

# Book of Acts Series - Part 12 | Guided by God

by Jim Cymbala

---

*Jim Cymbala emphasizes the importance of being guided by God in all aspects of life through the example of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.*

**Duration:** 50:26

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 4:2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:26-31, Acts 8:34-35, Hebrews 13:8

**Topics:** "Book Of Acts"

---

## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Jim outlines the order of events during a church service, including praise and worship, choir singing, announcements, offering, and a solo performance. He emphasizes the importance of serving and doing what is asked of us. Pastor Jim challenges the belief that supernatural experiences, such as God leading and guiding people, no longer happen today. He argues that God is still the same and can lead and guide us, and questions those who claim otherwise without biblical evidence. He encourages believers to be open and available for God to use them at any time, just as the early church did.

---

## Transcript

We're gonna continue in the Book of Acts, a series that was begun a few months ago, but I just thought as I was listening to Pastor Petri speak of an introduction to this message. This past week, I was able to spend a few days with a new grandson, as it were, Pastor Toledo, my son-in-law, who's married to my oldest girl, Chrissy. They pastor an excellent church in Chicago called Chicago Tabernacle.

Somehow over the years, they would have a little baby in their house when he was eight months old, a year and a half. I remember seeing him, Chrissy walking with him, trying to put him to sleep, and he was from Gary, Indiana, very dangerous area of Gary, Indiana, and his name was Malachi, little beautiful African-American baby boy who was born to a prostitute. And the city took the baby away from the mother and gave Malachi to the grandmother to raise.

I don't even know to this day, I forgot to ask her this week how the connection was made, but I would see Malachi there for a month, two weeks, a week, and then he would go back to the grandmother and so on and so forth. Handsome, handsome, so handsome little boy, and now, nine years old, they got a call last August from the grandmother who said, he can't even go out and play where we live. He's gonna get shot.

The crime is rampant, it's very dangerous. He can't even live a normal childhood, and I don't know if I can do this any longer. The mother had another baby, and they took that baby immediately away, and I think right now the mother's in prison.

So all Malachi is known is the grandmother in Gary, Indiana. So last August, they called Pastor Toledo, Alan Chrissy, and said, could you take him because it's bad here. So last August, they took Malachi, and he went to school this year, the whole year in their house, going to the school, and he's doing great.

He's doing great. He wasn't even there a month, and I was speaking at that church last September. It just comes to me, and he's nine years old, and he's very slick.

He has some interesting little moves that he has in his life. So he got in trouble that day, unbeknownst to me. They have multiple services, three services.

He got in trouble that day, and Pastor Al caught him being somewhere where he shouldn't have been, and not where he should have been. So he got corrected, and he said, we're gonna have to talk about this when we get home. So it must have scared Malachi.

So the third meeting, I notice he's in the front row, you know, listening to me like he's a Bible student, a theological student, and I couldn't put it all together, but I knew something was up when I started hearing him say, amen, amen. At the end of my message, when I made the invitation for people to stand, he was, boom, the first one to stand up. So on the way home, they told me later, he knew, I guess, what was gonna go down.

He said, boy, my new papa, he really had a word for me in that service. You don't have to teach kids to play the game, right? So the question arises, on what basis of judgment did my daughter and son-in-law, they're now legal guardians, I think they're gonna adopt him, on what basis of judgment did they take that boy in? There's no Bible verse that speaks to it. It's not a moral question.

It's not sin or not sin. So on what basis do you do something like that? I think that's a pretty awesome decision. What do you think? So on what basis? Do you adopt every baby? Do you take every baby you know that's in trouble in your house? Or do you take no babies in your house? How do you do that? Do you just think it through? You go by feeling? No, there was much prayer made to the Lord for this, and it's not a decision that can be based on a scripture verse, although God could use a scripture verse, but there is no verse that says take Malachi in, and that's something my new pastor Petri adopted from Ethiopia.

He's Levi. Now I got Malachi. I need just an Isaiah, Jeremiah, and I got the whole Old Testament covered.

I got a priest and a prophet. I just thought of that. No, there's not a moral question.

Moral questions are solved by the Bible. You don't have to ask God or pray about whether you should lie to someone or whether you should steal something or whether you should love your mother-in-law or whatever. Those are in the Bible.

Ah, we have some mother-in-law problems here. No, those are answered by the Bible, and to pray about something like that is to tempt God, but there's a lot of other huge decisions in life like what job to take, whether to relocate, whether to take a child in and become its parent, what to major in in college, whether to go to college, which college to go to, whether to marry someone that you think you're in love with, because all the Bible says is you're to marry someone in the faith, but there's a lot of folks out there in the

faith, so how do you know? Now, there's a school of thought now, very strong in Christendom, that it doesn't matter. God doesn't care about those things.

