

How God Makes Men: The Principle of the Power of the Holy Spirit

Selected

Good morning, men! Today's shout out goes to Real Men of the Cross Connection Church in Shawnee, OK. Some of you Area Directors may know this church. They're 10-12 men that meet Friday's at 7:00 am, joining us via the video Bible Study, and are led by Gregory Yort. So I wonder if you would join me in welcoming Real Men? One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys, we're glad to have you with us!

So the series we're in is called How God Makes Men. If you're here this morning, there's no doubt in my mind that you have a passion to make a contribution. You want your life to feel like you are on mission. You want to lead a life of significance. You want to make a difference. You want it to be noted that you walked across the face of the planet. You may have been called to be part of a great mission already, or maybe you are looking for what that mission might be. Yet, no matter whether you have found the way or are still looking for the way, you have been stunned, perhaps shocked, by the amount of opposition you find on this mission. You feel as though you know exactly what God wants you to do, you go to do it, and you're blocked! What's that about? Or the Lord gives you this concept, this idea of what he wants you to do with your life and then he keeps you in the dark constantly. You have no sense of where you are going, no sense of direction, and you don't know what's going to happen when you get to where you don't know you're going! I want us to talk about that today, and we're going to answer the question what one thing will most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission?

Today we're going to talk about the principle of the power of the Holy Spirit. I want you to turn with me to Acts 13 with me if you are not already there. Many people call the book of Acts the book of the Holy Spirit. It's all about the introduction of the Holy Spirit into the church. Why is Paul so successful in his mission, notwithstanding all of the opposition? Shipwrecks, beatings, starvations, cold, and dark? The answer is he walked in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Examples of Men Led by the Holy Spirit

I want us to begin this look into Acts by looking into some examples of men who were led by the Holy Spirit. Acts 13 says this. This is Paul's first missionary journey. He took three:

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit...

The first thing we see is that the Holy Spirit sets men apart for mission. Many of you, hopefully all of you, have sensed that at least once in your life that you've been set apart by God to do something magnificent for him. That's what's going on here in the first missionary journey. Now let's take a look at Acts 16:6 and look at another example of them being led by the Holy Spirit that occurred on Paul's second missionary journey:

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

They were blocked from going over into Asia. They used their free will, sensing they were being led to do this work over in Asia, but the Holy Spirit blocked them from that. Verse 7:

When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

We don't know how the Holy Spirit was blocking them. Was it an army? Bandits? The fact they had no money? Was it dysentery going through the whole group making them sick? We don't know how the Holy Spirit was doing this leading, and I think the Holy Spirit preserves the texts in this way many times, leaving things general so that we pull out a principle and not a tactic. What's important here is the principle that the Holy Spirit leads men who are willing to be led. He might have done it by voice, we don't know. Maybe they couldn't get transportation into Asia, who knows? Through circumstance, or immediate communication, the Holy Spirit led these men and they obeyed. They did what he wanted, and guess what! They didn't have a choice! They had to obey him! You know when the Spirit is leading you, most of the time you don't have a choice! Because you can't do what you want to do. He shuts you down, blocks you. All the while you're thinking what's up with this! You told me to go and do this thing and now I can't do it! Happens all the time. **The Big Idea is this: To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission.**

So let's look at a third example from the third missionary journey in Acts 20:22. Paul says this to the Ephesian elders:

"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

So the Holy Spirit is speaking to his heart and letting him know hardships and prison, that's what I have for you! On your mission!

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

Then they're moving on towards Jerusalem, and in Acts 21:10:

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart?"

I'm a man on a mission. This is my task, my destiny. This is my offering, my sacrifice, and my service. This is what I was called to do, what I was made to do, what I was born to do. Why are you weeping for me?"

I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

I guess so! **The Big Idea: To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission.** Now, these are three Biblical examples, but there are examples happening all around us every day! Every one of us are experiencing this if we're in touch with the concept, the principle of the power of the Holy Spirit. I'll give you a couple examples.

