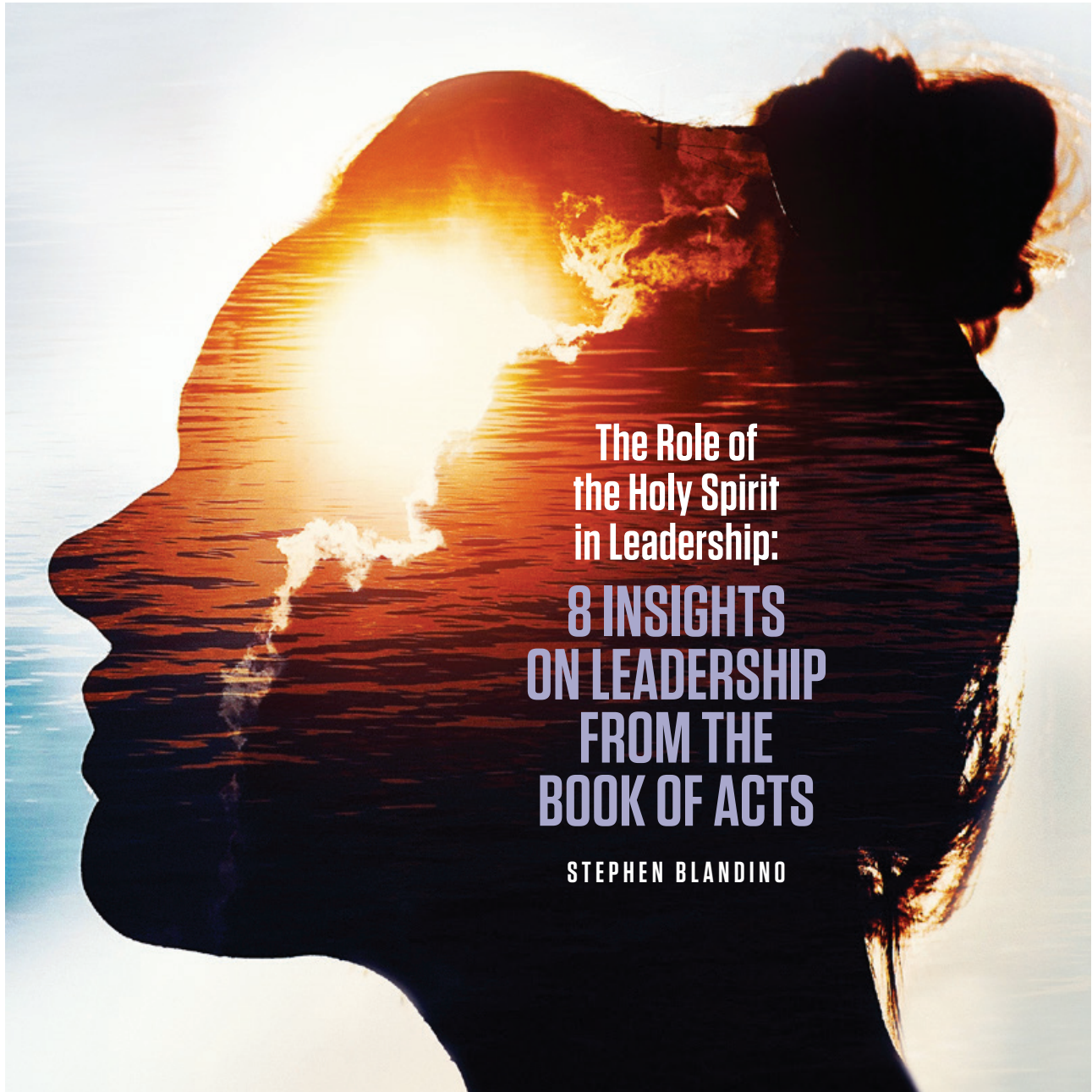


Influence
MAGAZINE

MAKE IT COUNT

An eight-week study
for leadership teams



**The Role of
the Holy Spirit
in Leadership:**
**8 INSIGHTS
ON LEADERSHIP
FROM THE
BOOK OF ACTS**

STEPHEN BLANDINO

DISCUSSION GUIDE

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Shapes Leadership Development

Assess: When you're building a team or hiring staff, how much do you lean on the Holy Spirit for guidance?