It's being preached now from pulpits. Just do what you feel like doing, and God will cover your back. Stop obsessing over it and praying over it, because guidance by God doesn't go to those areas.

Just do it. Do what you feel like doing. What stands out in the book of Acts is the fact that the early Christians, not just the pastors and the apostles, but rank-and-file believers were led by the Lord, or as the name of this sermon is, they were guided by God.

They didn't make unilateral decisions real quick, but they felt that God was interested in every part of their life. And I challenge pastors when I get around some who are into this teaching, it doesn't matter. I said, oh, then you don't care about your kids either.

Oh no, I care about my kids. I wanna make sure they go do their homework. I wanna know where they're going to school.

I wanna know who their friends are. Oh, I get it. You're interested in your children, but God isn't interested in his.

Oh, that makes a lot of sense. You love more than God. Well, of course not.

God is interested in every part of our lives. And this is one of the things that stands out in the book of Acts, that in dramatic ways or not so dramatic ways, God guided his people, and he wants to guide you. How many want, right now today, real talk, serious business, how many would like today, in a new way for the rest of your life, be guided by God? Lift up your hand.

Listen, there's three things that happen when you're guided by God. Number one, he guides you into the plan that he has. See, he has a plan for every life here in this room.

He has a plan for your life, and trust me, that plan is the best plan. There's a way that seems right to a person, but the end is destruction. There's a plan that God has for your life, but that plan can only be reached by making decisions along the way that lead you into the plan, and God has to guide you on those decisions.

Number two, there are guidances from God that save you from huge trouble. If you and I will let God guide us, he's the one who knows what's around the curve. We'll talk about how God guides in a moment, but I remember one time riding on the Gowanus Parkway, heading to the Battery Tunnel as a college student, coming home from a service, and I went off on the Prospect Expressway, which is the road that would take me closer to where I was living than on Parkside Avenue, and there's a curve there, and I was just praising God, and I was cruising, and I always had the foot down on the pedal too much, and as I was coming to the curve, I was safe at the speed I was going, but as I came around the curve, it's a blind curve as you come off, you don't see what's around, it's a strong curve, my heart, I started to feel very uncomfortable, I lost all sense of peace, and actually, I got agitated inside of me so much that I put on the brake, not even knowing why I was putting on the brake, as God is my witness, and sure enough, as I was coming around the curve, a truck had overturned and was there right in the road, and coming at the speed I was going, because it was so blind, I could've hit it or would've hit it, and I had to just put my hands up in the air right in the car and say, thank you, God.

He guided me away from something that was really dangerous. Lastly, when God guides you, you're able to make an influence on other people that is extraordinary because you're the right person in the right place at the right time, but that doesn't happen automatically. We have to be open to special guidance and special leadings from the Lord.

Here's a classic example of it, found in the book of Acts. On a Tuesday night recently, we talked about Philip, I think it was two Tuesdays ago, about Philip, who was a deacon, not ordained, not an apostle. There weren't even deacons yet in the church.

He was just one of the seven that in Acts 6 was chosen to distribute food to widows. We talked about that here on a Sunday. So this Philip ended up going to Samaria, which is north from Jerusalem, to a people that the Jews really looked down on, but now the gospel was being spread.

Jesus said, preach the gospel in the whole world, starting in Jerusalem, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. And he went there and was mightily used by God, and that's another thing we learned. In the early church, people didn't look to degrees.

They were just open and used by God, and it happened. We are structured now where you all sit, the performance is done up here, and then we're the professional clergy, and the members just come for an hour or so to church and go home, and maybe, hopefully, you'll come back next Sunday, and that's most American, what Americans think Christianity is. Go to church once a week.

Totally foreign, so far away from Scripture that it's painful to think about it. No, in the early church, everyone realized God could use me at any time, any way, for it's not by might nor by power. God's Spirit is gonna work through me.

How can I be a blessing and do his will? So everyone was an evangelist in a way. Everyone was talking. Everyone was shaking and baking and rocking and rolling as they follow the Lord.

So Philip now has a very successful series of meetings going on. God's using him supernaturally. Lots of people have got converted.

There's great joy in the city. Peter and John have come from Jerusalem to pray for the people because there was something lacking in their Christian experience. For as yet, the Holy Spirit had fallen on none of them.

They'd only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Scripture says. But now, I mean, there's just joy in the camp and great things are happening, and then out of nowhere, boom, this happens. Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, go south to the road, the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

So he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. So he's Jewish, he's from Ethiopia, he was in Jerusalem to worship, and now he's going back, and Philip runs into him.

