

# The School of the Spirit

## A New Life of Spirit Led Ministry to Others

There are lessons of the Lord which can be described in a classroom, but can only be imparted by the Spirit in the school of daily life. Being trained for ministry includes character development and spiritual growth, so expect on the job training to continue no matter what you are doing. That means leaning to survive trials and eventually thrive in the midst of them. Fortunately for all of us, our Teacher is also our Comforter and Best Friend!

**"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit." John 15:1-2 ESV**

## Internal Instruction

Without a doubt the Holy Spirit is the best Teacher on earth. Nothing escapes His attention. He is always working to help us do our best and be our best. If you have ever watched the Olympics, then you have probably seen athletes huddle up with their coaches after events. Even if they did spectacularly well, the coach will whisper words to them about how to improve for the next set. Similarly, the Holy Spirit will frequently bring to your mind ways in which you can improve your game as a servant of others. He has a lot to teach us!



Fortunately, the Lord is pleased with any step we take in the right direction and He never reproaches us for missteps, but He loves us too much to let us get the big head. Helping others leaves us open to temptation by pride because, after all, our good works are on public display.

Naturally we want to do well—and He desires that for us too—but there is a hidden danger in success: taking credit to ourselves, or thinking that we have arrived at a pinnacle of achievement. So, expect it that your greatest encourager is also your most devoted critic.

Not only is the Lord keenly interested in cultivating our abilities, He also wants to preserve our humility, so that we will remain teachable. If we are open to it, we are now learners for life in the great, never-ending School of the Spirit. This can keep everything that we do fresh and exciting for we who enroll in this course of instruction are always seeking to grow better at loving people and more effective at serving them. It can also open doors (if you let it) for the enemy to harass or oppress you with self-condemning thoughts. Learning to separate out [conviction by the Spirit](#) from condemnation by the enemy is part of the on the job training we need.



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## Nine Necessary Lessons

This list is not all-inclusive. It's simply an overview of certain basic lessons that the Lord will likely be working on with you as you work with Him.

### 1) Connection

Just as batteries don't last long without a re-charge, none of us can stay "in the Spirit" and advance the kingdom without staying closely connected to the One who desires to work through us. Jesus has given us [five main ways of connecting](#) to Him. Service is one of those ways, but staying refreshed and ready for anything means that we will need to learn how to keep the other four in good working condition: Bible, prayer, worship and fellowship. You will learn, if you are open to the lessons, that no matter how much you have to do for the Lord, the most important thing is staying well-connected to Him. It's our #1 assignment.

### 2) Criticism

Just because we are stepping out of our complacency or our comfort zones to do something noble for the Lord, doesn't mean critics, naysayers and busybodies will leave us alone. If they bother you, don't waste time trying to change them (or worse, becoming a complainer yourself). You could sooner bail out the ocean than change the sea of humanity around you. Let the barrage of negativity from others (when it happens) turn you away from seeking to please people and re-focus on Jesus and how He sees you. Are you here to please others or God? Criticism can help you see things about yourself you need to work on, even if the only thing that needs changing is your reaction to it.

### 3) Dependence

Entering into the Lord's work usually means discovering how little we have to bring to the table, like the disciples must have felt when asked by Jesus to feed the multitude. Seen from the outside we almost never seem to have enough: more money is needed for the work, or more resources, or more people. Seen from the inside, we can't help but notice our weaknesses and inadequacies. This is likely an uncomfortable position for many of us in the beginning, but it is teaching the life-long lesson of depending upon the Lord to be our faithful Source and supply.

### 4) Guidance

We may be perfectly willing to say with Jesus, "Behold, I come to do your will" and yet not have a clue how to place ourselves under His leadership. If we are willing to begin at the lowest level, serving the Lord's will is easy: just place yourself under the leaders He has already placed over the work. Eventually, though, you will start seeing needs that you would like to reach out to directly. This naturally causes us to pray and seek the Lord for guidance. Learn to watch for the opportunities His Hands provide and listen for the ideas He brings you. Guidance is an art best learned on the job, not in the arm chair. See [Walking in the Spirit](#) for more on this essential lesson.

## 5) Waiting

No one likes waiting these days. There is so much hurry up and impatience all around. Yet, waiting on God is a huge theme in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. Waiting is akin to hope and is infused with faith that the things we had to commit to the Lord (because they aren't happening now!) will come in due time, if we persevere while we are waiting. Christian ministry teaches us to be patient a) because without patience we will inevitably become unkind and that will never do, and b) so many things have to be prayed for in order for the Lord to bring them about. There's no point in holding your breath or drumming your fingers when what needs doing requires the Spirit's wooing in someone else's life. God's timing cannot be forced, especially since His priority is working on hearts. As you learn to wait, be sure to learn how to "enter into His rest" and "possess your soul" with patience.

