

HOW TO BE LEAD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

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PART I - NATURE OF MAN AND HOW WE ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Introduction: One of the greatest benefits of our redemption is the privilege of being led by the Spirit of God. Children of God can be expected to be led by the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:12-17:

So, then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh; for if you do live according to the flesh, you are about to die; and if, by the Spirit, you put the deeds of the body to death, you shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God; for you did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but you did receive a spirit of adoption in which we cry, 'Abba---Father'. The Spirit himself does testify with our spirit, that we are children of God; and if children, also heirs, heirs, indeed, of God, and heirs together of Christ--if, indeed, we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together.

Notice that our behavior is supposed to change when we come into covenant relationship with God.

- By the Spirit, we take control over our flesh.
- How do we do this? By being led by Holy Spirit!
- When we allow Holy Spirit to direct our conduct, then we show the world that we are children of God.

Proverbs 4:11-12

I have directed you in a way of wisdom, I have caused you to tread in paths of uprightness. In your walking, your step is not confined, and if you run, you stumble not. [YLT]

- One of our greatest needs is to have the wisdom of God to make the right decisions. Wisdom will bring many wonderful fruits into your life. Wisdom will promote you. Wisdom will bring you honor. Wisdom will

advance you in rank, dignity, and position. Wisdom will keep you safe from harm or injury. Wisdom will help bring desired change. Wisdom will bring the flow of God's blessings in your life. Wisdom will cause you to see the power of God in your life through the gifts of Holy Spirit.

- Wisdom comes through being led by the Spirit of God.
- Wisdom is making decisions today based on knowing what will happen tomorrow.

John 16:12-14

I have many things to say to you yet, but you are not able to bear them now; and when He may come--the Spirit of Truth--He will guide you to all the truth, for He will not speak from Himself, but as many things as He will hear He will speak, and He will tell you the coming things; He will glorify Me, because He will take of Mine, and will tell you. [YLT]

- How is it possible for you to make decisions based on hindsight rather than foresight?
- It's possible because Holy Spirit knows the future!
- He wants to let you know the future course you are headed on.
- Holy Spirit will guide you & tell you what is yet to come!

Let's look again at Romans 8:14-16

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God; for you did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but you did receive a spirit of adoption in which we cry, Abba--Father. The Spirit Himself does testify with our spirit, that we are children of God.

- How does the Spirit of God lead us? Notice that Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit! Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit. Our spirit then echoes the voice of Holy Spirit. In other words, Holy Spirit uses our own spirit to lead and guide us.
- Proverbs 20:27 confirms this: The spirit of man is the candle of the

Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly. The word 'candle' means 'lamp'. Back in Bible times, a lamp was an instrument used to guide someone along a dark path. God uses our spirits to guide us in our lives. Job 32:8 tells us 'but it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.

- It is not the mind that gives us understanding, but your spirit.
- This is why Solomon wrote, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5) Your own understanding comes from your mind, not your heart. Your heart is your spirit. Your spirit is the safe guide, not your mind. Your mind can get confused, your spirit rarely does.
- Being led by the Spirit of God involves two personalities: Holy Spirit and your own human spirit.

Holy Spirit

- Getting to know Holy Spirit better will help us understand what He is going to lead you to do.
- Holy Spirit is 'holy'--He will never lead you to do something unholy. Forget about Holy Spirit leading you to take someone's spouse.
- Holy Spirit agrees with the Word. He won't guide you in direct opposition to the Word. If you are in doubt, stay with the Word.
- Holy Spirit is gentle like a dove. He does not push. If you feel pressured to do something you feel is the guidance of Holy Spirit, then you know to back off, because He never pushes; He gently guides.

The Human Spirit

- Since Holy Spirit is going to use your own human spirit to enlighten you, you need to understand the function, operation and purpose of the human spirit.

- To understand the human spirit you must understand the three-fold nature of man.
- **Genesis 1:26** clearly says that mankind is made in God's image.
- **John 4:24** tells us that God is a Spirit.
- So, if mankind is in God's image and God is a spirit, mankind essentially must be a spirit as well.
- God is also a Trinity. There are three personalities to God: Father, Son, Spirit.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** tells us that mankind is also a trinity--spirit, soul and body. It is important that we do not confuse the spirit and the soul. The spirit part, which God breathed into man, is the part of man that is godlike. The god-side to man is his spirit.

