

Volume 3, Day 9: Just One Small Step

Whatever God wants for your future is going to unfold right there. I've said to people, "I think the best way for God to not get me where He wants me to be in six months from now is to tell me where He wants me to be then. Because when he tells me where he wants me to go, I'm actually going to try to get there for Him. And I'm going to do it my way. And I'm going to end up lost and not **in** the very thing God wants me to be."

The very way for God to get you where he wants you in six months from now is for you to simply follow the step He gives you today and then in each tomorrow follow that step. As we respond in the moment to each thing God brings before us, we're going to find ourselves down the road standing exactly in the middle of what God has in mind for us. So don't try too hard to get that healing. Don't try too hard to get rid of your despair. Just open your life to him and ask God what's next? And when he nudges you, follow him.

The psalmist, David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." The analogy is this. In those days of lamps for night travel, very little light was produced for this night time guidance. It shone only about one step or so ahead. It would have been foolish to run, unless you wanted to stumble and get bloody. The lamp's light could let you see enough of the path not to wander off of it. But it wasn't possible to take more than a single step at a time. Our problem is sometimes we think we have a brighter light which lets us hurry. But in the present moment only a little light will suffice. Just take it slow and easy. Stay in the light of God's lamp. Take just one step, then another and another.

Volume 3, Day 10: Finding a Better Way

I think it is interesting how we've learned to live this Christian walk. For the most part someone taught us a set of principles we ought to believe and things we ought to do. Then we try to wrap our heads around it. And then we try to do those things to the best of our ability.

When we reflect on how few people we have brought to faith in Jesus and how miserably we have done as Christians, we want to see Christianity as less performance-oriented. We want it to be something more of life in the spirit and spontaneous. But if this is attainable we need a radically different set of beliefs.

The questions about 'how to' live in the new way are endless. The problem is that we want to figure it all out before we even start on the journey. And there's just no way to figure it all out first. Jesus didn't give us a plan to follow. And God didn't give Abraham a destination when He told Abe to get up and go. Imagine that!

Jesus didn't give His disciples commands to follow except one. "Love each other like I love you!" He also said, "I'm going to give you My Spirit and He will lead you into all truth (and life). That's in John 16. Yet in our day we've assumed that we're going to get truth if we follow the right pastor, author, or guru. Or we're going to follow Him by following the scriptures. And as valuable as the scriptures are, without tuning in to the Holy Spirit, we misinterpret them. And they're not our way to follow him because unfortunately we end up misinterpreting the scriptures. The scriptures are great until we start misinterpreting them and then they're a bit of a mess.

Volume 3, Day 11: Faith's Gravitational Pull

What we need to **follow** is **the Holy Spirit** who lives in us. And that's what Jesus said. I'm going to give you Him to be in union with your spirit. He will guide you into all truth. Now, to be sure, even the John 16 explanation of the role of the Holy Spirit is largely wrongly taught. We hear that the Holy Spirit convicts the believer of sin, righteousness and judgment. However, that role of the Holy Spirit applies to unsaved persons. Further down in the chapter Jesus says that the role of His Holy Spirit is to **guide the believer to the truth** (correct interpretation of scripture and the ugly truth about ourselves).

So this journey, "walking in the Spirit," is not about obedience to rules or principles. It really is about following the Holy Spirit as He makes the will of the Father known within us. Here's an illustration. We're going to consider the gravitational pull of the **earth** and the **moon**. We're being pulled by two forces. The gravitational pull of the earth (**like our natural ways**) holds us here. The moon (**like the Holy Spirit**) with its gravitational pull isn't as strong as this, but we still feel it, or at least see its effects when our tides are high and low. The pull of earth is stronger until we move close enough to the moon for its pull to be stronger on us. So this new journey might be like our space flight to the moon. The pull of the distant new truth (moon/Holy Spirit) will not overwhelm the old truth (earth/our nature) until we are well into the flight.

Walking in the Spirit is a vastly different life than walking in the flesh (trying hard not to sin). It is as different as the earth walk is to the moon walk. Let the Holy Spirit teach you how to **release your control** to Him and peace will be yours as you let Him do the work.

Volume 3, Day 12: Us Living Life or God Living It

Let the Spirit of God draw you into the life of the Father. The old way of thinking was given to us by well-meaning family and friends, peers and pastors. You might even say that we all live by relative truth because we got it from our relatives. However, “You can’t be wrong, sincerely enough, to be right!” This journey is rethinking many things which we have tenaciously held onto as truth without due diligence in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The way of the world and the way it thinks and the way we were trained to live in the world have left us hungry for more of the Holy Spirit and life. We have become twisted and sometimes miserable because the Christian life has not been like we were told it should be. Even Jesus’ own declaration, “Come unto me and I will give you rest,” doesn’t always let me feel rested. At times it even seems harder to be a Christian than not to be. Trying to live in the power of my own strength (flesh) is the very religion that twisted me even further

As we start here and we begin to come alive in the Spirit, the Spirit begins to draw us into a different orbit, into a different life. But it's very faint. Sometimes we just hear the beck and call, but it is actually following that Spirit that Jesus wanted us to do. And sometimes we feel a nudge this way a little bit. But it still seems like the old way is so hard to resist and the new seems so weak and distant in our lives. But here's what I want to encourage you. **The more we move in the Spirit, the less pull the flesh has.** That lets us live in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. And that's what the Holy Spirit is doing. He's drawing us to God. The more we are pulled by our desire for God, the more blessing **is His presence** and not our circumstances.

