

## SESSION EIGHT

### “Empowerment--Assignment Pattern”

*“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” John 14:21*

#### **Knowing My Assignment, Experiencing His Power**

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Keeping Jesus’s commandments would definitely involve receiving and accepting the Spirit’s assignments for your life.

The surrendered person can fully expect to experience the fullness of the promise made here to His disciples: *“I will love him and manifest myself to him.”*

A love for the Savior and a predisposition to say yes to the assignment are the wellspring from which we become recipients for hearing God’s voice.

- Jesus’ words, *“I will manifest myself,”* clearly involve personal communication, an interchange. Those who love and obey Him can expect to hear from him. God often speaks to us that He might speak through us.

Prophesying—speaking or acting on God’s behalf.

This intimate communication with God is a promised resource to each of us who has been born again through the cross of Christ, and who have chosen to walk with Him in loving obedience.

It cannot be merely God saying what we or others want to hear.

#### **Every Believer Has an Assignment**

The nature of the work of the Holy Spirit is to give the believer an assignment, and then to empower the believer with everything necessary to complete that assignment.

Even the inner work of the Spirit of Christ is destined for an outward focus.

No believer is fully realizing his or her true identity until we are in alignment with the resources and empowerment of the Holy Spirit for our mission in Jesus.

In our assignment, the real power of God is released.

The working of the Holy Spirit in Acts is **the people’s source of special insight and even inspiring speech (prophetic inspiration), always for the purpose of empowering God’s people for effective service.**

- In the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit those early believers couldn’t stop speaking about what God was doing in their lives.
- Their spirits had been wholly seized by the Spirit of Christ.

The Holy Spirit birthed Christ’s Church as a speaking, proclaiming Church with the ability to speak the good news to all people and every nation. Ordinary people on assignment speaking powerfully in the heart language of every people group present.

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#### **Our inner life has never been the Spirit’s only concern.**

Preoccupation with the inner life can become paralyzing. Am I prepared enough? Do I know enough? Can I answer all the questions?

In Acts, whenever mention is made of believers being filled with the Holy Spirit, the account always goes on to mention speech (Acts 2:2; 4:8, 31; 7:55-56; 9:17-20; 10:44-46; 13:9-10; 13:52-14:1; 19:6; etc.).

While the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23 is largely his provision of inward graces, the consistent witness of the book of Acts would have us understand that **a primary work of the Spirit is to open people's mouths and get them to bear witness to Jesus Christ.**

The higher gifts of the Spirit are those that make possible the oral ministry of God's Word (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1-3)

### **The Spirit's work from Jesus to Us**

1. Jesus, the unique Charismatic Prophet, draws people from all walks of life.
2. The disciples, a community of Charismatic prophets, drew people from every nation.
3. Today's church? As Luke describes it, the ministries of Jesus and His disciples were possible only through the anointing, empowering, and leading of the Holy Spirit. Jesus's commission is still the church's commission today. The filling of the Holy Spirit is still available and necessary for us today. Can we not become a Spirit-empowered community of missional prophets?

### **Every Believer needs Multiple in-Fillings of the Holy Spirit**

The Apostle Paul teaches that subsequent to the wonderful experience of conversion, every believer needs multiple infillings of the Spirit.

- His power is available to every generation and is absolutely essential for effectively living out the mission of Jesus.
- The Book of Acts reveals the empowerment—assignment connection.

John Bunyan, John Wesley, Charles Finney, and D.L. Moody all report experiences of the Holy Spirit subsequent to their conversion.

We must, therefore, become conscious of God's presence. Not merely acknowledging that He is always present, but intentionally turning our attention to Him with expectancy.

God is always at work, always speaking. But just as there are radio signals constantly in the air around us, we do not hear them without a receiver, and that receiver has to be tuned in to the correct wavelength.

To receive, you need to believe. Hebrews 12:2 says fix your eyes on Jesus. The Psalmist says to enter with thanksgiving and praise.

Here are some examples:

- A previously timid Peter was now willing and able to stand and deliver a powerful Spirit-inspired sermon that resulted in thousands of converts to the Christian faith (Acts 2).
- Somehow Peter seemed to know that he was supposed to lift a lame man to his feet, thereby effect his healing, and then boldly preached to an astonished crowd about the resurrected Jesus (Acts 3).
- Peter was enabled by the Holy Spirit to offer a bold response to the religious leaders of Israel who wanted to know by what power he and John had been able to heal that lame man in the temple (Acts 4).
- After a fresh in-filling with the Holy Spirit, the entire Christian community began to proclaim the gospel in an extraordinarily bold manner (Acts 4)
- Stephen was empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the resurrected Jesus even as he was becoming the church's first martyr (Acts 7).
- An angel of the Lord told Philip to go to a certain location (out in the desert) and wait there for a certain ministry opportunity. Once there, the Spirit enabled Philip to evangelize and baptize a high-standing member of the court of the queen of Ethiopia! (Acts 8).

- The Lord spoke to Ananias of Damascus in a vision, sending him to pray for the man who would become the apostle Paul (Acts 9).
- The Holy Spirit told Peter to go with some Gentiles to Caesarea to do ministry there (Acts 10).
- The Holy Spirit, speaking through a prophet named Agabus, informed the church in Antioch that a famine would soon affect the disciples living in the region of Judea (Acts 11).
- The Holy Spirit spoke to the church leaders in Antioch, instructing them to send Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary assignment to Cyprus and Asia Minor (Acts 13).
- The Holy Spirit inspired the leaders of the church in Jerusalem not to require that Gentiles be circumcised to become Christ followers and church members (This was a huge development in the history of the church!) (Acts 15).
- Paul received some fairly specific and important ministry instructions delivered in various ways by the Holy Spirit. (As a result, the gospel crossed the Aegean Sea and invaded Europe. This too was a huge event in the history of the church!) (Acts 16).

Luke was doing more than writing a history. Luke was also a theologian, composing with the help of the Spirit a document that was intended to function prescriptively as well as descriptively.

Luke's belief, stated through the narratives of Acts, is that all Spirit-filled believers possess the capacity to hear God's voice, receive ministry assignments, speak and act on Christ's behalf, make new disciples, and build up Christ's church.

Worship prepares the heart to receive the word.

Rob Reimer says, *"God speaks. He speaks in whispers and pictures; He speaks in emotions and in words and straight to our 'knower.' He speaks to us so we can build up others — so we can strengthen, encourage, and comfort others in love."*

What if I get it wrong? You can be corrected. You can learn. A steering wheel is useless on a parked car. Once you start moving in the Spirit, you can be led by the Spirit, even if that means He has to correct you.