And on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah, the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, go to that chariot and stay near it. Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah, the prophet.

Do you understand what you are reading, Philip asked. How can I, the Ethiopian said, unless someone explains it to me. So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture. He, the Messiah, was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation, he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants, for his life was taken from the earth. So he's reading from Isaiah about the Messiah, which of course was fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus was led like a sheep to the slaughter.

And when I saw in Argentina one time a lot of years ago, when you kill a sheep, unlike a pig, unlike any other animal, when you kill a sheep, when you slit its throat, which I saw, it just looks right at you and never says a word. And that's how Jesus was. They took his life from him, and he never fought, he never screamed, he never yelled, because he knew that he had to give his life for us.

You know why he shed his blood, right? So that our sins could be forgiven. I trust everyone here in this building today. You have a personal experience with God through Jesus Christ, his son, and you know that your sins are forgiven.

You've put your faith in that Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I trust that, because nothing else really matters. What in the world would you give in exchange for your soul? What would it profit a man if he gained everything and lost his soul for all eternity? And the only way you can be forgiven and cleansed and know that you're gonna be with God for all eternity is to put your faith in Jesus Christ, to repent of your sins and put your trust in him, to turn away from your way of living and go God's way of living.

That's what a Christian is. That's who a Christian is. So he was reading that passage of Scripture just at that moment, and that's the one he said to Philip.

Watch. The eunuch asked Philip, tell me please, who is the prophet Isaiah talking about, himself or someone else? Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about who? Jesus. He didn't have to give him a survey of the whole Old Testament, didn't have to memorize 20,000 verses.

He told him the good news about Jesus, which had not been written down yet. There was no New Testament Scripture. There were no books of the New Testament.

He couldn't analyze anything in the Greek. He just told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, look, here is water.

Why shouldn't I be baptized? He might have already told him, Philip did, if you believe and are baptized, you'll be saved. That baptism is an outward sign that you've believed in your heart in Jesus Christ. And he gave orders to stop the chariot.

Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. And Philip was just a deacon. Philip wasn't a minister.

He was never ordained. Never called reverend once. Wasn't a pastor.

He's just a guy, full of God, full of the Word, full of Jesus, and that's the way it happened. So what do we learn about this? Because Philip is the one now who is guided by God. So as we hear this story, he's in the middle of a great godly commotion going on in Samaria, and suddenly an angel of the Lord says to him, go south to the road that goes down to the desert.

And he goes. And then as he's there, he sees this Ethiopian eunuch riding in a chariot. And the Spirit says to him, go next to the chariot.

So he just runs up, and he's walking along. And he hears the eunuch reading out loud from the book of Isaiah. And then he says, do you understand what you're reading? And the guy said, how am I gonna understand this unless someone teaches me? Come on up in the thing and help me.

He goes up in the chariot. Now they're riding along. He explains that, tells them the good news about Jesus.

Obviously a lot is left out, but the Ethiopian comes to the point of faith, and the Ethiopian says, that's how simple it is? You can have eternal life by believing in Jesus and following him, yep. And then you can baptize an outward sign that you put your, yep. Well, wait a minute.

Yo, look at this. There's some water over here. What stops me from being baptized? Philip says, nothing, nada.

They jump out, he baptizes them, and the beat goes on. And Ethiopian eunuch is numero uno next to Candace the queen of Ethiopia. He's the treasurer, he keeps the books.

Imagine the influence he has. And now the Bible historians and the commentators say, that's how the gospel got to Ethiopia. One man went down there with the message.

Not Philip, the eunuch. But the eunuch had to be led to Christ by someone, and it was Philip. So many believe he was the first missionary or Christian in that area.

Ethiopia, by the way, in the New Testament doesn't mean the country of Ethiopia. It actually stands for Northern Africa. That part of below Egypt and that area which we call Ethiopia and some other countries.

How did it happen? It all happened because Philip was guided by God. How'd this whole thing go down? Because he was led by the Lord. Were there verses that he obeyed? No verses.

There's no verse in the Bible that says, go to a road heading to the desert. There's no verse that says that. No verse says, jump in a chariot.

Every chariot you see. He was led by the Lord. Do you believe in that today? You know, in a lot of churches, there's a strong anti-supernatural current running in churches today.

Oh, it's everywhere I go. I was just with pastors in Lincoln, Nebraska this past Monday. Spent seven hours with them.

Very strong. Look, just study the Bible. Read the Bible.

Go to church and nada mas, nothing more. That's all. Christ alive, God leading people, the Holy Spirit speaking, angels.

Come on, get out of here. That was for 2,000 years ago. That doesn't happen today.