Insights and Ideas

There are lots of questions, assessments and interviews you can conduct to help you make wise decisions regarding staff and volunteer recruitment. Taking your time is crucial, and developing a well-formed selection process is essential. In most cases, the wrong recruit will delay, diminish or even derail progress. But it's easy in this recruitment process to overlook another powerful influence: the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before selecting His apostles (Luke 6:12–16). He needed the Spirit to guide and direct one of the most important decisions He would ever make. As you read Acts, you discover that the Holy Spirit is still interested in helping us build highly effective and empowered teams. He guides leadership development in three ways:

1. *Leadership qualification.* In the Early Church, widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The apostles' response to this need was to "choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:3–4). In this passage, a certain dimension of the Holy Spirit's presence in a person's life was one qualifier for leadership.

2. *Leadership selection.* In Acts 20, we see how the Holy Spirit had an active role in leadership selection. Paul said to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

3. *Leadership assignment.* Each leader has a God-given role or task where they can make the greatest difference. In Acts 13, there were a number of prophets and teachers at the church in Antioch, including Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul. These leaders received specific tasks to fulfill. Acts 13:2–5 says, "While they were worshipping 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."

The Holy Spirit commissioned these two leaders to an assignment of boldly proclaiming God's Word in Salamis.

Reflect and Discuss

1. In what way should the Holy Spirit be at work in someone's life before that person assumes a leadership role?
2. How can we lean on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and direction during the leadership selection process?
3. How has the Holy Spirit guided the ministry assignments you've had up to now? How can we encourage Spirit-guided assignments when delegating responsibility to team members?

Apply

It's easy to overlook the Holy Spirit's role in leadership selection and development. Look at your process for staff or volunteer recruitment. Identify a specific way you could welcome the Holy Spirit's influence into that process.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Shapes Leadership Development

Assess: When you're building a team or hiring staff, how much do you lean on the Holy Spirit for guidance?

Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before selecting His apostles (Luke 6:12–16). He needed the Spirit to guide and direct one of the most important decisions He would ever make. As you read the Book of Acts, you discover that the Holy Spirit is still interested in helping us build highly effective and empowered teams.

Three ways the Holy Spirit guides leadership development:

1. *Leadership* _____.

“Choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3–4).

2. *Leadership* _____.

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

3. *Leadership* _____.

“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 13:2–5).

Apply

It's easy to overlook the Holy Spirit's role in leadership selection and development. Look at your process for staff or volunteer recruitment. Identify a specific way you could welcome the Holy Spirit's influence into that process.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Empowers Leaders With Boldness

Team Review: What idea did you come up with to welcome the Holy Spirit's influence in your leadership development process?

Assess: When have you needed boldness the most in your leadership journey?

Insights and Ideas

The leadership terrain always comes with challenges and opposition. Somebody won't like what you're trying to accomplish — and often, those are defining moments for a leader. Will you back down in fear, or boldly advance toward the mission God called you to pursue?

This was exactly the situation Peter and John faced when they healed a lame man. They drew quite a bit of attention for this miracle, which led to questioning from the Sanhedrin: "By what power or what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7). Verse 8 begins with these words, "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit ..."

In the verses that follow, Peter gives a bold, unapologetic response, testifying that Jesus Christ, "whom you crucified," did this. He then declares that salvation comes through Jesus alone. How did these religious leaders respond? Verse 13 says, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." The Holy Spirit gave Peter and John the courage they needed in the moment.

The Sanhedrin threatened Peter and John, insisting they no longer preach in Jesus' name. Again, boldness won the day when Peter said, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19–20).

More threats followed, but Peter and John were unrelenting. They reported what happened to the believers, and then raised their voices together in prayer. Most of us would have prayed for protection; Peter and John prayed for more boldness. "Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness" (Acts 4:29).

When they finished praying, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and did exactly that — Peter and John "spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31).

Panic should never hijack your purpose. When you are questioned, threatened, or surrounded by fear, let the Holy Spirit give you courage to advance your calling. The Lord has entrusted you with a mission, and too much is at stake to let fear undermine it. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the boldness necessary to lead into the future.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What are the most difficult aspects of leadership?
2. How has the Holy Spirit emboldened you during one of these difficult seasons?
3. In what area do you need the Holy Spirit to give you boldness today?

Apply

Take a few minutes — personally or as a team — to pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the boldness to lead well in your current circumstances. Leadership is tough, but the Holy Spirit gives us the courage to lead in the face of opposition.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Empowers Leaders With Boldness

Assess: When have you needed boldness the most in your leadership journey?

