



DETOURS

OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL
ROADBLOCKS IN
MINISTRY

Devotion #7 - Dancing with the Holy Spirit

Read: Acts 8:26-40

July 2021

Have you ever watched a couple while they are ballroom dancing? Those who can do it well simply glide around the room in complete unity. It is incredible to watch how smoothly they move together. Ballroom dancing works because the couple functions as a team. They work together. One person leads, and the other person follows. Both partners know the basic steps of the dance, and so they can cooperate together. As they know the steps and trust each other, the leader can direct their partner around the dance floor with ease.

Ballroom dancing is an excellent picture of how we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to do ministry. The Holy Spirit leads and guides us, and as we cooperate with him, he moves us effectively in ministry. He shows us step-by-step how to fulfill God's plans and purposes in a given situation. In his sovereignty, God has chosen to partner with us in building his kingdom. 🌲🌲🌲

We witness this dance of cooperation in the life of Philip. He was one of the seven deacons who were set apart for ministry in Acts 6. In Acts 8, however, we have the opportunity to watch Philip dance together with the Holy Spirit as he engages in ministry with the Ethiopian eunuch.

As we look at this story, we can see how the Lord leads Philip step-by-step through the encounter to see the Ethiopian saved and God's kingdom advanced.

In the first step, Philip received the instruction to go.

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." Acts 8:26



Rest Stop

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit leading you in a ministry situation? Can you think of a specific time when you experienced a divine appointment with someone? Share or journal your experience.

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The angel does not give Philip the complete plan of what was going to happen. Instead, there is an invitation to trust the angel's word and step out in faith to obey what was said. We do not always have a clear idea about what the Lord may be calling us to do. The guidance which the Holy Spirit gives may just be the first step. Only as we step out will the Spirit give us the directions we need for the next phase of the dance. 

As Philip was obedient with the first step, the Holy Spirit revealed the next step to him.

The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Acts 8:29

Again, the full details are not shared. The chariot is identified as the next step in the

dance of cooperation. As Philip responds in obedience, he receives confirmation as he hears the Ethiopian reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip can take the next step and asks the question, "Do you understand what you are reading?"



Rest Stop


Can you identify an experience where you saw this step-by-step leading of the Holy Spirit? It could be personal or could be as part of a ministry venture. What were the steps of obedience the Lord asked you to take? How did the Lord reveal these steps to you?



Rest Stop

The Lord used the gifts Philip had as an evangelist, placing him in a situation where those gifts could be used. As we look at other stories in the gospels and Acts, we see how the Lord used the gifts people had to do his work (for example, five loaves and two fish). What are the gifts that the Lord has given you individually, or as a diaconate, that he wants you to use to build His kingdom?

The Holy Spirit has already been at work within the heart of the Ethiopian. The Spirit has stirred up a spiritual thirst and hunger within him so that once the question is asked, the Ethiopian opens up and invites Philip to join him and explain more about the passage.

In this next step of the engagement, we see Philip stepping into the kairos moment (kairos means the *right, critical, or opportune moment*), which the Holy Spirit has orchestrated. This kairos moment is a time when the Holy Spirit is moving. He moves within the heart of the eunuch and, at the same time, guides Philip in presenting the gospel to this man. Faith is birthed within the eunuch during the exchange, and he makes a profession of faith and asks to receive water baptism. 

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Philip was used in this dynamic of cooperating with the Holy Spirit. No doubt he had witnessed the Spirit setting up divine appointments for him before, and so he was ready and willing to respond in obedience to the Spirit's promptings.

This dance of cooperation with the Holy Spirit is not a technique for doing ministry. Instead, it is an outflow of our relationship with God. As we grow in our relationship with the Holy Spirit, we too will be able to recognize these moments when the Holy Spirit is inviting us to step on to the dance floor and dance with him.



The Scenic Route

(optional)

Our relationship with God creates the context for this dance of cooperation with the Holy Spirit. God works in the context of love relationships.

Take some time to be quiet before the Lord and invite Him to speak to you about your relationship with him.

- What are the things that he enjoys about you?
- What are the things he is inviting you into to grow your relationship with him?

Journal or share your reflections.

If you are in a group, take time to pray for each other about the areas the Lord has revealed. Give space in the prayer time to listen quietly to the Holy Spirit for each other and pray in obedience to what the Lord reveals. Make sure you allow time for everyone in the group to receive prayer.

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