The Soul

- The word for soul in the Greek is the word 'psuche', which we derive our word psychology from.
- Psychology is the study of the soul or the mind.
- The soul has been the predominate feature of man.
- **Genesis 2:7** tells us that man became a living soul.
- The soul consists of the mind, which houses our will, intellect and emotions--our personality.
- The soul is not completely reliable because the soul needs salvation. **James 1:21** tells us that the soul still needs saving. The soul is in the process of salvation by renewing our minds with God's Word.
- The Spirit of God does not testify to our minds. Our minds will not receive this testimony until they are renewed by the Word of God.

Conclusion:

We, as children of God can expect to be led by Holy Spirit. We can tell when a person is led by the Spirit by their conduct. Wisdom comes to us by being led by Holy Spirit. Wisdom is making decisions today based on what will happen in the future. This is possible for the Disciple of Christ because Holy Spirit knows the future and He will tell us what it holds. Holy Spirit leads us by speaking to our human spirits. Holy Spirit is holy, He always agrees with the Word, and He is gentle--He never pressures you. Don't confuse spirit and soul. They are different. The god-side to man is his spirit. The soul consists of the mind, which houses our will, intellect and emotions. We are not to lean to our minds for understanding, but to our spirits, because our minds are unreliable--they still need saving. Becoming a child of God enables Holy Spirit to talk with our reborn spirit. If we will listen, then He will lead us and guide us in making wise decisions for our lives. Our human spirit is vital to hearing from God.

PART II - VOICES OF OUR TRINITY

Introduction: Last week we discussed the nature of man and how we are made in the image of God. We discussed the Trinity of the Godhead and the trinity of man as well as the difference between soul and spirit. This week we will be learning about voices of our trinity.

Hebrews 4:12

For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- The Word of God can divide soul and spirit.
- This shows that the soul and spirit are not the same.
- This Scripture shows us the relationship between soul and spirit.
- First it says the Word divides joints and marrow. Are joints and marrow the same thing? NO. They are related, but the marrow is more important, because it gives life to the bones. The marrow affects the health of the joints.

- Second, the Scripture says the Word judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Thoughts and attitudes are not the same, but they are related. Thoughts are important, but attitudes are much more important than thoughts.
- With these illustrations in **Hebrews 4:12**, you begin to see that the soul and spirit are different, yet interrelated. The more important part of us is spirit, yet the soul is also important. They are related; if your spirit is unhealthy, your soul will become sick.

The Voice of the Body:

- The spirit has a voice, just as your soul has a voice. Their voices are similar but different. The body has a voice, too.
- Before we can actually learn to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, we first have to learn to recognize the voice of our own human spirits.
- We are not prepared to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit, until we have identified the voice of our spirits.
- Let's begin learning the different voices by first identifying the voice of our body. The voice of the body is called 'feelings'. You 'feel' hungry, sleepy, or even desire sex. Those 'feelings' are the voice of your body telling you what it wants. Whenever you act on those feelings, you resemble an animal, because animals have those feelings, too. If you live on that level, you are acting no better than an animal.
- 'Hedonism' is the philosophy which says pleasure is the highest good. **Jude v. 10** says, 'Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them.'
- People who live for pleasure are like unreasoning animals. They speak abusively against whatever they do not understand. Why can't we? Illegal sex, drunkenness and revelry. They spew words of hate toward those who preach the Gospel because the Gospel demands a

higher level of living.

- We are not made in the image of animals, but of God. Our bodies are made of the same stuff that animals are made of, but God did something extra for mankind. He breathed His life into us and we became a living soul.
- If you live entirely on what 'feels good' then you are acting just like an animal. The worst mistakes people make are when they follow the voice of their bodies. They do what 'feels good': having sex outside the bonds of marriage; addictions: drugs, alcohol, pornography; anger issues--saying what you please
- Listening to the voice of your body pertaining to fulfilling it's desires for pleasure brings consequences. It's good to listen to your body when it tells you to take better care of it.