Volume 3, Day 13: Selfish to Selfless

The idea of laying your life down somewhere for someone is so remote that you would never have thought of it or never wanted to do it. But when we seize the moment and we take the risk to follow what's in our heart, that's how we learn to keep moving this way where this attraction to selfish prosperity, popularity and power gets less, and this attraction to selflessly laying down your life for another gets greater until we find our way to live constantly and consistently this life of the Holy Spirit.

So I guess what I want to encourage you to do is learn to listen to that quiet inner voice of the Spirit. It may be faint, it may be incredibly weak and you're not even sure sometimes if it is the Spirit or your own desire. But if what you're feeling nudged to do isn't mean spirited, isn't going to hurt someone else, isn't demanding someone else serve you, but in fact seems kind, seems generous, seems wise, not by earthly standards necessarily, but by Godly standards, then go ahead and give it a whirl. There is no risk. If indeed the Holy Spirit does not desire it to happen, He will twist your gut.

Take that step forward. The more we learn to respond to this, the freer we're going to be. In the initial days, yes, I can tell you, we're always being pulled back toward religious ways of thinking. We're always pulled back to the way we indulge our flesh. But if you'll just keep walking, just keep listening to the Spirit, you will reach a point at which the gravitational pull of the flesh is less than the gravitational pull of the Spirit. And that's when this journey gets really, really fun. Now, selfishness doesn't draw me back so much anymore. In fact, I don't even want that. I want to live here in the awareness of the Spirit.

Volume 3, Day 14: Faith through Eyes of Trust

I think that early in my journey I misunderstood what **faith** was. Read scriptures like, “without **faith** it is impossible to please God,” or “if you have enough **faith**, you can move this mountain.” And I had the idea that **faith** was something I needed to produce for God. I needed to come up with enough **confidence that God would do things the way I wanted** and if I could, God would actually do them. And so **faith** to me just became another religious work, like all the other things you've got to do to keep God happy.

In the last few years of my journey though, I've been learning that **faith** is something quite different. Maybe if we used a different word for **faith**, it would help us understand that **faith is not some internal willingness to believe** something or pretend I do, even if I don't on the inside. If you use the word **trust**, it would take us to a different dimension because **trust** makes it more of a relationship word.

There really isn't a word in the English language that matches the Greek verb for **faith**. That's why we talk about **faith** as a noun, but not **faith** as a verb. We don't **faith** something, but we do **trust**. I think **trust** is a better word here because **trust** is essential in relationship. **Trust** is not how much I'm willing to believe someone. **Trust** is the foundation of relationship. The more I know someone, the more I know they love me, care about me would lay down their life for me, the more I would know what things I could **trust** them with. Trust is the byproduct of a growing relationship, and I don't think it's meant to be any different with Jesus either. He meant to lead us to **trust** Him completely with our very lives! You can't demand it.

Volume 3, Day 15: Trust That I Am Loved

It's a scary thing when someone has to demand that you trust them to prove your loyalty, to prove your faithfulness to God. Whether it's a spiritual leader or someone else, you've got to know that they don't understand trust. And because they don't, they're probably not worthy of it. Trust isn't given. Trust is won. And God began at the cross to win us back to Himself that we could trust that He in fact loves us and He's willing to walk in life with us and He's willing to lead us into His reality, His truth, His life, the way He wants us to have faith.

If it's just a religious work from our standpoint, then we're going to try to manipulate God to give us what we want. And I guess that's why a lot of people have a difficult time with trust. They've read scriptures about God that made Him seem scary. And so our misinterpretations of scripture don't lead us to be endeared to the Father in a way in which trust would grow. Also, a lot of believers have a lot of unanswered prayers and unmet expectations (hopes and dreams). And it's tough to trust God if He doesn't do the things we think He should do or the things we think love would compel Him to do.

But trust doesn't grow on that basis. Trust doesn't grow by getting God to do what I want. Trust grows when I live inside a relationship with Him, come to know I'm loved enough that I can put my whole life into his hands and believe that whatever He wants to do, whatever He has in the mind for my life, it will spill out and it will happen. And I found out that his ways of working are entirely different from my own.

Volume 3, Day 16: Trust! Don't Pray It Away

In my early days, I wanted life to be certain. I didn't want there to be pain and brokenness. I didn't want other things in my life. And so I would try to pray all the pain, all the need, all the risk out of my life, all the fears even of uncertain futures and trying to get my future in a way where I ultimately wouldn't have to trust Him. And people who go on this journey who have a fear of uncertainty or are anxious about it, I always say to them, "You are on the wrong journey if what you were hoping what God would give you is increased certainty." What God gives us instead is an increased rest in Him in the midst of the uncertainty and the chaos of living in this age.

I guess it was my hope as a younger man that if I really loved God, believed him, He would bless me and my life wouldn't have chaos in it. At 60, I'm a little wiser than that. Despite some of my best decisions at times, and despite some of my most ardent passions, life doesn't turn out the way we want it to. God was never planning to fix all of our chaos. What He wants to do is to be in the chaos with us. What He wants to do is invite us into a different way of living where we wouldn't be so zeroed in on man's interest.

What I think. What I want. How I want to accomplish it. These are natural. But if we'd really be focused in on how God makes Himself known in the world and how God works in me, knowing that what he wants to do in my life is far better than anything I would even choose for myself. At this season of my life, I will tell you I'm not doing anything I imagined I'd be doing as a young man with all the vision and passion I had.