



Transcript for Audio Teaching: [Module 3: The Path Ahead](#)

Hi! This is Stacey. I want to welcome you to the audio lesson for Module 3 from my study journal called Deconstruction: Your Journey in Faith. If you have not yet purchased your copy, you can find it on Amazon. Each section has an accompanying audio file on my website, which is ClarityUnleashed.com. There you will also find opportunities to connect with me for personal coaching. I am also offering an online “small group style” coaching program utilizing the study journal. Without further delay, let’s explore Module 3: The Path Ahead.

Module 1 focused on the start of our journey. Module 2 reminded us that we see our path more clearly as God shines light on our lives and as the scales fall from our eyes. In Module 3 we will explore how the Holy Spirit interacts with us, connects us in community, and helps us navigate our lives.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Just in that sentence you notice that the Spirit is a “who” and not a “what.” Spirit is present from the first page of Scripture as “a wind from God (that) swept over the face of the waters” (v. 2). In Module 3 you will have the opportunity to learn more about the Spirit’s presence in Scripture and in the lives of believers and perhaps begin to interact with the Spirit in new ways in your life and deconstruction journey.

The Holy Spirit is a feminine word, which is interesting to consider. That might be something that you choose to think more about as you journal this week. Why is it important that throughout Scripture, God is described in both feminine and masculine ways? The Spirit is a feminine word and I try to refer to the Spirit as “she” just to grasp the significance of the original language. God created all humans in His image. It’s not a stretch to hold on to the picture of God as something more than male or female.



The Holy Spirit is called an Advocate, or helper, and also a Comforter. She also appears in Scripture as a dove, water, wind, fire, and oil. Because images are impersonal, we forget that the Holy Spirit is the personal presence of God. The Spirit plays such an important role in our lives as believers. In advance of His death Jesus comforts His disciples by describing God's gift of the Spirit:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you." (John 14:15-17)

Jesus provides further clues about the Spirit's purpose, calling her an "Advocate."

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (John 14:25-26)

When we allow the Holy Spirit to take over the navigation of our lives, we minister to the very people God planned for us to meet. The Holy Spirit guides and empowers believers, which demonstrated in Acts 16, as Paul encounters the Holy Spirit's navigational influence. Turn to Acts 16 if you'd like, or follow the slides. I am using the NRSV version for my slide deck.

⁶ They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, **having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to speak the word in Asia. ⁷ When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but **the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them**; ⁸ so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night **Paul had a vision**: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. (Acts 16:6-10)

When we read this passage we may have a tendency to see the Holy Spirit's actions and assume that Paul was physically blocked by the Spirit, or there was some palpable presence



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that stood in the way, pointing in another direction. Let's put ourselves in Paul's shoes and picture how this might have occurred. Before I do that, let me ask you a question. Have you felt guided by the Spirit to make a change in your plans or path in life?

But what about Paul's role in this interaction with the Spirit? Remember that prideful Paul we met on the Damascus Road in Module 2? Remember his posture on that road? It was his way or the highway. Literally. It took a bright light, an audible voice from God, blindness, and Ananais' healing hands to alter his life's course. And now a few pages later in Acts, Paul has plotted his course to spread the gospel, packed his bags, paid for transportation, and set out on his course. Is it his way or the highway this time? Or does he recognize the nudging and discernment from the Spirit? Paul has had a change of heart. He has reoriented his life. Now he listens and pays attention to the Holy Spirit. He also makes choices based on that discernment. Paul is humble and receptive, and changes his course. It's an unknown direction for him and the destination was not on his list of desired locations, but he goes, knowing there is a reason and a purpose.

Tangent Alert! So, if you're me, you might find yourselves googling while you're reading Scripture. So I asked Google, "Why was Paul forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia?" I landed on "ebible.com" and here is what a few people had to say.

- "As far as I am aware, no specific reason is given (either in the passage cited in the question, or elsewhere) as to why or exactly how Paul was prohibited from going into Asia Minor at that time. Since many churches were later established there, it would clearly not seem to be attributable to any divine plan to permanently keep the gospel from being preached there." – Tim
- "The reason Paul wasn't allowed to go to Asia is because Peter was the apostle of the gentiles and God was preparing Peter for that specific ministry. God's plans are best and Paul wouldn't have been the best person for the job because God had other plans for



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him. And later Paul would go to Asia and see what God had done. So the answer was clearly in scripture. Knowing the nature and character of God helps you understand why certain people are chosen for certain tasks. God wants what is best. Not what is good.”

– Ryan

- “We can only speculate why the Holy Spirit forbade Paul from preaching in Asia. I believe other apostles were intended to preach in this region.” – Kenneth

There seems to be a trend in Tim, Ryan, and Kenneth’s responses. To me they seem to focus on who was called to preach the gospel. I wonder if you and I will see something else in this passage that answers the question. Why was Paul forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia? Let’s see. Paul remains open to the navigational assistance from the Holy Spirit, and we will now see who the Spirit is connecting in this passage.

¹¹ We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district^[c] of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. ¹³ On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and **spoke to the women** who had gathered there. (Acts 16:11-13)

¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. **The Lord opened her heart** to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us. (vs.14-15)

Acts 16 is a powerful display of discipleship. In this chapter, Paul travels with Silas and Timothy and the Holy Spirit redirects their course three times (16:6-10). I imagine that the men feel an urgency, passion, and responsibility to travel and teach the Gospel. Yet each of these three times, they lay down their plans and allow the Holy Spirit to redirect their path. Once they arrive in Philippi, they set out to find worshippers to teach and find a group of women gathered



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at the riverside. Paul, Silas, and Timothy knew the Gospel and were experienced teachers. Yet scripture does not credit them with Lydia's salvation. Instead, we read that "the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (16:14). Relationship with God prepares and equips Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's teaching. He is then able to equip Lydia to lead a house church in Philippi (16:40).

Paul carefully charted out his journey and destination, only to have his plans altered three times by the Spirit. Why was Paul forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia? It seems to me that the Holy Spirit was intent on navigating Paul to Philippi and connecting Paul with Lydia. God prepared her heart to hear Paul's message. Because Paul remained open to the Spirit's guidance, Lydia became the first European convert to Christianity, and her household was baptized, marking the formation of the church at Philippi.

I want to reflect on the "ebible.com" commentary. I think those guys missed the mic drop moment within Acts 16. God planned for Lydia to play a crucial part in church planting, evangelizing, and discipleship. The Holy Spirit continues to connect us, just like Paul and Lydia were connected, so that we can be equipped and empowered for service to God and to one another. In a world that often seems overwhelming and disconnected, it is the Spirit who has the power to connect the body of Christ one person at a time. I believe that global engagement occurs as each believer disciples those we encounter throughout our lives. This concludes the Audio Message for Module 3: The Path Ahead.