

## # 9 LEARNING TO FOLLOW THE LEADER

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

— Romans 8:14

When I was a young boy, I used to play a game with my sister and childhood friends called “Follow the Leader.” The rules of the game dictated that the leader had absolute authority to tell us what to do. I always wanted to be the leader, but my older sister would always end up in that coveted leadership role. The leader said what we could play, who would clean the house, and so on. We basically did whatever he or she told us to do. No wonder my older sister always wanted to be the leader!

When I think back on those playtime experiences as a boy, I am reminded of Romans 8:14, where the apostle Paul talks about following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He wrote, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” In Greek, the sentence structure is actually reversed, so that it reads, “For as many as by the Spirit of God are being led, they are the sons of God.” It puts the Holy Spirit at the first of the verse, and we are placed behind Him — a picture of our responsibility as children of God to “follow the Leader.”

The Greek word for “led” is **ago**, which simply means to lead. However, I want to point out that this word is also the root for the Greek word **agon**, which describes an **intense conflict**, such as a **struggle in a wrestling match** or a struggle of the human will. Thus, we see that although the Holy Spirit wants to lead us, our human will doesn’t like the idea of being led. The flesh always distrusts guidance or instruction given by a person in a position of authority, and it’s human nature to want to call the shots and lead the way. Whether young or old, most people don’t like the idea of being led. When I played “Follow the Leader” as a child, I didn’t like being led by my sister and being told what to do. I’d rather have been in charge myself and called the shots as I saw them!

In the same way, when we make the decision to allow the Holy Spirit to dictate the course of our lives, it often produces a struggle between our will and our flesh. However, as children of God, we must learn to subdue the complaints of our flesh and stay in our place — behind the Holy Spirit as followers. We’re not to be out front directing the Holy Spirit; we are to go behind Him, following His leading, direction, and guidance. The mark of a mature believer is his or her ability to sense where the Lord is leading and then to follow that leading.

The fact that the Greek word for “led” is also the root of the Greek word for struggle tells us that we will have to deal with our flesh as we begin to rely fully on the Holy Spirit as our **Coach and Guide**. Our flesh wants to control our lives, so we must say no to it and allow the Holy Spirit to have His way. Regardless of how great the struggle seems, this process of trusting the Holy Spirit’s leadership is the only way to live a supernatural Christian life.

In a certain sense, we should make it our goal to be “tagalongs” to the Holy Spirit. We should continually follow along to see what He is doing, where He is going, and how He is leading — and then we should obey His leading implicitly. Just as Jesus emulated the Father’s actions, we must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and then follow His cues. In other words, we must “be led by the Spirit,” which is both the responsibility and benefit of being a child of God. To become the mature Christians God wants us to be, we must have this practical relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The leading of the Holy Spirit is often subtle, taking the form of an impression or nudging in our hearts to do something. However, His leading can also be more dramatic, such as through a prophecy, dream, or vision, or simply through a voice speaking clearly to our spirits.

**The truth is, learning to know the voice of the Holy Spirit and being led by Him should be one of your primary concerns as a growing, maturing child of God.** It's all part of that lifelong pursuit *to know Him and the power of His resurrection as you press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus!*

### **My Prayer For Today**

Heavenly Father, I want to learn how to become a “tagalong” behind the leadership of the Holy Spirit. I know You sent the Holy Spirit to be my supernatural Coach — but that His Help is only a reality to me if I choose to obey His leading. I admit that I have often struggled with obedience, and I ask You to forgive me. I really want to obey. Today I ask You to give me the strength of will and the inward surrender of heart to trust and obey the Holy Spirit and do exactly what He is trying to lead me to do.

I pray this in Jesus' name!

### **My Confession For Today**

I declare that I am tuned in to the Spirit of God and that I boldly obey whatever He instructs me to do. Fear and lack of trust do not dictate my obedience to the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of truth. He will never mislead me or misguide me, and I am confident of His leadership over my life. Even when I do not understand the reasons why He is leading me in a certain way, I choose to obey Him. He is the Spirit of truth. Therefore, I am confident that He is directing me into the perfect will of God for every sphere of my life.

I declare this by faith in Jesus' name!

### **Questions For You To Consider**

1. Can you truthfully say that that you are a consistent “tagalong” who follows behind the Holy Spirit? Or do you find that most of the time you are out front, trying to direct Him as to what should be happening in your life?
2. Have you ever experienced an inner struggle after making a decision to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps He nudged you to do something — or to refrain from doing something — and you found it very difficult to do so, even though you were certain it was His divine leading?
3. Have you ever experienced a struggle when the Holy Spirit instructed you to witness to someone, but you found it difficult to obey? Or perhaps you sensed the Holy Spirit's leading to give a sacrificial offering, and your flesh put up a fight against His instruction in your heart. Can you think of other instances where you had to mortify your flesh in order to obey what the Holy Spirit was directing you to do or not to do?

*(-This series of devotionals are written by **Rick Renner**)*