## 6) Weakness

Don't we love leading with our strengths? Don't we wish we didn't have any weaknesses getting in the way? Strengths are a joy. We can get things done with them! Weaknesses are a bother all the way around. Nevertheless, the call of the Lord brings us face to face with our weakness, time and time again. Why? Wouldn't we be better off without them? In fact, we would do well to learn to see weaknesses as friends in disguise, not enemies to be feared. Our weaknesses lead us to Christ, reminding us to pray, to cast our hope on Him, and to cling to Him. Strengths usually throw us back into total reliance upon ourselves. Weaknesses teach us the high and holy way of dependence upon the Lord.

## 7) Busyness

Jesus said He needed to be about His Father's "business." He never said He needed to be busy. Busyness is a modern plague. For those who have caught the bad infection it feels good—most of the time. It really feels like one is making progress at getting things done. But what happened to the peace of Christ? What happened to the leadership of the Holy Spirit? What about the people who were steam-rolled as you pressed your agenda forward? The one who has learned the ways of the Lord gets more done with less effort, because the Holy Spirit is supplying strength and synchronizing events. Busyness is like an overfilled cup of coffee, sure to scorch someone when it's spilled, most frequently the holder. Let the Lord teach you when enough is enough.

## 8) Rescuing

There is only room for One Rescuer on the team. That position is already filled! Jesus cares for each individual we are trying to serve infinitely more than we ever will, but He has His own way of working with them and His own timing about it. We can easily get in His way if we seize things to ourselves, trying to fix people in our own strength. Learn to let your hand rest lightly on your plans and your desires. God often rules by over-ruling us. This is frustrating, but necessary. He knows what He's doing; we don't. At the same time the enemy loves to obstruct and oppose the work. When do we submit to God; when do we resist the devil? This calls for real discernment. Patient perseverance usually wins the day, though the victory may come days later than you originally expected.



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## 9) Submission

We are to “submit to one another” keeping the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Here is where the rubber of gospel truth meets the hard road of daily life. There are so many bumps in the road when it comes to working with others! Yet, the most important thing about the work is the relationships: with the people being served, with fellow workers and with our leaders in the field. The Holy Spirit is watching carefully over all of this. Of course, He hates it when we are mistreated, abused or oppressed, but neither is there any place in Christian ministry for us to adopt an attitude of self-pity, wounded pride, or resentment. Learn to be far less concerned about how you are treated, than how you treat others.

## Tests and Trials

There is a difference between tests and trials. Without drawing too fine a distinction, let’s just say that tests represent the kinds of situations we face most days. Seeking to be of service will test us in the various ways listed above, among others. Be ready for “pop quizzes.” Life hands them out all the time! Staying connected to the Lord and talking things over with experienced friends takes care of most things. You will find yourself learning all kinds of lessons through the ordinary cycle of trouble and resolution. These are usually felt as minor disturbances in the flow of work and as fairly normal emotional reactions. Above it all we usually have a sense of passing the tests and growing in faith and grace.

Trials, however, are more difficult and disturbing. We usually have a feeling of being caught in them, of regressing to previous levels of weakness, and of being too piercingly aware of our moral shortcomings. We don’t feel like we are passing at all. In fact, it is the Lord who “passes” the test of any trial worthy of being called a trial. He proves His strength of heart to us: His faithfulness and His mercy triumph over our dilemma and lead us out. This takes time. If (or when) you get caught in a trial, try to remember that He only disciplines in love. Once you recover your trust and confidence in God—at a new level---the trial has done its work.

## Relax, He Loves You!

Neither tests, nor trials, are a sign of His displeasure. He is genuinely pleased that you are seeking to serve Him. He loves you and He is really, really easy to please. Trials and tests are His “strange” way of working with us to liberate us in areas of our life where words alone could never have accomplished the work. He takes us through experiences that we might have shunned before we decided to follow Him, or overlooked by primarily being focused on ourselves, rather than the needs of others. He is delighted to have us on his team. He wishes to reward us for our service with greater freedom and with a closer walk with Him. Therefore, He disciplines or trains us through tests and trials. It is actually a profound sign of His favor, though a hard one (at times) to interpret.

**My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.** Proverbs 3:11-12 NLT



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## More to Explore

**Talents, Fruit and Gifts** The Lord gives talents and natural abilities to everyone as a way of getting us started in life. You don't have to be a believer to be a receiver of these—just develop what you notice. As believers, though, it helps to know the limits of these natural abilities in the spiritual life. Wiser still would be to shift our attention towards cultivating those gifts and fruit which are unique to we now are in Christ as His new creations.

**Doing Ministry** There's nothing like doing the thing, especially when what we are doing is something we can be sure that Jesus is doing right along with us! The real Minister, the true Servant, is there on the inside wanting to get out into that hurting, lost world through us His chosen vessels. The secret to kingdom success is letting Him do ministry through you. It is also the secret to never becoming burned out.

## Free Downloads

[pdf Preparing for Ministry \(eBook\)](#)

## Scriptures on Training

My son, do not despise or shrink from the chastening of the Lord [His correction by punishment or by subjection to suffering or trial]; neither be weary of or impatient about or loathe or abhor His reproof, [Psalms 94:12; Hebrews 12:5,6; Revelation 3:19.] For whom the Lord loves He corrects, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11-12 AMP

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. Titus 3:14 ESV

### About the Author: [Steve Evans](#)

For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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