David Delk is the President and Co-CEO of Man in the Mirror. When I met David, Tom Skinner, my best buddy and I had just finished up ministry in Jackson, MS. We started a ministry of racial reconciliation there that's still going on. I said Tom, I'm going to Israel with my Seminary for credit. Why don't you come with me on this thirteen day trip and we'll unwind. So we did. Most of you probably don't know who Tom Skinner is, but in his day he was the leading black evangelist in the world. Spoke to a million people every year around the world. He was a dominating presence! Chaplain of the Washington Redskins, powerful figure and he had permanent cards into all the baseball fields and dugouts. He had these relationships with all these different players and so forth. He would hold court, whenever he would speak, his presence was so powerful that people would just sort of sit and listen with demur posture as he would talk about this and that. He was the smartest man I ever knew until I met David. He's a guy that sat down and read through the federal budget just because he wanted to know what was in there! Who does that? Certainly no legislator has ever done that! He was that kind of a guy. Twenty years ago he had gotten into computers. Back then they were out there but there was still a lot of formative kind of things going on, and he was really into it. When he got into something, he would read everything on the subject that was available. I hadn't even met David except to shake his hand, it's the thirteenth day and we're on our way back to Orlando. We have a farewell dinner in Tel Aviv. As it turned out Tom and I were sitting at a table and David Delk, this 28 year old kid sat down at our table. So Tom began to hold court, and he was pontificating this and saying that about computers. After about five minutes, David said yeah and by the way did you know this, that and the other. Tom goes huh, wondering who is this that has darkened my door. But it was so insightful what David said, and he took note of it and he continued on for another few minutes. Then David said yeah and by the way did you also know this and that. Tom goes that's kind of interesting. So over a period of about fifteen minutes, Tom who is up here talking down to his subjects, got shifted in this balance of power, and I promise you that Tom Skinner, this powerful presence was sitting there enraptured, listening to David. I said who is this man! Who is this kid? I asked him, tell me about yourself. It turns out he had moved on from Atlanta because God had called him into the ministry and he was graduating from seminary. He was very modest, but I found out he was Phi Beta Kappa in mathematics, and at RTS he was graduating number one in his class, president of his class and he was preaching sermons. So he was this super star out at RTS! Did you know that of all his classmates, he was the only one who had not been offered a job? Can you imagine how he must have felt? Lord, what's wrong with me? Did I not here your call? Why am I being blocked, why am I in the dark? What's going on? Men, it's so obvious now that even though he

had to go through that dark period, that God had reserved him for men's discipleship! He's one of the leading figures in the entire world when it comes to men's discipleship!

There are many other examples like that, but it took longer to tell that story than I wanted, so let's move on. **The Big Idea: To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission.** Even if you feel like you're standing still! Even if you feel like you're marching backwards! If you are doing that in the power of the Holy Spirit, you are accelerating towards the fulfillment of your mission! Never forget this!

Who is He, and what does He do?

So who is He and what does He do? Well, we know from Genesis 1 that the Spirit of God was hovering over the deep. So He was right here at the beginning of creation. We know that He is one of the three persons of the trinity, we know that He is the author of salvation. Titus 3:5 he saves us by rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He is the author of salvation, of scripture. 2 Peter 1:20 above all you must understand that no prophecy or scripture came about by the prophets own interpretation for prophecy never had its origin in the will of men. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. He conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary. John 14:6 says Jesus said the councilor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and remind you of everything I said. The Holy Spirit is teaching us all things, and everything that Jesus said he's reminding us of what those words were. He is the giver of gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:4 and 7. There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit. Now to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. There are lists of gifts in the Bible. 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4, and so on. There are lists of the spiritual gifts. In Galatians, the Spirit gives the fruits of himself. Love, joy, peace, patience.

I had a guy call me up on the phone once. He was having a problem with a big business deal and said please pray that I have patience. I said you don't want me to pray that! You don't need to pray for patience, you have all the patience that you need. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, that's one of his fruits. Be filled with the Holy Spirit, walk in his power and you'll have all the patience you want. Now does this work every day? I don't think so! Every day I don't walk in the power of the Holy Spirit! I've been practicing. I made this commitment to not follow the car in front of me too closely. You know what happens when you don't follow the car in front of you too closely? Everyone jumps in front you! So I'm sitting there taking it, but I'm competitive in a car! Every now and then I just can't take it anymore and I lose the Holy Spirit! Can you do this 100% of the time? Absolutely not!