“By what power or what name did you do this?” (Acts 4:7).

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit ... !” (Acts 4:8).

“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

“Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19–20).

Most of us would have prayed for _____;

Peter and John prayed for more _____.

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness” (Acts 4:29).

“... spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31).

_____ should never hijack your _____.

When you are questioned, threatened, or surrounded by fear, let the Holy Spirit give you _____ to advance your _____.

Apply

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8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Gives Leaders Wisdom

Team Review: How has the Holy Spirit given you boldness to lead in the last week?

Assess: When was a time the Holy Spirit gave you wisdom for a situation that helped you make a better leadership decision?

Insights and Ideas

Wisdom is one of the greatest gifts a leader can possess. The truth is, wise responses keep you from adding new problems to your existing problems.

In Acts 6, Stephen performed miracles among the people and, as a result, faced opposition from members of the synagogue. These religious leaders began to argue with Stephen, “But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke” (Act 6:10).

The purpose of wisdom isn’t to silence your critics so you can elevate your ego. God gives us wisdom so we can do what is right, just and fair. Proverbs 1:1–3 says, “The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair.”

There will be plenty of opportunities in leadership where it’s easier to take shortcuts than to do what is right. There will be temptations to leverage influence for your own personal gain rather than doing what is just and fair. In these moments, the Holy Spirit gives us the wisdom to lead with honor and integrity.

As leaders, it is essential that we pray for wisdom daily. In 1 Kings 3:5, God appears to Solomon in a dream and says, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

If God made you that kind of offer, how would you fill in the blank check? Recognizing the enormous responsibility before him and the lack of experience that accompanied his youthfulness, Solomon made a bold request: “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (1 Kings 3:9).

God was so pleased with Solomon’s request that He threw in a bonus: wealth and honor.

Wisdom should be a leader’s number one prayer request because it’s the answer to many of our prayers yet to be prayed. How? Wisdom is like a doorway to long-term solutions rather than short-term relief. For example, a leader can ask God for the money to pay a pressing bill, or he can ask God for the wisdom to build an organization that is financially sustainable. A leader can ask God to provide volunteers to make it through another Sunday, or she can ask God for the wisdom to recruit and empower a high-performance, highly committed team. Neither prayer is wrong, but wisdom leads to long-term solutions.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Do you believe asking for wisdom is the best prayer a leader can pray? Why or why not?
2. How often do you pray for wisdom? What does this reveal about your dependence on the Holy Spirit?
3. In what area of your leadership do you need wisdom right now?

Apply

Make it a practice each day to pray this simple one-sentence prayer: “God, fill me with the wisdom and knowledge of Your perfect will, and give me the courage to do it.”

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Gives Leaders Wisdom

Assess: When was a time the Holy Spirit gave you wisdom for a situation that helped you make a better leadership decision?

Wisdom is one of the greatest gifts a leader can possess. The truth is, wise _____ keep you from adding new _____ to your existing problems.

“But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke” (Act 6:10).

The purpose of wisdom isn’t to silence your critics so you can elevate your ego. God gives us wisdom so that we can do what is _____, _____ and _____.

“The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair” (Proverbs 1:1–3).

“So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (1 Kings 3:9).

_____ should be a leader’s number one _____ because it’s the answer to many of our prayers yet to be prayed.

How? Wisdom is like a doorway to long-term solutions rather than short-term relief.

Apply

Make it a practice each day to pray this simple one-sentence prayer: “God, fill me with the wisdom and knowledge of Your perfect will, and give me the courage to do it.”

Study 4

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Provides Strength in Leadership Storms

Team Review: What difference have you noticed since praying daily for wisdom?

Assess: Can you think of a time when the Holy Spirit gave you strength in the middle of a crisis or a challenging leadership situation?

Insights and Ideas

Leadership is not for the faint of heart. You will face criticism, challenges, accusations and ridicule. You will experience hardship and make many difficult decisions. I hate to sound pessimistic, but pain is often your companion in leadership.

Navigating this leadership terrain requires strength beyond yourself. The apostle Paul said, “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16). No matter how great your talent is, you need the inner strength the Spirit provides.

The Early Church and its leaders faced persecution, trials and storms. However, the Holy Spirit wasn’t absent in their pain. In fact, the Holy Spirit provides strength in two ways when leadership storms rage.

