

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Learning to Operate in the Power of the Spirit

By Dan Trygg

"Truly, truly, I say to you, the one believing unto Me, the works which I do also that one will do, even greater ones than these will s/he do, because I go to the Father. ...and I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper (one like Me), in order that He might be with y'all unto the Age." John 14:12,16

"You shall receive (lit., 'take') power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..." Acts 1:8

"Therefore they remained a long time, speaking freely by the Lord, Who was testifying to the message of His grace, giving signs and wonders to happen by means of their hands." Acts 14:3

"...but 'truthing' in love, we might make all things grow up into Him, who is the head, Christ, out from whom all the Body, being jointly fitted together and being knitted together, by means of the connecting bonds of the supply, according to the in-working in measure of each single part, makes the growth of the Body unto the building-up of itself in love." Ephesians 4:15,16

At times, we will be led to depart from what is our typical pattern on Sunday mornings in order to worship, and to pray for individuals, more earnestly and intensely. As a result, we may observe, or participate in, some unusual experiences. As we respond to what we may feel are the "leadings of the Lord", a number of us may receive, and express, what we perceive to be revelations from God. It is wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit can lead us as a group, using many individuals, to address the needs of the person we are praying for. As we verbalize our individual bits of information, we will be amazed to see how God can lead us to address areas of need that we had no idea were even there. He may reveal to us word pictures, images, impressions, etc., that are very specific, directing us in a particular course of action that is different in each case. As we follow this leading, we will see God touch, liberate, and heal in ways that can be deep and significant. People will experience the hand of God in new ways that they had not previously known or understood. For many of us, this may be very exciting. For some of us, this may be a bit confusing, or we may be wondering, "What is going on?" Allow me to attempt to put this in perspective.

First of all, **we should not be surprised at the "super-natural"**, if by "natural" we mean what is physical and sensory. We know that there is an entire realm of angelic beings, both good and evil, that we do not normally see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. God Himself is not open to physical, scientific examination. There is no "litmus test" for God, that I am aware of, yet we know that He exists. **Furthermore, we should not be surprised that God would desire to communicate with us.** The fundamental basis for our faith is that God exists, that He cares about us, and that He is willing to participate in our affairs. Not only has He done so in ancient history (the Bible is a *record* of His interactions with people), but it is clear from the Scriptures that He still intends to foster personal relationships, even of an intimate nature, with His people (Psa. 25:1-14; Prov. 3:32; Jn. 14:16,17,21,26; 1 Cor. 2:10-13). Good grief, this was an *Old Testament expectation*, ...how much more for us, now that Jesus has opened the way into the Father's presence (Heb. 10:19-22)!! **Nor should we be surprised that God would want to work powerfully through us, ...even miraculously.** This was the model of ministry taught and exemplified by Jesus (e.g., Mk. 1:21-45; 6:7-13; Lk. 10:1-11,17-20). It was carried on through the apostles and other believers of the early church (Acts 2:43; 4:29,30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:1-13). Obviously, Paul's teaching on the spiritual gifts indicates an ongoing expectation that these kinds of manifestations of the Spirit would continue to occur (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

Biblically, the gathering of God's people is to be both a learning laboratory, and a dispensing station of God's grace. The ministry gifts described in Ephesian 4:11 were given to help others to discover, develop and deploy their spiritual gifts so that, as everyone utilizes their God-energized abilities, the Body would build itself up in love and maturity. The message of vs. 15 is that this happens as we actively express truth toward one another, in word and deed. Sadly, this picture of what is supposed to happen when the people of God gather is diametrically opposed to the practice of most Western churches in history, since the 4th century! The church gathering was meant to be an "every-member participating" kind of dynamic, such as we read about in 1 Cor. 14:26f. **By interaction and feedback, we help one another discover how the Spirit works in our own individual lives.** We learn to identify the Spirit's leading, and to confidently step out in response to what He is doing inside of us. **By interaction and feedback, we uncover the hidden things in one another's lives**, exposing bondage, brokenness, or immaturity (in Acts 2:46, the word translated as "sincerity" really means "openness" or "easy accessibility" of heart, implying deep, personal sharing; cf. 1 Cor. 14:3,24,25). We are generally encouraged and strengthened by the personal interest of God and others in helping us grow. The ministry directed by the Holy Spirit is to the

