

# Session 9



## **EMPOWERED**

### **Session 9: Empowered for the Mission**

#### **Primary Scripture**

Acts 13:1–12

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#### **Introduction — The Church Was Never Meant to Stand Still**

One of the greatest temptations churches face is becoming inward-focused.

Over time, it becomes easy for churches to center primarily around:

- maintaining programs
- preserving comfort
- protecting traditions
- or simply surviving

But the Book of Acts continually reminds believers:  
the Church was never meant to stand still.

The Holy Spirit forms believers not only for personal growth, but for participation in the mission of God.

Acts 13 marks a major turning point in the Book of Acts.

Until now, much of the story has focused on the Church growing locally.

But now the Holy Spirit begins sending believers outward intentionally.

This is important because mission is not primarily a human strategy.

Mission begins with the heart of God.

The Holy Spirit continually moves:

- outward
- toward people
- toward restoration
- and toward the ongoing work of Jesus in the world

This session explores an important question:

How does the Holy Spirit send and empower believers for God's mission?

Because Spirit-led living is not only about personal faith.

It is about participation in the work God is already doing in the world.

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## **Movement 1 — The Holy Spirit Speaks in the Context of Worship and Prayer**

Acts 13 begins with believers gathered together worshipping and fasting.

Read Scripture: Acts 13:1–3

This detail matters deeply.

The Holy Spirit speaks in the context of:

- worship
- prayer
- attentiveness
- and surrender

The church at Antioch was not frantically trying to manufacture direction.

They were making space to listen.

This is important because many people want God's guidance while remaining constantly distracted.

But throughout Scripture, attentiveness to God often grows through rhythms of:

- prayer
- silence
- worship
- Scripture
- fasting
- and intentional dependence

Read Scripture: John 10:27

Read Scripture: Psalm 46:10

Spirit-led living requires slowing down enough to recognize God's leading.

And importantly:

the Holy Spirit speaks to the community, not only isolated individuals.

Acts repeatedly reminds believers that discernment happens best within healthy spiritual community.

The church at Antioch listened together.

Prayed together.

Discerned together.

This protects believers from both:

- unhealthy independence  
and
- passive spirituality

The Holy Spirit forms communities that learn to seek God together.

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## Reflection

What practices or rhythms help you become more attentive to God's presence?

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Why is slowing down often difficult in modern life?

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## Movement 2 — The Holy Spirit Sends Ordinary People

The Spirit calls Barnabas and Saul to missionary work.

Read Scripture: Acts 13:2–3

This moment matters because mission was not reserved for spiritual celebrities.

Barnabas and Saul were ordinary believers who had been formed through:

- worship
- service
- prayer
- and community

The Holy Spirit empowered and sent them outward.

This remains important today.

Many Christians assume mission belongs primarily to:

- pastors
- missionaries
- church leaders

- or unusually gifted people

But throughout Acts, the Holy Spirit empowers ordinary believers to participate in God’s mission in everyday life.

Mission happens:

- at work
- in neighborhoods
- in relationships
- in acts of compassion
- through hospitality
- through encouragement
- through generosity
- and through faithful witness

Read Scripture: Matthew 28:18–20

Read Scripture: 1 Peter 4:10–11

The Holy Spirit does not merely call believers to consume spiritual experiences.

The Spirit sends believers outward.

And importantly:

mission is not only about speaking.

It is also about living visibly transformed lives that reflect the character of Jesus.

The Church exists not only for itself, but for the sake of the world God loves.

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## Reflection

When you hear the word “mission,” what immediately comes to mind?

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How might God already be inviting you to participate in His work in ordinary everyday life?

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### **Movement 3 — The Holy Spirit Gives Discernment and Courage**

As Barnabas and Saul begin their journey, they encounter opposition.

Read Scripture: Acts 13:6–12

A man named Elymas attempts to interfere with the Gospel message.

Acts says Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit as he responds.

This reminds us that mission requires discernment.

Not every voice,  
opportunity,  
or spiritual influence moves people toward truth.

The Holy Spirit helps believers:

- recognize deception
- remain grounded
- and respond faithfully under pressure

Read Scripture: James 1:5

Read Scripture: Ephesians 6:10–18

This is important because many Christians think Spirit-led living means life will become easier or more comfortable.