The Voice of the Soul

- The soul has a voice as well. The voice of our soul is called 'reasoning'.
- Notice in Jude it says concerning hedonism, 'Like unreasoning animals'. Animals do not reason. They live entirely on instinct.
- We humans can 'reason', because we have souls.
- The ability to reason separates us from animals.
- This is why we have made such progress, because we have the ability to reason.
- Humans can think through issues.
- We can even decide that what we feel like doing is something we should or should not do. So, sometimes we turn down what our bodies are telling us to do.
- When we decide to let the voice of feeling dominate reasoning, we

usually spiral downward.

- In many instances the voice of reasoning is the way to go, however, in matters relating to God, it rarely is.
- You cannot reason God; you simply have to trust Him. Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. Our understanding and reasoning can become clouded and can hinder us from really embracing the truth about God. Vs. 6 continues with, 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths.' God will direct your path when you acknowledge Him. God cannot be limited by our reasoning, because He is bigger than our understanding.
- Sometimes in your life God will tell you to do something which does not seem reasonable. Take Noah for an example. Are you going to reason God out? You better not.

The Voice of our Spirits.

- This brings us to the final point: the voice of our spirits. The voice of our spirits is called 'conscience'.
- You might find yourself in a position where something 'feels' good and 'seems reasonable', but your 'conscience' tells you not to do it.
- Who are you going to listen to? Your body, soul or spirit? Your conscience is your safest guide to follow.
- Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, acceptable and perfect will. You still need to deal with the body and the mind. He tells you to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice and to be transformed by renewing your mind. Nothing is mentioned concerning the spirit. Why? Your spirit is born again; it has been changed by salvation.

- Since the spirit has been regenerated, it becomes the safest guide to follow. Now, a renewed mind is safe as well, because it will be able to test and approve what God's will is. But, since so many believers have not renewed their minds, their spirit is safest guide.

A Seared Conscience

- The conscience is the pain we feel when we do what we believe is wrong. It is also the good feeling we get when we do what we believe is right. We all know those experiences--this is the voice of our spirit.
- The conscience is a safe guide, however, it is not an infallible guide, because your spirit, though complete, is not fully developed. Look at a baby: it is complete with hands, feet and mouth, yet, it can't walk, it can't grab very well and it can't talk. Eventually it will do all those things, but not now. It takes time for the baby to develop and the same is true with your spirit.
- Your spirit is born again, but it is a baby spirit.
- The Bible compares the new birth with a natural birth.
- 1 Peter 2:2 says, 'Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.'
- We were born again as baby Christians. As a result, our spirit has a god-like voice, but not a mature voice. Sometimes our spirit can't communicate accurately. Sometimes our conscience, though sincere, is not correct.
- 1 Timothy 4:2-4 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. In this passage Paul mentions consciences which have been seared as with a hot iron. What is the first thing that you experience when you get

burned? PAIN!

- Paul is showing that sometimes the conscience feels pain when it should not.
- The example he gives is about certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving.
- There were some people who felt guilty eating certain foods and Paul is saying they shouldn't because those foods are to be received with thanksgiving.
- A hot iron can pain the conscience--the hot iron is a picture of 'lies'.
- Today, there is not a religious debate about foods, but there are still many religious debates that bring about a guilty conscience.
- Believing and knowing the truth, instead of believing the lies will cause you to overcome a guilty conscience.
- The truth will set people free from a guilty conscience. The Word of God will determine what you feel guilty about and what you feel good about.
- If you continue to burn yourself, you will burn the nerves and you will stop feeling the pain. This happens to many people when they continue to act against their conscience. Eventually they will stop feeling guilty because the conscience has been completely seared. When this happens the spirit is no longer of value. The person is lost. He does not have salvation. This is a dangerous place to go.
- It is so important to listen to your conscience; as long as your conscience is sincere you are in good shape.
- **1 Timothy 1:5** The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. So long as your heart is pure and your faith sincere and your conscience is good, you will rarely make mistakes in following the leading of the Spirit.

Id, Ego, and Superego

- Modern psychology is telling us the opposite. It tells us to make logic, reasoning, and human understanding the supreme goal of mankind.
- Sigmund Freud theorized that there were three main forces in man's life: The Id; the ego; the superego
- The id is the instinctive force, the desires and pleasures of life.
- The superego is the subconscious or we call it the conscience.
- The ego is the executive force, the mind and reasoning.
- Freud believed that unhappiness was a product of the superego suppressing the desires of the id. His answer was in the ego.
- The ego was the rational part of man. He believed it was up to the ego to decide what was right. In this philosophy the soul is the supreme head of man, thus is born psychology, which is the study and exaltation of the soul.

