

**Moving of the Spirit  
Proof of the Pudding**  
by  
**Michael Rudolph**

As I looked over the hundreds of people at the recent Tikkun conference, I noted three kinds of demeanors among the worshipers. There were those who were in quiet meditative worship, those who were exhibiting great emotion and excitement, and those who were looking around trying to figure out what to make of it all. Years ago, I was among those who were easily distracted and annoyed by exhibitions of emotion and strangeness during Holy Spirit ministry. I suspected that it was of the flesh, and it sure didn't look Jewish. I was right about some of it; in fact I documented, with proof through what some people admitted to me, that some of the behavior I observed was "put on" because of pressure they felt to comply with others' expectations. However, over time, I observed another thing, and that was that some of those whom I saw acting strangely seemed to accelerate in their spiritual development soon after the events. Some received spiritual gifts they did not have previously, and many more matured in Galatians 5 fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." The last of the fruit listed is self-control, and I am telling you that it resulted from exhibitions that appeared to lack self-control.

Now, I have always believed the biblical proverb "the proof of the pudding is in the eating" (well, if it isn't in the Bible, no doubt something like it is). Anyway, I began to see good fruit come from those Holy Spirit ministries and, although I didn't understand them and was still uncomfortable with them, I had to admit that God was using them for good. As you can see, I was pretty conservative but, over time, I became more comfortable with emotional ministry, and even developed a theory of why Holy Spirit ministry and emotions so often seemed to go hand in hand. Here is my latest thinking on it:

First, the God who created the entire world and maintains it is so powerful that we humans cannot even stand up in the shadow of His presence. Although we ought not to intentionally lose control of ourselves, it is awfully easy to do, and it is understandable when we are in the presence of such power. That accounts for part of the emotion. The other part is that many of us are so self-controlled in our way of being and our daily walk, that without meaning to, we refuse to release control to God even when in his awesome presence. In order to break through, God meets us with power during times of ministry when we are willing, "ever so slightly," to open ourselves to Him by letting go of some of our conventional inhibitions. When we do that, God can get inside us without forcing Himself on us and, the combination of God's power and our openness to Him produces the great emotional release that we sometimes see and experience.

Now that I have all but endorsed emotional behavior in the midst of Holy Spirit ministry, here comes the caveat:

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DO NOT JUDGE GOD'S PRESENCE OR THE FRUIT OF HIS MINISTRY BY THE FEELINGS OR EMOTIONS WE OBSERVE OR EXPERIENCE.**

As I have said, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it may take days or weeks to finish this pudding. There are manifestations of the flesh (or worse) that can mimic manifestations caused by the Holy Spirit, so in the days and weeks following what has appeared to be a powerful move of the Spirit, we should prayerfully discern the aftermath and ask ourselves:

1. Have we repented of any life-dominating sins to which we were previously in bondage?
2. Have we let go of some of our flesh, put off our old man and put on the new man of the Spirit?
3. Have we received Holy Spirit gifts that we did not previously have? Discerning of Spirits? Healing? Prophecy?
4. Have we acquired more of the “Fruit of the Spirit?” – “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control?”

There is a bottom-line lesson here, and it is this: When we are in a properly-led and overseen meeting where ministry of the Holy Spirit is being invited, we should be discerning but not easily put off by emotional behaviors we see or experience. On the other hand, we should not seek manifestations, act falsely, or feel pressured to copy behaviors we see in others; we will work against the Spirit if we do. Also, we need to come to such meetings with repentant attitudes – expecting to be touched – changed in some way by the Holy Spirit. Finally, regardless of what we may feel or experience, we should not judge a ministry’s value until we allow some time to go by, to determine whether permanent godly change has resulted. That – not emotion – is the proof of the pudding.

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