But Acts repeatedly shows:  
where the Holy Spirit moves, resistance often appears as well.

The Spirit does not remove all difficulty.

The Spirit strengthens believers within difficulty.

And importantly:  
Paul's response is not driven by fear or panic.

The Holy Spirit produces steadiness and courage.

This remains deeply relevant today.

Believers need discernment:

- in culture
- in relationships
- online
- in leadership

- and in spiritual life

The Holy Spirit helps Christians remain:

- wise
  - grounded
  - courageous
  - and faithful.
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## Reflection

Where do you most need discernment in your life right now?

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How can prayer and attentiveness help believers respond wisely rather than reactively?

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## Movement 4 — The Holy Spirit Keeps the Church Moving Outward

Acts 13 marks the beginning of the Church’s intentional outward expansion.

The Gospel begins moving:

- across cultures
- across regions
- and eventually throughout the world

This reveals something important about the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit continually moves outward.

Fear pushes inward.

The Holy Spirit sends outward.

This does not mean every believer travels internationally or becomes a missionary in the traditional sense.

But it does mean Spirit-led living continually asks:

“How can my life participate in God’s mission?”

Read Scripture: Isaiah 6:8

Read Scripture: Romans 10:13–15

Sometimes mission looks dramatic.

Often it looks ordinary:

- listening well
- serving faithfully
- caring for people
- sharing hope
- offering encouragement
- showing compassion
- practicing generosity
- and living visibly shaped by Jesus

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to become participants rather than spectators.

And importantly:

the mission always remains centered on Jesus.

The goal is not:

- building personal influence
- winning arguments
- or drawing attention to ourselves

The goal is helping people encounter the love, truth, and transforming presence of Christ.

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## Reflection

In what ways might fear or comfort keep churches from engaging fully in God's mission?

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What opportunities for mission might already exist in your everyday life?

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## A Note on Mission and the Holy Spirit

Some Christians think of mission primarily as:

- church growth
- programs
- events
- or organizational success

But Acts presents mission as participation in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit:

- leads
- sends
- empowers
- convicts
- opens doors
- and prepares hearts

Believers are invited to participate prayerfully and faithfully in what God is already doing.

Mission is not about pressure or performance.

It is about faithful participation in the work of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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## Formation Practice (This Week)

### Practice: Becoming More Attentive to God's Mission

Each day this week:

#### Step 1 — Read Slowly

Read Acts 13:1–12 slowly each day.

Pay attention to:

- how the believers listened
- how the Spirit spoke
- and how the Church responded

#### Step 2 — Pray for Awareness

Pray:

“Holy Spirit, help me recognize where You are already at work around me.”

### **Step 3 — Practice Availability**

At the beginning of each day, pray:

“God, help me remain open to opportunities to love, encourage, serve, or speak truthfully today.”

Pay attention throughout the day.

### **Step 4 — Take One Intentional Step**

Choose one practical act of participation this week:

- encourage someone
- invite conversation
- pray for someone
- serve quietly
- reconnect with someone
- practice generosity
- or intentionally make space for someone who feels overlooked

Do not aim for dramatic.

Aim for faithful participation.

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### **Living It Out**

Where do you most sense God inviting you into deeper participation in His mission?

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What fears or distractions make it difficult to remain attentive to God’s leading?

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How can you become more available to the Holy Spirit in everyday life?

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## **Final Reflection**

The Holy Spirit does not simply comfort believers inwardly.

The Spirit sends believers outward into the ongoing mission of Jesus.

Acts reminds us that the Church was never meant merely to preserve itself.

The Church exists to participate in the work God is doing in the world.

The question is not:

“Is God still working?”

The question is:

“Are we remaining attentive and available to the leading of the Holy Spirit?”

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## **Weekly Prayer**

Holy Spirit,

Teach me to become more attentive to Your leading.

Help me slow down enough to recognize where You are already at work around me.

Give me courage to participate faithfully in the mission of Jesus,

whether through small acts of compassion,

honest conversations,

or quiet faithfulness in everyday life.

Keep my heart outward-focused,

grounded in prayer,

and open to Your direction.

Amen.