Conclusion:

Today, people are taught to evaluate everything in relationship to reasoning. If it seems reasonable and your id wants to do it, then do it. Forget about the voice of the superego. Don't let it rob you of happiness. Listen to reason. The Word of God differs with this theory. God says your spirit is the most important voice, not your soul. Listen to your conscience because listening to the voice of your body makes you hedonistic; listening to the voice of your soul makes you human; but listening to the voice of your spirit makes you like God. Which is better? To be human or to be godly? Now you can understand why only the sons of God can be led by the Spirit of God (**Romans 8:14**) The rest of the world are led by their minds or, worse, by their bodies.

PART III - THE NEW TESTAMENT WAY OF GUIDANCE

Introduction: So far, we've learned that we are spirit, soul, and body and

that we hear many voices. We discovered how to recognize the voices that are talking to us, so that we will be able to recognize Holy Spirit's voice and follow His leading. That's what we are talking about--How to be led by the Spirit of God. Through the years people have tried many ways to hear God's Voice and find His will.

Numbers 27:21

And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord...

- Under the Old Covenant, a Urim and a Thummim was used, perhaps like lots, to determine God's response to a question answerable by 'yes' or 'no'.
- Urim is translated from the Hebrew word Uwriym (plural of uwr; light; flame; fire) is from the root word owr, to be or make luminous; break of day; to give or show light; be enlightened; shine; set on fire.
- Urim literally means lights.
- Thummim is translated from the Hebrew word Tummiym (plural of tom; completeness; innocence; integrity; perfect; uprightness) is from the root word tamam; to complete in a good or bad sense; be perfect.
- Thummim literally means perfections or complete truth.
- The two words are used together only 5 times in Scripture.
- Together the two words are translated Light and Truth. Lights and Perfections. Manifestation and Truth. Sacred lots.
- They were the means of obtaining an answer from God regarding any problem which concerned Israel.
- They were perhaps 2 precious stones which were at times drawn from the bag to give God's judgment or message. The bag was kept in a pocket of the breastplate that the priest wore. They were next to his heart/spirit.

- I like to think that the stones were supernatural. That God would 'light them up'; turning them a different color for 'yes' or 'no'. Similar to my 'red light/green light' illustration. Scripture indicated this with Saul.
- This is a type and shadow of Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:26

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven.

- This is how the Apostles chose Matthias to take Judas' place.
- Today, we would vote, but then, the common way was to put the names on stones, parchment, or wood into an urn and after prayer, let somebody put his hand in and draw out one of the lots.
- The Holy Spirit had not yet filled the Apostles when they chose this method of picking the next apostle.

Judges 6:36-40

So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

- Since Gideon put out a fleece, others have tried doing the same thing.
- This is probably the favorite method people today use in trying to be led by God.
- The trouble with this method is that the devil may try to interfere.

- God is not bound to follow the Old Covenant, He has made a better way.

Galatians 5:18

And if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under Law. [YLT]

- This clearly shows us a better way.
- You can't have both. The Spirit will either lead you or you will be led by the way the Saints under the law were led.
- They were led by Urim and Thummim, lots, or fleeces.
- You should not follow these methods.
- They were all types and shadows of what was to come.
- Now we have the mighty indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He's our Light and Truth. He's our Guide. He's our Perfection.

Romans 8:14-16

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but you did receive a Spirit of adoption, in which we cry, 'Abba--Father'. The Spirit Himself does testify with our spirit, that we are children of God. [YLT]

- The sons of God are led by His Spirit.
- No one until Pentecost was called 'sons of God' in the sense of being born again.
- God has provided the leading of His Spirit for His sons and daughters.
- We have a better way!

