

TODAY!

What Would Jesus Be Doing If He Were You?

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Insight 15. Collectively Becoming The Family Of Lord Jesus (Part 4)

Let's start with some probing questions.

- If someone asked you *why* you're in your particular faith community, what would you answer?
- Could you cite Scripture that supports or commands the way you ought to choose a faith community?
- When you're with others in your faith family, do you often speak about how the Spirit of our Lord is using you? Yes or No
- Do you seek specifics from His Spirit in how He would have you cooperate together, and what mission He has for you personally and collectively? Yes or No

The problem for many in contemporary Christendom is that they erroneously believe that God wants them to choose a faith community based on their creedal persuasion or personal preferences or self-gratification among these people.

But would you have the courage to ask the Spirit of our Lord to assign you to a faith community so you may *collectively participate* in doing your part in His Kingdom—ALL to the Father's glory?

Very few have the *love for Christ* to separate themselves from what they've been seduced into. And the influence of familiar strongholds in their faith community convinces them to stay.

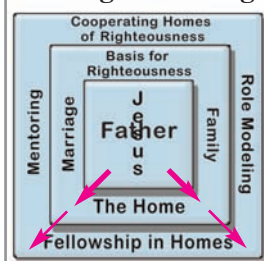
The spiritual courage to leave a faith community in which doing Father's will and extending the Kingdom *aren't* the

Undemolished strongholds keep so many mired in religious prison systems.



utmost purpose is the first step in *cooperative Kingdom service*. If you fellowship with others from the loving vantage point of our Lord Jesus and are committed to be used by Him along with others to extend His Kingdom, then your heart expression is this:

The Essential Relational Priorities of Kingdom Living



I'm among these people because the Holy Spirit placed me alongside them to do my part in the Body of Christ in loving service. The Spirit apportioned me spiritual gift(s) so I may cooperate with the spiritual gifts of others in this faith family, with Jesus as our only Head. It's *He* Who holds every joint and ligament of our relationships together so we may serve Him wholeheartedly: nobody greater than and nobody less than another person.

What self-deception to consider yourself a "Christian" yet neglect how by grace the Holy Spirit has apportioned—*empowered*—you to do your part in our Lord's Kingdom. Doing our Father's will out of love assures your confidence that you are in His Kingdom as His ambassador. You truly do have a key part to play!

Bible studies, Sunday services, or saying grace before a meal are meaningless if your conversations with others in your family and faith family don't focus on how the Spirit wants to use you as Christ's own in •specific ways for •specific endeavors for the •specific goal of extending our Lord's Kingdom to our Father's glory.

Restoration Ministries International

Sharing the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Followers of Jesus
Preparing Today's Followers of Jesus to Do Their Part in His Kingdom

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name” (John 15:16).

So much of your spiritual life needs to revolve around this verse! Our Lord knew that most of the commands in the Newer Testament were *plural* for His followers to put into practice *together*. Fruit-bearing isn't based on individualism. When His followers whom He chooses from generation to generation to bear fruit to His Father's glory *are* fruitful by His Spirit, their prayers are answered by our Father in the Name of Jesus.

The True God Is a God of Specifics

Throughout the Bible, whether from Creation and through delivering the Israelites and building the Tabernacle to the 1,060 commands in the Newer Testament, our God is a God of *specificity*! His sons and daughters in Christ who serve Him in His Kingdom: •have specific gifting(s) •to fulfill specific purposes •within specific faith communities. It's not illogical to grasp that our Lord has a **division of labor** in His Kingdom. In fact, *spiritual division of labor* parallels what we see in the physical world:

Husbands and wives have different biblical roles and responsibilities as do fathers and mothers. People in the military or workplace have specific assignments that require specialized abilities so they may contribute to the overall effort and goals.

Imagine asking someone in a navy uniform, “What do you do in the navy?” They reply, “I'm in the navy.” You repeat, “But, what do you *do* in the navy?” And they answer, “I'm in the navy.” This is how it is when you don't identify with the Spirit according the gifting(s) He's given you. You

identify yourself as “Christian” or by your denominational affiliation or the congregation that you attend. But these fall far short as identifiers to both our Lord and to others in Jesus who need you to be connected to them through the Holy Spirit.

Baptized By The Spirit = Given Spirit's Gifts

Jesus baptizes you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16). One way His indwelling Spirit reveals His presence is through specific gift(s) He apportions you to mutually serve others in the Kingdom. You wage spiritual warfare together to free people from demonic bondage so they can hear Him.



“God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will” (Hebrews 2:4).

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms” (1Peter 4:10).

Our Lord never intends for His followers to be run ragged when they do Father's will! His invitation to anyone who belongs to Him (or wants to) and serve Him in His Kingdom is this:

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:29,30).

Our Lord did His Father's will without being tyrannized by the urgency of people's needs. He even chastised busy Martha when Mary chose to sit at His feet to listen to Him (Luke 10:39-42). Remember, Father's will, accomplished through the Spirit of our Lord, is filled with the peace that only the Spirit gives.

“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:5,8).

