

Elisha—An Example of a Spirit-Led Life **I Kings 19:21, II Kings 2:2-6**

We frequently hear the phrases, “led by the Spirit” or “empowered by the Spirit”, and although we desire to live lives that demonstrate that reality, our actual reality is often much different. What does it look like to be “led by” and “empowered by” the Spirit, and how do I reach that place of intimacy in my relationship with the Lord? One example can be found in the life of Elisha, where we see principles that can be applied to our own lives today. As I read the story of Elisha’s call into ministry, I notice three different attitudes and/or actions that demonstrate his commitment to walking closely with the Spirit of God.

1. Absolute surrender (I Kings 19:21)

When Elisha received God’s call from the prophet Elijah, he was in the field plowing with his oxen. He immediately returned home, slaughtered his oxen, chopped up the plow to make a fire to cook the oxen, and had a feast for the townspeople. Elijah literally “burned his bridges” to his past life and livelihood as he wholly committed himself to his calling! He enthusiastically joined the work of the Spirit (his dinner for the neighbors gives the impression of a celebration!) despite the unknown way of life that lay ahead.

2. Attitude of persistence and determination (II Kings 2:2,4,6)

As the end of Elijah’s ministry drew near, he instructed Elisha to remain behind while he journeyed toward the encounter with God that would take him from this life. He tried three times to dissuade Elisha from following him, but Elisha did not allow himself to be put off by apparent rebuffs. In those days the Holy Spirit did not reside upon everyone, but only on a select few individuals. Elisha knew that where Elijah was, the Holy Spirit was, and he was determined to follow in His steps. He persisted through the temptations to stop following, to stay back and rest, to take a break; and he was ready when Elijah asked him the question, “What can I do for you?” (2:9). Jesus asked the same question of Bartimaeus in Luke 18:41. The persistence of the seeker was rewarded in both instances with the question of a lifetime. What do we want Him to do for us? Are we determined to follow in His footsteps and persistently seek Him for it?

3. Acknowledgement of our need (II Kings 2:9)

Elisha’s answer to Elijah’s question was a request to inherit a double portion of his spirit. He was referring to the double portion that was the right of the firstborn, described in Deut. 21:17, but he was asking for a spiritual inheritance rather than a physical one. Elisha expressed his great need for a special spiritual endowment. He recognized that he could do nothing without the power of the Holy Spirit. In order to go forward without Elijah, he boldly acknowledged that he was in desperate need of a double portion of God’s Spirit. Romans 8:29 says that Jesus is the firstborn of many brothers, and therefore the double portion belongs to Him. It is what He offers *us* as His fellow-heirs! Like Elisha, we also must reflect that kind of wholehearted commitment to the Spirit of God, and He will delight in empowering us with the gift of our inheritance.