1. *The Holy Spirit is present.* Stephen’s accusers stoned him for his faith in Jesus. There’s nothing comforting about that reality except for one thing — the Holy Spirit was with Him. Acts 7:55–56 says, “But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’”

At that point, the people rushed Stephen and began to stone him. As they did, Stephen prayed, “‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:59–60).

God didn’t abandon Stephen in his most desperate moment. In fact, the Holy Spirit gave Stephen strength to remain faithful to Jesus in persecution, and to forgive his accusers.

2. *The Holy Spirit encourages.* The church undoubtedly faced opposition and persecution, but the Lord also gave relief. Acts 9:31 says, “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.”

Is leadership tough? Absolutely! But we are not alone. The Holy Spirit is present and brings comfort, peace and encouragement to help us in our greatest time of need. Don’t let your current leadership storms overshadow your ability to see the Holy Spirit at work within you and around you.

Reflect and Discuss

1. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit’s presence and encouragement during a leadership trial?
2. During leadership storms, the Holy Spirit often wants to do a work in *us*, not just in our circumstances. Can you give an example of when the Holy Spirit used your difficulties to shape and form your character?
3. How can you keep the Holy Spirit’s work in focus whenever you face a storm?

Apply

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is encouragement (Romans 12:8). Use this gift by sharing a word of encouragement with a member of your team who is currently facing a leadership storm.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Provides Strength in Leadership Storms

Assess: Can you think of a time when the Holy Spirit gave you strength in the middle of a crisis or a challenging leadership situation?

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16).

How the Holy Spirit provides strength in leadership storms:

1. *The Holy Spirit is* _____.

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God’” (Acts 7:55–56).

“Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:60).

2. *The Holy Spirit* _____.

“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers” (Acts 9:31).

Apply

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is encouragement (Romans 12:8). Use this gift by sharing a word of encouragement with a member of your team who is currently facing a leadership storm.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Prompts Leaders to Have Strategic Conversations

Team Review: Who is going through a leadership storm you were able to encourage this week?

Assess: When has the Holy Spirit prompted you to speak to someone about a specific issue, need or situation? What was the outcome of that prompting?

Insights and Ideas

There are times in leadership when the Holy Spirit will prompt you to say something to someone at a strategic moment. Sometimes it's a word of encouragement for someone who's hurting. Other times it's a conversation that proves pivotal in a strategic decision. And sometimes it's the opportunity to share your faith with someone who hasn't heard the good news. That was the case for Philip.

In Acts 8, an angel told Philip to go down a road toward Gaza. Along the way, the Holy Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it" (Acts 8:29). In the chariot was an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the Book of Isaiah. That prompting led to a strategic conversation where Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading. Verse 35 says, "Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Leadership is time consuming. The need to formulate strategies, build teams, meet with leaders, write sermons and serve the people God has entrusted to your care is all-consuming. These tasks are important, even essential to leadership. However, if we're not careful, our pace can silence the Spirit's promptings. It's not so much that the Spirit has stopped talking, but rather that we're too busy to listen. When we fail to engage in Spirit-prompted conversations, we miss three opportunities.

1. *Opportunities for ministry.* The Holy Spirit often prompts us to engage in conversations that result in people being ministered to in their time of need. By listening to the Spirit, we participate in important ministry moments.

2. *Opportunities to experience a miracle.* Sometimes when the Holy Spirit prompts us to pray for someone, it becomes the catalyst for their miracle. Other times, God prompts us to engage in a conversation that leads to a miracle for us. I once engaged in a conversation with a man after a Sunday service who asked about a specific ministry staffing need. That week, he mailed us a check to pay the entire first year's salary for us to hire a new staff member. Had that conversation never happened, the miracle would never have occurred.

3. *Opportunities for expanded momentum.* There are times when the Holy Spirit strategically guides us to conversations with other leaders. Those conversations provide the wisdom, insight, influence, or resources to catalyze expanded ministry and infuse fresh momentum.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you share a time when the Holy Spirit prompted you to engage in a conversation that resulted in ministry, a miracle, or expanded momentum?
2. What are the biggest reasons we miss or ignore the Holy Spirit's promptings to engage in strategic conversations?
3. What could you do to slow your pace and become more sensitive to the Spirit's promptings?

Apply

With whom has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to have a conversation? Take a moment to schedule that meeting now.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Prompts Leaders to Have Strategic Conversations

Assess: When has the Holy Spirit prompted you to speak to someone about a specific issue, need or situation? What was the outcome of that prompting?

“Go to that chariot and stay near it” (Acts 8:29).

“Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

Our _____ can silence the Spirit’s _____. It’s not so much that the Spirit has stopped talking, but rather that we’re too busy to listen.

Three opportunities we miss out on when we fail to engage in Spirit-prompted conversations:

1. *Opportunities for* _____.

The Holy Spirit often prompts us to engage in conversations that result in people being ministered to in their time of need.

2. *Opportunities to experience a* _____.

Sometimes when the Holy Spirit prompts us to pray for someone, it becomes the catalyst for their miracle.

3. *Opportunities for expanded* _____.

There are times when the Holy Spirit strategically guides us to conversations with other leaders.

Apply

With whom has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to have a conversation? Take a moment to schedule that meeting now.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Guides Leaders

Team Review: With whom did the Holy Spirit prompt you to have a conversation? How did God use that conversation in your life, or in the other person's life?

Assess: When was a time the Holy Spirit provided clear guidance and direction to you?

Insights and Ideas

Leaders have the responsibility of providing clear direction to teams and the entire church. Too much is at stake to allow our own opinions, preferences or selfishness to cloud the direction our churches and organizations need, which is why the Holy Spirit's guidance is so important. In the Book of Acts, we see two ways the Holy Spirit provided guidance for leaders.

1. *The Holy Spirit gives discernment.* In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit told the prophets and teachers in Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work of ministry. These leaders commissioned them in prayer, and Barnabas and Saul headed for Cyprus to preach the gospel. While in Cyprus, they met Elymas the sorcerer, who opposed Barnabas and Saul and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. According to verses 9–11, "Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 'You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.'"

Elymas immediately went blind, and the proconsul placed his faith in Christ.

There are times when leaders need to be able to discern motives, opposition and intentions. In these moments, the Holy Spirit guides us by providing discernment to know what to do, when to do it and how to proceed.

2. *The Holy Spirit gives direction.* The Holy Spirit guides us by providing direction when we need it most. We see this play out when Paul and his companions traveled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. Acts 16:6 says that Paul was "kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia." And when they tried to enter Bithynia, "the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to" (Acts 16:7). That night, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia begging Paul to come and help. Acts 16:10 says, "After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."

The Holy Spirit was clearly involved in directing Paul and his companions in the mission of the gospel.

Reflect and Discuss

1. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit's discernment or direction in your life?
2. What are common ways in which the Holy Spirit provides direction to you?
3. In what leadership issue do you need the Holy Spirit's guidance today?

Apply

Identify the three biggest areas where your team needs direction and discernment. Take a few minutes to pray together over those areas. As you pray, ask your team members what they sense the Holy Spirit is saying regarding each of these areas.

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Guides Leaders

Assess: When was a time the Holy Spirit provided clear guidance and direction to you?

Two ways the Holy Spirit provides guidance for leaders:

1. *The Holy Spirit gives* _____.

“Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, ‘You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun’” (Acts 13:9–11).

2. *The Holy Spirit gives* _____.

Acts 16:6 says that Paul was “kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.” And when they tried to enter Bithynia, “the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to” (Acts 16:7).

“After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:10).

Apply

Identify the three biggest areas where your team needs direction and discernment. Take a few minutes to pray together over those areas. As you pray, ask your team members what they sense the Holy Spirit is saying regarding each of these areas.



8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Helps Leaders Resolve Conflicts

Team Review: How have you implemented the Holy Spirit's direction since our last meeting?

Assess: What does it look like for the Holy Spirit to help us resolve conflicts in leadership?

Insights and Ideas

In Acts 15, a conflict arose in the Church when some Jews insisted that non-Jewish people couldn't receive salvation without circumcision. After considerable discussion of the issue, the church leaders finally reached a conclusion.

They drafted a letter with this message and sent it to Antioch: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things" (Acts 15:28–29).

The fact that they said, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" indicates that the Holy Spirit was active in the proper management of this conflict. How did these church leaders resolve the conflict with the Spirit's influence on the situation? They took six conflict resolution steps:

1. *Hear both sides of the story.* The apostles and elders heard Paul and Barnabas share how God used them to see the Gentiles converted, while the other believers argued that the Gentiles should be circumcised and required to obey the Law (Acts 15:2–5).
2. *Engage in discussion.* The apostles and elders took time to discuss the matter (Acts 15:6–7).
3. *Present the facts and remain sensitive to what God is doing.* After much discussion, Peter addressed the crowd by drawing their attention to the facts — God was working among the Gentiles, as affirmed by their baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:7–11).
4. *Provide supporting evidence.* Paul and Barnabas shared about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. Then, James quoted the prophets to confirm the work of the Spirit among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12–18).
5. *Based on the facts, articulate a responsible solution.* James said, "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath" (Acts 15:19–21). The solution was based on the facts, without ignoring the Gentiles' responsibilities.
6. *Put together a communication strategy that brings clarification.* After articulating the solution, the apostles and elders put together a team to deliver a letter to the Gentile believers that communicated the solution (Acts 15:22–35).