Well, what verse, brother, what verse, pastor, tells me that that doesn't happen anymore? Oh, I don't have a verse. Well, then who are you to tell me it can't happen anymore? I thought Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. How many believe God can still lead us and guide us? Put your hand up high.

God can still lead us and guide us. Now, how does he do it? What do we learn? Obviously, this is not the definitive story, but it's an illustration of some important truths. So let's just look at them before we close.

First of all, did you notice that Philip wasn't praying about guidance. He just got guidance. Philip wasn't praying like, Lord, what should I do next? He was busy in Samaria.

He had new converts. They were getting baptized. He was busy preaching.

He was a busy guy. And out of nowhere, the Bible says, an angel of the Lord told him, leave and go to a road heading down to the desert. That tells us that God has guidance for us, not just when we're asking for guidance.

He wants us to stay open and receptive because he's got plans that we don't even know about. For he says, my ways are not your ways, neither are my thoughts your thoughts. So God's got things cooking for all of our lives, but we have to be open and receptive and walk humbly and quietly before him so we can pick up what he's saying.

Notice how he was directed at first. He was directed by an angel. What is an angel? An angel is an invisible, for the most part, messenger of God.

The book of Revelation says that heaven is inhabited by all these angels who are like flaming fires who are sent on missions by God to accomplish things. They can make themselves visible, it seems, but for the most part, they're invisible. There's possibly many, many, many angels in this room right now.

You say, you really believe that? Well, where are they? Show me them. Oh, there's all kinds of things that are real that you can't see. There's all kinds of things that are real that you can't see.

To limit to the senses what exists is silly. Maybe some of you use a mouthwash that's, the brand name is Listerine. Mr. Lister, who that is named after, was a very interesting man.

He was a doctor slash scientist, and he saw that people were dying after they had gunshot wounds or they had injuries, and he saw that no matter what the doctors did back then, a day of crude medicine, they would die. They would get infections and die. So he came up with this theory that there's invisible things called germs or bacteria that once spread into the body, to the wound, can cause fatalities.

He was laughed out of the ballpark. He was ridiculous. It was a day then before microscopes and everything else, these things could be seen.

He said, no, it's the filthiness of the conditions that is causing people to die who otherwise could survive. In fact, in the Civil War and other wars around that time, mid-1800s, early 1800s, doctors who worked in the tent where they would bring all the people who were maimed, they would keep, they have bloody belts and aprons, I should say, on them, filled with blood and gore and all of that, and they would take their scalpels and their knives and wipe it against the apron before they would cut on the next person. And the guy who

had the filthiest apron, he was like, yo, that's the guy.

I want him to operate on me. He has experience. Why are you laughing at me? That's how it went down.

And he went, was laughed at. Some doctors said that he was like demon-possessed or an insane person, like, you know, like what do you believe, like angels? How many can you put on the point of a pin, of a needle, which is what they would discuss sometimes in the Middle Ages. Everyone just laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed.

He was a fool, he was a crazy person. Talking about invisible things, like, you know, what are you, a witch? What do you believe in, black magic? White magic, whatever kind of magic? And then as they started to clean wounds and clean everything up, they realized, no, there's something to it. There's things that you can't see.

Well, now we can see those things, but you realize in the spiritual world, there's all kinds of things that exist that we can't see. For right now, the Bible says, the Lord says, where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be there. How many know, even though we can't see Him, how many know the Lord is here today? Well, of course He's here.

Haven't we felt His presence? Well, show me, prove it to me. Well, there's all kinds of things you can't prove that are real. You can't prove love.

Show me love. You say, I love my child, I give my life for my child. Prove it, show me love.

It's the strongest emotion in the world, isn't it? Has anybody ever seen love? No, we don't see love. We see how love works out, but has anyone ever, I fell in love with her. Oh, I love that girl, she's fine.

I love that girl, I love her. Show me that you love her, let me see your love. Show me the love that you have.

No, I love her, I'm telling you. I know, but show me the love. I wanna look at it, I wanna touch it and feel it.

No, you don't understand, I love her. Well, just show it to me and I'll believe you. Well, you can't see love, but how many know love is real? People give up their lives in the name of love.

So an angel told Philip, and a messenger from God told him, let's learn another lesson. He told him, go and leave where you are and go to a road that leads to the south, to the desert. Now, there's two things interesting about that.

First of all, it's illogical. If you're busy doing good things for God and you're occupied in what you're doing, why would you leave to go to a road heading to the desert? That tells us that God's leading many times is not according to our logic. If you are very proud of the way your brain works and if you and I are very secure in our way of thinking, then, and we're very super logical, we'll say, no, that makes no sense.