point, timely, and effective. **By interaction and feedback, the healing, empowering grace of the Spirit is expressed and released through us to one another.** In Ephesians 4:16, our relationships are described as "joint(s) of the supply". This image indicates that we receive something from one another, some kind of nourishment, support, or strength, as we interact "according to the inworking (energy, operation) in measure of each part". If there is no time or opportunity to express this "inworking" toward one another, we miss out on that investment of grace, strength and ministry that God intended for us to receive. **Furthermore, because our gifts differ, there may not be any other way to bring exactly what is needed, or at least what would be most effective, than through our interaction.** For example, you *can* cut a board with a hammer and chisel, but a saw is much more quick and effective. **The right tool for the right job applies to spiritual things, as well.**

OK, so how do I learn to operate according to the power of the Holy Spirit? Following are some suggestions to help us to "tune in" to what God is doing.

(1.) We must be desirous, expectant and watchful for God to begin to reveal Himself to us. If we do not wish to "go down this road", it most likely will not happen. God has been known to countermand our human objections and reluctance (e.g., Moses in Ex. 3,4; Jonah), but generally He will not force Himself upon those who do not want His input (e.g., Matt. 10:14).

(2.) Be prayerful, and ask God to teach you. He is quite capable of making you aware of what He is doing, though you may not recognize it at first. Ask Him to keep you from self-deception, as well.

(3.) Pay attention to the experiences of others who seem to be in touch with God. We must recognize that we are all individuals, so that the experiences we have of the operation of the Spirit in our lives will not be exactly like what other people experience. There are, however, often enough similarities that I might notice that what other people experience is happening to me, as well. **This is one of the strongest tools available to help us "tune in".** *Again, without interacting, we will never know what others experience.* **Especially watch for confirmation**, i.e., when someone has the same thing happen with them as did with you. **Pay attention to patterns, or puzzle pieces.** Remember, *we only see in part*. Often, God will only reveal one aspect to you, and it will not make sense. As you share it, however, someone else may understand, or they may have some more information, or the person receiving prayer may know what it is about. **Ask questions**, like, "How did you know that?", or "What did that feel like?", or "How did you learn to do this? What do you watch for?" In 1 Corinthians 2:13, Paul points to this methodology as something he relied on. The last phrase of the verse literally reads "with spiritual ones *judging together* spiritual things." The word translated as "judging together" implies a collaborative effort, i.e., co-judging, co-discerning, comparing ideas and perceptions with one another, interpreting and explaining together.

(4.) Weigh all things carefully against Biblical revelation and your personal discernment. If something is definitely contradictory to the Scriptures, then we can rule it out. God will not be inconsistent. If something seems inappropriate, or you are uncomfortable with it, be cautious. Your inner discernment may be warning you not to proceed. A more clear understanding may develop as you wait, or as you confer with others.

(5.) Learn by experimentation. We are told to "test all things, and hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). I always assumed that was to be a theological test, but actually it is an experience test. The word for "test" is the Greek word *dokimazō*, which means to "test out by trial". The same word is used in Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:10; and Phil. 1:10, which all refer to discerning the will of God. By understanding that God has set things up so that we would learn by doing and experimenting, and that He *expects* that we will make mistakes in the process, we can give ourselves permission to stretch out without so much fear of "doing it wrong". It is very much like any other skill-development process in life, whether learning how to walk, how to drive a car, or use a computer. Our first efforts are awkward, unsure, uncoordinated, and we make mistakes. As we keep at it, however, we will learn to be more effective and skilled at what we do.

(6.) Respond to what you see the Father doing. This was one of the principles that Jesus carefully followed (Jn. 5:19,20). Often when you notice that God is working in someone else's life, you are made aware of that because God intends for you to be involved in what He is initiating. It would be appropriate to come up and verbally acknowledge what you see, and ask if you can pray or help in some way.

Currently we seem to be in a "season", a limited period of time, where God wants to equip us to learn to hear His voice and to serve one another in this way. It is important to press forward to discover all we can about partnering with the Holy Spirit, so that our ministry is not by words alone, but by the demonstration of the Spirit in the power. He wants to work through us to make Jesus known in these ways.