Isaiah 30:19-21

O people who dwell in Zion at Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will

answer you. And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide Himself anymore, but your eyes will constantly behold your Teacher. And your ears will hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it', when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left. [AMP]

- Look at the inadequacies of the Old Covenant. People had to depend on a 'priest' to tell them what God wanted done.
- God had led the Israelites through adversity and affliction.
- He has a better way for us!
- This better way is the Voice of Holy Spirit, He's saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'
- Yet, you hear many Christians say, 'I learned so much from these tests and trials. I have learned God's will by going through the wilderness.'
- Many believers are living beneath their privilege of being led by the Spirit.
- They are being led by the bread of adversity and the water of affliction.
- Sure, you can be led that way if you want to, but God has a better way.
- He doesn't want you to go to the 'school of hard knocks', but the 'school of Holy Spirit.'
- Holy Spirit will lead you to avoid adversity and affliction.
- He will guide you to a better path--a path of blessings.
- Why can we avoid eating and drinking the bread of adversity and the water of affliction? Our 'Teacher' will be hidden no more.' Holy Spirit is our great Teacher. He has been sent to guide us on a more perfect

path. This is a better way!

Conclusion:

Do you see how far God has brought us? Stones, sticks and fleeces were all outside of our spirit. These things were types and shadows of what was to come. Now we have the Spirit of God living inside our spirits! He's there ALL THE TIME! Anytime we need direction, He's right there! Many Christians let the obstacles of life dictate the direction their life takes. They go along the road without the direction of the Spirit, and when they bump into something hard, they learn to go another way. They learned the hard way. Listen to the Voice of the Holy Spirit and you will make the right decisions every time. We now understand that we are a three part being, with voices talking to us all the time. We can now recognize those voices and choose to follow the voice of our spirit, which is our conscience. The voice of our spirit is better than feelings and reason, but, there is the BEST voice--the voice of God.

PART IV - HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

Introduction: We are studying how to be led by the Holy Spirit. So far, we've learned that we are spirit, soul, and body and that we hear many voices. We discovered how to recognize the voices that are talking to us, so that we will be able to recognize Holy Spirit's voice and follow His leading. Last week we learned of the different ways God communicated with His people before His Spirit came. This week will discover what the Voice of God sounds like.

1 Kings 19:11-12

The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

- This story contains a powerful truth.
- Many times we are looking for some spectacular sign from God to show us the way.

- Yet, God speaks in a gentle whisper.
- This is the same voice Isaiah describes that is behind you saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'
- This is the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- One way to recognize the voice of the Spirit is to see how the Apostle Paul describes His voice.

Romans 8:14-16

...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, 'Abba--Father'. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

- One way to find out what the voice of the Spirit sounds like is to know what it does NOT sound like.
- It is not a frightening voice.
- 'For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear.
- Unlike the voice which God spoke from Mount Sinai, which made the people tremble, the voice of the Spirit does not make us tremble, nor does it produce fear.
- This is important to know!
- If you are listening to fear and being moved to act because of fear, you can be sure to know God is not speaking to you.
- The Spirit does not make you a slave to fear.
- He makes you a servant to faith.
- Faith must guide you, not fear.

Galatians 4:6

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'

- The Spirit speaks and testifies to our spirit.
- The result is, we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'
- This passage says that the Spirit...calls out, 'Abba, Father.'
- Who is it that cries out, 'Abba, Father.'?"
- Obviously, both cry out--The Holy Spirit cries out inside of our spirits, and then we echo what we hear in our spirits.
- The reason you call God, 'Abba--Father' is because the Spirit told you to do so. You can't even say 'Jesus is Lord' without the Holy Spirit.
- At first you may think, 'I don't remember hearing the Spirit cry this out in my spirit', but you really did.
- You just did not recognize His voice.

I Corinthians 14:33

For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. [ASV]

- So, what did this voice sound like, which made you believe God was your Father?
- This voice was an inner conviction. Conviction is another word for 'faith'.
- When God speaks to you it produces faith--not fear, not doubt, and not confusion.
- The opposite of confusion is peace.
- You have an inner peace that God is your Abba Father
- You received this peace when the Spirit testified and witnessed to

your spirit that you were a child of God.

- The voice of the Spirit sounds like PEACE!

Acts 15:28

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements;

- This is an example of the inner conviction leading and guiding the apostles.
- The Apostles were discussing the role of the Law for the new gentile believers.
- There were scriptures which seemed to imply that the gentiles were under the Law of circumcision, yet at the same time there were other scriptures implying the opposite.
- How did they settle this issue?
- 'It SEEMED GOOD' to the Holy Spirit and to us...
- Nothing is mentioned that sounds definitive.
- As much as we would like God to make things definitively clear, He normally makes things seemingly clear.
- Nothing absolutely definitive or conclusive, just clear.
- This sounds like a whisper, doesn't it?