I'm in Samaria doing work for the Lord and this angel is just off. He got a wrong message or somehow the texting thing didn't work and he got a wrong message and I'm not going down to the south because it makes no sense. So we learn here that when God leads us, you can't always go by your brain and figure it out because God's ways are not our ways.

So God can prompt you to get up in the middle of the night to pray for someone. He can prompt you to make a phone call. He can prompt you to go someplace.

That makes no sense to you immediately, but you gotta trust God that in the end it'll work out. Number two, notice in the same happenstance here, where's the rest of the information? The angel told him go to the road that leads down to the desert and no, no and, that's it. That tells us that many times God leads us and doesn't give us the full picture when he directs us.

He just says go. Well, what am I gonna do? You'll find out when you get there. Well, who will I see? Just go.

You know, I really do believe that someone here right now while I'm speaking, God's directing you to do something in your life and because you can't see the end of it, you're not willing to obey. You gotta obey God. He'll just tell you what you need to know for the next step.

Don't get the full picture all the time at the beginning. That doesn't happen that way. What did the angel of the Lord, what did the angel say to Philip? Just go to the road that leads to the desert.

Nothing more. Just go, obey me. God many times just says, look, take that step.

I know, but where will that step go? No, no, no, no. When you take that step, I'll show you the next one. So don't be afraid.

If we wanna be led by the Lord, we have to be willing to not always figure it out logically in our minds and what we have to do is be willing to act in faith although we don't see the outcome. Now, he's on the desert road. Notice the change in the leading.

Chariot is coming by and now the Bible says the Spirit said to him. Oh, how this makes some people so uncomfortable. The Spirit said to him, go and join yourself to that chariot.

How'd the Spirit say that? Was there an audible voice? No, most likely not. You know, in a meeting, the Spirit can speak like in Acts 13 we read. The Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work that I've called them.

That was probably through the gifts of the Holy Spirit which the Bible tells us the Spirit uses many times to speak to a group of people or to a person. The gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge. But this didn't happen through a person.

One day as I was in college or just graduating college and God was dealing with my ornery little soul, never dreaming I would be in the ministry. You could take this for what it's worth. I was sitting in a meeting and I felt the Holy Spirit come upon me and I felt that I was supposed to do something in that meeting, right in the middle of the meeting.

But this was all so new to me that my heart was beating as God is my witness, pounding like out of my chest because I didn't wanna fake anything. I didn't wanna make a mistake. But it seemed like God was prompting me to be used, it seemed, which I felt totally unworthy of, in one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and I was sitting in a pew in that church where I was and my eyes were closed and the minister was preaching and boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, and tears in my eyes and God, what do I do? Is this you? I do not wanna do anything wrong, but I wanna obey you, what do I do? And a man of

God, three seats over, just sitting there, we're listening to the sermon.

He gets up out of his seat and he leans over the two people between us and he taps me and he says, Jim, do what God's telling you to do, don't hold back. And he went back to his seat. You say, you know, you're making that up.

I'm not making it up. That can't happen today. Well, whatever, according to your faith, so be it unto you.

I know what happened to me. But the Spirit said to Philip, how did he say it? Probably in a still, small voice. You know, this is a hard thing to be able to discern, the difference between mi cabeza, my head, my brain, the thoughts I get, and now the whisper of the Spirit.

That's the hardest discernment. To discern between the devil and between God, that's not too hard, although the devil can come as an angel of light, amen? But that's not the hardest. The hardest is discern between our good thoughts, our laudable thoughts, and the voice of the Spirit, because you can think things that are good things that are formed by your experience, your knowledge of the Bible, your love for the Lord, but they're not the voice of the Spirit.

That's the hardest. I told you about the time that, she's probably in the building right now, this, at that time, young lady was brought forward and to be prayed for on a Tuesday night. They didn't tell me that her aunt had dedicated her to Satan and was saying incantations over her and bathing her in herbs and lighting candles and handing her over to Satan.

I didn't know any of that, but when they brought her up and she came, when she heard the name Jesus, she jumped on me and drove me back against the facing of the platform and was grabbing up my throat, and these evil spirits that inhabited her were yelling out, there were people here who were in the service, there's one right there, who were in the service and saw this, and they were yelling out through her voice, leave her alone, leave her alone, you'll never have her, get out of here, she's ours, get away, she's ours, coming through her voice, but she was gone. And she's grabbing me and I threw her down on the floor, chaos broke out, everyone's praying, calling on God. She spit twice at me, she's rolling her eyes as she sat down on the ground, like just totally tormented.

And while all this is going on for about 45, 60 seconds, I mean, it was a scene. Imagine first time visitors who came to that service. They went like, how was the service? Oh yeah, great, the pastor was attacked by a girl five foot tall.

Hey, what can I tell you? While we're doing all this, there was a deacon of the church named Isaac Calderon, precious man of God. And he tapped me, I said, this is all going on, and I'm yelling, shut up, don't talk anymore. You're coming out of her, and this is all going crazy, and she's kicking and we're holding her down.

And he taps me and he says, pastor. I go, what, Isaac? No, pastor. I go, what, Isaac? He goes, I believe she's demon possessed.

It was a real prophet, this man, he just. I got spittle all over me, and she ripped my collar. I had a shirt just like this.

For those of you who don't believe in these things, had a shirt collar on just like this, and she tore, see this? She tore this off like it was tissue, like tissue. Those things don't happen today. Oh yeah, well then

buy me a shirt if you don't believe that.

But now, but now the spirit says, go next to the chariot. That means we have to be able to discern, not between the devil and God, but between our thoughts and then, oh, that other thought. Oh, to be led by the spirit.

I want to be able to discern the voice of God in my heart. How many want to be able to discern that? See, this all happened, and the gospel went to Ethiopia because someone knew the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Oh, you know what? You've witnessed that in your own life.

Haven't you had experiences where you know the spirit whispered to you? Haven't you ever been at night or during the day? Haven't you ever heard the Holy Spirit say, get alone and read the word? You don't think that's the devil telling you that, or your flesh, or the world? There's the world, the flesh, the devil, and there's the spirit. You got to obey those voices because he sees what's coming around the bend, and now you'll be strong. You'll have that truth in you.

Or as has happened to me, get out of bed. I can't sleep. No, I'm not letting you sleep.

You've been too rushed today. Go alone and open my word, pray, talk to me. Every time you feel a call to prayer, be careful of that.

It's usually not the devil. Devil doesn't cause too many people to pray. Talk to someone about the Lord, just promptings in the subway, wherever.

So the spirit now, not an angel, the spirit says God has different ways of guiding us. You can't put him in a box. Just join yourself to the chariot.

Again, and then do what? No, just join yourself to the chariot. Again, not complete. And now he's walking along to the chariot, and he hears the guy saying, he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and he opened not his mouth.

Oh yeah, that sounds very good. Notice the timing of God. Go to a road, he's on the road.

Then as he sees the chariot go by, and he's kind of following it, just at the right time, the spirit says, now go and join yourself. Why? Because now the man was gonna read out loud the verse that would open up a way for the gospel. It's not just where you need to be, it's the timing of God.

So now he's walking, and he hears that verse, and he goes, yeah, that's my signal. Yo, do you understand what you're reading? How can I unless someone tells me? I can. Come on up, join me.

This is a new chariot, new Toyota. It's a brand new model that I just got in. Good, I get in that.

And now, beginning from that passage, he told them the good news about Jesus. You couldn't do that? I can't do that? Oh no, pastor, I haven't been to seminary. I'm not even a Christian for six months.

God can lead you if you're a Christian for six days. Now, I don't know enough. Just tell them the good news about Jesus, that he's the son of God, that he was born of a virgin, that he died on a cross, but he rose again, that he's coming again, and that he's changed your life, and that your sins are forgiven, and you have peace and joy that you never had before, and that he's working inside of you, and that he'll work inside that person.

You and I can't tell that. You need to go to seminary for that? They had no seminaries back then. And because he was led by the Lord, the gospel went down with that eunuch, that official of Candace, queen of Ethiopia.

The gospel started spreading throughout all that part of Africa. The gospel is spreading throughout now Africa through a man who has authority and leadership and respect. And how did he get converted? By a guy who walked next to his chariot.

And why was that guy there? Because he was guided by God. I don't wanna stun anybody. I don't wanna make anybody challenge anybody's theology.

But there are some people here who you've been programmed and you've been taught in your church background. These things can't happen, and thus they don't happen, because Jesus said, according to your faith, so be it unto you. But God wants to guide you.

He wants to lead you. Forgive me if I have shared this before. The members can do hearing it again.

But my heart is burning now towards some visitors here who have influence, and God wants to bring you to another level of understanding of being guided by God. So I'm sitting on the platform back in our previous facility, and it's an afternoon service. We were having four meetings or three meetings, I can't remember.

I was sitting right here. The pulpit chairs used to be there. Pastor Hammond used to sit here.

And Carol is facing the choir back in that thing, and she's directing the choir, and she directs this first song. And as they're singing the song, the song ends. Suddenly, the presence of God just descends upon the choir and upon Carol and upon the congregation, just a spirit of praise, inspiring us to worship God.

