

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-13 The Spirit Directs Us in the Mission

Today we have detailed maps, and even GPS devices, to help direct us to where we want to go. However, no map or device can tell us where God wants us to go. Only the Spirit of God can do that. In Scripture, we learn that the Spirit of God chooses and sends people into the harvest. He then directs them to where He wants them to go and shows them how He wants them to labor in the harvest.

You will remember that in Lesson 3 you learned that Jesus is the “Lord of the harvest” (Matt 9:38). While here on earth, He himself directed the work of missions. He once told His disciples, “Do you not say, ‘Four months and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). However, just before Jesus returned to heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to take His place. Now, since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has served as Director of the Harvest.

As the Director of the Harvest, the Holy Spirit performs at least three essential missionary tasks: He *calls* people to the work, He *sends* them into the fields, and He *guides* them in the work of harvesting. In this lesson we will consider these three ways the Holy Spirit actively directs the harvest.

The first way the Spirit directs the harvest is by calling people to labor in the fields. In Old Testament times, the Spirit called and empowered the prophets to fulfill their calling. Micah could have been speaking for any of the prophets when he wrote, “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord” (Micah 3:8).

In the New Testament, Jesus began His ministry by choosing and calling His apostles. These 12 divinely selected men were to follow Him, learn from Him, and eventually take on the ministry He had begun (Luke 9:1). He told them, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). Later, Jesus chose 72 others to participate in His ministry (Luke 10:1).

Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has assumed Jesus’ role as the Director of the Harvest. He is now the one who calls men and women into the Lord’s service. In the Book of Acts, Paul told how, on the road to Damascus, Jesus came to Him in a vision. The Lord said to him, “I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you” (Acts 26:16).

The Holy Spirit still calls people today and appoints them as workers in God’s harvest. He calls *some* to special tasks. However, He calls *all* to participate in God’s mission of redeeming lost humanity. Our responsibility is to be filled with the Spirit, open to His voice, and ready to say “yes” when the Spirit speaks.

Second, the Spirit sends laborers into the harvest fields. Isaiah the prophet testified, “And now, the Lord God has sent me, and His Spirit” (Isa 48:16, ESV). In the New Testament, when it

was time for Paul to begin his missionary ministry, the Holy Spirit moved in the church at Antioch where he and Barnabas were teaching. Speaking through a prophet, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” The elders of the church then laid hands on them and sent them off. Luke notes that they were “sent off by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:2-4).

The Holy Spirit also sent Peter to Cornelius’ house to preach the gospel there. Later Peter testified, “The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going” (Acts 11:12). It is the same today. The Spirit still sends committed men and women into the fields to work in God’s end-time harvest.

However, not only does the Holy Spirit call people into God’s harvest; and not only does He send them on their way, He then guides them in the work. He tells them where to go and what to do once they arrive at their place of ministry. Jesus, our example in ministry, was himself guided by the Holy Spirit. When He was baptized in the Jordan River, the Spirit of God came upon Him. Then, being “full of the Holy Spirit,” He was “led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Luke 4:1). The Spirit continued to guide Jesus throughout His ministry.

The Holy Spirit also guided Jesus’ first followers in the Book of Acts. For example, the Spirit of God guided Philip to the Gaza Road to share Christ with an Ethiopian nobleman (Acts 8:29). He further guided Paul and his missionary team into Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). First, the Holy Spirit stopped them from going westward into the province of Asia. Then, He would not allow them to go northward to Bithynia. Finally, the Holy Spirit gave Paul a vision in the night. In this vision, Paul saw a man from Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” Paul and his team then knew that God wanted them to go to Europe to preach the good news there. Paul would later write, “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God” (Rom 8:14).

The Spirit still wants to direct us in our ministries today. Sometimes He will give us dreams and visions as He did Peter and Paul. However, He most often directs us through deep inner promptings. He says to us, “This is the way; walk in it” (Isa 30:21).

This lesson is **important** because in it we have learned how the Holy Spirit calls and directs us into the harvest to reap souls for Christ.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that we must remain committed to the mission of God and full of the Spirit. Then the Spirit will direct us in ministry.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson:

1. Jesus is the Lord of the Harvest. When He returned to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to take over His work. In this lesson, what title have we given to the Holy Spirit that relates to this work?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, The Holy Spirit is now the Director of the Harvest,” you answered correctly.

2. In what three important ways is the Holy Spirit active in directing the harvest?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that, “The Holy Spirit calls workers to the harvest, sends them into the fields, and guides them in the work, you are right.
3. How may we be ready to follow the Holy Spirit’s direction as we labor in the harvest?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that we must remain committed to the mission of God, full of the Spirit, and ready to obey His promptings, you are right.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this lesson several times until you understand its truths. Memorize these words Jesus spoke to His disciples: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). Realize that He is speaking the same words to you today. Then, commit yourself to God and His mission, be filled with the Spirit, and open your heart to hear the Spirit’s voice. Finally, when the Spirit does speak, quickly obey Him and do what He tells you to do.