Acts 16:6-7

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

- Does this seem strange?

- Why doesn't God just tell them where to go?
- Instead, He keeps them from preaching the word in the province of Asia.
- Next, the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to enter Bithynia.
- What does it mean when it says, 'having been kept by the Holy Spirit' or 'the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them'?
- Notice it doesn't say the guards at the border kept them from preaching or someone got sick so they were not allowed to enter the provinces.
- There was nothing in the natural, physical world that told them not to enter those provinces.
- The Holy Spirit told them.
- Sometimes a door flings open and we assume God wants us to enter through the open door.
- It may be satan who opened a trap door to destroy us.
- Don't look at circumstances as a sign of God's direction.
- Listen to the Spirit on the inside of you! Follow peace.
- Refuse to enter doors that God has not opened.

Let's continue reading Acts 16:8-10

So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- It took a vision to persuade them to take a trip to Macedonia.

- There was nothing in Macedonia, which made it attractive for evangelism.
- Paul normally entered areas where there were at least a few synagogues he could use as platforms to share the gospel.
- In Macedonia there weren't any synagogues, only pagan temples.
- Yet, they chose Macedonia because of a night vision.
- 'We got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to....them.
- They still had to interpret the vision.
- Finally, they concluded.
- You will have to interpret the leading of the Spirit.
- The leading of the Spirit is not obvious at times.
- You must consider carefully the message God has given you before concluding the direction of the Spirit. Mistakes are made from pride. When you say, 'God told me', and when it appears you misinterpreted the direction of the Lord--admit it--don't hold on to the supposed voice of the Lord! Don't let pride keep you from admitting that you missed it. Make the needed adjustments and move on.
- God's voice is a whisper--not a shout.
- Tread carefully when following the voice of the Spirit.
- Don't be so arrogant as to assume His voice is loud and clear.

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace--soul harmony--which comes from Christ, rule--act as umpire continually--in your hearts; deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds...[AMP]

- Peace is your umpire.
- Remember, we hear a lot of voices telling us what to do. He's a nice guy, you should marry him. Take the deal, this is an opportunity of a lifetime. This car's a beauty, buy it before someone else does.
- Everyone has advice, but the only voice that counts, is the Spirit's.
- His voice sounds like peace.
- Peace is the umpire
- The umpire decides and settles with finality all questions that arise in your minds.
- When you have questions concerning God's will for you, let peace be the only voice you listen to.

Luke 1:79

...to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

- God guides our feet into the path of peace.
- A path is a passage.
- It is a routine or course by which a person passes or travels.
- The course should always be paved with peace.
- If peace does not pave the road, then it is not the road you should take.

Isaiah 55:12

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

- You will be led forth in peace.

- If there is no peace, then you are not led by God.
- Peace is the fruit of the Spirit meant to guide you.
- Every fruit of the Spirit has a benefit attached to it. The benefit of love is the fact that you get along with people. The benefit of joy is it removes depression. The fruit 'patience' enables you to inherit the promises of God when they are delayed.
- Every fruit of the Spirit has a purpose that God designed for it.
- The purpose of peace is to lead and guide you.

Isaiah 63:13-14

Who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble; like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.

- Isaiah clearly tells us how God guided His people.
- He guided them when they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord.
- Rest is another word for peace.
- This is the method God used to guide His people and He still uses this method today.
- Have you ever needed to make a decision, and you feel pressured in a certain direction, yet deep down in your heart you don't have peace?
- Brother Kenneth Hagin called it 'taking a shower with your socks on'.
- You know something is wrong, but it is not obvious.
- I like to call it a 'red light' inside of me.
- No one else can see the 'red light' but me.

- There's no peace.
- Mistakes are made when we ignore the 'red light'.
- On the other hand, you may get a 'green light' to go in a certain direction when no one else is getting it.
- Follow the signal God gives you.
- The signal is peace or, sometimes, the lack of it.
- No matter what decision you need to make, let peace make the decision for you.
- Peace is the voice of the Holy Spirit. Another word used to describe peace is intuition. It's that 'gut feeling' that something is right or wrong. Intuition has to do with a premonition about the future. Jesus told us that Holy Spirit would tell us what is yet to come. When He tells us what is yet to come, it is interpreted as intuition. Intuition has nothing to do with the mind. The mind makes decisions based on 'fact', not on 'feelings' The 'feelings' we are describing are not the physical feelings but deep spiritual feelings. You just 'know-that-you-know'.

Conclusion:

Like in any matter related to God, Satan will bring the counterfeit. Intuition can also be the voice of your emotions. You can't trust your emotions. Not every premonition you get is the voice of the Spirit. It could be your emotions.

PART V - GOD'S VOICE VS. SATAN'S VOICE

Introduction: We are studying how to be led by the Holy Spirit. So far, we've learned that we are spirit, soul, and body and that we hear many voices. We discovered how to recognize the voices that are talking to us, so that we will be able to recognize Holy Spirit's voice and follow His leading. We now know that we do not have to 'put out fleeces' or 'read the stones' as God's people had to do under the Old Covenant. We discovered

that God's voice or the voice of the Holy Spirit is peace. We follow the peace. This week we will learn to distinguish between the Holy Spirit's voice and Satan's counterfeit voice.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

- Peace is the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- When He speaks to you, peace comes.
- Peace becomes the guiding force of your life.
- You make decisions based on the peace you have.
- If you don't have peace to go a certain direction, then you should not go that way.
- Peace is a fruit of the Spirit.
- Satan has a counterfeit fruit that resembles peace.
- We must be not confuse the world's form of peace with the peace of God.
- There was a minister, Howard Pittman, and he tells the story of the time he suffered an aneurysm. While he lay on the hospital bed, he could feel his spirit start to leave him. He first fought against this, until he heard a voice say, 'Relax, and let go.' He felt peace when he heard this voice, so he concluded it was God. Consequently, he obeyed the voice. As he was dying, he realized the voice was Satan after all. He fought against it and came out alive.
- Not every soft voice is God's.
- We are to test the spirits to see if they are from God.
- You can't believe every voice, no matter how godlike the voice

sounds.

Leviticus 19:31

You shall not turn to mediums and you shall not seek to spirit-knowers, to be defiled by them. I am Jehovah your God.

- Mediums are people who try to listen to their spirits.
- They live on the spiritual plane.
- Just like a gymnast works in the gym, so a medium works in the spirit.
- Modern day mediums would be known as psychics.
- They make predictions by listening to their 'intuition.'
- The intuition is the voice of spirits.
- For the Christian, the intuition should be the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- For psychics, they often are listening to other spirits.
- This is why God forbids listening to psychics.
- There would be nothing wrong with psychics if there weren't evil spirits in the world.
- It becomes dangerous to listen to 'any' voice.
- The voice of evil spirits sounds like intuition as well.
- The devil will try to deceive a child of God in this area.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but the Spirit of power, love and a sound mind.

- When someone has been through a bad experience of being deceived by the devil's voice, they may become wary of listening to

the Holy Spirit again.

- We can't let a bad experience drive us away from a godly experience.
- The Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit speaks to us today.
- We can't be afraid of His voice, simple because there are other spirits speaking.
- We must learn to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit from the voices of deceiving spirits.

1 Samuel 30:1-6

Before we read this, let me give you some background. David and his men were fugitives of Israel because of King Saul's hatred for David. David was afraid of Saul, so to hide, he went to the Philistines, to fight for them. That was a mistake. The Philistine King told David to leave and take his men with him. So they left. Now lets read:

Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

- This was one bad day for David.
- He lost everything--his wealth, family and now his position as leader. What was he going to do?

- Have you ever been in a situation where you feel there is no where to go?
- You are in trouble if you do and you're in trouble if you don't. You find no answer.
- The problem is insurmountable.
- David was in this kind of situation.
- When there is no way that seems right, remember, with God there is a way!
- God has never met a situation where He did not know the answer!
- Don't ever make decisions out of helplessness--that's the breeding ground for bad decision.

Notice the first thing David did.

- He did NOT pray!
- The worst thing to do when you are discouraged, despondent, confused, hurt, or betrayed is to first pray.
- DID I SHOCK YOU?
- People will tell you when you are hurting that you need to pray.
- I'm telling you they're wrong!
- Prayer can be very dangerous when you are discouraged.
- Here you are, discouraged, you need God's help; so, in the midst of your despondency you pray.
- Oh, God, please show me the way! I don't know what to do. I need your help! You weep.