So Carol gets through with the song, but instead of picking the next song up, she just stands there and lifts her hands up, and she begins to worship God. And the choir begins to worship God, and it's not loud, no one's yelling, but it's just like a hum of praise, a hum of hallelujah, thank you, Jesus. I love you, Lord.

And I open my eyes, and I see the congregation. A couple people have stood, and it's not like to beat the band kind of noise, but it's just a hum of noise. And as often happens, it happens today, it happens a lot to me, I'm trying to be guided by God to what to do in the service, because we have no agenda.

We have no script that we follow before the service. We have no script. In fact, we pray upstairs, God, if you wanna rearrange it, have no one preach, we'll do that.

But guide us. So I'm sitting here, and to be honest with you, I was a little loggy, I had had some fruit back then, I think, I don't eat now during the day to try to stay alert. And I thought to myself, what's happening, God? Are we supposed to praise you? Do you wanna say something to us? Should we sing a song? You know, I have the ability, because of this mic, to change the course of the service, you know that.

So I sat there, and I said, God, I need to be guided. And I got up, Carol was still standing there, and this thing is going on, but I don't know what this thing is. And I walk up to that wooden pulpit, and I stood there, and suddenly it hit me.

You could make a mistake, Jim Cimbala, and you could ruin this meeting. And I said, God, I have no idea what to do. If I have the people sit, they'll sit.

I'll cut this thing right off. If I have them sing a song, that'll divert their attention to the song. Should I encourage them to praise you? Do you want the choir to do another song? God, what do you want? You say to me, Pastor Cimbala, what does it matter? Just do your next thing.

You know, it's just that a church, in a conference, I should say, a large conference, I was one of the guest speakers, and they told me before the service, they had the script. They said, okay, so here, Pastor Jim, so here's the deal. We're gonna have praise and worship for 12 minutes.

Then we're gonna have the choir sing a song for three minutes and 40 seconds. Then we're gonna have announcements and a video. That'll go on for four minutes and 50 seconds.

Then we're gonna have the offering. Someone's gonna pray for the offering. It'll take one minute and a half.

Someone is then gonna sing. A lady's gonna sing a solo. It's gonna take three minutes and 22 seconds.

The track is that long. Then someone's gonna introduce you. They're gonna introduce you.

It'll take them about 90 seconds to introduce you. Then you have 22 minutes to speak. Then you turn it back to us because we have a patriotic number that goes for four minutes and 20 seconds.

Then we're gonna dismiss. This is commonplace. Don't go, ooh.

This is commonplace. So I said, whatever, because when you go someplace, you just serve and you do what you're asked to do. God could use me in 22 minutes, whatever.

So then what struck me was the guy said, now let's pray. Holy Spirit, come and move mightily among us today. I thought, where? There's no time left.

There's no crevice that he could get in. But we had to give lip service. You can't be super organized and control things and also have the Holy Spirit.

Pastor who's visiting here today, you can't control the meeting and then have the Holy Spirit move. You can't do that. You have to be open.

So I'm standing there weighing all my options, which I've done, God knows, 10,000 times. And the Lord directs my attention to a woman four seats in in the front pew, who's standing there just like this, quiet with her hands. And the Lord, I believe, speaks to me like the Spirit spoke to Philip and says, walk off and hand her the microphone.

That's not God. That's the devil tempting me. I'm telling you what I thought.

That is so extraordinary. That is so wild. That is so crazy that I will not do that.

And then the Lord said, didn't you just ask me? Didn't you just ask me what you should do? Walk off, hand her the microphone. Oh God, I can't do that. I have a lot of faults, but I don't like to fool around with the things of the Holy Spirit.

And this is all just happening in my heart. And Carol's still not moving and the choir's still praising God and this thing is going on. I have this hum of noise.

I realize it's the Spirit telling me. I go, oh God, I've done some crazy things in my life. This is at the top of the list now.

I remember my heart's beating now faster just thinking of it. I remember walking with the microphone and coming up the steps and the thought came to me, what if she just hands the microphone back to you? And I says, what are you doing? See, I didn't know how it would end. I'm walking down the steps now.

There she is, I'm getting close to her and she just doesn't move. She's not loud. She's just, and I'm saying, I said to the Lord, may I put my hand on her arm because I don't want to shock her or surprise her.

That's the last thought I had as I approached. But I reached out my hand but before I could touch her arm, she opened her eyes and grabbed the microphone. She grabbed the microphone from me and she started to prophesy using the scriptures, speaking to the church.

Oh my goodness, oh my goodness. And I remember like falling into this pew next to her. She was standing but I just, I thought I was gonna have cardiac arrest.

