

FOLLOWING JESUS
A Disciple's Handbook

Lesson 3:
“Following Jesus in Empowering and Liberating”

Empowering and Liberating Introduction

Read Luke 4

After Jesus was baptized in water by John the Baptist and baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit by Father God, He immediately moved into the wilderness of Judea where He was tempted by the devil, but resisted and overcame him in every possible way. After that, He went up to His hometown of Nazareth where He announced that Isaiah's prophecy of an anointed and appointed Messiah coming to empower and liberate bound and broken mankind had been fulfilled in Him.

During this time, Jesus began His mission and ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit of preaching the good news of salvation, healing the sick and afflicted, delivering those demonically harassed and oppressed, and empowering and liberating those held captive by sin and Satan. He preached that the kingdom, or royal rule of the God of heaven, had come to bring power to the powerless and liberty to those lost and locked up in a prison of pain and hopelessness. He came as the empowered liberator to set men free from the penalty, power, guilt and shame of sin, and then to send them on a mission of doing the same for everyone, everywhere.

Empowering and Liberating Defined

Empowering must be something received and released. To be empowered one must be saved, baptized and filled in the name of Jesus, by the person and power of the Holy Spirit. Having received the power of God—His supernatural strength to save and set free—one is sent to bring that same force and freedom into the lives of others. The word *empowering* in the Bible is God sharing with His children and the followers of His Son, Jesus, His divine ability to rescue, redeem and restore.

Likewise, *liberating* is something received and released. To be liberated means that one has been set free from the impact of sin and the influence of satanic forces. Having been liberated by the truth of the gospel of grace in Christ Jesus and the transformational power of the Holy Spirit, one then brings that same liberating life into the lives of others, anointed by Jesus, the Liberator, and appointed to use His name and authority to set the captives free. (Read Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18-19.) The word *liberating* in the Bible is setting men free from the ravishes of sin by the redemptive power of God in Christ Jesus.

Empowering and Liberating in the Life of Jesus

Everywhere Jesus went, He brought divine power and liberty. The Apostle Peter, in his message to those in Cornelius' house, summed up Jesus' ministry as one of helping and healing people, setting them free from demonic influence and impact by the will of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. (Read Acts 10:38.) He was anointed and appointed for and to a ministry of empowering and liberating every person He encountered who would receive Him and believe in Him. (Read John 1:12-13.) As Jesus announced and advanced the kingdom of God, miracles and manifestations of God's love and power broke in on the earthly scene and the human condition. (Read Matthew 12:22-29.)

It was the mission of Jesus to bring the embodiment and expression of God the Father's merciful and kind intention—to bring people out of bondage and into the blessing of new birth—into a new family where freedom and fullness abounded. (Read John 3:5-8, 12-17.) Every word Jesus spoke was borne witness to by the work of the Holy Spirit's power, authenticating Jesus' message with a ministry of bringing spiritual power to the powerless and spiritual freedom to those beset and bound. (Read Luke 7:22.) Empowering and liberating people to be saved, set free and saturated by the person and power of the Holy Spirit was at the very heart of the mission, message and ministry of Jesus.

Empowering and Liberating in the Life of Jesus' Followers

What Jesus did in ministering freedom and fullness to all He encountered became a model and mandate for those who followed Him. He sent His twelve disciples out with delegated authority and divine power to bring spiritual life and liberty to the people of every city they entered. He commissioned them to declare and demonstrate the passion and power of the Father to all bound by the effects of sin, sickness and demonic oppression. (Read Luke 9:1-6.) He then sent scores of other followers into other cities to prepare the way for His coming by preaching the king and the kingdom, and healing and delivering all who had need. (Read Luke 10:1-9.)

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He instructed His disciples to wait and worship together in Jerusalem until they were clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit, anointing them to be worthy witnesses of Him and His ministry of empowering and liberating the lost and the lifeless, the broken and the bound. (Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:46-49.) They did just that, and on the Day of Pentecost they were marvelously freed and filled to bring freedom and fullness to everyone, everywhere. (Read Acts 2:1-42.) What they received from heaven above, they released on earth below. The Anointed One, Jesus, had now empowered a liberating force of Anointed Ones who could freely give to others what had freely been given to them.

Throughout the Book of Acts, we see Jesus' disciples, free and full, bringing spiritual freedom and fullness to all. (Read Acts 5:12-16; 8:4-7; 10:44-48; 16:25-34; 19:1-10.) Throughout the epistles, the Lord's disciples wrote to instruct and remind believers that this ministry of

empowering and liberating that had impacted them was to be imparted to others. (Read Romans 13:7-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Peter 2:4-10.)

Empowering and Liberating in Our Lives

As followers of Jesus and devoted disciples, we are called to receive the empowering and liberating work of the Holy Spirit and then to release the ministry of empowering and liberating in the lives of those we seek to reach. As those who are in Christ and have Christ in us by the person and power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to live full and free and to carry the ministry of fullness and freedom wherever we go. We are an anointed and appointed people who are to continue all that Jesus began to do and teach when He was on the earth. (Read Acts 1:1-3.)

This means that as Jesus and His followers preached the gospel with truth and liberating power, we do the same. This means that as Jesus and His followers lived and worked by the power of Holy Spirit in everything with everyone, we do the same. This means that as Jesus and His followers dominated demonic forces and set people free by His divine authority, we do the same. And this means that as Jesus and His followers were worthy witnesses of the will of the Father to save, strengthen and set free by grace through faith, we do the same. (Read Acts 1:8.)

MEMORIZE: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.* (Luke 4:18-19)

KEY TRUTH: It was the mission of Jesus to bring the embodiment and expression of God the Father's merciful and kind intention—to bring people out of bondage and into the blessing of new birth—into a new family where freedom and fullness abounded.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- If you have yet to be baptized and filled with the person and power of the Holy Spirit, seek someone to agree in prayer with you to fully receive Christ's empowering. If you have been baptized and filled, seek to walk in the Holy Spirit's power, releasing empowering to others every day.
- Ask the Spirit to reveal to you the areas in your life where you have been liberated and set free from sinful strongholds, and areas where you have not. Again, seek someone to agree in prayer with you to fully receive Christ's liberating work. Then seek to release the liberating power of Christ into the lives of others.
- Confess daily that you have been anointed by the Anointed One to follow Him in empowering and liberating every life you touch.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Lesson Reinforcement

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages and fill in each blank below. This will help reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. _____ must be something _____ and _____.
2. To be _____ means that one has been set _____ from the _____ of sin and the _____ of satanic forces.
3. _____ and _____ people to be _____, set _____ and _____ by the person and power of the _____ was at the very heart of the _____, _____ and _____ of Jesus.
4. What Jesus did in _____ and _____ to all He encountered became a _____ and _____ for those who followed Him.
5. As _____ of Jesus and _____, we are called to _____ the _____ and _____ work of the Holy Spirit and then to _____ the ministry of _____ and _____ in the lives of those we seek to _____.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of this lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following questions.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?
2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?
3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?