- Have you ever prayed something like that?
- Now, in the midst of this prayer, you're quiet.
- Then suddenly a thought flashes through your mind.
- You begin to think that it is God speaking to you.
- You feel good about the idea you have.
- You then get up from your knees.
- You believe you have heard from God.
- HAVE YOU REALLY???? Well, I feel at peace. It must be God. Are you sure? Can you see how weak you felt? Satan doesn't come to you when you are strong. He knows better. Like a roaring lion, he looks for a weak, sickly prey. Satan didn't come to Jesus until He was hungry. He even spoke 'the Word' to Him. Satan comes to you at your weak moments. So many times Christians get misled during their times of weaknesses. They are desperate for an answer and they will believe any impression they 'feel'.

Think back for a moment in your own life.

- You felt frustrated.
- Then you believed you heard from God.
- Often things didn't turn out as planned.
- You realized you missed God.
- The mistakes we make in following God's leading often stems from our frustrations. Changing jobs or marrying the wrong person.

Now look closely at David

- There is no mention of prayer--YET! He does one thing: BUT DAVID

FOUND STRENGTH IN THE LORD HIS GOD.

- One translation says, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord.'
- Prior to this, David was in no position to make any major decisions.
- He had wept until he had no more strength to weep.
- He was not ready to hear from God.
- He must, first, encourage himself in the Lord.
- Only then can he rightly seek God's direction.

1 Samuel 30:7-8

Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, 'Bring me the ephod.' Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?' 'Pursue them, He answered, 'You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.'

- David did not inquire of the Lord until he had first encouraged himself in the Lord.
Prayer came after he was encouraged.
- Prayer is not the means for encouragement.
- The Word is the encourager. Romans 15:4 says, 'Through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.'
- After being encouraged, David sought God's direction.
- David was not desperate.
- He was not discouraged.
- He was not afraid. He knew God was in control.
- From this galvanized state of mind God spoke to him. It's CLEAR. Pursue them. You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the

rescue.

- David had truly heard from God.
- He did not hear from God while he was discouraged.
- He heard after he encouraged himself and he was strong in God. Learn from him. Don't seek God's direction while in a state of stupor. Wake yourself up. Get encouraged about where you are now, before you find out where you should go. You get encouraged through the Scriptures.
- If you are fearful at your present state, you will not find out where you should go in the future.
- You need to be encouraged now, before you know what to do later.

How do we walk this out?

- Go to the Word.
- Begin digging into the Word concerning your situation.
- Find every reference related to your situation.
- Read every Bible story concerning your situation.
- Study great men and women who went through the same situation.
- Find out what they did that worked.
- Study what others did that did not work. Don't make their mistakes.
- What is this doing? It is teaching you the Word of God about your situation to keep you from hearing a wrong voice. Many mistakes are made, which could have been prevented, if people would have been grounded in the Word of God. Instead, they went off on a tangent, and now they have shipwrecked their faith.

- You should have a good understanding of what you should do after doing this.
- But, you need a specific answer. To get this, you need a Rhema word. Listen for the Spirit to talk to you as you are reading the Scriptures. He will give you a Rhema word.
- After you get the Rhema, then you are ready for prayer. Tell the Lord all that you've found out in your studies, remind Him of the Rhema word that you received from the Spirit and then thank Him that everything will turn out as you've seen it from the Word. And it will.

Conclusion:

The Word of God will give you the wisdom to make right decisions. Most times God will speak to you after times of seeking Him in His Word. Quick words from God can come, but without the grounding of the Scriptures, they usually turn out to be man's own ideas, not God's ideas. Great men and women who have claimed God has spoken to them, generally have spent considerable time pondering God's direction and looking at Scriptures before claiming that God has spoken to them. Yes, God speaks. Yes, He will give you peace. Make sure, however, that you are strong in the Lord at the time you hear from God. To avoid deceptions learn to process the Word of God. Take the Scriptures, especially the part related to your situation, put them into your heart. Understand the context of the Scriptures. Don't take isolated passages, instead, get a thorough understanding of what the Word teaches concerning what you are going through. Those Scriptures will keep Satan from deceiving you into hearing a voice which is not God's. As you process those Scriptures, the Holy Spirit will use them to speak to you.