I'm over at the gym last week doing super sets. Sounds like a big deal for those of you who don't know. Actually, it just means you're alternating between two exercises. So I'm super setting, doing some dead lifts and something else, and I'm over there by the dead lifts and there's this guy. It's obvious I'm super setting, and he says to me with a bit of hubris are you on that right now. I'm standing over it mind you. I said yeah I'm on this right now. I did the other thing and came back. He said how many more sets do you have anyway? Bye bye Holy Spirit! So you shouldn't expect to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit all the time, and that's what it says in Galatians 5. It says the Spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh wars against the Spirit. So walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. But you're not going to be able to do that all the time, that's just life!

The Holy Spirit gives us power! Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses. Can you, when somebody does something to you like they did to me in

the gym, overcome that and continue to walk in the Spirit? Well, the truth is I actually did. I didn't say anything to him, out loud.

Who is He and what does He do? Matthew 10:19-20 says that when you are brought before the authorities and you don't know what to say, the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say. I think this as principle has a much broader application than being arrested for being a Christian. It means when you are in front of somebody and you're trying to resolve a family conflict. Or, you're trying to make a sale for your business, or you're trying to complete a tax return, or fixing an automobile. It doesn't make a difference what it is, the Holy Spirit will tell you what to do when you need it. That's why **the Big Idea today is this: To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission.** Whatever it is.

How You Can Walk in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Finally, how you can walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. A couple thoughts here. First thing is knowledge. Knowing what the Holy Spirit wants. He wants to teach you all things. He wants to remind you of everything Jesus said. The Holy Spirit wants to empower you, to lead you. Romans 8:14 all who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. He wants to lead you. He wants to give you spiritual gifts so that you can serve him. He wants you to experience, to bear much fruit. The fruit of good works, but also the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, and so forth. He wants that for you. If you're not experiencing these things, it's because possibly you're not walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. It's the one thing that can most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission! He wants to be your constant companion.

The knowledge piece, if you want to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, is first. Then, there is the doing part. A guy came to the Bible Study a few months ago. He looked like he should be on the poster for military ads. He told this story that he was in the military and he was a recruiter. His job was recruiting doctors and nurses. He was out one day and he was in his dress blues. He went in a convenience store to get a bottle of water and he had been wrestling with God. He had been telling God I want to have a deeper relationship with you. I want to be all in, to be more committed to you. I want to grow in my faith. I really want to do whatever it takes. Show me what I need to do, Lord! He went in, got his drink out of the cooler, and he heard the Holy Spirit whisper to him I want you to stand on your head. He was pretty sure of it. Sounds a little kooky. He was in his dress blues in a convenience store, but the Spirit kept pressing. He said I never even stood on my head before, I don't even know how to do it! I want you to stand on your head. So it finally got to a point where he felt disobedient, and he said I want to be all in and if I have to be a fool for you, so be it. He went over, got next to the wall, and propped against it and stood on his head. Nothing happened. So he went over to pay for his bottle of water and the clerk was crying. The clerk said I am at the end of myself. I don't know where to turn or what to do. I want to believe in God but I have just found it impossible. So this morning I prayed God if you really are there, send somebody into my store today who will stand on their head.

Do what the Holy Spirit tells you! **The Big Idea today is this: To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will most accelerate the fulfillment of your mission.** Let's pray!

Closing Prayer

Our dearest Father, we come to you humbly today. We know that you oppose the crowd, that you give grace to the humble and there is no greater grace than your grace. There is no greater blessing than to

be able to walk and be led by your Spirit, to experience your power. So Lord, the Holy Spirit, Lord you are not taught about enough, not talked about enough. I know many of the men here and online are deeply connected to you, but for those of us who needed this nudge this morning, I pray Father that you would give us a greater appetite to know more about you and how we can release this power that you have in our lives. That you would be glorified as we accelerate towards fulfilling the mission and you will be with each of us. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen!