital. So I turned around and did that. I prayed for her and asked her how she felt after and she said, I actually feel great. She was diabetic and she was just released from the hospital that night. She had been in the hospital because of her diabetes. She said she actually felt normal, what she hadn't felt in a long time. Then Holy Spirit released me to leave.

I would love to keep sharing testimonies of casting out demons because I love when Jesus makes those suckers homeless. I have several more but I want to share some miraculous healings with you.

Planet Fitness neck healing

I like to exercise a lot, because I love, love, love, love ice cream, chocolate chip cookies, and pasta. So I frequent Planet Fitness. The gym has become a huge place of ministry for me. I pray with people or share Jesus with people all the time there.

One day, I was leaving. I was in a time crunch. So I was hurrying out the door and I locked eyes with this lady who was probably in her late 50's. I gave her a head nod to be polite, then walked out. Half way to my truck, Holy Spirit said "She has chronic neck pain." So I said "What do you want me to do with this information?" He was silent, I knew what He wanted me to do. So I said yes and stepped in faith. I turned around and walked back in. I walked up to her and said "You

don't know me and I don't know you, I can be wrong with what I am about to tell you, but I don't think I am. Holy Spirit told me you have chronic neck pain."

She said "Oh my, yes, in fact it's absolutely killing me right now." I responded "Holy Spirit told me this because He's going to heal you, because He sees you and Jesus absolutely loves you." So I prayed "In Jesus most powerful name, neck be healed right now." She said "My neck doesn't hurt at all, I can move it." She started moving it all around, absolutely amazed at what Holy Spirit just did. She then started confessing all her sins, I didn't even share the gospel, but she encountered God and she knew that she wasn't right with Him. I then led her to Jesus.

Wal-Mart Aisle 19

Aisle 19 is my favorite aisle at Wal-Mart. It used to be my favorite aisle because that was the candy aisle but now it's because it's the aisle that my kids got to see their first miracle. One summer night we were gathering candy for an excursion to a drive in movie. While I was browsing the selections of dipped pretzels I heard a young teenage voice say to another young teenage voice "Please hand me that, I am a cripple."

Now I don't normally pay attention to the age of people's voices, but what popped out was what she said "I am a cripple." That's something you don't normally hear come out of such a young voice. So naturally I turned to see why. I saw a young lady no more than fourteen in a nice electric wheel

chair, this is one that she brought with her, not one offered by the store. Down her right leg was a full leg brace, from hip to ankle, complete immobilization.

I have had to wear a similar brace, though the one I had was smaller, but I knew what mine was for, I tore my MCL in my right knee in high school. So I walked up to her and said "If you don't mind me asking, what did you do to your leg?" She responded "She tore all the ligaments in my knee." I replied "I am so sorry to hear that, I know a fraction of what you're going through." Then I said "Do you mind if I pray for you, I know Jesus and I have seen Him heal cancer and knees, and knees before?"

She was taken back for a moment and said "Are you serious, most Christians I know would never pray for people in public." Hearing this broke my heart so I told her "I am sorry to hear that, I am just trying to be obedient Holy Spirit." Her friend said "This is crazy, I just got baptized last month and I've been learning about this stuff." Then the injured young lady said "Please pray, I have nothing to lose."

So I prayed "In Jesus most powerful name knee be healed, every ligament be healed in Jesus name." I asked "how does it feel?" Her eyes widened and said "It doesn't hurt near as much, this is crazy" So I said "Let's pray again, Jesus is the Son of God and He had to pray for a blind guy twice, I am just some dude. Let's pray 'Knee, in Jesus awesome name be healed now.'" She said "This is crazy, the pain is almost completely gone," so I said "Let's pray again, 'Knee

commanded you to be completely healed in Jesus name, you must obey now."

She said, "What did you do, my knee doesn't hurt at all, it was like an 8 out 10, now it's a 0!" I told her, "I didn't do anything but say yes to what Holy Spirit wanted to do for you. Jesus loves you so much that He died in your place for your sins." Her Christian friend then said "Let's get you out that brace and wheel chair." She then proceeded to unstrap all eight straps and yank her up out of that chair. These girls proceeded to jump up and down in excitement.

The healed young lady's mother rounded the corner and saw her daughter who had a life altering injury jumping up and down. I saw the mother's eyes get huge, I can only imagine out of surprise, fear, shock, etc. Then this healed young lady ran to her mom yelling "JESUS JUST HEALED ME, THIS MAN PRAYED FOR ME AND JESUS JESUS HEALED ME!"

This whole experience lasted five minutes. I turned and walked back to our cart to see both of my children watching. Their eyes wide and processing what they just saw. My daughter asked me "Daddy, did I really just see Jesus get that girl out of a wheelchair?" That's when I cried and through my tears I replied "Yeah, Sis, you sure did!"

When it's Not what you expect

As Holy Spirit started really starting to use me in miraculous healing something happened. It was crazy, I was

seeing people get healed. It seemed like every time I prayed with people, when I would go down town and pray for my city, they would get healed. During this season, I got a call one Saturday night that changed my life. My dad called and told me that my mom can't get up and is barely breathing. He called me to pray for her. He knew what Holy Spirit was doing through me. My dad is a man of God and He knows about God's healing power.

My sister's got there and they held the phone I was on so I was hearing everything in the background. I told my oldest sister to put me on speaker and pray with me. I prayed like I never prayed before with the same faith, with the same authority of Holy Spirit yet my mom still died. That's not what I was praying for. I had to process this.

At my mom's funeral, after I preached, the Holy Spirit gave me a word of knowledge and prophecy for a friend of mine who was attending. The word of knowledge was for her health and healing and the prophecy was she was going to have a son despite doctors telling her she was barren. I told my friend what Holy Spirit said and guess what, He healed her and prophecy came to pass one year later when her son was born.

I wrestled, why didn't Holy Spirit heal my mom. Ultimately He did, her faith is now sight in the presence of Jesus. He wrote her life backwards so she could live it out forwards. My point is that sometimes you will pray, you will say yes, you will step in faith and God won't move the way you

want Him to. Our job is not to produce miracles, we can't anyways only God can. Let God do His part and we do ours. Holy Spirit just wants us to keep saying yes to Him and keep stepping in faith with consistency over time. All the while trusting Him with the results.

What I Pray for You

I pray these few testimonies have jolted your "Yes to Holy Spirit" and your step of faith. I have had to honor to see Holy Spirit remove cancer, tumors, heal migraines, regrow bones, grow legs. I have seen demons scream and leave at command of Jesus name. I have seen so many demoniacs get delivered by Jesus and come into their right minds then turn their lives over to Him. These are just highlights. It never seems to start with the high lights, it always starts with giving Holy Spirit our yes and stepping in faith consistently over time. Holy Spirit will keep stretching our faith and opening more doors. Let Holy Spirit decide what He wants to do with your yes and step.

Holy Spirit wants to move through you to bring about God's will on earth. The greatest privilege we have for this walk with Jesus is to simply give Him our yes and step in faith. He will open door after door and He will do miracle after miracle with our simple yes and a little step of faith.

I want to end this book by giving you a prayer to pray that will help you walk with Holy Spirit.

Father, not only do I say yes to You, I want You to open doors for me to be Your hands and feet for the Gospel of

Jesus. I say, "Here am I; send me." Father, give me ears to hear and eyes to see where the Holy Spirit is leading. Father, give me Your heart for the lost and boldness to share Jesus' Gospel with them. Holy Spirit, baptize me with fire and power so that I might boldly be the hands and feet of Jesus. I don't want to go back to Christianity as normal; I want to be on fire for You, Father, so use me while I am on this earth for Your glory, not my own. In Jesus' most powerful name, I pray this. Amen.

APPLICATION QUESTION: WHAT IS HOLY SPIRIT ASKING ME TO SAY YES TO AND HOW CAN I STEP IN FAITH TO OBEY? (Some of you know the answer to this, say yes and step; some reading this want a new instruction from God because you don't like the last one, He'll give you a new one when you obey the last one, say yes and step.)

I pray for every person who reads this book, that they lay hold of everything God wants for them and wants to do through them. I pray in Jesus most powerful name that your faith runs wild, that you trust Holy Spirit's leading, and you step when Holy spirit says step. I pray Holy Spirit uses you powerfully for Jesus' kingdom and His glory. In Jesus powerful name Amen.

Get ready, my friend, because Holy Spirit wants to do more through you than you can even imagine. Just say "yes" and step. **'Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ' Ephesians 3:20**