

Main Point - We are called to be led by God's Spirit. This does not mean, however, that God's Spirit micromanage us as though we are meant to remain as spiritual toddlers. God expects us to show initiative in making wise decisions and in taking biblically informed risks.

### How do you spell faith? Faith is spelled F.O.L.L.O.W.

- **Numbers 9:15-23**

- **What was the point?** Why did God do that? What was he trying to teach them? Does that apply to us as well? How?
- **Follow.** If there was ever a time when God's people had more clear and decisive guidance on an issue I can't think of when it was. But they learned to follow. Follow when it meant "go". Follow when it meant "stay."
- **The supreme value of God's presence.** We were made for this. This is where history is headed.
- Moses telling God he doesn't want to go with an angel, but only with God's very Presence (**Exodus 33:15**)
- Moses longing for the Spirit of God to be poured out on all of God's people. (**Numbers 11:29**)
- "All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God." (**Romans 8:14**)
- The people of God **in the OT** stuck with the cloud in the desert the same way **the disciples stuck with Jesus** in all his travels. And now again in this current in-between age **we stick with God's Spirit** just like they stuck with the cloud and just like they stuck with the human Jesus.
- **Learning to follow is imperative.** There's a problem in human nature that makes us not want to submit to the will of anyone but me. Learning to be led is imperative if the deadly knot of self-dependence is to be untangled. This is partly why God makes such a big deal of submission to authority throughout all Scripture. It's what Jesus did – and the centurion with great faith knew the principle well.
- **Following is the prerequisite to leading others.** The best Christian leaders are just good followers of Jesus. They aren't so much trying to lead, as they are simply trying hard to follow Him. They aren't trying to please their people – not really. They're trying to please Jesus. Your kids or your friends don't need you to try to impress them or control them. They need you to get over your self-will and become a better follower.

### TRANSITION

- **So does God micromanage his children?** Will He **always** tell us what he expects on every matter? In every circumstance? Or does he sometimes expect us to make wise choices? Is it okay when confronted with two or three or five hundred righteous options sometimes to just ... (dare I say it?) – "just pick a good one and go for it?"
- **Does he always tell us** what job to work or who to marry or what to wear? How much room is there in the will of God for improvisation? How much room in the perfect plan of God for trial and error?
- **Think about parenting children.** Small children are given more limited choices and more comprehensive instructions. But at some point the parents want the children to understand the kind of choices that are pleasing and develop the character to choose them without being micromanaged. In fact, isn't that the essence of wisdom and character? Somebody who consistently makes godly choices in the midst of the uncertainty and complexity of life by drawing on their best understanding of who God is and what God has said?
- **Character, Virtue, Responsibility** – they don't mean much when somebody is micromanaged.
- **Think about Yoder's Country Store** - Staff that slack off when Ronnie is away lack character. What if 'x' decided not to make sandwiches for customers except when Ronnie was watching? That'd be weird, right? I mean there are predictable patterns of the kind of things you just ought to do.

- **Certainty about God’s presence does not at all imply certainty about God’s will in every detail.** Sometimes God’s Spirit gives urgency and longing without spelling out exact details. It’s as though He leaves some things...up to us to decide how we’re going to serve Him.

Main Point - We are called to be led by God’s Spirit. This does not mean, however, that God’s Spirit micromanage us as though we are meant to remain as spiritual toddlers. God expects us to show initiative in making wise decisions and in taking biblically informed risks.

### How do you spell faith? Faith is spelled R.I.S.K.

- **Luke 19:11-27**
- **Meaning of the Parable.** Who is the Master? How has he gone away? Who did he leave in charge of his work? What is his work? (Luke 19:10) Will he return and see what his servants have done?
- **take initiative**
- **faithfulness**
- David Bauer – **“the recklessness of caution.”**
- **Risk** means you don’t have a guaranteed outcome.
- **trial and error.** We’re certain about the kind of life He wants. And we’re willing to risk trying to live it.
- **Perfectionist God?** By getting stuck in fear of displeasing God by making a mistake, this guy squandered his opportunity to please God. Is God a cranky perfectionist? Nope. **Your feeble efforts to please Him bring Him joy.** Knowing this frees us to take risks and to try.
- I believe that this is a **missional parable.**
- **A ripe harvest.** Not many workers. We are workers in God’s fields. We’ll give an account for our missionary labors.

### Keeping these two aspects of faith together

- 1.) Following the Spirit *is risky*.
  - 2.) Risking obedience to the missionary task of Jesus *is following the Spirit*.
- It seems to me that God has an easier time directing people into specifics who are already pleasing him by doing what he already said. Why would he waste time giving specific directions to people who haven’t treasured what he already said in the Book? **Do** what the Book says while **listening** for the Spirit’s specific direction.
  - Paul’s **Go until you get a no.**
  - **Gary Miller** – if he’s got your heart you’ll do his will no matter where you are.
  - **“He said to do exactly this.”** Faith follows. Faith follows the clear guidance of the Presence of God. The Voice of God. I don’t like when I hear people tell me they know things God has called them to do but they aren’t doing them. Oy!!
  - **“He said to do this kind of thing.”** Faith risks. I don’t like when people spend too much time worrying about what God’s will is. You have a surplus of “God’s Will” right here that you aren’t living out currently and you think you need more? Oy!! Serve God’s church, tell the Gospel to the world, pray for the sick, serve the poor, treasure the Gospel.
  - **Keep these together.** Take initiative to risk in the direction of faithfulness – and obey His voice whenever you hear it. Go until you get a no.
  - **He’s already made the call to action clear in The Book.** You don’t need any special leading to serve the poor. You don’t need any special leading to feed the hungry. To care for the unloved. To serve the least. You don’t

need any special leading of the Spirit to pray for the sick. You don't need any special leading to tell people the great news about much God has loved them in Jesus. If God never spoke to you again in any other way other than God's book you would have more than enough to keep you inspired and motivated and active all the days of your short human life.

- **And that's not all! Praise His Name. He's given us His Spirit and He *does direct our steps*.** He speaks to us. He redirects us. He comforts us. He convicts us. He assures us of His love and forgiveness. So yield to whatever He might say. Go wherever He leads. Say what He puts in your spirit to say. Shout what He whispers. Love with His Love. We dare not be Martha's, worried and upset about many things and missing the One Thing Necessary. The supreme value of His Presence. The TREASURE above all treasures.

Main Point: We are called to be led by God's Spirit. This does not mean, however, that God's Spirit micromanage us as though we are meant to remain as spiritual toddlers. God expects us to show initiative in making wise decisions and in taking biblically informed risks.

- How do you spell faith? Faith is spelled "follow," and faith is spelled "risk."