Reflect and Discuss

1. What is a leadership conflict you currently need to resolve?
2. Which of the six strategies have you not been embracing in conflict resolution?
3. What would allow you to say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" in your conflict resolution?

Apply

Take the six steps from Acts 15, and apply them to a leadership conflict you are facing. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading in the process

8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Helps Leaders Resolve Conflicts

Assess: What does it look like for the Holy Spirit to help us resolve conflicts in leadership?

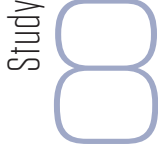
“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things” (Acts 15:28–29).

Six conflict resolution steps:

1. Hear _____ sides of the story (Acts 15:2–5).
2. Engage in _____ (Acts 15:6–7).
3. Present the _____ and remain sensitive to what _____ is doing (Acts 15:7–11).
4. Provide supporting _____ (Acts 15:12–18).
5. Based on the facts, articulate a responsible _____.
 “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath” (Acts 15:19–21).
6. Put together a _____ strategy that brings clarification (Acts 15:22–35).

Apply

Take the six steps from Acts 15, and apply them to a leadership conflict you are facing. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading in the process.



8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Gives Courage to Lead Out of Your Comfort Zone

Team Review: How has your conflict resolution progressed since our last meeting?

Assess: When was a time the Holy Spirit led you to take a step outside of your comfort zone?

Insights and Ideas

Leaders don't have visions of sameness. They envision bold new futures that meet needs, solve problems and change lives. But to get to a new destination requires the courage to step out of your comfort zone.

The journey from A to B is not easy because it requires us to make changes that arouse uncertainty and fear. For the leader, making these changes and stepping into the unknown requires continual courage.

When Paul went to Jerusalem, he understood the necessity of courage, and the challenge of stepping outside of his comfort zone. Acts 20:22–24 says, “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.”

From this passage, we discover three realities that awaited Paul outside his comfort zone:

1. *Uncertainty.* First, Paul articulated the uncertainty he was facing. He said he was heading to Jerusalem, “not knowing what will happen to me there.” Leadership often involves uncertainty, but if the Holy Spirit is guiding us, we can rest in the assurance we are in His perfect will. The Spirit “compelled” Paul to go.

2. *Hardship.* Paul was a realist. He understood that prison and hardships were awaiting him outside of his comfort zone. He didn't deny the inevitable, but he also didn't let it become a megaphone that would drown out the Holy Spirit's voice. He simply listened to the Spirit's warning, and then stepped out in obedience.

3. *Mission.* Despite the uncertainty and hardship, because he knew the Holy Spirit was leading him, Paul was able to keep his eye on the mission at hand: “testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” He understood that uncertainty and hardship were not the only things waiting for him outside of his comfort zone. His God-given mission was waiting for him as well. That's what made it all worthwhile.

Without the Holy Spirit's prompting, you'll find yourself confined to comfort without ever realizing significance.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What's the most significant thing that has ever happened to you because of your willingness to step outside of your comfort zone?
2. What uncertainty and hardship was (or is) awaiting you outside of your comfort zone?
3. What mission will not be fulfilled if you don't step outside of your comfort zone?

Apply

We all enjoy our comforts, but is it really worth it to exchange the greater mission just to be comfortable? Ask the Holy Spirit to burn His mission so deeply into your heart that you cannot remain in your comfortable routines. Then take your first step of obedience.



8 Insights on Leadership from the Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit Gives Courage to Lead Out of Your Comfort Zone

Assess: When was a time the Holy Spirit led you to take a step outside of your comfort zone?

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace” (Acts 20:22–24).

Three realities that await us outside of our comfort zone:

1. _____.
2. _____.
3. _____.

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Apply

We all enjoy our comforts, but is it really worth it to exchange the greater mission just to be comfortable? Ask the Holy Spirit to burn His mission so deeply into your heart that you cannot remain in your comfortable routines. Then take your first step of obedience.