What an amazing promise our Lord gave His disciples as they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit! Was His promise only for them, or for *all* His followers for *all* times? In his Pentecost message Peter assures us that this baptism is for *all* who love and serve Jesus as Lord: ***“And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call”*** (Acts 2:38,39).

Let’s take a look at some pertinent passages that reveal *specific* spiritual divisions of labor and empowerment given by the Spirit of our Lord:

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men” (1Corinthians 12:4-6).

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully” (Romans 12:6-8).

“[Jesus] gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherd/teachers” (Ephesians 4:11).

“Among the called-out ones at Antioch there were prophets and teachers... While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas

and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:1-3).

So why would anyone think that our Lord *doesn’t* have a Spirit-empowered division of labor in His Kingdom? The sad answer is that clergy-dependent **Nicolaitanism** has eliminated the need for spiritual gifts and the mutual cooperation of their use in the Body. Following the pattern of pagan Greek and Roman practices, professional clergy dominate an organizational religious system.

You won’t see spiritual gifts used among the whole fellowship family to serve our Lord and mutually bless each other as long as you are ensnared by Nicolaitanism! At best you’re allowed to help keep the religious system going by your hard work, your participation in programs and activities, and your tithes. At a minimum you’re a passive pew-warmer adding to the size of the Sunday service.

And the type of gathering Paul specifies will be foreign to you:

“What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the called-out-ones” (1Corinthians 14:26).

God’s Instruments For War— Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts As Weapons of Warfare.

- Every follower of Jesus has some gift, therefore all should be encouraged.
- No one has all the gifts, therefore all should be humble.
- All gifts are for the one Body, therefore all should be harmonious.
- All gifts are from the Lord, therefore all should be content.

If you're going to keep following our Lord Jesus until you're welcomed into heaven, then you need to know that our Lord redeems people by grace and empowers them for a specific purpose—to do His Father's will out of love for Him:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28);

“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

To be mutually effective in doing what our Father's wants, you must recognize and learn to appreciate the gifts of others with whom He's called you to cooperate.

- God speaks to *release His message* through gifts such as prophecy and tongues.
- God *reveals truths* through gifts such as apostle, teaching, knowledge, wisdom, evangelism, missions, exhortation, and interpretation of tongues.
- The Holy Spirit bestows gifts that produce *action to bless others*. These gifts include giving, healing, helping, mercy, and miracles.
- The gift of celibacy frees a person to be *specialty devoted* to the Lord's purposes.
- The gifts of administration and leadership can see the combination of people and goals from God's vantage point and can give *recommendations and guidance* to achieve His purposes.
- The *calm certainty* that gives a follower a “reckless abandon” to the will of God is the gift of faith.
- The gift of shepherding is given to mature men whom the Father has bestowed *special nurture and compassion* for each person in His flock.

If you're purposing by His grace to be true to our Lord Jesus, then you need to internalize the truth that His Spirit joins you into a fellowship family so your gift-ing(s) can cooperate with other gifts to cooperatively advance His Kingdom. And to advance His Kingdom means you also engage in spiritual warfare against relentless and ruthless demonic powers. That's why you need His spiritual power and the cooperation of gifts as division of labor in the Kingdom. Just because this hasn't been your experience doesn't make it any less truth right out of God's Word.

The choice is, of course, yours. You can remain firmly cemented in the comfort of your organizational religious system, spiritually powerless yet passively comfortable among others who cater to worldly interests. But realize that those who are focused on loving and serving the King of the Kingdom will avoid you in your compromised self-serving lifestyle because the Bible warns them against you:

*“[Those] having a form of godliness but deny its power. **Have nothing to do with them**”* (2Timothy 3:5).

Or you can join the millions scattered around this nation who've fled the Nicolaitan system to experience and share with others the Kingdom living they see lived out in the Book of Acts. Over a decade ago Christian pollster George Barna found that some 20 million people in the U.S. are yearning to restore the intimacy and power of the earliest Church. If you're among these hungering ones, be aware of this: what you're seeking isn't OUT THERE some place!

The Book of Acts begins with a small band of trusting brothers and sisters waiting for spiritual empowerment. For us today, Acts is our Lord's testimony of what our lives should look like if we authentically follow

Him in Spirit and in truth. He has set apart for holiness those He has called out from the world's ways, values, and goals. If we live attuned to His Spirit so that our lives please Him and uphold His holy and loving reputation, then He will lead us to those who also want to lift up Jesus as their Lord and King.

Say you do leave the clergy-dominated system which is hindering you from daily serving Kingdom purposes with others of like Spirit. The first thing you'll experience is a time of purifying your brain from old religious patterns and ways. These are like deep ruts in your neuron pathways. You'll probably discover motives and practices in your life that those who were spiritually dead in your former faith community never exposed in you because you were all similarly deceived. Don't be discouraged: Purifying precedes spiritual power!

If you don't know your own gift(s) and those of your spouse or others you fellowship with, use our short book to discover yours and theirs so you can cooperate together. It's free at our website:

God's Instruments For War—*Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts As Weapons of Warfare.*

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"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1Corinthians 4:20).