

Is the Holy Spirit Nudging You? Learn to Obey His Prompting

I preached at a conference in California in 2013. During one of the meetings the Lord showed me that a woman there was struggling with infertility. I didn't know who she was—all I knew was she was in the auditorium.

When I shared this word of knowledge with the audience, a young woman in the back of the room burst into tears. She had recently endured three miscarriages and was depressed because she feared she would never have a baby.

After this woman reluctantly came to the front of the auditorium, I prayed for her and asked the Lord to break the spirit of barrenness. Nothing dramatic happened in that moment. But I found out a year later that she became pregnant a month after the conference.

When I saw her during the next trip, I held her sweet baby daughter.

Many times I've wondered what would have happened if I hadn't shared this supernatural word from the Lord in that meeting. It would have been easy for me to suppress it. After all, how could I be sure I had heard from God?

I could have taken the easy road and kept to my script. I could have rationalized the whole thing and played it safe. But I've learned over the years that stepping out in faith is always worth it, even though it's risky.

Back in 2020 I walked into a gas station in Georgia to buy a bottle of water. When the cashier spoke to me in his heavy Indian accent, I immediately felt a desire to share Jesus with

him. But I was in a rush, so I was tempted to dismiss the thought. Yet something nudged me to strike up a conversation with this man, and we became friends. Within days he prayed with me to receive Jesus.

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After he was baptized, that Indian man led 11 people to Jesus in that gas station. Then he returned to India, where he now shares the Lord with his friends. None of this would have happened if I hadn't obeyed the Holy Spirit's prompting on that busy day.

When you read the book of Acts you learn that the Holy Spirit works through people who are sensitive to His gentle nudges:

- Peter and John passed by a lame man who had been sitting in the same spot near the temple for years. The Spirit prompted them to pray for him, and his healing caused a stir throughout Jerusalem (see Acts 3:1-10).
- Philip was busy leading a revival in Samaria, yet he obeyed when the Holy Spirit nudged him to go to a lonely desert road to witness to an Ethiopian (8:26-28). Tradition tells us that the Ethiopian took the gospel back to his country.
- Some Gentiles asked Peter to visit an Italian man named Cornelius. Peter could have easily dismissed the thought, since Jews didn't go to Gentile houses, but Peter obeyed the unusual prompting. As a result, the first Gentile church was born (10:44-48).
- While Paul was traveling in Troas, he had a vision of a Macedonian man beckoning him to cross the Aegean Sea and come to Greece (16:9). That could not have been an easy trip. Obedience is often uncomfortable. Yet because Paul obeyed that prompting, churches were planted in Philippi, Corinth and Thessalonica.

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God works through people. But not all of Jesus' followers are willing or available when God gives a directive. The prophet Isaiah wrote that God's followers would hear a voice saying, "This is the way, walk in it" (Isa. 30:21b). He was predicting the coming of the Spirit in New Testament times. But not everyone who hears the promptings of the Holy Spirit obeys them.

Some Christians disregard the Spirit's nudges. We make excuses such as, "That can't be God," or "The Lord would never ask me to do that" or "I'm not spiritual enough to hear God's voice like that." Like Gideon, we try to disqualify ourselves from hearing God.

Other Christians are so full of fear that we can't obey the Spirit's prompting. We hesitate, and vacillate, and say, "What if I'm not hearing correctly?" or "How will people react?" Our timidity paralyzes us, so we miss the opportunity.

Other believers have a stubborn attitude. We might hear God, but our arms are folded. Like Jonah, we start looking for a ticket to Tarshish when God asks us to preach in Nineveh.

Jesus is asking all of us to reexamine our willingness. He requires a posture of full surrender. He wants to use us in supernatural ways, but we must all be ready to step out of our comfortable boats so we can walk with Him on the water.

Let go of your fears. Don't let the noise of your chaotic schedule drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit. Tune your ears to hear His promptings, and obey when you feel His nudges.{eoa}

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