I thought, oh my goodness, God led me to do something and I'm gonna die because of it. My goodness, my heart was pounding. She gave a word, oh my goodness.

All heaven broke loose. All heaven broke loose. It wasn't that she said some new things.

She spoke things from the Bible but when you're anointed by the Holy Spirit, it cuts through, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. People start running to the altar. People start falling at the altar.

The choir now is going totally nuts praising God and everybody's praising God. And I'm just sitting there going, oh God in heaven, you are awesome. This goes on for 20 minutes and no one could preach.

Preach, preach. We were all like, everyone was like this after we just got through praising God. So the meeting's over, I go back up to this apartment, the room they got me.

I change my shirt. I rest, emotions, nerves, get tired and then go back and do another service. So on Tuesday, her husband comes into my office and says, whoa, what a beautiful day we had Sunday.

I said, yeah, praise God. He said, but that afternoon service. Pastor Jim, did you ever see anything like that? I said, yeah, that was extraordinary.

He said, you know, I talked to my wife riding home and I said, honey, God really used you. God used you. She said, yeah, give God the glory.

He said, but I gotta ask you something. How did you get the microphone? Because you were in the front and somehow you had the microphone. She said, well, honey, listen.

I was standing there and I felt the Lord prompting me to do something, but I wasn't sure if it was him. And then I knew it was him, but I told him, God, everyone's praising you. There's this noise, this hum, and my voice is so weak.

I'll know it's you if you make him walk off the platform and hand me the microphone. If he walks off and hands me that microphone, then I'll know it's you. I'll speak what you want me to speak.

Now you say, Pastor Cymbal, you're crazy. No, you're crazy for not believing that. Can we put our hands together? God is awesome.

Come on, God is awesome. Some of you here, you're gonna say, no, that's not how I grew up in church. I'm not so interested about your tradition or my tradition.

I'm interested in what the Bible says. And the Bible says you will hear a voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it. Those that are led by the Spirit are the sons and daughters of God.

Let's pray together. Would you forgive us, God, for not being sensitive to your voice, for having our agendas in life, our daily planner, where we put everything we can think of except to listen to you. Forgive us for reducing Christianity to going to church on Sunday, reading the Bible once in a while.

This is why you died for us. This is why you gave us the Holy Spirit. Break down the walls of unbelief in the hearts of some of the people, even listening to me here.

The prejudices that have filled our minds against the Spirit being alive, Jesus being alive. Our God is not dead. Our God is alive.

And our God speaks. He'll never give new doctrine. He'll never give new truth because that is found in the Scriptures, and the Scripture is complete.

Cursed is anyone who adds or takes away. But Philip didn't get Bible truth. He got directions from the Holy Spirit what to do.

Send the angels. Let the Spirit speak to us. Send us to that one person that you've been after, that one person who's gonna be so influential in the kingdom.

Give us boldness. Give us faith to obey, even though we don't know how it's gonna work out. Make us sensitive to the voice of the Spirit.

God, be patient with us. If we don't obey right away, have mercy on us because we make mistakes and we get afraid sometimes. But we want you to lead us.

We want you to guide us. You have great men and women here, God, great in your sight, believers new and old who you wanna use in extraordinary ways. We promise you now we'll give you all the praise and all the honor and all the glory.

It won't be about us. It'll be about you. We don't wanna be used so that we can boast to other people, look how God uses me.

We wanna give you all the praise. Those that have callings into unique ministries that are here running from your voice, stop them dead in their tracks today. Stop them dead in their tracks today.

Those visitors that you brought here today, they never thought I would speak about this, but it's the very thing that you wanted them to hear. God, there'll be people who ridicule what I just spoke about, but I stand on your word. There are those that'll say it's fanaticism or emotionalism, but I stand on your word.

There are others that'll say it's mysticism and not practical. I stand on your word. We stand on your word today.

We read from your word today. You didn't put that in there for nothing. You put the story of Philip for something that we would have faith to be led by you.

Those of you that are here today that need a leading from God, every eye closed. You need something from God. You had a fork in the road.

You need a direction, a directive word from God. Or those of you who have not been looking for direction from God, but you feel that the Spirit's trying to break through and say something to you, just stand right where you are. Anybody, just stand and say, Pastor, I need a word from the Lord.

It's not a biblical yes or no, right or wrong answer. It's a what is God's will answer. For that person, Lord, who has been debating whether they should retire early and do your work or continue on on their job, speak to them.

Make it clear what your plan is, Lord. Lead us, guide us, speak through us, love through us, send help through us, encourage people through us. We pray it all in Jesus' name.

And everyone said.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25025.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/book-of-acts-series-part-12-guided-by-god/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**